

Gartner: 5G Brings Augmented Reality Shopping

Written by Alice Marshall
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According to Gartner, 100 million customers will shop in augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) both online and in-store, as the technology has the potential to radically shake up the customer experience.



“Retailers are under increasing pressure to explain the purpose of physical stores, and take control of the fulfillment and return process for cross-channel execution,” the analyst says. “At the same time, consumers are progressively defining the value provided by the experiences they receive from retailers. As a result of these pressures, retailers are turning to AR and VR to offer customers a unified retail experience inside and outside retail stores.”

An August 2018 Gartner survey of 97 retailers in Europe (including the UK), the US, Canada and China shows 46% of retailers plan to deploy either AR or VR solutions to meet customer service experience requirements by 2020. An example of such technology is the IKEA Place app, a means for customers to virtually "place" IKEA furniture in a space. Retailers can also use AR to extend the brand experience, engaging customers within an immersive environment in order to drive revenue.

Meanwhile VR provides immersive interfaces allowing retailers to create task efficiencies or reduce the costs associated with designing new products. Some retailers are already testing the possibilities of VR, with examples including the Alibaba full VR shopping experience. Tesco VR tours, Adidas VR promo videos and personalised eBay Australia stores created in partnership with Myer.

5G technology represents an opportunity to accelerated the adoption of AR and VR in stores. The Gartner 5G enterprise survey indicates AR/VR 5G applications attract the highest expectations for driving new revenue across all use cases and respondents. 5G supports multiple use cases, including real-time immersive video rendering, shorter download and setup

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times, and the extension of brands and shopping experiences beyond stores.

“Gartner expects that the implementation of 5G and AR/VR in stores will transform not only customer engagement but also the entire product management cycle of brands,” the analyst concludes. “5G can optimise warehouse resources, enhance store traffic analytics and enable beacons that communicate with shoppers’ smartphones.”

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