The Difference Between Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality for Enterprise

Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are two technologies which are rapidly morphing. They've led the advancement of many different industries from gaming enhancements to B2B tools. The future of VR and AR are undetermined but they will undoubtedly impact business. Which technology is set to change business forever, and how?

Virtual Reality vs. Augmented Reality

Virtual reality technology facilitates the creation of real-life simulations, and creates an immersive experience for any user that makes them feel as if they are actually interacting with their digital environment. Augmented reality, on the other hand, layers digital enhancements geared to enrich an existing real life setting by appealing to the senses.

While many companies are enhancing elements of their business with these two technologies, the capabilities of both AR and VR are helping businesses in different, but important ways. Here are some of the different ways that businesses are embracing the different technologies to ignite growth and development.

Virtual Reality in Business

Virtual reality elements come to life through a headset worn by the user, and this headset displays a simulation of a real life environment that is immersive and interactive. The headsets are available in a variety of price ranges and styles, making it possible for many companies to implement this technology in the following areas of their business.

Communication, Meetings, and Training

Due to the interconnected power of the internet, many businesses work with remote employees and conduct business with clients and partners all over the world. Virtual

reality helps businesses connect with more people, in varying locations, without sacrificing the power of doing business face to face.

Virtual communication for meetings, presentations, or training can all be made more lifelike, immersive, and impactful by using VR. For example, a company can create a simulation of a conference room with furniture, art, and fixtures so all the participants feel as though they are sitting in the same room. Training sessions can also be enhanced, particularly in learning new skills or procedures that require a high level of hands-on detail and experience.

Sales and Tradeshows

Companies can also use VR to make compelling presentations in the sales or tradeshow environment. Potential leads or clients can slip on a headset, and be transported into a real-life simulation right from the show floor. This technology can help make sales demos much more convincing through lifelike interaction. It is truly the essence of immersing clients within your vision.

Product Testing and Simulation

Another way that companies can use VR effectively is to complete product testing, particularly if the product is a type of equipment that could be dangerous or impossible to test in person. Testing in a life-like, computer simulated scenario powered by VR can help companies cut production costs and safety measures when testing new products.

Grab Your Free eBook on AR: Augment's Essential Guide to Augmented Reality

Augmented Reality in Business

Augmented reality technology is powerful and portable so numerous companies have devised very clever ways to use AR to their advantage in furthering their business goals and sales. Since AR can operate very effectively through an app, it is easy to put this technology directly into the hands of customers. Consumers can use it to easily access an interactive, meaningful experience with a company or brand. Here's where AR fits in with business:

Design and Retail

Augmented reality technology has numerous, valuable implications in retail and design capacities within a business. For example, product-centric companies already use 3D

models for design, but deploying them through AR and make customizations before any production is ordered. This helps companies demonstrate prototypes more effectively, and more to the production phase much faster than ever before.

Additionally, in-store, retailers can use AR packaging, displays, and signage to engage customers as they shop in-store. For example, many toy companies have implemented kiosks in-store where customers can scan a product's packaging and see a 3D version of the finished product — assembled and all — on the screen of the kiosk. eCommerce is another area of retail that AR will have a heavy impact on. Find how Augment thinks AR will affect omnichannel retail and customer engagement online and offline in our latest whitepaper.

Marketing

AR opens up a new realm of seemingly limitless marketing opportunities — from interactive print ads, billboards, and marketing collateral to product packaging and displays. AR technology is such a powerful marketing tool because it's very likely that the everyday consumer owns a smartphone. AR in the marketing realm creates an immersive and interactive experience that consumers will associate to a trusted brand.

The New Yorker is a perfect example of a brand that made print fun and interesting once more by making the front and back covers of their printed publication come to life through the camera of a smartphone or tablet via augmented reality.

B2B Sales

One of the most impactful ways companies can use AR to engage and secure new business is through dynamic, customizable sales presentations. Selling into Walmart or Target is done through on-site meetings to gauge product placement. Using an AR app, a sales rep can meet common sales objections in the field by demonstrating exactly what a product display will look like in the particular location. With AR enabling products to be shown in real-time and fit to scale, B2B sales is an undiscovered market that this technology will change for the better.

Virtual reality and augmented reality are expanding in their utility. Both technologies are emerging as key growth tools for businesses of every size and type. However, augmented reality is growing in business popularity much more quickly, due to the powerful, but portable nature of this technology.