On-pack trends: Augmented reality-enabled packaging

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In theory, augmented reality (AR) could allow product owners and marketers to add a virtual layer of communication and promotional messaging to their brand packaging.

Wondering about the difference between augmented reality and virtual reality?

- Augmented reality (AR) is technology that adds an extra layer of digital content to your view of the real world, when observed through a device that is AR-enabled (such as a smartphone with the relevant app or in-built capabilities). Pokémon Go is a well-known example of augmented reality – offered in the form of a free-to-play game.
- Virtual reality (VR), on the other hand, creates an entirely new three-dimensional digital environment and then immerses the viewer in this environment through a VR device.

As smartphones grow more sophisticated, the mainstream potential of AR is growing (for example, the new iPhone X has in-built AR technologies). When viewed through a mobile device with AR capabilities, product packaging could carry an interactive digital overlay that could bring products to life and enable the consumer to gain an entirely new perspective on the product.

Marketers could supplement consumers' view of the real world with digital content, with the aim of:

- Entertaining and delighting them.
- Informing them about the product or service in an exciting new way.
- Helping them to visualise the product in their environment or in a new way before buying it.
- Promoting competitions and special offers.
- Introducing new product variants.
- Suggesting new ways to use the product.

While some brands are already using AR-enabled packaging and marketing material, this technology is still developing; and it may take some time for consumers to understand the value of this on-pack communication approach – and readily

accept it.

Until then, it is worth keeping an eye on developments in the AR field and other new digital technologies that could take packaging and on-pack communication by storm in 2018 and beyond. Pyrotec PackMedia will keep you updated.

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