

cannondale

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>> Cannondale Leverages Augmented Reality to Create Differentiation In the Biking Industry

Established in 1971, Cannondale is a global industry leader with a reputation for continuous innovation, quality development and manufacturing of high-performance bicycles, apparel, and accessories.

Headquartered in Connecticut, USA, the company's long history of innovation began with the creation of the world's first bicycle-towed trailer and production of oversized aluminum frames. Today, the company is part of Dorel Sports and continues to push the envelope with a rider-first mentality and quest for constant improvement.

The Challenge

Today's bicycle industry is very competitive, with the top-line companies leveraging the newest materials and technologies to produce bikes that meet the ever-changing customer demands. As these innovations come to market, the competition becomes tighter and the need for differentiation becomes greater.

Because Cannondale has been in business for over 40 years, customers can bring any number of bikes to their local shop for a repair – putting pressure on store owners to have rich industry knowledge of how that certain bike was manufactured, what year it was produced, and which replacement part is needed. Adding to the challenge, bicycles are sold and repaired through independent retailers and not manufacturer-owned stores. This means that these shops are not tied to a certain manufacturer or incentivized to push a specific company or bike.

The company realized that this gap in knowledge can create an unsatisfactory customer experience and began researching innovative ways to fill this white space. Cannondale needed a tool that could drive the marketing needs of the company, provide bike shop owners and staff with critical product design and technical guidance required for servicing, and deepen engagement with riders. After researching available solutions, the team turned to augmented reality (AR).

The Approach

The company did not have an application development or programming function internally, yet wanted to realize the promise of AR. The Cannondale team was already using PTC's Creo CAD software for the design of their award-winning bicycles and learned that Creo data and animated step-by-step instructions could be published in AR with Vuforia Studio. With the AR content creation challenge surpassed, the team jump-started a side project to pilot Vuforia Studio and create AR experiences. Within the first week, the project manager learned the software and brought an initial demo to life, which quickly turned heads around the company and created an "aha moment".

The demo soon found its way to the desk of the CEO, who immediately recognized the potential benefits AR could offer to resellers, service technicians and riders. This buy-in drove the company to quickly scale the technology implementation across the organization. The ease of use for Vuforia Studio allowed a one-man content design team to launch the first Cannondale AR experience within months and create additional experiences for new product launches in a matter of days.

The AR application is also available to riders who have already purchased a Cannondale bike, allowing them to experience the next-generation tool that is unique to the market. For those consumers who have experience fixing their own bicycles, the application helps them streamline the repair process.



The Solution

Feedback about the AR experiences on Cannondale bikes from independent retailers and customers has been positive.

The audience that has seen the biggest impact to date is the independent bicycle shop owners, who can now quickly access all relevant information without having to dig through numerous volumes of user manuals or part ordering books. This allows shop technicians to quickly scan a bike that may need serving and find the exact replacement part without any issues – reducing the time it takes to identify and order the correct replacement part, repair a bike, and get the bike back to the rider.

Cannondale has also worked with retail shop owners to show them how the AR experience can assist the sales process. When a potential customer comes in looking for a bike, but isn't tied to a particular brand or model, the sales associate can scan the VuMark of a certain Cannondale bike and show them what they can expect from the product as well as the features the bike offers. This creates a unique buying experience that no one else in the bicycle industry currently provides.

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“Vuforia Studio was really easy to use, from the drag and drop environment, to the one click publishing, it was much easier than we ever could have imagined. This technology empowered us to create an AR experience much faster than anticipated and well before our competition could beat us to the punch.”

Curtis Detwiler

Director of R&D at Cannondale



>> Next Steps

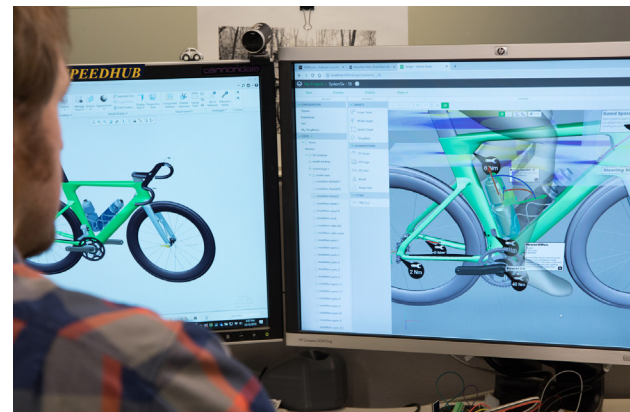
Moving forward, Cannondale is implementing AR on many platform introductions. Because of this, the Cannondale team will expand to include a person dedicated to curating and creating the AR experiences for each bike. These experiences will also be integrated into future product launches, allowing the information to be available for both dealers and consumers.

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