

## 6 Awesome Medical and Retail VR/AR Applications

After decades in the realms of fantasy and gaming, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) will soon invade the mainstream of everyday experience. And determined industry heavyweights like Microsoft aim to make the technology both accessible and affordable.

With demos of Microsoft's HoloLens generating oohs and aahs, and the announcement that Microsoft will incorporate all the features of Windows Holographic into Windows 10, the world of VR/AR now orbits the galaxy of business. Consider these visually mind-blowing opportunities for retailers and medical professionals.

### ➤ Surgical Training for the Developing World

Noble but inefficient off-shore education limits the scope of surgical training in developing countries. To speed the process, a 360-degree VR camera mounted above the operating table transports thousands of aspiring practitioners at once into the operating room with the patient and surgeon.

Medical students closely follow the operation, using a VR mobile app and inexpensive headset. Consequently, training costs shrink dramatically and care improves around the world.



## ➤ Virtual Patients

As VR technology advances, future students will operate on virtual patients, experiencing tactile feedback in life-like critical situations. Students advance at their own pace and help others hone their skills. Self-trained doctors have the potential to fill a growing gap in the supply of skilled medical professionals.

## ➤ Online Shopping Made Fun

Avid shoppers will tell you that the joy of “browsing” an online store falls short of flipping through hangers on a rack to find just the right color or style of dress for a special event.

In the near future, however, VR online shoppers truly browse, looking for an item that catches their eye, pulling it off the shelf to examine it from all angles. VR browsers also “try on” clothing to test fit and adjust colors and fabrics with the swipe of a finger. As a result, retailers offer more options with fewer item returns while decreasing overhead.

## ➤ Gearing Up for Outdoor Adventure



Picture Half Dome in Yosemite, one of the most recognizable climbing destinations in the world. Now, envision climbers donning AR headsets and trying out the top five classic climbs to the summit without leaving their favorite outdoor gear store. Climbers plan their route and their gear, anticipating difficult holds and outlining their route before they hit the mountain.

## ➤ Garden Design

Novice landscapers make the mistake of planting a beautiful garden only to realize that the mature plants look out of balance by year two or three. Hence, "Green Tech" garden centers enable customers to virtually manipulate plants in their garden space, adjusting for sunlight and topography, and viewing changes as the garden matures.



## ➤ Remodeling Without the Oops

AR offers a huge win for both home improvement retailers and customers who wish to remodel their homes and keep their sanity (and relationships) intact. The customers make design decisions, choosing fixtures, paint, flooring, appliances and other finishes.

With initial selections identified, they experience their remodel in a 3D AR overlay, adjusting colors and placement. At their own pace, they eagerly compare fixtures and swap out selections until confident with the design.

AR and VR technologies hold enormous potential for retail and medical applications. Innovative retailers are beginning reach customers in ways not possible with smallish, 2D screens. Likewise, the technology stands to dramatically transform medical training and practice.