

# Sunglasses Maker Bollé Leverages AR for Try-On and Try-Out

## ARTICLE |

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**T**rying on sunglasses is a popular use case for augmented reality (AR). But trying them *out*—and experiencing how the world looks with them on—is a compelling example of how AR in social media can be more than just light-hearted entertainment.

Chris Abbruzzese, vice president of trade marketing at Bollé Brands, told us why the maker of high-end sunglasses, bike helmets and other sports gear decided to create its first AR experience on Instagram—and what it learned.

### **What led you to develop an AR experience?**

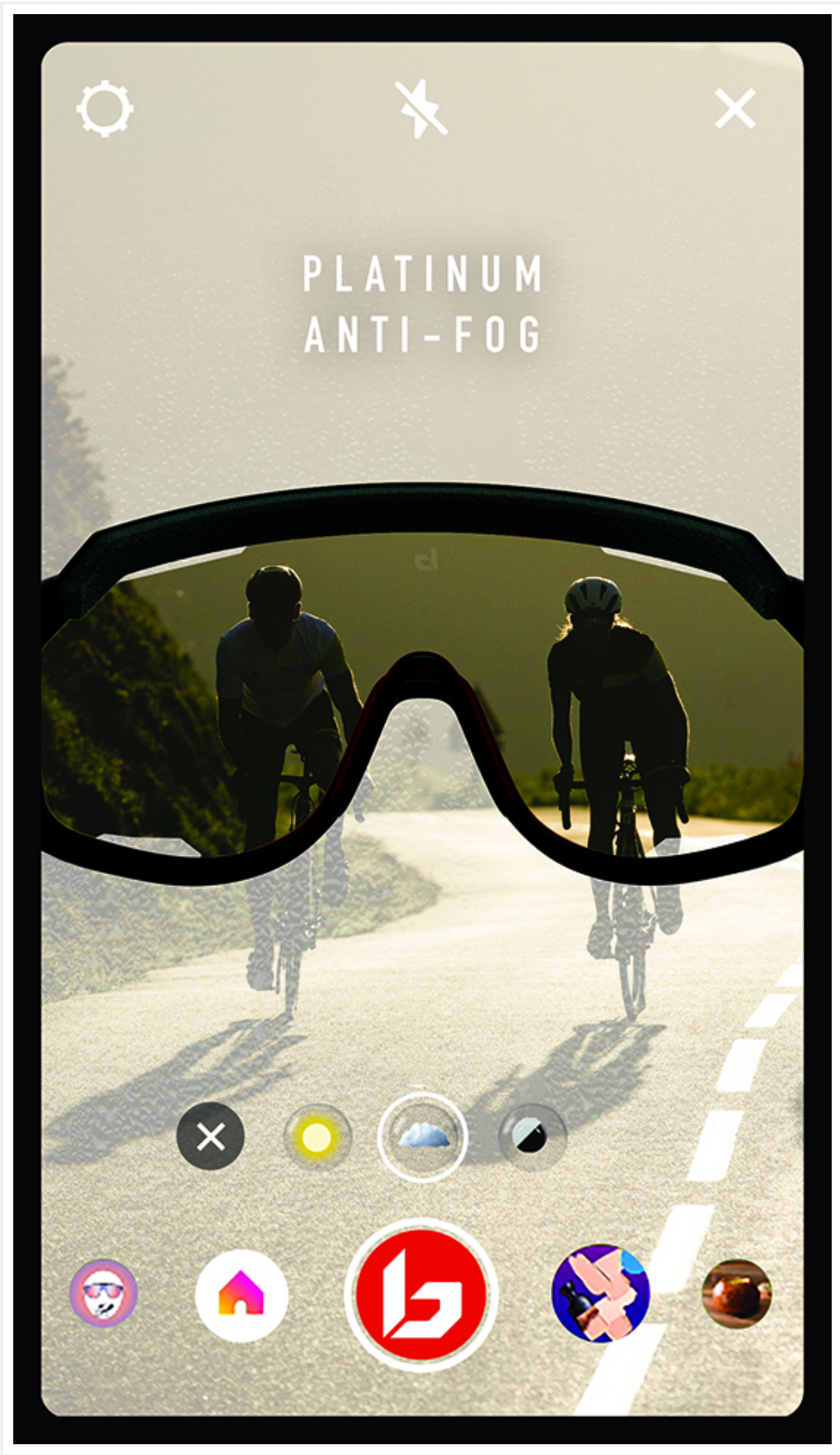
We were struggling to demonstrate our Phantom sunglass lens technology, not only at the point of sale, where people are picking out glasses, but at events, trade shows, and even in the digital realm. I thought if you could put this demonstration of our lenses in the hands of anyone who has a phone, you could [potentially] reach billions of people.

### **How do people access your AR experience?**

You can access it from our ads on Instagram, from an influencer post or by following our page. It starts with a try-on using the front camera,

because people need bearings. Then, when you switch to the back-facing camera, you switch from the selfie view to the world view, and we project the lens onto your surroundings.

It's our lens meeting your reality, not some contrived place or experience.



## **Why was it important to offer not just a try-on, but a try-out?**

Try-on is not new. What's new is the try-out and saying to the consumer, "This pair of glasses is \$200 to \$300, and they need to perform. Let's show you what light-adaptive [technology] is. Let's show you what happens when your glasses fog up. Let's show you what contrast looks like in different settings and do it where you are, not where we are."

## **What role did the pandemic play in your venture into AR?**

As soon as COVID-19 hit, people didn't want to go into malls or sunglasses stores to try on glasses. Who wants to touch something that was just on somebody's face?

We saw a convergence of our goals in AR: We're trying to demo our glasses, but we're also trying to reshape the shopping experience.

## **What were your marketing objectives?**

It was a brand-awareness play. Bollé is an older company that needs a resurgence here in the US. There's new ownership; it's reinvesting in technology, and it's bringing some cool lenses and frames to market. We wanted to have the digital technology to go with them, to demonstrate the products.

We've spoken with a lot of new dealers who haven't carried Bollé in the past, who are now interested in carrying the brand because of this AR technology. We're seeing that consumers who visit our site are spending six times longer on it, which we can attribute to the new AR experience.

## **How are you measuring the results?**

We're measuring time on site, the number of people who opened the [AR experience] and the number of times they shared it. Within two or three days, we engaged hundreds of thousands of people, and we were shocked at the time they spent on it. We had people spending 7 to 13 seconds, which is extraordinary if we can get somebody to stop for that long and try something out.

## **What have you learned about AR's role in marketing?**

When you think about marketing in general and social media specifically, it's about being useful, relevant and lightly branded. That's what AR can do.

For more on how COVID-19 is driving marketers to AR, eMarketer PRO subscribers can read our recent report: "Augmented Reality in Social Media: It's Growing Up, and the Pandemic Is Playing a Role."

**Report** by Debra Aho Williamson Aug 26, 2020

### Augmented Reality in Social Media

