

At National Retail Federation's Big Show, all eyes were on the metaverse

Article

The trend: Retailers are getting excited about the metaverse, seeing it as an opportunity to deepen customer relationships. Here are some highlights from this week's annual industry

conference.

The rise of the digital wardrobe: Patrice Louvet, CEO of Ralph Lauren, said during his session at the National Retail Federation's **Big Show** that the metaverse is an opportunity to build relationships with younger consumers.

- Louvet shared how Ralph Lauren is leveraging Roblox, popular with underage consumers, to allow users to clothe avatars in branded apparel.
- The brand has also built a presence on the metaverse platform Zepeto, where it has sold over 100,000 units from its digital apparel collection.
- On the trade show floor, ecommerce platform Obsess showcased a mobile responsive virtual storefronts it had made for Ralph Lauren, as well as other brands, including Bravo TV and Dermalogica.

Digital goods will go mainstream: According to **Cassandra Napoli**, senior strategist at forecaster WGSN Insight, getting familiar with the metaverse economy could become mandatory for brands that want to connect with Generation Alpha—those born from 2010 to 2024—which will be the first generation to have no memory of a life prior to digital goods and may prefer them to physical ones.

- Napoli addressed how brands and retailers will be able to make money in the metaverse, and how for many, augmented reality (AR) will serve as an entry point for more immersive experiences.
- Opportunities abound for creators as well: Napoli theorized how celebrities will be able to license their digital twins to participate in a virtual campaign so that individuals can earn "by doing literally zero work."

Why the metaverse will work: Emma Chiu, global director at Wunderman Thompson Intelligence, held a session discussing why the metaverse shows so much potential: 85% of consumers feel that for brands to be successful in the future, digital presences will be "essential."

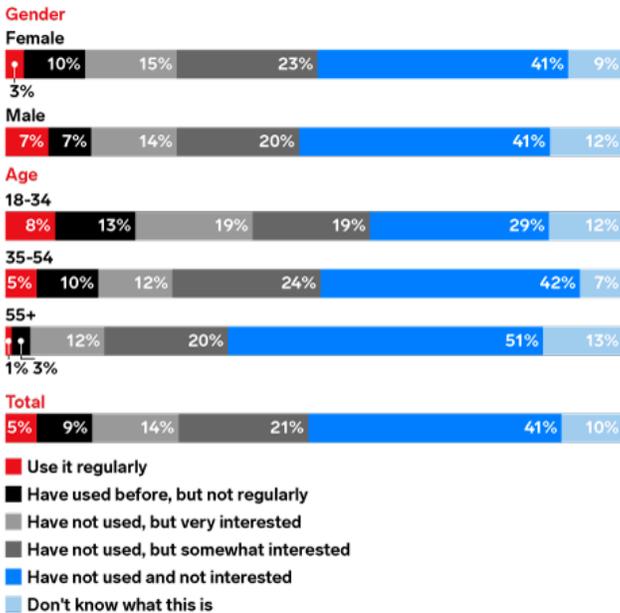
- Chiu covered the concept of **NOwnership**—valuing experiences over material goods—and how it is more popular among Gen Zers. While nearly 35% of millennials think home ownership is important, just 26% of Gen Zers feel the same, per a recent Apartment List study.

The big takeaway: Despite not quite existing yet, the metaverse may be already too big to fail.

- The revenue opportunity could become \$800 billion by 2024, [per](#) Bloomberg Intelligence.
- Between retailers seeing the metaverse as critical ground and tech companies such as **Meta** and **Microsoft** making major plays, there may be enough corporate investment in making the metaverse “happen” to win over the most wary consumers—albeit over time.

How Interested Are US Adults in Using AR* and VR While Shopping?

% of respondents, by demographic, Dec 2021



Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding; *for example, trying on clothing or makeup by superimposing an image onto themselves
Source: "The Insider Intelligence Ecommerce Survey" conducted in December 2021 by Bizrate Insights, Dec 8, 2021

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Deeper dive: To learn more about the metaverse and wider AR/VR, platforms read this [metaverse primer](#).