

# Metaverse Marketing – The Future of Sustainable Marketing

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## **ABSTRACT:**

Society is evolving and even trying to “conquer” new universes, no matter if they are physical, virtual online. The CoVid-19 Pandemic, wars, natural catastrophes, are pushing humans to adopt and to spend more time in Metaverse platforms, as a means of escaping the ordinary and their daily problems. Where there are potential customers, companies, or organizations will follow in order to change the behavior and make them purchase products, or services, increase the brand awareness, or in the case of politicians, or politics, determine them to vote, or agree with the wanted strategies. Not only will the customers have avatars, as well as organizations are becoming more humane and attractive towards users. Organizations are investing in technologies related to AI (artificial intelligence) and technologies related to multiverse as the attractiveness of these virtual universes are more and more appealing. In this study, we are conducting research in order to discover what the benefits are, but also how brands, companies and organizations that are joining, use marketing strategies, policies and tactics to increase their sales. In the Metaverse platforms, there will not be only the place to spend leisure time, socialize, do the shopping, even working, or why not, even voting, there being practically no limits. We have discovered in this study that customers would also like some sort of regulations, which relate to how marketing and experiential marketing are conducted in Metaverse platforms. Like the Internet, the Metaverse has the power to drastically change economic and social life for all the parties involved.

*Keywords: Metaverse, marketing, experiential marketing, customer behavior, AI*

## **1. Introduction**

The lack of physical space is a concern that both governments and academicians try to resolve. As we have only one Planet and we have already reached the psychological milestone of 8 billion people. There are some steps taken, either to build cities in some remote parts of the globe, where the climate and environment are not so friendly for humans, like in desert areas, or the poles, or even it was taken into consideration to inhabit other planets like Mars and not only. But the construction of this kind of cities, like “The Line” which is set (Al-sayed, et al. 2022) to be built in Saudi Arabia, imposing the new idea, as the “5-minute” town, that allows the inhabitants to travel in three dimensions. This means that the members of a traditional family, kids can reach school, parents reach the workplace, even playgrounds should be reachable in 5 minutes or less, as the city will be developed vertically. Whether they are real, virtual, or online, new worlds are being "conquered" by the civilization as it evolves. War, natural disasters, and the CoVid-19 Pandemic are (Choudhary, et al., 2022) encouraging people to use and invest more time

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on Metaverse platforms to escape reality and their everyday issues. Companies or organizations will follow where there are prospective consumers to alter their behavior and convince them to buy goods or services, raise brand recognition, or, in the case of politicians or politics, persuade them to vote or concur with the desired strategy. Not only will consumers have avatars, but businesses are becoming more humane and appealing to users. Organizations are (Hwang & Chien, 2022) investing in AI (artificial intelligence) and multiverse technology as the desirability of these virtual universes grows. We are doing research in this project to find not only what the advantages are, but also how brands, corporations, and organizations that are participating, employ marketing strategies, policies, and techniques to enhance their sales. There will not only be places to spend (Dwivedi, et al, 2023) leisure time, mingle, shop, work, and why not even vote in the universe, since there will be essentially no restrictions.

## 2. Review of the scientific literature

The term Metaverse refers to a virtual environment where users may communicate with one another, even in groups, in real time, regardless of where they are physically located, with respect to three minimal conditions. The conditions, that have to be fulfilled, are for them to have electricity, internet connection that supports the amount of information in order to act and a device, not matter if it is a PC, laptop, tablet or a smartphone. Metaverse represents (Huynh-The, et al, 2023) the new frontier that many people might “move” in the years to come. Our behavior as customers will change dramatically and, in a way, never witnessed before. Metaverses, will not be used just only for fun and recreation, but also to test something new and marvelous, play games, socialize, that can be used (Ahuja, 2023) for the daily use, like: education, work, or to find what is wrong from a medical point of view, report a crime but also socializing. More and more people are switching towards the virtual realm, either from curiosity, fun or are obliged by the company. Increasingly corporations are conducting meetings and conferences in virtual reality, reducing tremendous costs of having the events face to face, especially if we discuss multinational corporations that conduct businesses all around the world. We can bring into discussion virtual worlds developed (Ziwei, 2020) in games, like Fortnite, and their spectacular success in which they succeeded in gathering themselves at two concerts, one held by Christopher Comstock aka Marshmello (Coby, 2019) and the other by Travis Scott (Stuart, 2020), around 10 respectively 12 million people that were logged (Copland-Mann, 2022) in, at the same time. The concerts lasted for only 10 and respectively 12 minutes. For now, there are two kinds of Metaverses Worlds: Mirror World that is a faithful representation of our reality, and the Virtual World, or space that either is created, developed by the owners of the platforms or realized by the users, being constructed after their wants, desires and imagination.

The marketing shift towards online has (Meade, et al, 2022) already taken place, as brands will go (Barrera & Shah, 2023) where the potential customers are or spend time, in order to communicate (Gupta, 2021) with them. If a couple of years ago, the social mass media platform, TikTok was almost unknown, and was (Menon, 2022) targeting only kids, has gained popularity not only among youngsters, but also adult and elderly people. If an

image's worth one thousand words, then a short film should be worth one thousand images. Companies have a more difficult task in Metaverse as they need not only to promote (Lee, et al., 2023) their brands, but also to make it more humane. This means that the experience would be immersive and engages them even more, making them more loyal towards the organization.

The digital representation will not be only a billboard, but an avatar that talks back and even suggests products or services that suit best the potential customer. Also AI (Artificial Intelligence), will be involved as that the Branded Avatar, will be able to handle stimulatingly, at the same time, more customers to answer their questions, or if they are reluctant to succeed in making them proceed towards the purchase process. Customers will not have (Yang, 2023) to stay and wait in queues, speed being very important nowadays. Avatar will also have sales and negotiation skills, presenting only the strong points based on the profile of each person.

If in real life (Braguez, et al., 2023), customers have to go for several kilometers to a dealer to make a drive test, the wanted car or motorcycle, in Metaverse, just with one click, you can drive along the wanted roads. Even more than that, companies can either offer free of charge or sale a digital car in order for others to see it. If in real life, if you see a car in a movie or a billboard, the customer has to go to the dealers' showroom to test it, while in Metaverse instantly you can try it virtually.

Interactive and immersive advertising will make potential customers to adopt more easily the products offered by companies. Hypermarkets can even offer the possibility for the customers not only to do (Novak, et al, 2022) the shopping in Metaverse, but to place an order in real life and deliver to the customer his or her groceries. As in Metaverse there are no boundaries, these kinds of features will be at a Global reach, being at the same time cost effective.

Also the improvements made (Weking, et al, 2023) by the developers of Metaverses, are going from avatars and worlds, made from brut blocks as seen figure no 1, to very attractive real life avatars looking in Mirror Worlds, as it is shown in figure no 2. Even more customers will be able either to scan their bodies or insert the measures of the parts of their body in order to visualize virtually closer to the reality how a dress or a piece of clothing fits. Not only the customer behavior will change (Goldberg & Schar, 2023.) dramatically, but at the same time, the way companies will fulfil the needs of their potential customers resulting in economy of scales as the era of mass production will cease to exist.



Figure no. 1 Early stages of avatars shopping in a virtual Mall, Source: Lawrence L., 2021, *Here's what your mall will look like in the metaverse*, <https://www.protocol.com/mall-in-metaverse>



Figure no. 2 Advanced and more realistic way of shopping virtual, Source: Murad A. & Smale W., 2022, *The retailers setting up shop in the Metaverse*, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-61979150>

Companies will better understand their World Wide Market, or just Produce on demand! No stocks! They will make marketing reach its outmost levels, the Right Product, with the Right Price, Right Promotion, Right Place and introducing the fifth “P”, with the Right Particularity, as every user may create his or her unique product, giving a sense of power and also satisfaction, figure no 3. The new design product can be displayed and even commercialized, while the creator can receive money for creativity if it is successful.



Figure no. 3 The 5 P's of Metaverse

### 3. Research methodology

We have deployed qualitative research among users and non-users of different Metaverses, no matter if they are steady or occasional users. The instrument used to collect data was the semi-structured interviews. We analyzed the answers given by the respondents, putting emphasis on major subjects like marketing, advertising, experience, promotion, AI and ethical issues that might arise when using Metaverse platforms. The questions were addressed in one-on-one conversations interviews, personally asking people about their experience, joy or fears of using Metaverses platforms. Instead of employing focus groups, which are more difficult to manage, we advocate for in-depth interviews. One of the biggest problems with focus group research is that the subjects might be swayed by the responses provided by the other study participants and sometimes being reluctant to state their aspires and fears.

### 4. Results and discussion

We asked our respondents what kind of Metaverse platforms they know, either as users, or just heard about them. Among the Metaverse platforms they mentioned: Roblox, Sandbox, Metahero, RobotEra, Star Atlas, Room, Second Life, Axie Infinity and Epic Games. The respondents were receptive to new Metaverse platforms, no matter if they are Virtual or Mirror Worlds. All of them described them like a very profound and experiential experience especially if VR glasses are used while being logged in.

They expect marketing strategies used by organizations, NGO's and even politicians to be even more aggressive and persistent through their experience. Being something new, will gain more and more visibility and notoriety. One of the respondents mentioned the AI chatGPT that succeeded in just a few weeks to gain lots of popularity and is expecting that

not only one AI engine will be used in Metaverse platforms, but a couple or even dozens that will enrich their experience, no matter if it is about language barriers, cultural and behavioral, and it will be diminishing these barriers.

A very important issue was raised by some of the respondents towards ethics and morality of the Metaverse platforms, as on one hand it will ease the way we are going to live, interact, work, study, shop and socialize; but there is on the other hand the danger of offering a tremendous amount of information to the users regarding their likes, pleasures, sympathies, hobbies and interest that will not be in their own benefit. One of the respondents mentioned that when he is doing online shopping on a platform, although it is about the same product, firstly he is shown the more expensive products and then the cheaper ones although they are from the same brand manufactures but sold by different suppliers. From an ethical point of view, we also discussed about which laws should be respected and what is not allowed in Metaverse platforms. Some users even felt threatened as they stated that behind a keyboard, you can find mostly “Kings” and “Queens”. In the case of Mirror Worlds that try to replicate reality, it can be considered that the laws, regulations, social norms from each country should be uploaded and respected as in each virtual country. The problem arises in Virtual Worlds where the laws and regulations are established by the creators. What are going to be the punishments, who will enforce them in reality, like in the case of theft of identity, funds, money, passwords that will conduct to losses in the case of the victims.

## 5. Conclusions

Metaverses is here to last, and what is most important to fulfil the mankind needs of work, spending (Buhalis, et al., 2023) leisure time, socializing, shopping and even travelling virtual, having virtually holidays. Nowadays, travelling on long distances have become more and more expensive, bearing in mind this point of view, it is much cheaper to reduce the “carbon footprint” as people will not need to have a ride with a taxi, but to appeal to different platforms of ride sharing, or drive even their own car to the airport, flying with the airplane, renting a car to the hotel or other tourist attractions. Furthermore, the visitors do not have to wait in too long queues, and therefore, they may organize efficient their own time. Regarding limitations of our research and future studies, we can mention that quantitative studies should also be conducted to discover the degree of the adoption of these ideas and on what should be put the emphasis. Even governments invest in digitalization and AI, a good example is an European country that hired an AI consultant for their Prime Minister. Although Metaverse platforms, are at their early stages, with their complexity and limits, we can go on until the limitations of imagination of the users and creators of the platform impose.

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