

# Augmented Reality: The Next Big Leap in Learning & Development

**Caspar Thykier**

CEO and Co-Founder of Zappar

April 2, 2019

Augmented Reality (AR) has been a popular buzzword for several years now. While the technology rose to popular fame through the likes of Pokemon Go and Snapchat Lenses, those who have been paying close attention will also have realized it is increasingly being utilized in more practical, business-driven ways. One of the most interesting areas of growth and potential for AR is in the application of learning and development (L&D). Each year, companies are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars training employees, seeking new ways to save/make money, and looking for ways to get better and go further.

Here's why increasingly more companies are turning to AR to keep their workforce ahead of the curve.

**Applying AR to employee onboarding**

A lot of the conversations around the potential of AR largely focus on obscure future-speak that often fails to outline real-world use cases. The truth is that there are dozens of industries that provide specialized training for their employees, with equally specialized AR programs.

Perhaps the most practical application for AR is in employee onboarding. Imagine your employee having the most incredible and engaging onboarding process possible. Not only can AR bolster a new employee's learning experience, but it can also create an incredible first impression for a new team member that leaves them feeling ready and excited to join your company.

A great example of applying AR for onboarding is the take-and-bake pizza company, Papa Murphy's Pizza. Papa Murphy's Pizza recently rolled out an AR training campaign where codes were added to posters in various locations at 15 stores. New employees are able to scan these codes (placed in various training stations) and watch an engaging video. An additional benefit is that these can be updated easily over time. This AR system offers a way for Papa Murphy's Pizza to engage and educate an otherwise disconnected and mobile workforce.

### **AR enables employees to build confidence with minimal risk**

For more specialized positions, such as factory workers and production line employees, AR allows for a new level of process visualization that

builds confidence with minimal risk to the employee and the business. For customer-facing roles, AR can place employees in a highly immersive situation, so they are better prepared for what may happen out “on the floor” in real life with little risk.

## **Using AR to turn mundane information into memorable experiences**

AR can also refresh face-to-face training through the addition of a new interactive dimension, transforming mandatory sessions into a more enjoyable and memorable experience. This can enhance the relationship between employees and their organization and we’ve had great success with this approach in a wide variety of onboarding applications across different industries:

- Training facilities managers to encourage cleanliness in the workplace
- Staff handbooks as a new way to introduce fire safety
- IT overhauls to inform the workforce of important changes to organizational systems.

## **The power of doing**

These applications are all well and good, but you might be wondering exactly what makes AR such a powerful learning tool? Why does it leave us walking away with such an impactful experience? The answer

is rooted in the science of how we learn and interact with our environment. [Data has shown that learning is fundamentally enhanced through engagement and immersion](#), two factors that are at the core of augmented reality. Our own research created in conjunction with Mindshare and Neuro-Insight and encapsulated in the [“Layered”](#) report empirically proved that AR drives nearly double the levels of visual attention in the brain compared to traditional learning experiences. Moreover, it elicits a “surprise” response in the brain that is highly effective in knowledge retention. Most importantly of all, the research showed that our brains retain about a 70% higher rate of encoding in long-term memory from an AR experience versus a non-AR experience.

The science certainly makes sense when one thinks about it. Which experience is going to excite you and leave you more inspired? Sitting at a desk, scrolling through an employee handbook on a computer screen, or an interactive and immersive experience that has you up and moving and is accessed conveniently through your phone or tablet?

On top of a more engaging training experience, these factors open the door for significant potential cost savings by increasing speed to competency, increasing knowledge retention, reducing required training hours, and improving employee satisfaction. Not to mention the plethora of rich, measurable data.

BLOG

Augmented Reality (AR) drives nearly double the levels of visual attention in the brain compared to traditional learning experiences.



## How to get started with AR

What causes many companies to abandon investing in AR for their L&D programs is not actually cost or complexity, but a misunderstanding of how easy it can be to get an AR program up and running within their organizations. When it comes down to it, there are really only four main factors that need to be kept in mind:

1. Thinking deeply about the context of the use case, your target audience, and the display devices.
2. Investing the right time in the User Experience (UX) flow and content you're delivering.
3. Building the right framework for the future to make it truly scalable, robust, effective, and efficient from day one.

#### 4. Having a dedicated project lead with C-suite support.

In order for anything to get off the ground, there has to be a solid understanding of exactly where and how AR would benefit your L&D program. You need to put yourself in the user's shoes and think deeply about the moment of assistance in minute detail. No two are built the same, and the team needs to think critically about the value it could provide. It is also entirely possible that a non-AR solution is still the most viable, depending on business needs.

Upfront investment in time shouldn't be confused with monetary investment. AR does not have to be expensive—the simpler, the better is often the case. However, the more time that is dedicated to thinking deeply about the UX and the right content made for the AR training, the more effective the end result will be. With the growing number of customizable toolkits available to businesses today, it is easy to start very small to get a hint of how things could work before scaling up and that's exactly what our ZapWorks service is created to do. Again, Papa Murphy's started its program in just 15 store locations before expanding.

If you build it well from the start, you'll ensure that you're building training content and collateral that is built to last. You want employees to be able to use this over and over again down the road. Finally, it's imperative that someone is tasked with delivering the program and

driving this through the organization. In order to do that they need the full weight of senior management behind them.

The potential for augmented reality goes far beyond marketing. Where its real value exists is as a facilitating technology for spatial computing and a reimagining of how to display and convey information. AR has real staying power when it comes to process-focused applications like those required for learning and development. Companies of all sizes that are looking to inspire and engage their workforce while reducing costs and gaining better metrics are already reaping the benefits. That opportunity is now available to every business.

### **About the author:**

*Caspar Thykier is CEO and co-founder of [Zappar](#), the market leader in AR-enabled product and infotainment experiences on mobile.*

[https://business.udemy.com/blog/augmented-reality-the-next-big-leap-in-learning-development/?utm\\_source=pdf&utm\\_medium=pdf&utm\\_campaign=blended-learning-ebook](https://business.udemy.com/blog/augmented-reality-the-next-big-leap-in-learning-development/?utm_source=pdf&utm_medium=pdf&utm_campaign=blended-learning-ebook)