

Apple's iPhone 8, iPhone X, Apple Watch, augmented reality: What it all means for business

Sure, Apple's iPhone trio will dominate the headlines, but there were a bevy of other developments worth noting from the company's big launch. Here's the crib sheet.



By [Larry Dignan](#) for [Between the Lines](#) | September 13, 2017 -- 10:00 GMT (03:00 PDT) | Topic: [Hardware](#)

Dissecting Apple's September 2017 product launch for business pros

Apple's launch of the iPhone 8, iPhone 8 Plus, and iPhone X will grab headlines, spur debates over specs, features and pricing, and probably extend the use of the Apple Watch, but there's a lot more to digest.

Here's a look at everything business pros need to know about Apple's iPhone event and what it all means.

DON'T BE DISTRACTED BY THE HARDWARE

This iPhone event was all about the roadmap, catching up on AI, developing another line, and augmented reality. Sure, we'll all ponder whether the iPhone X at 256GB is worth the \$1,149, but what this Apple powwow was about was setting the stage for the future.

The subtext of everything CEO Tim Cook outlined was about direction of Apple's future state. The iPhone improvements and upgrades were about creating a hardware platform that could support Apple's moves in artificial intelligence and augmented reality.

What's it mean? In the months to come, I'm willing to bet that more folks will come around to seeing Apple as a platform company as it transitions to services even if the iPhone pays the bills.

Read more:

- [Apple says new iPhones are 'custom tuned for AR'](#)
- [Apple AirPower charging accessory for iPhone, Watch to launch in 2018](#)
- [Beyond the iPhone: How Apple is positioning itself for the next big thing](#)
- [AR, IoT, Siri and machine learning: Will iPhone X showcase changes to the user experience?](#)

The \$1,000 smartphone line

Apple noted that the iPhone X starts at \$999 to hold the \$1,000 mark, but many will pay up for the 256GB version. What's unclear is whether FaceID and animated emojis are worth the upgrade. Beyond those two features the iPhone X has basically the same innards as the iPhone 8 Plus, which run you \$949 for the 256GB version.

What's it mean? The real competition for the iPhone X is the iPhone 8 Plus.

Read more:

- [Video: What you need to know about the iPhone X](#)
- [Apple's \\$1000 iPhone X embraces the bleeding edge: The top 3 features](#)
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IPHONE 8 AND IPHONE 8 PLUS: INCREMENTAL?

Apple's iPhone 8 and iPhone 8 Plus are good enough to upgrade, but they're somewhat incremental. Given the iPhone X hubbub the obvious focus revolved around Apple's superphone. Yet, for most people, the iPhone 8 and iPhone 8 Plus will be a good reason to upgrade.

Keep in mind that Apple's base is mostly on the iPhone 6S or below. As a result, they were holding out for the 10th anniversary slate of iPhones.

What's it mean? The iPhone upgrade super cycle is intact.
Read more:

- [Apple upgrade program: How it works](#)
- [Phone X brings much needed makeover](#)



AR IS THE GAME CHANGER FOR APPLE

Throughout Apple's iPhone event, executives repeatedly noted that the devices were tuned for augmented reality. This move will obviously help gaming and consumer apps, but also open a bevy of business applications.

As we've noted before, Apple's ARKit and iPhone upgrade cycle will create a big audience for AR across consumers and business. Apple is likely to be a leader in the space largely due to the fragmentation across other platforms.

What's it mean? Apple's iPhone event will ultimately be remembered for its augmented reality pivot.

Read more:

- [Apple previews ARKit apps, Google debuts ARCore: It's all about business, developers](#)
- [Apple's iPhone 8, iPhone 8 Plus, iPhone X to kick off mainstreaming of augmented reality](#)

APPLE TURNED A WEAKNESS INTO A STRENGTH

For FaceID, marketing chief Phil Schiller noted that the biometric data was on a secure area of the A11 Bionic chip and never goes on a server. That Apple line used to illustrate how it wasn't cloud savvy enough to use the cloud for its processing. However, with every Equifax-like data breach, Apple's move to secure data on the hardware makes more sense.

What's it mean? Now that hackers have your credit history, social security number and driver's license information Apple's former weakness is a strength.

Read more:

- [Inside Apple's new A11 Bionic processor](#)

APPLE WATCH SERIES 3: FOCUSED ON HEALTH

Apple Watch Series 3 clearly focuses on health care, fitness, data. Apple Watch is now the No. 1 watch in the world, according to Cook, who boasted of a 97-percent customer satisfaction rating. Cook clearly pegged the Apple Watch to health outcomes and fitness. That move makes sense given that Apple needed a purpose for Apple Watch. Fitness is the most obvious use case. The next update of Apple Watch will include better connectivity with cellular service and the bet is that the third series of that device will garner more mainstream adoption. For the enterprise, Apple Watch integration with medical devices such as glucose monitors adds new use cases and integrates the company more with the health care system. Fitbit has a similar approach. Apple outlined Gymkit and a bevy of other features.

The company updated its heart rate app with new measurements such as resting heart rate and recovery heart rate. Apple Watch will now notify you when your heart rate spikes and you're not active as well as track heart rhythm. Apple said it will launch a heart study with Stanford Medicine.

Prices will start at \$249 for Series 1, \$329 for Series 3, and \$399 for Series 3 with cellular. Available Sept. 22.

What's it mean? Apple Watch now has history, updates, connectivity and software to become more dominant. The device isn't likely to become as successful as the iPhone, but Apple Watch sets the stage for life beyond the smartphone. What remains to be seen is whether the Apple Watch becomes a viable substitute for the iPhone. Apple Watch is becoming more of a medical device and that creates a business that's much more defensible. Cellular service is likely to translate into an Apple Watch upgrade cycle at the very least. Perhaps it even cannibalizes iPhone usage a bit.

Read more:

- [Here's what you need to know about the new Apple Watch Series 3](#)

APPLE WATCH: FINALLY, IT'S UNTETHERED

Apple Watch business use cases will come with connectivity. Now that the Apple Watch will be untethered from the smart phone, it'll make more sense for developers to ponder business uses beyond notifications. This app area is largely undeveloped, but given iOS dominates in the enterprise, it won't be much of a stretch to extend into watchOS. In fact, SAP, Oracle and Salesforce could step up their efforts to target connected Apple Watch devices.

What's it mean? Apple Watch can be an enterprise play.

APPLE'S PLACE IN THE SMART HOME

Apple made a bigger play for the smart home. It talked up Apple TV and the subtext here is that Siri can become your living room companion and bump out Amazon's Alexa. The AI personalities in the living room are crowding the couch.

Apple TV 4K is designed to give better picture quality and provide more detail. Apple TV also has a A10X processor, latest tvOS, and more content options as well as free upgrades to 4K versions of HD content purchased.

What's it mean? Apple should make a big play for the living room because it's the key area in the smart home. No Apple TV presence may mean little HomeKit traction. Apple can't afford to have its device stack ending at the smartphone and watch. The landscape has changed, and Apple can't merely position Apple TV as a hobby anymore.

Read more:

- [Apple announces Apple TV 4K, available September 22 for \\$179](#)

REVAMPED RETAIL STORES

Retail stores are a product marketing vehicle. Apple outlined plans to revamp its stores and create areas where kids can learn to code and aspiring photographers can hone their craft. Apple becomes a town square in some locations.

The company has been an innovator in retail and the redesigned stores will advance the ball as other stores close. Keep in mind that Apple is a lifestyle brand as much as a tech company.

What's it mean? The capital expense spent on Apple stores will be well spent if keeps the customer base in the fold and provide more touch points. Apple stores have also become a key venue for services revenue attached to Apple Care and device sales.

Read more:

- [Apple touts new 'Town Square' retail store concept](#)

STEVE JOBS REMEMBERED

Apple also opened its Steve Jobs Theater at its new headquarters with a voice over from its former CEO. "I love hearing his voice," said CEO Tim Cook. "Steve meant so much to me and all of us. There is not a day that goes by that I don't think of him."

"It has taken some time, that we can reflect on him with joy," said Cook, who referred to Jobs as the DNA of the company. Cook also noted that Apple dedicated the theater to Jobs because he loved product announcements and days like the iPhone launch.

What's it mean? The 10th anniversary launch and opening of Apple's new headquarters are lasting memorials to Jobs.

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