The Era of Scannable Images Has Arrived

This post was created in partnership with IRCODE

QR codes are so yesterday — enter the era of scannable images. During a Brandweek 2025 session co-hosted with IRCODE, ADWEEK editor-in-chief Ryan Joe sat down in conversation with Matty Beckerman, IRCODE's founder and CEO. Together, they explored how the company's technology lets consumers scan any image to engage directly with branded content.

Shazam for images

Beckerman began by explaining how the IR Lens White Label System—an image recognition code—works for brand marketing. "You can literally point your camera at a piece of content that you have and scan it and engage with it, whether it's video out of home, TV, CTV," he said. No QR code required.

The technology fingerprints each image and stores its metadata, building on drone image-recognition research from a decade ago. "Think of us like Shazam for image recognition," Beckerman said.

He explained that IRCODE builds and integrates an image-scanning lens directly into a client's app at a cost that makes sense for most brands. And it happens fast: "We built a whole system that's almost turnkey for a company to create a lens in less than 48 hours."

A full funnel view of visual engagement

Beckerman shared that the more exciting feature for brands

might be the back-end measurement tools that reveal organic user intent in the real world… “We have a measurement tool that gives you a heat map of the world. If you’ve got a big campaign out there, you can now tell who’s engaging, where they’re engaging, how they’re engaging, what they’re scanning and what they’re interested in,” he says.

So while Nielsen can tell you if a television is on in someone’s home, IRCODE can tell brands *who’s* watching that television. “It’s a big deal. You finally have a full funnel view of the engagement you’re getting organically,” says Beckerman.

IRCODE in action

Beckerman then shared some examples of how brands are using IRCODE, including to promote the documentary film “Satisfied.” To promote the film about the Broadway phenomenon *Hamilton*, IRCODE deployed scannable billboards across Times Square. “We enabled it so you could just scan it and win tickets.” Actress Renee Goldsberry was part of the live event, but the in-home version of the film will also be scannable.

The other example he shared was of a scavenger hunt contest for Disney fans. The host of a travel show created a scavenger hunt where people could win a Disney vacation. “We had tens of thousands of people doing this and engaging with it. It was really cool as a test case for a television network to be able to use our technology built into their app, and a real world, practical application at a place like Disney,” said Beckerman.

Performance marketing potential

For now, IRCODE is focusing on bringing its technology to TV advertising. “We’re going to make every ad on television scannable, and then allow the brands to log in, create where those landing pages go, what experience somebody gets when they’re scanning, and then give the brands the measurement

data behind it," says Beckerman.

But he also envisions a multitude of use cases, such as gamification. "You could scan a TV show that has a contest in it, and suddenly you're playing on your phone alongside what's happening on the TV," said Beckerman.

Another obvious opportunity is what Beckerman calls "product placement on steroids." "You're watching the latest reality show, and then able to purchase all the products right on the screen," he said. It can work in the film world as well. "It becomes a huge tool for an independent creator to be able to monetize their content," said Beckerman.

IRCODE is also speaking with big retail brands about enabling its customers to scan every item on the shelves to access product information. This can include everything from coupons to product details and even instruction manuals.

Beckerman also sees big opportunities in live sports, such as scanning for fantasy stats, seeing replays, or going straight to purchase a player's jersey. "We actually made the Super Bowl scannable from start to finish last year as a demonstration," said Beckerman. And it garnered significant interest from leagues and teams.

Beckerman said the ultimate goal is for the technology to scale to the point that it becomes native in-camera rather than just app-based. "That's the future of where we go with this."

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