

Google Glass Finds a Home on the Factory Floor

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Companies from Samsung to Dignity Health to GE are fitting their employees with smart glasses, including the product that once was known as Google Glass.

Google Glass as a product is long gone—its parent company sunset it in 2015. But since then, the technology has found a place on factory floors and industrial settings.

Its appeal is in its hands-free nature. Factory workers need to carry rugged laptops or tablets with them throughout the day to log tasks, reference work orders or read equipment manuals. With Google Glass or other wearable devices, such as [Epson's Moverio](#), workers can call up the content they need or log tasks easily.

These devices are also customizable, so companies can create software solutions specifically for their workplaces. Google works with more than a dozen software solutions partners who create workplace solutions for different business cases, and manage the Glass infrastructure integration.

Israel-based Plataine is one of those partners, and CMO Amir Ben Assa's thinks smart glasses represent a "fourth industrial revolution" that revolves around a necessity to get things done in real-time.

He credits the shift to two main factors: Manufacturers have invested in Wi-Fi networks for their factory floors in a way they didn't 20 years ago and are collecting massive amounts of process and machine data. Factory floor workers are in turn tasked with making increasingly complicated products on the same lines.

"Because manufacturing facilities today are more complex, we need to equip managers, operators and staff with a digital assistant. This is how they're going to do their job more efficiently, and this is how the end result will be higher quality products," Ben Assa said. "It's market demand."

Smart Glasses in Action

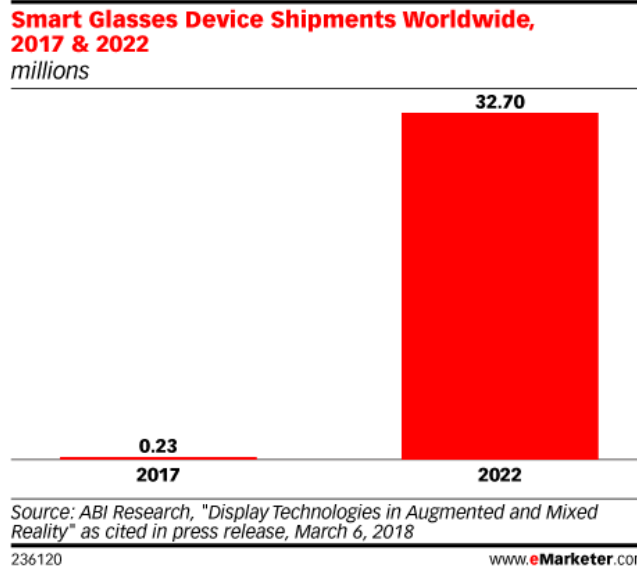
DHL began testing smart glasses in 2015, and [expanded the program last April](#) after the devices reduced the time needed for a worker to pick out and pack a shipment by 25%, according to the [Wall Street Journal](#). Markus Voss, global CIO of supply chain at DHL, [called the program](#) a "game changer" for the company's operation, and heralded the tech as taking the company one step closer to "Industry 4.0." In DHL's case, warehouse pickers wear the glasses to load orders onto trolleys by visually displaying where each item needs to be placed.

Meanwhile, Sutter Health outfitted 100 doctors across its network with Glass and a pre-loaded software system from [Augmedix](#). Doctors wear Glass during visits with patients to augment administrative charting and note taking tasks. In the future, Sutter Health plans to add in a machine learning tool to organize messages from patients and "supercharge scribing" according to a [press release](#).

What's Next?

The initial success of industrial smart glasses is encouraging, but Ben Assa acknowledged that not every factory floor will adopt them overnight. Cost is certainly a pain point—aside from Glass, other smart glasses like those manufactured by Epson can set a company back anywhere from \$700 to \$2,000. Still, he has high hopes for wider adoption as more lower-priced devices enter the market.

Data from ABI Research shows that by 2022, there will be 32.7 million total smart glasses shipments, a significant increase from the 223,000 in 2017.



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