

Reality Check: Virtual Reality

Pics of state-of-the-art VR experiences courtesy of the 2018 Future Tech and Virtual Reality Show.

Virtual Reality (VR) is changing what's possible for live engagements at corporate events.

VR is an entirely simulated environment that can:

- **Transport prospects to any time or place**
- **Demonstrate something that you can't bring to the show floor**
- **Create an experience around something that's intangible**

VR is evolving rapidly. Costs are going down and there are now many ways to deliver VR experiences including:

- **Phone-based viewers** like Google Cardboard, which turns smartphones into headsets, are inexpensive and thus massively scalable.
- **Head-mounted displays (HMDs)** like Oculus Rift and HTC Vive, which must be paired with a high-performance PC.
- **Standalone VR systems** like the new Oculus Santa Cruz and Google Daydream, which require no PC, phone or tablet, are less expensive and offer positional tracking.

One travel agency saw sales of a helicopter tour jump

190%

after customers got to experience the tour virtually.



If you're thinking about using VR at your next event, here are a few things you should know.

Industry Interest: On the VRge of Growth

According to industry analysts like IDC, VR is poised for growth—not just in the consumer space, but also in commercial applications such as training simulations.

Tech Readiness: VR 2.0

The VR ecosystem has matured. The first standalone systems are here. There are now headset options for virtually every space, marketing need and budget.



Tom's Guide and PCmag.com just rated Oculus Rift the best overall VR headset of 2018

thanks to a lower price and the inclusion of Oculus Touch motion controllers, which use 360-degree positional tracking for seamless interaction with the virtual world.

The commercial market of VR headset shipments will grow from 24% during their events. There is an **80-90% increase in attendance** when using live response tools.

BEST PRACTICES: EXPAND YOUR STORYTELLING HORIZONS

Immersive games, experiential marketing and product demonstrations are some of the most common uses of VR at trade shows. VR experience experts recommend:

- **Slaving individual VR experiences to an external monitor so others can participate**
- **Providing seats if space permits**
- **Adding a guardrail people can hang on to for standing experiences**

Of course, as the industry evolves, VR experiences are evolving too. *The 2018 Future Tech and Virtual Reality Show* included things like a VR Rave where guests partied in virtual reality, a Vocktail Bar that hijacked the senses of taste and smell and a Digital Gym that brought physical activity to a virtual experience. ■

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