

How you can use XR tech to achieve your business goals

With 2021 now well underway, now is a moment to pause and consider exactly how you are going to achieve those ambitious goals you set out in January.

As every successful entrepreneur knows, if you really want to progress those crucial inches ahead of your competition, you must approach goal achievement with the same focus and strategic mindset that you use in the everyday operation of your business.

I believe that, although 2021 is already proving itself to be another challenging year, it will also be a year of opportunity for those with ambition. As a CEO and entrepreneur in the Extended and Virtual Reality (XR/VR) sector, I'm excited to watch as my fellow business leaders begin to explore the implementation of innovative new technologies in my field. If you are interested in harnessing the largely untapped power of immersive tech to make your business goals a reality, read on for my advice.

Goal mapping

Today's unique and unpredictable business landscape makes it all the more important that you drill down and select a small number of goals to focus on.

Look back at the goals you made at the end of 2020 and the start of this year. Ask yourself if they are both specific and measurable. This means that, for

example, rather than making a vague goal of ‘winning more new customers’, you should list exactly which clients you want to onboard, when you want to onboard them (setting monthly milestones helps to keep your goals time-bound), and outline the steps you’ll take to approach them.

Your goals should also be realistic, acknowledging the practical restrictions that the pandemic and its legacy will have on your operations, customers, clients and suppliers. However, rather than becoming despondent about perceived insurmountable barriers to your progress, decide to seek out new paths around the obstacles instead.

Exploring new paths to achievement

Choosing to engage with the rapidly-growing world of Extended Reality technology is a fantastic example of how forward-thinking businesses can overcome existing hurdles and secure an edge on their competitors in 2021.

XR is an umbrella term referring to technologies with the capacity to integrate the real and virtual world. The content can be accessed using a 360-degree VR headset, a laptop, desktop or even a mobile phone, and includes:

Virtual reality (VR), which immerses users in a fully artificial digital environment or 360-degree video

Augmented reality (AR), which overlays virtual objects on the real-world environment

Mixed reality (MR), which not only overlays, but anchors virtual objects to the real world

For business leaders considering the best way to begin their journey into XR, these are my suggestions for how you can leverage the strengths of the technology:

XR for networking

Without a doubt, 2020 was a tough year for businesses who rely on in-person networking to achieve their growth goals. If interpersonal connection is

essential to your business success, 2021 looks set to offer little relief. However, we've had a year to adapt and overcome the problems of social distancing, and now it's time to start seeking out and adopting solutions.

The XR sector is currently seeing exponential growth in the uptake of XR networking and conferencing technologies – from multinational medical device manufacturers to university academics. If one of your 2021 goals demands the expansion of your contact database, prepare to enter the world of immersive online events.

The benefits of XR-driven networking events include:

- Barriers of distance and cost can be eliminated

- Entirely COVID-secure

- Inbuilt data collection tools allow tracking of participant engagement and participation

- Instant, real-time feedback can be collected from attendees

- Multimedia resources can be instantly shared.

As a low-cost, high-return venture, hosting an event in XR makes perfect sense for businesses in 2021.

XR for training

Whether your training goals involve personal upskilling or are oriented towards the upskilling of your workforce, the scalable and remote opportunities offered by XR tech are an obvious solution.

The fully immersive, interactive experience of training in a virtual environment, where the boundaries between reality and computer-generated content are blurred, is fast becoming the new gold-standard at the cutting edge of 'ed-tech'.

Research has demonstrated that learners do not only acquire new skills more rapidly when using an XR platform, but they also retain that knowledge for longer, experience lower levels of stress and report higher levels of confidence when using their new skills in a real-world environment.

Businesses should look to choose an XR platform that facilitates independent creation and uploading of bespoke training content. This is not only very cost effective when it comes to delivering mass training, but it seamlessly overcomes the challenges of social distancing. The best platforms also enable

video training material to be overlaid with interactive elements such as quizzes and assessments, meaning that learner progress and skill acquisition can be quantitatively tracked.

XR for sales

Chasing ambitious sales targets this quarter? If you want to see them realised, you'll also need to plan how you're going to train your sales reps to achieve these targets.

For example, to make sure that your sales team members are fully up to date with the operation of your new products, use XR to allow them to engage with a 'virtual' version of the product.

If you want to deliver a training session to promote soft-skill development, you'll need to adopt a XR soft skills training technology that removes the subjectivity from the exercise, deploying sophisticated algorithms and AI tools to drive skill acquisition. Objective measurements – including voice pitch and facial expression – should be gathered and scored quantitatively. This data can then be used to provide detailed, bespoke feedback to trainees, so they can become more effective communicators.

XR for recruitment

If you're serious about growing your business, you'll need to surround yourself with the strongest, most highly-skilled and company-compatible colleagues out there. If you are going to identify and attract these people, traditional interviews and assessment methods are not going to cut it.

Employers looking to implement a data-backed, highly effective hiring process can create and upload their recruitment tasks and scenario-based assessments onto a suitable XR platform, which prospective candidates can then access via any smart device or VR headset. Depending on the sophistication of the platform you choose, detailed feedback on candidate performance collected via inbuilt AI technology can be collected and used to inform smarter, bias-free hiring decisions.

There has never been a better moment to move forward from the tired, anachronistic business growth strategies of the last decade and to seek tools built to drive success in the modern world.

By taking action now, you can seize the opportunity and rewards of being an early XR adopter whilst your competitors struggle with the barriers presented by traditional sales, networking, training and recruitment methods.

Are you ready to adopt XR tech to smash your business goals? Now is the moment to get started.

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