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Setting up a virtual office in the metaverse in three different ways: A step-by-step guide

Virtual offices have been around for a while. They're a type of service provided to companies and individuals that gives them a real physical address they can use as a mailing address and to receive faxes and other business-related communications, including postal mail. They even go as far as offering customer support services, personal assistants, and even offices and meeting rooms companies can rent to celebrate an in-person meeting with a prospective client.

However, *the metaverse* is reshaping what we understand as a virtual office. This virtual reality space allows us to create “real” virtual offices, i.e., office spaces that only exist in the metaverse and that we can access through a VR headset or similar device.

If you’re curious about how this really works and how you, too, can create your

own virtual office in the metaverse, you'll find three different ways to pull it off in the paragraphs below.

Building your own metaverse

When you want to set up a virtual office on the metaverse, the first option is to build your own metaverse and the office within it or have someone else make it for you. Of all the methods available, this is the most expensive but also the most customisable. You can think of it as a tailored suit, a metaverse explicitly made for you and your company.

Pros

It is highly customisable and can be tailored to fit your needs.

Since you're deciding what capabilities you want to implement in your metaverse, you can be sure that it will have everything you need.

For example, you may want to create and use a company token for every transaction in your metaverse. That's not an option if you're not in charge.

The only limit to what you can do is your imagination.

Unlike some metaverse platforms, you will have unlimited space if you build your own metaverse. This means you won't need to buy land, and you can make your virtual office exactly how you want, following the laws of physics or doing without them.

You can set up personalised payment channels.

By building your own metaverse, you can create a native cryptocurrency or token to handle things like payments in the metaverse and even loyalty rewards with new customers you engage in your virtual office. These tokens can then add value to your brand.

Cons

Expensive and time-consuming to produce.

Since you will be building your metaverse from scratch, developing it will take plenty of time and money. For instance, Decentraland was founded in 2015 and is still in development!

Though your metaverse will likely be significantly smaller than Decentraland, you can expect to spend a lot of time and money just hiring the right people for the job.

You need an experienced team to produce it.

The metaverse is a relatively new field, which means that people experienced in building it are few and hard to find. So, if you wanted to build one from scratch, you'll have a pretty hard time finding an experienced metaverse developer (though it is possible).

Three Basic Steps to Get Started.

If you decide to make your own metaverse, there are a couple of basic steps you need to take.

Step 1: Choose which blockchain you'd like to build your metaverse on.

An essential requirement for any metaverse platform is to use smart contracts. This restricts your choices when choosing a blockchain to build your metaverse on. You can either choose Ethereum and build a Layer 2 blockchain to help it scale, or you can choose another newer blockchain that also supports smart contracts like Polygon.

You need to build a layer 2 blockchain (a blockchain on top of a blockchain) when you use Ethereum because it can only process a limited amount of transactions and thus cannot scale. It's also necessary if you want to run on the Ethereum network but don't want to use Ether as your currency. You may be interested in setting up a native token for your metaverse and offering crypto signup bonuses or retirement plans to your employees.

All this becomes possible by building a layer 2 blockchain. Plus, you'll have a lot of other metaverses that your users can interact with.

Step 2: Integrate core metaverse and Web 3.0 functionalities into your metaverse.

Before building your metaverse, you must first plan what functions you want to incorporate. These functions may vary from organisation to organisation, but here are some core functionalities that your metaverse must have:

> Asset Creation Tools: You need to give your employees tools to create outfits for their online avatars or create custom office furniture for their private offices. This ability to freely create digital assets will help them express themselves more and thus be more productive in their work.

> Ability to Mint Digital Assets: If your employee created a digital asset for themselves, you also need to give them the ability to mint the assets they made. It would allow them to truly own those assets and provide them with a sense of ownership that will become valuable in the long run.

Digital Assets Marketplace: Lastly, give your employees the ability to trade digital assets with each other by integrating a digital assets marketplace into your metaverse. The ability to exchange digital assets will allow your employees to build a sense of companionship with their coworkers.

Step 3: Build the back and front-end layers of your metaverse.

Once you're done planning your metaverse, it's time to build it.

To build the backend layer, you need to hire blockchain developers (if building a layer 2 blockchain) and smart contract programmers. They will ensure that you can securely mint and trade digital assets.

Lastly, you must build your metaverse's front-end layer, the part your employees will see. For this, you'll need to hire 3D modellers, motion artists, and UI/UX designers to ensure that your virtual office is enjoyable and functional.

Set Up Your Virtual Office On A Centralised Metaverse.

If building a metaverse is not for you, but you still want to set up a virtual office on the metaverse, the next thing you might want to look into is centralised metaverses like Meta.

Pros

Top-notch customer support.

Since giant tech companies back centralised metaverse platforms, you can be sure they will have a dedicated customer support department to help you if you have any problems using their platform. This feature would be beneficial if your employees have no prior experience using the metaverse and VR.

Easy to set up even with no prior blockchain knowledge.

It is in the company's best interest to promote ease of use when developing its metaverse. They will surely allocate many resources for designers and programmers to make their platform more user-friendly.

It has built-in VR support.

Another advantage that a centralised metaverse has over a decentralised one is its built-in VR support. Meta, for example, acquired Oculus, a pioneer company in virtual reality equipment.

Also, since centralised platforms control all aspects of their system, it would be easier for them to develop highly specialised VR solutions for their metaverse.

Cons

You have limited control over the platform's policies.

Unlike building your own metaverse or virtual office on a decentralised metaverse, you have no control over a centralised platform's policies. This lack of control means that if the centralised platform decides to prevent your country from accessing the metaverse, you have no other choice but to work around that policy.

Limited cross-platform interactions or interoperability.

Unless centralised platforms make a partnership with each other, it is not in their best interest to develop a cross-platform relationship with other metaverses. This situation is in direct contrast with other decentralised platforms where any user can develop cross-platform solutions if they want to.

Three Basic Steps to Get Started.

Creating your virtual office in a centralised platform involves different steps to creating your own metaverse. We'll use Meta as an example, but the steps will be similar to other platforms.

Step 1: Create a workplace Facebook profile for your employees.

Though Meta's metaverse is still in its early stages, they have hinted that their metaverse platform designed for working environments would offer support for a separate work account for employees. This will make your employees more comfortable working in the metaverse, especially if they are worried about their privacy.

Step 2: Hire a Meta metaverse designer or consultant.

Since Meta is building their metaverse with propriety tools, you need to hire someone experienced and proficient with these tools to customise your work environment. Some of these tools include:

Horizon Worlds' Build Tool: One tool that your designer should know how to use is the Horizon Worlds' Build Tool. It is the built-in 3D modelling tool in Meta's Metaverse game, Horizon Worlds. If your designer knows how to use this tool, he can also build your virtual office on Meta's upcoming platform since they will most likely use the same tools for asset creation.

Spark AR: Another helpful tool that is beneficial for your designer to know is Spark AR. It is an AR software developed by Meta. It was built to design AR

and VR assets for the metaverse, which will be helpful if you plan to implement special features in your virtual office.

Step 3: Prepare the VR equipment for you and your employees.

Lastly, when you have your employees' accounts set up and your virtual office decorated, all that's left is to use your virtual office. To do that, you need to use VR equipment. Here are some of the most popular options available today:

Meta Quest 2: If you want the best experience in Meta's metaverse, it is advisable to use Meta's proprietary VR equipment, the Meta Quest 2. The package includes the headgear and a pair of touch controllers.

Oculus Gear VR: If you're not a fan of Meta Quest 2, you can go for the Oculus Gear VR. It is a VR gear developed by Samsung in collaboration with Oculus. However, if you're planning to use this gear, you should know that only Oculus still supports it; Samsung stopped supporting it in 2020.

Nazare Glasses: Though not technically VR gear, Nazare glasses are AR glasses that allow users to see real-life projections in the real world. Meta is still developing the glasses, but it will most likely sport metaverse integration capabilities upon its completion.

#3 Using an Existing Decentralized Metaverse

If the first two options don't work for you and your organisation, you can look into building your virtual office on an existing decentralised metaverse like Decentraland.

Pros

A decentralised metaverse has a more active marketplace.

Suppose you want diversity in the digital assets you want to use to develop your virtual office. In that case, you will have a lot more fun in a decentralised metaverse since it has a more active marketplace with more users than a centralised one.

Decentralised metaverses have more potential for future interoperability.

There are a lot of companies developing interoperability solutions for decentralised systems today. It is only a matter of time before different decentralised metaverses will become interoperable with each other, finally

giving rise to the real metaverse.

Cons

No decentralised metaverse still has native VR support.

As of today, there is no decentralised metaverse that has perfected VR implementation within their system. So, if VR is important for your organisation, you'll have to wait a bit longer.

Users need to have at least some background knowledge of crypto.

One criticism experts have against crypto is that it is not beginner friendly. Something as simple as buying crypto in Singapore can be as challenging as doing rocket science for someone that has never dabbled in blockchain technology.

The same will be true for your virtual office if you build on a decentralised metaverse since crypto transactions would be inevitable for your employees.

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When building a virtual office on an existing metaverse, you first need to choose which platform to use. The most popular decentralised metaverse platforms to build a virtual office are:

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The Sandbox: Sandbox is a direct competitor of Decentraland and offers the same services. What makes Sandbox unique is that they have better graphics quality. However, because of this, users need to download a separate program to access the metaverse.

Somnium Space: Somnium Space is a relatively new metaverse platform built on Ethereum and Solana. It is a cross-device platform meaning users can access it either from their PCs, smartphones or VR. Like the other platforms, it has its own asset creation tool and a marketplace to allow users to transact with each other. This platform has a unique feature called

"Live Forever." If the users activate this feature, all their actions will be analysed by AI to revive their avatars in case the platform becomes inaccessible in the future.

Step 2: Buy a plot of land.

You can rent office space in the metaverse, but the best option is to invest in a plot of land to build the office. This will give you more freedom, and you'll effectively have invested an amount you can later get back by selling (for a profit, even).

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Once you have a plot of land, you can use the platform's native 3D modelling tools to build your virtual office. Alternatively, you can also make custom models with third-party 3D modelling software and upload the finished models, but you'll have to be mindful of the resolution or polygon count of your assets. This is because some platforms limit the total number of polygons you can have in your space to ensure the platform runs smoothly.

The Bottom Line

The metaverse is more accessible today than ever before. If you want to build your virtual office on the metaverse, there are many ways to do it. It's not only entirely possible; it can even be easy.

We are currently in the early stages of Web 3.0 and metaverse development. By setting up your office in the metaverse today, you are effectively contributing to the industry's growth and future-proofing your business.

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Article by JORDAN BISHOP