

Breaking With Tradition: How adidas Revolutionized Their Workflow With Collaborative VR

Take a look at how HTC VIVE and The Wild helped this iconic sports brand revamp its design and storytelling process with collaborative VR technology.

Background: The Selling Season Kick-Off

Each year, adidas gathers its global team for a time-honored tradition: the selling season kick-off. Product merchandisers, trade marketers, and salespeople file into a huge auditorium and take their seats in front of an imposing stage. An empty projection screen looms overhead, and a barrage of posters occupy the periphery. Then, the kick-off begins in earnest. The staffers in attendance are subjected to a deluge of information. Over the course of this short presentation, they must digest all the big ideas for that season, including crucial information about new products, campaigns, and brand initiatives.

The kick-off functions as a rapid-fire lecture, rather than an educational workshop. The attendees are left

with a lot of questions, such as, “what new products are we trying to sell?” and, “what is the overarching story behind that product?” Unfortunately, the challenge of disseminating information to a large group places a time constraint on the whole affair. The adidas staff must now return to their own teams to relay the information and coordinate a series of complex handoffs.

The Problem: Crucial Information Missing its Mark

The selling season kick-off is a common and traditional practice in many organizations. However, despite its long history, the format has proven to be inefficient. In theory, it's ideal to gather key stakeholders in a single room for a group discussion. In adidas's case, the reality couldn't have been more different: There was too much information, too many voices, and too little time.

Adidas's advanced analytics team found that their current method of collaboration was not serving them, despite a concerted effort to improve it. It led to siloed decisions which resulted in complications, including cost overrun, inefficient workflows, and bottlenecked processes. Key stakeholders often missed out on crucial information. This resulted in a full-stop issue: the delivery of inadequate products to wholesale partners.

The Vision for a Virtual Solution

In their existing kick-off process, the adidas team found a lot was lost in translation. The vision, inspiration, and intended purpose of their product failed to manifest in retail experiences. The existing process seemed beyond repair, so they opted to explore an entirely different approach.

They envisioned a single space for collaboration, including a virtual library of product assets. Curated by the design and product teams, these assets could serve marketing and merchandising divisions simultaneously, helping to unify the product narrative. Then, together, all teams could see the culmination of their efforts in a lifelike virtual setting, allowing them to catch flaws before it's too late.

The potential payoff for adidas? Less second and thirdhand information, fewer hand-offs, less room for error. Everything all in one place, in real-time.

Bringing Collaboration to Life

Next, adidas's teams collaborated on the creation of a retail space in virtual reality, leveraging VIVE VR systems and The Wild's software. This would serve as an immersive testing ground for stakeholders, with assets and information at everyone's fingertips.

VIVE's system empowered adidas to create the most realistic, immersive experience possible. Its high-fidelity visuals created a true-to-life experience, with accurately portrayed designs and tangible construction elements. The Wild's software facilitated the creation of a human-scale environment that could be explored on foot. Now teams could see how their ideas would translate to the real world and explore functionality across a wide range of scenarios. This crucial exploration phase had come much later in the original process and required costly physical mock-ups. By eliminating work silos, these teams radically increased efficiency.

With their new virtual solution, adidas's teams could

conduct work in a shared space—they could develop, assess, alter, and reassess all in 3D. Storytelling and product offerings evolved far more quickly, with a much more cost-effective review process. Sales information regarding these new initiatives was disseminated with relative ease, now that teams could explore the ideas together in a live environment.



Above, the simulated retail playground for adidas's design, merchandising, and communication teams.

Lessons Learned

Adidas looked at a broken process and decided to reassess from the ground up. They knew what was at stake: If they miss the mark on product storytelling, they miss the mark on the customer experience and, by extension, satisfaction. Their new solution streamlines the collaboration process, maximizes resources, and delivers an optimal experience every time. adidas has strengthened their informational loop, cut out the back-and-forth, and created a system that catches all flaws before they reach the customer. With HTC VIVE and The Wild's assistance, they have achieved their vision of working more collaboratively in a virtual creative space and eliminated the drudgery of the selling season kick-off for good.

About The Wild

The Wild is an immersive collaboration platform for teams to share ideas and work together, from anywhere. Communicate your vision like never before as you, your team, and your clients experience your work at human-scale in a shared virtual space. Collaborating on spatial designs in 2D is often ineffective and time-consuming, especially with remote colleagues and clients. With tools designed for ideation and iterative prototyping, The Wild enables design teams to inhabit, interact with, and present their ideas immersively, leading to more effective communication, more confident decisions, and better-aligned teams. Learn more about The Wild and how it can enhance your workflow at thewild.com.