How Can VR Help Us Create Engaging Virtual Meetings?

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I created my avatar in the stage by using ZEPETO App.

Due to Covid-19, **#pivottovirtual** is becoming our new trend in the meetings industry. However, people feel that the amount of interest in this new virtual meeting platform is different compared with on-site ones. In short, we think it's boring compared with face-to-face meetings. On the other hand, virtual has some positive points. People can attend from anywhere in the world and above all, it might be better than canceling or postponing in the time of COVID-19 crisis. If we can find a way to make it fun, we can broaden our possibilities. The key might be how we use **Virtual Reality (VR).** Today, we would like to learn what we can do to **make our audience engaged** while using VR. For that, I interviewed Mr. Marco Alonso, Director General of WPBR Marketing Digital.

What Are Virtual Meetings?

Before talking about VR, first we need to know what Virtual Meetings are. According to Mr. Alonso, Virtual Meetings are divided into **Online Meetings** and **Virtualized Meetings.**

Online Meetings are divided into 3 areas:

On-Demand	Social Live Streaming	Webinar
Ex) PowerPoint (recording a slide show with sound) Pros: Audience can watch it anytime from anywhere. Cons: Just watching. Kind of boring.	Ex) YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn Pros: Using like buttons, comments, and easy to be shared. Cons: Not that much commitment from the audience.	Ex) Zoom, Go To Webinar, WebEx, Google Meet Pros: By using engagement tools such as Q&A, polls, and word cloud, audience can commit more. Cons: You need an organizer beside of moderator / speaker to control the screen.

Mr. Marco Alonso
*Mr. Marco Alonso Director General, WPBR Marketing Digital*

Virtualized Meetings are divided into 2 areas.

Multiplatform (Web & VR)	Fully Immersive (VR)
This can be divided into with/without avatars. Ex) Phionik, VirBELA Pros: Fun to look at and to be connected with others virtually. Cons: Not many examples in the meetings industry so far.	Usually you will use oculus goggles. Ex) ENGAGE, Glue, Spartial Pros: Fun to experience. New to everyone.

You can create your own avatar and attend the virtual meeting.
https://www.phionik.com/
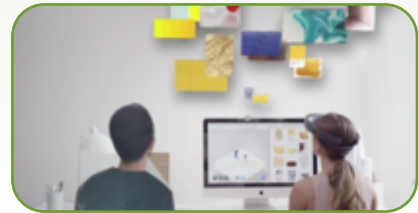
Cons: You need extra equipment.
You can pop up files in the air by using Spartial. **https://spatial.io/**

3 Ways to Use VR for Your Virtual Meetings

For attendees, one of the most important reasons to attend Meetings is to interact with others. At Online Meetings, it's possible to be a part of the Meeting by asking questions, discussing, joining a poll, etc. However, most of the people still feel that they did not have an opportunity to interact with others. Well, you can change it by using VR.

1: Let Each Attendee Be Connected
First, you will create your own avatar in the Virtual Meeting Platform. The avatar (virtual you) will attend the Virtual Meeting.
At the Meeting, you will find other avatars (virtual others). For events ranging 100 – 700 participants, about 3,100 conversations have been made. (Reported by Phionik)
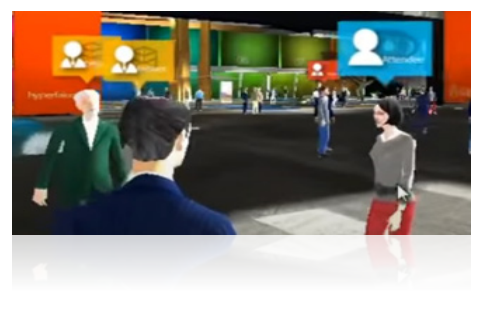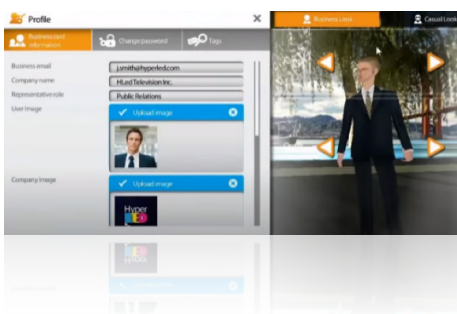
2: Design Sponsor Areas Virtually
Like on-site meetings, you can create exhibition booths. At the booth, exhibitor avatar(s) can stand and exchange business cards with attendees. They can also put their company signs, their product advertisements, and online brochures. By using screens, they can also stream their product videos.
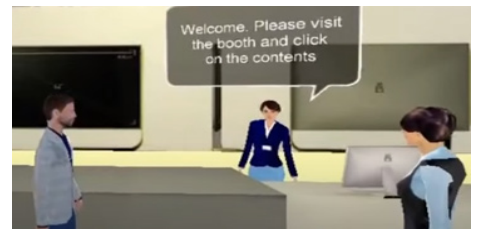
3: Connect Sponsors with Attendees
This is one of the ways to keep your sponsors for the Virtual Meeting. Avatars can talk, chat, run group talks, and exchange business cards, etc. For events ranging 100 – 700 participants, about 3,300 virtual business cards have been exchanged. (Reported by Phionik)

Advice from Mr. Alonso
We all organize events, congresses and exhibitions with one primary thing in mind: To delight our attendees. The more we understand their needs and behaviors then the more likely we can deliver a more enhanced experience. VR is becoming a big thing and is already leaving the "early adoption" stage rapidly. What about adoption you might ask? Well, think about the Medical Industry. Many of the largest conventions we organize worldwide help Healthcare professionals be up to date. Many of them (Doctors, Surgeons, Nurses) are trained using VR Devices (take the Johnson & Johnson Institute program for instance, or Osso VR Surgical Training options). In fact, new devices are designed for the common user, so it is no longer a "geek" thing, but more of a regular-people thing. If we embrace virtuality faster and start thinking in terms of how people are already behaving, we will find that events, as long as value is provided, will be a great experience no matter what format is chosen.

Final Thoughts on VR for Virtual Meetings
When our clients want to hold "Virtual Meetings" instead of canceling or postponing, the first thing we need to do is to know which type of Virtual Meetings they want. It differs from their purpose, preparation period, and budget.Second, we need to think how to satisfy sponsors to keep them. Without them, it's going to be difficult to maintain the meeting. Third, we need to think how to make attendees commit to attending the Meeting. Virtual Meetings are not exactly the same as face-to-face meetings. In fact, these meetings have their own attraction. People say virtual is boring, but virtual is actually filled with possibilities and opportunities.

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