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VR Training Is Replacing Traditional Training: Are You on Board?

Do you want to reduce employee training time, increase training effectiveness, and help employees gain experience and confidence? While many companies still provide traditional classroom training, increasingly trainers and trainees have turned to Virtual Reality (VR) training because of its many benefits:

- **VR training is scalable:** Adding new VR headsets or additional training scenarios can be done quickly and cost-effectively.
- **VR Training reduces the learning curve; employees like VR training and learn more:** A recent PWC study found VR learning is 4X faster than traditional learning, and VR learners were 275% more confident in their abilities versus learners who acquired knowledge via more traditional approaches.
- **VR Training delivers positive financial impact:** VR training programs save companies hundreds of thousands of dollars per year by reducing attrition rates, shortening onboarding costs, and reducing travel costs to various training facilities.

Three World Class Companies Leverage VR Training to Deliver Outstanding Results

Walmart was an early adapter of VR training for onboarding and associate training. Trainees who take Walmart's VR training courses to learn about how to deal with challenging customers report a 30 percent higher satisfaction rating compared with trainees attending traditional training courses. The VR trainees score higher on content remembrance tests 70 percent of the time. They also demonstrate a 10-15 percent higher rate of knowledge retention compared with those in traditional training. The training also takes less time: what might require 90 minutes of classroom training can be completed in 20 minutes using VR training. This translates into higher employee loyalty since their associates appreciate the investment Walmart is making in their training, better employee confidence, happier employees, higher customer satisfaction, and millions of dollars in productivity savings for Walmart.

Pfizer applied VR training during the Covid pandemic to train thousands of new manufacturing workers quickly within Pfizer manufacturing facilities that produce the Covid-19 vaccine. Pfizer had to scale VR training in an unprecedented way to quickly ramp up its vaccine manufacturing. Whereas a new manufacturing floor worker might take about a year to become fully operational with traditional training methods, the highly contagious Covid-19 virus only magnified the limitations of traditional training methods. Pfizer also utilized 3D replicas, virtual group training, and real-time feedback to ensure excellent training outcomes. The results were astounding:

- VR manufacturing training transformed 100+ pages of Standard Operating Procedures into interactive training experiences, which greatly reduced the time to train and minimized space required for the training.
- VR behavioral training trained users on proper behavior/movement using speed and haptic tracking capabilities.

- VR training environment removed accessibility issues by taking 3D scans or creating 3D replicas within the training.
- Pfizer's VR training leads reported a 40% reduction in total training time and a 3X increase in quality.

Verizon has been using VR training since 2021 to build empathy and de-escalation skills for their contact center customer service associates. Pre-VR training, Verizon put on 4-hour, in-person workshops and leaned on role play to deliver the de-escalation training. But they found role play fell short because it fails to replicate the emotional aspects of an escalating situation. Now, instead of role playing, customer service associates immerse themselves in a virtual world, where an avatar takes the place of the angry customer. Associates need to de-escalate this customer, who now has a 'face' versus being just a voice. Associates see, hear, and feel the customer's frustrations more powerfully.

VR training helps Verizon associates gain the valuable experience and confidence they desire in a safe, virtual environment. Many associates, anxious to improve their skills, find the immersive aspects of VR training to be rewarding especially when complemented by a gamification component that makes learning more fun.

Will VR Training Become the Dominant Way to Train Sales, Marketing, and Customer Service Personnel?

Verizon and many other companies have learned one of the most impactful applications of VR training is in the contact center. Topping the priorities of a contact center is reducing agent turnover. Every time a contact center loses an agent, operational costs soar, remaining agents struggle to keep pace with the increased volume, customer satisfaction scores drops, and team morale takes a hit as agents question why their desk neighbors keep leaving.

Companies leverage VR training to help contact center agents master the company's products/services, and help agents feel increasingly confident and comfortable dealing with even the most demanding customers. These two VR training benefits meaningfully decrease agent turnover, which can be financially staggering. If you run a contact center with 100 agents and have an industry-standard 45 percent agent attrition rate, you will spend anywhere from \$1.6M to \$4.8M each year on turnover. Reducing turnover by only 5 percent can put anywhere from \$176k to \$600k back in your company's wallet. A 20% reduction in turnover can lower operational costs by \$704,000 to \$2.1 million (source: SharpenCX). Reducing agent turnover rates is the strongest reason VR training is becoming the dominant way to train contact center agents. While space does not allow me to go into detail, VR training's impact on sales and marketing personnel is equally impressive.

The writing is on the wall: Traditional training is dying. VR training will replace all forms of traditional training by 2028. Are you on board?

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