Learn in MR

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Any organization that wants to stay competitive in today's hybrid work environment needs to invest in continuous training and personal development. It's not only vital for keeping employees' knowledge and skills up to date but also contributes to staff retention and a positive company culture.

SHRM's 2022 Workplace Learning & Development Trends report shows that:

76% of employees are more likely to stay with a company that offers continuous training

84% say it's important to them to get training in soft skills specifically

But with many businesses facing time constraints and stretched budgets, training can often get overlooked, especially for remote workers. Traditional in-person training also comes with certain challenges that can hold businesses back. It can be slow and expensive. It doesn't always achieve the desired results. And it can be risky, particularly with practical skills training like learning to operate complex machinery.

Learning and development strategies need to evolve to support employees wherever and however they work.

That's where mixed reality comes in. It's great for teaching those all-important technical skills that people need to do their jobs effectively. But it can also train employees in soft skills like empathy, inclusion and teamwork.

How MR can overcome training challenges

MR offers immersive learning experiences that can replicate real-life scenarios and work-related challenges, from landing an airplane to handling customer complaints.

Using a headset and controllers, trainees enter a 360-degree virtual learning environment, experiencing sights and sounds that mirror the physical world. They can look around, talk and move through a virtual setting, interacting with simulated equipment, as well as other trainees and instructors. **This allows employees to practice new skills in a risk-free environment without the need for physical materials or resources.**

Retention of skills learned in MR is high, leading to increased productivity, fewer errors and better performance overall.

Let's look at some of the key learning and development challenges facing businesses today and how MR can help solve them right now.

⭐ **CHALLENGE 1**

Making training efficient

A traditional classroom setting typically requires role playing, coaching and physical premises, which can be expensive and inflexible.

It might also require travel, with all the attendant costs and time-consuming hassles.

In fact, research shows that US organizations with more than 100 but fewer than 1,000 employees **spend an average of**

$1,433 on training per employee[1].

HOW MR CAN HELP

Long-term savings

Immersive training can save your organization time and money. It allows learners to progress faster – a PwC study found that employees who completed learning modules in MR were up to four times faster than traditional classroom learners[2].

MR training is also more cost-effective. Employees can learn without the need to travel or take large chunks of time out of their day. The upfront costs of investing in MR headsets and other equipment are offset by long-term efficiency savings.

CHALLENGE 2

Scaling up

Today's global workforce has made it easier for businesses to expand. **But how do you scale up training when you have staff scattered across different locations?** Getting everyone together in a classroom learning setting is nothing short of a logistical nightmare.

HOW MR CAN HELP

Access from anywhere

With MR training, you can reach any number of people anywhere, anytime. **It's easily scalable** because you're not limited by classroom size or reliant upon the availability of trainers.

Research shows that using MR to train large numbers of people over time is the most cost-effective way to learn on a large scale. **If you have 3,000 learners, it will cost you 52% less than classroom learning[3].**

[3]PwC, 'Study into the effectiveness of VR for soft skills training', 2021

CHALLENGE 3

Getting the outcomes you want

Classroom learning can't give a sense of how situations feel in real life. And not everyone relates to training based on theory.

The pace or level of learning can also be a problem. Some employees will find it too slow and lose interest, while others may struggle to keep up. **E-learning, meanwhile, can make users feel isolated and lead to screen fatigue.** All of which can get in the way of the results you're looking for.
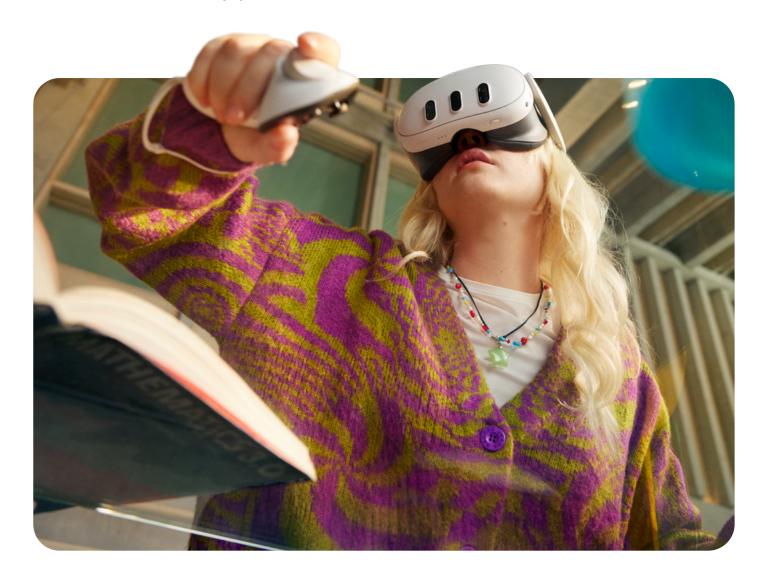

HOW MR CAN HELP

More personalized learning

Immersive training can be personalized to fit the learning style of each student. People can learn at their own pace, practicing new skills until they grasp them, without risk. Being able to interact with fellow trainees, even if they're not in the same physical space, makes the experience more enjoyable and engaging. And with the fully immersive experience MR provides, **people are less likely to get distracted or frustrated.** In the PwC study, learners were found to be four times more focused during MR training compared to their counterparts who took part in e-learning[4].

[4]PwC, 'Study into the effectiveness of VR for soft skills training', 2021

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CHALLENGE 4

Avoiding onboarding mistakes

Only 12% of employees feel their company does a great job with onboarding[5].

And yet those first impressions are crucial. **If your induction program for training new employees is poor, it can negatively affect productivity and morale.** This, in turn, can lead to poor performance and high turnover.

HOW MR CAN HELP

Boosting culture

Immersive onboarding can help new starters experience company culture and get settled in more quickly before their official start date.

For instance, they can be introduced to the company, tour the building and meet their line manager – all from the comfort of their own home – before they've even set foot in the workplace. **This will help them feel more at ease when their first day starts for real.**

MR IN ACTION

When global IT consultancy **Accenture** needed to onboard new hires around the globe at scale, it built the world's largest virtual onboarding program in a virtual office space called '**The Nth Floor'**. The company purchased 65,000 MR headsets to connect employees.

[5]Gallup, 'Why the Onboarding Experience is Key for Retention', 2018

CHALLENGE 5

Getting people up to speed

For many organizations, there's an urgent need for employees to develop their capabilities because of **growing staff shortages and skills gaps.** This is particularly true in companies where older workers are retiring before they're able to fully pass on their knowledge to younger employees.

But watching a dull training video or reading a weighty manual isn't the most engaging way to teach employees new tasks. **The challenge is how to hold learners' attention and make sure lessons are easily understood.**

HOW MR CAN HELP

Hands-on learning

Skills taught in MR are not only learnt faster but also tend to sink in that bit deeper. Why? **Because people learn best by doing,** and it's easier to retain information in lifelike environments you can interact with.

The **PwC report** found that learners completed training in MR **four times faster than in a classroom setting.** They were also **3.75** **times more emotionally connected to content**[6].

MR IN ACTION

Alarm.com trains and upskills technicians to install office door security systems in MR. Trainees learn to wire circuit boards in a photo-realistic simulation, using their hands to connect up wires and route cables. Advanced trainees get to test their skills against a ticking 'time bomb' – if they don't succeed, the place explodes. If they do, their names are added to a leaderboard.

[6]PwC, 'Study into the effectiveness of VR for soft skills training', 2021

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CHALLENGE 6

Giving real-world experience

The problem with most forms of traditional learning is that they can't provide real-world settings that reflect the types of scenario employees are likely to face in their everyday work.

HOW MR CAN HELP

Promoting inclusion

Thanks to **MR simulations,** employees can gain valuable hands-on experience in a range of skills they need to carry out their job effectively, including soft skills. **For example:**

> **Business leaders** can rehearse important speeches and presentations

> **Customer service reps** can practice dealing with difficult customers

> **Sales and marketing teams** can refine pitches and client interactions

> **Managers** can practice giving negative feedback during performance reviews

> **Healthcare professionals** can practice having difficult conversations with virtual patients

Research suggests that **80% of people believe role-playing scenarios in MR are a top training approach for soft skills[7].**

MR IN ACTION

Hilton Hotels used MR to help corporate employees build empathy and appreciation for frontline teams, improving decision making in the process. Many of Hilton's corporate team members have never actually worked in a hotel, which sometimes means they make decisions that negatively impact frontline workers. Partnering with **SweetRush,** an independent software vendor, Hilton was able to develop learning programs to bridge the gap, while also simulating difficult interactions with guests. According to Hilton, **MR training led to 87% of participants changing their behavior.**

[7]Future Workplace & Mursion, 'VR Changes the Game for Soft Skills Training', 2021

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CHALLENGE 7

Reducing risk

Learning on the job can be fraught with danger, particularly in high-risk environments such as operating machinery, working at height or carrying out surgical procedures.
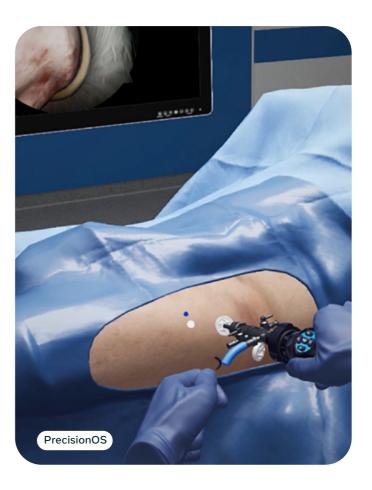

HOW MR CAN HELP

Lifelike simulations

MR training is a safe place to fail. In simulated situations employees are free to practice complex real-world skills without the real-world consequences.

In the healthcare profession, for example, **trainee doctors can practice surgical procedures in 3D with real-time feedback** and receive expert advice from top surgeons around the world.

In construction, trainees can learn to detect hazards, put up scaffolding and operate machinery – all through a MR headset.

PrecisionOS

MR IN ACTION

Virtual training modules are giving surgeons at **Johnson & Johnson** the opportunity to get hands-on with the latest medical devices. The training, created by **The Technology & Innovation team** in conjunction with **Osso VR**, means surgeons learn new procedures faster and make fewer real-world mistakes. Those trained on a procedure in MR at **Johnson & Johnson scored 223% higher than those using passive learning tools.**

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7 steps to get started in MR

Now that you've seen how mixed reality can transform corporate L&D, **the next step is to put together a strategy for actually getting started.** It can sound daunting, but it doesn't have to be. In fact, we think that if you follow this 7-step framework you'll be in a pretty good place.

STEP 1

Kick off – Establish an implementation timeline so you know what your major milestones are. Secure budget from IT and purchase the hardware you need.

STEP 2

Develop use case and KPIs – Successful MR pilots have a specific goal in mind. Decide what objective you're trying to solve for (e.g. are you interested in soft skills training or is there a technical skill you want to hone?), determine the right KPIs then engage with your test population - in this case, your L&D team.

STEP 3

Engage your executive sponsor – Another reason some technology pilots fail is because they don't have executive buy-in. The best way to secure this (along with the funding or operational support that comes with it) is to get your leadership team to try MR and experience their own 'a-ha' moment. Once you've done that, get feedback on your use case and KPIs and set up regular check ins.

STEP 4

Choose (or develop) your MR app – While Meta makes the hardware, MR experiences come to life through the apps in our store. There are loads of training apps from third-party developers that your teams can work with, like Mesmerise or Talespin. Or you might choose to develop a bespoke experience. Whichever route you go, set up regular review sessions with the test team and iterate based on their feedback.

STEP 5

Set up hardware and software – Use Meta Quest for Business to get access to device and app management controls to make deployment swift, smooth and secure.

STEP 6

Launch pilot - Activate your headsets and let your teams start collaborating. Work with your tech partner (if you have one) to set up onboarding, demos and troubleshooting. Track impact against your KPIs and start thinking about how to scale.

STEP 7

Conquer the world – Once you see positive results from your test team, go back to your executive sponsor with plans for additional use cases and budget. Purchase headsets and follow the previous steps to scale up.

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