



The  
beginner's  
guide

**academia**  
the technology group

# Meet in VR





Meetings and check-ins are vital to creating community.

They give employees a chance to connect with colleagues, generate new ideas, solve problems and make important decisions. When they're run well, meetings can help build trust and instil a feeling of togetherness, both of which are essential for nurturing a positive and productive work culture.

But meetings have become more challenging in the age of hybrid and remote working when, increasingly, teams aren't in the same place at the same time. The number of fully remote workers quadrupled between 2018 and 2021<sup>1</sup>. And according to Gallup, 59% of employees would choose hybrid work while only 9% would choose to work full time in the office<sup>2</sup>.

The big issue for companies is how

to help distributed workers feel more connected to each other, and to their colleagues who are physically present in the office. While video conferencing is a useful collaboration tool, it only goes so far. It can feel impersonal. People can become easily distracted. And then there's the matter of having to stare at yourself on screen.






Immersive meetings are a giant step up from traditional video calls. Meeting in a virtual office allows people to feel truly present with each other even if they're on opposite sides of the world. That makes collaboration feel more effortless, which fuels better outcomes. To put it another way: virtual meetings help teams see eye-to-eye even when they can't be face-to-face.

# How VR can overcome meeting challenges

One of the most exciting things about virtual reality is its ability to wrap you up 'in the moment'.

When you enter a virtual space, you become a digital representation of yourself in the form of an avatar. Using a VR headset and controllers, you're able to interact with digital objects and other avatars. This allows you to communicate with colleagues using body language, gestures and facial expressions, just like you would in real life.

This type of interaction can make work more productive and efficient, strengthen team connection and improve job satisfaction levels. With VR you can:

-  Have engaging weekly team check-ins
-  Write and draw on virtual whiteboards
-  Generate ideas with a core working group
-  Make presentations to senior leaders
-  Make presentations to external clients

All this means VR is already helping to tackle the most common meeting and collaboration challenges facing businesses today.

<sup>1</sup>Zippia, 'Remote Work Statistics', 2023,  
<sup>2</sup>Gallup, 'The Future of Hybrid Work', 2023







CHALLENGE 1

# Making meetings productive

It’s never been more important to get meetings right because we’ve never been having more of them. According to research from Asana, 32% of knowledge workers say they’re on more video calls than a year ago, while 26% say they’re going to more in-person meetings<sup>3</sup>.

And when people don’t understand what the meeting is about, don’t feel inspired or struggle to absorb complex information, they won’t be engaged.



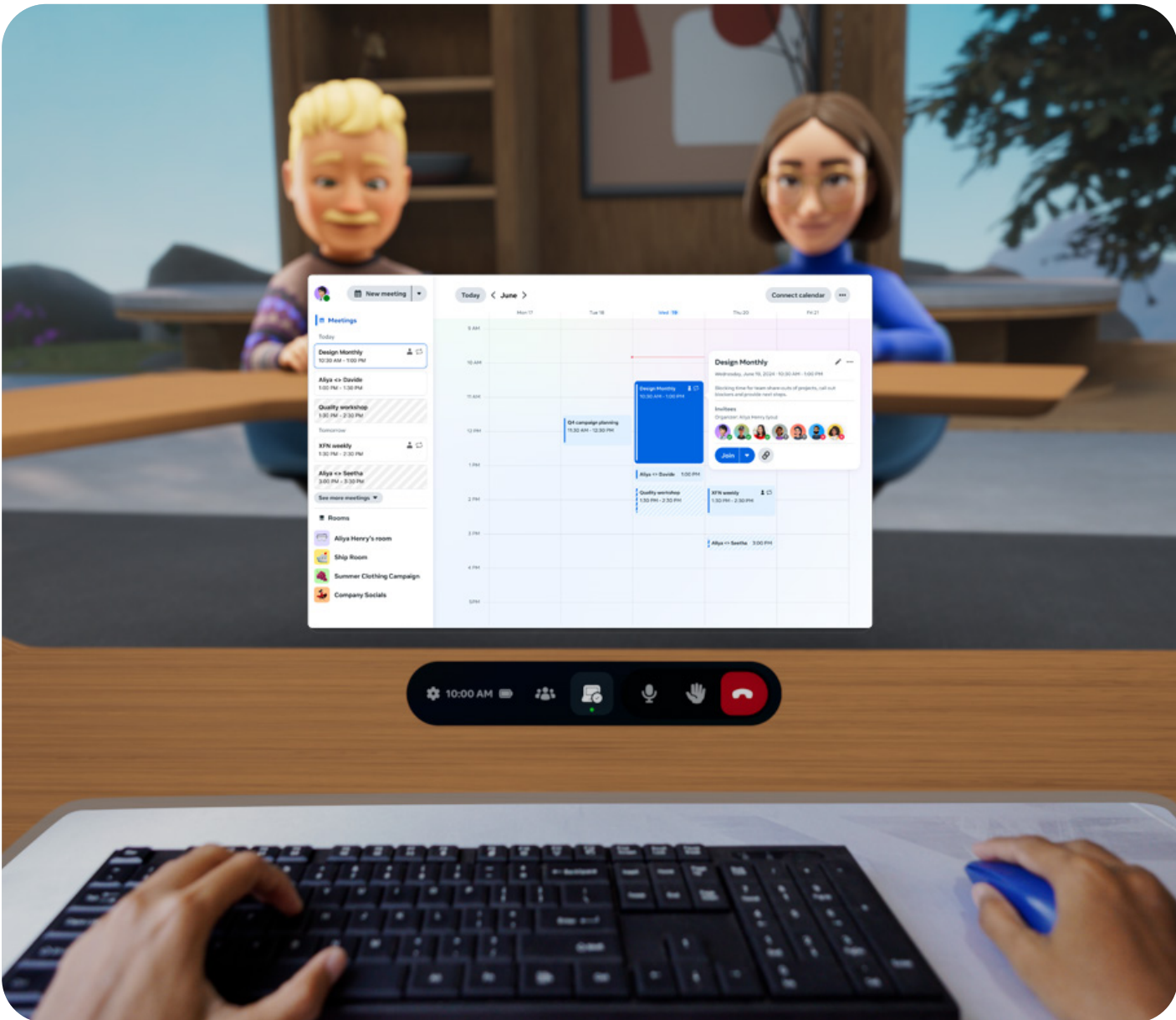
<sup>3</sup>Asana, ‘The Anatomy of Work Global Index’, 2023

HOW VR CAN HELP

## More engaging spaces

With VR, you can immerse yourself in a virtual office space that enhances presence and engagement, leading to more productive meetings for the

entire team. Experience improved collaboration sessions, compelling sales presentations and seamless feedback sharing in Meta Horizon Workrooms.







CHALLENGE 2

# Connecting in a meaningful way

Remote collaboration can be challenging. In virtual meetings where you can't see someone, it's impossible to pick up on body language and other non-verbal gestures that are an important part of how we communicate.

It's extremely difficult to have side conversations outside of a separate chat function. And the meeting leader might not be able to gauge whether attendees are confused, distracted or have lost interest entirely.



HOW VR CAN HELP

## More natural conversations

Video calls put people in a box, literally. But VR sets us free. When you're in a virtual office, you're really in a virtual office, not just on a screen. And as avatars get more sophisticated, the feeling of holding a totally normal conversation with the person 'next to you' is only growing.

This is also where spatial audio comes into its own. You can think of spatial audio as '3D sound'. On a video call, it can be hard to tell who's talking because everybody's voice comes at you from the same direction – usually your laptop or monitor speakers right in front

of your face. VR is different. Because the avatars around you inhabit a three-dimensional world, voices come at you from different places, which means you can pinpoint exactly who said what based on where they're standing.

It's exactly like the physical world, and so is that fact that you can hold side conversations or quickly tell what somebody is thinking by the look on their (avatar's) face.



VR IN ACTION

Accenture's Nth floor is a [virtual campus](#) where people can do everything from meeting for coffee and office parties to being onboarded into the company, holding meetings and attending training. No matter where they are in the world, employees can come together and be part of a community without having to be physically present in the same space.





CHALLENGE 3

# Building team cohesion

Many employees say they don't have enough opportunities to bond with teammates and build relationships, particularly those who work remotely. Working from home can feel lonely and isolating. And coming up with ideas together can be disjointed if a couple of people are in a physical meeting room while the rest participate virtually.

When you don't have strong relationships and mutual respect between colleagues, it can lead to low morale and a lack of trust.



HOW VR CAN HELP

## More connected teams

We've already talked about the fact that immersive technologies can help distributed teams forge closer bonds by giving them a shared sense of presence

that you don't get with 2D video calls. You may be miles away from each other but with VR there's a palpable feeling of togetherness and connection.



VR IN ACTION

Pet food supplier Purina needed to connect its salespeople based in different locations. It used [VR devices](#) to enable geographically dispersed teams to collaborate. Being able to review content, share insights and communicate using immersive tools has allowed the company's sales team to plan more effectively.





## CHALLENGE 4

# Reducing screen fatigue

As remote meetings have become the new normal, it's all too easy for screen fatigue to set in. According to a [post-pandemic report](#) from Stanford University, there are four fundamental flaws built into video conferencing that make it unsuitable if it's our only way of connecting:



**It's too intense** – excessive amounts of close-up eye contact creates stress



**It's fatiguing** – there are negative emotional consequences to constantly having to look at ourselves



**It reduces our mobility** – the less mobile we are, the less well we perform



**It increases the cognitive load** – removing non-verbal communication forces our brains to work harder

The end result? Many employees are now longing to experience things again instead of just watching them unfold on a screen.

## HOW VR CAN HELP

## It's more dynamic



Once you're in VR, the screen melts away. What you're left with is a feeling of being transported into a shared space that's so immersive we've heard stories of people who have accidentally kicked something under the desk in their physical environment only to apologise to a colleague in VR because they're worried they hurt them.

Working in VR is a great way to tackle many of the issues identified in the Stanford report. But at the same time, if you need to bring a computer screen into your virtual office you can do it. In Meta Horizon Workrooms, for instance, not only can you access your physical laptop in a virtual space, you can conjure up to three giant screens so your personal productivity doesn't take a hit.





CHALLENGE 5

# Staying focused

Dull topics, discussions that go off-piste, too many distractions... there are many reasons why it's easy to lose concentration in meetings.

Research suggests that attention spans for online meetings are worse than physical ones. For in-person meetings, 63% of office workers report having an attention span of 45 minutes or less before they begin to get bored or distracted. This compares with 68% for remote meetings<sup>4</sup>.



HOW VR CAN HELP

## Reducing distractions

Once you're in a headset, there's no multitasking with your laptop, or worrying what people think of your outfit. In VR, meeting attendees are 100% focused on the task at hand because they're fully immersed in the meeting space and fully engaged with their colleagues.

According to Meta's own research, 66% of people who took part in a Meta Horizon Workrooms study said they performed better in VR than video conferencing due to fewer distractions and greater focus. While 58% said it promoted more active participation compared to VC<sup>5</sup>.



<sup>4</sup>Showpad, 'State of Selling Survey', 2022

<sup>5</sup>Meta internal data (based on a Meta-commissioned mixed methods study with 35 people in the US and UK), October 2022





CHALLENGE 6

# Making sure everyone’s voice can be heard

Missing a meeting or not being included in discussions can leave employees feeling sidelined and left out of the loop.

This can be a particular issue for remote workers, who often get overlooked in favour of those who are physically present. In fact, one study shows that 43% of remote workers don’t feel included in meetings yet<sup>6</sup>.



HOW VR CAN HELP

## Promoting inclusion

VR can create greater meeting equity for all participants across all workspaces wherever they are to make every member of the team feel included.

Thanks to its adaptability, VR is uniquely positioned to reduce barriers and create opportunities for marginalised groups. You no longer have to be in

close proximity to a major city to take advantage of career opportunities or form communities for support and encouragement.

VR is the best of both worlds: it offers the freedom and flexibility of remote working with the sense of connection and belonging of the physical office.



<sup>6</sup>Microsoft, ‘Making Hybrid Work Work’, 2022

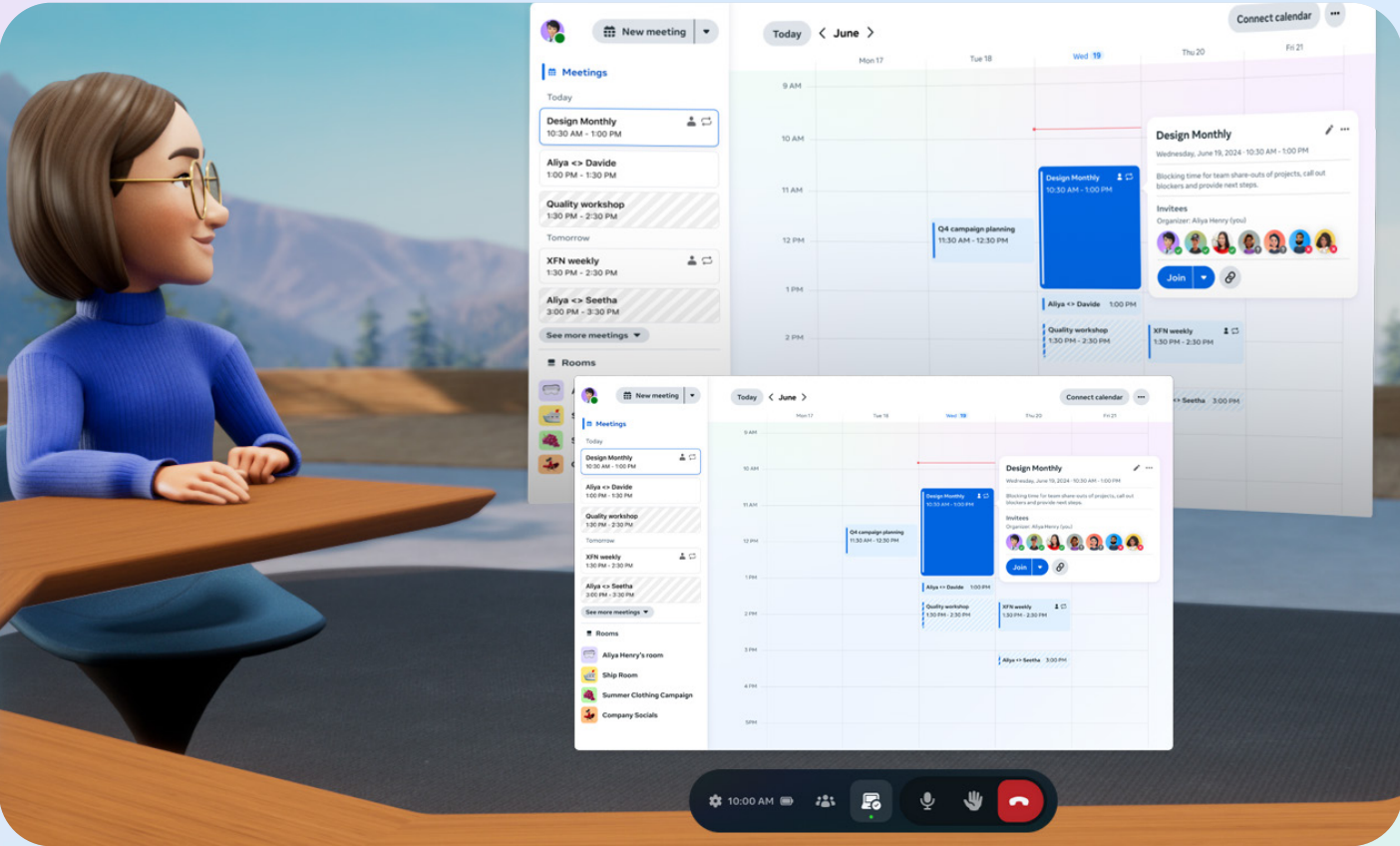


CHALLENGE 7

# Bringing the whole company together

Organising corporate events and meetings for hundreds of employees dispersed across the globe is a major challenge for large companies.

Say a keynote conference is being held in Los Angeles. It’s simply not practical for all staff to attend in person. But if they don’t, important information can get lost in translation or not shared at all.



## HOW VR CAN HELP

# Global reach without the carbon footprint

In a virtual world, everyone in the company can attend the conference at the same time, hear the same presentations (in any language) and interact in real time. This offers a more inclusive way to engage than streaming the event or sending a select few to attend in person. What’s more, you can save on travel and venue costs – and cut

your organisation’s carbon footprint.

By bringing your entire organisation together in a remote town hall, you create a genuine company community, where leaders can update all employees on the latest news and business performance.





# 7 steps to get started in VR

Now that you've seen how virtual reality can help you hold better meetings, 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 very 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 VR pilots have a specific goal in mind. Decide what objective you're trying to solve for (e.g. facilitating better collaboration for dispersed teams), determine the right KPIs then engage with your test population.



## 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 VR 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 VR app** – While Meta makes the hardware, VR experiences come to life through the apps in our store. There are loads of apps from third-party developers that your teams can work with, like Arthur or Glue. 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** – Enrol in the Meta Quest for Business beta 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 exec sponsor with plans for additional use cases and budget. Purchase headsets and follow the previous steps to scale up.





[forwork.meta.com](https://forwork.meta.com)