Stop Thinking Killer App and Start Thinking Killer Experience

Virtual reality and augmented reality strategies from an industry veteran.

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David Polinchock has worked in the virtual reality (VR) and experiential advertising space since the 1990s, and he's seen the good, the bad and the ugly for using VR and augmented reality (AR) to create marketing events and experiences. At the Propelify 2017 Innovation Festival, he gave a talk about three big ways technologists, marketers and companies need to improve their use of VR and AR to create amazing experiences in the future.

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1. Include elements of the real world to create a more engaging VR experience.

"How many times have you seen a VR setup that includes a table, a chair and a head seat?" Polinchock asked. "Where's the sense of falling into the story?" Instead of just focusing on the tech, Polinchock wants companies to use real-world elements in their VR setups to enhance the total experience.

Polinchock offered up a few creative, low-budget ways companies could incorporate physical elements of the real world into a user's VR experience. For example:

- A tourism board wants a user to experience a particular beach. Craft a VR experience where the user sits in a sandbox and smells sunscreen while wearing a headset.
- A VR experience that takes place in the woods? Try adding a few potted plants to the room with the VR setup, so when the user walks around, branches occasionally brush over their cheeks or arms.
- At a VR experience about conquering fears, users in head seats "walked on a ledge" in VR – and in actuality, Polinchock recounted. Users stood on a small ledge, a few inches off the ground, with their back to a wall, while also walking a ledge on a super-tall building in VR.

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2. Possibilities for the future of AR.

To Polinchock, AR is a totally different world than VR. The key to creating a great AR experience? "We don't want to walk down the road and see virtual billboards jumping at our faces. But, we do want interesting information that helps us get through the day," he said. A few exciting possibilities he sees for AR include:

- A building plaque that pops out diagrams and text with significant historical information about a site
- Walls, statues or monuments that relay information, key dates and importance of a site or artwork
- Facial recognition technology that could remind you of where you met someone or of pertinent info like a

birthday, job, or other details that would make networking easier

3. Complete the experience.

Polinchock used to work as a character actor at Disney, and he credits Disney for fully immersing their visitors at the theme parks. “Even when you’re waiting in line, you’re fully in their world,” he said.

Polinchock finds companies using VR for marketing experiences often don’t give users a similarly immersive experience.

“If someone doesn’t know how VR works, don’t just drop them into the room. Because then, they’ll go into an experience, don’t get the whole story, and then don’t think the tech works,” he said.

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Rather than just plopping a headset on someone, Polinchock wants companies to educate users in advance on what they should expect to see, hear and feel from the VR experience — before the experience begins. By fully prepping users of the possibilities of the VR experience awaiting them, more users will have truly relevant, engaging and informative VR experiences.

Watch highlights from Polinchock’s talk at the 2017 Propelify Innovation Festival.

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