This Creative Brought a Magical World to Life Using Virtual Reality

|
8 hours ago
Resh Sidhu holds the top creative role at digital agency Barbarian, and as a woman of color and a mom, recognizes she's breaking the status quo every day.

"I think my whole career has been about challenging the norm and being the oddball in the room," she said.

Sidhu started as a graphic designer in the gaming industry around the time of the dot-com bubble. Since then, she's gravitated to roles that allow her to creatively experiment with new technologies, which landed her a position leading Framestore's virtual reality studio five years ago while serving as creative director. She combined her agency experience—she'd previously held creative positions at AKQA and Digitas—with her penchant for helping clients find ways to experiment with virtual reality.

While there, Sidhu led a virtual reality project for J.K. Rowling's 2016 film Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them, a Harry Potter spinoff. The immersive experience gave fans the chance to step into the magical world.

"The reason why that project was so thrilling is that everything was new," she explained. "As creative director of that project, it was tremendously challenging. We had to keep spirits high when the challenges were difficult."

Sidhu briefly returned to AKQA before joining Barbarian earlier this year, where she leads a 20-person team working with clients including JBL, Mucinex and Samsung. At Barbarian,

she feels as though she has a “tremendous responsibility to make sure that my past can pave the way for others to succeed,” particularly diverse talent.

She remembers a time not too long ago where she looked around the room during a 30-person meeting and realized she was the only person of color.

“A chill went through my spine,” she said, explaining that Barbarian’s diverse leadership team is one of the reasons that she wanted to join the agency in the first place. “I want to elevate unheard voices because I’ve been that unheard voice.”

Big Mistake

Sidhu used to hide parts of her upbringing at work, like the fact that she came from a working-class background and was the first person in her family to receive a university education. As a new mom, she would shy away from sharing how exhausted she was at the office.

Lesson Learned

She eventually realized she has an “amazing story” to tell and decided to change course, instead seeking out work environments where she can truly be herself. She encourages others to follow suit.

“We should always stop and say, ‘Is this an environment where I can bring my true self to work? Or am I beginning to mold myself into someone else to fit in?’” Sidhu said.

How She Got the Gig

She was looking to shape a department with the right partner support. During her first meeting with Barbarian CEO Steven Moy, who she refers to as her “kindred spirit,” they chatted for more than three hours.

Pro Tip

“If you don’t have a champion, it’s hard to succeed,” Sidhu said. “You’ve got to find somebody who believes in you who is willing to invest that time in you.”



Standout amongst the industry’s best and give your employees something to celebrate. Become an Adweek Fastest Growing Agency and gain industry recognition for your success over the past three years (2017-2019). Submit today.

https://www.adweek.com/agencies/this-creative-brought-a-magical-world-to-life-using-virtual-reality/