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Galliford Try | Virtual Reality HSE Training Oct/25

Introduction

Galliford Try has harnessed virtual reality (VR) technology to enhance health, safety, and environmental (HSE) training across its workforce and supply chain. Using VR headsets, users are immersed in 360-degree incident scenarios filmed with real Galliford Try employees, placing them directly in the role of a site operative facing a live HSE situation. The training has been shared with National Highways and SDF Partners.



Overview

The VR training modules replicate high-risk construction environments such as plant and people interfaces or working near utilities and recreate them as immersive experiences. Unlike traditional classroom or video training, VR provides users with the closest possible exposure to real-life incidents without physical risk.

The headsets also offer a judgement-free learning environment, allowing individuals to fully engage without distraction or peer pressure. The tool has proven particularly effective for experienced personnel who may have become desensitised to risk, offering a grounding reminder of real-world consequences.



Challenges

- Traditional HSE training methods can sometimes feel repetitive and fail to fully engage learners.
- Experienced workers may underestimate or become desensitised to the risks they face daily.
- Apprentices and new entrants often lack first-hand site experience, making it difficult to appreciate the seriousness of potential incidents.
- Simulating high-risk scenarios in a safe yet impactful way is difficult without the right tools.
- Ensuring consistent, authentic training across teams and partner organisations is essential to improving safety culture.

"Having undertaken first hand one of the VR toolbox talks / start of shift briefings I can honestly say I was extremely impressed. Unlike a standard briefing the use of VR really pulls the operative into the zone ensuring full attention is given to the important safety briefing. This move towards VR has the potential to be a real 'gamechanger' for Health and Safety in our industry, is a significant step forward and is certainly something I'd like to see rolled out on our construction sites." – **Gary Knowles, NH Head of Scheme Deliver NW**





Action Taken

Galliford Try have deployed the VR headsets on the M56 Stretton to Preston Brook scheme and in National Highways offices, delivering sessions to National Highways teams, SDF partners, and apprentices. The immersive experience provided a safe introduction for individuals who had limited or no prior on-site exposure. The sessions showcased the realities of live road environments without the risks associated with physical site visits.



Results

The training was widely recognised as innovative and impactful, with participants describing it as “the closest thing to being on site without physically being there.” Compared to traditional methods, attendees reported significantly higher engagement and a deeper understanding of on-site risks. Its ability to immerse users in realistic National Highways scenarios highlighted a clear opportunity for further expansion.

Building on this success, Galliford Try is now collaborating with National Highways and SDF partners to develop a new VR module specifically focused on working on the Strategic Road Network, ensuring even greater relevance and industry-wide adoption.

The positive feedback has also prompted wider exploration of VR applications across the business. The technology is now being integrated with 4D planning on SDF schemes, enabling teams to visualise construction sequencing alongside safety-critical scenarios. In addition, VR is increasingly being used for public engagement, offering stakeholders and communities an accessible and immersive way to understand upcoming works.



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