



# Is VR the future of insight?

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## Can you imagine a world where all insight is done using VR?

Can you imagine challenging pretty much every known marketing assumption by testing innovative ideas virtually? Maybe.

Virtual reality is not a new development. What has made it a game changer to insight is the addition of eye-tracking within the virtual environment. Gone are the hours of project managing the creation of concept layouts, mock-up stores, and negotiating with retailers for space or layout changes.

### In the virtual world we can:

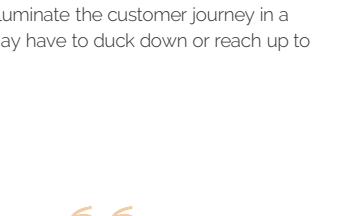
- Create new environments and test concepts, layouts, space and range for retailers.
- Make fixtures and aisles for any brand or category.
- Test different designs and ideas for brands.

### But we can go beyond this.

We can take people to places where they could never usually go. To environments that would be impossible to create in reality due to retailer permissions and logistics. We can do this all with a few clicks of a button (ok, in reality, some pretty good design skills) and have a virtual test environment ready for your consumers to immerse themselves in.

Isn't this starting to sound just a little bit awesome?

Is VR the future of insight? Quite possibly.



## Total immersion.

Traditionally, in the past, we've been able to ask people to look at things on a screen and use a mouse to move through it. What's great about virtual reality is the immersive experience for the user.

In shopper research, the realism of your brand's positioning on a shelf will illuminate the customer journey in a uniquely granular way: whether at the top or the bottom, your customers may have to duck down or reach up to even locate the product.

Just like in real life.



## The power of the analysis behind VR.

So why is this all really important? It's all about the analysis.

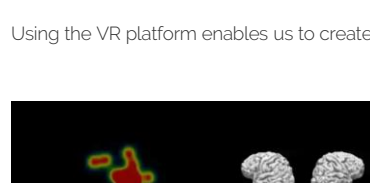
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| Detail only possible with VR.   | We can run powerful analysis on the eye-tracking data and look for hard to find differences in behavioural changes as we are measuring tiny changes in behaviour that is possible to quantify. Eg. store paths, dwell times, where we look, time to find a certain product. All of this is captured in a detail that would otherwise not be possible. |
| Actual behaviour, not claimed.  | We can observe how people actually behave in a certain environment and understand their motivations and decision making.  |
| VR environment tailored to you. | We build and adapt the virtual environment for you. It can be bespoke to your needs to ensure your objectives are met, whether it be a full store, a fixture, home or a street.   |
| Far greater depth.              | We observe how people behave. You can see what they see. We understand far more about their motivations. You figure out the choices they make in response to your innovations.  |



## VR is more than just a gimmick.

There is no denying that the technology is cool, but VR offers much, much more.

It allows us to layer on multiple levels of insight to better understand people. We are big believers that no single technique can provide all of the answers. We need to blend different techniques together to build in new layers of understanding. VR allows us to capture another layer of understanding, but in a way which allows unprecedented levels of analysis.



### Heat maps and fixation analysis.

Using eye-tracking built into the VR, we not only see what people see, we measure it. We look at which products caught the eye at a very granular level.

We know that eye-tracking in the real world can be tricky because the length of the fixation is very small – a quick glance, a fleeting moment. With VR the power of the data enables even the slightest of fixations to be measured and analysed.

This is all helping us understand what people can't tell us.

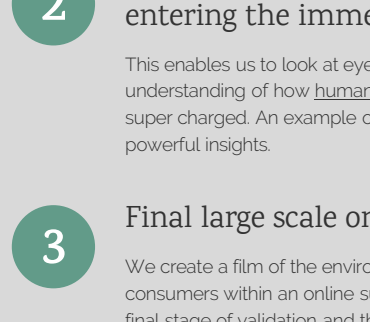
### Quantitative to measure their opinions.

As well as understanding the implicit dimension to how people react in a certain environment, there is an important role for understanding the explicit. How do people rate the look and feel, the ease of navigation, the appearance of the signage. What do they recall seeing? How likely would they be to purchase something?

### Qual to understand why they felt that way or did what they did.

With any research, understanding the hows and whys is really critical to building up knowledge of human behaviour. After a session in the immersive virtual environment, a short depth interview to uncover why people did certain things, what made them walk over there? Why did they look at this thing for ages? This can uncover a lot of the motivations that data simply can't tell us.

Using the VR platform enables us to create insightful research that creates change for our clients.



### Neuroscience to measure emotion.

As they wander around the virtual environment, what is their emotional reaction?

By combining neuroscience measures with VR we can understand the unconscious emotional impact of the environment and environmental cues. For example, the impact of layout or fixture changes.

## A model of insight.

It's important to think about how using VR would work in a practical sense. This is really critical as many people will talk about how exciting the process is, but the research still needs to be put together in a practical manner. It needs to work.

It needs to have clear objectives.

It needs to fulfil a business need beyond just being cool and exciting.

For example, if you were thinking about how to apply a Virtual Reality environment to your next insight programme, here is an example of what could be suggested.

- 1** Qualitative phase of 10-20 shoppers experience the VR environment to assist in the design and concept phase.  
An exploration of what they looked at, why and how it made them feel. Analysis of eye-tracking data to capture viewing and heat maps. This is a first point of call for how your test concept is impacting on behaviour. It shows us immediately whether this is a feasible concept or environment for shoppers.
- 2** Quantitative validation of 50-100 target demographic shoppers entering the immersive VR environment.  
This enables us to look at eye-tracking data at an aggregate level to create powerful understanding of how humans behave in any given environment. This is shopper research, but super charged. An example of how quantitative eye tracking data can be used to create genuinely powerful insights.
- 3** Final large scale online validation.  
We create a film of the environment from a 1st person perspective, and use this to show to consumers within an online survey to collect data on recall, perception and motivation. This is a final stage of validation and the third way the same environment can be used to its full potential. At this stage you are looking to validate a concept that has passed the first two stages. We are now looking for subtle nuances and differences in demographic or shopper type in terms of what they think, say they feel and how they respond to the idea.



## Creating change in shopper research.

We know a big frustration for FMCG brands is how to influence retailers in the way their products are merchandised. Creating virtual aisles and different creative concepts can be an easy way to test new ideas and use the evidence to influence change with the retailer.

### We use VR to test:

- Different point of sale
- New planograms
- Innovative aisle concepts
- New fixtures

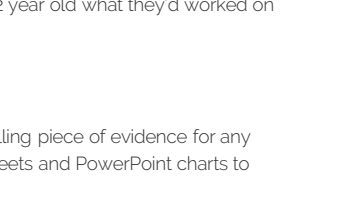
## Generating excitement in retail.

Many retailers are challenged internally, and by customers to create exciting and engaging shopping experiences. It can be hard, time consuming and costly to execute new store ideas in the real world, and with the added risk of impacting on real shopper behaviour it can create more problems than it solves.

We also know that, with the best will in the world, certain concepts in retail never make it onto the shop floor in quite the right way. Point of sale items in the warehouse, staff can implement concepts incorrectly, things get delivered to the wrong store. Imagine setting up a program of research in-store to test a new concept and discovering on day 1 that none of the concept is actually implemented.

It happens.

And more often than you would think!



## VR is a multi-sector technique.

It's not just about shopper and retail either. We can see VR being applicable across many sectors with any sort of physical environment. Below are just some examples.

- Cinema
- Airport
- Market
- Street
- Bus
- Car showroom
- Show house

## But doesn't VR all just feel a bit odd?

We know some people worry about feeling a little 'strange' in a virtual environment.

As humans we can adjust very quickly to any new surroundings and we see this virtually as well.

- Made me feel as though I was in another dimension.
- Makes you feel as though you're using all of your senses although it's actually only your sight.

Any study using VR involves a 'familiarisation' exercise to give people a chance to 'play' in the new environment, figure out how to pick things up, how to move around, and how to get used to the environment. When we watch a new person don the headset and enter the world of VR, sometimes there is trepidation, sometimes there is excitement, and this is something we consider in the design of our research.

We make sure our methodology never overrides the impact of what we are trying to achieve.



## Something to get stakeholders talking and interested.

One side-benefit to using VR to explore new ideas for insight, is that it is exciting for people. This means it is exciting for your stakeholders. They will be interested in the findings. They will find the outputs and the analysis visually stimulating. One of our clients said they went home and told their 12 year old what they'd worked on today and for the first time they'd said, 'wow cool Mum!'

### It feels like an exciting time for VR.

The sheer power of eye-tracking within the environment makes it a compelling piece of evidence for any shopper insight team. Many stakeholders are only used to seeing spreadsheets and PowerPoint charts to represent the insight. This will change that.

What could be more fascinating than watching virtually what 20 people did when they entered your new environment? And using the analytics and insight to uncover why they behaved that way?

## A cost effective solution in the long run.

The perception for most is that VR is a few years away from being a "cheap" alternative. We, however, believe one of VR's best assets is its ability to be a cost-effective tool.

Consider the ability to test multiple different designs, layouts or concepts without the hassle and cost of a traditional in-store methods. Whether it be at a preliminary level, where you are trying to whittle 15 concepts down to 5 or if you just want to reduce the cost of producing and testing 10 separate POS pieces, VR can be cost effective at any level. Once the initial virtual store or environment has been built subsequent projects are at a fraction of the cost of the first.

VR is an investment for the future.

## Using VR in insight in the future?

Virtual reality has the power to engage, excite and create genuinely new insights for brands, retailers, tech companies and financial brands. Is Virtual Reality The Future Of Insight? We think it should be.

Our challenge is to make sure we use the technology in a way that ensures human understanding at every step.

Virtual Reality isn't just about technology for technology's sake. Anyone can buy the kit, but to really tame the opportunities it presents into something that drives insight isn't necessarily easy. That's where you need the expertise of using different tools to get at a deeper level of human understanding.



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