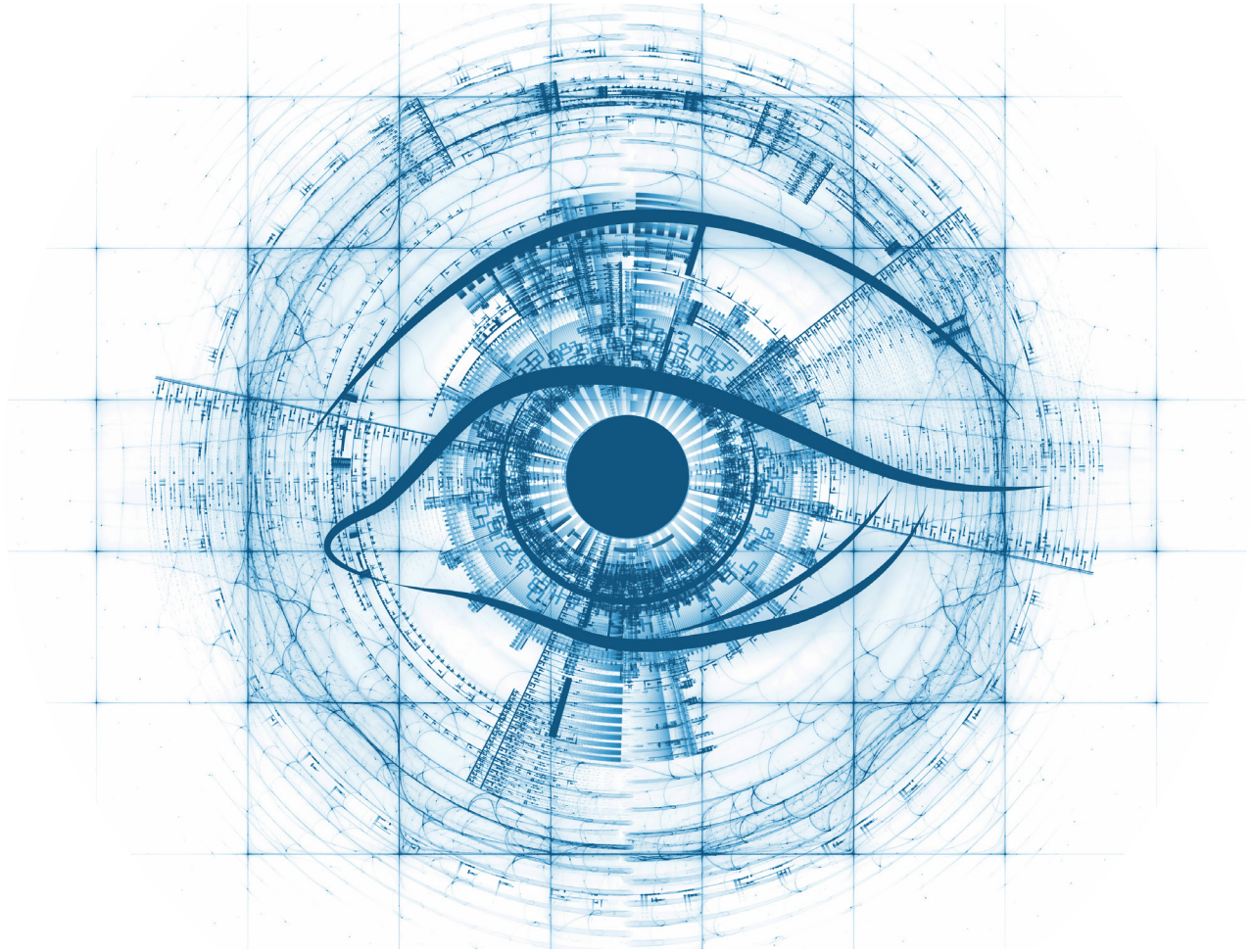


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Welcome to reality: It's not what you think

How virtual reality can broaden experiences and open minds in the HR organization of the future

ConnectMe™



I recently had the opportunity to experience a virtual reality (VR) film for the first time. I was fascinated and completely immersed.

I watched the 10-minute movie twice and came away with a different experience and impression each time. I haven't forgotten it. I instantly thought of all the possibilities where VR – or similar cognitive technologies – might be used within the organization of the future. Eventually, the effectiveness of this approach could be parlayed to address a variety of workplace human resources (HR) issues, from diversity and sensitivity training, to recruiting and onboarding new employees, to intensive on-the-job instruction.



Upending how we learn

At most organizations, employees' career development falls under HR responsibilities, or is closely connected. In the not-too-distant future, HR might use VR to facilitate goal-oriented career learning, recognizing that it could potentially boost retention rates and open minds to new concepts. VR films have the potential to build empathy and tolerance, which can positively impact employee engagement and drive business results.

In addition, VR can give workers a better understanding of their colleagues' jobs. Think about a call center representative for a health insurance company. If he or she could virtually follow a nurse or a physician and "see" some of the treatments members receive, suddenly the scripts would become experiences and, with it, a level of understanding otherwise not possible. Through empathy and understanding, customer service results could dramatically improve.

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Transforming the way we work

According to Deloitte's 2017 Global Human Capital Trends report, 70 percent of companies are redefining their organizational models, striving for interconnected teams instead of hierarchies. VR could be instrumental in helping people interact with their teammates and showing managers how many groups their employees interact with each day.

The precursors to VR are already at work. For example, new technologies and subscription services that feature employee portals are providing ways for employees to interact with managers when and how they want, making the work life balance easier.

Employees and managers alike have a vast array of information at their fingertips, such as leave requests and parameters, benefits explanations, withholding data, and more – all accessible from their mobile devices. These technologies provide a seamless, nontraditional way to accomplish tasks that used to be unnecessarily time-consuming.

It's technologies like these that will likely pave the way for VR implementation on a broad scale in the future.

Co-existing in the organization of the future with advanced technologies is real. Artificial intelligence, machine learning, and robotics are going to change the landscape for many jobs. The 2017 Deloitte Millennial Survey reveals millennials recognize the opportunities automation can provide for value-added or creative activities: it opens them up to be more strategic. The survey also showed that 51 percent of millennials believe they will need retraining to hone their skills and retain their jobs.

VR can be a powerful ally in teaching employees how to co-exist with new technologies, using them to achieve heightened decision-making capabilities. VR could also help those on the factory floor troubleshoot problems and manage a fleet of sensors that are tracking products traveling through assembly lines.

VR experiences can help employees prepare for safer experiences at work as well. Wouldn't you rather have them make the mistake in a simulation than in a plant?

Along with training, VR can also be used as an evaluation tool. For example, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), along with some airlines, are employing VR to train pilots using interactive problem solving. This opens yet another possibility: VR can be used to assess employees' skills, reducing subjectivity and bias in awarding promotions and enabling a better evaluation of skill mastery. Finally, there could be a way to assess recruits' performance in potential real-world situations.

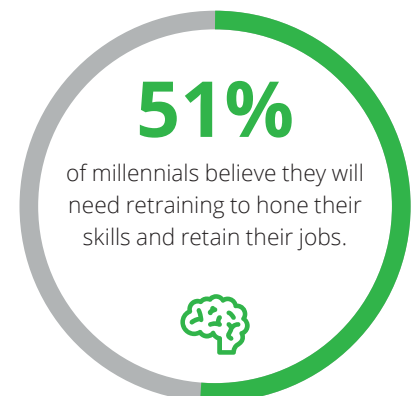
Deloitte's 2017 Global Human Capital Trends indicates that...



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and





Using the power of the experience to recruit

For attracting and recruiting highly-skilled or sought-after talent, VR can offer a powerful experiential glimpse into what it's like to work for an organization.

VR has been used by some nonprofits to "show" donors the impact their donations can make. In the same way, VR can have a measurable effect on recruiting success. VR can make a recruit feel like he or she is already at the company, experiencing what every day work life is like.

Recruits can virtually travel to an organization's global offices or meet the C-suite team – without the travel expenses. And once they accept a job and begin the onboarding process, VR can be used for diversity and ethics training.

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Building a business case

After listening to a panel discussion with the creators of the VR film I experienced, I understood a lot more about the complexity of creating this type of immersive content.

The creators of the film that I saw were working with professional actors, writers, special 360 degree cameras, and all of the technical teams, not to mention budgets that come along with film making, even for just a short 10 minute one like this. However, as with most technologies, there's little doubt that competition will drive down VR costs in what is projected to be a multi-billion-dollar market.

To make the case for VR investment, HR organizations need to have a clear business case. It may make sense to demonstrate its value in multiple internal and external initiatives. The cost to develop and design VR for an organization can be weighed against savings in travel and training costs. Think of the amount of money a company can spend bringing together employees in centralized annual training. Its usage may also result in increased employee engagement, retention, productivity, and risk aversion. It's all quantifiable. And, at some point, VR will make sense for many large organizations.

VR allows people to step into different stories and into their own life-like experiences. The value of VR exists in opening minds, reframing dialogues, and creating transformative ways of working.





Addressing the changing landscape *now*

The workplace continues to evolve at a breakneck pace, creating challenges for HR leaders. Disruptions abound – from demographic shifts in the workforce, to digital advances in the workplace that are altering traditional business models.

Fortunately, a number of innovative solutions are available today that can help HR organizations stay ahead of the curve. Deloitte's insights and experiences help organizations stay abreast of trends and adeptly maneuver the shifting landscape. And Deloitte's ConnectMe™ enables a digital workplace using data and insights

to connect the workforce to what they need, when and where they need it. Digital technologies such as ConnectMe can improve HR's ability to effectively address a number of HR issues – and, in the process, transform the employee experience.

So while VR may be around the corner, today's reality is digital HR. Welcome to the *new* reality.

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