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Helping employees develop valuable skills through immersive VR experiences

Aiming to stay at the leading edge of staff training and career development, Saint-Gobain France is expanding its digital training catalog by creating immersive learning experiences delivered through virtual reality (VR) headsets.

Working with VR training specialist Uptale, Saint-Gobain France deployed Lenovo Mirage VR S3 headsets and started designing new training courses.

Following its highly successful experience with two VR training tools – in the domains of safety and price labeling – the company is now busy designing further experiences and increasing its autonomy in the use of the Uptale Immersive Learning platform.

The platform is already delivering on the primary objective of making training more effective. And the use of Lenovo ThinkReality platform simplifies the deployment and ongoing remote management of headsets as Saint-Gobain France rolls out more experiences.

Saint-Gobain France is the leader in sustainable housing, employing around 37,000 people, operating 2,000 points of sale, 88 industrial

sites and two R&D centers.

Developing employees' skills is at the center of the company's strategy. In a world of change and disruption, the company aims to ensure that a career at Saint-Gobain is characterized by the development of skills, well-being and engagement.

Enabling remotely managed learning

Mindful of the effectiveness of its training, Saint-Gobain France has two objectives: to create learning journeys that are sequenced and spaced out over time, and to offer a mix of modalities: in-person and digital, synchronous and asynchronous.

Intrigued by the possibilities of VR, Saint-Gobain France worked on a pilot program with Uptale: a leading French solution provider.



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**Smarter
technology
for all**

Lenovo



In technical terms, the Lenovo solution works better, and everything is more fluid. We save time at every stage, and full remote management through ThinkReality means we avoid having to travel offsite to update headsets or fix problems.”

Brendan Le Bihan

*Training Projects Manager
Saint-Gobain France*

Brendan Le Bihan, Training Projects Manager at Saint-Gobain France, explains: “By combining different training modalities, we can increase the interest and engagement felt by participants. VR enables us to rapidly deliver content on a variety of topics, taking advantage of the pedagogic benefits of immersive learning.”

While the Uptale Immersive Learning platform was a great success, making it easy to design and deliver 360-degree experiences that improve long-term information retention, the VR headsets that Saint-Gobain France initially selected proved to be problematic.

Brendan Le Bihan says, “VR is very well suited to autonomous learning, so it was important to have a solution that we could deploy and manage remotely, outside of our training centers. The VR headsets we chose initially did not meet those requirements, so we looked for a new platform.”

Simplifying the rollout of VR experiences

Based partly on a recommendation from Uptale, and partly on its existing partnership with Lenovo, Saint-Gobain France switched to Lenovo Mirage VR S3 headsets managed by the Lenovo ThinkReality platform.

“The Lenovo Mirage hardware was a clear step up in terms of quality and user experience,” says Brendan Le Bihan. “It provides a simpler, more ergonomic and more fluid experience for the user, and the ThinkReality software enables us to simplify the remote management of headsets. We’re now working with Lenovo to integrate our single-sign-on solution, and to roll out a Kiosk mode, both of which will further improve ease of use.”

Using the online Uptale studio, Saint-Gobain France rapidly created its first two immersive learning experiences: for safety in the workplace and for legal training around in-store price labeling. Both include elements of gamification to improve the learning experience

and support long-term retention. The legal training experience puts the trainee in the shoes of a store manager, making decisions about labeling, guided by a good and a bad conscience, while the safety experience puts trainees in simulated at-risk situations to help them understand the group’s safety rules.

“Uptale provided great support in helping us to build the first experience, and we very rapidly became autonomous,” says Brendan Le Bihan. “The Uptale offering meets our needs: It’s easy to use but very powerful. It also provides precise statistics on how the headsets are being used and how effective the training is.”

Uptale and Lenovo are continuing to work together on the integration of the Uptale Immersive Learning platform with the Lenovo ThinkReality platform to enable easier management and more detailed analytics. Saint-Gobain France has already deployed 62 Lenovo Mirage VR S3 headsets and expects to grow to approximately 120 devices in the next 12 months.



Accelerating employee training through VR

Switching to Lenovo VR headsets provided immediate improvements in both usability and manageability. “In technical terms, the Lenovo solution works better, and everything is more fluid,” says Brendan Le Bihan. “We save time at every stage, and remote management through ThinkReality means we avoid having to travel offsite to update headsets or fix problems.”

A June 2020 study by PwC revealed that VR learning can be as much as 4 times faster than classroom learning and 1.5 times faster than e-learning, as well as making learners almost 3 times more confident to put their new learning into practice.

“We’ve received very positive feedback from trainees: VR learning encourages participation and interaction with other learners,” says Benjamin Croizet, VR Training Manager at Saint-Gobain France. “The dynamic nature of VR learning is great, and the gamification element provided by Uptale is a vital element in creating engagement. Everyone learns better through play.”

Adding immersive VR experiences alongside other learning modalities will help keep training varied, engaging and impactful, while making it easier to extend learning to locations throughout France.

Growing demand for new experiences

Since the go-live, Saint-Gobain France has developed new VR experiences, including the installation of floor joists and the management of customer complaints. Other plans include sanitation and a virtual visit of the corporate headquarters, the Saint-Gobain Tower.



“We’re seeing great interest in VR training, and we’re looking forward to getting more quantified feedback on the positive impact that we’re already seeing,” says Brendan Le Bihan. “We hope that these good results will encourage other teams to start using it in ways that are adapted to their own specific working contexts and challenges.”

He concludes: “The partnership between Uptale and Lenovo is working really well for us. We plan to develop new learning experiences so that we can offer an innovative modality that allows employees to develop their skills faster and more effectively.”



Working with VR specialist Uptale, Saint-Gobain France deployed **Lenovo Mirage VR S3** headsets and started designing new learning experiences.

The Smarter Solution

Excellent learning experiences

Lenovo’s Mirage VR headsets provide a comfortable, ergonomic and above all fluid experience for users, promoting better learning outcomes.

Committed to ongoing integration

Uptale and Lenovo, Saint-Gobain France’s solution partners, continue to work on closer integration between the Uptale Immersive Learning platform and the Lenovo ThinkReality platform to simplify the management of headsets and provide more detailed analytics on their usage.

Easy remote management

The Lenovo ThinkReality platform makes it easier for Saint-Gobain France to manage VR headsets remotely, saving time and effort by avoiding the need for technicians to travel offsite for maintenance or updates.