



JT40 Virtual Product Demo

Challenge

Ditch Witch is a globally known leader in the design and manufacture of underground construction equipment. Innovation is foundational to the brand. Ditch Witch launched the first compact trenching machine in the 1940's to replace the pick and shovel for the installation of underground utility services. It was revolutionary. Their decades of specialization in equipment for the construction of subterranean structures and systems has earned them the reputation of "The Underground Authority".

When Ditch Witch was preparing to launch a groundbreaking, new equipment platform, the JT40, there was a strong desire to design a launch strategy as innovative and technologically advanced as the JT40 itself. Ditch Witch and their agency Littlefield wanted to do something unforgettable for the rollout of the JT40. What better way to unveil revolutionary horizontal directional drilling technology than to market it with revolutionary technology?

Ditch Witch and Littlefield reached out to create strong narratives and visual experiences to inform and engage sophisticated B2B buyers – and the semiannual CONEXPO in Las Vegas, Nevada would be the perfect place to do it.

CONEXPO is North America's largest construction trade show and the ideal setting for such an important product launch as the JT40. However, with over 1800 exhibitors, Ditch Witch faced multiple challenges including (i) standing out from the competition on a crowded trade show floor, (ii) demonstrating the product to attendees at scale given only one JT40 at the event, and (iii) simulating the product's unique underground capabilities in an exposition hall.



Ditch Witch wanted a JT40 launch strategy as innovative and technologically advanced as the product itself."

Solution

Virtual Product Demonstrations

The solution was to create an immersive virtual reality (VR) tour of the JT40's revolutionary capabilities. XALTER went to work designing an exciting "dark ride" style experience for booth attendees that would engage their senses completely while learning all about the notable features and innovations of the new equipment. This included a dynamic overview of key specifications in a futuristic showroom, a first person tour of the interior cabin's state of the art controls and interfaces, and a front row seat to experience the JT40 in action – including the unprecedented ability to follow the equipment underground to see it in action.

Only in virtual reality could an equipment manufacturer like Ditch Witch give its prospects, customers and channel partners an experiential tour of key product features and selling points, including vantage points and visualizations not possible in the real world. All this while giving them a memorable and entertaining experience that makes a buying decision an enjoyable one.



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Pre-show VR Content

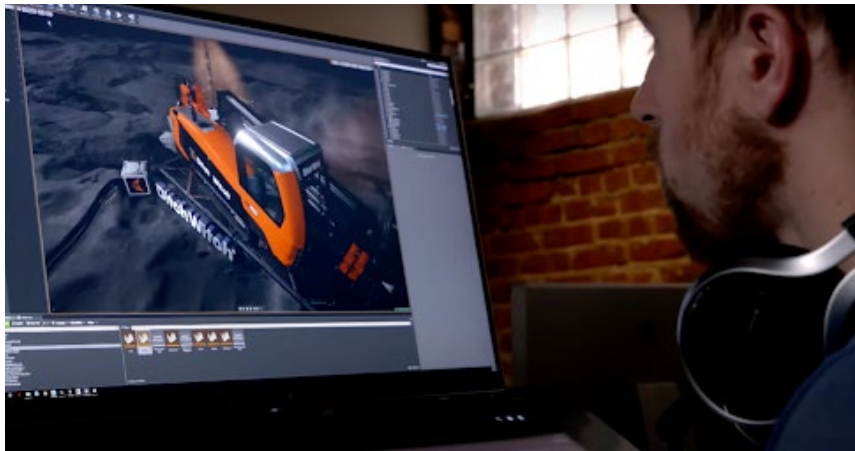
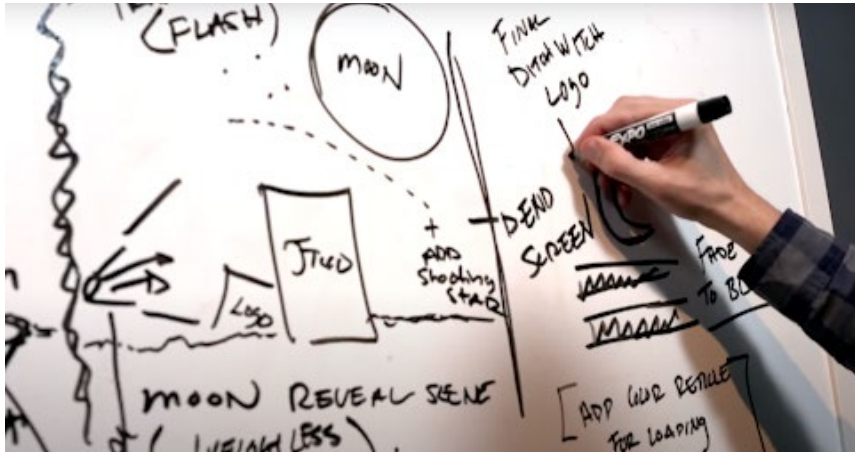
To take full advantage of the experiential nature of VR, XALTER crafted a pre-show video teaser and other media assets for Littlefield and Ditch Witch to emphasize the immersive VR experience to drive interest and traffic to the booth through an online campaign. One of the many advantages of creating 3D CGI assets (including the product itself and branded environments) for VR is that these can be easily repurposed to create animations for traditional playback on social media and flat screen presentations.

Virtual Lead Qualification

Using VR, four virtual demonstration stations were set up in a footprint that would have only accommodated one physical JT40, Ditch Witch was able to engage visitors at 4X the throughput of a physical product demo. In addition, each interested guest got an informative, engaging overview of the equipment in less than four minutes. Not only did this create a perfect first impression, but it freed up the sales staff to talk to qualified buyers, instead of consuming time providing general product information as part of the initial discovery process.



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Increased Traffic and Engagement

The results absolutely exceeded Ditch Witch's expectations, and their Senior Vice President of Brand Strategy called it "a home run" as they experienced increases in booth traffic, prospect engagement and lead capture based on the JT40 Virtual Reality Tour.

Accelerating Lead Generation and Sales

While specific numbers and conversion rates are restricted by confidentiality, the use of VR did increase leads and sales of the JT40, according to Ditch Witch leadership. "It was a home run in terms of audience acceptance, people actually seeing the VR and wanting to experience the product. It led from seeing the virtual reality experience of the JT40 to 'Can I See a Sales Guy?'"

Attracting Next Gen Customers

Another important result from using VR to demonstrating the JT40 was its particular appeal to younger generations at the show. The JT40 Virtual Experience got rave reviews from many of the younger visitors to the Ditch Witch booth.

Feedback included, "It was a fun experience, it is a good way for a younger generation to play with technology while learning about underground drilling, which isn't always the most exciting thing but you guys found a way to make it exciting" and "This is beyond anything I have seen at the show so far."

With Millennials now representing the largest generation in the workforce, it is critical that manufacturers recognize that these digitally-native decision makers prefer to experience their learning – and VR delivers on these expectations. Creating

strong positive brand experiences early in the buyer journey can help manufacturers stand out and sustain sales engagement with key prospects and customers.

What Attendees Had to Say

- “[Wasn't Expecting Anything Like That](#)”
- “[You Found a Way To Make it Exciting](#)”



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XALTER develops virtual and augmented reality solutions for product development, technical and safety training, marketing, sales enablement and customer support. This includes XR content development, XR strategy and deployment consulting, and a cloud-based Metaverse platform for creating virtual university and industrial collaboration environments.

We serve a variety of industrial, higher education, government and military customers and help them plan and deploy AR and VR to transform their operations and engage the 21st century workforce. We also help to prove efficacy through the safe and secure collection of performance data to improve worker safety and operating performance.

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