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X Series Virtual Product Launch

Challenge

For five decades, ECHO has been a worldwide leader in manufacturing professional-grade, hand-held outdoor power equipment for both the commercial and homeowner markets. The company prides itself on setting the industry standard with its dedication to new technology and quality products.

When ECHO decided to launch a new line of professional grade, “prosumer” outdoor equipment products (the “X Series”), it was essential that the launch experience was impactful and memorable to reflect the product positioning.

While attending an industry trade show, several ECHO executives visited another manufacturer’s booth and witnessed the increased booth traffic and product

engagement being created by a virtual reality (VR) experience produced by XALTER. After experiencing XALTER’s VR content first-hand and receiving an enthusiastic recommendation by a satisfied XALTER customer, ECHO executives became convinced that virtual reality (VR) would be a key marketing and sales enablement technology to support the X-Series launch.

ECHO wanted to deliver a set of personalized brand and product experiences to outdoor lawn and garden enthusiasts with high expectations for handheld equipment. XALTER’s task was to craft an engaging, memorable experience that would create interest and ultimately sales of the X Series product line.

Solution



The ECHO Chamber

VR is a space of unlimited possibilities: scale, distance, physics and the laws of the universe are suspended. It's not a medium to simply simulate reality but a place to give people experiences that could ONLY happen in virtual reality. With that in mind the ECHO Chamber was born.

We cast the X Series as "precision equipment so extreme that only the most hard working and committed (users) can challenge the limit of its capabilities." In a bit of playful reverse psychology, the ECHO chamber was conceived as a human testing facility designed to test and certify individuals extreme enough to be worthy of X Series ownership.

VR Enabled Content Strategy

To take full advantage of the unique appeal of VR, XALTER crafted a video teaser to drive interest and traffic to the X Series marketing and trade show events as part of an online campaign. One of the many advantages of creating 3D CGI assets (including the product itself and branded environments) in VR is that these can be easily repurposed to create animations for traditional playback on social media and flat screen presentations. In addition to pre-show marketing, the ECHO Chamber concept was leveraged to create a branded bag to memorialize the VR experience. Nylon bags emblazoned with "I survived the ECHO Chamber" were handed out to everyone who made it to the end of the VR experience.

Emotionally-Connected Recall

The sensory believability of VR made it an ideal medium to create extreme situations sure to get a visceral response from participants. Studies show that experiences in VR have significantly higher recall and individuals are 3.75 times more emotionally connected to content they experienced in VR.

3.75x

More emotional connection to content experienced in VR

Source: [PwC](#)

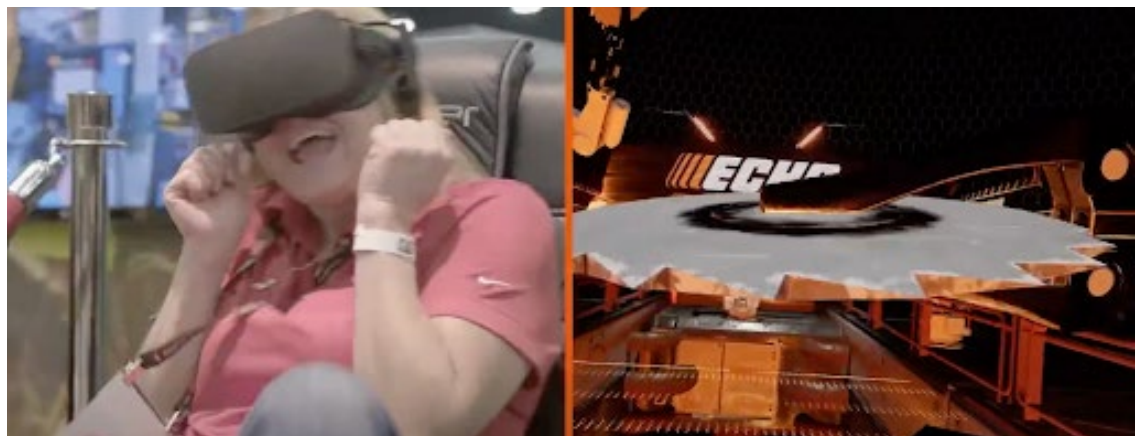


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Taking advantage of these unique properties, the experience was designed as a series of tests tied to the distinctive strengths of the X Series line: speed, torque, weight, and precision. A high speed tunnel, a tornado near miss, weightlessness, and close quarters with circular saws all created an intense thrill ride that had most ducking, squirming and sometimes screaming in their seats. The experience ended (after passing the test) with a visually dynamic overview of the key features that make this line of outdoor equipment product line in a class of its own. It was clear that the ECHO Chamber experience made a lasting impression on all who experienced it.

Experiencing the Product Positioning

Tim Bartlett, the Marketing Manager for ECHO, identified VR as a way to connect the ECHO brand with its reputation. "There is a lot of technology that goes into the engines we make and a lot of innovation goes into the engines themselves. I wanted to carry on that same sort of image into the marketing. So we started thinking about how we could use this new technology (VR) in our marketing efforts." The VR technology in the booth would communicate to everyone that visited ECHO's dedication to technology and innovative design.



Increased Traffic and Engagement

The results were obvious to everyone involved. The use of velvet ropes were necessary to organize the near constant line at the booth driven by word of mouth. Booth traffic and prospect engagement were more than double the previous GIE expo event and attributed to the ECHO Chamber VR experience. Bartlett encapsulated the sentiment by saying, "We have an awesome project, you can see how many people are going through it and look at their reactions, it's just killing it."



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- Tim Bartlett, Marketing Manager, ECHO

Believers in VR

The first use of VR for ECHO and the results it generated had them thinking about its future applications. Wayne Thomsen, the VP of Marketing said after seeing the impact of VR himself,



"We want to see how far we can take technology like this (VR) to do different things for training, for the entertainment value, for the brand equity, so we'll continue to look toward pushing the envelope."

- Wayne Thomsen, VP of Marketing, Aftermarket and Outsource, ECHO

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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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