



Virtual reality

Virtual reality (VR) has recently risen to prominence in the media conversation, and many broadcasters are looking into the exciting new opportunities this technology offers. The real value of VR for broadcasters goes beyond the 3D video format: it's about the opportunity it offers to create interactive and immersive social video experiences for viewers, thus connecting them deeply with a brand, be it that of a channel or an advertiser. The monetisation opportunities linked to VR products are manifold, including product placement, mixed reality ads, sponsorship and in-app transactions.

egta has compiled four examples of companies that created VR content for promotion and entertainment purposes as an inspiration for egta members considering making use of this new format.

Discovery and Eurosport – brand integration



In early 2015, Discovery launched its [Discovery VR](#) app devoted to 360° videos and VR content across Discovery and Eurosport. Viewers can watch the videos on several platforms, including iOS, Android and Oculus apps, Samsung Gear VR and Oculus Rift. The main strategy behind the launch was to appeal to millennial digital natives by tapping into a potential next-generation growth business. On top of its original content videos, Discovery launched its first VR scripted four-part miniseries, [The Satchel](#), in collaboration with [Toyota](#). The objective was to introduce the new Rav4 Hybrid model and demonstrate its versatility and range through an authentic VR road trip. This campaign reached 14.2 million views. As of November 2016, Discovery achieved 80 million video views overall (59% through YouTube, 32% through Facebook and 9% through the Discovery VR app).

Discovery and Eurosport also cooperated with **Audi** and the [Audi Birds of Prey](#), one of the biggest downhill ski races on the planet. Viewers could step into Bode Miller's skis as he took on the *Birds of Prey World Cup* downhill course. Promotion for this initiative also took place on social media, as the content was easily sharable and snackable. For the 2016 French Open tennis tournament, Eurosport launched its own [VR application](#) and showcased exclusive behind-the-scenes VR content produced specifically for the [Longines](#) watch brand, on top of its traditional digital activation during the event.



TF1 – The Voice VR

TF1 offers its viewers the possibility to experience *The Voice* on a whole new level. Thanks to the [MYTF1 VR](#) app, viewers can immerse themselves into an interactive virtual set while sitting on the judge's seat. While watching the show, viewers can select their favourite talents during blind auditions using their phone or VR headset. TF1 offers a unique opportunity to tailor this immersive experience for an exclusive advertiser throughout the duration of the blind auditions. There are multiple branding options within the app, such as the brand's logo appearing before each performance, logo integrated in the virtual set, banners, 15-second spots, page takeovers, etc. To attract viewers, some auditions are available 24 hours before the TV premiere through [The Voice VR](#). There is also a branded section dedicated to the sponsor within the MYTF1 VR app, which allows them to share their own VR content. The exclusive sponsor also gets additional visibility from social media posts, promotion on the TF1 website and TV promos.



Géraldine Pangrazzi, Director, TF1 Publicité Live shared with egta: "We believe that many other VR projects will see the light in the coming months and years, as they offer a real opportunity of powerful interaction with brands and therefore strong partnerships for us."



TV4 – living the adventure



TV4 Sweden also decided to test VR for its talent show [Idol](#) in 2015. Thanks to the app developed for the show, viewers could be virtually present on the set close to the judges and contestants, and they could experience the auditions, watch contestants singing backstage or even visit the control room. This initial test of VR was successful, leading TV4 to go a step further in 2016 and develop Sweden's first TV program in 360° with the popular Idol host Pär Lernström. This was done in cooperation with [Liveit.se](#) – a company offering experience gifts – with the goal to highlight the experiences people can enjoy with Liveit.se activities. The VR program was called [Weekly 360](#), and viewers could

experience the most breath-taking activities, such as skydiving, driving a Ferrari, paragliding or flying a helicopter together with the host. All the videos were recorded in 360° and could be watched on VR headsets, tablets, phones or computers. The show was a great success; after only 6 episodes, the show had more than 190 thousand views and reach on social media of 1.3 million. The show's innovative format also attracted great press coverage.

Despite the big PR success of both these projects, TV4 has not found a way to capitalise on VR for the moment. "Therefore, for now, we are focusing on those business areas that we find need to be improved and developed, and put the technology of VR on hold." said Malin Hager, Sales Director of TV4.



Sports events make a great match for VR



Sporting events seem to be a perfect match for the VR technology. egta's 2016 study trip to New York included a meeting with [LiveLike](#), a VR platform and tech provider that enables broadcasters and sports teams to deliver immersive, live sports viewing experiences and that has worked, for example, with Fox on events such as the [Super Bowl](#) and [Basketball tournaments](#). Another broadcaster also recently announced the launch of its VR offer: [France Télévisions Publicité](#) will offer new digital experiences, including an e-mag called 360° VR, during the upcoming French Open tennis tournament. This daily magazine will allow viewers to immerse themselves behind the scenes of the tournament in VR.

Why does this matter to egta members?

Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) echo television's core strength: creating emotions. If these new technologies enable these emotions to become even stronger, the potential for marketers is immense – providing users truly embrace the technology.

When new trends like these emerge, it is important to watch and learn from the experiences of fast-movers and to assess the real business opportunities behind them. As Simon Applebaum, a contributing writer for MediaVillage.com, said: "VR and AR can only become commonplace if we have more than one way to experience them. Smart TV sets and devices may be a way, together with headgear and mobile. Is that the only way? We'll never know unless the creators of these services try."

Resources

- » **Discovery VR** (click [here](#))
- » **The Satchel case** (click [here](#))
- » **Birds of Prey case** (click [here](#))
- » **Eurosport VR** (click [here](#))
- » **Longines case** (click [here](#))
- » **MY TF1 VR** (click [here](#))
- » **The Voice VR** (click [here](#))
- » **TV4 VR** (click [here](#))
- » **Weekly 360 case** (click [here](#))
- » **LiveLike** (click [here](#))
- » **FTP VR** (click [here](#))