Audi uses virtual reality to train Logistics employees

- Virtual training concept teaches packing processes
- Game-like approach increases motivation and attention
- Pilot phase successfully completed; use implemented in multiple locations

Ingolstadt, August 25, 2017 – The training center of the future fits in a suitcase: A computer, a pair of virtual reality glasses and two controllers are all it takes for the new interactive learning program for Audi packing logistics. The program makes it fun for employees to learn the packing process for CKD Logistics (CKD = completely knocked down). The exercises are designed like a video game and the equipment is quick and easy to set up anywhere.

When employees put on the VR glasses, they see a realistic and true-to-life simulation of their work station in Hall L of the Ingolstadt Logistics Center. They also hold a controller in each hand that is also used for video games. They use it to grasp and move the virtual images of their work equipment, such as containers or components. Preparing cardboard boxes, placing sun visors in the correct position, applying labels correctly to the container: step-by-step, employees go through the various packing processes just as they would happen in reality. They learn the required hand movements while also getting familiar with the corresponding IT programs. Because this no longer requires actual components and containers, the training can be accomplished flexibly at any location, and the company saves valuable space as well as time and money.

The VR training has various levels of difficulty. This way, the employee can advance and is motivated to immediately put what is learned to use. Whereas learners receive detailed instructions in the first level, in the second round they must “pack” more independently and remember the work steps. The training program immediately gives employees feedback and they can repeat each exercise as often as they wish. A trainer is available to support employees at all times. These trainers can use an associated app on their tablet to follow the training progress and offer help where needed.

The new training program also overcomes language and distance barriers: various language versions can be run with little effort, so that Audi employees can now also train with Spanish or English instructions. This also functions across locations: an employee in Ingolstadt Logistics
can work virtually in the Audi plant in San José Chiapa, Mexico, and vice versa. Programmers used existing 3D data from the plans for Audi plants for the realistic depictions of the various locations.

“The response of the employees to the virtual training is extremely positive,” said Project Head Mirko Göres from Brand Logistics Information Process Planning. “After a six-month pilot phase, two process training programs are now in permanent use in CKD Logistics. We are now working with the training center in Ingolstadt and the Neckarsulm and Ingolstadt Plant Logistics to develop three additional VR training programs on the topics of pick-by-light, pick-by-tablet and pick-by-voice.” In addition, the Audi locations of San José Chiapa and Brussels will be more involved in the project in the future.

Virtual reality is used by Audi in numerous areas of the company – from Sales and Technical Development to Production. For instance, the first Audi dealers are already offering the “Audi VR experience” during customer consulting in their dealerships. With this, prospective buyers can configure their virtual dream car and examine a lifelike replica down to the smallest detail.

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