

RETAIL

## Harrods' VR experience brings customers to the Seven Wonders of the World

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*Harrods' VR experience will last until the end of October. Image credit: Harrods*

By DANNY PARISI

London department store Harrods is promoting its globetrotting He Who Travels menswear effort with a virtual reality twist on the standard campaign film.

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The retailer will be hosting an in-store virtual reality experience until the end of October developed in partnership with Oculus. The campaign shows the staying power that virtual reality has had this time around, as previous resurgences of the technology have not been embraced by brands the way VR has in the last few years.

He Who Travels

Virtual reality as a concept has reappeared numerous times since it was first conceptualized decades ago.

While previous iterations of virtual reality have failed to catch on, the most recent resurgence of VR is showing a staying power unmatched by those that came before.

This is particularly true among brands, who have begun to embrace the possibilities of VR in a major way.

Harrods is the latest retailer to employ virtual reality for a unique in-store experience.

Until the end of the month, visitors to Harrods in London will be able to experience an in-store VR trip through some of the seven wonders of the world.



*Harrods' 360-degree video campaign. Image credit: Harrods*

In a campaign called The Great Outdoors, Harrods will let customers experience what it is like to ski down the Alps or hang glide over a canyon all through virtual reality.

The VR experience is part of the larger menswear campaign that Harrods is running called He Who Travels, focusing on the luxury goods and apparel essential for someone who lives their life traveling around the globe to exotic locations.

The Great Outdoors was created in partnership with Oculus, the VR startup that was purchased by Facebook and has been leading the current charge on virtual reality as a branding tool.

#### VR's future

While Harrods' use of virtual reality is experiential and aimed at getting customers into the store, other brands have taken a more transactional approach to VR.

Luxury travel and hospitality brands are embracing the impact virtual reality has on consumers through a bespoke experience that tailors experiences for each brand.

Four Seasons and Rosewood are a few of the luxury hotel companies that are looking to VIP Worldwide for its marketing virtual reality application. The brands are creating unique, immersive experiences that draw in customers ([see story](#)).



*The campaign was created with Oculus. Image credit: Harrods*

Similarly, precision-cut crystal maker Swarovski is working with Mastercard for its latest retail innovation, a virtual reality shopping app for home decor.

The app will allow customers to view crystal accessories for their homes in three dimensions, all through their

smartphones. The partnership shows that even with augmented reality's dominance, virtual reality can still be a powerful tool for brands and retailers in all categories ([see story](#)).

These transactional uses of virtual reality are not as flashy as something as bombastic as Harrods' take on the technology. But what these other uses show is the versatility of virtual reality as a tool that can be used beyond the initial wow factor of being in a 360-degree immersive environment.

As Harrods and other brands continue to take up VR for a variety of diverse use cases, its status as a useful tool for brands and retailers is looking better and better.

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