

VINCI Energies steps up health & safety at work with virtual reality

VINCI Energies, through Actemium, its brand dedicated to industrial processes, offers its employees health & safety training courses with the aid of virtual reality. The realistic nature of the training courses means that workers are noticeably more aware of procedures and the hazards they may face on the job sites. The company offers a total of four VR modules, the very latest of which focuses on the risks that occur on the way to and from work.

VINCI Energies is a pioneer in the area of workplace safety. The company is keen to play its part in driving down the number of occupational accidents. To this end, it organises an annual Safety Week around the globe to raise awareness among employees. At [Actemium](#), the health & safety training courses are staged with the aid of virtual reality.

“Our employees are exposed to potentially hazardous situations on a day-to-day basis. Which is why we stage intensive health & safety training courses each year. However, we were eager to find a novel way to actively involve all workers”, Actemium’s Operations Support Manager Dirk Wuyts explains. “Along with a Dutch colleague, I set out to find alternatives. Eventually, we came up with the idea of setting up virtual reality training sessions.”

Interactive training

“To me, the biggest factor in the success of virtual reality is that it makes situations feel very real AND it allows people to get things wrong and make mistakes. Not a luxury we can afford in real life”, Dirk Wuyts goes on to say.

“All training sessions are attended by groups of just four to five people. Whilst one person is performing the VR exercise, his/her fellow workers and the instructor can see how he/she goes about it on screen. The results are subsequently discussed as a group. After such a session, participants are much better able to draw conclusions and learn from their mistakes.”

The realistic and interactive nature of the training courses means that workers are noticeably more aware of procedures and the hazards they may face on the job sites. All the more so as the sessions are entirely tailor-made. Each scenario is based on hazardous situations that actually occurred. In addition, all tools and materials that are used in the virtual world are exactly the same as those used in the actual working environment.

Workplace travel

Alongside job site inspections and sessions on the health and safety rules to be observed whilst performing electrical & mechanical activities, a module on road safety will be added. This is the first module that is also aimed at administrative staff. *“The safety of our employees is paramount, including during workplace travel. This module sees us focus on the danger of using a mobile phone behind the steering wheel for instance”, Dirk Wuyts explains. “But this is just the beginning. Once we have had all the safety modules, we also plan to convert standard training courses into virtual reality courses.”*

Demo at Flemish government

“The scenarios for the VR training courses are devised entirely in-house by a team that is made up of my Dutch colleague, at least two experts and myself”, says Dirk Wuyts. In the meantime, the training courses are attracting a lot of interest within VINCI Energies Belgium and abroad. “Other companies too are suitably impressed with the thoroughgoing health & safety training courses and we have even staged a demo for the benefit of the Flemish government”.

“We’re delighted with the positive comments. My ambition is to expand the training courses to include all VINCI Energies Belgium business units in times to come. Yet, the best feedback to me is the feedback we get from our

employees. The fact that fellow workers who never previously actively took part in training courses are now enquiring about the next training module themselves is proof positive that the courses are a resounding success", Dirk Wuyts concludes.

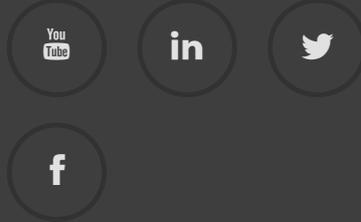
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