XR EVENT PLANNER: 
BRINGING HOTEL EVENT ROOMS TO LIFE
Accenture XR Event Planner is an immersive, collaborative and interactive augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) solution piloted in partnership with Qualcomm, Intercontinental Hotel Group (IHG) and InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown.

In the $330 billion annual US meetings and events industry,* booking event space is a slow and expensive task, often requiring event planners (representing corporate or individual buyers) to travel to multiple locations and communicate with geographically distant clients—a process that can take up to six months to complete. The lengthy timeframe to close a sale results not only in lost hotel sales opportunities, but also increases booking costs for both hoteliers and event planners.

The XR Event Planner solution extends the digital consumer journey to include mobile, mobile AR, AR glasses and VR headsets—enabling event planners, buyers and hotel sales staff to visualize, customize and move through event spaces remotely and collaborate throughout the process. This solution can significantly improve the way hotels sell meeting space, while supporting sales of associated hotel rooms, and food and beverages.

Focus group feedback and market analysis shows hotels could see increased revenue of up to 8 percent. In addition, hoteliers estimate being able to reduce sales cycle time and decrease booking costs.

* The annual revenue generated from the US industry is split between 1) direct spending for meeting planning and production; 2) sales of associated blocks of guest rooms, food and beverages and tourism services.
XR Event Planner is a super exciting and innovative app that brings our hotel directly to customers wherever they are. It will help us convert prospects to contracts more rapidly. Using the immersive experience, we can bring our meeting rooms to life in 3D and collaborate in real-time with buyers and event planners to modify a room configuration and flow.

Carolyn Harber, Director of Sales and Marketing, InterContinental Los Angeles, Century City at Beverly Hills
Today’s consumers increasingly demand hyper-personalization and authentic experiences in real-time while collaborating with friends and colleagues. This is especially true of the event planner demographic, more than half of which are Millennials and Generation Y, who find emerging technology tools appealing and expect brands to offer these types of immersive interactions. Hotel companies can push the boundaries through Extended Reality (XR), comprising AR and VR technologies, by simplifying the process to research, collaborate and book event rooms through an interactive and customizable virtual guide to meeting spaces. This approach—which extends the digital consumer journey to include XR—is an important time-saver and cost-saver for event planners, hotel sales staff and buyers, as well as a brand distinction for responsible hotel businesses in a carbon-conscious world.

The vast majority (92 percent) of travel companies are experimenting with new technologies to drive growth, innovation and better experiences.

Accenture Travel Technology Vision 2019

XR Event Planner benefits include:

- Overall increased revenue for hotels and hotel companies.
- Improved consumer trust through collaboration.
- Faster, more efficient booking process.
- Shorter sales cycle.
- Reduced booking costs for hoteliers as well as event planners and buyers.
- Increased event room bookings.
- Improved brand affinity through innovation
- Overall increased revenue for hoteliers.

For certain XR Event Planner use cases, hoteliers may choose to loan or supply AR or VR devices directly to customers to interact and collaborate as part of the purchasing process.
Event planning is a three-part process that can take as much as six months to complete.

**01**

The first phase involves researching and configuring possible spaces.

For the initial research in the first phase, event planners often rely on peer recommendations and the internet to identify room options. Most hotel websites include 2D photos and sometimes 360-degree photos of prime 5,000-to 8,000-square-foot meeting rooms; however, an event planner and/or a buyer usually still needs to see the space in person, which means traveling to multiple hotel sites.

**02**

The second phase includes confirming a suitable event space.

The second phase of the event planning process is to confirm the space. During this phase, event planners must convey their research results to colleagues or buyers (corporate or individual), who may be in different parts of the world. After gaining agreement from all parties, the event planner can make a down-payment—enabling hotel sales staff to close the meeting room sale.

**03**

The third phase is for planning details such as food, beverages and seating charts.

Only then can the hotels sales staff embark on the third phase of selling associated hotel rooms, and the event planner and buyer on choosing food, beverages and audio/visual services.

XR Event Planner solves for the first and second phases: improving the process for researching, configuring and confirming an event space.
For special events such as weddings or charity galas where details matter most, XR Event Planner helps customers see the space in a way that they can become emotionally attached to—because they can better visualize and feel their event come to life in the decision-making process.

Amy Funke, Director of Marketing & Communications, InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown
BRINGING THE HOTEL TO CLIENTS—ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

The XR Event Planner pilot solution, powered by Qualcomm technologies, recreates the iconic Hollywood Ballroom in the InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown in 3D—including architectural features, layout, lighting, carpet design, table settings and fabric patterns.

Hotel sales staff, event planners and buyers can collaborate side-by-side or in separate geographic locations using mobile, mobile AR, AR glasses and VR headsets with each device providing different levels of immersion in the space. Together, they can configure the ballroom and layout in real-time, using XR Event Planner to modify room layouts, toggling between table and chair configurations, stage placement, decorations and lighting—all while adding notes for colleagues or the hotel set-up crew.
In the pilot testing process, hotel sales staff noted these important features:

**360 degree and 3D view**—Allows event planners to get a clear idea of the flow and allows buyers to more quickly choose the room. Provides a realistic view from every vantage point and improves comfort to book the space without physically seeing it.

**Real-time room configuration**—Shows different room configurations; ability to modify and review in real-time with clients is “incredible.”

**Remote collaboration**—Helps a buyer or event planner colleague visualize what the room can look like in different set-ups or what the flow will be with a different number of tables and chairs.

**Sales-led, ambassador-driven presentations**—Shows customers (while on location, at a client site or tradeshow) what different set-ups and table configurations can look like. As salesperson makes changes on the phone, the event planner and buyer would be able to see it either on a tablet (as a screencast), mobile AR, AR glasses or VR.

**Modernize the brand**—Impresses customers by showing innovative solutions for event planning.

In a recent sale for our Hollywood Ballroom, I was working with one client located in Singapore, the other in London. XR Event Planner would have been an ideal tool to show the room without them leaving their offices.

Jim Ries, Director of Catering and Conference Services, InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown
Traditional digital consumer journeys need to be modernized and extended to account for what people now expect when interacting with a company or product. Consumers want to be immersed in a situation or an experience, as if they were physically present. They also want to be able to manipulate products from the comfort of their own home or office. And they want to collaborate with others while doing it.

Companies need to create new XR touchpoints that extend the typical web and mobile channels to mobile AR, AR glasses and VR. The experience and functionality should be tailored to the key strength of each device—ease of interaction and familiarity in mobile AR; deeper engagement, portability and ease of usage with AR glasses; and full immersion in VR. This approach will help strengthen a company’s appeal and differentiation while increasing customer loyalty.
IHG has a legacy of innovation, bringing new solutions to our hotels that enrich the guest experience and drive value for our owners at our nearly 5,800 hotels in more than 100 countries across our portfolio of 16 distinct brands. Participating in the XR Event Planner tool pilot with Accenture and Qualcomm is another great example of this focus. Through the use of augmented reality and virtual reality technology, we can help our hotels close event sales faster, increase overall productivity and ultimately have the potential for increased revenue. At the same time, we’re helping groups and meetings clients experience an event space up close without having to visit in-person, reducing carbon footprint, and giving them added assurance their event will be a success by bringing it to life in even more dynamic ways during the planning process.”

Jeff Edwards, Senior Vice President, Global Hotel & Owner Solutions, IHG
XR EVENT PLANNER IMMERSION, COLLABORATION AND INTERACTIVITY LEVELS BY DEVICE

**Mobile augmented reality**

- Easy to use and carry around. Runs on a mobile phone many people already own.
- Can be the “ambassador” device from which the hotel sales staff can screencast set-up and modifications in real-time to clients that might be in the same room, at a conference, in their office or in a different part of the world.
- Ideal for starting the initial browsing process (choosing the event room based on location or date) and toggling through layout options on the phone.

**VR headset/Vive Focus Plus**

- Able to immerse fully in the environment, walk around space and judge the placement of objects and details of the room accurately.
- Engaging experience for tradeshows
- Easy to ship to a client.
- Best for display role (in person or remote) while phone will be main device used by a connected presenter.

**Nreal glasses**

- Able to quickly see set-ups and modifications in a light, open and familiar form.
- Comfortable and easy to travel with or to ship to a client.
- Best for display role (in person or remote) while phone will be main device used by a connected presenter.
- Can add annotations using voice recognition without having to type.
At Qualcomm, we are excited to work with Accenture and IHG to develop experiences and solutions built upon our foundational technology to transform XR consumer journeys. Our underlying technology—whether on a smartphone, AR glasses or VR headset—will allow hotel event sales staff to reimagine a specific space to help a client become immersed and envision their event at that hotel location, even remotely. The Qualcomm Snapdragon XR Platform enables 360 and 3D environmental views, real-time room configuration and remote collaboration to support event planning efficiencies and drive XR innovation.

Patrick Costello, Senior Director, Business Development, Qualcomm Technologies, Inc.
STRATEGY TO EXTEND TRADITIONAL DIGITAL CONSUMER JOURNEY WITH XR

What does the future digital omni-channel consumer journey look like in your industry? What front-end design and build components will be required? What data and services will enable the back-end platforms that support these consumer journeys? What functional elements will fit the right device, platform or touchpoint? What are the implications for the creation of 3D content/assets and the associated pipeline?

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Analyze the entire consumer journey
Understand how and where XR can enhance an experience and relationship for both the consumer and the brand.

Balance the interactions
It may be possible to include multiple XR touchpoints into the omni-channel journey to enhance and extend the non-XR touchpoints. But choose the right functionality for each touchpoint.

Build for continuous functionality
Enable companies or consumers to use the XR solution repeatedly in their day-to-day roles versus “one and done.”

Deliver experience with purpose
More than just a brand marketing experience, XR should support a broader outcome like a sale or qualified lead.

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Accenture believes the influx of AR and VR is an important evolution in the omni-channel consumer journey. Accenture XR is leveraging the XR Event Planner framework, as well as usability lessons learned across XR platforms and 3D pipeline process, to create additional XR consumer journeys tailored to other industries.
Accenture Extended Reality (XR) is committed to helping our clients grow their businesses by creating, adopting and maintaining new digital journeys that extend into XR, allowing them to develop deeper relationships with customers and to connect, sell and provide services across all touchpoints.

The XR Event Planner—created in partnership with Qualcomm, IHG and InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown—is our first industry solution aimed at growing and increasing productivity across the $330 billion US meeting and event industry.

Raffaella Camera, Global Head of Innovation & Market Strategy, Accenture Extended Reality (XR)
About Accenture

Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions—underpinned by the world’s largest delivery network—Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With 492,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives. Visit us at www.accenture.com.

About InterContinental Hotel Group® (IHG)

IHG is one of the world’s leading hotel companies, with 400,000 colleagues working across more than 100 countries in nearly 5,800 hotels to deliver True Hospitality for everyone. Its diverse portfolio of differentiated brands are well known and loved by millions of consumers around the world. The company has the right hotel brand for both guests and owners, whatever their needs: Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas, Regent Hotels & Resorts, InterContinental® Hotels & Resorts, Kimpton® Hotels & Restaurants, Hotel Indigo®, EVEN Hotels®, HUALUXE® Hotels and Resorts, Crowne Plaza® Hotels & Resorts, voco™, Holiday Inn® Hotels & Resorts, Holiday Inn Express®, Holiday Inn Club Vacations®, avid™ hotels, Staybridge Suites®, Atwell Suites™ and Candlewood Suites®.

About Qualcomm

Qualcomm invents breakthrough technologies that transform how the world connects, computes and communicates. Building on 30+ years of mobile innovation, the company is extending into the XR ecosystem, driving a new caliber of experiences and transforming the enterprise industry by powering the most immersive and untethered mobile XR solutions.