

Making use of virtual reality (VR) technology, the project team has developed three multimedia, interactive virtual firm visits for students to learn from business managers in practice.

We provide students with firm visit experience using VR and multi-media technologies. There are two major components of the project:

1) Virtual Tour of the Company

Making use of the virtual reality technology, the business managers show students around their work place so as to replicate the experience of an actual firm visit. Students can freely explore the work environment of the firm with specific information popping-up.

2) Interview with the Business Managers

The interview focuses on the factors affecting the firm's business strategies, like pricing, industry structure, macro-environments (political, environmental, social, technological etc.) and relationship with supplier and customer. These interviews are incorporated with the virtual tour.

The VR tours produced will be accessible not only via specific VR devices but also devices like laptop computers, mobile tablet or phones. Students can make use of their own devices to access the virtual tours.

Firm visit is a very important component to complement business education in addition to lectures. While lectures equip students with the theoretical framework and knowledge, firms visit can provide students with (i) an opportunity to understand the real business world, (ii) insight about the industry from managers in practice and (iii) an opportunity to realise how different theories and tools learnt can be applied in practical managerial problems. However, given various constraints, firm visit can be difficult to arrange. For example, companies usually will not be able to accommodate too many students at the same time, or the same company will not be available to host such event repeatedly. On the other hand, it is always difficult to come up with a common time slot for firms, students, and the teacher, not to mention that the cost of arranging such a firm visit may be prohibitive, especially if the firms are located overseas. In view of these constraints, firm visit usually can only be arranged as an out-of-classroom activities, which can only benefit a very limited number of students. The virtual firm visits can overcome the limitations discussed above to benefit greater

number of students while, at the same time, minimising the administrative work involved in organising firm visit.

The VR visit can be used either in class time or before class. In the former case, teachers can guide students through the firm visit, explain relevant concepts and lead class discussion during the face-to-face class sessions. In the latter, students can take the VR tour on their own, be prepared when they come to class, and be engaged in more challenging class activities that involve higher-order thinking.