



ANDERS JØRGENSEN

PROJECT LEADER AT STOUENBORG

Selling your vision to a client is a challenge for any consultant but now Anders Jørgensen has a new tool in his arsenal. He talks to Anna Mitchell about using VR to create better buildings.

It's very hard for architects and consultants to take designs off the page and bring them to life for a client. At the very top end, CAVE environments can be used to walk people through projects but are expensive, often not practical and usually the preserve of those designing buildings, and not the systems within them.

But Danish AV consultancy and integrator Stouenborg is changing all that with the development of a VR tool to help it work with clients to sell its vision for projects, fine tune them and ensure that all invested parties are happy with the result.

Stouenborg has created immersive walkthroughs of four of its projects so far. Using standard VR hardware, the company is now able to enter a virtual world with their client and

discuss and amend projects before getting on site.

Anders Jørgensen, project leader at Stouenborg, recently headed over to the UK to demonstrate the tool.

I donned an Oculus Rift headset in London and found myself in an auditorium in Denmark. I looked around the room, saw screens go up and down, and witnessed the walls bathed in immersive projections. I was able to move around to experience viewing of displays and speaking positions from different places in the room. When the room was divided I could experience how it would feel to be in a smaller space. In a fun twist, at one point a sign instructed me to look round. I turned and was suddenly face to face with a huge T-Rex. It's playful but hugely practical. "The

aim is to create a story around the project that feels natural," explains Anders. "But it also allows us to get into a project earlier and influence building decisions," he adds.

This isn't theory. In practice the ceiling height of an auditorium, as well as a change in seating degree (to avoid line of sight problems) have been applied all because client, architect and integrator were able to see the virtual rendering of the project. "This is true consultancy," points out Jørgensen.

"When we're working in VR we can put the calculations aside for a moment and just focus on what feels right," he continues. "That's a big, and often ignored part of consultancy."

When "what feels right" doesn't match the calculations, measurements and drawings, it

can be expensive. Jørgensen estimates the ceiling height adjustment would have cost €10 million if it had been a physical building change.

VR can also persuade clients. In one project Jørgensen knew that doors would be required for an auditorium but the client wanted it open, out into a foyer. With VR, Jørgensen simulated the impact of ambient light and noise and the client then requested doors.

Right now the kit is bulky. I was amazed that Jørgensen was able to get through an airport with the PC required to run the visualisation. It's also not that cheap, although still a fraction of what a CAVE environment would cost. But things will only get better. The technology will advance, slim down and become cheaper and Stouenborg will be right at the front of the curve.