

YULIO^{VR}

StorrOffice
ENVIRONMENTS

Client Conversations:

Storr Office Environments:
Communicating Better With Yulio VR





Storr Office Environments of Raleigh, North Carolina have been creating inspiring workplaces for over 100 years.

But that long history has been driven by core principles and being leaders in innovation. In 2016, Storr adopted Yulio VR, and designer Lizzy French took the opportunity to dive in and become their VR Specialist. We sat down to hear from Lizzy how VR is helping Storr bring their best to client pitches, and win the business.

Can you describe your role and how you first encountered VR?

LF: I was new at Storr Office Environments the fall of 2016, and they sent around an email to the design team and asked if anyone would be interested in testing VR. I took it and ran with it and started using the Yulio app. I had time to educate the team and test and re-render, and through that morphed into the virtual reality specialist. On the team, we determine if a project is a candidate for VR mockups, and designers create a project, then I'll add ceilings, lighting features, and I'll create the presentation. We have a pretty well-developed process. A lot of designers on the team propose VR and I help them make it a reality.

What are some of your biggest business challenges today, and has VR helped with them?

LF: I think one of the biggest challenges, like everyone deals with, is building great relationships with the customers. Just being able to really communicate and build trust. And if you can do it faster, it's huge because we're in such a competitive world. If someone swoops and gives an awesome presentation, they could take your business. **The fact that we can build a relationship and do it quickly and convey the message faster is a big advantage.** So really the biggest help VR has given us is just helping us work and communicate with customers. Honestly, communication is the foundation of the house.

So where does Storr use VR most often?

LF: I was looking for ways VR could be used efficiently and started seeing that on bigger projects customers had trouble visualizing our designs - so those became the projects that had great potential for VR. **We have a set of criteria we use to evaluate bids, and the decision is really the same with VR. It's based on the size of the project, the competitive edge we want to use - and the project type.** If it's a customer we've worked with for years and they want similar things to what they've always had, maybe it's not a great use. But if it's a brand new customer or we want to wow someone and bring everything possible to the table, we build a VR presentation.

I find it's best to use it for clients when they're having a hard time understanding...and when we want a competitive edge. So I went to the owner of the company and we started talking with Yulio and we knew we needed to get some better goggles and I started moving into a VR specialist role and started proposing VR as much as possible.

We also use VR if we have revisions where we keep on going back and forth and we just cannot narrow something down, that's another great reason.

So does putting the client in VR speed up the sales process?

LF: It absolutely speeds it up - they don't really get it until it's their building, and they see their space, where they're going to spend 8 hours a day. It helps with communication.

If you can get the customer into the showroom to give them the experience, or even just send them a link that shows them their space, instead of a room with random furniture that they don't fully understand, that's huge.





Has Yulio saved you meeting time?

LF: For sure - it saves more than half the meetings. Typically if I have a million dollar project, I might normally have 6 in-person meetings. I'd say with the VR it's reduced to 2 or maybe 3 due to deeper understanding. But even more than that, **it builds the client's confidence in us, they trust us more because they now realize "ok, they're not just trying to make a sale, they understand what we're trying to achieve". It proves that our vision is all aligned.** And it falls in line with the core values we have at Storr, ensuring we're here for our clients.

We've also seen that VR helps with the number of meetings for things like finish decisions. Being able to show in the same meeting what a solution looks like in two finishes is amazing. We can put it right there in front of them where they can see it and then we can give them a sample in hand so they can look at it and touch it after. That way there's no "we'll get back to you". We can get people to make a decision in the showroom and get it ordered for them.

Have you won business because of VR?

LF: We have a great working relationship with a local university...I'm actually about to host a VR workshop for them. We'll be showing them a few floors in their library, and I'll be showing the model to students. We already have sign-off from the c-suite and librarians, but we'll be helping them get buy-in from students and faculty with this presentation. We've done VR for them several times and it's helped win upwards of another \$500K in business.

How do you find your clients react to VR presentations?

LF: They're usually pretty astonished. They don't fully understand how it works.

When we get into a room and pull out the goggles there's a sense of "whoa, what's about to happen". They put the goggles on and I remind people to relax and take in the experience. I always let them look around for a bit before I start the presentation because I've found as I experimented with colleagues and family that when people put goggles on, it's overwhelming if I immediately start talking. So I like people to look around, see where they are and then we can start discussing specific elements of the presentation.

So I think the short answer is that everyone is shocked and impressed, and it shows that you really care and you took the extra time to give them the personal experience of their actual space.

In many cases are you the one bringing your client's first VR experience to them?

LF: Yes - often in a room of 8 people or so there will be 2-3 who have seen it but usually in gaming or movies. Even those who have a sense that they've seen this before put the goggles on and they're as shocked as everyone else.

Most people haven't experienced it with the world and furniture they interact with on a day to day basis which I think makes a huge difference.





What are the Yulio features you use most often?

LF: The collaborate presentation tool has been the most beneficial part for us - being able to put the goggles on and have the design projected up on the screen is huge, instead of just watching someone wear goggles and not know what they're looking at. So being able to keep everyone fully engaged and part of the experience makes a big difference.

Personally, I also love the hotspot and floorplan tools. I use that a lot because I work on very large floorplans and I find as we're moving through a presentation clients don't know where they are. So that's when I say "let me show you exactly where you are" and I pull up the floorplan that's on the project and there's a blue dot there showing them exactly where they are. It's so helpful and clients can go anywhere in the floorplan they want.

I just did a presentation where we were going to do 3 views, but I had enough time to add ones from each department (11 views) and they ended up bringing every person from each department to the meeting, which we had no idea would happen. So by having everyone be able to experience their area and go through their own questions created amazing engagement.



Did it take you a long time to learn to use Yulio VR?

LF: No - It's so simple to use - I had probably a one hour call where the team walked me through how to add hotspots and how to collaborate - and how to add things like text and audio and basically everything inside Yulio in about an hour. And I haven't really had to call back! I just was able to figure it out myself and keep moving. It's pretty intuitive. I've been able to maneuver through it on my own with no problem.

Our thanks to Lizzy French for chatting with Yulio. To get started using VR to communicate faster and wow your own clients, contact us at hello@yulio.com for a demo, or visit yulio.com today.



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