

Walmart's annual meetings go virtual (and viral) with xR

American multinational retail corporation Walmart was faced with the necessity of holding two of its most important corporate meetings virtually for the first time in February 2021.

In this case study you will discover how [Xite Labs](#) relied on the disguise extended reality (xR) workflow to power two virtual meetings for Walmart that captured the attention and interest from both investors and key management personnel.



At a glance

Walmart needed to address a global audience of investors in its annual Investor Community Meeting (ICM), as well as key management personnel in its Year Beginning Meeting (YBM).

Once the decision was made to hold the two meetings virtually, Walmart opted to have top company executives host the proceedings in extended reality at Walmart headquarters in Bentonville, Arkansas. From there they could present information, showcase statistics and accent the meetings with AR elements to add layers of visual interest and engage viewers in a compelling way.

Following a successful demo of the disguise xR capabilities, experiential event company [LEO Events](#) invited Xite Labs, a long-time disguise creative and workflow partner, to custom build a disguise xR stage at Walmart's HQ, seamlessly integrating each key element to deliver a one-of-a-kind virtual event experience.



The challenge

Early in Walmart's decision-making process, Xite held a virtual technology demo on the xR stage of its LA studio. LEO Events passed the demo along to Walmart's key event producers who loved what they saw and signed up for xR production for the YBM meeting. Subsequently, approval was obtained to use the same process for the ICM project, maximising the custom xR stage Xite would build on site in Arkansas.

Short timeframes

Los Angeles-based Xite Labs were tasked with building a custom xR stage in Arkansas in one week, fully calibrate and test it in a part of the US that's distant from most production hubs, and run it live for the meetings with teleported interviewers.

Instrumental to meeting this tight timeframe for Walmart's two xR productions was Xite's careful equipment planning and the ability to have its own studio vet all the gear and the workflow pipeline even before placing equipment orders.



The challenge

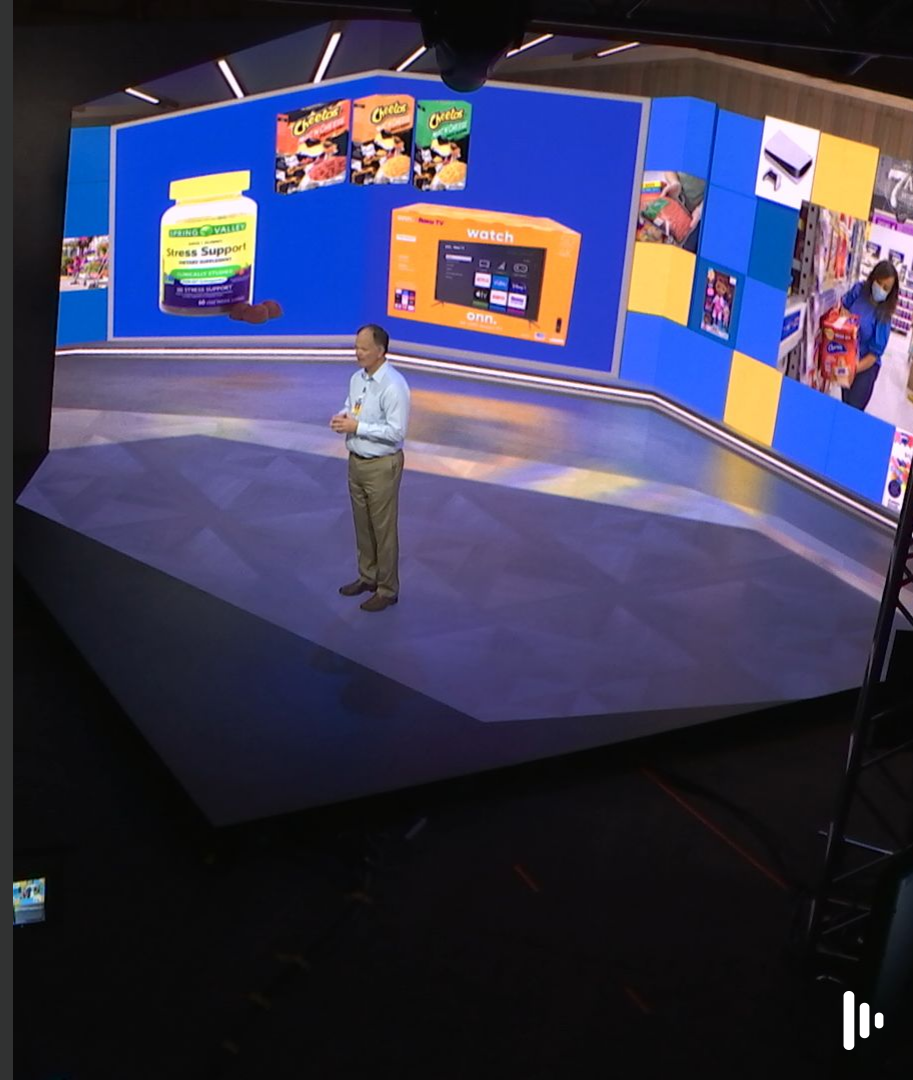
The nature of a corporate environment and a high-profile investment meeting meant Xite had to be prepared for last-minute script changes close to the launch day.

“We had parameters in disguise for all the 3D text elements, which allowed us to change the values of the text quickly,” explains Creative Director Greg Russell. “All the AR content updates were done remotely through the disguise interface. This gave us flexibility to handle last minute script changes.”

Getting the colour right

It was imperative for Xite to get accurate colour reproduction from the LED displays and camera and match them to the virtual set extension.

“This was very challenging since the LED product itself wasn’t reproducing certain colours optimally,” Creative Director Vello Virkhaus notes. “So you are starting from a position where you’re correcting colour that’s not reproducing accurately and then trying to create custom LUTs to fix that.”



The solution

A tailored approach to support

“We are focused on delivering xR whenever and wherever it makes sense, and for this type of corporate event with the sharing of detailed reports, xR was a no-brainer,” Russell explains.

“We set up a Slack channel with disguise support throughout the project,” Virkhaus reports. “We got very seamless results. The colour reproduction itself involved different layers of colour correction and a lot of collaboration between disguise and our team working together to find the best solution. We built custom LUT files to fix the colour reproduction problem, and disguise enabled the use of those custom colour LUTs on the output, which really helped us.”

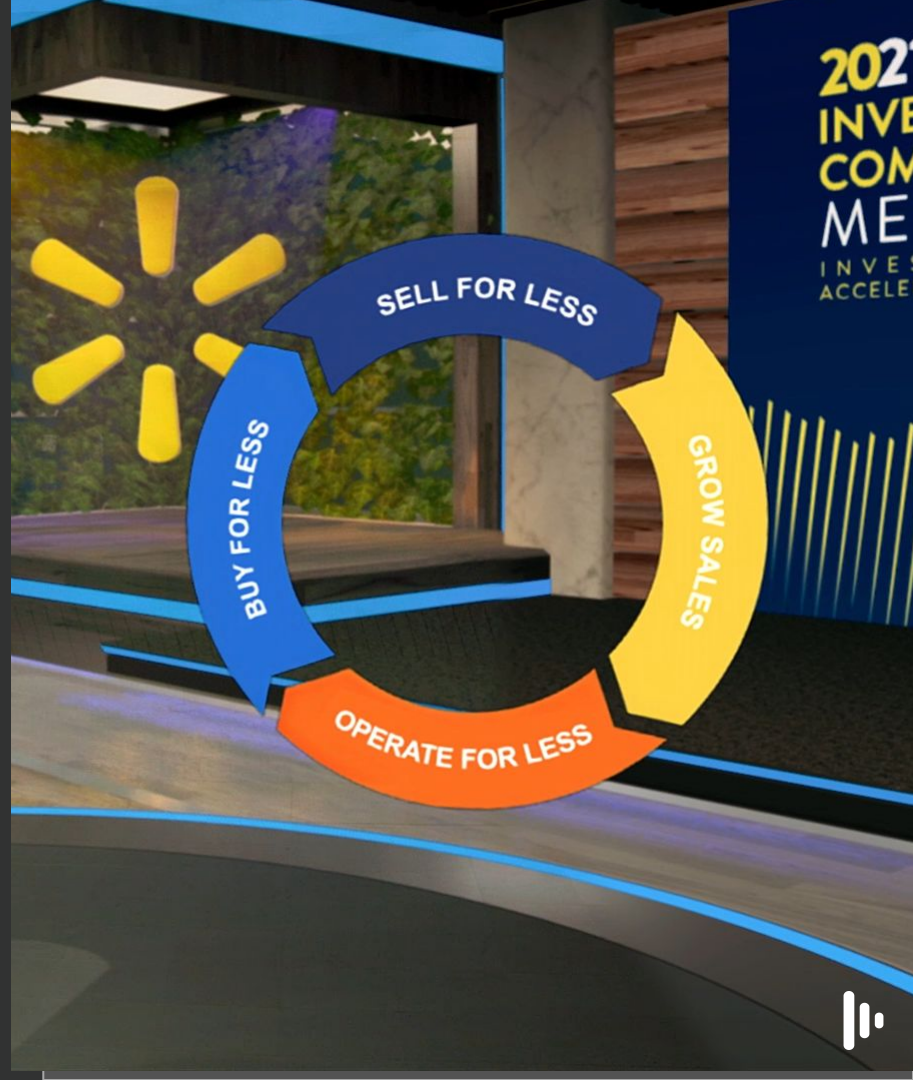


The solution

A comfortable and engaging space

Walmart executives embraced xR production. They were able to get a sense of their environment and position on stage, including the appearance of AR graphics. The ICM event featured up to 40 AR moments, some consisting of video panels floating in AR space and a more complex example showcasing a moving AR whiteboard that flipped over to reveal the next speaker.

Editorial was performed on-site for each of the shoot days, eliminating the burden of clean-up and rendering. The only live components of the two meetings were Q&As that ran at the end of each event when Walmart President and CEO Doug McMillon responded to callers seen on the rear screen.



“

For me, the ability to programme a corporate meeting with a timeline in a completely virtual world is a big benefit of disguise. Having Unreal Engine and Notch integration built in is hugely important for these types of projects. Just being able to treat this like any other show and not make special concessions as to how we would produce it was amazing.”

Greg Russell, Creative Director, Xite Labs



Results

“Xite was proud to deliver a near-perfect xR production for one of the biggest companies in the world on an event [ICM] that moves markets,” says Russell.

Xite’s other key achievements from the two meetings included designing the YBM set from scratch while adding elements and modifying a stock Notch set to meet ICM’s needs. They also designed a way to reveal speakers on stage with a front-plate effect that disappeared into the back-plate, honing their team’s collaboration and performance on site.



Success

1 month
pre-programming

1 week
building the xR stage

3 days
shooting

33,000
YouTube video views
for the ICM

The producers from LEO Events and the Walmart executives were extremely happy clients when the two meetings wrapped.

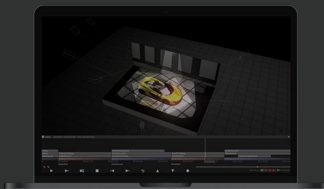
“This represented a pretty significant step up for Walmart in the virtual space, and now they’re interested in doing more,” explains Russell. “The president of Walmart’s phone lit up with positive responses to the approach, appearance and overall polish of the presentation experience.”

Watch Walmart’s ICM 2021 meeting [here](#).



disguise equipment used

Designer software
r17.4



Release 17.4 unlocks RenderStream support to enable truly engine-agnostic real-time content, all managed from the disguise timeline.

[Find out more.](#)

gx 2c



Built to enable the latest in xR workflows, the gx 2c media server powered the xR environments hosted on the studio's LED stage.

[Find out more.](#)



In partnership with:

Executive Producers: LEO Events

Creative/xR Directors: Vello Virkhaus, Greg Russell

Media Producer: Emile Wolsky

Technical Directors: Jeremy Vannix, Simon Anaya

Production Partners: Evolve Media Group, Lightswitch, Robe, ANC

disguise Media Server Operator: Simon Anaya

Producer: Anders Rahm

Notch Artists: Travis Poe, Simon Anaya, Mike Estacio

Lighting Director: Mike Robertson, Lightswitch

DP/Jib Operator: Pierce Cook

Render engine: Notch

Images: Xite Labs



Get in touch!

Curious to know more about us? Want to master our production toolkit? Need support on your project? Our team will be happy to speak to you, whatever your query:

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