

# How Erste Bank builds employee resilience for stressful situations like bank robberies

Erste Bank was founded in 1819 as the first Austrian savings bank. The bank is headquartered in Vienna, and has 45,000 employees serving 16 million clients in more than 2000 branches in 7 countries.

Erste Bank has a strong focus on innovation and digitalisation and is always looking for new approaches to learning and training employees and managers. Virtual reality training is used to prepare employees for a number of tricky situations that are hard to prepare for using more traditional methods like checklists, e-learning and classroom training.

## Challenge

An important focus of Erste Bank's training program is to prepare employees for potentially unsafe situations like bank robberies. Training is aimed at improving employee resilience and prevent negative outcomes like PTSD. This however was very resource intensive, as trainers had to visit branches separately throughout the year to organize face-to-face workshops.

Bringing together all employees per branch is furthermore hard to organize with many part-time roles, holidays, etc. And more importantly, only a few people could actively participate in the roleplays which were part of the training, whereas the rest could only watch.



## Solution

VR training uses true-to-life scenarios where trainees can practise and learn by doing. They are placed in situations like a real bank robbery, and by choosing their actions they learn the best way to respond.

Branch employees can participate with their own own smartphones to learn anytime how to follow procedures (e.g. how to use a safe in a secure way), de-escalate difficult situations and react correctly to threat scenarios and other security topics. For sensitive topics, there were no linear trajectories and good or bad paths, but only better and worse reactions to each situation. Other scenarios like receiving visitors, working with safes and fraud prevention do use right and wrong answers.



## Creation

In the creation process of VR training scenarios, Erste Bank selects topics where VR as a format is beneficial to the whole learning journey - maybe together with a face-to-face training, but also where there is a bigger scaling effect and where you can learn through specific situations in the best possible way. Then relevant people from a diverse group of internal specialists and users are brought together, as a broad perspective is important. In a first brainstorming phase, different situations are prepared and it is decided what elements each story should be made up of.



Once a scenario is defined, the story needs to be created including a prologue, tension curve, engagement, replayability, characters, dialogue and creating the right challenge for the target audience. The next step is choosing camera locations and actors and filming the different scenes using a 360-degree camera. All stories are recorded in existing bank branches with the involvement of actors and real employees, to make the training scenarios as realistic as possible.

In the test phase, experiments were carried out with both more expensive VR glasses such as the Oculus Go and simpler solutions in which a smartphone acts as the headset screen. Due to the cost factor and security concerns - each VR headset had to be integrated into the bank's corporate network - the lower-threshold solution with the smartphone-based headsets will be used in the future, as trainees liked the accessibility of 2D training in combination with foldables better. Using a SAP SuccessFactors integration, VR scenarios are distributed to individual employees. In the LMS, trainers can see who completed specific training scenarios.



*"The VR glasses and the 360-degree view make it much easier to immerse yourself in a scenario and feel much more realistic compared to educational videos or roleplaying games. Especially when it comes to escalations and real threat situations, which are difficult to simulate in conventional workshops with your own colleagues. Every decision I make in the VR scenario has an impact on the further storyline, contrary to the rigid linear process of a training video."*

David Gezzele, Head of Learning & Development, Erste Bank

## Results

The bank robbery pilot scenario was tested with about 50 branch employees (advisors in retail, L&D people and retail branch managers). As their feedback was very positive with VR considered as an easy and memorable learning format, the pilot was scaled up to the rest of the branches. Feedback from the pilot showed that playing in a virtual reality environment has a significant added value and the emotional charge is also much higher. The bank noticed a significant increase in engagement compared to other forms of training.

Watch on YouTube: [Interview David Gezzele \(Head of L&D\)](#) and [Using VR training for fraud prevention at Erste Bank](#)

## Train your workforce **just like in real life**

Make your training programs more effective with story-based immersive learning. Discover the easy, fast and affordable way to onboard and upskill your employees.

- **True to life.** Enable learning by doing and improve retention.
- **Easy to use.** Make it easy to create and play VR training scenarios.
- **Easy to scale.** With SSO, integrations and multi language support.

## Ready to take training to the next level?

Visit [warppvr.com](https://warppvr.com) to learn more and to request a personalized demo.



★★★★★ (4.9 / 5)



ASML

MERCK

ERSTE  
Bank



TATA STEEL



Rabobank