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TBWA\HAKUHODO LAUNCHES INTERNAL GAME CONTENT ON ITS NEW METAVERSE OFFICE

**Inventing a New Form of Team Building in the Hybrid Work Era
with Metaverse-Based Evacuation Drills**

TBWA\HAKUHODO has developed and internally launched "THE ESCAPE," a game content to be played on its metaverse office. Combining the idea of an evacuation challenge game and disaster preparedness drills, it will be utilized as a tool for "team building" in the hybrid working style as well as improving employees' disaster awareness.



In the wake of the spread of COVID-19, TBWA\HAKUHODO proactively introduced a hybrid work style in early 2020. While hybrid work has taken root as a culture at the agency, there have been challenges in internal communication and team building, such as a decrease in serendipity from random conversations within the company and fewer opportunities to gather in real places to work on the same tasks at the same time.

From these issues, in 2022, TBWA\HAKUHODO launched a project utilizing the metaverse in order to revitalize internal communication as well as to evolve creativity from new collaborations that transcend departments and positions using emerging technologies. So far the agency has implemented a variety of measures, including "management meetings on metaverse," or "Avatar CEO Management Meeting," in which multiple employees disguise themselves with the avatar of the CEO to frankly discuss their opinions on the company at the management meeting, and the installation of "VR room" where anyone can freely use VR and the metaverse at the office.

"The Escape" was developed as part of the Metaverse Project, a game content on the virtual office that enables team building through evacuation drills. It begins with an earthquake at the office, and multiple players work together to evacuate the office while rescuing injured colleagues and handling a fire accident. Players can be immersed in a realistic 3D office space wearing VR headsets, crouching down to secure their own safety and performing firefighting activities to accomplish the required missions one after another. The virtual office is faithfully reproduced the real office, with first aid kits and fire extinguishers placed in exactly the same places as the actual locations.



Comparison of the real office (left) and the virtual office (right)

"The Escape" was launched this month to coincide with the start of the 2023 fiscal year in Japan. Since the program can be conducted with a maximum of 8 people, it is expected that participating in the same

content and communicating with each other will contribute to team building and raise awareness of disaster prevention in the office.

TBWA\HAKUHODO aims to reach 100% participation rate in disaster drills using “The Escape” and to use the content as a team-building tool across departments. In addition, the program will be added to training programs for new and mid-career employees, to familiarize them with the structure of the office and to stimulate interaction among employees.

As disaster drills and team building during the hybrid work era is the challenge faced by most companies that allow flexibility for employees to choose workplaces, TBWA\HAKUHODO aims to start supporting the introduction of this program in other companies in the future.

■ Participants' voice

- During and after the pandemic, opportunities for multiple members to gather in the office to work together were dwindling, but being able to communicate on the VR office made me realize the potential of the Metaverse office. (Planning team member)
- I was surprised at how well the office was reproduced in “THE ESCAPE”. Although now we are able to choose where to work with fewer trips to the office, I have often felt the difficulty of onboarding new employees and less chatting with team members. I am glad that this kind of game became another opportunity for new conversations with my colleagues. I had not actively participated in disaster drills before, and this game made me realize my awareness of disaster preparedness in the office had waned, and it reminded me of the importance of it. (Creative team member)



■ **Comment from an expert on “team building” (NPO Coach-Do Representative Director Toshio Matsuba)**

“THE ESCAPE” is imbued with important components for team building, including “common goals,” “close communication and cooperation,” and “a special experience that is different from the usual work.” Not only can players experience the excitement of teaming up to accomplish a mission, but they can also get a glimpse of members’ true selves and new sides through the unusual mission of “protecting themselves from disasters while at work”.

Because THE ESCAPE reproduced the real office so realistically, I see the potential for a variety of uses beyond the mission-completion game, including use for office tours for new employees, or for lively chats even during remote work, since everyone can feel as if they are in the same space in the Metaverse office. I believe that this content will be one of the effective tools for organizations that are struggling with team building in the post-COVID era.

■ **Comment from the project leader (TBWA\HAKUHODO Disruption Lab Creative Director Kaname Aratame)**

Building the office, destroying it, and then escaping from it – it is the experience that you can get only on Metaverse. It is not an exciting experience but by reproducing a full-scale realistic office with accurately putting disaster prevention goods as its physical location, players can naturally acquire disaster prevention training, which is often passed off as someone else’s problem.

We focused on providing a realistic sense of crisis, which is impossible in conventional evacuation drills, such as the inconvenience caused by poor visibility and office furniture becoming obstacles in the event of a disaster.

Participants will learn the importance of cooperation as a team in an emergency by closely helping each other with instructions and guidance in the game through voice chat.

We hope to develop “THE ESCAPE” as a new solution for conventional disaster evacuation drills, for example, by applying it to public facilities where many people gather.



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About TBWA\HAKUHODO

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