



Lamborghini Shifts Gears for a New Digital-First Landscape

When car configurators first came out, they had one simple purpose: to enable prospective buyers to personalize their vehicle before purchase.

Initially, the process would have been guided by a salesperson at their computer in a dealership, before web configurators enabled people to change trims, seats, and wheels from the comfort of their own home.

While pre-sale personalization remains the primary focus of CG car configuration, it is just the tip of the iceberg. Because these configurators are often built on powerful real-time platforms, they open up a whole new world of marketing opportunities to automotive companies.

At major automakers like Lamborghini, it's a dynamic that is providing new and exciting ways to wow customers and clients alike.

PROBLEM

Lamborghini is part of the VW Group, alongside a number of other well-known sister brands including Audi, Bentley, Bugatti, Porsche, SEAT/Cupra, Škoda, and Volkswagen.

The company's existing configurator was in need of an upgrade in order to improve both visual quality—materials, paints, and lighting—and system performance.

SOLUTION

A complete, Automated Digital Pipeline

Through its Unreal Engine platform, Epic Games recently explored how an innovation that started at Audi has transformed visualization across the entire group. The Automotive Visualization Platform (AVP) is an Unreal Engine-powered data conversion pipeline that takes heavy manufacturing CAD data of a fully configurable vehicle and prepares it for use in marketing materials.

It provides the VW Group with a complete, automated digital pipeline—one in which it's possible to update vehicles and content at the push of a button. In essence, that means you can create everything from car configurators to marketing brochure images and slick social media videos in a matter of minutes.

The AVP is the backbone of Lamborghini's new configurator. Lorenzo Bonora, Digital Product Manager at Automobili Lamborghini, is the man who manages car configurator development strategy at the company. He says Lamborghini recognized the need for an



updated car configurator after seeing a huge step forward in digital visual quality and product consistency in the automotive industry over the last few years.

That comes at a time when digital experiences are playing a greater role in the customer purchase path. While most people probably won't be adding a Lamborghini to their cart online any time soon, research, speculative configuration, and exposure to advertising occur more and more often over the web. Lamborghini has realized this, and wants in. "As a top automotive luxury brand, we want to offer the best-in-class visualization to our customers, in order to convey the high value of our products and deliver the best customer experience," explains Lorenzo.

IMPLEMENTATION

Lamborghini fans and customers can access, through any device, a web version of the configurator that enables them to configure their dream car, generate a brochure, and get a unique configuration code. Customers can share that code with their Lamborghini dealership and retrieve the configuration in the dealership.

On the other side, Lamborghini salespeople can access a specific dealer version of the configurator that features a package of marketing and commercial tools capable of offering customers an enhanced experience in the dealership, including 3D streaming, videos, and high-resolution images, among other media.

"These tools strengthen the dealer's image, visibility, and reputation as an important part of the Lamborghini world," says Lorenzo.

The AVP is more than a simple car configurator, however. It's like an engine—one that can churn out bespoke marketing materials, lightning fast. That means it's not just used at the point of sale—it can be used to create high-quality renderings of cars in real time, which can be used to target the customer at different stages along their path to purchase.

OUTCOMES

Targeting the Digital Touch Point Ecosystem

Before purchasing a car, customers will hit on multiple touch points along the buyer journey. In pre-internet times, those touch points might have been seeing a magazine or TV ad before a dealership visit. Today, the touch points are increasingly digital.

Tools at the disposal of marketers now include social media adverts, YouTube videos, online articles, web search ads, snapchat filters—and even promotion in video games. As Lorenzo explains, when it comes to the automotive purchase path, it's useful to zoom out and assess these points of contact as a whole. "We have to think of the digital experience as an ecosystem made up of multiple multi-device touch points, each with a



specific use case,” he says. “As a first step, we want to isolate each phase of the configuration journey, each use case, identify the different clusters of touch points and, after tying them together, build a seamless, fully integrated journey.”

Lorenzo believes that AVP is the best platform to hit this goal, since it is ‘ecosystem-driven’: it’s a highly integrated visualization engine that can create content for all of the digital touch points mentioned previously, offering not only super-fast cloud rendering but also high-end solutions for Lamborghini’s retail network.

Using the AVP, Lamborghini can create millions of marketing assets every year, at a fraction of the cost of traditional marketing. This material might include brochures of the exact car a customer has been looking at on the showroom floor or video of a yet-to-be-released model in photorealistic detail, in which backgrounds, scenery, car specifications can be swapped in or out instantly.

Best-in-Class Real-Time Visualization

For a luxury brand like Lamborghini, it’s important to have a world-class configurator. The brand is synonymous with quality, reliability, and technical excellence. In a world where a sizable chunk of the purchase pathway now happens online, the challenge is how to digitize such a luxury product—to make it so real it feels as if the customer were touching it.

“Along the customer journey, the car configurator plays a key role,” says Lorenzo. “The car configurator must boost emotions and desire in the customer’s heart, in such a way that they cannot wait to own and drive their own Lamborghini.”

Evoking feelings like these is no easy task. You need a level of visual accuracy and realism that does justice to the majesty of a luxury car like a Lamborghini. “We believe Unreal Engine offers that best-in-class visualization,” says Lorenzo. “It also delivers high performance as it uses less memory and resources, and additionally, the conversion process to Unreal is much faster than before—it now takes a few hours instead of days. This improvement is not only a big advantage in terms of model updates but also enables us to convert ideas into experiments and iterate in a very short time.”

A World of New Marketing Opportunities

The tools and technology of the AVP are impressive, but the most powerful thing is the idea behind it. The system has been designed with the recognition that the customer journey has undergone a digital shift.

When you understand that, a whole world of new opportunities opens up. You can start to think of new channels and new ways of marketing that you may never have tried before.





The popular vehicular soccer game Rocket League is a case in point. A recent collaboration between Lamborghini and Rocket League enabled players to drive the Lamborghini Huracán STO in the game. That raises the profile of one of Lamborghini's newest road-legal models and exposes it to a huge, previously untapped audience of potential customers. Video games are played by millions globally, making this a great example of the innovative ways automotive companies can reach new customers and gain new fans.

As we get closer to the Metaverse, industries such as fashion, automotive, and gaming are going to become ever more connected. Cross-marketing opportunities will abound, whether that's Nike-wearing avatars in Fortnite or Huracán-driving racers in Rocket League. Companies like Lamborghini that are already investing in cutting-edge digital solutions and powerful real-time technology-powered platforms are set to reap the rewards.

For more on Epic Games and Unreal Engine, visit www.unrealengine.com.