

Sam Cole

EDITORS' NOTE Prior to co-founding FitXR, Sam Cole worked with Innovativo Group of New Zealand. He was also an associate at Hutton Collins, a U.K. private equity firm, and an investment manager at E2Exchange in London. Cole received a bachelor of law and a bachelor of commerce in finance from the University of Otago and an M.B.A. from Cambridge Judge Business School.

COMPANY BRIEF FitXR (fitxr.com) is redefining fitness through immersive technologies. It creates immersive fitness games that provide real-world benefits. Its professionally designed workouts make fitness fun. They combine the enjoyment of gaming with the intensity of a personal training session, all in the comfort of its customers' own homes. Its first product, BOXVR, has been described as "Guitar Hero crossed with a studio boxing workout." Many users are calling it the best fitness game on the market and it has been awarded "VR Fitness Game of the Year."

What was your vision for creating FitXR?

The vision for us was to use the alternative reality headset to enhance the way that people exercise. This could be when exercising at the gym or exercising at home or exercising



Delivering an Immersive Experience

An Interview with Sam Cole, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, FitXR

outdoors. We saw that so often fitness can be pretty dull and boring. I think for us, believing that there would be this shift with hardware at some point and time in the future, was really the catalyst to say we want to be the ones that dominate that space, and we should be building that future now.

Is there a need to educate the market about FitXR?

I think at the moment, there's an education piece around the hardware itself. If you haven't tried virtual reality, it's really hard to understand how powerful it is in delivering an immersive experience. The ability to get you into a mindset where you can completely forget what you're actually doing is very powerful from an exercise perspective. We see this a lot in our reviews where people say that they put the headset on and forgot that they were exercising.



They have all been choreographed by one of our fitness instructors, and the goal of that is to really create a choreography that feels as close to what the instructors would deliver in an instructional group fitness class.

Will this offering replace the traditional gym or do you see this as an additional offering for the industry?

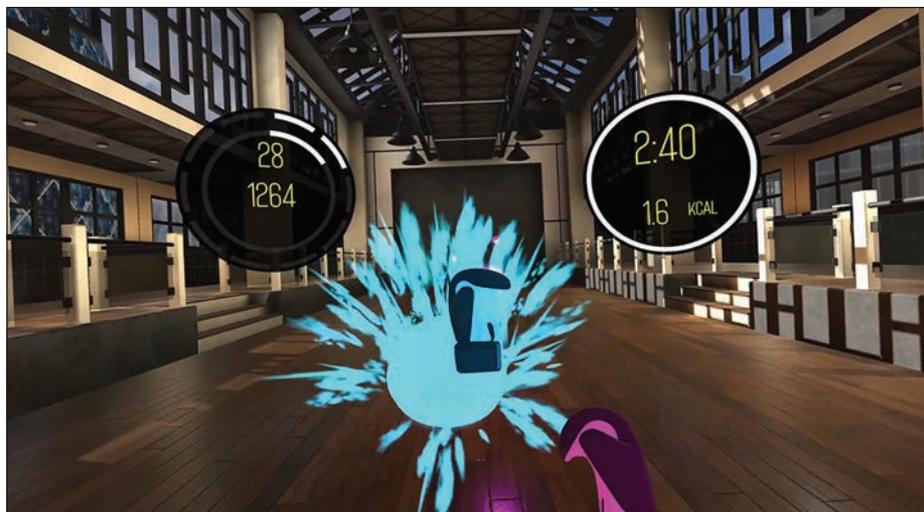
This space is definitely growing and if you look at the overall market share, I think you will see that it is eating into the gym market. I think gyms will reinvent themselves. Gyms and fitness classes are always going to have the latest and greatest equipment. They're always going to be a meeting place for like-minded people. I think that the industry will definitely change, but I don't think you'll ever see at-home fitness completely erode traditional fitness clubs.

Did you always know that you had the entrepreneurial spirit to build your own business?

Both my parents are entrepreneurs. I was hungry from a young age to do something on my own. I settled for a career in private equity for a while, but I went to business school with the intention of finding someone to start a business with and that's exactly what panned out.

Have you been able to reflect and appreciate how the business has grown?

Sameer (Baroova, FitXR co-founder) and I try and force ourselves to celebrate the milestones, but it's definitely an area that we're working on. It is very easy to get caught up in looking to the next challenge, but I think it's important for us as a team to relish in the milestones as well. ●



Three views of BOXVR, a virtual reality fitness game

When using virtual reality, are the programs still being choreographed by fitness instructors?

Yes. We designed our products with a group of fitness instructors and the intention was that we really wanted to create a product that was a fitness product first and foremost, and then find ways to gamify it and make it as engaging and as fun as possible. We worked very closely with a small group in the beginning to really understand the best practices from that industry in order to apply that to the design and the game mechanics for the product. BOXVR at the moment offers 50 workouts that range from 7 minutes to 60 minutes in length.