



How to Make Online Training as Interactive as In Person Training

According to Training Magazine studies, top priorities for trainers are “increasing effectiveness,” “reducing costs,” and “measuring impact.” Survey participants also report that budgets are down about 11% from 2007 to 2008 while the average number of trainees per trainer is up slightly.

The good news is that moving at least some training online using web conferencing can help. In a study by Wainhouse Research, trainers identified the top three benefits of using web conferencing for training were “saves travel costs,” “involve people who otherwise could not attend,” and “saves time away from the job” respectively.

In this web seminar we explored and demonstrated how to engage an audience with live, interactive exercises. As a supplement, this handout provides three things:

One, there is a brief summary of the seven key steps we explored during the live web seminar. We recommend you view the recording of the web seminar to see how we used Citrix GoToWebinar™ to accomplish this.

Two, there are additional resources listed to help you accelerate your training mastery. Though these were not discussed during the live webinar, they are provided here for your convenience.

Finally, here’s a thought about where to learn more:

First, 1080 Group is conducting an independent study about how to promote and deliver impactful webinars. If you’d care to share your experiences, can opt in to receive a complimentary pre-release copy of the report that results from the study. You can find the survey at <http://bit.ly/cQuHnU> and/or by visiting my blog, www.TheVirtualPresenter.com.

Two, with the large audience we could not answer all of the personally submitted questions live, I will be tackling many FAQs in my blog over the next few days.

From all of us at 1080 Group, thank you for being part of an interactive event! Here’s to your online training success!

Roger

Roger Courville
Principal, 1080 Group



Making Online Training As Interactive and Effective as In-Person Training

A key point we made at the beginning of the webinar was that every medium of communication has its own unique benefits and tradeoffs. Every organisation is unique, and therefore what is most important to you is unique.

Web seminars uniquely enable live, interactive dialogue at a distance. And this creates the opportunity for organisations to reach more trainees per trainer, include other remote subject matter experts, reduce travel costs, and easily survey for effectiveness – all are powerful benefits for trainers who embrace the medium.

A couple key premises:

1080 Group doesn't claim online training replaces all face-to-face training. Some activities are obviously not possible, such as manipulating an object. Some other benefits also may not be possible, such as a team-building exercise like tug-of-war on a beach somewhere or post-training session socialization.

What can be moved online, however, is anything you present from a desktop – information, websites, computer applications, etc. Benefits not possible in face-to-face include reaching attendees who may not have otherwise participated or including subject matter experts who likewise would otherwise be unavailable.

Approaching live, online training with an instructional design mindset, there are many ways to move beyond just presenting to make the experience engaging and interactive. The web seminar explored these in the approximate chronological order of planning and coordinating a training session. Those steps, along with the potential benefits, are expressed as follows:

Choose the right online training “venue”

To move live training online, you must have the flexibility to accommodate different communication scenarios – smaller, collaborative groups and/or larger, structured conversations. “Venue” was used as analogy for the configuration of the communication tools, both the web conferencing tools and options in audio conferencing and VoIP (voice over internet protocol). And it's hard to interact well with an audience with a set of tools not suited for the job. As we quip at 1080 Group, you can use a mini-van or a pickup, and while both might haul gravel or the football team, arguably the right tool for the job makes all the difference.

Pre-assess to improve relevance and engagement

Online registration is easy to set up, personalise, and monitor. Custom fields on a registration form can and should be used to gather additional information beyond a simple RSVP – information to assist the trainer in assessing wants and desires or conducting pre-assessment of knowledge and skills. Easily monitored in real time, trainers can quickly understand trainees and tailor content. Focus on getting beyond just “what” and “when” to the “why.” The better you can understand what motivates your audience and deliver it, the more engaged they'll be.

Adapt an exercise to the new environment

In this section we did a hands-on exercise to demonstrate/simulate a training exercise. Like a pilot who learns to fly by instruments in addition to by sight, online trainers have tools that help them keep an eye on trainees. One example is an “attentiveness meter” that indicates if trainees are paying attention.

Leverage different methods of interacting

To be optimally effective, live training needs to be interactive – offline or online. From the trainees' perspective, they should find it easy use the tools to participate. From the trainer's perspective, they should be able to easily engage trainees, communicate naturally, monitor their attention, and use polls, surveys, and text-chat to assess and measure progress. Together you can share desktops, annotation tools, highlighters, and other collaborative tools. Remember the power of a tool isn't just that it exists, but that you can turn it on and off as well (e.g., an highlighter...you might not want everybody being able to draw all the time, but might want to turn it on for an exercise).





Adapt a presentation for short attention spans

That people are going to multitask is a given (they're using their Blackberries in offline presentations, too!). Add to this the fact that a webinar changes the visual focal point from you at the front of the room to your slides, and you need to adapt to your slides to improve learner-to-content engagement. Remember that people generally notice change, and they usually don't want to miss something relevant. If you'll focus on one idea per slide, perhaps even putting that key point in the slide title, you'll help those who are only giving you part of your attention. Then spread your content out over more slides (don't increase the content, just move through more slides over the same content and time period).

Increase reach and save time with recordings

Making recordings of offline content requires additional personnel, equipment, and time. Publication and distribution of that content takes time and incurs cost. Making recordings of online training is simple, making it easy to record every session, publish almost immediately, and save valuable time in reaching those who missed your session. Build out a content library to optimize your reach. Used strategically, this may mean you can take some pressure off your live sessions, freeing you up to build in more interactivity.

Use detailed reporting to hone content and follow up

Reporting is both a function of the quantity and quality of data available and its availability. Online trainers should plan to take full advantage of post-event reporting to analyze trainee participation, feedback, and results. In addition to assessing the growth of the trainees in the session, leverage the data to improve follow up and future sessions. Ideally this will lead you to better understand what's working, what's not working, and improve your relevance and engagement in the following session.



Calculating Training ROI

Frances Lilly, SPHR, CEBS has a wonderful piece outlining how to get from impact point to dollar figure. According to Lilly, only 10-20% of training programs receive a thorough ROI analysis. Roger expressed in the web seminar that while a full ROI analysis may not occur, it does not mean we can't or shouldn't identify impact points relative our organizations and measure them. Any increase in benefit or decrease in cost positively improves ROI. Her four steps are as follows:

1. *Isolating the effects of the training*
2. *Converting the effects of training into monetary values*
3. *Calculating the cost of training*
4. *Comparing the value of effects to the incurred costs*

The full document can be found here:

<http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/fac/seitz/trainingroi.doc>

A few other resources about training ROI:

<http://www.slideshare.net/nusantara99/measuring-roi-of-training>

<http://www.intulogy.com/good-reading/training-roi.html>

http://www.workplacebasicskills.com/non_frame/free_tools/roi/YI%20Frameset.htm

<http://www.fastrak-consulting.co.uk/tactix/Features/tngroi/tngroi.htm>

Every business is unique, but here are two examples of industry-specific ROI calculators:

http://training.cuna.org/trainers/roi_calc.html

<http://www.ewebuniversity.com/corporate/roi.asp>





Other Resources

Three-part webinar series (recordings): Planning, Designing, Delivering Effective Online Presentations (note, the first webinar of this series was an early pre-cursor to what you saw):

- <http://learn.gotomeeting.com/forms/070109-NA-G2MC-WBRARC?ID=701000000005H0h>

A great chart about charts

- http://www.extremepresentation.typepad.com/blog/2006/09/choosing_a_good.html

100 free stock images

- <http://www.virtualhosting.com/blog/2007/100-legal-sources-for-free-stock-images/>

Color tools

- <http://websitetips.com/colortools/>

A BUNCH of public speaking blogs

- <http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/public-speaking-blogs/>

A couple other favorite blogs:

- <http://www.speakingaboutpresenting.com/>
- <http://workshifting.com/>

A fun Periodic Table of Visualization Elements (mouse over the boxes!)

- http://www.visual-literacy.org/periodic_table/periodic_table.html



About 1080 Group, LLC

Roger Courville is a ten-year veteran of web seminars and presentations – from startup to Microsoft to co-founding two companies with partner and industry veteran Scott Driscoll. 1080 Group is a training and consulting firm providing companies with knowledge and skills to better communicate and compete with virtual presentations by teaching trainers, marketers, and salespeople how to design, promote, and deliver innovative web seminars and presentations. Our team has a collective experience that includes hundreds of clients, thousands of web seminars, and more than a million web seminar attendees. You may contact Roger at roger@1080group.com or +1.503.329.1662.

Additional 1080 Group Resources:

www.theVirtualPresenter.com - Roger's blog and book (*The Virtual Presenter's Handbook*)

www.twitter.com/1080Group - Roger on Twitter

About this Document

This is a handout for participants in a February 2010 webinar sponsored by Citrix GoToTraining. The guest presenter was Roger Courville, Principal at 1080 Group. Its intended use is as a supplement to the content presented that is now available online as a recording, but does not represent a summary of the presentation. Links provided in this document were working at the time of its creation but may change over time, and they lead to content publicly available on the web. Please respect the intellectual property rights of those website owners.

