



Up Your EQ (Engagement Quotient!) 10 Practical Presentation Skills for Trainers

In *Web Conferencing Training Trends 2009: Europe* the 1080 Group study found that trainers' top two concerns were "reducing travel budgets" and "including learners who could not attend before." To be sure, face-to-face instruction is desirable, but in today's competitive – if not economically challenge – global environment, alternatives must be found.

The good news, however 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.

Most importantly, when approached correctly, web conferencing isn't just a poor alternative to face-to-face training, it's a new strategic asset.

In this web seminar we explored and demonstrated ten practical ways to improve audience engagement with a goal of going beyond "you should use a poll." As a supplement, this handout provides two things:

One, there is a brief summary of the ten ideas we explored during the live web seminar. If you missed the webinar or would rather "see the action," I recommend you view the recording.

Two, there are additional resources listed to help you accelerate your training mastery. Some were discussed during the webinar while others are provided to give you new ideas and resources.

Finally, 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. If I haven't gotten to yours and you want to connect, *please* feel free to forward it to me (roger@1080group.com) for priority.

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



Engage Your Audience – 10 Practical Tips for Trainers

A key point made at the beginning of the webinar was that every medium of communication has its own unique benefits and tradeoffs. Despite many new opportunities (if not buzzwords), live communication is



important and uniquely powerful.

Web seminars 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 socialisation.

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.

Those ideas are expressed as follows:

Learner-to-Content Engagement: *Design for Engagement*

A common mistake when thinking “engagement” is to leave out how learners view and mentally interact with the content itself. Consider:

Think visually to engage visually

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 when learners try to read and listen to you at the same time, the “cognitive load” actually decreases your effectiveness, whereas a strong, complementary visual will enhance it.

Big Idea

A great visual doesn't have to be a photograph – it can be anything that enhances the communication. Favour visuals that 1) enhance how easily your idea is grasped, 2) are memorable, and 3) tell a story or provide additional context.

Keep it changing

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. Assuming you've got engaging and relevant content, you'll decrease the likelihood that they'll look away for long. Conversely, if they realise they can simply listen and not watch your slides, they will. And you lose an opportunity to improve how you impact their knowledge and skills.

Big Idea

Don't increase your content, just move through more slides over the same content and time period. Lose the idea that “a slide equals X amount of time.” Note: if you're adept with using animation to time when content appears you can accomplish the same thing. For many, though, this takes more time than simply duplicating a slide and changing its title. The goal is the same either way.





Use handouts and recordings strategically

Most of the time, a “data dump” is an ineffective means of accomplishing your goal. Consider focusing your presentation on the big ideas and the taxonomy, moving detail into other media that are accessible. When trainees understand why they should care and where to find additional information, they’ll be much more likely to access it on-demand.

Big Idea

Great slides make lousy handouts, and great handouts make lousy slides. When combined with recordings, your trainees will have a choice about what they want to access when. (Use this webinar as an example...if you attended the live webinar, this handout serves as a mnemonic enhancer for the content we covered without you having to review the recording...but if you want to review how we did something, the recording is hard to beat). And when you lose the data dump, you’ll be much more free to incorporate interactivity, exercises, and discussion.

Learner-to-Instructor Engagement: *Deliver and dialogue naturally*

Too often, without an audience sitting right in front of them, trainers tend to talk AT, instead of WITH their audience. Consider:

Direct attention visually and verbally

Some of the “keep it moving” idea isn’t entirely accomplished with slides or animation alone. Sometimes we need to direct attention to a specific area of a slide. Webinar solutions have multiple annotation tools to point or draw with, but supplement that with specific, direct instruction or questions that elicit attention (e.g., “What do you see in the lower right hand corner of the slide?” “In the upper center of the slide below the red box you will see...”).

Big Idea

The goal continues to be to make it absolutely clear and easy for the learner to comprehend the key ideas. Mastering your “virtual body language” visually and verbally not only directs the eyes of the audience, but also will catch the ears of someone who may have looked away.

Keep your eye on the audience

In person we look at our audience, and we glance at our notes. Online, however, we have our slides right in front of us. Recall, however, that in 1080 Group’s 2009 study on online presentation best practices (found here if you want it: <http://bit.ly/4s0wjO>), 620 respondents overwhelmingly note that they detest presenters who read slides or scripts. And what might happen if you’re staring at a slide (and it happens to be full of words rather than visuals)?

Big Idea

Configure your webinar software desktop so you can watch your audience’s responses in real time.

Get creative with polls, questions, and chat

You have your own style of communicating, interacting, and sharing. Now that you’re going to keep an eye on your audience, plan to figure out how you’re going to facilitate natural dialogue through various means. Recall that in the webinar we combined a poll with Q&A to show one example of capturing both quantitative and qualitative responses.

Big Idea

The goal is to dialogue naturally with your trainees and/or help them naturally communicate with each other. For some, using chat or other tools will be second nature, for some you’ll want to provide direction. But it’s not difficult, perhaps just different, and people are brilliant at surprising you with their adaptation and creativity. Enable it!

Bring it all together

Recall that of the three types of engagement (learner :: learner, learner :: instructor, learner :: learner), the one we were going to have the most difficulty replicating was the latter with (literally) 1000 people in the “room.” “Bring it all together” was a variety of ideas to improve presentations.





Adapt an exercise

In this section we did a hands-on exercise to demonstrate/simulate a training exercise. Watch the recording to see how we did it.

Big Idea

With a little creativity you can adapt games, exercises, role-plays, and other hands-on activities to help you turn passive audiences into active audiences.

Extend the dialogue beyond the presentation

While Twitter and social media are hot topics (even quite useful...you can see that I'm quite active there if you check out @1080group), the webinar tools themselves provide great opportunities to do one important thing to help you improve your webinars – listening to your audience.

Big Idea

From beginning to end and in the middle, webinar tools capture data. Use them purposefully and you can grow beyond just thinking about training from the “what and when” to the “why.” Audiences who find relevance and applicability are going to be the most engaged...and your listening tools will help you improve how you deliver what they want.

Rehearse by verbalising

So simple, so often ignored. If you want to be a pro, do what pros do and suggest: rehearse by having the words literally come out of your mouth. You'll improve not only your fluidity, but it'll help you find the energy to recreate the “magic of the first time.”

Big Idea

Your voice delivers confidence, authority, and trustworthiness. If you can't rehearse the sum of your content, make sure you nail your openers and closers to begin with momentum and close with clarity and finitude (i.e., don't let it dribble to a close). Make a recording of yourself and listen for a real eye opener.

Choose your own adventure

This idea was borrowed from in-person seminars where a set of subjects is projected for the audience to see and, by show of hands, they choose the top topics they wish the panel to discuss. In this webinar, we used the same technique to choose a few audience questions (of the *thousand* – no kidding) and put them up for a vote. The most popular was the next question I answered.

Big Idea

There's no way to make every single individual happy, but if everybody gets a vote, you've given everyone a fair shot. In many training scenarios, this will help you tap into what's most important to your audience.



The books mentioned in the webinar:

Beyond Bullet Points – Cliff Atkinson
Presenting to Win and *The Power Presenter* – Jerry Weismann
Advanced Presentations by Design – Andrew Abela
Presentation Zen – Garr Reynolds
Slide:ology – Nancy Duarte

Others worth mentioning:

The New Virtual Classroom – Ruth Colvin Clark
Clear and to the Point – Stephen Kosslyn
Now You See It – Stephen Few





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 organisations 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>

Three-part webinar series (recordings): Planning, Designing, Delivering Effective Online Presentations

- <http://learn.gotomeeting.com/forms/070109-NA-G2MC-WBRARC?ID=70100000005H0h>

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/>

About 1080 Group, LLC

Roger Courville is a ten-year veteran of web seminars and presentations and principal at 1080 Group, a research, training and consulting firm. 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.

About this Document

This is a handout for participants in an May 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. For more information, visit <http://www.gototraining.com>.

