Live Virtual Learning

Seven steps to make Live virtual training highly interactive

By Susan Cullen

Live virtual training is growing in popularity because it meets the demands of a geographically dispersed workforce who is seeking targeted, customized learning in an interactive format. The programs can easily be customized and the interactive component of a live class can enhance learner engagement and accountability if delivered well.

However, the same approach facilitators used in the traditional classroom won't work in the virtual classroom. This article is designed to show you how to structure the learning process to make it interactive and have long-lasting impact.

Seven Steps to Make Live Virtual Training Highly Interactive People can initially be concerned that live virtual training cannot be as interactive as the traditional face-to-face approach, but this isn't necessarily true. The key is to design your program well by constantly keeping it moving and keeping participants engaged. Some ways to do this include:

Encourage the group to highly participative in the very beginning. When you let them know you expect them to be active, they will better understand how the program is designed and what their role will be.

Have a lot of slides and change them frequently. This helps you keep the program moving. If you stay on one slide too long without asking them questions, they will start to think it's a snore and mentally check-out.

Use the hand raising feature and telephone together. One technique we frequently use is to ask people to raise their hands in response to a question asked. Then ask a few people who responded to explain their reason for their answer. This keeps other people other than the instructor talking, encourages participation, and makes the program more interesting.

Actively engage the text chat feature. When you want people to respond to an open-ended question, using text chat can be a great tool. One excellent example is using it when asking people what they will commit to doing going forward as a result of the class. You can then also ask them to come off mute and discuss their answer.

Incorporate polling questions frequently. You will need to prepare these in advance as part of your learning design. The polling capability will indicate to everyone the percentages of the class that responded to each answer. Using several polling questions sprinkled throughout your program also keeps things moving and the participants engaged.

Use webcams on each computer so the participants can see each other and the facilitator. Not every platform can provide this feature but it is a great tool when it can. You can ask participants to raise their hand and actually see them. You can also watch them as they verbally ask questions and provide answers.

Include interactive game technology as a warm-up or ice-breaker before the class begins. There are quite a few resources like this available if you google them.

When you use the tips provided above, you will be better able to keep the program moving and your participants highly involved. You will have created a highly interactive live virtual training that will keep your participants wanting to come back for more!

Checklist for Planning, Delivering and Reinforcing Live Virtual TrainingWhen conducting a live virtual training course, it is especially important to be organized during each step of the process. Here is a checklist that may help you.

How to Make Live Virtual Training Stick

If you perceive training not as an event, but as a process designed to reinforce behavior over the long run, you will see long-term behavior change and increase your ROI from learning initiatives. An excellent way to do this is with a "blended approach" to learning, with a great deal of emphasis on the live virtual classroom. The primary viewpoint needed is to view training not as an event, but as a process of ongoing learning and follow-up. Live virtual training can provide an excellent vehicle for helping learners retain and apply key concepts learned back on the job. Find out how you can learn more about making your training stick.

Best Practices for Live Virtual Training Webinar

As early adopters of live virtual training, we share our easy, practical tips about what works and what doesn't in this recorded webinar addressing:

How you can make your virtual training stick for long-term learning impact

How to build accountability into your course design

How to blend self-paced elearning with live virtual learning

Best practice case studies

Summary

Live virtual learning is a growing trend. It's gaining momentum because it can be convenient, engaging, interactive and targeted to your organization's objectives. As learning professionals incorporate best practice techniques, you will be able to impact more people, in less time, and in a cost-effective manner. **TEL**

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