

## 7 Signs Your Live Virtual Training Didn't Take and Solutions to Try (Jun 11)

If half your participants are trading goats on Farmville during your PowerPoint presentation, you need to rethink your virtual training.

By Margery Weinstein, 15 Jun 2011

Live virtual training is just the way training is done these days. After all, what corporate learning and development program would be complete without it? But how do you know it worked? Is it as simple as giving learners a test? Martyn Lewis, principal, 3g Selling, offers seven tongue-in-cheek signs your live virtual training might not have been that effective, and seven real solutions to implement.

1. During your PowerPoint presentation, half your participants are trading goats on Farmville, checking e-mail, or viewing a Flickr stream taken at last night's sales convention after party.
2. You ask one of your participants a question about something you just talked about, and he says, "Sorry," but he has to catch a flight to Kazakhstan immediately.
3. After the first two hours of the training, only 15 percent of your participants still seem to be logged in.
4. After the first three sessions, your participant dropout rate is higher than the recidivism rate for car thieves (which is in the order of 64 percent).
5. Participants who complete the training, when tested, have retained 3.5 percent of the information presented. It turns out that these same participants used to know 18 percent of the information you presented before the training session even began.
6. Some participants who complete the training have retained .01 percent of the information you've delivered three months after the training is over. Even worse, 17 percent of the participants thought they were in a Webinar and can't recall a training session at all.
7. Your company's business results have taken a serious dive two months after the training has ended and you're about to file for Chapter 11.

**On a more serious note, here are seven ways to make sure your live virtual training proves effective:**

1. Make the training highly interactive. Engage your participants by name to let them know you are invested in their learning experience. Reintroduce their comments during the session to let them know their feedback is valuable and keep their enthusiasm for participating alive.
2. Make the content engaging and entertaining. Mix up media: Use video, photos, charts, graphs, audio, and text in ways that reinforce the learning points and make the learning experience enjoyable.
3. Leverage broadcast media techniques to make the delivery human, lively, and spontaneous. One way to do this is to script a training session led by a professional broadcast media host in conversation with an expert on the subject matter.
4. Adopt a rock-solid support system for participant involvement. Enlist an experienced Web producer who can make the technology disappear so participants can focus on learning rather than the technology.
5. Follow up with assignments and methods to encourage continued participant collaboration. End each session with a hands-on assignment, so participants get a chance to apply the training, collaborate with each other, and retain their knowledge better and for a longer period of time.
6. Start each session with a review of assignments completed by the participants. Highlight the positive business results, but also call attention to any difficulties, so possible solutions can be discussed among the group.
7. Timing is critical. Be respectful of participants' time. Be sure to start and finish as scheduled. Avoid virtual training that extends beyond 90 minutes. Participant attentiveness will wane if the training session is too long.