Virtual Training: Tips

Training Preparation

- Know your audience. How many people? What are their roles? What are their expectations? Did you provide a training description with learning objectives in advance?
- Know your audience, think about who our audience is and what are the key things we want people to take way from the training. This is especially challenging when we went from in person to virtual and what we thought would be the key topics are.
- Familiarize yourself with the technology. Know what features you have access to and who will be controlling the PPT slides as this will determine what features you can use.
- Have your camera set up steady with good lighting, and include your entire face/head and the option of showing hand movements if needed. Test it out prior to presenting.
- Include short breaks
- Create an evaluation form to gather feedback on the training and facilitation, this can be done in Relias, Survey Monkey, emailed or any other platform you have.
- Test technology ahead of time, set up a time for the new employee to go and gather materials needed and then test them when at home prior to the first day of training.

Content

- Create a title that is short, reflects the core topic and tailored to the audience (i.e. conservative, snazzy, fun, etc.).
- Create content that covers all learning objectives.
- Include mixed media to increase participant engagement.
    - Videos and short discussion
    - Images
    - Music (if relevant)
    - Word clouds
- Incorporate methods that increase participant engagement.
    - Activities – incorporate as much as possible to increase participation
    - Polling – use when applicable to engage everyone and encourage more dialogue
    - Break-out rooms – use for larger groups
    - White boards – to make it more fun and engaging
    - Gamification – if applicable to increase participation and test knowledge
    - Animation – to make content more interesting and memorable
- Use stories to engage participants and connect them to the material being covered
- Include slide(s) with just one question to encourage participants to engage in deep thought and/or brainstorm with other participants to address and respond to the question.
- Record each session and make them available for replay or if people need additional time to learn skills. This is especially helpful when you are teaching others how to use a computer system.
- Break your virtual training sessions into shorter, smaller chunks. Don't force your participants to sit for an eight-hour webinar or training.

PowerPoint Slides

- Slides should include minimal content (3-5 bullet points)
- Content should be 24 font size at minimum. If you are presenting a Webinar, keep font size larger as participants might be on phone/tablets.
- Test the share screen and ensure that the font is readable for all learners
- Include images on slides that will help convey the message and spark thoughts/feelings to connect participants to the topic being discussed.

Facilitation

- Ask if you need a moderator/co-facilitator to help with the information. What about in breakout rooms?
- Avoid reading the content on the slides word for word. The content is there for more visual learners. Elaborate on each talking point and provide examples/stories.
- Encourage participants to show their videos (to prevent participants from multi-tasking which decreases participation)
- For participants who are not required or do not opt to show their videos, encourage them to utilize the chat feature to respond to or ask questions/comment on anything being discussed.
- Have participants update their information displayed with name, title, organization (if audience from different places or if you will have multiple presenters).
- Do one introduction (introduce only yourself if training a large group and go around and have everyone do a brief 30 second introduction if under 10 participants)
- At the start of the presentation after introductions, make it a point to thank them for having you and that you are excited to be presenting on this topic – and then add that you are all there to learn from each other and that you are not the only expert so you encourage everyone to participate and chime in at any point with questions, comments, etc. Mention that because you are not in-person that you need their help in making this discussion interactive and engaging.
- Have the group name a few guidelines if you need to create a safe space to discuss sensitive topics (i.e. confidentiality, step in/step back, etc.).
- Allow for other people to participate if one or a few people are dominating the conversation. Ask, "Does anyone else have a different perspective or anything they want to add? We'd love to hear from everyone."
- When no one is responding to questions or participating – instead of just moving on, gently remind the group that "It would be great to hear from folks" and that "We are just having a conversation – there are no right or wrong or bad answers" and "I'm interested in hearing what you all think." These are just a few suggestions depending on the situation.
- If someone is challenging what you are saying validate their contribution to the discussion. Thank them for sharing and then add to it with more accurate information without saying that they gave

inaccurate information. This will empower people who may have fears about saying something "wrong" in front of the group.

- Stay consistently confident in your delivery. Avoid sounding nervous.
- Avoid reading from a script if you are referring to notes. If possible, look into your camera so that folks feel like you are talking to them rather than reading to them.
- Use facial expressions and body language moderately to convey a feeling (i.e. passionate about something, when sharing a story, etc.).
- Aim to cover all of the material/learning objectives BUT be sure to be flexible and to go with the flow and needs of the audience even if it takes you away from your slides (the order and the content).
- Have fun!