

What makes Virtual Training Unforgettable?

It is exciting to see more and more conferences, onboarding, our communication trainings go virtual. Here's how we are doing it and coaching other Learning and Development teams to do it. People who can do this well will see their teams strengthen while cutting all the physical costs associated with in-person training: travel, catering, and facility costs.

- 1. Thoughtful Planning**
- 2. Highly Interactive Facilitation**
- 3. Surprise Factors**

Thoughtful Planning

Define your direction. What exactly do people have to master from this session?

Choose a theme that pulls the learning topics together. Design all materials around this theme. Some examples include: (1) Curiosity, (2) Courage to Speak Up, (3) Connection, (4) You can only chase one rabbit at a time, (5) Pull back the curtain.

Choose speakers. Have at least 2 faculty for groups of 15+ participants. Segregate duties clearly for faculty.

What do you want people to *think, feel, and do in the training and after the training*? How will you allow participants to be a part of brainstorming, building, and deciding? The people need to feel connected. Having them immediately chat something privately to one another helps.

Plan your opening moments: the music, the movement, the first words seen on the screen, the first human words.

Plan your closing and how you will follow-up. Have follow-up include 2-3 touchpoints. (1) Survey, (2) Tools, and (3) Reminder one week out.

Highly Interactive Facilitation

Zoom Breakouts: You can send people into breakouts to gather ideas, solve a problem, or practice something. Make sure your faculty is bouncing room to room, watching and offering suggestions. This makes your virtual experience extremely high touch.

[Poll Everywhere](#) and [Mentimeter](#) have great tools for gathering your audience's thoughts and decisions. You can build Word Clouds, work on 2X2 Matrices. [MIRO](#) boards and [Mural](#) allow beautiful virtual spaces where you can use sticky notes that look realistic.

Have your tech host emphasize important data, action items, and *exercise instructions in the chat room*. If using slides, have your tech host annotate on the slide by putting rectangles around the key points the speaker is emphasizing.

Never speak longer than 3 minutes without them doing something. They can be voting and doodling on pages. They can be chatting. Dr. Lindy Greer at the University of Michigan's Ross School recommends chunking learning into 7-minute modules. She says her virtual courses are now delivering richer content and more creative learning experiences than her in-person format was.

Design visual candy for the eye- brand the event with posters for the breakouts. You will need a facilitator in each breakout. Prep them fully.

Make the learning competitive to heighten engagement. Infuse humor, and you have a winning combination. Have a contest where people draw a pig on a whiteboard and then vote on the best one.

Surprise Factors

What can you do that they will certainly not expect? Show video, play a game, reveal new microsite, have an unexpected speaker, use the virtual backgrounds or a costume for a speaker, find some levity, personalize in an authentic way (introduce family, pet, show and tell). Have people find something living in their space and show it. Plants and produce from the kitchen count!

If you have a big budget since you are not paying for travel, do something big! Hire a production professional and make a music video with hired celebrities or use your own employees. Develop a new online board game related to your theme, topic, or mission. If you can get their home addresses, send something to their homes.

With Thoughtful Planning, Highly Interactive Facilitation, and Surprise Factors - your virtual trainings can be a more effective, creative, and efficient process for all involved.