



3G selling™
third generation selling

Getting Started with VILT

- Create compelling, relevant content.
- Choose an online delivery platform that creates a seamless and compelling training experience.
- Engage learners before, during and after the event.
- Prepare by practicing with speakers, testing the technology and mapping out time restrictions.
- Record training sessions for expanded on-demand use (turn synchronous, or live, recordings into asynchronous learning modules).

The Virtual Learning Advantage: Designing a Best-in-Class VILT Program

There's nothing like a global economic crisis to reshape and refine the way we do business—including the way we train. As we watched, training organizations cut 11 percent of their budgets in 2008 and again in 2009¹; in response, the demand for learning strategies and tools that deliver greater ROI and efficiency with minimal investment has grown exponentially.

Now Learning & Development (L&D) professionals, wrestling with the problem of how to do more with less, face a critical decision: continue with traditional classroom training or join the virtual training movement? Interestingly, new survey data from 1080 Group indicates that nearly 15 percent of trainers plan to cut in-person training in the next year, while almost 15 percent plan to employ new technologies in future training efforts.

What's clear is that there's a growing awareness among L&D professionals of the ability of Virtual Instructor-Led Training (VILT) to not only match the business impact of physical training, but to actually exceed the capabilities of physical training and deliver superior results.

The logical course of action for L&D professionals is to weigh the respective pros and cons of physical and virtual training, as well as the advantages each offers in helping you meet your organization's training objectives.

Companies commonly assume that in-person training trumps virtual training in terms of engagement, immediacy and business results. In fact, in a recent Citrix Online survey of L&D professionals, engagement was identified as the leading challenge facing users of virtual training.² However, it's nearly impossible to compete with virtual training when it comes to reduced travel costs (the top business benefit identified in the 1080 Group survey) and increased productivity, both of which directly result from employees staying in the field. Additionally, virtual training adeptly loops in learners who otherwise could not participate in an on-site training event (a close second to reduced travel costs in terms of online training benefits identified by the 1080 Group survey).

Physical training also comes with baggage, so to speak, especially considering IDC's prediction that nearly 75 percent of the U.S. workforce will be made up of mobile workers by the end of 2013. A burgeoning remote workforce ensures that travel to a physical training site will become increasingly more costly and less convenient for companies.

Physical and virtual training certainly differ from one another. As you might

¹ Bersin & Associates. Another Year of Training Budget Cuts. January 12, 2010.

² Citrix Online Training Survey. Q2 2010.

12 Reasons to Employ Live, Web-Based Training⁴

- Avoidance of travel costs
- Convenience
- Increased retention and productivity
- Security
- Interactivity
- Ease of reporting and analysis
- Accessible data
- Enhanced organizational productivity
- Measurable global impact
- Flexibility
- Informal learning
- Ease of preparation

Imagine, virtual training requires a different strategy and set of best practices to be effective. Virtual training programs must be designed to maximize the inherent strengths of a VILT format. Plus, virtual training technology must be selected based on its ability to seamlessly and effectively deliver desired results, enhance the learning experience and engage learners before, during and after the training.

Ironically, physical training's physicality itself can sabotage the learning process. It's not uncommon for on-site training sessions to last for long periods of time—often all day. As the hours tick by, learners struggle to process a deluge of information. Fatigue and the stress of processing too much information can quickly overwhelm learners and, in the end, compromise retention. Furthermore, with physical training, there's usually less documentation and fewer online resources to refer to later, which can also negatively impact retention and practical application. Add to this the disruption of employee productivity during the time learners attend lengthy training sessions, not to mention the travel time to and from a physical training event, and the advantages of VILT become even more apparent.

Despite these significant shortcomings, the physical classroom remains the dominant mode of corporate training. Sixty percent of corporate learning is still delivered in the traditional instructor-led training (ILT) format.³ Interestingly, 80 percent of companies that have tried VILT now use it as their dominant mode of corporate training, suggesting that once they have invested in virtual training they tend to embrace its unique advantages.

Not all virtual training is created equal

First, be aware of the distinction between synchronous and asynchronous training. VILT is synchronous, which means it takes place live, via the web; VILT is an interactive online event led by a real person in real time. By contrast, asynchronous training is self-paced; there is no live, interactive component and it happens completely independent of a presenter. VILT is sometimes incorrectly categorized as asynchronous, but the two formats are as different as night and day. For training that is focused on engaging participants and changing behaviors, VILT is definitely the preferred format.

Next, VILT programs must be strategically developed to fully leverage the unique strengths of virtual training, rather than just mimicking physical training or grinding through a tired, old PowerPoint presentation. VILT's delivery must also engage the learner by incorporating multiple learning styles and by bringing interactivity, a quick pace and a high level of energy to the overall learning experience.

Finally, because VILT places a greater emphasis on design, development and delivery, it offers a unique set of benefits that a physical classroom simply can't provide, including:

- A continuous learning environment — Students can easily access content, reports, and continue the interaction on other channels, such as social networks, forums, etc.
- Practical application of learned concepts — Pre-, mid- and

³Citrix Online Training Survey. Q2 2010.

⁴TrainingIndustry.com. How to Promote the Value of Online Training within Your Organization.

post-session tests and polls track the learned concepts, as well as giving the instructor a report of student's progress.

- Inclusion of learners who could not otherwise participate — A web-based application allows for anyone, anywhere with an Internet connection to join the session.
- According to Roger Courville of the 1080 Group, "Synchronous remote training potentially offers more than just saving money to an organization open to new possibilities."⁵

Three Elements of a Best-in-Class VILT Structure

- Design – integration of learning, application, collaboration, and coaching methods
- Content – compilation of compelling, useful information
- Delivery – incorporation of broadcast media strategies, online training technology, social networks, forums, etc.

Measuring ROI and impact of VILT

VILT holds many benefits, some of which are already widely recognized and some of which may challenge conventional thinking. These include:

Cost savings

Measuring the ROI and business impact of VILT begins by drawing a line through your training travel expense column—VILT simply eliminates the need for travel. In an era defined by the emergence of the distributed workforce, travel savings alone can be a significant sum—as much as 40 percent of your training budget, especially when you consider administration, venue and material costs in addition to transportation, food and lodging.

Increased productivity

Now factor in the increased productivity for learners who do not have to travel to a physical training location. Plus, VILT not only eliminates the time spent traveling, but also enables flexible scheduling outside of peak work hours.

Superior business impact and training results

While few would argue against the fact that VILT can reduce training expenditures and the burnout associated with heavy travel, many are skeptical about its ability to match the business impact and training results typically seen with physical, event-based training. Perception aside, the truth of the matter is that VILT has a number of unique strengths that actually make it a superior learning tool. A best-in-class VILT program can engage learners, increase the rate of program adoption and behavioral change and improve performance results.

Designing a best-in-class VILT program

Let's take a look at the components of a best-in-class VILT program, starting with engagement. Broadcast media provides an excellent template for creating and delivering content that engages learners. From incorporating personal storytelling and tight scripting to using multimedia content and multiple "on-air" presenters, broadcast media strategies are effective at engaging the audience.

Like a cable news program, a VILT session should feature multiple "on-air" presenters, including a training host and subject matter expert (SME), as well as a producer for backend support. Here, again, is another unique advantage of VILT: cost, travel and location are no longer prohibitive factors in inviting the most suitable SME in the field for a particular training. When selecting presenters, choose candidates who are able to modulate their voices and convey emotion effectively. Then, once the training team is in place, incorporate storytelling and careful scripting of the training, remembering to set and respect time limits, include short breaks and build in blocks of time for impromptu interactions during the training.

⁵1080 Group. Web Conferencing Training Trends: 2010.

As you build your program, you will amass a sizable collection of multimedia content, including video, audio and graphics. Keep your valuable resources organized and ready for use in a content library. As you create content, carefully consider the learning format that will best engage learners and enable them to retain and put into use as much information from the training as possible. One way to ensure this is to build shorter modules that can be delivered regularly over longer periods of time. Smaller class sizes and assignments that allow learners to apply new knowledge also support engagement and retention.

A best-in-class VILT program integrates learning, application, peer collaboration and coaching. Virtual training technology that enables you to record training events introduces an asynchronous benefit, which can be effectively used following the live, interactive training to reinforce concepts and provide valuable reference long after the training event is over. Real-time interaction and assessment are critical to the success of a VILT program as well. Be sure to choose a virtual training technology that enables pre-session, mid-session and post-session tests, plus polls, handraising, messaging—and even an attentiveness feature. These types of interaction all serve to keep learners engaged while informing presenters about comprehension, pace and whether learners are actually paying attention and allowing presenters to make the necessary adjustments on the fly.

Best Practices of Online Training⁶

- Plan
- Promote
- Present
- Record

⁶1080 Group. How to Move Your Training Program Online

Case Studies

A Leading Global Provider of Business and Hardware Systems

This 3g Selling customer provides the world's most complete, open and integrated business software and hardware systems, with more than 370,000 customers—including all 100 of the Fortune 100—representing a variety of scales and industries in more than 145 countries around the globe.

Challenge: Training a global sales management team

With a sales management team that had mostly come up through the ranks, the customer's Vice President of Sales needed a sales management training program that would provide high-impact approaches and skills for managing the business of sales while enhancing and standardizing sales management practices. Due to operational challenges, he was drawn to the idea of rolling out a live, web-based training program that would give his team the approaches and tools they needed while keeping them in the field and completely eliminating travel-related costs.

The Solution: A new-and-improved virtual training program

The customer's Vice President of Sales asked 3g Selling to develop an expanded version of its Sales Management training program that would meet all of the customer's criteria for success. The resulting live virtual sales training program covered three critical topics: 1) business planning; 2) pipeline planning and management; and 3) coaching and sales leadership.

While the customer's executive team went into the planning process fully aware of both the strengths and limitations of web-based training, the the 3g Selling sales training program was a total success, easily meeting or exceeding all established performance criteria. Highlights included:

- The vast majority of sales managers who went through the program—over 80%—completed all work assignments.

Results from VILT

- Increased ROI
 - Greater business impact and training results
 - Decreased time to program adoption
 - Improved learner engagement and knowledge retention
 - Increased rate of program adoption
 - Elimination of travel costs
 - Reduction of man hours
- Virtually all participants reported that the approaches and tools they learned in the program were relevant and applicable to their jobs.
 - Managers overwhelmingly agreed that the 3g Selling program was “different and more effective” than approaches used in the past in how it imparted consistent practices for effective selling.
 - Post-program participant satisfaction rates in the areas of content, delivery, facilitation and engagement were all superior to benchmarks based on previous physical training events.
 - Within 3 months of the program, the customer’s sales management team saw measurable and sustainable increases in average deal size, win ratio and velocity of deals through the buying-selling process.
 - While the program was priced comparably to what the customer had invested in equivalent physical classroom training events in the past, the live-virtual program saved an estimated \$58,600 in travel costs.

Solutions Cube Group

Solutions Cube Group provides project meeting facilitation, business coaching and extensive training in project management, including methodologies, facilitation skills and a preparatory course for the Project Management Professional (PMP®) certification exam.

Challenge: Improving accessibility to training

Initially, Solutions Cube Group provided all its project management training courses on site in a one- or two-day format, but filling these classes became difficult because attendees did not want to travel, or had difficulty obtaining funding or taking time away from work. For this reason, the company decided to explore online training as a flexible and cost-effective alternative, ultimately selecting VILT’s interactivity over self-paced, asynchronous training.

The Solution: Remote training via the web

The company chose Citrix® GoToTraining® as the platform for its new corporate offering and an industry first: a live, online preparatory course for the PMP® credentialing exam. As a result, Solutions Cube Group has set itself apart from competitors and added a revenue stream, while offering learners greater flexibility, efficiency and interactivity.

By moving from in-person training to a VILT format, Solutions Cube Group expanded to a fully global reach; people around the world can participate regardless of location and without the need for expensive travel. Similarly, instructors can teach from anywhere, which means that the company can leverage global experts to teach new subjects that expand its offerings.

With GoToTraining, Solutions Cube Group is able to deliver interactivity in a virtual training environment and create new business opportunities. According to the company’s CEO, “Citrix Online products enable a small company like ours to look and act like a large business. Equally important, they allow us to honor our promise to provide practical, usable techniques in a real-time, interactive learning environment.”

Conclusion

Shrinking budgets and shifting priorities may be the impetus for exploring the world of virtual training, but you'll soon discover that VILT expands, rather than limits, the scope of training efforts. The shift to a web-based program, if undertaken effectively, is a wise business decision for any organization.

This should come as very good news. Instead of spending valuable time trying to figure out whether VILT has the chops to deliver results for your organization, you can focus your resources on designing and delivering a truly effective virtual training program that harnesses the inherent advantages of VILT.

Best-in-class training companies have already cracked the code and increased their training impact. Is now the time for your organization to take advantage of live online training?



Visit 3g Selling online today at www.3gSelling.com to discover how our live virtual sales training programs can help your organization achieve world-class results.

About 3g Selling

Solve the training challenge! 3g Selling is an innovator in the design and delivery of live virtual sales training experiences. Our unique approach—which leverages production techniques from the broadcast media—combines a dynamic delivery style, Integrated Learning format and proven sales methodology to help our customers achieve greater business impact and improve training results.

The end result is a richer learning experience with a more immediate and enduring impact on sales performance. Plus there are no travel costs. No more time out of the field. And no more complaints about training programs that go nowhere.

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