

A WEapproach to Virtual Facilitation

ANALYTICAL

Get comfortable with the delivery platform to further validate competence.

Define objectives early and tailor them to current business needs.

Present your credentials and qualifications.

Use metaphors to deliver content.

Move quickly through slides to maintain engagement.

Recognize the whimsy that comes with virtual training, i.e. the occasional dog that barks and children that enter the room.

CONCEPTUAL

STRUCTURAL

Stick to the agenda presented.

Ensure your participants are prepared by referring them to their handouts.

Review the “Virtual Workshop Checklist” to keep yourself organized.

Acknowledge participant questions using the participant’s name whether live or in chat and state whether you plan to answer it now or later.

Use brief and relevant stories to deliver content.

Encourage individual contributions and takeaways during discussion for participants to learn from each other.

SOCIAL

1/3 ← EXPRESSIVENESS → 3/3

Be comfortable with periods of silence after questions so those who have something to contribute can do so without talking over others.

Utilize video share so your face conveys nonverbal signals and intentionality.

1/3 ← ASSERTIVENESS → 3/3

Use polling technologies or chat functions to seek consensus on topics.

Be direct when responding to questions to move through the discussion quickly.

1/3 ← FLEXIBILITY → 3/3

Establish group norms for the virtual session and commit to them so they know what to expect.

Encourage people to self-monitor their needs to stay engaged during online learning whether it be moving locations, standing up or incorporating nondisruptive brain aerobics.

Getting Ready for your Virtual Workshop

Virtual Workshop Checklist

- Familiarize yourself with your virtual platform. Be sure you understand the experience as a presenter and participant. Locate and learn all menu commands and how to manage breakout rooms. Test the platform ahead of time.
- Familiarize your participants with the platform. Include the tools your participants will need to access during the workshop.
- Test the hardware you plan to run the session on. Ensure your computer has the proper software and drivers installed. Be sure it is charged, and your camera lens is clean.
- Check the internet connection in the location that you plan to host your session. If possible, have an alternative connection available in the event you encounter internet disruptions.
- Consider whether you'll use a telephone or computer audio to host your session. In either case, test the audio system to make sure there are no reverberations or feedback.
- Download all training materials (including slide decks) onto your computer so they are easily accessible. Print copies of all facilitator and participant materials so you can easily reference them without changing your screen.
- If possible, arrange to have a producer assist with all technical needs, breakout rooms, and moderate comments and questions from participants in the chatroom.
- Familiarize yourself with the participants joining your session. It's recommended to have some type of contact with all participants prior to the session to be able to anticipate their objectives, needs and the questions they may have as it relates to their work. Verify that they've completed any assigned pre-work.
- Practice! Online delivery style needs to be developed just like your in-person facilitation style. Practice the brief and relevant stories and metaphors you want to incorporate.
- Plan for a slow start in your agenda. Allow 10 minutes for everyone to join the session and troubleshoot technology issues.
- Make all weblinks and passcodes to join the session available to participants and have them easily accessible if a participant needs it resent.
- Confirm meeting arrangements and details at least twice prior to the date of the session. Include date, time, weblinks and required pre-work. Ask them to test the software ahead of time to ensure all proper software is installed.

Other Tips and Tricks

- Set up a clean and professional background with good lighting to brighten your face.
- Clear your space of other noise distractions, e.g., pets, children, phone ringer, etc.
- Check your appearance in the mirror.
- Position yourself close enough to the screen so that your face is the primary focus.
- Wear professional clothing.
- Practice looking at the camera lens and not your screen.
- Shut down all other applications on your computer so notifications don't interrupt.
- Smile while you are presenting, even if you aren't on screen – the participants will hear the difference in your voice.

Checklist Adapted from Association of Talent Development