Taking Traditional Training Online:
From the Classroom to the Web

by Tom Bunzel
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Objective: This eBook provides a how-to overview of taking in-person training online, reviewing the technology involved and leveraging the Web and social media.

Hypothetical Case Study:

Carol Muir, McCheesy’s new COO was tasked with reducing costs while improving sales and customer service while reducing costs for supporting and training owners, managers and staff at the company’s 3,354 franchises nationwide. How could she achieve all of these goals?
How She Did It: Carol revamped the company’s training program at McCheesy University with an online training program, having instructors blog and use social media to engage franchise owners, managers, employees and restaurant patrons online. Then she had her HR department do an audit of all courses and begin develop modules of instruction to be given online in short two-hour interactive segments that franchise owners, managers and employees could take locally without needing to be flown to the main campus in Kansas City. These included the best elements of classroom training, including quizzes, polls, role-playing, simulations and animation of cooking techniques.

Introduction: Trends in Online Training

As the economic circumstances put the squeeze on many training budgets, the growth of broadband Internet has served to make it increasingly feasible and attractive to take training initiatives online.

In traditional training, it is necessary to get the participants into a physical classroom with a qualified instructor, provide compelling and effective training materials, and design an educational program to serve the needs of the students and the organization.

Whether it provided in-house by a Human Resources department, or outsourced to a third party source, an instructor-led training program is essentially a project that runs its course and hopefully achieves a particular goal. Training initiatives generally start with formal needs or cause analysis, move on to developing a curriculum, delivery of the program(s) and subsequent evaluation of the results. When additional needs arise, another program may have been implemented.

Most instructor-led training projects are like chunks, units or packages of learning delivered on an as needed basis, mainly because of the limitations and logistics of getting everyone to a classroom at the same time and place. Constraints of budgets and the versatility of online events have begun to move many training initiatives online.

The New Learner is a community composed of various backgrounds where users can read and submit current articles and learn corporate trends in technology, businesses practices, and an array of other topics. In a recent study, the New Learner asked respondents about the future of instructor-led and online training with the following results:
Trend One: Reducing Travel Costs

A key trend of online training is obviously the prospect of greatly reducing the expense of getting everyone to one location to take a course or seminar. This excited accounting and finance departments as it significantly cut costs for travel, accommodations and course materials. More learners are able to participate as trainees can join a session despite being off-site. Some departments have even reported a reduction in their training budget by 50%.

Trend Two: Self-Directed Asynchronous Learning

With the growth of the Internet, and the growth of small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures, the need has never been greater to expand skills in many areas on the part of motivated individuals. Searches on Google will point users to online courses and other learning materials – from IT-related material like computer training to soft skill information on marketing or specific how-to information in lifestyle areas.
In many cases these materials are not traditional education courses at all – they may be archived recordings on sites like YouTube or Vimeo or even hosted PowerPoint presentations on SlideShare or AuthorStream. The key point here is that in many cases the Internet has motivated individuals to seek out information they need on their own because they are sparing themselves the expense and time of attending traditional training in a set location.

**Types of Online Training**

- **Online Documents** instead of manuals or text—with instructions and graphics.
- **Downloadable documents, white papers and eBooks** with reference and printed material.
- **Interactive courseware** with multimedia, point and click responses, quizzes and forums.
- **Recorded Video** of graphics and computer screens from application, usually with voice-over narration. These may also be archived Live Online Training events available online.
- **Live Online Training** which represents a virtual classroom environment with chat, audio, video, presentation graphics and whiteboard.
- **Interactive Learning Environments** or virtual worlds or comprehensive eLearning platforms, combining some of the above elements.

**Trend Three: Synchronous Online Training**

The problem with hosted recordings is that it is completely packaged; even with the presence of an expert/narrator there is no opportunity to interact with the material directly—except, again, through ancillary social networks or blogs from the content provider.

To get back to the real dynamics of a classroom environment, a synchronous online training platform can provide the presence of one or more instructors or experts, participation on the part of students or learners though chat, polls, questions and answers and other interactive elements, but not require travel to a set location. This requires the use of a dedicated online training platform to host the live event and provide the logistical support necessary for implementation.

**Trend Four: Learning from Social Media: The Importance of Engagement**

The absence of a live instructor makes it difficult to keep even the most motivated students attentive when they are sitting at a computer instead of in a classroom. On the other hand, unconventional methods and new technologies, like social media, are pointing the way to how to get employees to actively participate in initiatives that benefit the company’s bottom line and improve their own professional experience. The New Learning survey anticipated that social media will increase substantially in its impact on online training this year:
The personal learning environment is more of a conferencing tool than it is a content tool. The focus of a personal learning environment is more on creation and communication than it is consumption and completion. It is best to think of the interfaces facilitated by a personal learning environment as ways to create and manipulate content, as applications rather than resources.”

--Stephen Downes

One of the most dramatic examples of the power of engagement is the social network Best Buy developed, almost by accident, to enhance customer service. Blue Shirt Nation was initially a research project by two marketing executives at Best Buy in which they began by interviewing employees at several locations about customer service issues. After getting support from executives at the company, the social network let employees share ideas interactively about how to improve customer service—a marked contrast from traditional training seminars that a company might otherwise provide.

Trend Five: Creating a Conversation

The critical element was that all levels of management and staff actively participated and listened to the concerns and suggestions of others, and learned from their experiences. For example, a sales associate managed to meet directly with middle management by providing innovative ways to market video games in the stores. One employee posted a picture of a display case he thought was too big for his department and solicited opinions; higher ups quickly realized that the display case in question was the incorrect size and
exchanged it. Another employee started a conversation that convinced management that email should be supported during working hours to communicate internally and with customers—management listened to the stream of arguments and agreed.

Besides dramatically improving customer service in ways that conventional training methods seldom, do, Best Buy also found that employees using the network had only an 8-12% turnover rate as opposed to 60% in the overall company – so they remained engaged not only on the network but as participatory members of the organization.

(Source:  http://garykoelling.com/node/442)

Trend Six: Mobility

More and more workers workshift or otherwise work away from the main office of a company, also known as telecommute. By next year almost three-quarters of the U.S. workforce is anticipated to become mobile in some fashion—along with one-third of the world’s workforce. (Source: IDC forecast; http://bit.ly/cIOChh)

Many of these employees will be at different locations within a given enterprise, from a roving sales force to service personnel, others will be working between various organizations or acting as independent contractors—they may also be changing jobs, handling different projects and requiring new skills all at the same time.

Reaching these workers in an effective way to manage change, build skills or otherwise train them according to company standards will require creative efforts in terms of needs assessment, content development, implementation, logistics and evaluation.

“The technology will be used to create learning communities among students in new ways. People are correct when they say online education will take things out the classroom. But they are wrong, I think, when they assume it will make learning an independent, personal activity. Learning has to occur in a community.”

-- Philip R. Regier, the dean of Arizona State University’s Online and Extended Campus program Bits.blogs.nytimes.com - http://nyti.ms/av3Bh1
Trend Seven: More Effective Presentation Tools and Skills

When users attend an online conference they may never see the instructor at all—so how can they be actively engaged and important material provided? In most cases a presentation program—the standard would be Microsoft PowerPoint—is used but it has even more potential for boredom and ineffectiveness in an online classroom than with a live instructor present. Clearly there is a need to elevate computer graphics with more effective PowerPoint skills, eliminating text-heavy, bullet-ridden slides, and preparing material in a way that refrains from reading the slides but using them as supporting visuals to deliver compelling content.

According to The New Learner, web conferencing training presentations should follow these guidelines:

- Simplify content.
- Use a large, bold, simple font like Arial.
- Have no more than 6 to 8 lines of text per page (fewer are better).
- Make no more than 4 to 5 training points per page (fewer are better).
- Use plain backgrounds that contrast well with the text without clashing.
- If possible, avoid complex animations.

To increase attentiveness and interactivity, foregoing text slides in favor of images that convey emotion, using analogies and metaphors, and providing links to online resources are techniques that work best online.

Tools for Maximizing Online Training

A dedicated online training platform can make the transition from a conventional classroom to a virtual learning environment less painful by providing a set of tools specific to the needs of web students and instructors.

Registration can be customized online along with easily accessible catalogs of upcoming sessions. Attendees can register directly via email or on a web site, gain access to training materials through convenient downloads in electronic formats, and use pre-sessions tests for skills and needs assessment or polls or surveys to ensure that their expectations will be met.

For the content creator a dedicated platform can provide a library of instructional materials, including slides and graphics to be used at various events, as well as interactive materials like tests, polls and evaluations that can be customized and integrated as needed.
Subsequent to events a dedicated platform aggregates evaluations and reports to facilitate analysis of results, provides post-tests to gauge the continued effectiveness of the instruction, and generates follow-up email to maintain connections and to allow anyone who missed a session or wants to refresh their knowledge to access archived, hosted recording of an event.

For a larger organization, a dedicated platform also lets a centralized administration center coordinate events and content development to serve needs across various departments and facilitate partnerships between HR/Training, Marketing, Sales, Finance and upper management.

**Leveraging Interactive Technology**

As discussed earlier, engagement is a key component to the success of an online initiative. For example, Best Buy’s Blue Shirt Nation was able to use the power of a social network to get employees engaged and provide customer service best practices to one another.

Besides reducing costs, one of the most powerful aspects of using online training platforms is the ability to take advantage of the myriad of new interactive technologies to increase engagement and to empower the classroom experience. For example, the use of extensive profiles for instructors and the ability to engage attendees through their profiles in social media can greatly increase conversation and create an atmosphere of community in the online classroom. Using tags for posted material that allows users to quickly locate relevant text, graphic, video and other items in search, or hashtags on Twitter, helps users identify important content and tags for photos. This creates community as users maintain their contact on social sites like Facebook and Flickr.

**Blogs and Wikis**

Because registration and preparation for a web conference, webcast or webinar takes place through email or web sites, it is easy to integrate other types of powerful social tools with the virtual classroom. Whether to promote an upcoming event, solicit ideas and feedback, follow up subsequent to an event, create a buzz or excitement, or disseminate relevant information in an interactive and collaborative way, a blog with its ability to thread commentary, or a wiki, with its aggregation of user-generated content, can provide tremendous support and resources for an online training event.

“Wikis include ‘talk pages’ parallel to each page where contributors discuss (and sometimes fight over) what ought to be included. Contributors can also view each others’ profiles; those that contribute most often get more respect from others in the community... In a very real way this communities are collaborating to define the content of creative efforts that many millions of people will use.”

--Charlene Li, Josh Bernoff, *Groundswell*
In traditional training the first time many students ever encounter their instructor may be on the first day of class. Today’s computer-savvy students want to know what the instructor brings to the classroom--today, there is an expectation on the part of participants in any training that they can find out about the “who” as well as the “what” of their upcoming session to prepare and in some cases determine whether to attend at all. The profiles and links in Wikis, Blogs and other social tools create a sense of identification and connection between instructor and students.

By building relationships through the interactive engagement of a blog or wiki, the instructor or designer is able to engage students prior to the event and can greatly enhance the classroom experience. By getting ideas before planning or delivering training, content developers can also use these social tools to gain important insights into what is of particular value to the prospective attendees. Blogs and wikis also harness the power of the Internet through their ability to link to hosted content in other formats, like graphics, video or audio to provide context and additional information to learners.

LinkedIn for Research and Outreach

Business social networks like LinkedIn can supplement online training by expanding the reach of the content developer and student. For example, the Advanced search feature of LinkedIn lets you locate individuals with unique combinations of skill sets or very specific attributes with key words and other parameters. The answers section of the social network uses questions to generate extremely helpful responses on topics you select, within specific industries or markets, or through the entire network.

The Twitter Backchannel

Many trainers are threatened by the aspects of social media that distract from online training. The Backchannel is the phenomenon of social media users commenting on a presentation as it is delivered, usually on Twitter. Social media experts like Olivia Mitchell have suggested steps to harness this new trend rather than seeing as a threat:

1. Survive the experience – adequate preparation
2. Respond to the audience’s needs – master the phenomenon
3. Engage with the backchannel – use it for your own purposes

Cliff Atkinson, author of *The Backchannel: How Audiences are Using Twitter and Social Media and Changing Presentations Forever*, suggests using several Twitter features prominently during training and other presentations—

Hashtags (a “#” prefix in Twitter messages) let users aggregate and filter messages pertaining to a specific topic and can be used prior to, during and subsequent to online training events to gather information, create buzz and allow interaction with nonattendees.

Identifiers for presenters should include their “@” Twitter ID to allow them to communicate with learners, again in preparation and follow-up to a live event and to create a sense of community for any training topic.

Facebook Events

Facebook is the main competing social network to Twitter and trainers can create groups around an event and use their Facebook presence to stay in touch with students. Facebook also has an events page feature that can be coordinated with the registration capability of an online training platform to facilitate sign-up and monitoring of attendees, and to build a database of participants.

New Technologies—Location Based Interaction

New mobile technologies like Whrrl, which lets users build stories with images using their cell phones and post them on a social network, and Posterous which also aggregates content for brainstorming and presentations quickly and seamlessly are changing the
landscape of the Internet with their immediacy. Their impact on online training is particularly apparent in how these technologies have changed the attention spans of students. Organizations that might consider moving a full day event online, for example, might be better served by breaking it up into smaller, shorter time burst segments to improve impact and retention.

These technologies can also help to target specific interest groups more precisely, allowing trainers to create high impact classes for a specific niche of student to be delivered quickly in response to a specific need or situation. Some of these technologies, like Whrrl, have a “check-in” feature that lets a content provider know not just who is participating, but where they are currently or have been recently, which provides even more information for targeted content creation.

**Online Techniques that Incorporate Traditional (In-Person Practices)**

Perhaps the most significant aspect of taking traditional classroom training to the web is the physical absence of the instructor.

This greatly increases the importance of graphics to hold the visual attention of the student, along with a more effective use of the voice of the presenter to hold attention. In terms of blended training, which seeks to combine the skill sets of the classroom with what will be delivered in a web browser, the greater the levels of interactivity through the use of polls, stories, games, quizzes and other creative techniques, the more energy the event will have and more retention on the part of students.

An effective program will frequently have an assistant monitor the mood of participants using the online platform’s feedback feature, answer questions directly about technical issues, and respond to other matters through chat.

In terms of visuals, the staple for presentation is still PowerPoint, and a desirable online training platform will not require presentations to be uploaded but rather to be presented directly in real-time, or let the presenter share her desktop and present full screen during the event.

The shared desktop scenario makes it possible for the trainer to change material in the last minute, and also allows for quick links to web pages, shared documents, and other brainstorming or interactive applications. The annotation tools of the online platform can generally be used to highlight graphic content, or if PowerPoint is displayed full screen, its native annotation features like the highlighter would also be available during an online event.
The shared desktop scenarios is particularly helpful in software training, or any situation that can use simulations or live demos; for example, training a group on Microsoft Excel and showing a pivot table being created, with live questions from the group during or after the event, is far more effective than showing a slide show of Excel screenshots.

In terms of best practices, experts emphasize the unique features of the online experience as differentiated from a traditional classroom. Roger Courville, training veteran and principal of 1080 Group LLC, explains: "Corporate trainers used to the classroom environment regularly tell me that they will lose their ability to connect with students if they take training online. I tell them, the only way to engage an audience is to keep it interesting. Up your game--think of yourself as an entertainer, regardless of the nature of the material."

Courville’s tips for impactful online training include:

1. Repurpose and adapt content, don't just copy your in-person events. Online training is a different medium and needs to be treated as such. By all means, repurpose content from offline training sessions you've conducted, but adapt the format to the online environment. That means developing a new agenda and flow, new visuals and new interactive activities.

2. Convert your physical classroom content into smaller modules. In a virtual classroom setting, content can be delivered in smaller doses over a longer period of time. For example, 16 hours of content can be delivered in two days in a physical classroom, but in an online setting, the same class may be delivered in increments of two hours a day spread over two weeks. The result is often more effective training and improved learning retention and application, as your students have time to incorporate the learning into their daily work across a longer training period.

3. Make your materials engaging. With no presenter to watch, your course materials are the primary focus. You'll lose engagement in a heartbeat if you don't provide interesting content to help stimulate dialog between instructors and students. Replace word-intensive content with images and aim to have something occur on-screen every 2 or 3 minutes. For example, instead of using slides all the way, mix it up by sharing your desktop and opening up a blank desktop.

“When we celebrate our successes we elevate our partners and generate a positive focal point for the entire organization. Because the work we do is achieved through collaboration, it is critical to exhibit public signs of appreciation and recognition of everyone’s efforts... Look for creative ways to build celebration into project methodologies. This is another good place for corporate communications to help us.”

--Terrence Gargiulo, et al., *Building Business Acument for Trainers*
document to use as a virtual whiteboard or use your drawing tools to visually highlight the point you are addressing rather than just talking about it.

4. Use polls, questions and tests to the fullest. Whether online or offline, your students will soon get bored if you talk at them for too long. Engage them every step of the way by conducting regular polls, inviting questions and comments via chat and asking for a show of hands. Don't forget to test them at the beginning and end of every session to determine experience levels and see how much of the content sank in.

5. Maintain virtual eye contact. You may not be able to physically see your students, but you can absolutely maintain engagement by leveraging your online training dashboard. In addition to your presentation materials, keep the questions box, chat and even Twitter on-screen at all times. Make sure your online training platform allow you to keep an eye on the attentiveness monitor to see if a student's attention is wandering to email instead of being focused on your training. When you feel like you're losing your students, it's time for an interactive activity to wake everyone up.

(Source: http://www.marketwatch.com/story/five-tips-for-successful-online-training-2010-07-07)

Bestselling business authors and nationally recognized speakers Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton, and authors of The Carrot Principle, have a three-step concept of blending classroom content with online initiatives. They recommend beginning with a live webinar or online training event, of energetic content for one hour with the ability to ask an expert instructor questions at the conclusion. The live event can be followed with interactive self-paced training, engaging learners with stories, research data, best-practice examples and interactive exercises to increase participant engagement. These modules might be 1.5-2 hours in length and the results of quizzes or exercises can be captured for further review. Finally in terms of “transfer of learning,” the authors would use a set of recognition tools and a resource library of support materials, to continue an ongoing monitoring of how their students (managers) are honing their skills on the job.

(Source: http://carrots.com/training/carrots_online)

**Online Training Leverages Instructor-Led Classrooms**

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While social media tools and interactive programs can aid in assessing needs and delivering online courses that leverage Instructor-led classroom content, it is the unique capabilities of a comprehensive Learning Management System that facilitates the sort of system that experts like Bob Pike (www.bobpike.com) refer to when they say that “training is a process, not an event.”

For example, Hazwoper Online Safety Training is a 40-hour program that combines 32 hours of online training with 8 hours of classroom instruction, culminating in OSHA Certification. “It is really two classes combined, one online and one in a classroom environment. In the classroom portion, students receive hands-on training during the final 8 hours of their 40-hour certification. OSHA requires workers to be adequately trained to use specialized equipment in a training environment before actually having to use it in a hazardous work environment. This session introduces students to examples of this type of equipment and allows them to practice with it.”

The National Safety Council offers defensive driving training and a professional truck driver online program, both of which are based on classroom counterparts with animation, video, narration and interactive screens.

The safety programs are asynchronous courses that have the advantage of being accessible 24/7 for students.

**Blended Training**

The key to blended learning is the ability to use both the content and skills of your existing instructors to the greatest degree possible in online training courses and events. Classroom instructors should use interviews and classes monitored to take advantage of questions and responses, stories, anecdotes, analogies and other significant material that can be incorporated into a live online event. Marc Rosenberg, of Rosenberg & Associates, mentioned changes in blended learning as part of major trends covered in an ASTD webcast, saying that it will be “redefined.” He said, “Traditionally, blended learning was simply a combination of online

“Avoid simple recall exercises that do not link to the learner’s job context. Asking learners to recall the five principles of great customer service is way less effective than giving them a scenario and having them identify how they would apply the 5 principles to this scenario.

Give learners opportunities to practice as you go along rather than waiting until the end of the course to give them any chance to practice. Let them use it before they lose it.”

--Sharon Boller, http://www.bottomlineperformance.com/eMag/Article_02_02.pdf

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training and classroom training. The new definition will involve using a variety of sources, including online training, classroom training, mentoring, communicating with experts, knowledge repositories, etc.” (Source: HR.BLR.com - http://bit.ly/9DNdpI)

Managing Content Effectively

Implementing an effective platform content management tools is a key component to using classroom assets effectively and being able to locate and reuse graphics and other interactive content, along with registration forms, test, evaluations, polls, video, surveys and forms. A comprehensive system for live online events will probably include features like:

-- Custom Registration Capability
-- Catalog and Calendar of Events
-- Library of Content
-- Reusable tests, evaluations and surveys
-- Configurable Class Size
-- Invite Attendees on the Fly
-- Automatic Event Reminders
-- Audio Options for Phone or VoIP

Commentary and Review

Creating an effective training system is an evolutionary process in which all participants, including partners within an organization, should collaborate to make sure that all training programs achieve the goals of students and the training developers.

More and more, HR departments that implement training initiatives are also called upon to align these programs with strategic corporate goals. (For more information on how to meet strategic objectives using live online training, see “Using Webinars to Engage Employees and Drive Productivity” – http://bit.ly/bNL4mk.)

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According to Josh Bersin, writing in HR Management, this requires that HR coordinate its training so as to “identify critical talents required by the organization; integrate the business processes involved in retaining and developing employees with these talents; and provide ongoing workforce planning.”

This means that all aspects of online training needs to be reviewed by the departments affected, allowing them to provide feedback so that they address issue such as how:

- Organizations are revamping, improving and automating performance management.
- Performance management and corporate learning are being integrated, as are the supporting system platforms.
- Organizations are rethinking core competencies.
- New job roles and organization structures are emerging.


Online tools themselves can be used effectively in the commentary and review process. Besides the quantitative results of tests, evaluations and surveys, archived recording of live events along with comments and feedback of participants, trainers and supervisors of students who have taken the training can be compiled in a content library to be analyzed and used to improve results of future events.

**Strategies for Evaluation and Improvement**

After any online training event it is important to be able to assess the results for every aspect of the process including who registered and for what reasons, who attended and their profiles and expectations, test results filtered by attendee groups, comprehensive evaluation reports summarizing questions and attendee responses, and preferably reports on how test results may fluctuate over a range of dates, to compare to various training events and methodologies.

- Reports provide a way to evaluate all phases of the training by detailing who attended, how they tested, and the feedback provided about training sessions.
- Analyzing the reports lets organizers evaluate the event and gauge retention of information and skill levels in order to make necessary adjustments.
- Surveying participants for feedback and to monitor effectiveness of training to real-world situations.
By maintaining this information in a central online location for administration, the organization can make results available to all parts of the Training department, along with relevant managers and stakeholders in Marketing, Sales, Finance or Upper Management.

Data collected from all of these sources will form the basis for an assessment process by analyzing the four levels of the well-known Donald Kirkpatrick model:

- How participants responded to the training
- Quantified results through testing
- How training impacted real world results (Transfer of Training)
- How training impacted or aligned with organizational goals

Additional high-level analysis may include:

- What additional benefits will accrue from the training program?
- Are there intangible results that are apparent from the evaluations?
- How do the intangibles supplement or impact financial and productivity results?
- What circumstances will inform us that the benefits – tangible and intangible – have been realized?

Besides formal evaluation techniques, don’t forget the lessons of social media; monitor tweets using the training module hashtag, follow attendees on Facebook and check commentary on blogs and other social sites to get an accurate picture of attendees’ real reactions to what took place during the online training event.

**Summary: Making Your Move**

When using the foregoing guidelines to move a training program online, choosing a training platform that adequately suits organizational objectives is key. When looking for the optimal online training solution, keep the following resources in mind:

- Customize registration and class size
- Audio conferencing to maintain interactivity and connection with students
- Live chat to technical report issues and pose questions for the moderator and speaker
• Desktop and application sharing to demonstrate procedures, highlight key points, allow access to web pages and PowerPoint presentations
• Record and archive to make content available for review and to those who missed the session
• Instant and customizable invitations to build promotional buzz and get attendance “on the fly”
• Ability to change presenters for maximum use of subject matter experts and resources and to change the pace of the training
• Drawing and annotation tools to highlight key points and to maintain participant attention
• Multiple monitors to enable trainers to watch their dashboard and monitor participant view as they deliver content
• Timers for tests and breaks keeps attendees alert and simulates a conventional classroom
• Generate, aggregate, distribute and analyze evaluations, tests and reports from a centralized administrations center
• Automate the use of email reminders and follow-up messages

The email features are an excellent way to integrate aspects of social media, by linking to blogs, Facebook event pages, Twitter accounts and other online venues where prospective attendees may have been engaged and introduced to training materials. Registration for viewing archived recordings can also be supported through these social media channels, and by direct email from the training administration center.

Strategically, these features lend themselves best to being able to impact real-time performance; by using online events to help in specific situations, for example, the frustrations involved in customer service or help desk activities can be addressed in live online events that combine the expertise of the instructor with the dynamics of a classroom in which students can actively participate through shared desktops, chat and Q&A. Relevant documents can be “scraped” during a live event to point out passages from manuals or feedback from customers or associates, and all of this content can be maintained online and re-presented in online recordings, future live sessions or other formats.

All of these key features should provide the basis for successful live online events that with an ongoing process of assessing metrics and reviewing evaluations to keep training initiatives dynamic and productive.
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Additional Resources and References

Cliff Atkinson - www.backchannelbook.com

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Particia Fripp - www.fripp.com

Robert Pike - www.bobpikegroup.com

Dr. Carmen Taran, Better Beginnings, How to capture your audience in 30 seconds, principal, Rexi Media – www.reximedia.com
About the Author

Tom Bunzel specializes in knowing what presenters need and how to make technology work. He has appeared on Tech TV’s Call for Help and spoken at InfoComm and PowerPoint LIVE. He was a “technology coach” for Iomega, MTA Films, Nurses in Partnership and the Neuroscience Education Institute. He has taught regularly at Learning Tree International, West LA College Extension and and does presentation and video consulting in Southern California.


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