



# Before You Begin...

Three Virtual  
Classroom Best  
Practices to nail down  
for success with true  
Virtual Learning!



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# Introduction

Learning & Development teams are tasked with addressing their organizations skill gaps, revealing knowledge and ensuring teams are up to date. With the discovery of technology and dispersed nature of today's workforce, access to remote learning is critical. To avoid the common mistakes in creating a remote learning strategy listen carefully! Although the steps for implementing these strategies are similar, organizations are required to develop remote learning strategies that support their unique learning outcomes.

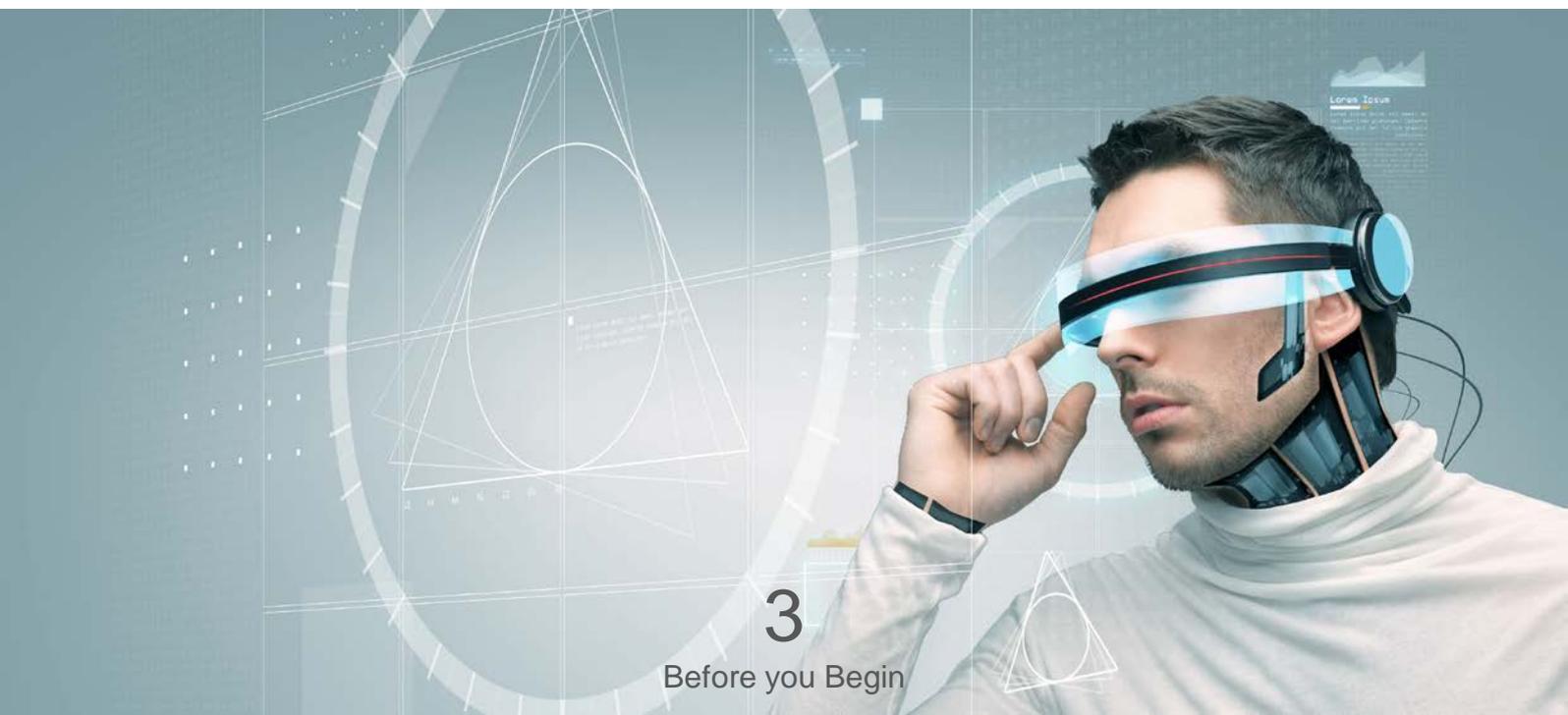
Our experience shows that the best practice for developing a virtual learning program start with developing outcomes in the following three areas:

- Course Content
- Production Services
- Time Management

One or more of these elements are often overlooked, skimmed over or missed. For example, IT will tend to focus on the delivery of the content while an instructor focuses on the course content. The impact of missing one or more of these steps could be the deciding factor between success, or yet another failed tech experiment.

**“In times where small instructor-led classrooms tend to be the exception, electronic learning solutions can offer more collaboration and interaction with experts and peers, as well as a higher success rate than the live alternative.”**

*Keith Bachman  
Corporate eLearning Executive  
W.R. Hambrecht and Assoc.*



# Course Content

The first area to address is content. With the constant discovery of new technology and information, content is easily staled. We have seen this unfold time and time again when important changes to course materials are not made and we preach old findings to participants. The tendency is to ignore the new "medium" of technology and move forward. For example, learning programs provide the same content year after year, perhaps adding an extra PowerPoint slide to address the latest trend. We have gone from handouts to overheads, to PowerPoints, and excluding a few decorative elements and transitions; the course materials are rarely redesigned for the new medium. Instead, old material is given a fresh coat of paint, reloaded all shiny but not new. As the veneer comes off in the new delivery mechanism, the results are not a match to your goals.

Approaching training from this perspective ignores a key element. A learner's expectations are shaped by their real-world experiences; participants ignore inputs they perceive as outdated. For example, can you imagine paying attention in a class on the Stone Age man where the content was teaching you how to open a fruit with a rock? Stale content does not provide a foundation for desired learning outcomes to be attained.

"Good design goes to heaven, bad design goes everywhere."

*Mieke Gerritzen*

Further to this point, it's been shown only 31% of corporate leaders think L&D provides learning solutions relevant to solving their needs; while only 23% of leaders believe L&D addresses business challenges in a timely manner.

Next, let's put content aside and imagine what the learning results might look like. What outcomes or impacts would be interesting for you and the participants experience, engagement, interactions and retention? When Apple designed the iPhone, they put the limitations of the current cell phone aside and brainstormed on the following: If we designed a mobile device that could be anything, what would it have or look like? KPI's for instructors and participants are often not aligned. By answering questions from the participants perspective, we ensure the communication of our content is absorbed and corporate learning objectives are met.

## How Refined Data can help with Content:

We work with your course design teams to repurpose your content through an analysis, framework design, optimize and deployment approach. Throughout this process we provide guidance and recommendations on how to incorporate new technology to achieve course objectives.

We can start at the high level and work with executive sponsor to identify strategic organization goals then continue to work with the business team to repurpose content using the organizations high level goals as the context to achieve the training objectives.

*To learn more about virtualizing your content contact: [Info@RefinedData.com](mailto:Info@RefinedData.com)*

From a participant's point of view, it may not be news to some, but embedding MP3 files, and dancing transitions do not count as repurposing. Given the pervasiveness of social media, and the habits people have formed in how they consume and parse information and then process it for knowledge, we are competing with cutting edge delivery mechanisms for the most mundane things. It is naive to believe that a dusting of content from even five years ago will be close to believable in this day and age.

Working with participants in advance of reformatting the content, will allow you to understand how each audience consumes and applies the lessons learned. For example, with virtual learning you can deliver in increments, not so much micro-learning, but aligning lessons with the business process it relates to, or function of a piece of equipment, where being able to apply the learning to ensure adoption is critical to success, and corporate objectives.



# Production Services

If you're lucky, you have access to a geek who is excellent at instructing others or you are a subject matter expert turned on by technology and willing to manage and operate your online training environment. To successfully manage your online training environment, you either must learn if you're boot strapping or invest in a production manager. Having a competent person manage the technical aspects of your meeting room will ensure the best participant and instructor experience.

Virtual Classrooms are a production, which is why best practice L&D teams use a combination of specialists on "both sides of the camera." This leads to smooth delivery, a better experience and most importantly, the maximum impact from the lessons delivered. We have all been to online meetings where audio or visual connection failed because of a technical glitch.

We can provide certification training for the people who focus on making it all happen in the background. We can also provide professional Virtual Producers to work with your facilitator, allowing them to focus on delivering the content and engaging the learner.

While the instructor is solving the lost connection issue, the rest of the class gets distracted eroding learning outcomes and diminishing the effectiveness of training. It is hard to deliver effective learning when your instructors are forced to keep one eye on the technology while still leading an engaging conversation on new material. Save money, improve performance and hire a producer. You'll save money over the long run, deliver a remarkable class experiences, and get positive reviews.



# Time

Our only non-renewable resource and most of us walk through life like there is an endless supply. Despite advances in technology, it takes a lot more time to develop and deliver virtual classes than anticipated. This makes it is easy to see why we take shortcuts and "settle" for mediocrity. Coordinating the production services and course content takes time. First you create the content, then review and optimize until it meets the business requirements. L&D professionals tell us that designing a fail proof content and delivery program takes twice as long as anticipated.

"You can pay for it now or pay later." While it may be tempting to take shortcuts in testing, reviewing and delivering your training program, you will pay for it when the results and outcomes are revealed. The advantage of investing the time to create a foundational

Time lost in projects leads to delays and added cost. We can coordinate internal parties and support them in fulfilling their roles and succeed in meeting the project objectives. Our proven Discovery Workshop framework allows you to leverage our experience, while reducing both delivery time and time to results.

platform, is that you realize higher returns moving forward that will pay dividends for L&D, the participants and the organization. In conclusion, the above three elements will support you in developing a platform for success for your online training environment. In addition to planning and implementing the learnings above, we advise you to include a mechanism for continuously learning about new tools and learning mediums so you can incorporate these into your program. The opportunity cost for not taking these preventative actions in your L&D strategies is too high. We don't want you to miss out!



## About Refined Data Solutions

At Refined Data, we humanize technology by providing software solutions in three core service areas:

- Risk and Sustainability
- eLearning and Virtual Classroom Live Content Delivery
- Learning Management Systems

Our clients span the globe and include multinational corporations, universities, government departments, accreditation bodies, real estate firms, consultancies, and property management firms — all of whom are leveraging our technology to make data driven decisions, connect communities, and enable authentic learning, communication, and collaboration.

Our Refined Risk product line enables property managers to capture, analyze, and report on large volumes of data to make informed decisions, meet regulatory compliance requirements, identify considerable cost savings and operational efficiencies, and track environmental impact, OH&S factors, and environmental risk.

In the Learning space we provide virtual learning and training solutions for data and course management and reporting as well as live course delivery that mimics the face to face classroom setting, maximizing facilitator and learner engagement, and capturing learner metrics of success.

Our vision is to build a connected and sustainable world by creating innovative technology solutions that ultimately enable collaboration, discovery, and growth.

Experience the difference yourself at one of our regular Virtual Classroom Experience. Join us for an Engaging and Interactive Session and see how we're Transforming the Virtual Classroom can change the learning experience, learning results, and improved productivity.

