



BLENDED LEARNING

A to Z about the **Next-Gen Learning** for
the Modern Learners



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Introducing Blended Learning

1.1 The Current Scenario and the Need to Transform Learning to Digital Means

The pandemic has changed our outlook towards various things that we could never think would change. So many on-premise operations could become remote, and that became the new normal. Looking at the pace of change, the only rescue in learning was to move from in-person learning to digital learning solutions. As a result, the percentage of people learning remotely is increasing and will only increase in the future.

Companies are taking steps for safety as well as trying not to break the continuity in learning. For learning, the ILT learning sessions have to be replaced with digital learning. The reasons can be many for the same-

- ▶ **To make learning contactless.**
- ▶ **No space is required, it can be conducted remotely.**
- ▶ **Budgets can be pre-planned and controlled.**
- ▶ **Groups can be limited and defined.**

All these factors give a clear indication to the L&D team to explore the various options available for remote learning. Here where the learning has to be contactless, virtual learning proves to be the ideal solution. It has all the features that can make remote learning well possible. And the companies which are well versed with the virtual training and development strategy have an upper edge in the



1.2 Blended Learning – The Optimal Learning Solution

Blended Learning combines the two modes of Learning- Instructor-led Learning and Self-paced online Learning. The combination of the two makes it the most optimum learning solution that combines the strengths of both modes of Learning.



A successful transition has to be made from in-person training to a blended learning mode to transform Learning into virtual dynamics. To ensure this, some factors have to be taken care of; some of them can be the following-

- ▶ *Having a computer-literate staff and ensuring the company's senior stakeholders are also comfortable grasping the software.*
- ▶ *The training team and the users adapt to the new system readily.*
- ▶ *Getting an immediate resolution to the technological challenge faced in virtual Learning.*
- ▶ *Adopting the process and smooth transition to the new technology for learning for both learners and instructors.*

Transforming to the virtual training mode does not only mean moving from ILT to VILT training completely. It means rightly combining the best of both ILT and remote learning mode and deciding the most optimum learning path for the course in question. A combination of different learning modes can be used that contribute to the Virtual Learning Transformation strategy.





Challenges Faced in Transformation to Digital Medium

2.1 Challenge #1: Methods of Traditional Learning

Though there have been a lot of advances in technology, the value and relevance of ILT remain till today. There are several reasons why a company would prefer ILT over all forms of learning most readily. It was the most preferred learning solution for corporate training in the world. Specific types of content and training needs mostly go well with the ILT mode of training. The value of ILT can be the following-



Focused Learning

When you have ILT class, you have your complete focus on the particular session. The instructor speaking grabs attention, and this does not let distractions happen. All this enables the learners to learn, understand and contemplate better.



Most suitable for Complex Content

Complex topics related to skill development, technical skills, etc., can be conducted since they require engagement, interaction, discussion, and analysis while learning. The pace of learning can also be adjusted independently depending on the difficulty level and the content grasping power of the learners.



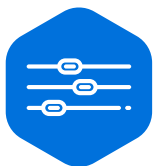
Offers better opportunity for engagement

ILT in the classroom allows highly interactive sessions, role plays, group activities, and opportunities to share, learn and practice so that participants learn together. The trainer is more satisfied with the learning levels and finds it to be more fruitful.



Opportunity to choose competent expert trainers

A good trainer makes it half the way in learning for the learners. He has the competency and skills to encourage and train the learners to have the best skills, knowledge, and tips, making learning simplified and effective.



Trainer-centric modulations and adjustments

ILT helps trainers make schedule changes, training material changes, additional course changes, and in-depth topics that can be added as per understanding and needs.

Challenge #2: Keeping Learners Engaged in Digital Learning

The key challenge in remote learning is engaging the learners and making the Virtual Learning Transformation happen.

- ▶ *With the change in work dynamics and everybody working remotely, it isn't easy to get the learners in the same mindset and fully engage in learning in the remote environment.*
 - ▶ *Retaining learner attention and focus becomes difficult.*
 - ▶ *The new platform has to be accepted by everybody, and analysis needs to be done correctly.*
 - ▶ *The fruitfulness of traditional classroom learning will be affected to some extent or the other.*
 - ▶ *The remote learning mode does not encourage learners to engage readily; thus, learners can become passive in learning.*
 - ▶ *The lack of human touch may make specific learners feel disconnected and detached.*
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Though there are limitations, it is the most convenient and efficient method of learning in times of the pandemic when focusing on contactless technology. Adopting the best practices, tips and guidelines can make learning efficient with Virtual Training Transformation.





Training Transformation to Blended Mode of Learning

3.1 Building Blocks of Virtual Learning

Moving from classroom learning to virtual learning is not easy, and it takes great planning and effort to have effective remote learning. The power of ILT lies with the trainer, whereas the power of blended learning lies in the fact that you can approach any learning content anytime and have access to face-to-face support.

While there are numerous strategies to Virtual Learning, the Blended Learning approach is the most preferred since it benefits both ways of virtual training.

Building Blocks of Virtual Learning:



From ILT to VILT

- A. Complete conversion to online training.
- B. Provides pre- and post-session resources online



Enhancing VILT

- A. Improve collaboration and learning with the virtual mode.
- B. Add courses and resources online prior and post sessions.
- C. Post session discussion and collaboration after the VILT.



Adopting Blended Learning

- A. Freedom in learning with VILT blended with online learning.
- B. Live and recorded sessions with VILT and a platform where peers can collaborate online.



Transition to Self-paced Learning

- A. Online Learning format helps transit to self-paced learning and supports bite-sized learning.
- B. Customization is available to have a personalized learning experience.
- C. Create interesting learning journeys like creating learning paths, reviewing progress, studying advanced analytics with consolidated reports.

3.2 Highlights of VILT and Blended Learning

- ▶ *Participants actively involve themselves, collaborate for knowledge acquisition and contribute to self-learning and, at the same time, peer learning.*
- ▶ *The instructor has better control over the session and gets a better opportunity to understand learner needs and difficulties, different learning preferences, etc.*
- ▶ *A facilitator's interaction gives a more personalized experience of learning and is more engaging.*
- ▶ *Compared to ILT, VILT can provide learning using asynchronous mediums, discussions, and role-plays using synchronous mode.*



Tips and Best Practices in Blended Learning

4.1 Tips and Best Practices for VILT Mode



Get a feature-rich platform for VILT

The best platform will be the one with the most needed integrations, SSO, easy access, easy sharing options, provision for different learning assets, and so on. Also, have a platform that has added features like whiteboarding,



Keep a session for a maximum of 45 mins

Limiting the time and keeping a break in between can help maintain learners' concentration and get better productivity in the session with better completion



Make sessions exciting and engaging

Use open polls, breakout rooms, gaming activities, chat boxes, and similar features.



Encourage learners to use audio options

Learners should use a good internet connection, microphones, and headphones to remain connected to sessions and classes.



Major role of facilitator

Upload minimum and to the point information and allow the facilitator to do maximum explanation to keep the learners engaged.



Keep minimum animations

Focus more on content and learning and minimize animations to avoid learner distractions.

4.2 Tips and Best Practices for Blended Learning Mode

- ▶ *Decide and create learning paths for users by combining different content forms and converting them to self-paced and self-directed learning.*
- ▶ *Have small ILT learning sessions for better learning efficiency and completion rate.*
- ▶ *Enrich your VILT sessions by improving engagement, discussions, breakout rooms, gamified sessions, and much more.*
- ▶ *Each learner experiences a personalized learning experience and can personalize their journey.*
- ▶ *Use varied assessment strategies to assess learner performance and ensure participation throughout the training.*
- ▶ *Offer online resources, including job references and aids along with the training sessions.*
- ▶ *Enhance social learning with peers and facilitators and use tools for discussions, sharing, and commenting.*

Case Studies of Adopting Blended Learning

5.1 Blended Learning for Sales Training

- ▶ Better role plays and more discussions are possible with VILT sessions. Tips and guidelines can be shared and downloaded for reference.
- ▶ The concept of Microlearning supports core learning. It can be used to make smaller goals for the sales team to achieve step-by-step and reach their goals.
- ▶ Gamification helps in understanding concepts in a gamified way and creates a sales environment alive throughout the training.
- ▶ Simulated learning environments provide maximum support during VILT sessions.



5.2 Blended Learning for Product Training

- ▶ Better product knowledge and customer management are possible with product training using VILT.
- ▶ Resources, files, documents, guidelines, and tips can be shared and downloaded for references as and when required.
- ▶ Discussions, forums, and groups can be formed to have engaged learning with VILT.
- ▶ VILT makes social learning becomes possible that enabling us to achieve product success together.



5.3 Blended Learning for Customer Training

- ▶ With Blended Learning mode, customers can easily access and learn about products at their convenience.
- ▶ Greater customer satisfaction can be earned by providing them the flexibility to learn and use products.
- ▶ Greater customer satisfaction leads to better feedback and recommendation to prospective buyers.



5.4 Blended Learning for Partner Training

- ▶ Blended Learning Mode provides the convenience for partners to take up training as per flexible time schedules.
- ▶ Partners can collaborate and engage in forums, groups, and discussions to better understand the product.
- ▶ Higher sales are achieved by using the blended learning mode.



5.5 Blended Learning for Compliance Training

- ▶ Blended learning mode ensures rigorous tracking of learners to ensure compliance.
- ▶ It ensures that the overall final outcome is met.
- ▶ Blended learning helps in driving long-term results and goals.



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