FRONTCORE AS

How to Make a Successful Online Course

Step-by-step guide on how to:

- Build an online course from scratch

- Convert an attendance-based course

- Deliver courses online during a crisis

Content

Introduction

Welcome to our guide on how to create courses that are to be delivered online. This guide is designed for people who now stand in front of one or more of the following challenges:

- You are transforming an attendance-based course to an online course
- You are building an online course from scratch
- You are in a crisis and suddenly you must deliver attendance-based courses as online courses as quickly as possible

This guide will present the various steps you need to take in order to create a successful online course. Not only do we take you through the various steps, but we also give you many useful tips along the way.

To make it all clearer for you, this guide is divided into two parts:

Part 1: How to design an online course. This section is useful for those transforming an existing attendance-based course, or for those who are building an online course from scratch. The fact is that these are two relatively similar processes and you will realize along the way why this is so.

Part 2: How to deliver an attendance-based course online during a crisis. This section is designed for those suddenly in a situation where they can no longer deliver courses face to face. You must move your courses online, and you must do so quickly.

PART 1
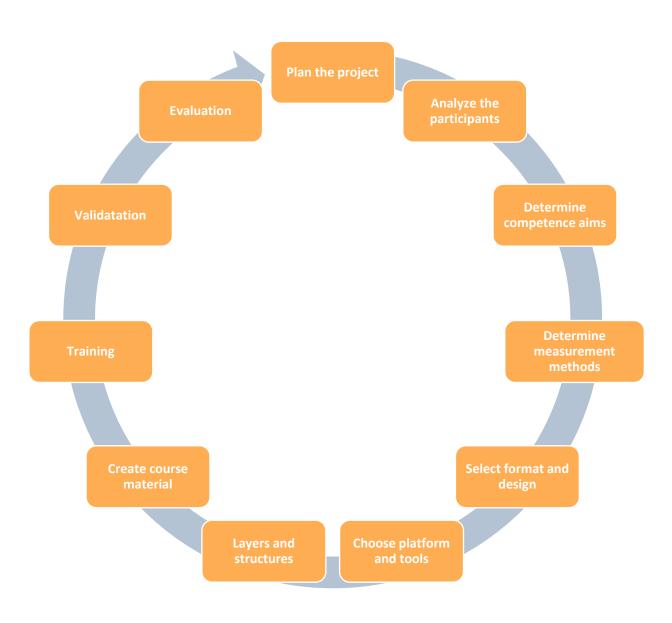# HOW TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE COURSE

Part 1: How to design an online course

Whether you are creating an online course from scratch, or converting an attendance-based course, you should prepare yourself: This will be a time consuming task. In fact, planning, preparing and developing a full online course at university level usually takes up to nine months. Although your course may not be as comprehensive, building an online course is not done in one day (Just like Rome).

That being said, there are some practices that are more effective than others. Following a step-by-step guide like this can help you work systematically and effectively in creating an online course that you can be proud of delivering to your customers.

Below you will find an overview of the 11 steps you have ahead of you. After checking out the figure, you are ready to jump straight into the first step: Planning your project.

1. PLAN YOUR PROJECT

Step 1: Plan the project

As with any other project in your business, your new online course should be carefully planned. While planning may not be the most exciting part of the process that you are now entering, it is crucial to reducing the risk of the online course failing[1].

Even for those who have delivered your upcoming online course in an attendance-based format earlier, this step is important. Converting a course from one format to another is actually a bit like designing the course all over again. Yes, there are items and materials you can reuse. But often it has to be adapted to its new format, and the framework for the course is no longer the same. This means that if you want to create a course that really hits home with your participants, you should redesign your course from scratch.

The planning step, of course, includes the typical project activities, such as making a budget, setting deadlines, defining purposes and project objectives, allocating resources and so on. But when planning a training course in an online format, there are nine things in particular to keep in mind:

1. If you already have a course delivery platform online: What tools /features do you have available in the platform that you will use to deliver the course?
2. Desired learning outcomes
3. Is the course content suitable for delivery in an online format?
4. How compatible is your delivery platform with other tools and solutions you use? For example, solution for training management
5. Suggested course duration
6. Suggested number of parts/virtual gatherings
7. Suggested duration of every part/gathering
8. Suggested time between the virtual gatherings
9. Suggested number of participants
10. Suggested instructors

Just as budgets and deadlines provide a framework for the project, the points above will provide you with a framework for how to work on the next steps in the process. Once this framework is set, you can proceed to the next step: Analyze your participants

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[1](Alexander 2018)

2. ANALYZE PARTICIPANTS

Step 2: Analyze your participants

With a clear framework in place, the time has come to analyze your participants.

Participants = «Learners»
"A learner" can be defined as a person who learns a skill or acquires knowledge of a topic. When we talk about "learners" in this guide, we mean those who participate in learning, regardless of the type of "learner" they are; be a course participant, student, employee or student.

First, you may be wondering why it is important to have good knowledge of those who attend your courses.

Well. Courses are a bit like marketing campaigns. It is often the most targeted ones that have the highest impact. While one often sees increased brand awareness and willingness to purchase as the desired effect of a marketing campaign, we are mainly talking about learning outcomes in the course world. In order to provide your participants with the best possible learning outcomes, you need to design targeted courses that meet the needs of your participants. Thus, to know the needs of the participants, it is vital that you get to know them.

But how do you really get to know your participants? Well, by exploring what typical traits they have. By this, we do not mean features like height and hair color, but characteristics that influence how you should design your course. Here are some examples:

- **Language.**
- What **equipment** they use to access the course.
- **Location.** Yes, this is also relevant for online courses. Location can have a significant impact due to for example the Internet connection, which in turn can determine in which format you should deliver the course content.
- **Skills**. Your design should be tailored to the capabilities of your target audience, both when it comes to using technology, as well as to their writing and reading skills.
- **Expectations**. What do they expect when attending an online course? A younger target group will often expect a more interactive design than older target group.
- **Learning style.** A younger target group is often less self-disciplined and typically need more follow-ups compared to older participants.

Now you may be wondering what to do if you can't figure out something particularly reasonable about the above points. Unless you are not able to find information about the above points, you can safely assume the following:

Speak to a 6th grader

If your target audience is adults, you can assume that you should design your course material in a language that even a 6th grader would understand. Doing so will make even the most difficult topics become understandable to any audience. And by the way! If you find it challenging to convey

complex things in a simple way, I can recommend you [Melissa Marshall's TED talk "Talk nerdy to me"](link).

Make the lower 25% the baseline

There are always some participants who have a little less knowledge and are a little less experienced than the other participants. Therefore, when designing your course, you should customize the content, so that these also can get a good learning outcome. Not only should this characterize your course content, but also how well you intend to give participants the use of the learning platform they are taking the course on. You do not want 25% of your participants to miss important course activities simply because they are unable to understand how to use the platform.

Make it relevant

Relevance always results in increased learning outcomes. If you manage to get your participants to understand why your course content is important to them, they will become more engaged and motivated participants[2].

While relevance can be a bit of a twist, there are some simple methods you can use to increase relevance for your participants.

1. Use examples that your target audience can recognize.
2. Link the learning material to something you know is important to your participants, whether now or in the future, at work or at home.
3. Open for input from participants during the course, so you can merge the input into further discussions, storytelling and exemplification.

Let's move on to the next step!

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[2] (Roberson 2013)

3. DETERMINE COMPETENCE AIMS

Step 3: Determine competence aims

If you have followed the steps so far, you have already set some overall objectives for what knowledge and skills to give your participants through the web-based course you are designing.

Now is the time to further specify and clarify these. Maybe you already have some competence aims you can use from the attendance-based course you want to convert, or you may have to design some brand-new ones for your new online course.

Whatever is the case for you, it is important that you take the time to complete this step. Why? Because the competence aims are crucial to what content you should fill your course with, as well as what format you should use. In addition, the goals will provide guidance for instructors and participants who will deliver and participate in the online course.

Now you may be wondering how to create good competence aims for your course. Well, it's not really rocket science. Ask the following questions:

What competence should the participants be left with after completing the course?

By the way, it is worth mentioning that many people choose to split their competence goals into knowledge and skills objectives. While the knowledge objectives include what information the participant should acquire during the course, the skill objectives involve the skills the participants should learn during the course.

BI Norwegian School of Management makes this kind of objective for all its courses. Here are some examples of the competence aims the school has set in the course Coaching and Self-management[3]:

Competence aims	
Knowledge objectives	**Skill objectives**
Acquire a good and broad understanding of what coaching entails	Use structured coaching methods to help yourself and others succeed
Have a good amount of knowledge of self-management	Use self-management/super-management to lead youself, as well as to lead employees to lead themselves
Be familiar with several practical tools that can be used in coaching	Use the coach's "toolbox", for example; active listening, leading questions, intuition and feedback

For providers of work-related courses

If you are designing a work-related course, it is important to link the aforementioned aims to the work tasks of the employees who will be trained. Only when you do this will the course be able to provide participants with the knowledge and skills they will need in their everyday work. If you are an

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[3] (BI Norwegian business school 2018)

external course provider that offers courses and training to employees of a company, it may be a good idea to ask the company to send you such an overview.

Step 4: Determine measurement methods

When setting goals for what competences your course should provide, you also need to make sure that your participants are left with those competences after taking your course.

And how do you really insure this?

Well, the possibilities are many, but the most common method is to set up a test, provide an assignment or run the participants through a simulation towards the end of the course.

In this step you do not need to design anything. Simply plan how to make sure that your participants are left with the right skills. We will return to the design itself in later steps. And speaking of design. Now is the time to decide what kind of design your online course will get.

5. SELECT FORMAT AND DESIGN

Step 5: Select format and design

So far in this guide, we have used the broad term "online courses" when referring to courses delivered online.

The truth is that "online courses" can refer to so many things. There are endless combinations of different elements, and thus, a variety of formats and designs you can choose from.

For example, take a look at the following variables related to web-based design courses[4]:

Distribution
- Online only
- Mixed (Over 50% online)
- Mixed (25-50% online)
- Web-enabled F2F

The role of the instructor
- Active online presence
- Little online presence
- No online presence

Speed
- Learning in own speed
- Speed is determined by virtual classroom activities
- Following the pace of the classroom activities, as well as something at their own pace

Role of the participant
- Listen, read or watch
- Complete exercises or answer questions
- Explore simulations and resources
- Cooperate with other participants

Participant-instructor ratio
- < 35 to 1
- 36-99 to 1
- 100-999 to 1
- >1000 to 1

Communication synchronization
- Only asynchronous
- Only synchronous
- Mix of both

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[4] (Charles Hodges 2020)

Pedagogy

- Descriptive
- "Practice makes perfect"
- Inqusitive
- Cooperative

Feedback

- Automated
- From instructor
- From participants

Test role

- Determine if the participant is ready for new content
- Support further development of participant
- Provide information to participant and instructor about the participant's learning outcome/process
- Determine handout of competence certificate
- Identifiy participants with extra challenges, which need extra support and follow-ups

Even just a quick look at these variables makes it clear that the design options for an online course are many.

Still, some element combinations are more common than others. Often, we call them "Online teaching", "online courses", "e-learning" or "webinars". These types have certain characteristics that tell you something about the format of the online course. Take a look at this overview:

Online teaching
• Instructorled teaching.
• Occurs in real-time over the web on a specific time in a virtual classroom.
• Often involves more gatherings.
• Can also include more activities than instructorled teaching, such as group discussions and exercise submission.

Webinars
• Instructorled teaching.
• Occurs in real-time over the web on a specific time.
• Often incolves one gathering.

Online courses
• Course online that particpants can access at their own convenience.
• Often composed of a series of pre-recorded videos.
• Often completed with a test.

E-learning
• Is often modular and contains elements from all the different web formats, including quizzes, group discussions, tests, simulations, and the like.
• Is often designed with automated feedback and can incolve a high degree of personal custom learning processes, thanks to the use of AI.

Whilst these definitions can be useful to get an idea of what design options you have, it's important not to be limited by them. When designing your own online course, you can choose items from the different formats or stick to one of them. What is advisable depends entirely on what kind of course you are going to deliver and who you are going to deliver the course to. Also, which platform(s) you deliver the course on will also determine what design options you have. If you have not already obtained the solutions you need to deliver your online course, we will take you through this in the next step.
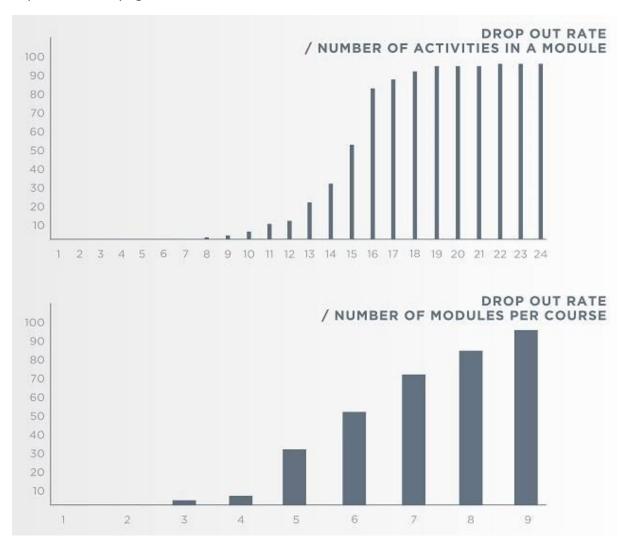
Although there are many design options, there are some general recommendations for online courses that you should take note of. Let's take a look at what is the recommended course length, number of modules, activities and the like.

Course length, number of modules and activities
It is certainly possible to create longer courses and modules, but the risk of losing participants' attention and involvement increases with the duration of the course and modules. Remember, when the participant is sitting at home in front of the computer, the distractions are just a click away. The smartest thing to do is therefore to keep the course as short and precise as possible. Focus on your main points and stick to what is strictly essential for your participants to achieve the competence aims you have set for the course.

By the way, here are some graphs from the 360 Learning Research Institute[5] that emphasize the importance of staying consistent:

If you are currently designing an online course based on a course that was originally classroom-based, it is recommended to use the following conversion rule: 1 hour in the physical classroom accounts for approximately 10-20 minutes in the virtual classroom[6]. This means that you must reassess what content to include and how to organize it. You may have to divide the classroom-based course into several courses delivered online.

Also remember that your design should not only be determined by your target audience and your competence aims, but also by how many participants the course has. For example, it would be silly to allow 1000 participants to take a course designed with hand-in assignments for the instructor to correct.

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[5] (360 Learning Research Institute 2018)
[6] (Sanniè 2018)

PAF-distribution

PAF is short for "Presentation, application and feedback". When delivering online courses, only one-third of the virtual classroom time should be spent on the instructor presenting course content. The other two sections should be used by the participants to apply what they learned during the presentation and to receive feedback.
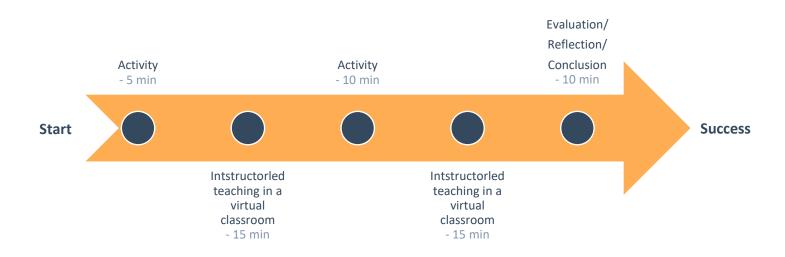
As you fill the various sections of the course with content and activities, you should keep in mind that everyone learns differently. This means that you should choose methods and activities that reflect a wide range of learning styles. Be creative!

Here are some examples of the most commonly used methods:

- Brainstorming
- Case studies
- Games
- Simulations
- Lectures
- Exercises
- Roleplay

The Alias-model

Abd Karim Alias, professor in food technology at the School of Industrial Technology in Malaysia, has created a model for how to build virtual classroom gatherings without boring your participants[7].

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7 (Alias 2020)

As you can see, the structure is very similar to what an instructor would do during an attendance-based course. Still, the amount of time the instructor spends lecturing is significantly less in the virtual classroom.

6. CHOOSE PLATFORM AND TOOLS

Step 6: Choose platform and tools

There are several platforms and solutions you can choose from to deliver online courses.

As we mentioned in the previous step, the choice of platform and course design will go hand in hand. It means the following:

- If you already have a platform, your course design should reflect the capabilities of the platform you are using. If you see that the desired course design does not match your current system, consider switching platforms.
- if you have not already acquired a platform, you will need to find one that has the tools you need for the course you have designed.

When looking for solutions to suit your course design, you have many options. If your course design looks like the online teaching or webinar format we described in the previous steps, a solution that allows you to use a virtual classroom may be enough for you. We have compiled an overview of the best online teaching solutions here.

If, on the other hand, you want to provide a more holistic course experience with several e-learning elements, you need to acquire a learning platform, also called LMS or Learning Management System[8].

Regardless of what kind of solution (s) you choose to go for, we have listed seven things to look out for when making a choice:

Intuitive user interface
You are smart in choosing an easy-to-use system. Not just for the person designing the course, but also for the rest of the involved parties. How will the platform work efficiently for instructors? How will your participants easily find tools, course materials, virtual classrooms and the like?

Simple datatransfer
It is highly likely you will need to use several systems and solutions to offer the ultimate course experience. In addition, your business is probably using several other systems already, and these may need to be integrated with the potential new solutions. For these reasons, it is advisable to choose a system that has an API that allows you to use your data across systems. It will both save time and often appear more seamless for your participants as well.

In other words, you should investigate whether you need, and if it is possible, to integrate your new system with the system you currently use for course administration, HR, accounting and the like.

Mobile friendly
Shift Learning reports that 70% of course participants experienced improved motivation when they were able to use mobile phones during a course[9]. 72% experienced increased involvement, and

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[8] (Talent LMS 2020)
[9] (Gutierrez 2016)

participants using their mobile phones completed courses 45% faster than those taking the course on a computer.

What do these numbers tell you? Well, you should choose solutions that make it easy for your participants to take your course using their own mobile phone.

Tool for unity

One of the most important factors for achieving success with online courses is to make the participants feel a sense of unity - both with the group and with the instructor. This can be challenging in a physical classroom and is even more of a challenge in the virtual world.

To create a human connection between the instructor and the participant through the screen, using video as a tool can be very useful. In addition to hearing the instructor's voice, participants will be able to see the instructor's body language, facial expressions and energy. Compared to a recorded voice over a PowerPoint presentation, video can transform the participants' perception of their instructor.

Also: When choosing a platform, you should make sure to choose one that allows you to have group discussions, "breakout rooms", "whiteboards", or the like. This will make it easier for you to create unity within the participant group.

Tool for increased participation

As we have already mentioned, keeping participants engaged during online training can be challenging. It is therefore important to choose a delivery platform that makes it easy for the instructor to keep the participants engaged. Look for platforms that:

- Allows you to design interactive exercises where participants can participate actively
- Enables the instructor to present content in an engaging way
- Make it easy for participants to engage in online lessons, for example, using a "raise your hand" button, feedback icons, or chat.

Tools for testing against competence aims

How do you, the instructor, the participant and a potential employer know if your course has taught the participant anything? Well, by using exercises and tests. Not only is this important for measuring participants' learning outcomes, but it can also help increase their return. Exercises and tests can be a fun way to learn, and many participants put in greater effort knowing they are being tested before moving on to the next course module.

If you want to use the results of the tests to improve your course offers, you should also make sure to choose a system that will allow you to get good reports on how past participants are doing after attending your courses.
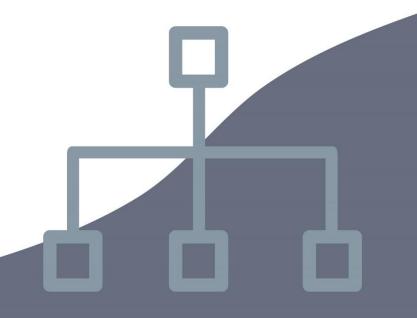
Roles

If many people will be using the same system, you should choose a system that allows you to define different roles. In this way, you will be able to limit what insight and possible changes different

people in your company can have and make. "Too many cooks spoil the broth" applies when it comes to delivering online courses. In other words, a good distribution of roles is important.

7. CREATE AND STRUCTURE THE COURSE

Step 7: Create and structure the course

Now that you have analyzed your target audience, decided on the format and content and acquired the necessary platforms and tools, the time has come to fold up your sleeves and start creating the course itself.

While in the previous steps you have been given an overall image of what your course design should be, you must now have to decide on more detailed decisions.

Which modules should contain what and in what order? How and when should you use the various tools and features of the platform on which you deliver the course? What should be presented as course material and what should be presented by the instructor in the virtual classroom? Should the instructor use a PowerPoint when talking? How should course material be designed? Should participants have access to recordings or PowerPoint presentations after the course? What exercises should you fill the activity time with?

Should you use whiteboards in the breakout rooms to present the scenarios that the groups will discuss, or should the whiteboards be used by participants to write down the answers to present when everyone gathers? Should the instructor use a series of questions, statements or scenarios as a starting point for discussions? Should tasks be solved in groups or individually? How many participants should be in each group?

It is at this stage that you decide on the critical details that will make your course come alive in the online format. Focus on developing an online course that is interactive and engaging for the participant who will soon be participating in what will hopefully be the course experience of the time.

8. CREATE COURSE MATERIAL

Step 8: Create course material

Many who are developing online courses for the first time take this step far too early in the design process. Therefore, they often end up with course material that does not work for the web-based course design they choose later in the process. There may even be a large gap between the course material and the competence aims that the participants will reach. Suddenly, they end up spending a lot of time making adjustments.

However, since you have followed the steps above, this becomes an easier and less time-consuming task for you. You already know what the course will teach the participants, and you also know what course design it must be suited to. What you need to do now is fill your course with content. Design quizzes, tests, discussion questions, information pamphlets, presentation pages, tutorials, and so on.

If this online course is a new version of an attendance-based course, it is likely you already have some material you want to reuse. Still, it's important to keep in mind the following: Course materials that seemed clear and useful for use in a physical format tend to get overwhelming and messy if you bring it online without making any adjustments.

Diana Howles, owner of the online coaching company Howles Associates, says: "If you go to a learning management system and you open a screen, and everything is in front of your face, most people close that screen. The key to success is to build vertically, down into the presentation, rather than horizontally, across the surface".

This means that, instead of presenting the material in a large booklet that you might want to distribute in a physical classroom, you should split it into smaller and more manageable parts.

When you have finished designing your new course material, you should also plan for how the material will be used by the instructor and how the instructor will introduce it to the participants. By doing this, you ensure that all the course's resources are utilized optimally.

9. TRAINING

Step 9: Training

Now, we do not know what role you have in your company, but the likelihood is that you have not been working alone in the previous steps. And if this is the case, you probably won't be alone when your new online course is launched either.

Everyone involved in the delivery of the course should also be trained in all the tools and platforms used. This can be done in different ways. Typically, platform providers offer training to one or two "super users" in your business. These can then conduct training on the other members of the business.

Other platforms offer courses or webinars that your team can attend, occuring mostly online. Maybe you can even get some inspiration for your own courses by attending these?

If none of these options are right for you, you can always learn the tools yourself, and then pass on this knowledge by teaching. Many platforms today are very intuitive and have good self-help solutions, so this is not an impossible task for someone who has a basic understanding of computers.

Whew. You are now approaching a completed course. But before you can press the publish button, there are a few more steps left.

10. VALIDATE

Step 10: Validate

The validation step is perhaps the step most course providers skip when they convert or create a brand-new online course. And that, my friend, is a real trap! Yeah, we know - when your course is ready, you just want to get it out on the market. But this step is one of the most important steps in this process. And now, let's tell you why.

Validating your course is a bit like sampling for a chef. The chef must ensure that the dish is cooked properly before serving it to the guests. Similarly, you must test how well the content, design, and tools of your course function before presenting it to your participants. This gives you the opportunity to revise and refine your course elements before launching the course.

Now you may be wondering how to best test your course. Of course, we have some suggestions for you:

Individual validation

In the analysis step we mentioned that you should always design the course so that the 25% least competent participants will still be able to understand the course content. Who is better to test the course than a person belonging to this group? Have one of these participants test out your course and provide feedback. Then, adjust the course and feel free to test one or two more participants to see if the adjustments have had the desired effect.

Group validation

To ensure even better validation, you can also run a group validation. Offer your course free of charge to 4-6 people from your target audience and do the same process as for individual validation. Feel free to start testing the lower 25th percentile, but don't forget to test the course on others in your target audience as well. If you forget this, you risk ending up with a course that "the best in class" fall out of because they are bored.

Colleague validation

The above options are not always easy to find in practice. Time and resources are not always sufficient. However, this does not mean that you should skip the entire validation step.

Remember that you can always ask your colleagues or others in your inner circle to make an assessment. Don't ask anyone who has been involved in the design of the course, because they have (hopefully) already done their best and need feedback themselves. And if no one has the time to complete the entire course for you, then you can test the aspects of the course that you are most unsure of.

After validation you can give yourself a real pat on the shoulder. You have now completed many time-consuming steps to complete your new online course and are now ready for launch. However, that does not mean that your project is complete. And you should definitely not forget this last step.

11. EVALUATE

Step 11: Evaluate

Whether you've been through your course for the first, second, or 25th time ... Making sure you evaluate training and course sessions will ensure that your online course retains its success factor - for a long, long time to come.

So, how do you evaluate your course?

Firstly, it is not you who must evaluate the course. It is your participants who must do so. In order to get feedback from your participants, you need to design some good evaluation forms that will give you the insight you need to take your online courses to the next level. We have written an article on how to make good evaluation forms [here.](#)

Furthermore, it is important to mention that it is not helpful to request course evaluations from your participants if you do not use the evaluations to optimize your course. That is why we have also written an article on how to interpret the course evaluations, and you can find it [here.](#)

And now you may be thinking ...

…What now?

That was all! Our step-by-step guide from start to finish. You are now ready to launch amazing online courses. We hope you find our guidance helpful, and that your new online course will be successful. Good luck!

HOW TO DELIVER COURSES ONLINE DURING A CRISIS

Part 2: How to deliver courses online during a crisis

If you have read part 1 of this guide, you already know this. But in case you have not read it, we will repeat it here as well: Converting all, or part of, your course offerings from being a classroom course to becoming a full-fledged e-learning course takes time. In fact, planning, preparing and developing a full university-level course is expected to take from six to nine months. Although your courses may not be as comprehensive, the conversion process is not carried out at the snap of a finger.

Unfortunately, you won't always have several months to move courses and training online. A highly relevant example is the situation we are in right now, by which there are limitations related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The preventative measures prevent us from physically meeting, which means that countless schools, universities and other training and education providers all over the world make sudden and urgent decisions about how to continue delivering their services - but currently only online.

When such crises take us by surprise, we are forced to think in new and different ways. You no longer have the time to develop a training course that usually takes up to nine months in just a few days.

So, what do you do when you don't have time to follow the steps we've taken you through so far in this guide?

Well, you must take a step back and commence with what is being used these days about training and training providers' efforts during COVID-19: namely Emergency Remote Training[10].

What is Emergency remote training?

Unlike courses that were initially designed to be online or attendance-based courses that have been through a comprehensive conversion process, Emergency Remote Training is a temporary change of delivery method due to a crisis.

This form of course delivery involves delivering courses that would otherwise be attendance-based, in a way that does not require anyone to meet face to face. It is so-called distance education that is implemented only for a period when it is needed.
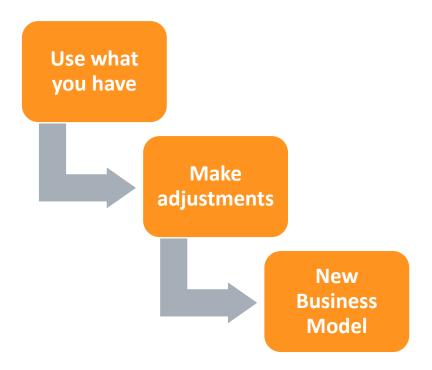
This means that you do not recreate the attendance-based course in an online format, as you would if there were a permanent change in delivery method. Instead, you quickly establish a temporary solution that make it possible to offer the course even though it is not possible to meet face to face.

So, what exactly do you do if a crisis arises and you must deliver your attendance-based course online? We've created a three-phase model to help you:

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[10] (Charles Hodges 2020)

Use what
you have

Make
adjustments

New
Business
Model

Let's take a closer look at the three phases.

Phase 1: Move what you have and do your best

The first thing to do is to digitize all course material. Take what you already use for your attendance-based courses and make it available online. Don't think too much about customizing the format and making it perfect. Now it's all about making it work.

For many course and training providers who already provide some online courses, this phase involves doing what they used to think of as their site activity to become the new main activity. These providers already have the technology they need in place, precisely because they already offer parts of their courses online. These have a great advantage and will be able to handle this phase much more efficiently than those starting from square one.

Those who have not already tested the online format at this stage will have to acquire some new technology. These could be solutions for virtual classrooms, cameras, microphones, and new learning platforms. If you are in this group, you and the rest of your business must spend time learning the tools while using them. Therefore, it is important to mobilize the employees, assist each other and optimize along the way. You have no time to lose.

Whether you already have experience with online courses or not, remember to communicate and inform participants about what's going on. You must show that you care about the participants and do your best, even though everything may not work perfectly - yet. In this first phase, your participants are very patient and have a high level of understanding. This means you can try your best and improve along the way. But remember: Participants' patience does not last forever.

Phase 2: Adjust your courses to the new delivery method

Once you've moved everything online and feel like you've got your head over water, it's time to make some adjustments to your format.

Why? Because what you do in the physical classroom may not work as well online.

A typical classroom application often looks like this:

- The instructor speaks in front of the participants and usually uses a PowerPoint presentation.
- After the presentation, discussion is stimulated in the classroom.
- Sometimes, at the end of the session, a quiz or test is held.

Instead of doing the exact same thing in the virtual classroom, make some adjustments that suit the new format better. Here are some suggestions:

- Split the content and activities into smaller sections so that you do not force participants to sit in front of a computer screen hour after hour. The ability to do this is one of the benefits of online training: It's easy to split it into shorter and more specific sessions.
- The instructor can record his presentation on video. Students can thus decide when and where to watch the presentation, and the instructor can reuse the video later.
- Have live sessions with the instructor and participants, giving participants the chance to ask questions, interact and discuss with each other. In this way, you can try to recreate the community feeling you get from being in a physical classroom.
- Think about the "reverse classroom" strategy: Introduce the participants to the learning material before a joint session in the virtual classroom. In the virtual classroom, you instead spend your time improving the participants' understanding through discussions and problem-solving activities that the instructor facilitates.

And keep in mind: What kind of adjustments you should make depends on what courses you provide, who your participants are, and what type of online format you use. Besides, it is also important to understand that this phase does not require you to go through our step-by-step model to create an online course. There is something to consider only when you move into phase 3.

Phase 3. Alter your Business Model

If the emergency situation persists or you find that the future of your business lies in the online format, you should consider making a complete transition of your course offers. This involves completely redesigning your courses, to transition them from online that can be carried out online, to becoming competitive, in-demand online courses. If you are going to do this, we recommend you follow our step-by-step guide on how to create online courses.

If you convert all or most of your courses to the new online format, you must also reinvent your business model to fit the new format of your business. Your costs, the way you market your offers, who your target audience is, how you set your prices and how your entire organization works, has now completely changed.

For example: If your company pays your instructors based on the number of hours in the classroom, this is not an equally sensible model in the digital world. Even if an instructor makes a 30-minute

video for an online course, it will probably take several days to create the video. And once the video is created, the instructor can use it over and over again.

Conclusion

In this guide you have not only learned what steps you need to take to create a successful online course. You have also learned how to convert an attendance-based course, as well as how to move courses online during a crisis.

If you still feel the need for more guidance related to this or other topics related to your course and training activities, you are always welcome to contact FrontCore. We have partnered with course and training providers for over 20 years and can help your business achieve both more efficient training management and higher revenue.

Learn more about how we can help you at www.frontcore.com, or send an email to info@frontcore.com. You also reach us at the phone number +47 23227200.

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