

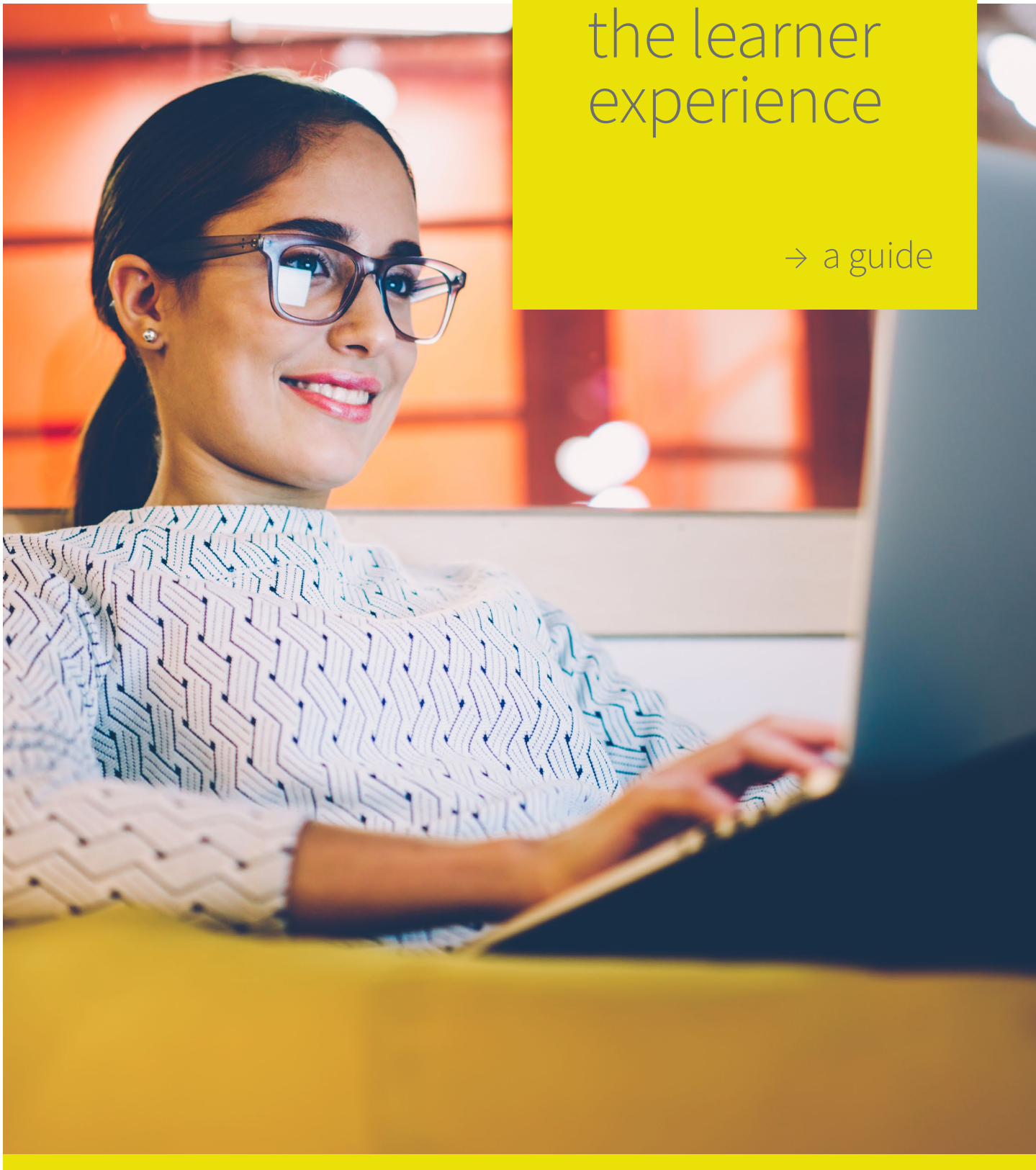


CATCH-22 CREATIVE

online training:

the learner
experience

→ a guide



training or learning?

For some people, the word “training” can be triggering. Some immediately are flashed back to those onsite, snooze-worthy events, shoulder to shoulder with people they don’t know. Others may cringe at the thought of jam-packed PowerPoint presentations that they breeze through as quickly as possible.

→ a tip

The most effective trainings meet the challenge of making the experience feel more like learning and less like information overload.



We get it, there are some experiences out there that tend to give “training” a bad name. That’s why we prefer the term “learning.” Learning is something that we will do for the rest of our lives. Learning is necessary and essential to not only grow personally but professionally too.

How do people best learn new information in a professional setting? Maybe your new product entered the market, and you need to provide instruction for your team on its features, benefits and differentiators. How do people – particularly in our remote business culture – learn about the product in order to best sell it?

The easiest and quickest way is, in fact, training. Specifically, web-based, online training. And the most effective trainings meet the challenge of making the experience feel more like learning and less like information overload.

After developing dozens of online training courses for many different companies, we've found that there are a handful of must-haves that transform simple trainings into effective and engaging learning experiences.



1 length

Timing is everything, and that goes for online trainings, too. In the early years of online training, participants were spending a considerable amount of time working through their courses. Now, the trend is shifting, and participants are dedicating less time to any given course. These days, an ideal training length for keeping learners' attention is 3-5 minutes.

→ a tip

It's best to break up the longer training programs into smaller, "bite size" courses.

And that makes sense. Time is valuable, especially to those with busy and jam-packed days. It's more likely that participants can squeeze in a short 3-minute course as opposed to the traditional 30-minute session. But we get it, there's often too much information to cover in not a lot of time.

That's why it's best to break up the longer training programs into smaller, "bite size" courses. Instead of a 30-minute course, consider creating a training track of six, 5-minute courses. This way participants can quickly take your training in the amount of time it takes to pour another cup of coffee, leaving with more digestible takeaways after each course.

2 messaging

Clear and concise messaging is one of the most fundamental pieces of any online training. There's nothing worse than a long-winded explanation for something, especially when your sales are on the line.

Any effective salesperson can agree that a simple and relatable pitch is key to driving action. That's what a good training course should do, too. Describe the problems that your product solves, benefits and how to best sell the products to customers. All while explaining in a relatable way. Provide anecdotes, but don't stray too far from the bottom line.

What may be most important of all is to be mindful of your audience. There's a fine line between providing too much technical information and simplifying too much. Too much detail can become boring and monotonous, while too simplistic of messaging can come off as insulting to professionals. The last thing you want is for learners to come away from your training experience thinking that it was a waste of time at their level of expertise. Trainings should be written to your audience, be relatable and hit on points they care about.

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3 graphics

Every engaging online experience begins with eye-catching visuals. That's why it's important that, in order to be effective, online training graphics must deliver an interesting story that clearly supports the messaging.

→ a tip

Teach the learner with visuals what the training script can't explain alone.

Think of your online training as though it was a stage performance, with the messaging as the lead actor and the graphics as the actors in supporting roles. The performance of the lead could be the best there ever was, but if the supporting actors are fumbling on their words or not picking up cues, the whole performance falls flat.

Online training graphics need to be eye-catching but also relevant. They need to teach the learner with visuals what the training script can't explain alone. But don't make the mistake of getting carried away, especially with those overwhelming PowerPoint presentations. Sometimes less is more when it comes to graphics onscreen. Keep it simple for the learner, but exciting.

Sometimes bright colors catch the eye, other times it's bold and weighty elements. But every time, whatever it is, it must be high-quality. Gone are the days of an audience looking past pixelated, irregularly stretched images. In order to keep the learner's attention, one of the most fundamental must-haves is great image quality.

Imagine browsing online for a new appliance. You navigate to a website only to find that the images are pixelated and graphics are poorly constructed. You're bound to immediately assume that this is not a reputable business. The same goes for online training. Online experiences rely so heavily on graphics, it's important to show participants that you're willing to invest in their experience with sharp imagery and videos. They'll take you seriously knowing that you care.

4 motion & interactivity

Movement in online trainings is as essential as it is exciting. Whether it's as simple as elements fading in one at a time, or as complex as animating a 360° interactive view of your new product, motion will elevate your online training to new levels.

→ a tip

Relying on text and static graphics can consume valuable seconds or even minutes.

Adding motion does help catch the eye of the learner, and it can also be fundamental in showing how your product operates. Relying on text and static graphics to describe product operation can consume valuable seconds or even minutes. Even then, the message may not be clear. When those same steps are demonstrated in just a few seconds of animation, the viewer is bound to stay engaged, alert and more inclined to completely grasp the message.



Video can also be an integral component in online training sessions. Repurposing short clips of existing video assets can save time and money while developing your training, while at the same time adding engagement with little effort and resources.

Sometimes even the best online trainings can start to lose a participant's attention. Interactivity is the kryptonite for glazed over eyes. Consider adding a section within your online training that involves a short activity. It could be a simple matching game, or a drag and drop experience. There are endless options to keep your audience focused and engaged through customized activities.

Lastly, we recommend incorporating a quick quiz at the end of each course. This may seem unnecessary to some, but it does more than you may think. The quiz isn't there to trick a participant or even make them struggle. The primary purpose of the quiz is to reinforce key training points, prompting retention of essential bits of information. Even the most intent participant can miss some vital messages, so it's always a good idea to let your quiz be the recap they need.

→ a tip

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5 incentives

→ a tip

The most head-turning of all incentives is prizes. And the more significant, the better.

This is the “so-what,” the “what’s in it for me?” There are many ways to incentivize your learners to take your training courses. Some ways are more fundamental, and some approaches are more active.

Many learners find joy in...well...learning. Continuing their knowledge base and ensuring they’re up-to-date on new products and practices in their field is important to them. For these learners, incentive to take your course is innate.

For many others, it takes a little more pull for them to be drawn into a training course, but that doesn’t necessarily mean a lot more work or cost for you. Something as simple as a \$5 gift card giveaway could be enough incentive for learners. There’s nothing like a gift card to your favorite store to kick-start the learning process.

The most head-turning of all incentives is prizes. And the more significant, the better. Many of the training programs we’ve helped launch have had strategic incentive programs accompanying them, promoted via email blasts and other literature, to encourage participation and completion. Typically, prizes are awarded to a predetermined first number of participants, or through a random drawing of those completing the courses. Drawings can be once, monthly, or even weekly. Grand prize drawings can include an all-inclusive trip, which is always a favorite among learners.

When it comes to online training, the bottom line is simple: Effective online training programs are designed to deliver critical information in a fun and engaging format that allows participants to forget they're being trained. Which may just be the best way to learn.

Ready to take your online sales training to the next level? We'll help make the process easy.

