Remote work has quickly become the new normal: up to half of Americans are now working from home. But despite the difficulties posed by this new normal, you still need to invest in your employees by teaching them new skills and updating their current knowledge. Virtual training is the answer. With virtual training, you’ll be able to reach your team regardless of whether they’re in office, at home, or at a local coffee shop.
Virtual training — also known as remote training — is any training that takes place using a digital medium. As such, it relies on using eLearning content to inform and engage learners. With today’s focus on remote work, virtual training must serve more functions than ever before. If you’re launching a new product, for example, virtual training can give you the chance to train your employees on how to use it. It’s also a valuable tool for compliance training, rolling out a new process or system, and more.

Note that while virtual or remote training typically refers to educational activities in professional settings, remote learning focuses on academic settings.

Virtual training comes with some major advantages:

- **Increased Flexibility:** Virtual training allows employees to learn anytime, anywhere. This is especially great news if they’re trying to balance work with childcare and other responsibilities.

- **Reduced Expenses:** Compared to traditional training programs, virtual training programs offer hefty cost savings. Your business may be able to save thousands if you move just one in-person training course to a virtual alternative.

- **Management and Tracking:** With an eLearning tool like a learning management system (LMS), you can automate much of the administration required for virtual training, from enrollment to notifications. You can also quickly see how each employee is progressing and generate reports on all your key performance indicators (KPIs).
Despite these benefits, there are some pitfalls to remote training you should also be aware of:

- **Barriers to Social Interaction:** Virtual training limits the opportunities for trainers and learners to interact face-to-face, so ensuring learners get the **personalized attention from instructors** they need requires more effort. Use discussion groups, chat rooms, and emails to foster communication between peers and with instructors. You might also combine in-person and virtual instruction to create a **blended learning experience** that gives learners the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of both learning styles.

- **Technology Issues:** Virtual training doesn’t work without the right tools. Unfortunately, glitches can arise and prevent employees from using these tools effectively, and some employees may be hesitant to use them in the first place. Provide the IT support they need to understand the necessary technology and keep it functioning properly.

- **Self Discipline:** While most employees enjoy the freedom offered by virtual training, it can also lead to procrastination and struggles with self discipline, motivation, and organization. Keep them engaged by developing — or purchasing — great content, including quizzes and **videos**, and incorporating their feedback into future offerings. Creating learning paths that give learners the guidance they need together with the flexibility they crave is a great idea as well.
7 Strategies for Virtual Training Success

Whether you’re new to virtual training or consider yourself a seasoned vet, implementing the following strategies will ensure you’re getting the most from your remote offerings.

1. Use the Right Technology

Virtual training isn’t possible without the right technology. Here’s some of the hardware and software you’ll need for seamless virtual training.

A Reliable Internet Connection
If you’re going to move forward with virtual training, all participants need a reliable internet connection. Don’t choose a low speed internet connection to save a little. A poor internet connection will take a toll on your program and lead to decreased employee engagement and lower completion rates.

Mobile Devices
You can easily perform virtual training on a desktop, but learners should keep mobile devices like laptops, tablets, and phones to hand as well so they can take full advantage of the mobile capabilities of virtual training.

Webcam
The trainer should use a freestanding camera that shows the presentation area and can easily be redirected as needed. If you’re presenting in front of a group that will be participating in the training, another camera pointed towards them is a wise investment.
Hands-Free Headset
Using a hands-free headset lets trainers focus on communicating the material and managing other tools rather than wasting time dealing with microphone issues.

Cloud Account
A cloud account like Google Drive or OneDrive can be invaluable. Learners can use it to share documents with ease and collaborate on assignments and projects.

Learning Management System
An LMS is a scalable, web-based platform designed to make delivering and managing online content as simple and efficient as possible for both trainers and students. Using an LMS, you can create a catalog containing all your virtual training content — whether self-created or obtained from a third party — and then automatically enroll your employees in the appropriate courses, so they can focus on learning rather than finding the right training material. In addition to benefits in terms of management overhead and ease of use, an LMS lets you track data at all levels, from individual learners to your organization as a whole.

2. Plan and Outline in Advance
Some trainers “go with the flow” and teach their virtual lessons without a solid plan. This can lead to disorganization and confusion, increasing the risk of omitting important tidbits of information, so planning in advance is vital.

As a trainer, it’s your responsibility to conduct extensive research via reputable online sources, focus groups, and employee questionnaires. Use your research to develop an outline that covers every aspect of the core lesson you’d like to impart to your learners.

While you don’t have to follow your outline to a tee, it’s important to reference it throughout your training to ensure you don’t miss anything valuable. If you’re new to virtual training, it can help you ensure a flawless experience for your learners.
3. Engage Your Learners

It’s more difficult to engage your learners when you don’t occupy the same space, but it’s possible. Here’s how:

- **Use Multiple Forms of Media:** If your online lessons include nothing but text, learners are likely to lose interest. Mix things up with multiple forms of media such as images, videos, and slideshow presentations. You should also consider interactive elements like quizzes, polls, and games.

- **Keep Content Short and Simple:** Microlearning involves breaking down large pieces of information into digestible nuggets. It can keep your learners’ attention and minimize the risk of distractions.

- **Create Opportunities for Socialization:** Give your students the opportunity to interact with you as well as their peers. Discussion boards and social platforms can make them feel like they’re a part of a community of learners.

4. Tailor Your Approach to Your Audience

Before you design a remote training program, take the time to truly get to know your audience. What is their background? What are their goals? Once you answer these questions, you’ll know how best to structure your program to meet their needs.

Let’s say you’re training a group of call center representatives on how to use a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool. You may want to go through the process step-by-step and include plenty of visuals along the way, as they are unlikely to retain the information if you simply talk them through it. You’ll also want to keep things simple and focused — providing supplemental information when you’re covering such a granular topic will do nothing but confuse your students.

5. Find and Retain Great Trainers

Your trainers can make or break your virtual training efforts, so do your research and find a skilled in-house or third-party trainer. They must know the topics they’ll be covering inside and out and have the skill to grab your employees’ attention from afar.

To find the very best trainers for your virtual training program, vet a few internal or external candidates. Then allow them to participate in a practice training so that you can gauge their skills and determine whether they’d be a good fit. Be sure to hire trainers that offer a unique blend of topical expertise and virtual training skills. Consider using multiple trainers in the same group of lessons or courses as well so learners remain engaged and don’t get tired of listening to the same person for hours on end.
6. Prepare Pre- and Inter-Session Activities

Including activities before and between learning sessions can spark interest and create anticipation. Before you launch a remote training course, send out an email to your students and familiarize them with what you’ll cover and how the information will benefit them.

You can also create compelling landing pages that feature information about your course and entice future participants. In between sessions, implement ice breakers that help your students get to know the trainer and vise versa.

At their core, pre and inter-session activities are intended to get your students excited about virtual training. Without them, learners may find remote training courses overlong and draining.

7. Focus on Post-Training

The learning experience shouldn’t stop after training is completed. Post-training initiatives help learners retain the knowledge they’ve gained. You may want to send out a transcript of relevant questions and answers after you’ve completed the session. You can also create and distribute a questionnaire so you can gather feedback on your course and uncover its strengths and weaknesses.

Remember that virtual training sessions are never set in stone. You should alter them as needed to meet your goals and learners’ expectations.
Enable Virtual Training with a Learning Management System

An LMS can revolutionize the way you create virtual training programs for your organization by automating management of your entire eLearning library and letting your learners access content where and when works best for them. Inquisiq is an LMS that has **everything you need** to make virtual training a breeze, including mobile compatibility, localization support for up to 14 languages, and a fully customizable user interface. To experience its benefits firsthand, **try it for free today!**