HOW TO...

Virtual training ISN'T all about using whizzy tools and wowing participants with your technical prowess. Whilst it's important to build in regular interaction AND to mix up methods so that the session doesn't become predictable and boring, we don't need to use 5 different applications in a 90 minute session.

Virtual training is no different than face-to-face training in that it should be driven human interaction and a really clear outcome/objectives. Too many applications over-complicate things and make it harder for the facilitator AND the participants. The challenge should come from the content, NOT from engaging with the session, so here are 12 ways that you can engage participants in a virtual session without going outside of your platform (in most cases!).

1. **Simple Check-ins –** Asking for a thumbs up, an 'OK' or a nod are a good way to check that participants are still with you. Simple interactions like this should happen every 2-3 minutes.

2. **Chat and Verbal Chat** – You wouldn't expect people to sit in silence in a face-to-face training session, so don't expect it in a virtual one either. OK, for larger groups you may want to mute people apart from at specific times, but allowing people to use the chat function can be very helpful for clarification or asides.

3. **Annotation/Whiteboards** – The closest thing you'll get to a flipchart, allow delegates to write their own words on slides or whiteboards... but be careful of them getting over-loaded.

4. **Polls** – A really simple way to get a response from everyone on a specific question. Set the polls up in advance to keep the session moving smoothly.

5. **Pairs Work/Discussions** - Whether you use breakout rooms, private chat or ask people to call each other on the phone, pairs activities can still work in a virtual environment.

6. **Break-out Rooms** – All main packages allow you to use breakout rooms for more detailed group discussions around specific tasks. Combine with a whiteboard (or Google Docs) to allow participants to present back.

7. **Individual Exercises** – People can still complete questionnaires or do personal analysis as part of a virtual course. It's doesn't all have to be online all the time.

8. **Physical Exercises –** Whilst group physical exercises may not be possible, individual ones are. If there's something physical that can be included, do so – it will make the session memorable and energise participants.

9. **Case Studies –** Case studies are incredibly versatile and can be used in advance of a session, during it (as an individual, pairs or group-based exercise) or post event work.

10. **Pen and Paper –** It's OK for people to make old-fashioned notes OR to draw things and show their work to the camera… they'll probably enjoy taking their eyes off the screen for a while.

11. **Video –** Provide a change of voice or a different perspective by including a YouTube or corporate video as part of your session.

12. **Mini Project/Collaboration –** In a longer session (or as part of a programme) you can give people mini projects to work on during a defined time. Allow them to work out how best to do it and report back. You don't always have to define the how.