D I G I T A L
TRAININGS & WORKSHOPS
LIKE A ROCKSTAR

INCL. NEW CHAPTER ON HYBRID SETTINGS + FITTING HARDWARE

With Training Videos • ist.training/en •

C
T
A
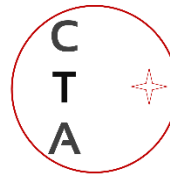
Corporate
Training
Academy

*Proven methods and tools for everybody in human resources,
training departments, people & culture and learning & development.*

linkedin.com/in/mariusjost • Web: ist.training/en

Content

Online Facilitation Like a Pro – Methods and Hardware

45 Proven Tools for Online Trainers & Facilitators

The audacity

Returning from a second trip to the breakfast buffet, I sat back down at my table on the hotel's sunny terrace. I added another egg and some bread to the plate I had left on the table.

Suddenly, a fellow hotel guest from the next table appeared and took the cutlery right out of my hands. Speaking in a language I didn't understand, he moved my plate away and covered it with my napkin, fork and knife.

I was stunned. How rude! I mean... the audacity!

I looked back at him. His expression seemed apologetic. Was he trying to teach me a lesson? Did he think that second egg was just too greedy?

A bit offended, I looked around for someone to translate. Just then, the waiter came running and explained:

"A seagull just landed on your breakfast! It left droppings on your plate!"

Wow. I wouldn't even have noticed! And I realized:

Sometimes, others see things you never would have noticed in a million years.

So how does this relate to the purpose of this eBook?

During my 15,000 hours as online facilitator, I have learned that participants' attention can be lost so much faster when you work *online*. There is a *much smaller margin for error*, compared to the same events held in person.

By sharing what I have learned, I am trying to save you from seagull sh*t.

Those pitfalls, challenges, and surprises that can cause your events to fall flat or even fail completely.

My goal is to empower you with the knowledge and tools you need to deliver your digital workshops and trainings – like a rockstar.

Marc

Part 1
Online Facilitation Like a Pro – Methods and Hardware

At the start of my career as an online trainer, I encountered numerous challenges. At times, my mistakes before or during online trainings resulted in awkward situations. These were those moments where I wished having the superpower to make myself invisible and never be heard of again.

Looking back, I can laugh about these incidents. In our Online Trainer Certification Program, I am passing on my experience to our participants.

The first part of this book, *Facilitate Like a Pro Online*, lets you walk away with the most essential

- techniques for engaging your participants from the beginning,
- steps to properly prepare digital trainings and workshops,
- set of tried and tested methods for digital trainings & workshops
- check lists to optimize your hardware (sound, image, light) without having to sell your valuable stamp collection.

In the second part I describe 45 software tools (online boards, conferencing, LMSes, etc.) that have been proven to work well for online trainings and workshops.

If you would like to develop well-designed online trainings (live or on-demand) without having to start from scratch, or if you are already a trainer but still lack an official certification from a reputable trainer association, or if you want to take the next step in your career, check out our Online Trainer Certification Program or our Checklist: What to look out for before you buy your seat in a Online Trainer Certification Program

---

Check List (PDF)
Questions you should ask before you decide
for an Online Trainer Certification Program

Check-ins & ice breakers, "energizers", that really work for digital trainings and workshops

An ice breaker is a short interaction that helps participants to connect to each other and to stay alert. A good ice breaker will help the facilitator to learn a something about the group and its dynamics. With some ice breakers, participants briefly share their opinion on a topic, other ice breakers allow the group to get creative or solve a mini-challenge.

Why did we choose the twelve following ice breakers for you?
Well, it's actually the ones that work. Our experience also shows that more and more people hate to share personal information about themselves online. For example, if participants don't know each other yet, you should avoid asking about their character or personality traits or any data which is too personal. (This happens frequently! Participants get asked to upload their portraits on online boards, "what are three strengths of yours").

We have noticed that many facilitators overlook the fact that an ice breaker should *contribute to the content of the workshop/training*. If it's just "fun" or you just let participants do yoga exercises every time, they will eventually start to wonder what the point of it all is.

01 Breakout Carousel

At the start of your live workshop / training, conduct three breakout rounds* with three (max.: four) participants each with alternating lineups. The task for each round: "In your groups, find *two* characteristics that you have in common." Seven minutes per breakout is a good time for them to make it. (For groups of 4, 9 min.)

*A breakout room is a space for a few participants. It is a separate virtual room where people work together (for ex. in Teams®, Zoom®).

02 Interesting Item

Instead of doing the usual business card padlet* with soul striptease (where are you from, passport photo, what's your social security number?), we recommend a psychologically safe variation. Before starting the training, a padlet is provided. Task: "Upload a picture (e.g., of an interesting object) that you think fits our workshop theme."
To start the online workshop, the group can take a look at the participant names and the items. Only at the end of the live session will it be revealed what the item means to each participant. (If applicable, include a round of guesses, "What could Andy's flower pot mean?"
*Padlet.com is an online bulletin board

03 One-Adjective Check-in

Ask all participants to come up with "a single adjective for your mood this morning." The huge advantage in this simple check-in is that even larger groups can get "up to speed" in a few minutes. Even if a few Chatterboxes will turn it into a few sentences: The rule of thumb is: 1 ½ minutes per four participants gives you sufficient time. With 12 participants, you actually get by with about five minutes!
You can ask a second time after the lunch break: "How are you feeling now that we've hit the

first milestone? (one adjective please)" Over time, you'll figure out how to get most participants from initially "tense / still a little nervous" to by the end "fired up" or "energized"

04 Battery check-in
The facilitator shares a battery symbol (there's plenty of room inside) and asks participants to "draw a line as a marker. How full is your battery this morning?" I like the connection of symbol and emotion. Participants, without having to talk in print first thing in the morning, can put a mark further to the right of the battery (full) or further to the left (empty) to express how they are feeling right now.

05 Fun click on slide
Show your participants a fun looking slide with two statements: "What type of vacation "are" you, "Mountains only" or "Sun & sea please!". Let everybody put a checkmark onto their choice on the slide using the whiteboard functions (e.g., via "annotate" in Zoom®). The fun click is simply a first minor interaction where no one needs to speak yet. This kind of "A" or "B" selection can also be changed into a scale-type question: e.g., on the left of the scale "I'm an early riser" ---- "I'm a night owl" or "I need structure" ---- "I'm creative & spontaneous."

06 Animal Mosaic
In order to thematize the cooperation in a group or a team or "just for fun" the group is asked to choose an animal. This animal should be put together like a mosaic, e.g. in Mural, Miro, Klaxoon or Conceptboard on prefabricated points or own Post-Its.

07 Where is John, where is Jane?
Best played in Zoom Gallery view. Teams unfortunately only shows a limited number of participants in the mosaic view. One person starts and asks, "Where's Jan!" Now all participants should quickly point in the direction where the video image of the participant is visible from them. Often people don't point in the wrong direction until, for example, their own video image is not mirrored. Time pressure makes it a bit more fun. Don't overdo it, one round is enough.

08 The trick ("Am I telling you the truth?")
Tricks are great if you train groups for fraud detection or in other security related issues. Use a stage trick that works well in front of a web cam. Example of a stage trick: The participants are asked to physically imitate the trainer. "I'm stretching out my arms and bring my right hand over my left. Now I turn my hands together and interlace my fingers. " Now build in a distraction by addressing a participant, with the words. "Your little finger needs to be up!" Video here.
You can also use the *two boxes trick*: This [video shows how it works.](#)
Don't just leave them perplexed. Instead, go to a meta level and ask the group: "How are criminals trying to mislead us?", when you train in financial institutions and your topic is fraud or embezzlement.

09 The Coin

After a break, say to the group: "Find a coin in your wallet. What year is imprinted on it? What has been happening in your company this year?" Alternative: "What has happened or changed for you as an executive that year?" Benefit: Your participants move around their office room and become invested in the workshop process.

10 Change exercise (e.g., after a break) is very well received

The facilitator asks the participants to turn off the camera for one minute. During this time, the participants should change three things about themselves or the visible scene. When everyone has turned the camera back on, the trainer asks what changes participants can notice in others. Leaving it at this one round is a very good energizer after a break. Of course, one more sentence can be added as a conclusion, but don't overdo it.

11 Metaphor introduction (or check-out)

To start an online meeting, the facilitator asks: which <animal, kitchen utensil, watercraft> would you be / symbolizes you (today) / on this topic.

Examples:
Workshop for the marketing department of Siemens home appliances:

"Which kitchen appliance symbolizes you (today)?" (asked as a playful question)

"What watercraft are you after this online training, and what do you have on board? (i.e., what did you take with you)

12 Scaling by Post-its®

The trainer / moderator asks everyone to cover their webcam with a post-it or turn it off for a moment. (Post-its have the advantage of creating a colorful field of yellow, blue, and green glowing in the gallery view).

Say to participants, "How much experience would you say you already have in <insert workshop topic>? Whoever would choose a one on a scale of 1-4 (1="hardly any," 4 would be "a lot of experience, both theoretical and practical") is now welcome to take the post-it off first." "Who would rather be at 2, i.e. "first experience") The trainer now goes through the scale step by step, so asks for level three and lastly four.

This gives everyone a picture of their previous experiences, the participants move actively and you as facilitator already get a first picture of their field of participants.

Checklist: How to prepare for and follow up on online trainings and workshops

What	Explanation
CHECKLIST: PRIOR TO YOUR ONLINE WORKSHOP OR TRAINING	
Days before your virtual workshop / training	Send an audio file or very short video. This serves to set the stage and manage the expectations of your participants. In the email text just write: "We have a voice message for you". So, instead of a long email, use a format that tends to surprise your participants. Listen to an Example here (sorry, still in German)
Prepare a dramaturgy instead of a simple agenda	Send your participants a concise agenda. However, being the online moderator, you should note what you plan to do with the group as well as the expected duration of each phase of your training or moderation. These notes are known as *dramaturgy:* During this process, you should consider what emotions the participant will experience while taking part.
Test dial-in appointment - Schedule several business days in advance	Only offer this service for significant online events or HTML-based webinar systems such as edudip, YuLinc, or BigBlueButton. I recommend scheduling a separate test dial-in appointment (lasting only 20 minutes) three business days before the event. Avoid scheduling the test dial-in appointment on the seminar day, 30 minutes prior to the official event because it often gets overlooked.
Check your technical equipment	Ensure that your video lights are working and that the batteries on your wireless connection or or headset / microphone are charged. Make sure your internet connection speed is at least 25 Mbit/sec. You can check your internet speed using the "Speed Test" tool provided by Google.
Rules or better success factors for participants	Have you defined any rules for your virtual meeting? Consider expressing these rules as *success factors* to clearly communicate your expectations to the participants. This will help ensure the training or workshop runs smoothly and achieves the desired outcomes.
For Breakouts >10 Min.: Task sheet (PDF, PPT)	If you plan breakouts for a duration of over ten minutes, prepare a task sheet. This is a PDF or any other document format that all participants can open on their computer. Try to keep it down to only one page with about 3-4 bullet points: "what to do & how long". Also include information about how long the group present, analyze or discuss their topic.
Passwords in text file or at least on paper	Write down your passwords for Padlet / Mentimeter and any other online tool you will need. You will be able to copy it quickly if you keep it electronically in a simple text file, something like OneNote® or Last Pass®.

Prepare interaction tool & Links to videos, task sheets & tools	The most time is needed to prepare e.g. a Padlet or other internet boards. Which link leads to your 2 min. video that you want to show in the training? Which link to the prepared padlet? If applicable, links to resources you recommend to participants such as an eBook or website.
Prior to start: Prepare hardware	Have second headset handy & start video light if necessary. Shortly before I start, I open all the windows I need: online board, video links, PowerPoint and my audio mixer and dramaturgy.

CHECKLIST: AFTER THE WORKSHOP

Privacy I	On which online platform (e.g. online web boards) have participants left personal data (including photos etc.) that I should delete again?
Privacy II	Where in the slides is there a participant face that I still need to cover up before I export the slides?

CHECKLIST: SECURING RESULTS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

Overview screenshot for slides	Screenshot of the discussion transcript / online boards
Back up the chat	*Save the zoom chat if necessary (or set this to always happen automatically).*
Documenting participant artifacts correctly: PDF!	Export online boards as PDF to protect results against vendor failures / vandalism from the group and make them viewable offline.
"Advertising" on your own behalf (or for the client).	Check if you may include a link pointing to your next event or website in the seminar documentation / slides / handout.

Please note that this e-book is constantly being updated. It is being created alongside our daily work and training of corporate trainers. Every week, my team and I present to companies, teaching them how to effectively collaborate online.

Please excuse any typos or gaps in logic that you may encounter. If you find any errors, kindly send the page number and error to mj@ist.training (yes: the e-Mail is without .com or .de, just is.training). Thank you!

Cheers,

Marius

Virtual training or workshop?

There's a difference between *sharing knowledge and experience* (training) and *brainstorming ideas or problems to work with them* (workshop moderation). If you are moderating a workshop, the outcomes of that virtual meeting are not given in advance: The group's *results are not predetermined*.

Offering a solution to a
challenge, educate, give advice:
→ **Training**

Open-ended
(Results not predetermined)
→**Moderation**, "Facilitation"
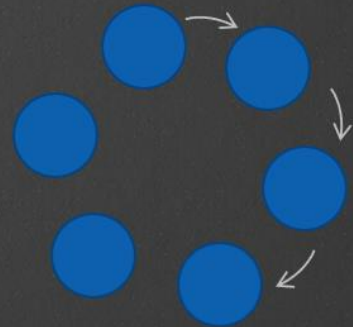
Training / Seminar
"getting everybody on the same page"
Your role: online-trainer / corporate trainer

Workshop
Moderation, discover solutions
Your role: facilitator / moderator

Examples:

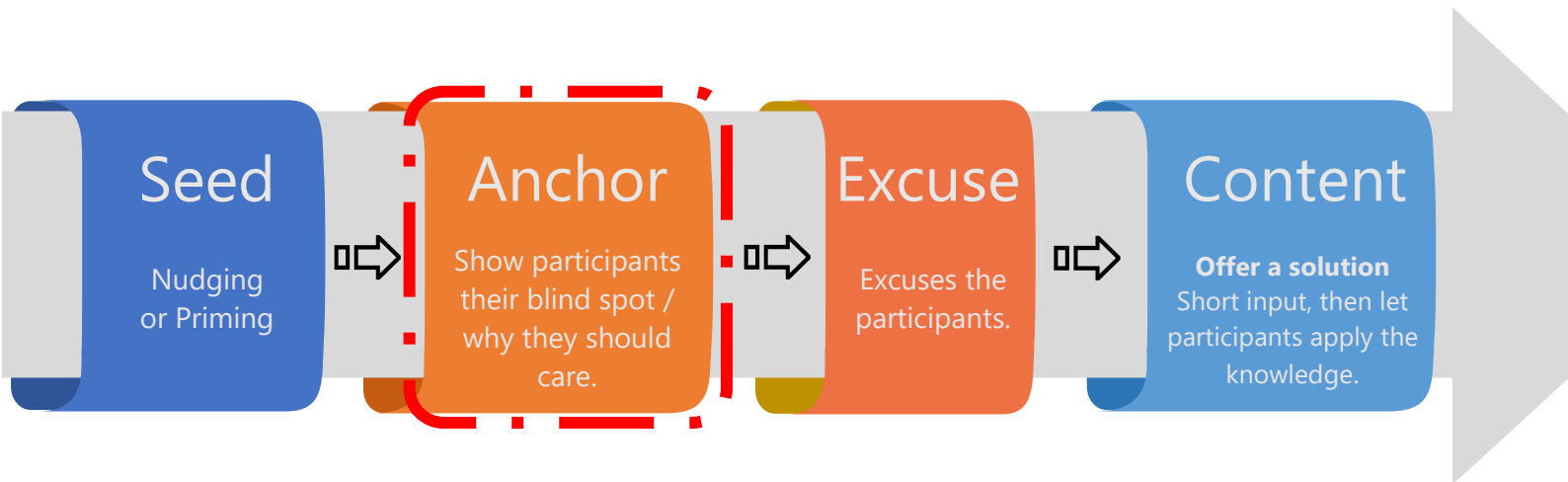| Training / Seminar	Workshop
Sales training	Identifying problems in a team
Presentation of quarterly figures	Innovation workshop
Professional training on tax issues	Exception: Executive Training with a workshop character

Before you try to deliver any input for the group, it's a good idea to remind participants *how today's topic affects them*. Why is the challenge we are discussing so relevant to them?

In October 2022, I presented the "Anchor - Excuse - Content" model (AEC) in a webinar organized by Zoom. AEC works well for professional *trainings* and for getting everyone on the same page. It's *not very suitable for workshops*. Here's [the video where I describe the concept](#).

Seed	Anchor	Excuse	Content
Nudging or Priming	Show participants their blind spot / why they should care.	Excuses the participants.	Offer a solution Short input, then let participants apply the knowledge.

While you could skip the "seed phase", *the anchor phase is really important*. Here you are pointing on the sore spot, or you would ask about the participants' challenges. You can also raise the question (or start a discussion) why the upcoming topic is relevant for everybody.

Anchor Method	Explanation
Mobile Picture Hunt	The picture hunt is suitable either as an introduction to your whole online workshop or to place an anchor for the next piece of content you will offer. (Within an AEC sequence) Example version just as a check-in: "Which picture / symbol represents the start of your week?" Ask your participants to search for a photo on their phone or to google an image/symbol within about 1 minute. Example of an anchor phase: "Which picture / symbol represents our next topic, "the client from hell"? Images help participants to connect their own experiences with a topic. Thanks to Julian Kea.
1 Min. Shocker Video {plus improvement brainstorming on whiteboard}	A funny or serious, evocative video that highlights the problem in a particularly drastic way. Here is an example on the topic of *improving my video presence in online*. Say to the group: "Prof. Cumbersome has filmed his first part of his online training and would appreciate our feedback. [Watch the video here, please use the English subtitles.] Most participants will laugh about the professor's clumsy manner. They will find improvement possibilities on an online board (e.g. Flinga). Now turn it around: "We want to measure ourselves against what you noted down! Even though we may not have it as bad as this absent-minded professor!"
Live Survey (w/ cell phone)	Tools such as Mentimeter or, for ex., sli.do allow participants to name their biggest challenge with a keyword (or two). Use styles such as "word cloud", scales or Q&A. Share your screen as survey results evolve in real time before the participants' eyes. Why do participants love to vote with their cell phones? Well, it's making their lives easier: To date, many participants only have one screen (where they see voting results) and would be overwhelmed by having to switch to to browser to vote at the same time. Many are indeed overtaxed if they have to switch between programs.

Use a Prop and ask: "What could this have to do with our topic …"	The facilitator holds a chainsaw* in the camera image and says: "What could this have to do with our topic? Go and collect ideas and, if necessary, go into more detail on a few of them.
	Next, teach your model or solution to the problem you just pointed to. During the input phase, it is explained what the symbol means as part of the model.
	For example, a chainsaw can stand for the fact that a salesperson scares the customer when he puts him under pressure. So the chainsaw strategy is not appropriate for dealing with objections. Let your imagination run wild as to what you call your concept and what symbol might represent it.
	* just a prop from a toy store. This specific prop is just an example.
Metaphor Approach	Let's say you 're facilitating an online workshop about *fraud prevention*. The principle: We first present a short scenario symbolizing our challenge. We then ask how the participants would react, immediately putting them under time pressure.
	Example: Facilitator: "Imagine waking up at night. You are noticing the smell of smoke. How will you react?" The facilitator now starts a countdown (1 minute), visible to everybody in Zoom. For a small group, say: "Feel free to call in!" For large groups: use the chat instead. Now numerous requests to speak will come from the participants. Some will make sense, some would lead to disaster.
	Next, resolve the story: "You realize it's just the toaster, a little smoldering fire. You are still able pull the plug. How could this fire have been prevented?" Gather participants' answers. After this phase, you will have to make the transfer into the world of fraud prevention. "In payment processing, we deal with small and large arson attempts almost every week …. How can we detect them?" (either you gather their input again, or, if the question is too hard to answer, you can deliver your solution (model / legal input…).
	This interaction is made to show how precautions can become vital to prevent harm. Tweak the interaction to your needs to deliver your specific message in the best way possible.
"Have You Ever …"	As an introduction to a content block or new workshop day: Have the participants cover their camera. Then ask: "Who has read a book on the topic we are discussing today?" Participants who can answer the question in the affirmative may now turn on the camera. The trainer can now ask, "What book was that, Klaus?" The point is to uncover things that can help the group achieve its goal or make the topic easier.

The Chat Storm Method	Let's assume that You have posed a question and are looking to receive answers in the chat. However, the longer there are no responses, the greater the likelihood that participants won't respond in the upcoming moments. This is due to the fact that participants observe that nobody is entering any answers. The Chatstorm method addresses this issue by asking participants to simultaneously click the "send" button after preparing their response. This method leverages the principle of peer pressure. When choosing a question to ask, consider one of two options: - Either give your participants permission to complain: Pose questions such as "What has been bothering you about our service process lately?" or "What needs improvement in our meetings?" - Or: Ask a more direct question about thier own challenges: "What do you still want to learn in marketing?" or "What's your biggest challenge when it comes to communicating with customers?" Questions about limitations and challenges are more likely to be answered when some foundation has already been established within the group: You need a certain level of trust with them.

The investment principle for Online Trainings

How can you create "constructive tension" during your live digital trainings? Should you tell more captivating stories? No. I found out what the super successful in the world of corporate training are doing (I call them "Rockstars"): The answer is hidden in *the way we think about* our seminar participants!
(In all videos, please use the English subtitles.)

Investment principle - Overview
[Link: https://youtu.be/sO3j0FYquXo]

Investment principle – 2
[Link: https://youtu.be/6ilqv6bcZIA]

Investment principle – 3
[Link: https://youtu.be/tFc-1nxPecY]

The most Effective Structure for Online Workshops

Digital workshops **will differ** from what we explain in the three videos above. Online workshops need an **open structure which allows everyone to gather and process** participants' input.

If you want your digital event to be *open-ended*, you will want to understand *the five steps needed* for such an online workshop.

Workshop Structure – The essentials

Welcome to leading online workshops! After you have read this mini-manual, you will know the most essential aspects of an effective **workshop structure**. In addition, you'll walk away with a few tried and tested methods to fuel this structure.

I understand that leading an online workshop can be a new experience, but please --- don't let that hold you back. The perspective and skills that you already have are super valuable, and I'm confident that you'll do great.

Behind everything we are about to learn, there is a specific mindset which originally came from experienced workshop facilitators around the world.

Please note: A workshop is not a training, because what emerges from a workshop is not completely pre-determined! We call this an open-ended process.

In such open-ended processes, where you collect problems and discuss possible solutions, you should employ a core sequence of at least four steps.

We will add something to these steps later, but first, let's focus on those four:

1 - Share) Your first step will be to bring everyone to the same level of knowledge (That is "What has happened, what are the options or problems, what is our legal situation, what is the data or what are the key deadlines.).

This helps in the discussion and in collecting ideas or problems as everyone starts from the same foundation.

Let us assume that you are talking about a **change project** with your group in a lab technology company.

And, let s image it is your goal to improve **several key processes in the area of production**.

Your whole online workshop will be of no use **if only one part of the group is very familiar with the latest legal changes for these processes**, but the other part is not.

That's why it's so important to bring everyone up to speed.

2 - Brainstorm) The second step will consist of a brainstorming phase. Let your participants write down their ideas. After two or three minutes, you've got to collect these inputs from your participants.

Brainstorm ideas, solutions or better:
Brainstorm **all problems first**
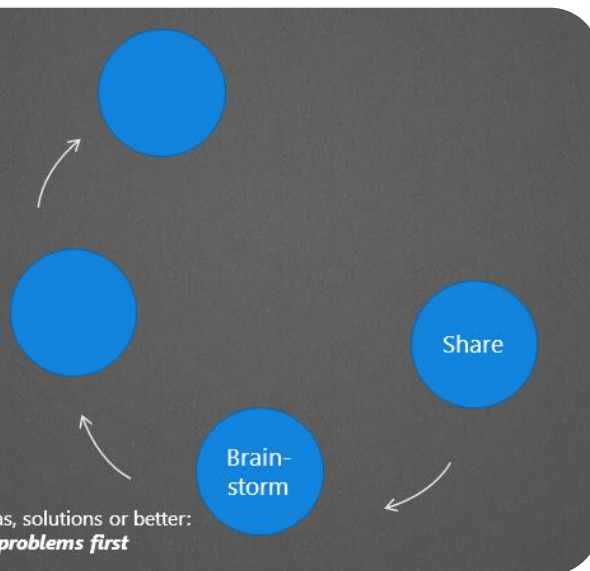
When you have an in-person meeting in a brick and mortar room, this normally happens with a pin board, where every participant writes one or a few cards. Then participants would be invited to come forward and pin their cards to the board.

With online workshops, your participants will write these ideas on electronic cards in a system like Padlet, Mural, Miro or Klaxoon. If you need to keep the ideation phase anonymous, these cards can even be created in a private space and all be revealed at the same time.

This way, many facilitators will try to *collect possible solutions* to existing challenges in production. However, experience shows that thinking into solutions may be inappropriate at this early stage in a moderation.

Why? Most in the group don't actually have an idea on how to solve any of the existing problems. They even might not have an overview of all underlying challenges in the entire production process. Don't expect team leads, project managers and experts to even agree on how name some common challenges!

That's why it is often better to stay at the problem leven. Simply ***gather challenges*** (management level), ***problems*** (facts and figures) ***and irritations*** (social level) that seem to be present in the production team and in the production processes you are looking at today.

Let s assume you end up with 24 electronic cards that you collected from 12 participants.

These cards are now on your Miro board, unsorted and waiting for the next step in your moderation.

3 - Filter) Next, you have to filter the information you gathered. This is done in two phases: In an initial ***clustering phase***, simply ask the group to name categories for the 24 challenges that they see on the cards. You as the facilitator are free to suggest a few categories and to ask specific participants if they would like to suggest a category name for a group of cards you would point out. This way you could end up with 5 categories, namely "Problems with

1. … our product assembly in Taiwan"
2. … team communication between the U.S. and Europe"
3. … the new legislation on sustainable packaging of products"
4. … product quality in one of your oldest lines of products" and
5. … software bugs in the new product line called Automated DNA Analyzer"

The final phase in your filtering step is simply a ***prioritizing*** activity. We will evaluate which of the five categories should have the highest, the second highest, the third highest, and so on, priority to be worked on for a possible improvement or solution.
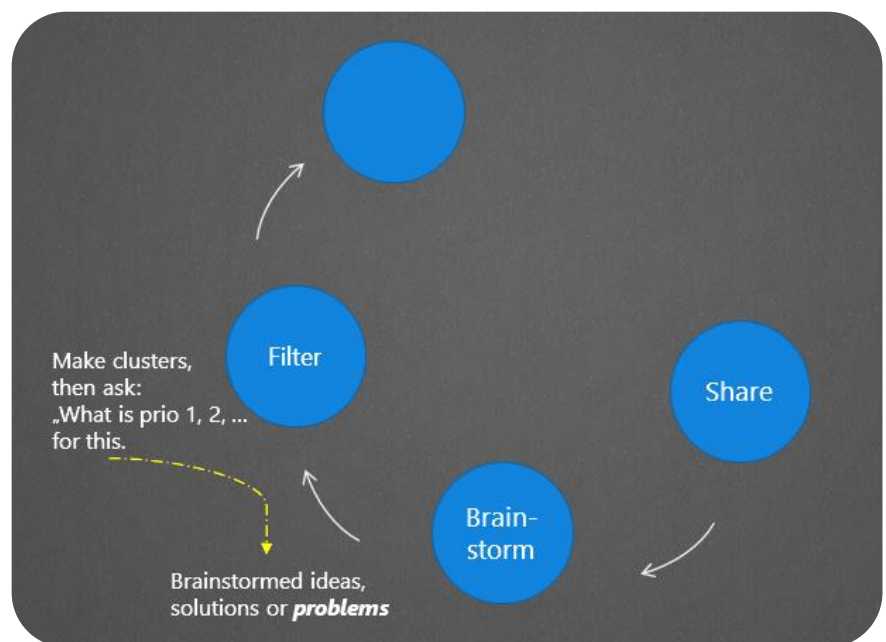
Why this step? We need to decide which problems to focus on in more detail and which can be deferred to the next meeting. This whole filtering (and prioritizing) process usually results in a ranking which could look like this:

1. Problems caused by software bugs: new product line {Auto D. A.}
2. Problems w/ product assembly in Taiwan
3. Problems caused by new legislation on sustainable packaging
4. Team communication challenges (U.S. and Europe)
• Product quality in one of your oldest product (deferred because sales numbers are declining)

In brick and mortar workshops, this voting could be done using sticky dots, where each participant received two points to allocate.

For your online workshop, use the voting tool that Miro, Mural, google board, Concept Board, Padlet or any other whiteboard offers you. If there is no voting tool, simply use

electronic stickers (like green dots) that each participant may attach to their preferred problem.

4 - Solve) In the final step, your participants will **work on the top-ranked topics in breakout groups**.

For example, the first four most important problems could be assigned to four different working groups. This could be achieved in Zoom by creating four breakout rooms, each focused on a different problem, depending on the size of the group. The model can be further expanded, but if you understand the basic structure, you will make significant progress."

Want to ensure engagement?
Add an anchor before the traditional steps!

Would you actively contribute to a workshop which doesn't seem to matter for your work? Honestly, no!

Why should you care? But what if I show you, with a picture or video, how this workshop actually does affect you?

Let's pretend you are the team manager of bacteria production at a vaccine company. Workshop topic: "Quality problems in bacteria production". Sounds boring, does it?

I will tell you what their problem was: Due to a software glitch, certain refrigerators in the laboratory randomly switched off – over night. They stayed powered off, sometimes for days.

Seems like your enthusiasm for the subject is still very limited?

However, this blew several thousand dollars out their lab windows, literally. Lab workers were aware of the challenge but could not get through to IT to finally invest enough time to fix these breakdowns once and for all.

We told the lab engineers and project managers (who lost valuable time and money) to add an anchor interaction, before they would dive into the share-brainstorm-filter-solve cycle.

An anchor interaction shows everybody in your workshop, why they are here. What makes the workshop topic relevant for each participant?

Now, over to you: What would you do to get everybody on their toes?

..please brainstorm for a minute.

...
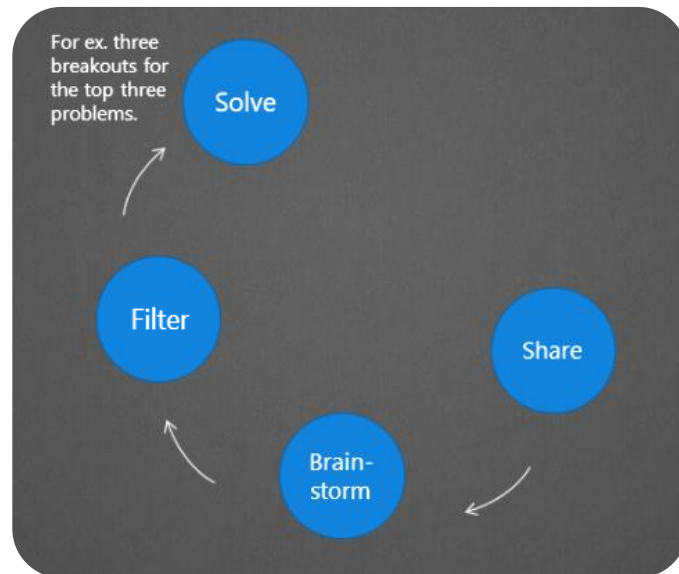
Here is what we did: The workshop facilitator had the lab workers make a very short video of the faulty fridges. You could see how a lab worker tapped in the code, opened the door and voilá, ober 35 bacteria cultures, completely covered with green and blue mold. Disgusting.

"That will take one day of cleaning and we lost one week in research. This goes into the thousands…" says a voice at the end, and the video is over.

The video made it far higher in the hierarchy than Team Management. And the workshop was a success. All you need is management buy-in, right?

Right. So what are proven ways to demonstrate the relevance of a problem (and your workshop topic?)

- Shocker video: Simply show a 30 – 120 second video no one will forget. I don't care if it is disgust, irritation, extreme joy, a funny scene or something totally surprising. You video must have a wow-effect. Participants will say: "Wow – I wasn't even aware of that" or "Wow, that was hilarious…"
  If you want an example for a workshop centered around commercial property (and avoiding huge mistakes in this area), you could use the first few seconds of [this publicly available video](#).
  If your workshop is for a manufacturer of goods to be sold in Europe, 5 seconds of this clip are already enough to start a discussion about the importance of complying with European copyright law (It shows how [German police is issuing a huge fine at an Asian trade fair booth](#))
  Generally, it is safer to simply share a video for copyright reasons. Think twice if you plan to download a video (for ex. because you would want to shorten it.)
- Sometimes you already know that workshop participants disagree about a key aspect of the workshop topic. The problem is sometimes: They are not even aware of the disagreement. This is why you should exactly start off with a poll about this exact topic. The result will show how divided the group is and thus the importance to find a common denominator or alternative ways to handle the situation.
- Remember why the *share* phase of a workshop is important? We said it's key because most participants are not on an equal playing field when it comes to knowledge about the most important aspects of the workshop. The facts and figures, the history and future of your topic. Are they up to date with the research or the legal or financial data? The more ignorant your group seems about this inequality, the more I would suggest you to try a short quiz in your anchor phase.
  Some answers can be so obviously wrong that it s funny. However, test them and make them aware that they lack the basics. When you offer to update everybody with the must-know-data, you will "run into open doors", as German people use to say.
- While there are still countless opportunities to make participants of a workshop aware of how vital the meeting is for them, just consider this option, which almost always works: Bluntly ask about the participant's challenge or insecurities about the workshop topic.

If your workshop is about improving how people facilitate workshops, simply ask: "If you were to hold an important online workshop tomorrow, what would bother you most?"
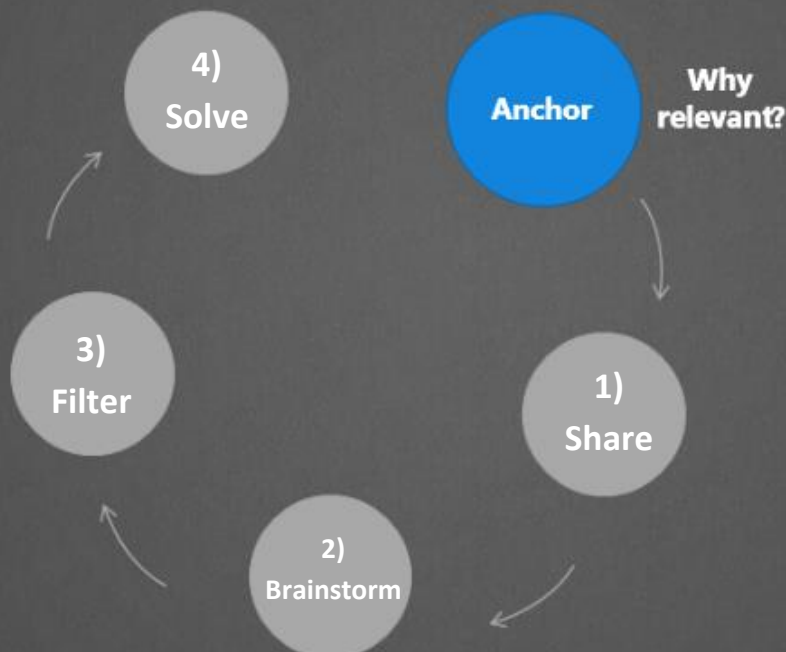
If the workshop is about improving security on the shop flor in your plant, ask: "If my colleague would suffer a major injury, what could be the worst consequence for him or her at work and at home?"

This was a basic intro to online workshop structure. I promise you that the last added step will pretty much define how alert everybody will be in your next workshop. Remember, people like to distract themselves when they are online, so the risk of losing them is immense. Make your structure bullet-proof: Engage them right from the beginning. Give yourself and the group the gift of a good anchor phase!

If you need additional methods which you can plug-in to this structure: You will find them in the green table on the next three pages. (Selected methods making your online workshop or training interactive)

Selected methods making your online workshop or training interactive

Methods	Explanation
Enhancing participation through the "Change Game" exercise	If you get participants moving physically, they will become more engaged in the interaction process of your online workshop, leading to increased productivity. Here's the process: Ask participants to turn off their cameras for a minute and during that time, have them make three changes to themselves or their surroundings.
	After turning their cameras back on, ask participants to identify the changes they observe in others. This can serve as a great icebreaker if you only do this interaction once, but it becomes a more impactful exercise if repeated three times. By the third round, you may see participants becoming frustrated, saying things like "Do we really have to change something again?" As a trainer, it's important to stay committed to the exercise and not give in to the frustration. Finally, conclude the interaction by asking an evaluation question such as "What will happen with your employees if you keep introducing too many changes?" You can also choose other relevant evaluation questions. When starting an interaction like this, it's helpful to have the end evaluation question in mind. {Thanks to Julian Kea!}
Start a discussion with the "challenging statements" exercise.	Initiate a discussion with challenging statements by revealing moderation cards: Moderators, facilitators, and online trainers often face the challenge of how to encourage more independent thinking and sharing among group members. The "Challenging statements" method can help you achieve this. In this format, participants engage in discussions around predetermined, polarizing statements instead of responding to a single question. These statements (assertions) can be presented using PowerPoint, adding an element of excitement to the process. Both hard-skills and soft-skills can be explored through this format, either by conducting quizzes or working on specific topics. {Thanks to Sandra Schlagheck}
Role play or develop solutions in breakout rooms.	The facilitator provides the group with a task sheet (e.g. a PDF), which the breakout groups will work on. Either the groups would work on solutions that they will present in a plenary session at the end, or they can engage in a role play within the small groups (e.g. customer-sales). Doing a role play within the smaller groups can feel psychologically safer than performing it in front of the entire group. {If you use edupad.ch or a less GDPR-compliant option like Google Docs, participants in each breakout group can easily collaborate on a shared document in real-time.}
Development of a personal concept across multiple live sessions.	If several online workshops are scheduled, it's a good idea to provide an opportunity for each participant to develop their own personal concept over the course of the sessions (for example: a quality concept or a sales process). This allows participants to refine their concepts over time. During the first session, you can dedicate time for participants to reflect and start developing their own concepts, for example, through working with a partner in breakout rooms. After two or three sessions, a

|	
	"showcase" is recommended, where participants present parts of their concepts and receive feedback from the entire group.
Deploy the "teach-back method" to enhance knowledge retention {Ideal for teaching / for getting everybody up to speed}	If you want to ensure that participants retain a new concept, try the Teach-Back method in your online training. Assign participants to pairs and initiate a breakout session. {We'll refer to the first participant in each pair as "Person A" and the other as "Person B."} 1) Provide each pair with two PDFs. The first PDF is intended for "Person A" and contains one page of new knowledge that solves a problem or follows up on a previously introduced concept (for example, it could explain the final step of a 4-step model previously introduced). 2) Have Person A explain what they have understood from reading their PDF to Person B. 3) The second PDF is intended for "Person B" and contains two or three questions for the two participants to discuss. The goal is for them to engage in a brief discussion based on the questions. Success Factors: Allow ample time for the breakouts. Both partners will need some time to read through their respective PDFs and complete their assigned task of explaining or questioning. Start with 20 minutes and adjust as needed. Consider scheduling a panel discussion after the breakout session to clear up any misunderstandings and guide the group to the next idea."
Learningsnack.de quiz during live training	Learningsnacks.de is a free, German system that allows you to create an interactive quiz that can be consumed on a cell phone. The online facilitator gives participants a chance to remember what they have learned or previously decided in the workshop in a fun way.
Retro gameshow with buzzers	Do you know "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" Build a slide deck in PowerPoint that reminds you of the show. Form two teams, A and B. Now fade in the questions: As soon as one buzzer (use Cosmobuzz) is pressed, all others are blocked. Now someone from team A or team B gives his answer. If the answer is wrong, the other team gets the point. This is always a great way to get into the spirit of the game.
Allow learners to categorize their knowledge	If participants in a workshop can, for example, graphically classify your four new marketing concepts / your new financial tools or the five legal regulations we were talking about today at the end of the day, they are very grateful for that: It feels tidier to somehow "reconcile" what's still new and know which thing belongs to what. You can offer this well on a

board like Mural or Klaxoon / Conceptboard / Miro. (E.g. have everything put into a table).

An even better "low-tech" format: backpack packing: Participants draw a backpack on paper. Around it, hold new concepts, skills, or solution paths in bullet points. One of the most powerful exercises ever. The format is good for the time at the end of a presentation, a workshop, or an entire online training day.
The point behind it: The exercise helps participants become aware of their new knowledge & skills. Steps to perform this: Ask participants to grab paper and a thick pen. (Preferably during a break beforehand). To get everyone (including the gentlemen) to draw a reasonably nice backpack I recommend making it a little game. I like to tease the participants a bit:

"The following exercise is actually an intelligence test. You're going to draw something - but it's not about artistic ability. The goal is that you end up with a backpack in the middle of your A4 sheet. Leave plenty of room at the top, bottom, left and right."

I then take the participants step by step through four slides to have them conjure up a somewhat-pretty backpack on their sheets. While doing this, I say, "OK, it's not an intelligence test, but we're about to collect knowledge that we have latent in our heads." Duration: about 15 minutes (rushing is not nice here.) {Thanks to Julian Kea}
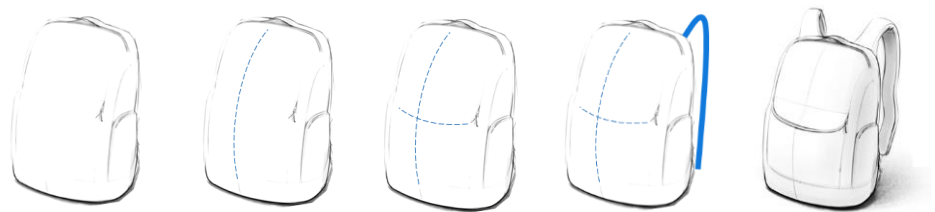
Video, audio and lighting checklists for live online trainings and workshops

Consideration 1: Redundancy (Seagull alarm ...)

If you want to save yourself from surprises and embarrassments, you should improve your technical equipment for online events. It's cheaper to deploy professional, mutually compatible equipment than trying to save a few bucks here and there when you're shopping for tech.

If your career or reputation depend on a smooth event, remember to have a backup device for every critical technical component. Don't ask, *if* there will be a failure of a device you deploy. Rather ask how long will it might take until one of your devices will fail. The first total outage solely depends on the time you are spending as online facilitator.

I would have found the following list ridiculous until, one by one, all of the following failures happened to me.
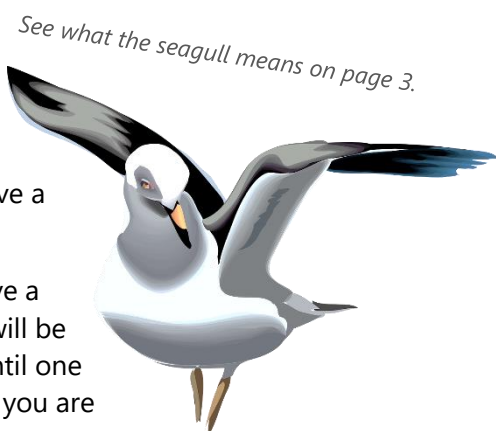
Failure of my 250 € Sennheiser HSP headset, in the middle of online training with a renowned company. Participant: "Marius, your sound keeps cracking..." 5 min later: "We can't hear you." (cable had broken)	Keep a second cheap USB headset. Ex.: Sennheiser PC 7 USB. For the money it performed like no other in our YouTube test. Cost: 35 €. Don't use the built-in microphone of your notebook, it sounds horrible.
2nd computer: In the middle of an online conference (work for the German training association) a hinge of my sinfully expensive Lenovo notebook broke. The screen literally slumped away. Now I had only one external monitor left to use.	I've seen countless online facilitators freeze on screen because their operating system crashed. At least, have a large Android or Apple tablet (please with a tablet holder so that the tablet camera is at eye level). You could even dial-in to the Zoom call with both devices. If your computer crashes, just continue with the tablet.
In the middle of the call, my internet went down. Only later did I realize: The gardeners had literally "stabbed" our connection to the internet to death. Even if I had found out what happened, I wouldn't have known how to get back online.	Connect your cell phone (with mobile internet access) to a charger. In the event of failure, go to "tethering" and share internet access with your computer. (You could go online solely using your phone, but the screen is too small to work with a group). Tip: Tethering via USB cable instead of Wifi. It's way more stable. {Tethering: Sharing your smartphone's data connection so that another device can connect to the Internet."}
Are you using an external sound card (=audio interface) for your microphone? My EVO4 just stopped working in the middle of a virtual workshop, and noone will ever tell me why.	Pros use external sound cards to drive a microphone that needs phantom power. (Needed if you use a condenser microphone or a lapel mic) You should have second audio interface in your drawer, just in case a driver or the hardware (you'll find out later) suddenly gets a bug. I actually recommend choosing a different manufacturer for the second device: If the software drivers crash, an identical card won't work either!

web: ist.training

Consideration 2: Better audio and video for your live meetings

If you'd like to improve how present and approachable you appear online, then you should improve how you sound first. Please don't believe your notebook manufacturer's marketing claim about your built-in "microphone by Bang & Olufsen®". You're sounding horrible, and nobody has yet dared to tell you. In general, don't use any "hands-free" microphones. Anything that's far away from you will pick up your room's reverb. It sounds cheap and choppy, even though your software is working hard to reduce noise.

Hear it for yourself in this Video: (for English, activate the subtitles)
[The Definitive Guide to Online Headsets & Microphones for Zoom® and Teams® 🎧](#)

If you are on a budget, go ahead and use our …
Low Budget List

Webcam (you don't need 4K)	
Unbranded. Description on Amazon: "Full HD webcam, USB 1080P web camera for PC / Mac, with autofocus & microphone for video conferencing, YouTube, Skype, online learning". Don't pay attention to any crappy-sounding built-in microphones with webcams. Always use your headset!	~25 €

Audio / Sound	
USB headset with cable (cable = fail-safe) EPOS / Sennheiser PC 7 USB - Lightweight Single-Sided On-Ear Headset PC - Headphones with cable - Passive noise-canceling microphone (Alternative: PC 8 USB)	~25 €

Light	
Have a big window in front of (not behind) you (Now it depends on the weather how you look: too dark when suddenly cloudy, too red at sunset etc.).) Better: Use a soft-box with a 85W photo lamp and cheap included tripod e.g. from ESDDI or Neewer.	40 €

Optional	
Use a tripod for your webcam if necessary (bring the webcam to eye level and place it independently of your screens). Table clamp tripod with photo thread to attach to any table (e.g. UTEBIT Articulated Arm 11 Inch Magic Camera Arm, or e.g. Manfrotto)	30 €
Sum	**~90 €** (plus opt. 30 €)

If you are working online every week, you should go for our …

Advanced list

Clamp tripod for a semiprofessional camera	
Clamp tripod with photo thread for attachment to any table (e.g. UTEBIT Articulated Arm 11 Inch Magic Camera Arm, or e.g. from Manfrotto), Alternative Brands: TARION, SmallRig, Neewer	30 €

Audio

If you don't want to have a headset on your head, use a clip-on microphone that can be operated directly via USB. (on the cable) Example: "Saramonic USB Lavalier Microphone for PC, 6M USB-A laptop desktop computer clip-on microphone." Alternative For excellent quality: External audio interface such as "ZOOM U-22 Audio Interface" (76 €) Plus: adapter for microphones: "Rode VXLR+" (20 €) Plus: Professional clip-on microphone powered by the ext. sound interface, such as the Edutige ETM-008, cardioid pickup (reduces room reverberation without filter technology) Alternative microphone: Rode Lavalier GO lapel microphone(Lavalier), available in black or white, Kevlar-Reinfced Kable, also needs phantom power. (omnidirectional pickup pattern)	48 €

Camera (If available, use your existing video camera with HDMI that supports at least 720p.)

Elgato Facecam - Full HD webcam (1080p60) for streaming, gaming, video conferencing, Sony sensor, advanced light correction, DSLR-like operation, for OBS, Zoom, Teams and more, for PC/Mac. Alternative: If you'd like to create a soft background without depending on virtual backgrounds which everybody recognizes: Panasonic G70 (LUMIX G DMC-G70KAEGK system camera with OLED viewfinder, 7.5 cm OLED touchscreen) with lens H-FS14042E Not the best autofocus. {new: 518 € with lens / used: much cheaper} Plus: You need a HDMI video capture stick e.g. from Elgato (Elgato Camlink) Alternative: get the Video capture stick cheaper from Hama.	136 €

Light

Use two softboxes (place at an angle of 45° above yourself) with fluorescent lamps of 85W each, Color: 5,600 Kelvin. (LED lamps need less space, approx. twice as expensive)	75 €
Sum	**289 €**

The expensive list for total nerds (like me)

If money is no object, and you want a professional image, no autofocus issues plus a great lens selection to showcase yourself or others in online settings:

Camera & interchangeable lens

Get the tried and tested Canon 90D (900 €) (plus an Elgato Camlink to get the camera signal into the computer), plus a legendary lens: Sigma 18-35mm F1,8 DC HSM ART (72mm filter thread) for Canon lens bayonet {760 €}. That's already a whopping 1,670 €.

Leave some budget for a well-designed background and for three video lights (by Neewer or Falconeyes).

You want a solid external sound card? Focusrite Scarlett 2i2. Metal encasing, great microphone preamps.

Professional Headset microphone: Sennheiser HSP Essential (~280 €), needs ext. audio interface
Alternative: Wireless DECT Headset EPOS Impact SDW 5011 (~250 €) {formerly Sennheiser}

How to make hybrid trainings and workshops work

What is a Hybrid Format?

The hybrid meeting format is becoming increasingly more common and necessary. Hybrid meetings are typically hosted in a physical location. Some participants are together in-person, while others join remotely, enabling live, real-time interactions between presenters, hosts, facilitators, and attendees in multiple locations.

Ideally, hybrid meetings combine the best of both worlds – traditional and virtual – to allow more people to attend and create a supercharged, productive, interactive, and collaborative event. However, the reality is often far from this.

This section is dedicated to helping you overcome some of the unique challenges presented by a hybrid setup.

Sea gull?
See page 3.

Beware! Challenges and Pitfalls

Hybrid environments offer some great benefits, but there are also significant and unique challenges and potential pitfalls to consider, from group dynamics, to technical difficulties, and more.

Group Dynamics

In hybrid meetings, the "real" space often dominates the virtual space.

When the in-person attendees are key stakeholders, higher ranking, or greater in number, something as simple as body language can create confusion, lead to the exclusion of the virtual attendees, and affect outcomes. For example, if the CEO or another key stakeholder in the room reacts to an idea with a disinterested shrug, that idea may be discarded without further discussion. On the other hand, if f that key stakeholder listens with wide eyes, leaning forward with rapt attention, it will probably be discussed and explored longer.

Technical Difficulties

If you've ever logged into a meeting remotely, you've probably experienced the mass chaos and confusion caused by technical difficulties. As well as lost time and lost productivity.

web: ist.training

A Typical Hybrid Story*

based on true events

Monday: The Phone Call

Industry: Medical Technology

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Location: Germany

MANAGING DIRECTOR:

"Müller, tomorrow you are doing the workshop with the innovation group. Room Berlin on the first floor. Claudia, Matt, Peter and Mark from Product Development all have time. But Dr. Peters is very important. She joins in from Spain, nothing works without her. Go for it, you'll get it."

Context: Müller has never led a hybrid meeting before. The team has never participated in one.

Tuesday: Training Day

In Person: Müller, Claudia, Matt, Peter, Mark

Remote: Dr. Peters

Room: Tiled walls and marble floor = terrible acoustics

Tech Setup: A large screen on the wall with a wide angle camera and integrated microphone

Working in her hotel room from her laptop, Dr. Peters logs in to the meeting. But unfortunately, she forgot her headset.

DR. PETERS: "Hello, Peters here!"

MARK: "What did she say?"

CLAUDIA: "Did she say anything?"

MÜLLER: "Can you say that again, Dr. Peters?"

DR. PETERS: "Müller, is that you? I can hardly…."

MÜLLER: "Yes, we're here, Frau Doktor…"

MARK: "It's so loud in here; we're getting an echo. Can you turn it down, Müller?!"

CLAUDIA: "But then we won't be able to hear her."

                .... *Several minutes of volume adjustments* ....

MÜLLER: "Okay, Dr. Peters, can you see us?"

DR. PETERS: "Yes, I can see the whole room, but everyone is far away and looking down at the table... do you all have your laptops?"

MÜLLER: "Yes, yes, we have them. They're right in front of us. I think we can start now."

Sound familiar?

Four Dimensions

To avoid some of these pitfalls, first consider: What is your goal for the training? What do you want to achieve, and what is really needed to achieve it? Then, carefully consider each of the following four dimensions of hybrid events:

1. Audio and Video Quality
2. Methods and Dramaturgy, or Training Design Plan
3. Visual Collaboration
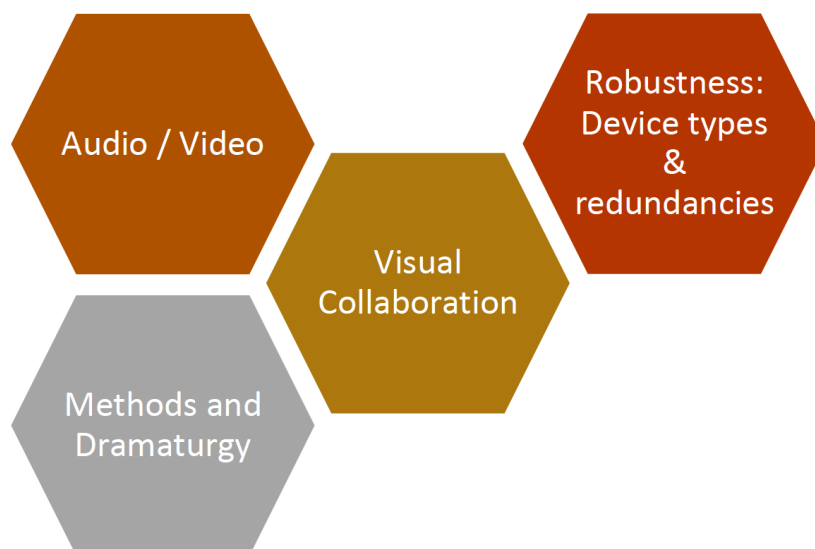4. Robustness: Device Types and Redundancies

Fig: Dimensions of hybrid workshops and trainings

Use these dimensions as a framework to make decisions about:

- the necessary level of complexity
- the technical solutions needed
- the estimated time and effort that will be involved.

Ask questions like the following to help estimate the level of complexity:

- How many trainers/facilitators do I need? Can I do it alone?
- How many people will participate?
- What equipment do I need (technical, visual, or other)?
- What tools will we use (online or other)?
- What is my budget?
- How much preparation time do I need?
- What stakeholders do I need to involve? Do I need to get supervisors on board?

|	Simple	Complex
Training Design Plan: Methods & Dramaturgy	Trainer/facilitator: 1 Group size: < 50	Trainer/facilitator: > 1 Group size: > 50 Differences between in-person and online audiences, ex: training methods or time slots
Tech Setup: Audio & Video	Existing equipment is sufficient All participants have a their own device	Existing equipment is not sufficient & may need to be rented Multiple cameras Multiple groups Multiple rooms Special training setup (ex: whiteboard or flipchart)
Visual Collaboration	1-2 simple online tools	New/complex online tool >2 complex online tools Non-electronic whiteboard or flipchart Both online and non-electronic visuals
Robustness: Device Types & Redundancy	All needed equipment is available and tested	Unfamiliar or insufficient equipment/technology Need to arrange to have redundant equipment available in case something fails (Internet, audio, or video connectivity, etc.)

Plan for Success

Fortunately, we can take steps to drastically improve both the experience and outcome of hybrid trainings and workshops.

1. Prepare the Tech Setup

First and foremost, get a handle on _audio_ quality and speech intelligibility.

The most important thing is to be able to hear and understand each other. So avoid using a single microphones or "meeting spider." This is the worst possible choice because it transmits sounds from the entire room, making it extremely difficult for online participants to follow the content of the meeting.

In physical rooms, the human brain does a good job of filtering out room reverberation and other unimportant sounds (the blue lines in the illustration below) because the room reverberation comes from a different direction and, since it has to travel a longer distance, also arrives with a time delay. It's much easier to focus on the main signal and any other important sounds (orange lines) when physically present.
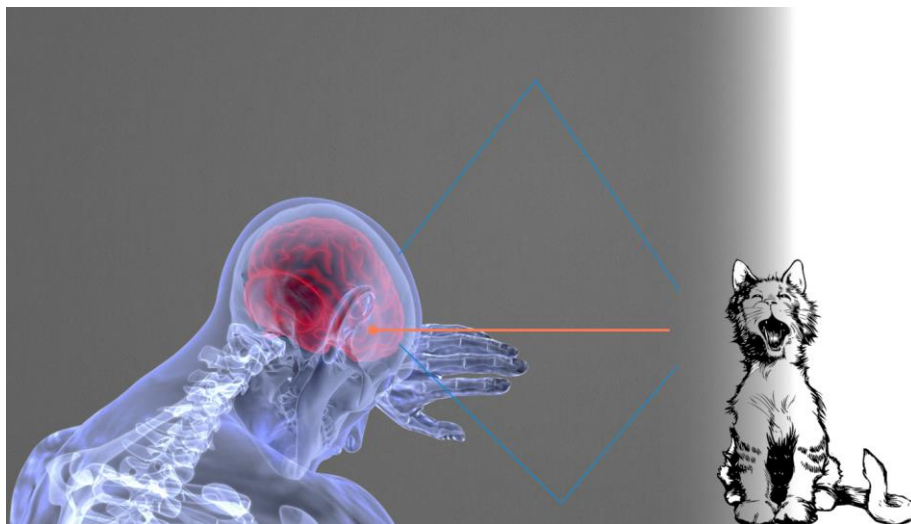
However, when the room reverberation is transmitted through headphones or a laptop speaker, all the sound comes at the same time, from the same direction.[1]

First, tackle **audio** quality. Next, tackle **video** quality. See the tables below for ideas, options, and solutions.

2. Get Leadership Buy-In

Hybrid meetings need backing from IT and supervisors. Communicate with leaders and key stakeholders about your event, even earlier than you normally would, to get their buy-in. You will need their support to:

---

[1] *Neuronaler Zeitverlauf der Echounterdrückung beim Menschen, Kristina C. Backer,1 Kevin T. Hill,1 Antoine J. Shahin,1 und Lee M. Millercorresponding author1,2*

Blauert J. Spatial hearing: the psychophysics of human sound localization. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology; 1999.

- Work with IT or other staff on the tech setup.
- Engage colleagues to help you experiment ahead of time, try things out, test feasibility, run tech checks, etc.
- Enforce decisions about how the meeting will be run, like who must wear a headset or lapel microphone.
- Implement rotations among participants, so that sometimes they attend online, and other times they attend in person.
- Engage team members to take on additional tasks or roles to provide support before, during, or after the training.
- Prepare, implement, and enforce the training design plan (dramaturgy) and schedule. (This is indispensable, especially if you plan to include group work in the in-person portion.)

3. Determine Roles

What roles should there be in a hybrid workshop or training? As complexity increases, the number of tasks (and roles to be responsible for them) increases. These tasks should be explicitly planned for and assigned to the different roles. For example, you may need someone to:

- control breakout rooms
- post links in the chat
- record the meeting
- monitor, save, delete, or edit the chat history based on privacy considerations
- save other documentation from the meeting, like screen shots, PDFs, etc.
- oversee mics, cameras, and other privacy considerations
- etc.

Here are some possible role-based training scenarios:

1. **Moderator Only**
   For small, simple hybrid meetings that do not require a professional trainer or complex tech setup, you may only need a moderator to be present, either online or in-person, and facilitate.

2. **Two-Person Team: Trainer + Technical Assistant**
   Ideal for more professional workshops and trainings, this is my favorite scenario. It consists of:

   1) **content meeting facilitator/professional trainer** who leads the training/workshop for all attendees (Pro tip: "Online trainer" training can be very helpful for trainers leading hybrid environments!)

2) **technical assistant** to keep the meeting running smoothly from a tech perspective. The technical assistant may:
    a. help panicked participants with tech issues (how to log in, get their microphone and video working, use the mute button, etc.)
    b. keep an eye on the sound and microphones in the physical room
    c. answer technical questions in the chat
    d. mute inactive participants
    e. oversee cameras and privacy (for example, call or message participants who may have forgotten to turn off their mic or camera during breaks)
    f. document the meeting afterward

3. **Five-Person Special Operations Squad**
    Ideal for larger and more complex workshops and trainings. It consists of:

    1) *in-person* **content meeting facilitator/professional trainer** who leads the in-person session
    2) *online* **content meeting facilitator/professional trainer** who leads the online session *(optional/as needed)*
    3) **sound and visual technician**, usually from a rental company. This person may:
        a. operate the mixing console in the room
        b. carry replacement equipment (microphones, headsets, cables)
        c. test all wireless microphones
        d. test the sound quality coming from both directions, listening in as both an online and an in-person participant
    4) **technician at the video mixer** (for very large events)
    5) **IT department staff** to:
        a. ensure Internet connectivity and redundancy
        b. provide contact info for participants if needed (no-shows, travelers, anyone struggling with technical problems.)

4. Understand Requirements

In hybrid workshops and trainings, "minor" requirements can make a very big difference, especially for things like:

- Recording
- Group Interaction
- Room Type and Availability

Carefully evaluate whether each requirements is actually necessary and worthwhile. Then choose and plan accordingly. This can prevent so much unnecessary chaos, overwhelm, headache, and expense.

Requirements for Recording

Recording Requirements	Complexity	Considerations
No recording necessary	Low	
Only recording of Zoom® / Teams® / BigBlueButton® meeting required	Moderate	All online participants must agree in terms of the GDPR
We need a record of the real room (also record of individual working groups) and all online interactions, including online breakout groups	High	Cameras & sound must be mixed (live). Best way to represent things that happened at the same time?

Requirements for Group Interaction

Group Interaction Requirements	Complexity	Considerations
The online group only listens to the group in the room ("spectators"), possibly a question and answer session at the end.	Low	
The online group should be able to interact with the group in the room at scheduled times.	Moderate	This is actually the ideal requirement for good hybrid meetings.
The online group should be able to interact with the group in the room at any time, even if break-out groups / working groups are working split.	High	Who should be able to interact with whom and when. Detailed planning of the breakouts is necessary here.

## Requirements for Room Type and Availability

Room Requirements	Complexity	Considerations
We have a (soundproofed) room that can be permanently set up as a studio for hybrid meetings.	Low	
We have few rooms / little space and the meeting room must be completely cleared after each use.	High	Drastic increase in complexity because setup of sound, light, sound absorbers & camera(s) takes time. High risk of frustration.

5. Set Up the Physical Space

Scenarios and Formats

Following are some example scenarios of hybrid events and the best formats to set up your physical space accordingly.

Scenario 1) 2 to 4 In Person + Many Remote

In Person

Remote
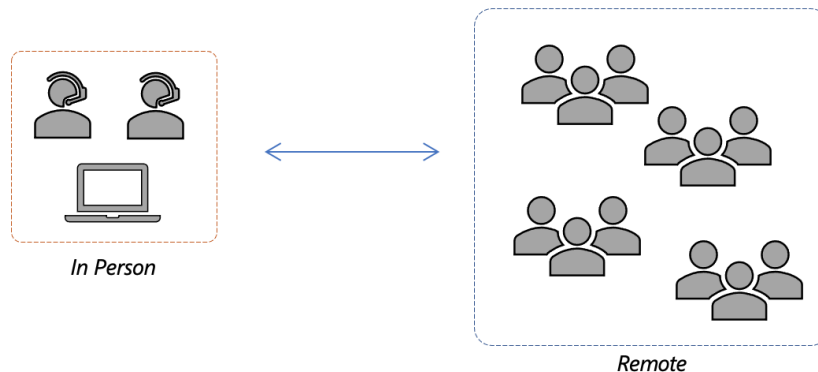
Ideally, in the physical room, each person would have their own device and headset. However, as long as you have at least one device with a webcam for every two people, that should be sufficient. The sound can be output through the device speaker, or you can use a splitter cable to connect both participants via headphones. Or, alternatively, the two participants can share a pair of Bluetooth headphones.

For sound, you can use sound cards like the Focusrite Scarlett 2i2 (140€) and similar.

You can also use one USB audio interface for every two people. Personally, I recommend the **AI-Micro** for this because of these great features:

- compatible with:
  - Mac and PC
  - iOS and Android
- affordable (about 80€)
- compatible with every 3.5 mm microphone, regardless of whether the plug has three dark rings or only two rings (TRRS or TRS)
- also compatible with wireless microphone systems
- speakers that work with lapel microphones (see photo)
  https://rode.com/de/interfaces-and-mixers/ai-series/ai-micro

Case study 2: Large conference table and twenty participants on the web
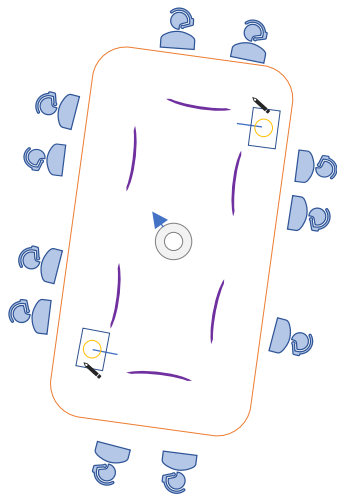
Have you ever experienced a meeting room as an online participant? All to often, people sitting at the conference table are looking at their notebooks, but the camera is centrally located in the front (usually too high) above a huge monitor. In most cases, the sound (often from a central room microphone) also leaves a lot to be desired.

Our suggestion: To connect e.g. 12 participants on a conference table with online participants, we suggest to either have them bring their own notebooks (byod) or to deploy 6 stationary computers with monitors (in case of high security requirements). Monitors should not be too high (see video).

Audio: Each participant should wear a headset, a Sennheiser PC-7 or a wireless DECT variant from Jabra would be sufficient. (Bluetooth is not robust enough).

Video: A Meeting Owl® can stand in the middle of the table and capture whoever is speaking. This ensures that the participants eyes and faces in the physical room can actually be seen when they contribute something to the workshop.
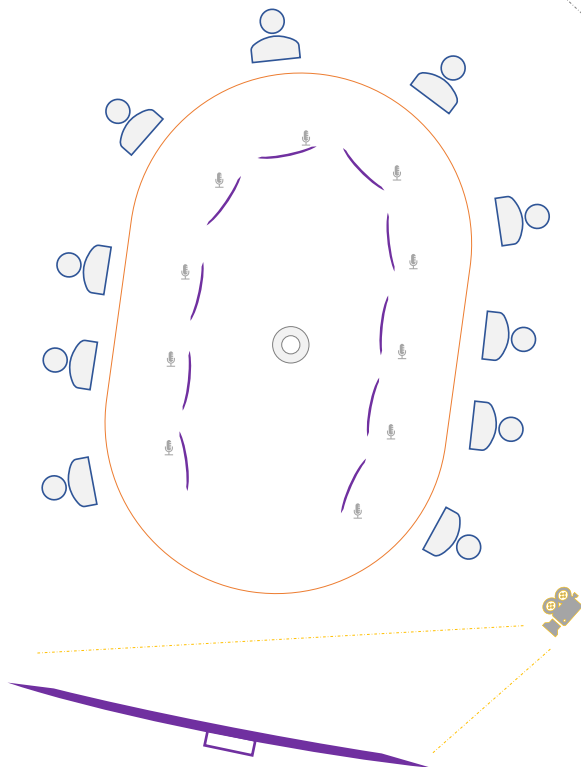
A more "luxurious" setup is depicted on the left: Ten participants each have a monitor in front of them (their own notebook or, for example, in companies with high security requirements, their own computer).

Alternative: The setup is also possible at a lower price with only one central computer. Then a video splitter and 10-channel audio mixer with USB for the microphones is necessary. Use auto-mixing.

Audio: A separate directional microphone is aimed at each participant: Excellent speech intelligibility.

Advantage: Participants who speak are excellently understandable because a dedicated directional microphone is aimed at them. In addition, there is no need to bring or put on a headset. (Headsets are often forgotten or stolen).

Video: Again, if the monitors are not placed too high, the Meeting Owl® or a similar product can be used. Again, the advantage is that participants in the room who are currently speaking are brought into focus and can see each other properly.

The purple indicated monitor is a modern whiteboard solution*. A pen enables hand drawings. Don't rely on the Meeting Owl® for this speaker position. An additional camera is needed here for the speaker. It can be alternated or mixed with the Meeting Owl® image into the Zoom® stream using a video mixer. (Simpler: Additional computer for this camera position = additional meeting participant in Zoom® or Teams®)

Audio whiteboard position: Additional directional microphone or better a clip-on wireless microphone (e.g. Rode Wireless Go) or a pendant wireless microphone we offer from e.g. getcatchbox.ch. * z. B. Microsoft Surface Hub oder Cisco Webex Board

In the following *case study group*, I present a basic scenario and then go through different designs (possible formats) for it in parts a) to d). Remember that you can always scale down. This means: There could be significantly fewer participants. It could also be less complex and there could be fewer participants online.

What are technical solutions?

There are some technical components mentioned above that you might not know about. Under the heading Technical example solutions for hybrid trainings and workshops, three pages further down, you will find most of the systems listed and briefly explained.

Case study group 3: One facilitator, one trainer and 50 people in the (real) room, plus a similar number of participants on the web.

Realer Raum

Web-Teilnehmer:innen
Jede/r trägt ein Headset
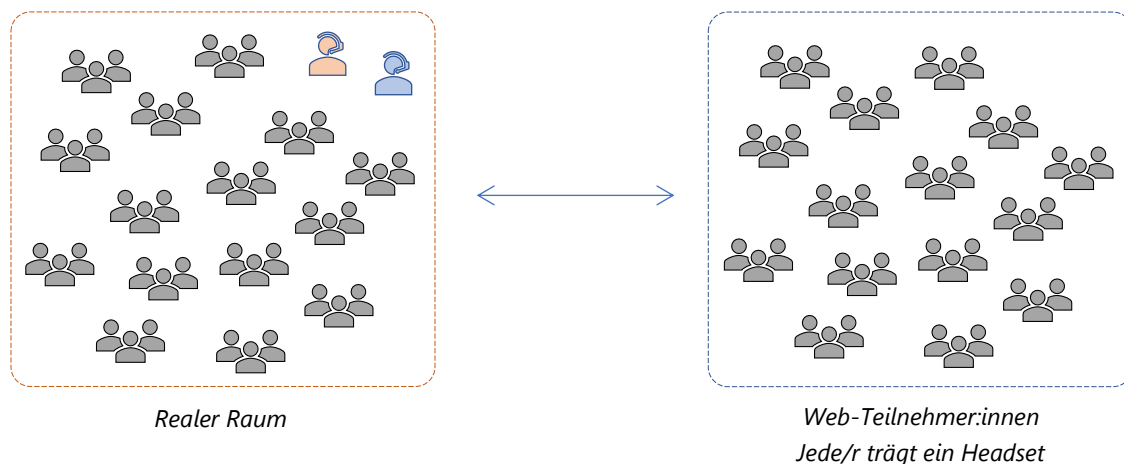
Preparations for the web participants: inside
Prepare web participants that active use of the camera is desired. The most common problems participants have on the web are problems with sound. Make it clear that you expect every participant to wear a headset (e.g., Sennheiser PC-7) on the web.

Let them try it out: It's not enough to set up a test dial-in for insecure attendees half an hour before the big event: There is no time here to borrow hardware from a colleague / from the children / from an acquaintance or to procure new hardware. Attention: participants may reproach you for this! "So, how am I going to fix this by later?"
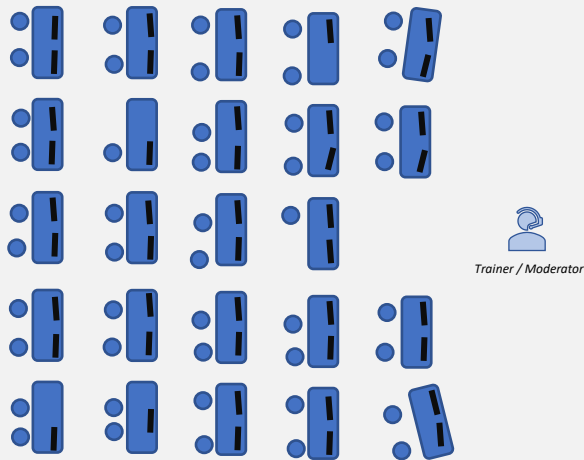
For important events, set up a test date (or dates) 4 or 5 business days before the actual event. Now you can argue to complaining attendees that preparation could have been done several days before.

web: ist.training

Setup of your physical space in four variants

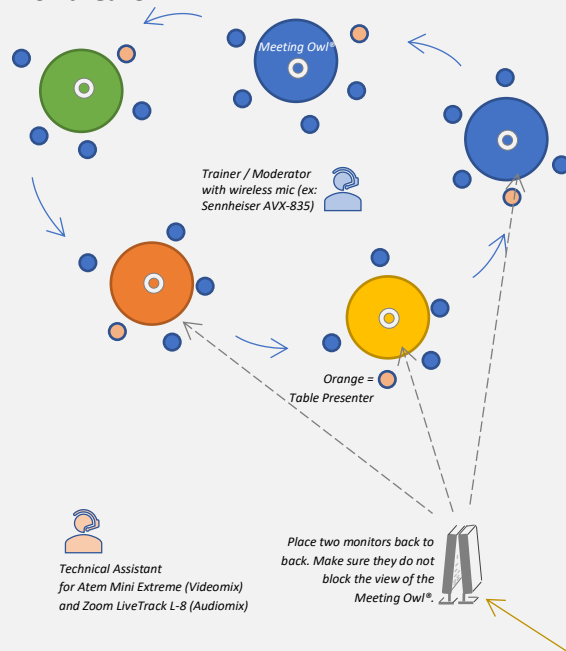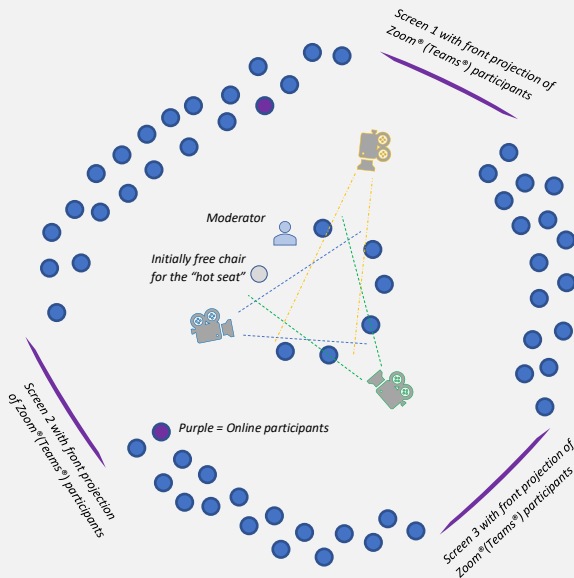| Format	Description
Classroom IT Lab *Trainer / Moderator*	In the **Classroom IT Lab** format, each participant has their own computer. **Audio:** Everyone wears a headset with a microphone. **Video:** Everyone has their own webcam. Organizationally and technically, this meeting can be held like one large Teams® or Zoom® meeting. **Drawback:** Does not allow for in-person group interaction.
World Café *Meeting Owl®* *Trainer / Moderator with wireless mic (ex: Sennheiser AVX-835)* *Orange = Table Presenter* *Technical Assistant for Atem Mini Extreme (Videomix) and Zoom LiveTrack L-8 (Audiomix)* *Place two monitors back to back. Make sure they do not block the view of the Meeting Owl®.*	In the **World Café** format, several round tables are distributed in one or two rooms, each of which can host 5 or 6 people. Acoustically, the tables should be separated from each other as much as possible (even pin boards can help). At each table there should either be a PC and headset for each participant, or, ideally, a Meeting Owl®. **Audio:** 1-2 omnidirectional microphones per table. Audio is actively mixed by assistants. **Video:** The Meeting Owls® must be mixed for the online participants. **Special feature:** To allow in-person and online participants to interact (ex: in break-out rooms), place a speaker and two screens on each round table to display the web participants. **Recommended hardware:** Atem Mini Extreme® **Drawback:** Requires a lot of space. Easier with fewer people.

web: ist.training

Fishbowl

*2 Technical Assistants
for Atem Mini Extreme (Videomix)
and Zoom LiveTrack L-8 (Audiomix)*

Screen 1 with front projection of Zoom®(Teams®) participants

Moderator

*Initially free chair
for the "hot seat"*

Screen 2 with front projection of Zoom®(Teams®) participants

● *Purple = Online participants*

Screen 3 with front projection of Zoom®(Teams®) participants

"Our space has a lot of reverb. How can we make contributions from the web audible to everyone in the room?"
With such a large room, you should consider sound diffusers and absorbers.
Speech intelligibility will be further enhanced if several medium-sized speakers are cleverly aimed at each group of people. Using only two or four very large speakers won't do much good. If participants from the virtual room are simply not understood, then their opinion is not heard and will inevitably be lost.

In the **Fishbowl** format, you have an inner circle and an outer cirlce. The inner circle consists of a moderator/facilitator, a free chair, a few participants, and cameras. The outer cirlce consists of screens and the remaining in-person participants, who can move to the inner circle to contribute if they wish.

Audio: After some trial and error, we now recommend handheld radio microphones for everyone, including the moderator in the inner circle. These are placed on each of the 8 chairs in the inner circle before the start of the event. Lapel microphones are not recommended since participants frequently rotate between the inner and outer circle.

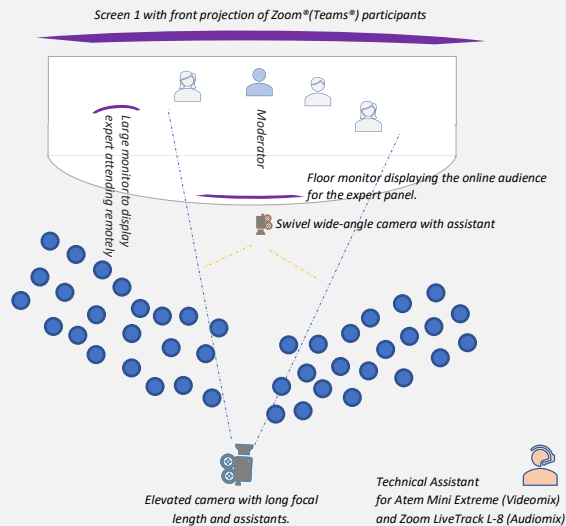If you want to be able to hear the outer circle audience:
a) position multiple directional microphones to cover each area of the room or
b) enlist an assistant to travel around the room with a handheld microphone.
You will need a technical assistant to actively mix the microphones and immediately turn the volume down when people stop speaking.

Also consider enlisting someone in-person to represent the online attendees so that they also have the opportunity to switch to the inner circle and be heard.

Video: Set up at least 3 cameras, each capturing 3 participants in the inner circle. (The outer circle can be captured as well if you would like.) We recommend renting rolling tripods. As a bonus, place a wide-angle camera on the ceiling to occasionally show a bird's eye view of the entire room.

Drawback: This format requires a large room, which will typically have poor acoustics.

Expert Panel

Screen 1 with front projection of Zoom®(Teams®) participants

Large monitor to display expert attending remotely

Moderator

Floor monitor displaying the online audience for the expert panel.

Swivel wide-angle camera with assistant

Elevated camera with long focal length and assistants.

Technical Assistant for Atem Mini Extreme (Videomix) and Zoom LiveTrack L-8 (Audiomix)

In the **Expert Panel** format, you give your experts the stage. The audience (in person and online) can ask questions.

Audio: Since panelists will remain seated, we recommend equipping each with a neckband microphone. Neckband microphones are strategically placed with the mic located on the head, and they are not sensitive to reverberation, so they offer the great advantage of producing high quality sound, even in large rooms or with wildly gesticulating speakers who frequently turns their heads.
To allow the audience to contribute, use a throwable radio microphone such as the catch box from catchbox.com. (Currently, the "Cube and Clip bundle" costs over 1,400€).

Video: Two cameras are required as a minimum.

Consideration: Can remote participants be part of the panel of experts? This will add complexity.

Good sound in reverberant rooms - Why is speech intelligibility still unacceptable

Many of us have had to endure poor speech intelligibility in hybrid events. If you don't want to lose your participants after a few minutes, you'd better make every spoken word coming from physical room easy to understand. If you deploy several microphones (which is already an achievement in many companies), the next problem immediately arises: poor speech intelligibility, mostly due to background noise and room reverberation.

You might have already followed the solutions of this e-book. However, your participants who all have extra lapel (oder other professional) microphones might still be hardly understood in Zoom® or Teams®.

Next, people often try to set the reverb suppression of Zoom or Teams to a high level. You will just get more audio dropouts: When someone starts speaking, you ll only hear everything starting from the second syllable. There might also be parts are missing in the middle of the sentence. Obviously, software filters are not a good solution.

In a setup with, for example, eight microphones, the room reverberation no longer arises at each individual microphone. It occurs because microphones that are distant from the speaker also reproduce his voice, plus the background noise near to them.

That's why you should always mute microphones which are not assigned to the person speaking. At professional events, this is done by assistants at the mixing console. The difference in speech intelligibility is dramatic.

At this point, most IT departments just give in. They resign to a cheap room microphone, half-heartedly try to get the room to sound a little dryer and set the filter for "background noise" in Teams® or Zoom® to maximum.

A solution for just 500€

Fortunately, sound engineer Dan Dugan has developed a technology that is called "automixing" or mix assist. The sound mixer evaluates all incoming signals. Within milliseconds, it decides which channel(s) need to be faded-in or out. Yamaha's Digital Mixing Consoles division has worked with Dugan to offer his technology in their QL series, among others. Everything we discuss in this paragraph is good to know for large events. However, what if you only have a handful of people in the room and no money for expensive pro equipment?

A possible remedy comes in the form of the latest generation of audio consoles which were not designed for sound engineers, but for podcasters and live streamers. Australian company RØDE, for example, offers the RODECaster (right) and RODECaster II. These are two affordable mixers featuring excellent preamps. They are easy-to-understand for non-experts. As can be seen at the bottom of the page, it offers four microphone inputs.

The product (we tested it) works without Dugan's expensive technology. Instead, it provides noise gates. In plain English: For each of the 4 microphones, you can set how strong a signal has to be in order to be automatically activated. Even demanding situations with people talking at the same time are mixed quite well!

Feel free to use the settings on the bottom left as a basis to tweak your multi-mic setup. Thanks also to Curtis Judd from *Light and Sound Media LLC* in Utah, where we first found the settings.

Caution: We have not yet tested the TASCAM MIXCAST 4. - Caution 2: The Zoom F8 & F8n promises similar features, but it doesn't really deliver.

Example solutions for hybrid trainings and workshops

The following hardware list (which cannot be exhaustive) is intended to give an impression of what is possible for small and larger budgets. We hope to finally put an end to the "we have a big room with a central camera" (where you can't really understand anyone). In particular, we want to use our experience to save you from searching for reliable hardware. (All suggestions are independent of manufacturers).

The solutions match the example scenarios above. They often stand for a whole product category of similar solutions

Audio solutions	Recommended hardware
USB Audiointerfaces (=Professional "sound cards" connected via USB).	
USB audio interface for a group of up to four, on one computer in the conference room. Matching: Case study 1	Zoom AMS-44 (approx. 165 €)
USB audio interface for a group of up to 18 people, on one computer in the conference room. Matching: Case study 2 Case study 3 b, c and d	Scarlett 18i20 2nd G (ca. 260 €) von Focusrite®
Easy-to-use USB audio interface for an impromptu meeting with a two-person group, on a computer in the conference room. Suitable for: Case study 1	AI-Micro von RØDE Microphones
(Auto-Mixing) Audio mixer for large events that fades out attendees who are not currently speaking. Example of auto-mixing: Discussion with Auto-Mixing Discussion without Auto-Mixing Matching: Case study 2, below "more luxurious setup". Case study 3 c, d	For example, ask your PA rental company about Yamaha QL Series Digital Mixing Consoles http://www.yamahaproaudio.com bzw. weitere Informationen bei: http://www.dandugan.com und http://www.dandugan.com/products

Microphones	
Clip-on microphone, inexpensive, made of metal, price-performance excellent. Picks up sound from all directions (typical for clip-on microphones). Unidirectional alternatives reduce reverberation in rooms with lots of noise / reverb.	Edutige ETM-006 Lavalier Microphone by EDUTIGE approx. 50€ For connecting to a USB audio interface or wireless link. For use with tablets / cell phones: EDUTIGE EIM Series {4 pole connectos} More: https://www.edutige.de
Professional clip-on microphone (available in white, beige, gray and black, extremely robust, sweat-proof, very balanced sound)	Sanken Cos 11-d approx. 360 € For connecting to a USB audio interface or wireless link.
Headset microphone recommendation 1 Hardly perceptible room reverberation. Ideal for very large rooms, halls. Ideal when speakers are expected to turn. (Microphone moves with them). Tightening causes problems for the untrained. Not suitable for quick changes such as fishbowls. Goes with: Case study 3 a and b (for moderator/trainer) or d (for panelists).	Sennheiser HSP Essential Omni Head microphone Very balanced sound. Good signal. High quality cable. (approx. 300 €)
Headset microphone recommendation 2 Hardly perceptible room reverberation. Ideal for very large rooms, halls. Ideal when speakers are expected to turn. (Microphone moves with them). Tightening causes problems for the untrained. Not suitable for quick changes such as fishbowls. Goes with: Case study 3 a and b (for moderator/trainer) or d (for panelists).	RØDE HS2-P Headset Microphone Sehr angenehm zu tragen. Sehr lautes Signal. Kabel wirkt leider etwas billig. (approx. 300€)
Adapter for clip-on or neckband microphones for connection to USB sound interfaces	RØDE VXLR+ (approx. 25 €)

More microphone solutions for hybrid events	
Example for a directional microphone for conference rooms	Shure Centraverse CVG12D-B/C Gooseneck Microphone with Desktop Stand oder ähnliche
Wireless "Throw microphone" Capture audience contributions, hear voices of observers from an outside fishbowl circle, or capture spontaneous word contributions from observers. The foam prevents the radio microphone from being damaged when passing or throwing it to the next participant.	Catch box by getcatchbox.ch
Wireless Lapel microphone	Clip Mic by getcatchbox.ch
Funkstrecken (wenige Beispiele)	
Low cost wireless sender and receiver for microphones on 2.4 Ghz basis, digital audio transmission	Sennheiser XSW series (prosumer level), plastic, supplies phantom power, 19ms latency {from 300 €} or e.g. RØDE Link (prosumer level), plastic, provides phantom power, only 4 ms latency, AA batteries 24bit 44. kHz {380 €}
wireless sender and receiver for microphones; 1,9 Ghz. digital audio transmission, encrypted with AES 256 If no other DECT devices, up to approx. 10 Systems can be used in parallel.	Sennheiser AVX series, very suitable for everyday use due to internal Li-Ion batteries and charger, very slim form factor, metal housing, provides phantom power, audio quality: 24bit 48kHz, receiver with XLR out. 19ms latency, high dynamic range {over 700 €}
Professionelle Mehrkanal-Funkstrecken	Sennheiser Evolution Wireless Digital - EW-D & EW-DX; half rack and full rack mount modules, almost all with AES 256 encryption
Automated camera	
360° camera that automatically aligns with the active speaker. In addition to the camera, the device also features a microphone and speakers. The system uses proprietary AI-driven software that learns over time. Currently available: Meeting Owl 3, Expansion Mic & Room Kit - Starting at about €1,000 Partially similar products: NexPod N109, Logitech Conect, Kandao Obsidian Pro	

Kameras, zur Nutzung auf Stativen für Streaming	
APS-C chip, with mirror - Extremely wide range of professional lenses - suitable for streaming since clean HDMI output - Here: Mini-HDMI (very robust connection) - Always use with continuous power This and the following camera can be combined excellently e.g. with lens Sigma Art 18-35 1:1.8 DC or Canon EF 50mm 1:1.8 STM	Canon EOS 90D (900 €)
APS-C Chip, Mirrorless (more compact) - With mechanical adapter like Meike mk-c-AF4 extremely large selection of professional lenses - Suitable for streaming since clean HDMI output - Here: Micro-HDMI (quite small connector) - Always use with continuous power	Canon EOS M6 Mark II (650 €)
Wenn du lieber in der Panasonic-Welt arbeiten willst, hier zwei exzellente Kameras für Online-Workshops	
Micro 4/3 chip, A camera for quality shots Mirrorless (more compact) - Suitable for streaming since clean HDMI output - Here: Micro-HDMI (quite small connector) - Always use with continuous power	Panasonic GH5 (1.000 €) (Neue Alternative: GH6)
Micro 4/3 chip, mirrorless, B camera(s) for well-lit or less frequent scenes	Panasonic G85 (700 €)

How do I convert the camera HDMI signal to USB? Use e.g. Elgato HD60S or other capture cards.

Note on cameras: Always use the same manufacturer, since the color world of the devices is then matched to each other.
Note on lenses: You don't need very expensive lenses for any camera with good lighting! Invest the money you save in video light sources.

Examples of professional audio and video mixers	
Audio mixer with mix-minus capability Mix-Minus means that the mixer does not send all incoming channels to the outgoing channels. It can be selected which inputs are selected for which outputs.	Zoom LiveTrak L-8 (Link)
Professional video mixer Allows combination, crossfade and stream output to Zoom®, Teams® and others. System with 8 HDMI inputs, 2 separate HDMI outputs, 2 USB ports and a headphone jack, Ethernet, USB-C for webcam output, among others.	ATEM Mini Extreme ISO (Link) {ca. 1.500 €}

45 proven Tools

for Online Trainers & Facilitators

web: ist.training

Separating the wheat from the chaff

In the course of my career as an online trainer, I've tested over one hundred tools for online facilitation and training. The ones which failed made me lose time, money and sometimes my reputation with a client. Quite often I have had to listen to false statements by tool providers. With some of the tools I had tested, I had fallen flat on my face.

This is why I have written this little booklet. It offers you a shortcut through a jungle of online systems.
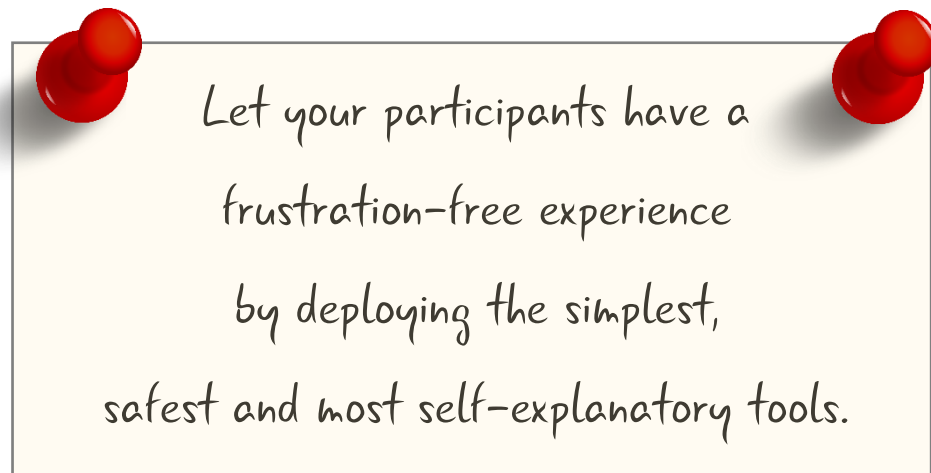
Obviously, using tried and tested tools is only one of two keys to success for online trainers. The second key to success is to skillfully activate our participants and keeping track of technology, content and your seminar dramaturgy. All this takes practice. The online trainers who complete our programs at Corporate Training Academy prove every day that attending a well-founded training program does pay off. You will find almost everything you will need in terms of tools, divided into six categories. However, the most important thing is that you just start, no matter which tool you're using right now.

01 Simple, Effective Facilitation Tools

"How can I use workshop cards or have a poll with adhesive dots? How can I brainstorm or carry out a classic 6-stepped moderation?" Answers to these questions can be found in the following list. The tools mentioned here mainly allow you to create the electronic equivalent of paper cards online. You will be able to move them around (also in columns) and let participants vote.

If you don't need more than exactly that, you should think twice about whether you really want to be using a complex board (as in the green table). These boards are a bit more difficult to use for many participants and there is more to be considered in practice.

Let your participants have a
frustration-free experience
by deploying the simplest,
safest and most self-explanatory tools.

web: ist.training

Data protection - GDPR

If, according to the provider, their tool is GDPR-compliant, you will find the symbol: 🛡. However, we refuse to assign the symbol if we have doubts about the provider's claim "GDPR-compliant".

"But wait, I have heard of a much better tool …"

When I started out in my career as an online trainer, I regularly let people make me nervous about fancy "not to miss out" tools. Especially during the pandemic, a new tool was recommended to me almost every week. Unfortunately, many tools (also from Germany) are unusable due to poor hosting. And sometimes, the provider doesn't allow commercial use or critical information on data protection is missing.

My advice: When you've found something for yourself, stick with it. The good tools are being copied again and again anyway. Now read what has proven itself and has stood the test of time.

Tool Ranking {Reason}	My experience	Comments
1st: Padlet ® {All-rounder, easy for participants} Alternative: Taskcards.de 🛡	Padlet offers facilitation, simple instant polls as well as geographic representations and it even has brainstorming options. It's popular in the field of education for good reason. In the Padlet type "shelf", the typical card query with evaluation of the ideas can be implemented in all possible forms. Padlet also boosts a user-friendly interface. For participants; a login is not necessary.	The free version is already very useful for trainers and facilitators. Hosting: Amazon AWS, extremely stable. Good browser support.
2nd: Flinga ® {Really intuitive for participants, usable for trainers under stress}	Flinga is a less known online board that combines few but clever features and a maximum of simplicity. However, not everyone likes its pastel colors. Can also be used by facilitators under stress. Participants often start interacting within a minute. Ideal for brainstorming.	Many trainers and facilitators use the free version & delete old boards from time to time.
3rd: Native Whiteboards esp. in Teams ®; followed by Zoom ® & comparable {Simplicity, free of charge}	Microsoft's integrated whiteboard comes with impressive functions. Teams users must first install this free of charge. The whiteboards from Zoom and BigBlueButton can be used to a lesser extent for very small moderation tasks. However, the overview is quickly lost there and "something else is beautiful."	Members of some trainer associations such as BDVT eV receive a discount for STACKFIELD.
4th: Trello ® or STACKFIELD ® 🛡 {Possibility for authentication, process orientation}	If facilitation means long-term collaboration or the distribution & management of tasks (possibly in distributed teams) to you, you should authenticate your participants. If they have no problem logging in to an account beforehand, they can use the minimalist Trello or the German, GDPR-compliant STACKFIELD (which is similar to Trello). It works like a pin board and gets you through agile processes.	If the customer is using the system anyway, you should seriously consider using it for your online training.

Bonus Tool: I've somehow fallen in love with the login-free, forever free, minimalist, mobile phone-compatible oncoo.de. It is good especially for card queries and debriefings. However, the private project does not guarantee the availability of the tools nor the correct functioning or faultless quality of the offer. "In order to keep the use of ONCOO's services as simple as possible and GDPR-compliant, no login or registration is necessary."

Padlet – Example of an Online Board from a training

padlet

Train the Trainer TTT + 9 · 25T.

Was läuft schief in unseren Meetings?
Jetzt ist die Chance, etwas zu ändern!

💡 Alle Ideen

noch nicht zugeordnet

weitere Idee...

Kommunikationskultur

Das es durch das Lüften immer kalt ist

alle reden durcheinander

Chef ist vorlaut!

wir fangen nie pünktlich an

ich komme nicht zu Wort

Keine Agenda

zuhören ist nicht so einfach

Der Ton untereinander ist nicht OK!

Zweite Kategorie... Motivation/Ernstnehmen der Teamsitzung

Ich komme zu spät

alle reden durcheinander

ich habe keine lust

Verpflegung

es gibt keinen kaffee

Technik

ich finde es doof, dass

man oben und unten schreiben kann, das macht es am Ende unübersichtlich, weil alle es anders machen

Technik funktioniert nicht

Participants are able to move these cards around in their browser. They will see changes in real time.

O2 Complex Online-Whiteboards

Tool {Reason}	Experience	Comments
1st: Mural.co® or miro.com® {Best mix between features and simplicity for participants Mural: super-beautiful UI}	In my every day usage, Mural and Miro constantly deliver excellent results: Easy to understand for participants and trainers & the reliability is excellent. May fans of one or the other tool may forgive me: I am dealing with both tools as one line-item here. However, there are many parallels. Both are not really GDPR-compliant but popular with international clients. By now, both have license models that make sense for trainers. Miro looks a little less colorful and more minimalistic than Mural. Everything is super logical and the ergonomics are excellent. I like Mural a little more just because of the little things that come in handy in online trainings. Which group doesn't like to be surprised with a rain of graffiti? The timer and (blind) voting are also perfect for workshops and training sessions.	Mural can currently be used free of charge as a "consultant". [Read more](#). Tip: The image search function in Mural is didactically worth gold. Difference? Mural is a little more popular in advanced training, miro in the agile scene.
2nd: Conceptboard® {features, price, beautiful UI}	Conceptboard.com is a German company and I had *one painful outage* up to this date. The system offers many good features. It's listed second place here because participants are able to do almost *too much*. For example, the can format texts in sticky notes in all possible ways. This makes Conceptboard more difficult to use than my two winner tools in the line above. I also don't like the additional distinction between selection and move mode. Pro-arguments: Fully GDPR-compliant, established in major corporations, many templates for communication, business strategy, retrospectives and brainstorming, to name but a few. Even team and task management are possible. Participants should be introduced to Conceptboard step by step. To sum it up: A reliable, good tool.	ip: First explain the difference between hand and arrow tools (select). Only then use sticky notes. I especially miss: scoring, bid search & timer. .

2nd: Klaxoon® 🛡️ {Excellent features, great integration of mobile participants, support}	Klaxoon® reminds me of President Macron: handsome, famous beyond the French Borders and sometimes polarizing. Some trainers swear by it, others find it too complicated. I think: For little money you are getting a tool that has almost every bell and whistle a facilitator or trainer could ever dream of. It should be emphasized that mobile phone users can collaborate without any problems: The tool stands out particularly positively here above all others. Scoring ideas (in all possible ways) is a matter of course in this tool, as are the many professionally designed templates. The additional full GDPR conformity help Klaxoon to get exactly the same second place in my practical test as the concept board, which is a little faster for trainers to learn.	Klaxoon® offers different "modes" of boards. Even a kind of pirate hunt through the open sea can be played as a competitive quiz.
3rd: Dependable free boards, for example jamboard.google.com or sketchboard.io {high quality, no additional cost}	Jamboard is my favorite free board besides Flinga. However, many European clients reject it because of concerns against Google Inc. The alternative, Sketchboard.io, is also solid. However, it's a little less intuitive than Jamboard. I also used the many other (free and pay-for) systems like Productivity Lab, milanote, draft, draw.chat, Deskle, Collaboard, NoteBookCast, Ziteboard, Whiteboard Fox, Stormboard, InVision Freehand, Limni, explaineverything.com and lucidspark viewed. In practice, I use Mural, Conceptboard or Klaxoon for client work.	When a company uses G-Suite, I immediately start using Jamboard. The "laser" and image search functions are ingenious, and operation is child's play for most.
Outside our ranking: Creative processes with Mindmeister®	If you prefer using mind maps rather than sticky notes, you should take a look at Mindmeister® or similar systems. In my experience, a mind map mainly helps whoever created it, so I don't use the tool in my seminars.	Maps can be connected to Meistertask to assign and track tasks.

Web-Boards

Data compiled for facilitators or trainers who pay monthly & have 2 to 3 groups with approx. 15 participants each month.

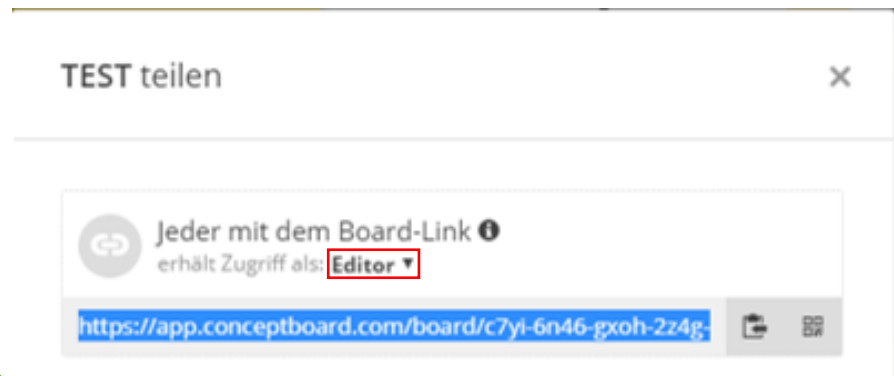| Board	How complex for participants?	How complex for facilitator?	GDPR compliant	Feature example: dot voting	1 year (US$)
Miro.com & Mural.co [US]	◢	◢	🔥	✓	Miro 120 Mural 192
Concept Board [EU]	◢	◢	✓	✗	107
Klaxoon [EU]	◢	◢	✓	✓	119
Flinga.fi	0	◢	🔥	✗	90
Padlet.com	◢	◢	🔥	✓	142

As the overview above shows, we are only recommending two GDPR-compliant boards, Conceptboard & Klaxoon, at the moment. We deliberately combined moderation boards and more complex boards: These are some of the most popular systems on the market.

At the time of our research, Conceptboard was a complete steal with just over a hundred euros per year. Unfortunately, on the day this test was completed, on February 3, 2010, conceptboard had an outage for about 40 minutes. It was the first time since we have been using Conceptboard at Corporate Training Academy.

Klaxoon: If you don't click on „move" in the lower part of the interface, you can actually get confused. Double-check, if the option in the middle is sett to off: then you wou't be able to move your own drawings, images and shapes!
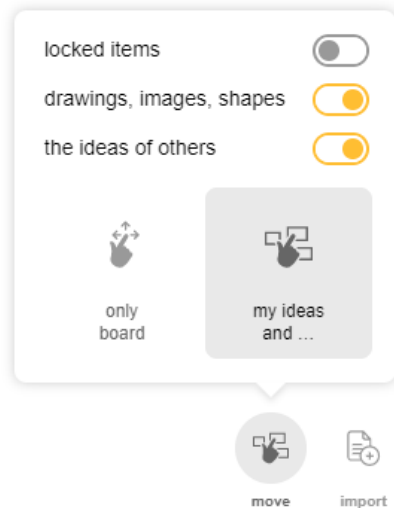
With Conceptboard you should consider whether you share the board with editor or reviewer rights. Only reviewers are allowed to move objects previously created by you, the board owner. This pertains to many forms of interactions. If participants should only be able *to add new* objects, the "Reviewer" role is suitable.

03 (Live) Quiz & Polling Tools

Tool {Reason}	What it can do	Comments
Live-Quiz-Tools		
Live Quiz & Polling: **1st** Mentimeter® / Sli.do® Alternative: voxr.org®* 🛡 Alternative: directpoll.com {Modern Look, Live experience}	Mentimeter.com and sli.do allow live surveys and short surveys e.g. B. with scales or multiple choice. The free packages are interesting for both providers: While Mentimeter allows up to two survey slides and up to five quiz slides (and an infinite number of participants), sli.do allows 100 participants and five surveys per event. The visually more impressive mentimeter uses the Amazon Cloud and is therefore very reliable, but not fully GDPR compliant. On the other hand, one should ask oneself whether problems can arise at all with data-sparing use. I mention both systems because Sli.do for some reason sells licenses with many companies and thus may appear more familiar to participants in your in-house seminars.	Mentimeter and sli.do offer short URLs that participants can enter on their mobile phones. After entering a PIN, you can now easily answer your question on the mobile phone. You can then see the development of the survey results live on your PC / Mac.
Live Quiz & Polling: **2nd** quizizz.com® Alternative: Kahoot!® {Positive Atmosphere}	If you just want to play a colorful live quiz with your participants, Kahoot! (more expensive) or quizizz (more up to date) in good hands. The principle: The participants go to your prepared quiz website and then give the correct answers to a series of questions on the PC / Mac or tablet (possibly under time pressure). This is particularly popular with competitive characters.	In my opinion, the Kahoot challenger Quizizz now wins the price-performance comparison by far.
Live Quiz & Polling: **3rd** Forms in Teams® and its likes in video conferencing tools	Due to its sheer simplicity, the onboard tools from Zoom®, BigBlueButton®, WebEx®, GoTo ... and z. B. Teams® for me in 3rd place. You don't have the login for Mentimeter® / Sli.do® / quizizz® at hand? Participants are too unsure to leave the video conferencing tool for a survey? Do you work with	Attention: Forms must be installed in Teams beforehand (go to the three-point menu). It's

* Even though VOXR doesn't look as nice as Mentimeter: The German tool deserves a special mention: According to the company, VOXR interactions are fully GDPR-compliant. Not even the IP address of the participants is being saved. In addition, everything is hosted on German servers and no data is sent abroad. An overview of all interaction options can be found at: voxr.org/tool

{stress free, no added costs}	more experienced people over 60 who would be overwhelmed by switching to a web browser? Simply use the Zoom® survey tool or z. B. the Forms plugin (free of charge) in Microsoft Teams.	free. Participants do not need to install it.
Live Quiz & Polling: **4th** cosmobuzz.net Alternative: justbuzz.in {Individual design of the seminar}	From my face-to-face seminars I have developed a set of slides that is similar to the TV show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*. To pull this off, my group of participants will be divided into two groups. Now one group plays against the other and tries to correctly answer the knowledge question from the previous seminar. The design, the music, everything about this PowerPoint is created for maximum fun. I put Günther Jauch's reading glasses on and I know exactly where to ask: "Would you like to use the telephone joker?" I neither get this experience through Kahoot! nor by any other tool. Cosmobuzz allows me to turn the participants' internet-enabled cell phones into interconnected buzzers. I see who buzzed first (someone from group A or B) and the other buzzers are blocked immediately until I unlock them again. Anyone who has built the perfect quizz show or simply wants to use the "buzzer" during their input and training phase (e.g. for questions, as a call for help during breakouts or for other learning games) is well advised with such an HTML-based buzzer.	There are also real buzzer apps for iPhone and Android. The challenge, however, is to find a single app that is available for Android and iPhone that is free and reliable at the same time.

Asynchronous tools: The following tools are suitable if you work with your participants at the same time in your videoconferencing tools.

1st: in async. Quiz / Polling: Learningsnacks.de® 🛡 {Ease of interaction, use on mobile phones, popular with participants}	"Easily digestible bits of knowledge" - this is what the operator calls what learning snacks offer. You can use learning snacks to create a free quiz that is particularly useful on mobile phones. Going through the quiz is almost like a WhatsApp conversation. Of course, you could use learning snacks during your live seminar. A better time for such a quiz is after a live input phase (refresher). The participant sits	Although it is a German operator, I cannot say for sure if the system is GDPR-compliant or not. However, since the user does not provide their own personal data

	on the couch at home and receives z. B. your email with the link to the quiz. The hurdle is small, sacrificing three minutes and solving the single or multiple choice questions.	and no login is required, I hardly see any problems here.
2nd in async. Quiz / Polling: Easy-Feedback.de® 🛡 Alternatives: lamapoll.de 🛡 Polyas 🛡 {Psychological safety, data protection, building trust}	Even if it can certainly do more - I regularly use Easy-Feedback.de to query my expectations before in-house seminars. The free version of the GDPR-compliant tool is very easy to use (which you can no longer say about ted.me, for example). The tool works without embarrassing ads. The entry into the paid version is relatively expensive: from 50 € per month. A good alternative is Lamapoll, also with headquarters and servers in Germany. In the free version there are 50 participants for free and an unlimited number of questions. Lamapoll is also positioning itself in the area of security and sensitive surveys and elections. In addition to certified data servers according to ISO 27001, penetration tests and end-to-end encryption are also offered as protection against eavesdropping.	"We'll quickly put your poll online on our server." Today I reject these well-intentioned offers from the HR department. Participants feel more comfortable if their employer didn't even have theoretical access to the results.
3rd in async. Quiz / Polling: formative® or socrative.com® {effective control of learning progress, especially with hard skill topics}	If you want to take an online performance test instead of an entertaining quiz, you can use a full-blown learning management system or simply formative free of charge (goformative.com). The tool from California was developed for the school sector. It is well suited for having authenticated (logged-in) users complete a multiple choice test or for testing your skills e.g. B. to be proven by a drawing. If you do the test live, you can see in real time for each participant which question was answered correctly or incorrectly! Socrative (company headquarters: Canada) is an alternative and enables the level of performance of learners to be checked "at class, individual student or question level". There is also Socrative Pro for companies.	I am aware that there are 100 alternatives in this area. Formative just works for me because it's simple.

04 Learning Management / Collaboration Tools

The following tools have very different target groups. Ranking them really doesn't make sense.

Not everyone needs a learning management system (LMS)

Learning management systems were developed to support teaching and learning processes and to manage learning materials and users. The web-based systems enable the provision of learning content, the organization of learning processes and communication between students and teachers.

Collaboration tools help nurturing collaboration in your group

In the second section of the table, we discuss some extremely practical tools that allow participants to work on common tasks at the same time or at different times, to analyze what they have learned or to advance creative processes.

Tool {Reason}	Details	Comments
Category: LMS avendoo® 🛡 (Target group: Corporate clients) {Infinite possibilities, personal, highly professional support}	REWE, DM, Sixt, TOOM and Haufe Akademie: they all have something in common. You use avendoo as a learning management system. Avendoo is a solution and a service provider at the same time: Large companies adapt the platform to their own needs - including corporate identity and their own process integration. In addition, small companies also use avendoo's entry-level offers. The team behind avendoo offers the customer professional support through to the complete implementation of projects. The cost for initial "set-up" amount to approx. € 1,000. Further costs depend on whether the rental or purchase model was chosen and how many users are working and learning on the system. Avendoo currently offers an E-Learning Edition, a Blended Learning Edition and the so-called Black Edition.	Avendoo is the right choice for trainer entrepreneurs who have a full-blown digital business model.
Category: LMS Moodle® [🛡] {Totale Flexibilität} Alternative: Ilias® [🛡]	Moodle can be anything for you: A self-hosted LMS that you download as software and install on your web server (advantage: free of charge), a ready-made web service "Software as a Service" (SaaS) from the provider "Moodle" (advantage: reliability, predictable costs) or the typical, loveless university LMS (advantage: you don't have to worry about it yourself). If you recommend Moodle, you won't go wrong. But anyone who recommends Moodle doesn't necessarily do everything right. Here are the disadvantages of the three variants: Self-hosted (software version) - Disadvantage: own GDPR responsibility, possibly performance and security problems, investment in time to pimp up the learning environment and install plugins. Adaptation to local language, formats, etc. "Software as a Service" from Moodle.com - Disadvantage: More users, more costs, especially if there are more than 50 users, GDPR: No result As a free rider in an organization or university - disadvantage: Insufficient adaptability, often loveless learning environment	Moodle is available for free download as open source software. An alternative to this: Ilias®

As a single trainer, I would either install moodle on my own and immerse myself in it for two days plus take care of the legal issues in order to build something up for me on a permanent basis or simply buy it through a German hoster as SaaS.

Category: LMS

TalentLMS®
{Well balanced offering}

First of all: The free version of this all-rounder is only suitable for trying out: 5 users, up to 10 courses. Those who use TalentLMS mean business: $ 60 per month allows onboarding of up to 40 users, from $ 130 you can go up to 100 users.

So if you have the business model and the corresponding change, you basically don't need to look any more: TalentLMS is easy to use, super stable and the support is a dream. Courses can be created quickly and easily, because your own, already created content and learning materials can easily be imported.

In addition, Talent LMS allows you to integrate an infinite number of media types, sell your own courses (PayPal or Stripe) and automatically issue certificates for the participants. There are simple ways to effectively test a student's level of proficiency. My favorite feature: Participants do not need a login with a password, but can log into the course via a link.

In this paper, TalentLMS stands for maybe 50 other well-made LMS systems, some of which are free and some are very expensive. Examples are Canvas, SAP Lithmos, Thinkific, Wisetail LMS, iSpring, Wisetail LMS, eloomi, cornerstone, Inquisiq, Brightspace, google classroom, absorb LMS, edmodo, Kadence LMS, Tutor LMS, Neo LMS, Odoo, Docebo or Totara.

Are you a self-employed trainer and don't have much time to deal with an LMS? The Darmstadt-based company has recognized a niche in the market: with Blink.it, they are positioning themselves as a blended learning provider, not a dusty "learning management system". Blink.it has recognized that trainers

Since the company, Epignosis, is based in the USA, there is basically no basis for GDPR compliance. If you are not afraid of surveillance by the secret service, you will find many other security promises: talentlms.com/gdpr

sometimes want to "click together" their training sessions as quickly as possible. They also understood that content should be short and that participants should not be overloaded.

In terms of scope and operation, they are absolutely top-notch. However, there is not much that can be adjusted (design, menu navigation, etc.). So, I think, as a trainer, I am more comparable to others who use Blink.it. Personally, I think it's nicer when my LMS doesn't look like an LMS, but smells like my institute.

Category: LMS Blink.it® 🛡 {Verblüffende Einfachheit}	Blink.it found a niche with the idea of "online training support". Its founders understand that everything the system delivers must be 100% mobile phone compatible. The combination of GDPR compliance, the possibility of monetizing courses plus "foolproof creation" of courses is currently unique in the market. Unfortunately, the prices at Blink.it have risen sharply in the last few months: For € 99 per month net you get just five active courses & only up to 200 participants / year.	I don't use blink.it because I cannot tweak the look of participants' user interface. ...and I don't want to look like all the other blink.it trainers.
Category: LMS Wordpress® + OptimizePress® 🛡 {Design options, low costs} Alternative plugins: LearnDash, or LearnPress or DigiMember	If you are running your own website and would like to build a digital business model as a trainer, you might be well advised not to depend on a third-party provider. We have been following this path with our institute for years. We have developed our own website into an LMS. What you pay is not money, but time, any amount of time: looking for plugins, adapting the design, adding functions and fixing bugs. If you want a modular system based on WordPress, you can use OptimizePress. It can be annoying at times, but that works well overall. It's true: You don't always get everything the way you want it, but there are no monthly fees in the almost three-digit range. In order to add interactive or particularly mobile-capable content, we use JAVA script, lots of CSS and H5P as plug-ins.	

Collaboration: These tools allow you to work together as a group or in small groups when no live training is taking place.
(Yes, there is much, much more. ... but somehow we only use the following tools in practice.)

Category Collaboration Slack ® {Collaboration & cohesion for longer periods of time} Alternative: discordapp.com	Slack is a web-based instant messaging service for communication within workgroups. With Slack, messages and files can be exchanged or e.g. B. small surveys are carried out. As with teams, there are channels that you can use to discuss things like in chat forums. Trainers can use it to enable social learning. This is particularly useful for training programs that stretch over many appointments. I've been using chat systems like this less recently, but if I do, Slack is my first choice due to its extremely good usability. The mobile app is also mature and makes life as a trainer easier. So if you can't have Microsoft Teams, you at least want Slack! The free version offers, among other things, access to the 10,000 most recent messages from my slack team, ten integrations with apps such as Google Drive, Office 365 and z. B. Audio and video calls between team members. The paid version starts at just over € 6 per month.	An alternative to slack is Discord, which sees itself as a competitor to Skype and TeamSpeak. Discord appeals more to a young target group. If necessary, first check whether you like the look. Free use is not a problem here either.
Category Collaboration edupad.ch ® 🛡 {Simultaneous writing without the NSA listening to you}	When working in small groups or in tandem, it is nice to be able to work on the same document in real time. Google has been offering this for ages, but not all participants or clients are Google fans. Those looking for an NSA-free alternative should check out EduPad, a collaborative text editor. Several participants can edit a text document at the same time and see who is working where in the document. The platform is operated by studer + raimann ag from Burgdorf in Switzerland. A tip so that your participants can work simultaneously without any problems: advise you to use Firefox or Chrome as your browser. There are problems especially with the old Internet Explorer / EDGE. Cost: Free	Switzerland is not part of the EU and therefore the GDPR does not apply there. However, the data protection agreement with Switzerland is highly regarded and I therefore use edupad with a very clear conscience.

O5 Videohosting & Backstage-Tools

Werkzeug {Grund}	Detail	Anmerkung
Category: Video **Edpuzzle®** {Interactivity} Alternative: H5P	Edpuzzle.com allows you to add real interactivity to videos (e.g. your YouTube videos). So it is z. B. possible to specify when the video WILL stop in order to ask the participant a question about the content presented so far. However, it is advisable to keep this interaction in mind when producing the video. So in the video you can e.g. For example, say that the video is now paused and the participant will find a question on the right-hand side to which there are, for example, two correct answers. The tool currently offers free use.	This and much more is also possible with the free H5P system. However, the learning curve for us trainers is higher here.
Category: Video **OBS Studio®** {Live video editing, recording and manipulation}	OBS Studio is a free, very stable software that allows recording and live editing of videos as well as the mixing of audio and video sources. I currently use this free software for everything: The recordings of screencasts (filming my screen for explanatory videos), as a software camera for live seminars (with Zoom, BigBlueButton, WebEx or Teams) and in my YouTube production as a live editing system. If you're just looking for a solution to record your screen and combine your voice with it, take Camtasia or a similar tool. However, if you work a lot with video and need smooth scene transitions, picture-in-picture technology or a correction of the aspect ratio of your HD webcam, if you give a lot of live seminars and e.g. B. want to show your company name or if you carry out live streaming events, then you need OBS Studio.	I use OBS, among other systems, to compensate for problems with my video grabber. My Canon EOS 90D is z. B. shown in BigBlueButton with a distorted aspect ratio. The picture is squashed. If I switch OBS Studio in between everything is fine again.
Category: Video **Vimeo®** {add free}	Vimeo is the solution to the above advertising problem. Unfortunately, the free version only offers limited functions and, in particular, a rather tight data limit per month. I've been a happy Vimeo customer for a long time. Vimeo allows the	

	protection of your intellectual property through security measures and gives you maximum flexibility over your video content.
Category: Video **YouTube®** {unlimited storage space}	Anyone who creates short videos to accompany learning can save them quickly, easily and free of charge on YouTube. The optional setting "not listed" ensures that only participants with the specific video link have access to the pearls of our wisdom. Disadvantage with YouTube: At the end of videos, users are offered another video from YouTube, possibly that of a competitor. This also happens when you embed your video in your website / LMS. For this, YouTube is recommended as an advertising platform under certain conditions. To do this professionally, however, it has to be learned.
Category: Video **Miracast® / Apple airplay®** {Flexibility with wireless integration of a tablet}	This is not software, but a device standard for tablets and mobile phones. Miracast (Android) and airplay allow the transmission of the mobile phone screen (i.e. the video stream) via WiFi. In concrete terms, this means: With the appropriate hardware, you can feed any mobile phone / tablet into your zoom video image. Instead of sharing the screen, the content of the tablet appears instead of your face in your video image. Now you can z. For example, show your graphics tablet app (e.g. Notability), your stylish timer app or videos. Search word for the corresponding hardware: "Miracast HDMI Stick" or "Miracast Dongle". But keep in mind that these sticks simply deliver an HDMI signal. You may have to feed this into the PC via USB using an Elgato Camlink or similar hardware. This then recognizes another webcam. A disadvantage of Miracast and Airplay: Not every mobile device / tablet offers the standard, and the connection with low-quality devices can break. Good candidates are the premium devices from Motorola, Huawei, LG (very good experience), Samsung (very good experience) and of course Apple. I am currently getting a particularly stable connection with my LG V40.

Why don't I just split my screen, e.g. to show a timer: Splitting the screen in almost all VC tools means that the video images of the participants can no longer be seen. If only my "face becomes a timer", the group can still see each other.

Category: Backstage timeblocks.co® Alternative: CuePilot {Supports you with your timing}	Timeblocks is a free web tool that was originally developed for keeping the timing in meetings. I have been looking for a solution like this for months: You can specify your own seminar agenda (seminar plan) in time blocks with an indication of the duration in minutes. If you click on the play button, the system measures the time and at the appropriate time flashes the next part in the seminar sequence (an audio signal is also possible). Such a "living" seminar agenda is very practical for complex / longer online training courses. How often it happened to me beforehand to forget the time during an exciting discussion. The best thing about timeblocks: If you are a little ahead of the time, you can click the >> button, if you are a little late and are actually allowed to overdraw, you can use the pause button.	Timeblocks can be used by several trainers at the same time if they all have web access.
Category: Backstage / Planning sessionlab ® {Practical use for seminar plans}	Sessionlab allows you to set up a seminar agenda professionally online. The entire tool is designed for workshops and training. There is a database with pre-formulated suggestions for seminar sequences for all possible areas such as strategy, team building, creative workshops.	

06 Video Conferencing Platforms aka „Webinar Software"

More about over 30 videoconferencing vendors incl. experience reports, features, stability and hosting in Europe / GDPR: ist.training/blog

Werkzeug {Grund}	Detail	Anmerkung
1st not fully GDPR-compliant tools Zoom® {Transmission quality, reliability} Alternative: WebEx® (Same rank)	When it comes to clean audio and video in HD quality, I immediately think of ZOOM. I have a subscription here too. The excellent stability of the connection, the very good desktop experience and the good user experience on the mobile phone / tablet speak for ZOOM. At ZOOM you can tell that nothing is unnecessary. Even so, the important features are all there. Even in the first payment level there are breakout rooms, a whiteboard that participants can comment on, chat, good keyboard shortcuts and useful functions for managing and inviting participants. Of course, you can also record the meetings at ZOOM. It is nice that you can switch off many features. This gives you a tidy window in front of you when the meeting is running. Cost: You can connect 100 participants for up to 40 minutes free of charge. Without time restrictions, € 13.99 net per month is due. From 19 € per month you can include 300 participants. Everything after that becomes very expensive very quickly. Good news: My test (Feb. 2021) on the current version of WebEx showed that the competition from Cisco Systems has caught up a lot. WebEx has become another top tool, provided you use the current version directly from the Cisco Cloud and not some undersized, hosted in-house installation. WebEx now stands for good connection quality, now also has breakout rooms, presents itself with a tidy interface and, like Zoom, increasingly offers useful security features.	In my opinion, many organizations underestimate the security of Zoom and WebEx, and overestimate the security of teams. All American communication companies are subject to the FISA legislation of the USA: All must provide the NSA with an interface for reading out communication data about non-Americans.

2nd not fully GDPR-compliant tools

Microsoft Teams®

{Distribution, customers request it, increasing quality, security impression of the customers}

Video passend zum Thema:
[„Breakout Rooms in Teams sind jetzt einfach"](#)

Teams is a platform for asynchronous team collaboration, project coordination, social collaboration and video conferences ("Meetings"). According to Microsoft, Teams is the "central place for teamwork in Office 365". Teams works well with other Microsoft applications such as Link e.g. OneNote, Microsoft Whiteboard, PowerPoint, Word, Excel and many more. Above all, it offers channels for discussions, the sharing of files, the linking of resources and can be used almost like an intranet.

SAP, Porsche, Osram, ... many large and medium-sized companies work with teams. The system has spread rapidly in many organizations. However, you should familiarize yourself well with teams. I've made one or two embarrassing mistakes in teams. Sometimes a message ends up in the wrong channel, or the chat is not available in an open meeting because you got carried away with providing the meeting with a channel when planning it.

If you don't shy away from the effort of getting really smart in the area of teams, then you can shine as a trainer in companies that rely on 365 environments. I wouldn't use it stand-alone on my own. Microsoft is z. B. relatively intrusive: "Please log in for a better experience ..." You don't necessarily have to have a Microsoft account, but the customer will be reminded of it again and again. Systems that require or provoke a login from my participants annoy me.

If you are allowed to use Zoom and otherwise only need a good chat forum, then slack is often the simpler alternative. Slack offers channels and file sharing. However, a login is also required here.

Costs for teams: From "free" to € 4.20 (Microsoft 365 Business Basic) to 19.70 per month (Office 365 E3) and per user. In the free version there is no high availability of 99.9%, no administrator tools to manage users and applications, no usage reports for Office 365 services and no configurable user settings and

Teams has also been offering breakout rooms since December 2020. As of January 2021, some participants keep dropping out of the rooms. You usually have to dial into teams from scratch. It affects about 5% of the participants.

	guidelines.	
1st GDPR-compliant tools BigBlueButton® {GDPR-compliant tool with functioning breakout rooms} Alternative for ex. Jitsi Meet (must be properly hosted) Video: BigBlueButton: Einstieg und Fallen	The open source software from Ontario, Canada has made it worldwide: Many organizations rely on the combination of "self-selected hosters" plus BigBlueButton. No wonder, the system offers a lot of security due to the open source (you can examine the program code) plus the flexibility to look for a new hoster if I am dissatisfied with my current one. The system is browser-based - there is no software for the participants. This has the advantage that we trainers do not have to argue with the client about whether the participants are allowed to install software. At the same time, there is the disadvantage (with all HTML-based systems) that the absence of software makes the user experience a bit more bumpy for the participants. In particular, the initial selection / setting of the microphone and headphones causes problems for the participants. A web browser is simply not a multimedia all-rounder. BigBlueButton is one of the few systems that is offered in compliance with GDPR (e.g. from BBB Server, vimotion.de or Rackspeed) and also has breakout rooms, an easy-to-use whiteboard, a very nice presentation area for my slides (built into the tool itself) offers. Integration in Ilias or other LMS is also easily possible. The system is currently my first choice for fully GDPR-compliant live training. The breakouts work reliably, and the picture and audio quality is good. The options that participants have are also sensible, relatively easily accessible and ergonomically arranged.	Unfortunately, participants have to select their audio equipment again when entering a breakout room. This can be really annoying and simply overwhelming experienced participants. Cost: You can connect 100 participants for up to 40 minutes free of charge. Without time restrictions, € 13.99 net per month is due. From 19 € per month you can include 300 participants. Everything after that becomes expensive very quickly.
2nd: GDPR-compliant tools Edudip next® {GDPR-compliant tool with a	Only because of the server bottlenecks (which could have been resolved in the meantime) I canceled my edudip next account in 2020. This system also relies on browser usage and thus avoids the annoying topic of "software installation".	In contrast to BigBlueButton, edudip next is not an open source software, but a software as a service

cool look & very good ergonomics for participants}	What do I still like about edudip next? It now offers meeting rooms (something like breakout rooms), the ergonomics are good (minimalist) and the dark design is really very chic. As with BigBlueButton, I can easily upload my presentation as a PDF and then display it on a presentation area within the browser. And as with BigBlueButton I can z. For example, simply insert a YouTube video into the live meeting using a link and play or stop it. As a trainer, you understood edudip next extremely quickly. Unfortunately, just like with BigBlueButton, dialing in is a bit more difficult for some participants because everything has to be done via the browser. Unfortunately, many participants are afraid of granting the appropriate permissions when their browser asks them.	service. You get hosting, support, billing and the function yourself. So I don't have to look for hosters. However, if I am dissatisfied with the hosting, I cannot switch to another hoster.
1st Innovative video conference platform Wonder.me® {Spatial experience, simplicity} See the illustration on the next page.	Wonder.me (Fig. Next page) combines a spatial impression with video conference rooms. After you have logged in via the browser you will be represented by your own face / avatar on a surface. If you approach another person, you automatically enter a two-person video conference room and can exchange ideas. If another person joins, it becomes a three-way conference. Any number of people can now join my automatically opened room. I can then leave this again and visit another group of participants. Since I can see the names of the participants in the area outside the video conference rooms, I can use spatial proximity to control who I want to speak to. Almost a bit like in real life. Meetups, bar camps or world café formats are easy to implement. Warning: It is still beta software. So far, the tool was easy to use free of charge and the availability was very good. I currently do not rate the tool as fully GDPR-compliant, but at least the company provides information on the data processing contract, makes both its own data protection guideline and the data processing contracts for the partners Twilio, DigitalOcean, AWS (Amazon) and Agora available online.	Since it is a German startup, GDPR-compliant use is generally conceivable. However, the service is currently running on the cloud of the American company Amazon - very reliably.

Abbildung mit freundlicher Genehmigung von wonder.me
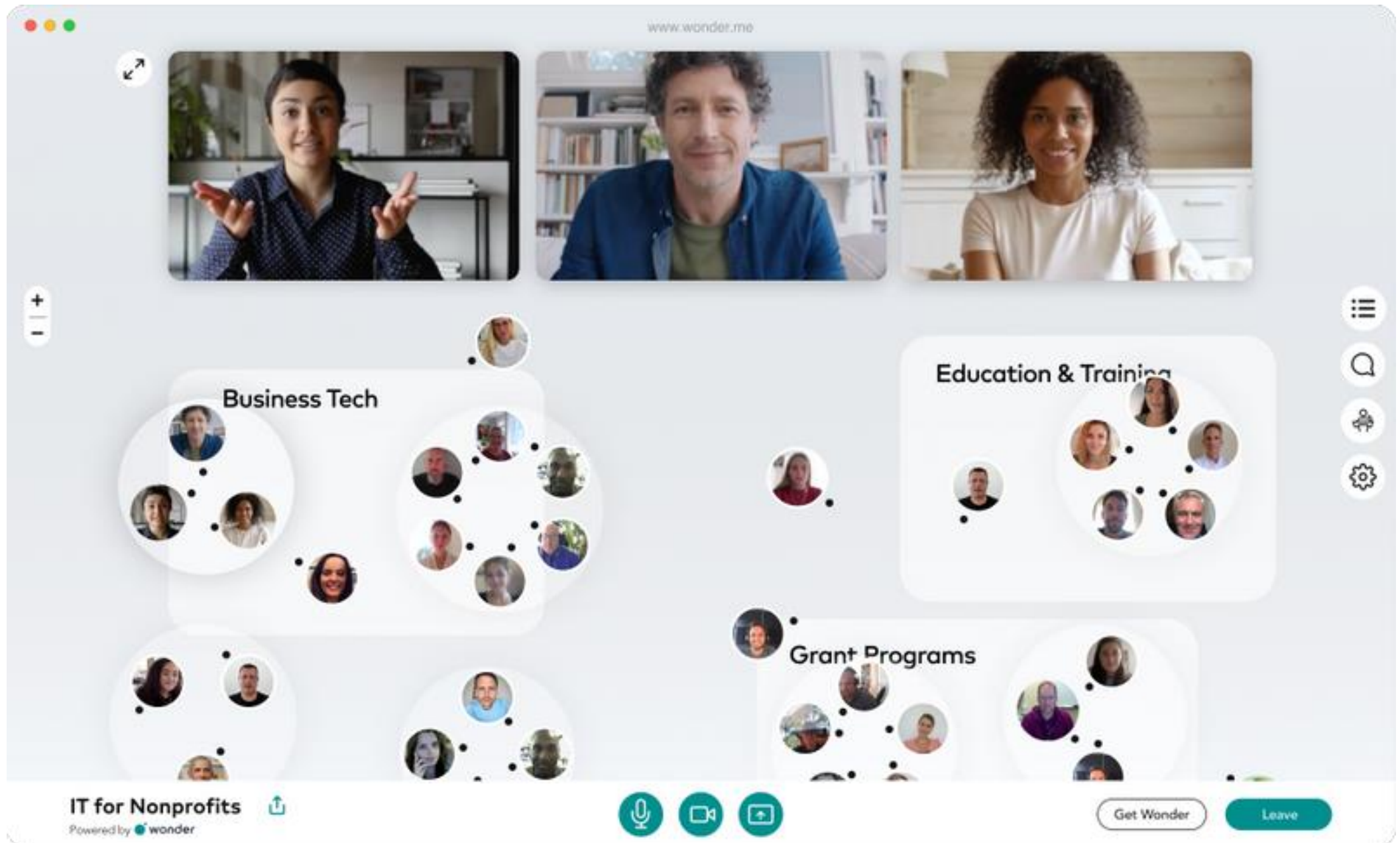
Get certified

as an Online Trainer

https://ist.training/en

See here [who's certified](#)

What will be your next step to facilitate digital workshops or trainings like a Rockstar?

Perhaps you are familiar with me through this book, or have seen me on YouTube. It is possible that we have talked on the phone or that you have heard me on a podcast.

Today, I bring you new information: Our Business Trainer Training Online will begin again soon. (You can find a PDF with pricing information, all dates, and more details here).

If you have any questions, you can always reach me at +49 176 310 10 652 or via e-mail: mj@ist.training

Consider this as a guide for your decision making: Our training program is the right fit for you if …

- You wish to have control over group dynamics online and be skilled in handling challenging situations.
- You aspire to create excitement in your hybrid or live trainings without being excessive, and without having to start from scratch.
- You have been considering a career as a business trainer for some time, or if you are looking to obtain an official certification from a reputable trainer association.
- Networking with peers and ample hands-on experience are important to you
- You may be starting a new chapter in your professional life and want to establish a solid foundation for your future career.

Many participants also choose to train with us because they prefer to work remotely, without the need for unnecessary travel (as I have been doing for years from Madeira).

In my opinion, prospective trainers often do not have sufficient critical thinking when searching for a business trainer education. That is why I have provided you with our recently updated checklist: "What to Look Out for in a Business Trainer Certification." This list is based on my personal experience and the market research we conduct annually.

Do you know of anyone in your network or profession who may be interested in becoming a trainer? If yes, please share this information:

Best regards,

Marc Jost

PS: Our five core appointments always take place from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.: (You can find the current dates on ist.training/en)

Contact and imprint

Corporate Training Academy LLC

Marius Jost M.Sc.

810 Summerset Dr. • City of Hockessin • Delaware, 19707 • USA

Lokale Telefonnummer in Deutschland: +49 176 310 10 652

Telefonnummer in Portugal: +351 29 16 56 85-3

You find us here in YouTube

Appendix

Transcript: THE AEC Model

We have prepared a handout for you. Please make sure to download it after this live-event. It is free of charge!

Before we start with the AEC Model: I have a symbol here for you. Please ask yourself for a second, what could this symbol have to do with the AEC model that we will look at in a few moments? I will reveal the answer to this later.

I have a question for the audience now:

If you've ever experienced a boring online training, why was it boring? However, please don't submit your answer yet. I'll count down to zero first. Please take notes in the zoom chat entry field, but you will be sending these notes off a little later!

You will have 30 seconds from now on: Why was that boring?

Thanks, then I'm going to count down to zero:

"3, 2, 1, …zero: Please, send your answer into the chat right now.

Wow, I'm grateful about so many people really being interested in this challenging topic. Now, that's what you all contributed to the chat:

- "Online facilitator kept monologuing"
- It was more long-winded presentation
- Too much talking, no interaction
- boring slides that looked like walls of text
- monotony, no structure!
- This is good: "Lack of information on about what is to come…"

I started with facilitating online trainings years ago, I made quite a few of these mistakes. …And it seems **things haven t changed** much since then, because participants are still complaining about the same problems with online workshops and live trainings: monotony, and almost no interaction – all this makes it hard for our clients to take anything valuable away for themselves.

I have learned almost everything that I will say in this webinar from the numerous mistakes I had made myself along the way.

When COVID finally hit the world, many people probably felt the same way as I did **when I first started holding online trainings**. I know form our clients that they felt like being thrown in at the deep end: **They had to deal with the challenge of online facilitation, before they had the knowledge or experience for it**.

It is really not your fault if some of what we learn today feels strange: In school, in university, even in your job, no one prepared you for facilitating online workshops or virtual trainings.

What can help you to get a group up to speed or the simply teach online is the AEC Model:

The AEC model wants you to do two things: To split your input for the Group into several small parts and it shows you how to make your ideas stick with your audience.

First phase: start with seeding or priming your topic. This means that you will make a hint concerning the upcoming content. For example, you can make you participants **curious about what is to come**. You can use a prop as a symbol and make a statement: This will help you remember what we will talk about now. Alternatively, you can present a surprising statistic or fact about the upcoming topic. Something counterintuitive. Wake people

up, build some tension, but don t spoil it: Explain two steps later why this fact is surprising everybody, and why it is actually not surprising if you know the whole story. Or reveal what your prop stands for.

Your next step is to set an anchor. This anchor is about getting participants involved, that is: Make the aware of why your topic is so important to them. One of the best ways to archive this is to bluntly ask your participants about their challenges connected with your topicyou're your group consists of dentists, and the topic is business development, ask them how they will find their privately insured patients the coming month. If you have a workshop with salespeople, ask how they handle clients' doubts in the final phase of the sale. If you train solopreneurs and your topic is "predictable cash flow", ask them how the had to live in month where their revenue was zero.

Next comes an optional step. Here, you simply excuse your audience for not knowing it all yet.

For example, you could tell the solopreneurs why it is not their fault that cash flow is so volatile. In leadership seminars, you might mention that nobody has had to manage as much change projects as our generation. (if your topic is "managing change")

Why this step? Well, experts like us sometimes totally forget that we do so much experience than your participants in workshops or trainings. If we just "teach" and "preach", some people in the audience will probably feel inferior. That s why it can make a lot of sense to make one short sentence of excuse.

However, please handle this with care. Over the years, I have found that this step is especially meaningful in sales.

Among colleagues, it can sometimes seem a little artificial. Judge yourself if a short excuse statement really would fit into your context.

The last step in this model consists of what you offer. That s not a sales offer. No, this last step is about your content, your input, or your solution to their problem.

Now, imagine, most facilitators, including myself, years ago, just think about the last step when the plan an online workshop or training. The just think about how can I deliver my solution, my input, or "he content" to the group.

When I had started years ago, I hadn't thought about these other steps as well. I had just organized and presented content, and tried to make it somewhat interactive. But the truth is people were just not ready to receive any information.

Here is something most facilitators miss out on: this model is not your training. This model only works if you split your input into small parts. A 60 Minute online training should not become one AEC model. Rather, you could go through the AEC steps three times. This forces you to think about how to make your content blocks smaller, shorter & simpler.

There you have it: This is what we call the AEC model: anchor, excuse, content.

This is not prescription, however. It s not the holy grail of teaching online. You **are** welcome to **adapt** and **change** this model for yourself.

The seed step is really optional. It can be very helpful and bring in healthy tension, but don't forget: Close the loop at the end of passing through one AEC loop! For example, reveal what your symbol means right after your content step, but NOT at the very end of the seminar day.

Now I will give you a practical example.

The king: This was my **seeding to create some** curiosity. {In the handout there are other ways to create curiosity.}

After this initial phase, we got to the anchor step: I had asked you: "Why was this online training or workshop boring?"

...and you had a lot to say there!

You 've mentioned aspects like: "Monologue, no interactivity".

Obviously, the answers you gave provoke an inner dialogue: What if I would come across that way? Maybe I don t hold monologues, but how interactive was my last online training really?

I could have been more direct and could have asked you, after you posted your answers in the chat: "How sure are you that your digital workshops are the opposite of boring?" Or "how sure are you that you are really avoiding all these mistakes?"

That's when people start realizing how essential it is to listen to what is to come next.

However, this will only happen if you have the guts to "put your finger in the wound" and ask people about their challenges. Dare to ask what they are insecure about, when it comes to your workshop topic. this is of "double importance", because it is so much easier to lose participant's attention when you are working online.

An example for the next step, the excuse, is our cute scared groundhog here.

Next: My input was the model itself.

That s four pictures that have a chance to stick with you. Working with images, with pictures or symbols will tremendously help you holding your online seminars and workshops.

Now, lets uncover the mystery: Please write into our chat what the king could stand for. A hint for you: Just think of the different parties involved in a corporate online training or in an online workshop. Let s take 30 seconds for this.

Reading through the chat, many of you said: the client is king! The participant is the king…. Ah, that s interesting…. here Julia wrote "the person who ordered the online workshop must be happy with it, they are the king in the game…"

Well, that is exactly the problem for 90 percent of online facilitators out there. We want to please the participants, right? If I have this mindset, then

"The client is the king here…"   After all, most facilitators will be graded at the end of the online training.

That s why we as online facilitators start to put our participants on a pedestal. As a result, we tend to look up to them, and who dares to ask a king about his challenges.

who here dares to ask a group of kings about what keeps them awake at night, only to offer them a solution for the challenge later?

Please, go and throw away that attitude! If you see yourself on the short end of the lever, if you fear your audience too much, you won t dare to ask the group about their challenge.

You don t even have to put this as a question. A simple discussion will do as well, and there are many more good methods for this.

That's it for the AEC model.

We will answer all your questions Now, after that I d like to talk about field tested methods to interact with your participants.