



ZELUS

Beyond Process. Performance. Results.



PART OF THE NEW NORMAL
A VIRTUAL LEARNING SERIES
PART 1 OF 3

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PART OF THE NEW NORMAL

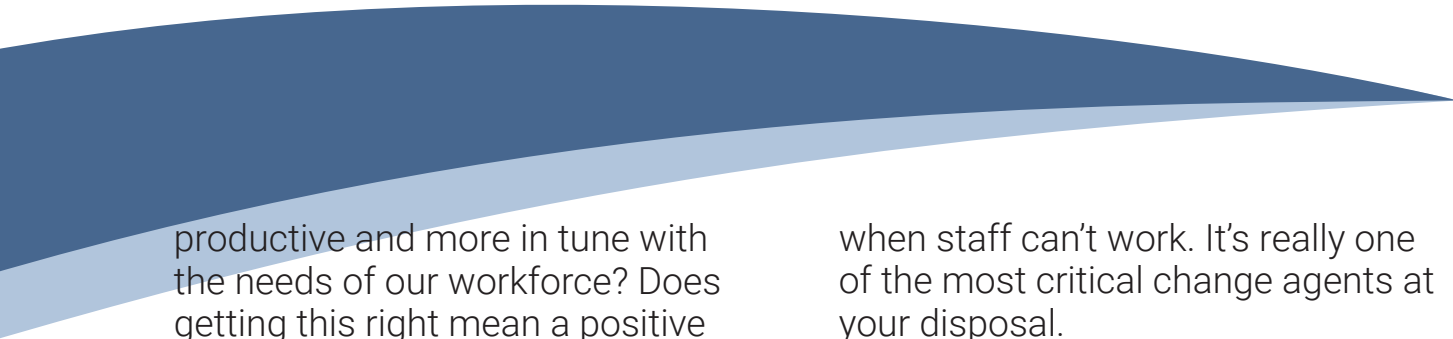
At Zelus, we've been working remotely for 16 years. Theoretically, we were as well positioned as anybody for a stay-at-home order.



But this has been DIFFERENT. In my family, we sometimes use the word DIFFERENT to be code for weird and bad. I think that's where we are now. We all find ourselves part of a grand experiment. The thing is that experiments are normally carefully planned and thought out. As you know, there was no time for that. Instead, we woke up one day and had a mission to reinvent the way we do everything. As states struggle with how to reopen and stay open, plans are appropriately cautious. It will be a very long time to get back to normal. Instead, we seem to be angling toward a new normal probably into late 2021.

So, what does that mean for the workplace? Well, it means that considering these past few months

as a temporary delay is off the table. This grand experiment is here to stay. We are moving out of the 'just survive this' phase and into the 'we have to figure out how to make this work' phase. The world soon tires of standing in place and halted progress. We already are. We need to radically rethink the way we work and the work we do. Let's face it, businesses who don't do this will struggle for years, and possibly not survive at all. There are people all over the world who will never return to the office. There are CFOs and CHCOs thinking about this reality and saying that maybe a change in how we work isn't all bad. Maybe it's even good. Is this a more cost-effective way to work? Does this help us reduce real estate costs and space constraints? Does it make people happier? Can we be just as



productive and more in tune with the needs of our workforce? Does getting this right mean a positive culture shift? The answer to every one of these questions is: it depends. It depends on what your leadership team does right now to drive to these answers.

So how do you move forward? As a business leader you want to return to the outcomes you've been working toward all year (and maybe even longer-range goals than that). We are all exhausted by the 'making things work' phase we are in right now. It's reactive, and it requires a lot of brute force. A return to a focus on outcomes is just the opportunity we need to take a breath and think about more elegant and sustainable long-term solutions. With a focus on outcomes, comes a requirement to think about training not as an obligation you don't have time to think about, but rather as a critical tool in moving the organization forward. Learning, when viewed as a tool, is the answer to how you support your staff through rapid changes. It's the answer to how you will backfill roles

when staff can't work. It's really one of the most critical change agents at your disposal.

Enter virtual learning. It's not new. Everyone has a war story about a compliance web-based training or a corporate 'check the box' requirement. But fewer have stories about good, skill building oriented virtual learning. The time is now to change that. The truth is that in person training stopped being the only answer years ago. In the most progressive learning-centric organizations, in-person training has been openly questioned for years. This new reality is really just accelerating a shift that's been coming for a long while. It's OKAY to believe that not every training is more effective in person. Tactically, the realities of continued social distancing requirements and the trajectory of this virus, make it difficult to envision a cramped training room full of contact center agents learning how to support customers. It's not viable for many reasons. We need to shed our notions of what learning looks like and say what should learning look like in a virtual world?

EFFECTIVE VIRTUAL LEARNING

So, how does an effective Virtual Class differ from an effective In-Person Class?

Let me start by answering what makes an effective class, period. Its 4 things:

1. ENGAGE THE LEARNER.

Humans can only learn if they are interested and motivated to learn.



2. INFORM

The content needs to cover what learners need to know to effectively do the job.



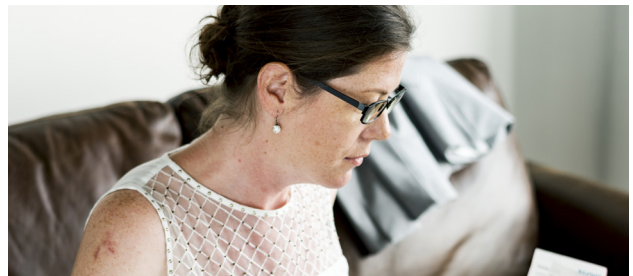
3. PRACTICE

Humans learn by doing. We need plenty of practice.



4. EVALUATE

We need to be able to assess whether each learner has learned what they need to; and if they can do the job.



Just as your business strategy and technology is adapting fast to the changing environment, so to should your training approach. Training still needs to be effective; how to make training effective is very different in the virtual world. The question for every business to answer is where are you trying to go, and how does learning propel you there? Every state is developing their own re-opening phases and stages, and each business will need to do the same. We're here to offer our own guide to how learning will change as a result of this pandemic.

PHASES OF ADJUSTMENT

Here are the 3 phases we see. And we have seen customers in multiple phases based on initiative and priority; and bounce back and forward between Phase 1 and Phase 2 with the waves of COVID-19.



SURVIVAL



RETURNING TO (NOT SO) REGULARLY SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING



EMBRACING THE NEW NORMAL

PHASE 1:

SURVIVAL

Many of us are through this phase. Maybe some are still limping to the end. Here we are talking about the immediate need that allows people to be some kind of productive at home. Do people have laptops, internet, VPN, and ways to communicate amongst the team? If you are a customer facing team, can customers reach you in a systemic way without needing to use personal cell phones and the like? Can managers schedule and deploy the workforce in real time? Is your staff adapting to a whole new layer of technology? There's quite a lot of virtual training out there, and the standard offerings, out of the box, work well in a pinch. Leaders should also be thinking about engagement and connectedness of staff in this phase. Traditional e-learning, web-based training, and a back to basics engaging leadership approach are the answer here. Shed your assumptions about what staff do and don't need based on past performance. Acknowledge that this is a new way to work and start from the beginning.

PHASE 2:

RETURNING TO (NOT SO) REGULARLY SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING

As we move out of survival and into new normal, we will need to figure out how to resume all the things we put on pause, but with a few more constraints built into every task and goal. Social distancing is here to stay, and it will impact how you serve customers, how you staff your offices, and how you fill, or don't fill, your training rooms. Scheduled refresher training and skill building need to get back on the agenda.

In this phase, we are not exactly going back to the world we know, but there are a lot of things we do know. We know a lot about our existing staff. We get to work with a well understood baseline and some basic tool familiarity. This is where the shift to virtual learning starts to take place, with conversion efforts to move previous classroom training out of the physical classroom. Some of these things are relatively quick to execute and re-frame if you have deep expertise in virtual learning. We shouldn't expect just anybody to be able to do this work, nor should we expect a classroom only instructional designer to excel in this kind of design work. While the goal of the virtual world is to produce outcomes that are comparable to the classroom environment, how you execute this is very different.

Take some time to understand your staff's learning skill set in the virtual context and your timeline to deliver. If your staff are not experienced with virtual learning design, invest in training them first. It will not go to waste. Virtual learning design translates much easier into the classroom than classroom design translates into the virtual world. You cannot buy this conversion work off the shelf. But you can rely on experts who can take your existing content and rapidly reinvent it.



PHASE 3:

EMBRACING THE NEW-NORMAL

You may not have the luxury of working through phase 2 on the way to this reality. If you are a contact center like many of our clients, you are here no matter what. If you are hiring new people or substantially changing job functions, you are here. So, what does this mean? It means you need to take on redesign efforts. Your world must shift to virtual learning, there is really no other choice to ensure business continuity and to minimize disruption until we get to return to 'actual normal'.

There are many questions to answer to get there; but key ones are:

- ▶ **HOW DO I DESIGN VIRTUAL LEARNING TO POSITIVELY IMPACT THE LEARNING?**
- ▶ **HOW DO YOU EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE WITH LEARNERS VIRTUALLY SO THE LEARNING STICKS?**
- ▶ **HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THAT EACH STUDENT IS LEARNING? AND CHANGE COURSE IF THEY ARE NOT LEARNING?**
- ▶ **HOW DOES HANDS-ON PRACTICE WORK?**

Answering these questions is the key to designing effective remote learning. And it is not easy. ***Redesign work will require deep virtual learning design experience and creativity focused on driving the desired impacts. It will also require businesses to re-think everything they think they know about learning. Set your new staff up for success with an appropriate investment in the design effort.***

But first, take a moment to relish in the opportunity this new-normal presents your organization; and your ability to prepare your staff more effectively. There are so many creative ways to ready your workforce. Up your game! Be creative, try new things. And watch your organization be re-energized to learn.

STAY TUNED FOR PART 2 OF THE VIRTUAL LEARNING SERIES: ASSESSING YOUR READINESS





CONNECT WITH THE PARTNERS

CAROL FAHY : CAROL.FAHY@ZELUSLLC.COM
JENNY GRAHAM : JENNY.GRAHAM@ZELUSLLC.COM

WEBSITE : ZELUSLLC.COM