

# Adapting face-to-face to fully online training courses

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In 2020, the physical distancing required due to the COVID-19 pandemics catalysed the shift of the well established face-to-face training courses into fully online events. This posed several challenges to professors and students.

Video conference platforms were swiftly available with remarkable benefits. Every student has the same view like if they were on the first row, commuting time was non-existent, the Q&A session became more active and the lectures can be recorded for the asynchronous mode. However, some challenges remain such as interaction among students, technical visits, assessments, motivation and focus.

This report presents a few observations and lessons learned aiming at the efficacy of fully online training courses.

Firstly, it is easier to motivate students when the topic is connected to a meaningful, higher purpose, personal or relatable matter. People have different styles to perceive meaning, and therefore to give attention to. Some would like to listen to whatever relates to one's values and beliefs, others would look for opportunities for professional networking, or work context knowledge like new techniques or strategic planning. Some prefer in-depth knowledge with expert opinion, while others would be inspired by wider and superficial scope, and get inspiration for further studies and creativity. Some would find the global experience more relevant, while others would stick to the specific region and industry. The online programmes should consider the different styles to perceive meanings and provide the content in a balanced way to attract the students' attention. It is also interesting to consider the opinion of the university students or in the early stages of their careers. They grew up in a technological world based on the Internet. Figure 1 shows the millennials' opinion on what business should try to achieve includes society improvement and environmental protection. It is possible to suggest that training courses should

be relatable to environmental, social and governance elements (ESG) to draw the millennials' attention and give a sense of a higher purpose of a given technology or scientific development.

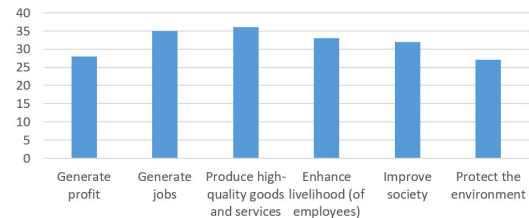


Figure 1. Percentage of millennials' opinions of what business should try to achieve. Source: The Deloitte Global Millennial Survey 2019.

Secondly, it is time for a change. Online training demands a lot from professors. In addition, this period of disruptions is an opportunity to review the syllabus to identify what will be useful for the students in synchronous mode, in a more valuable, dynamic and attractive way, and allowing for more individual coaching time. For students, it offers flexibility but requires more initiative and active learning. If the concentration is difficult, one needs to identify what triggers any symptoms of anxiety and to control the compulsion to dopamine generators, like overuse of social media. Self-awareness and recognition of issues are key to change and to focus on something productive. Replacement of technical visits with VR is a possibility and enhancing and simulating practices with eye-tracking and AR tools might come soon [1,2].

In conclusion, more research on this new education and training era is required. A student-centred environment, competence building for a new set of jobs, and advanced technological tools will drive the evolution in E&T.

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