The World is Your Classroom

How a virtual corporate university can enhance
your global training programs

Abstract

This white paper discusses the impact of the virtual corporate university on global companies' training results. Employees, partners, and clients need to be retrained continually, to perform wider-ranging job functions, stay current with new technologies and methods, and receive important product information. Virtual corporate universities enable organizations to:

- Immediately expand training programs to reach global workforces

- Provide an engaging learning experience while reducing training costs

- Integrate subject matter experts into training programs to facilitate the transfer of institutional knowledge

- Deliver interactive training sessions via webcasts, collaboration tools, and social networking

A number of case studies are included to illustrate how global companies are using the ON24 Virtual Environment as a virtual corporate university platform, enabling them to train their worldwide employees, customers, and partners more effectively and at lower cost.

The Importance of Corporate Training

In our increasingly global marketplace, ongoing corporate training is critically important. Companies that succeed will be the ones that make the most effective use of available resources, and the best way to do this is to have well-educated employees, partners, suppliers, and customers. Organizations must train these audiences continually – including the rapidly growing numbers of remote workers – to ensure that they have the most current knowledge, skills, and information.

Why is continuing education so important?

1. Retiring baby boomers are taking their skills and education with them out the door. Transferring institutional knowledge between generations is a critical requirement in today's organizations.

2. Relevant knowledge is changing at a much faster rate. Key specialists need to be retrained as often as every 1-2 years.

3. Organizations need people who are cross-trained in more than one job and are able to perform a much wider variety of tasks.

4. Application updates and new technology platforms require continual employee retraining.

5. Workforce demographics are changing, with many more immigrants entering the workforce than ever before. Such workers may need additional training, including language skills training.

ON24 Virtual Corporate University for New Hire On-Boarding

Organizations are under increasing pressure to shorten sales cycles, reduce costs, and improve productivity. Corporate HR and training departments are looking for new approaches to corporate training, especially cost-effective options that have global reach, offer social learning, and include collaboration tools.

The Virtual Corporate University

The rise of the "virtual corporate university" reflects the need for companies to deliver engaging training, collect timely feedback, and ensure that learners can access the training materials anytime, anywhere. Companies must also provide varied levels and types of training programs (for example, centralized, functional, and geography specific). And given shrinking budgets, the new training programs must be more cost effective than traditional learning methods.

The virtual corporate university satisfies these requirements. By combining virtual online classrooms, live webcasts, social networking tools, and other Web-based collaboration tools, it creates a highly adaptable and engaging learning experience for wide-ranging learning programs and employee needs. Moreover, it does so while allowing employees, partners, and clients to access training courses anytime and from any location. This is an enormous advantage given the need to train busy employees who are often spread out across global locations.

Businesses are using virtual corporate universities for a variety of training and communication needs:

- New Hire On-boarding – Companies are using virtual corporate universities to conduct new-employee orientation and training. Virtual universities provide an engaging, effective and consistent on-boarding experience for new hires, as well as offer the opportunity to expand the orientation process globally.

- Leadership / Management Development – Virtual corporate universities have become increasingly popular for leadership training and management development courses. Flexible online training is much easier to fit into managers' busy schedules – resulting in higher participation than for traditional classroom training.

- Continuing Professional Education – Professional training on new techniques, rules and procedures is much more convenient when employees can access training on their own schedules and without the need to travel to distant training seminars.

- Client Training – Virtual corporate universities are ideal for training clients on the use of new products and applications. The convenience and flexibility offered by virtual universities dramatically increases client participation in training programs. They also enable clients to regularly discuss common issues and share best practices.

- Sales Training – Companies are using virtual corporate universities to train their sales teams on new products, services, and promotions, in addition to basic and advanced selling skills. Virtual universities also allow direct access to subject matter experts for technical Q&A and discussion of specific topics.

- Partner Training – Firms use virtual corporate universities to educate partners on new technologies and partner programs. The virtual university's social networking tools allow partners to jointly discuss challenges and companies to quickly obtain feedback on product priorities.

Benefits of Virtual Corporate Universities

One of the most compelling arguments for using virtual corporate universities is that organizations can reduce their training costs by up to 70 percent. Virtual universities can also deliver engaging training programs to a global workforce, including company-wide, geography-specific, and job-specific training.

Virtual corporate universities provide employees with a choice of learning methods, enabling them to learn in the ways that work best for them. Employees can access course material 24/7, including listening to lectures and engaging in chat-room-style discussions. Moreover, subject matter experts from anywhere in the world can participate as online facilitators, further enhancing the real-world applicability of lessons and quality of learning experiences.

Online courses allow for wide-ranging content, and employees can access course documents from their PCs or tablet devices, including research articles and live webcasts. And all of the training metrics—including attendee activities—are tracked, enabling the assessment of learner participation and completion rates.

ON24 Webcam Scheduled Chat

Differences with Learning Management Systems

Virtual corporate universities and Learning Management Systems (LMS) are complementary training platforms, each with their own unique benefits.

- LMS systems enable companies to create individualized training schedules, track each employee's progress, and serve as the delivery platform for e-learning courses.

- Virtual corporate universities offer more collaborative learning by combining online instructor-led training with social networking, expert-led discussions, scheduled chats, blogs, and more.

- Virtual corporate universities facilitate the development of social training programs that are interactive, collaborative and engaging. With virtual universities, training participation and course completion rates are higher than those for traditional formal training programs.

- LMS systems primarily focus on employee training. Virtual corporate universities allow interactive training to be delivered to employees, clients, and partners.

- Virtual corporate universities also support mobile learning, allowing instructors, employees, clients and partners to access training materials via phone and tablet devices.

Virtual corporate universities and LMS systems are frequently integrated. In many cases, the virtual corporate university is designed to only be accessible from learning management systems. In other integrations, the virtual university is the primary training environment, and it links to e-learning courses residing in the LMS.

Why ON24?

ON24 is a leader in virtual online learning technologies. The ON24 Virtual Environment solution is being used by leading global companies to provide engaging training programs using virtual classrooms, live webcasts, collaboration tools, and social networking tools. Key competitive features of the ON24's virtual university solution include:

- Industry-leading webcasting platform that combines instructor-led training with attendee collaboration and social networking

- Comprehensive social learning tools for group discussion, networking, employee feedback, and peer-to-peer collaboration

- Enterprise-class platform designed to be extremely secure, reliable, and scalable (including role-based access and SAML authentication)
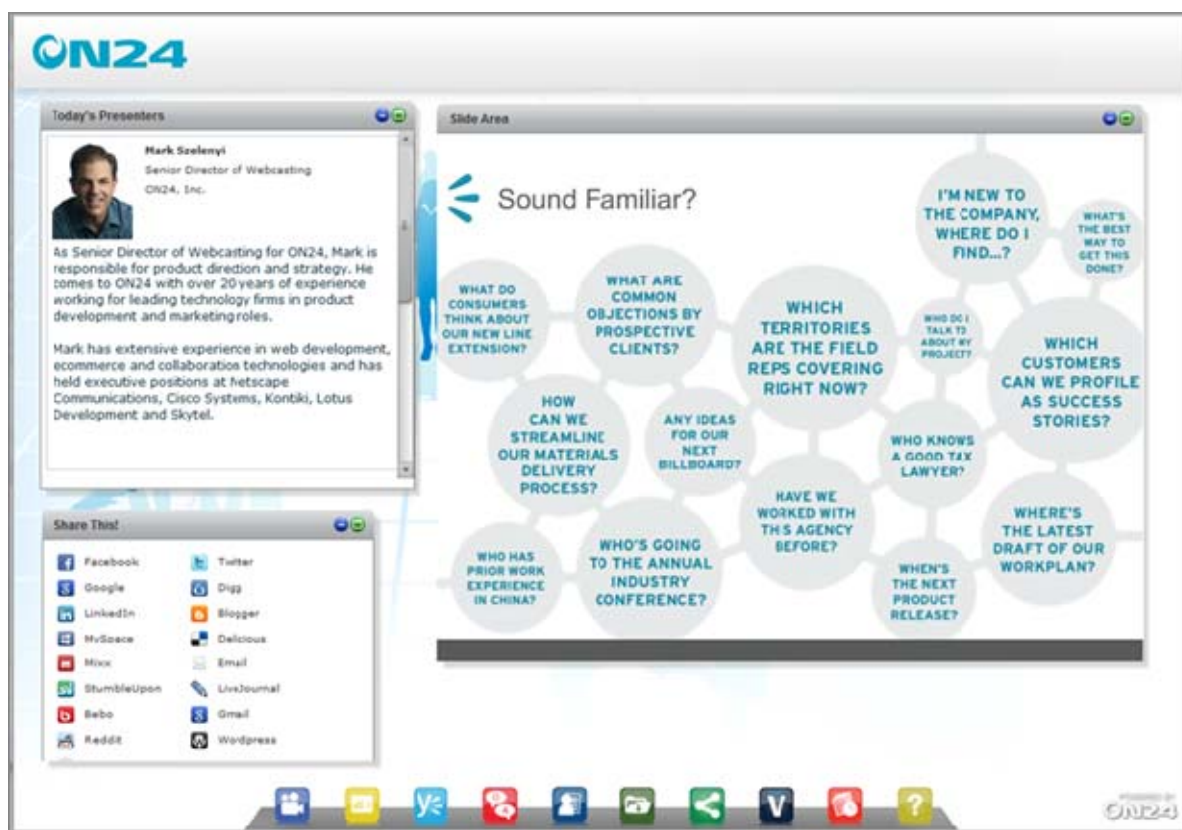
ON24 Platform 10 Webcasting

- Completely multilingual environment, including the ability to "toggle" between 15 languages in real-time

- "Out of the box" support for mobile learning (tablets and phones) for both instructors and participants

- Real-time measurement of training participation

ON24's Platform Includes Comprehensive Multilingual Features

Real-World Experience, Real Benefits

The ON24 Virtual Environment has enabled leading firms to provide engaging and interactive online training to their global audiences of employees, customers, and partners. The following case studies highlight some of the ways companies are leveraging an ON24 virtual corporate university to provide tangible benefits by:

- Providing a global learning experience while reducing overall training costs

- Delivering an effective and consistent on-boarding experience for new hires

- Increasing employee training participation and completion rates

- Boosting social learning via expert-led discussions and Q&A sessions

- Accelerating the transfer of institutional knowledge between employees

Food Services and Facilities Management

Sodexo, an international food services and facilities management company, uses the ON24 Virtual Environment platform to provide ongoing training to a geographically-distributed workforce of seasonal employees. This perpetual virtual corporate university includes formal training days (via live webcasts twice per year) as well as informal training via chat discussions and social networking. Sodexo has achieved meaningful ROI from both cost savings and increased manager involvement in its training process. The company regularly provides leadership training to more than 4,000 managers, which comprises 90 percent of its management team. Sodexo has delivered over 59,000 hours of manager training, and estimates a cost savings of approximately $1.4 million per year.

Sodexo's Management Training Environment

Professional Services

A major professional services firm has used the ON24 Virtual Environment platform to create a private virtual university for the education and discussion of mobility and incentive taxes. The community helps members stay up-to-date and communicate in real-time with other tax and HR professionals on the latest trends and issues. Members have spent more than 3 ½ hours, on average, listening to educational forums and engaging in discussions with their peers. The ON24 Virtual Environment allows the professional services company to demonstrate its wide-ranging expertise, leading to new business opportunities for its global employer-services division.

Technology Manufacturing

A leading global technology manufacturer uses the ON24 Virtual Environment platform for training its employees on a variety of collaboration tools. The company offers weekly live and on-demand "virtual-brown-bag" webcasts within the virtual university. The ON24 solution allows the company to deliver productivity training cost-effectively to its employees worldwide.

Hotel Management

A major hotel chain is using the ON24 Virtual Environment platform to launch a global initiative designed to improve key employees' understanding of management fundamentals and leadership principles. Using the virtual university, instructor-led training (via live webcasts and moderated discussions) was delivered to the company's geographically-distributed leadership team. Several thousand hotel managers and company leaders were trained, at a cost that was 69 percent lower than the industry-average.

The Difference Between Success and Failure

In the global marketplace, well-educated employees, partners, suppliers, and customers will be a primary success factor. Companies across industries are using virtual corporate university solutions such as the ON24 Virtual Environment to achieve this goal. These organizations are providing highly effective learning experiences to their global workforces at much lower cost compared to traditional learning methods.

For more information on the benefits of the ON24 Virtual Environment, please visit www.on24.com.