The annual listing of 10 companies that are at the forefront of providing Distance and Remote Learning solutions and impacting the industry.
vitero GmbH

A Realistic Touch to Virtual Learning

The year began on a hectic note for the training academy of one of vitero’s clients. The training was in full swing and as per schedule, with the first module completed for companies in the financial sector. Then it happened. The COVID-19 pandemic was gradually throwing life out of gear across the world, and Germany announced lockdown in a bid to contain its impact. The academy had to push the pause button in the middle of their training schedule as face-to-face training was suddenly brought to a grinding halt. Overnight, the training schedule was derailed, and the only option was to transition to virtual training. Even as the market was replete with various options, the academy was bent on a virtual learning platform that would deliver learning as effective as in a classroom setting. And only vitero could tick the box on all their vital requisites. The transition to vitero was not only quick and straightforward but the switchover saved the academy from losing three million Euros as they could now seamlessly continue with the high-quality training.

What tilted the scales in favour of vitero?

For many reasons—the core among them, as a spin-off of Fraunhofer IAO, vitero has strived to model virtual communication along the lines of the situation in the real world. Right from the drawing board, the focus has been to design a solution to conduct effective virtual meetings and learning sessions ergonomically and humanly in an inspiring and most conducive atmosphere. To bridge the gap between the virtual and real-world scenarios, an interdisciplinary team consisting of usability experts, cognitive psychologists, designers and IT specialists at Fraunhofer IAO created prototypes of different virtual communication scenarios. The objective was to ascertain the most effective design that would constructively support the various roles such as the trainer, learner and moderator.

Based on in-depth research, vitero inspire mimicking the real-world scenario is set up as a table with chairs, where the virtual table in the middle serves as the presentation screen. Among a slew of innovative functionalities such as fast, reliable screen sharing or desktop sharing, vitero inspire boasts of a very intuitive user interface with all the rules and connections built-in to mirror the same experience and efficacy of a traditional classroom setting. “The interface is designed not to burden the user with extraneous cognitive load or in simple terms does away with the needless effort of thinking where to find a button. Learners can concentrate on the learning aspects alone,” says Dr Fabian Kempf, Managing Director of vitero.

The innovative solution also takes into consideration the higher distraction levels associated with virtual learning. It is designed to capture the attention of the learner and drive enhanced learner engagement by facilitating highly interactive and collaborative learning. More importantly, vitero provides the functionality of virtual side rooms whereby teams can be divided into
subgroups, with the mere push of a button, to discuss specific topics. Even as vitero comes integrated with VoIP, participation by telephone is also possible. Further, card queries can be carried out in an anonymous, personalised, open, or covered way depending on how the instructor wants to conduct it. “This brings in a huge amount of flexibility to make a vivid training,” remarks Dr Kempf.

Real-World Learning Experiences

It comes as no surprise that vitero is the solution of choice for a multitude of businesses across sectors in the areas of e-collaboration, live e-learning, language learning as well as in web conferencing, e-health, and more. Dr Kempf touches upon a bevvy of customer success stories. The automotive giant Volkswagen utilises vitero to train their numerous resellers, dealers and service personnel spread across locations, on their various car models both pre and post-launch. With one-on-one training not a feasible approach at all times, given its associated high cost and time delays, vitero fit the requirement perfectly for the Volkswagen Group to impart training quickly and cost-effectively. The distance factor fades into oblivion as the Volkswagen Group can conduct all training programmes easily and also provide more effective types of learning, such as just-in-time learning. On an equal note, with vitero, the learning process is easy even for personnel who are not well acquainted with computers or proficient in keyboard usage.

In yet another example, an automotive company, one among vitero’s long-standing customers, could go ahead with their plan of training the service personnel using the webcams in vitero even before launching the new model in the market.

Dr Kempf cites an interesting scenario that showcases vitero’s technological prowess. Companies in the airline sector find it difficult to conduct training in the traditional computer-based classroom method as the staff are always on the move. A leading airlines company is conducting virtual training with its staff accessing vitero through iPads. “We were one of the first companies to design a classroom and a web conferencing solution leveraging WebRTC and HTML5 technology, which the staff can use via the browser,” says Dr Kempf. “They can not only listen to the trainer, but also collaborate, interact, and utilise card-based moderation techniques among others.”

In line with the trend of mobile learning, the company’s new flexible solution, viteroinspire, works independent of the device, whether it is tablets, smartphones or convertibles and is compatible with Android and iOS.

Fostering Experiential Communication

With deep technology expertise in the area of web conferencing or synchronous live communication, the vitero team committed to creating environments that inspire learning, is taking the virtual game of learning a notch higher. It is common knowledge that what you hear and see will influence the atmosphere of communication. For example, the ambience of a traditional fireside can foster better conversations due to the more relaxed atmosphere, and this is what vitero aims to replicate. “We are enroute to making the fireside conditions possible through the graphical user interface, with the mere push of a button, to facilitate conversations that are better and easier,” states Dr Kempf. The company has filed a patent recently and plans to integrate this new idea in the next versions of the product. Building on the foundation of robust growth, the future looks rosy as vitero envisions to double its employee strength and fortify its presence further in Europe. ET