



Leaders in Learning Design

Episode #6: Affordable Virtual Workshops That Really Deliver

with Joanne Bentley and Graham Edmondson

Joanne Bentley: [00:00:00] Welcome folks to the leaders and learning design podcast by Blue Consulting and Resourcing the place to get up to the minute information for cutting-edge learning design. So it's just us today, Graham, but we've been thinking a lot at BCI about virtual learning over the past few weeks. Haven't we?

Graham Edmondson: [00:00:31] Yeah, well, we have Joanne and, and it's really it's like you said, a few weeks ago that the whole COVID thing, if anything, has propelled the world of L&D 10 years into the future we'd minimum warnings.

So it's all now about. Virtual learning that that's essentially what we're, we're thinking about, what we're doing with. And, you know, obviously what we're working with clients who themselves are transitioning to, to this virtual learning concept. And, and, and in fact, we're learning a lot as we go. I think along with our clients where we're testing a lot of thoughts and we're learning a lot as we go.

And, and obviously what we've been doing, you and I particularly have been, Creating developing and rolling out our own curriculum of, or pre-packaged, virtual learning solutions.

Joanne Bentley: [00:01:22] Graham, do you think people will know what we mean by pre-packaged solutions?

Graham Edmondson: [00:01:28] Well, that's a fair point because it could have some implications can there, but I think what we're trying to get across with that idea of pre-packaged is that they actually physically exist, that they are developed, ready to go.

We've actually got a curriculum of, it's almost 30 courses now, 30 different workshops. Isn't it. Different topics that we address and pre-package. Really means that they are just, they're good to go. They're good to go. And they do, obviously in delivery need to be customized and positioned for specific clients, but the core ideas and concepts of so generically applicable.

That's why we call them. Pre-packaged everything is there, but the slides, the activities, the participant materials that the facilitator guys, that the product is good to go, but it can be customized and close.

Joanne Bentley: [00:02:26] I love it. You know, when I think about it, we had great foresight. Didn't we to begin developing these virtual workshops.

Graham Edmondson: [00:02:34] I wish you could claim it was that visionary. I mean, as you know, and honestly, we were ahead of the game, we were ahead of the game, but we were actually originally trying to move in this virtual direction really as a way to try to save travel costs. I mean, we. I in my own case was obviously scheduled to come across to the US so frequently because we'd sold so many of these workshops in a traditional classroom setting and you yourself, where we're tracking along with other people up and down the country.

And so it was a goal was to try to minimize travel costs. So we were encouraging clients to think about virtual options. And lo and behold, it turns out we were very much ahead of the game. We'd certainly didn't predict the extent to which everything was going to move as quickly as it did to that virtual environment.

But yeah, we, we were in a good place enabled to, to literally, while we had hit the ground running before the crisis. Of course.

Joanne Bentley: [00:03:39] So there are several workshops that relate specifically to learning and development there. learning facilitation workshops, instructional design in virtual facilitation. and those are specifically within that L&D space.

But Graham, there's a host of other more, generically applicable titles. Aren't there. Tell me more about those topics.

Graham Edmondson: [00:04:02] There are now, I guess we could group them by saying that there's a, a bunch of courses that really talk about virtual working, you know, which I think is top of mind for everybody at the moment.

Of course. So we've got programs on, finding my place in a virtual team. Managing the virtual team connecting the virtual team. We've got some broadly generic leadership and management kind of skills, things that people will in any organization find useful and applicable were things like communication skills, written communication skills, verbal communication skills, problem solving decision-making influence skills, collaboration, coaching, providing feedback.

Some courses around the matrix structure and how you yourself managing a matrix situation or how as an individual, you can actually master the matrix and distinguish yourself in a matrix kind of structure. We've got people, styles, programs, we've got a program on. Internal business partnering, becoming a value added business partner.

We've got a program that looks at generational skills or the, the skill of managing across generations. And we think about the competencies that we're going to need for the future. so, so a whole bunch of the actual list that on the website, there's a comprehensive list for give my memory for possibly missing some, some ideas out there.

But on the website, there is a full list of what is now 29 programs that we've got ready to go. And that's there on the website already Joanne.

Joanne Bentley: [00:05:49] Excellent, please check sat on the website because there's a full catalog there with descriptions and objectives and outcomes that were we with your time digging into I think.

Why do you think these workshops are going to be helpful for people Graham?

Graham Edmondson: [00:06:05] Well, I think first and foremost, and we haven't really mentioned this yet, but, the fact is these workshops have four hours each. We hit the key messages. Get the point across in, in just four hours in all cases. And I think that's a massive advantage. It's a, a realistic time commitment for people. And I think it's also a realistic concentration expectation for people. And I think in this virtual learning world, we don't want to be spending if we don't have to spend any longer than that, we of course have a little bit of pre-work preparatory stuff to be done.

We've four hours of virtual workshop, and then we've got some follow through as you know, Joe. So I think that the brevity. It is a good thing. They're short they're realistically. Attendable I think they're also quite honestly, realistically priced. Now, we're not ashamed to say that we've gone to market. I think very, very competitively than if I, if I'm honest, I think.

People would struggle to find anything remotely like that at the price that we're at able to offer these programs. But we'll talk more about that when we get to the relevant time, but these are very, very affordable. And I think that the real thing that distinguishes them as well in the design is that we're really trying to make them very activity-based and very application focused.

A lot of time, people will be looking at the ideas we cover and then actually applying them, even in that short four hour window, we have opportunities to apply the ideas to the real kind of things that people are dealing with in their working life. So, so they're very relevant. They're very practical.

And, basically, you know, they're designed to deliver, change your behavior and the feedback we're getting. It is absolutely phenomenal. People are a liking that the style and the manner, which is really reassuring, but they're also, and I think I can quote this statistic, Joanne of every workshop that we've delivered and we're up to triple digits now, we have had 100% of people saying that they're taking away something of value on the workshop and that that's thing that that's taking away is going to be relevant to their job, improve their performance. And it's no, exaggeration. So that's been 100% of attendees have reported that, which I'm kind of proud of the first one who report something different will break my heart.

But in the meantime, I'm just so proud of that.

Joanne Bentley: [00:08:40] It really is a phenomenal statistic, especially in this, timeframe where so many people are reporting Zoom fatigue. These are workshops that the four hours just fly by folks. You really got to check them out.

So Graham, how can people get an understanding of what they are all about?

Graham Edmondson: [00:09:02] Well, there's a few ways. one thing is that we're planning to do some kind of, if you call them showcase examples during December, we will give people some selected people, the opportunity to. To sample the experience probably in a, maybe even a shorter timeframe, we'll give a little truncated version, but we'll give people a real sense of, of the style that the way that we get these messages across in these workshops.

We'll also try to send out some communications probably through our LinkedIn network and probably on an email basis as well, just to get some people and roles in, in a taster where they can actually experience what we do. And, and, and kind of gauge that for the relevance and applicability into their own kind of organization.

And in the new year, haven't really thrashed out the fine details yet. But I think what we'll definitely be doing is trying to organize some in-company demonstrations. If people feel there's a potential appetite, we're try to do our best to showcase within a particular company environment. Just how effective and useful these things would be and how positive we are that the feedback would be, be encouraging.

I mean, we're going to outline those funds on the website of the next few days or, or weeks certainly. And, we'll also. Be in the next few weeks, adding some additional titles, Joanne to the list that we have. So it becomes an even bigger catalog. And, and, and we're trying overall to make sure that when we take these things to market, as we are doing, we're going to make them as easy to buy as we can.

So we're looking at some interesting ideas around how realistically we might be able to. Present these kinds of things without any development cost to an organization, if they've got 50, 60 learners, I think we can figure out a way to take this to market whereby we would absorb the time and cost of creating the workshops.

But the more to follow on that when we get to a little bit clear about how we can make that work.

Joanne Bentley: [00:11:22] Wow. That's really exciting stuff. Graham, imagine listeners being able to come up with a new topic and we at BCR would be the development costs. If you can provide us 50 or 60 learners, that is a phenomenal offer.

More to come on that, we are excited to be able to offer you this catalog and hope to work with you in the near future. Listeners. If you want to learn more about the full catalog of workshops currently available, check it out at blueresourcingandconsulting.com or follow the link in the transcript of this podcast.

Folks, you've been listening to the leaders and learning design podcast by blue consulting and resources or weekly podcast for cutting edge design.