



"Discover the Secrets to Interactive Virtual Training Sessions" Transcript

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Melissa Chambers: Hello and welcome to “Discover the Secrets to Interactive Virtual Trainings.” In the session today, attendees will learn how to choose the right type of webinar room for your event, how to customize settings and features to accommodate planned interactions, document delivery plan in a shared location, communicate with team members using secret and private messaging, manage participant questions and technical issues, deliver consistent sessions using templates, and discover what presenters do that participants don’t see.

With us today presenting is Karen Hyder. Karen Hyder is an online event producer and speaker coach at Kaleidoscope Training and Consulting. She’s been teaching about technology since 1991 when she delivered instructor led software courses for logical operations. She was promoted to Director of Training Development, helping trainers improve skills and earn CTT+ and MCT certifications. In 1999 she created a course for trainers using virtual classrooms and helped launch the eLearning Guild forums in 2004, with – honored with the 2017 with Guild Master award. Currently, Karen provides coaching and production support for a series of online courses at Hearing First, a not-for-profit that educates training and spoken language professionals and parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Let’s please welcome Karen to the session. Karen I will bring up your first slide and the floor is yours.

Karen Hyder: Thanks so much Mel, it’s good to have you there as my producer. Normally it’s me playing the production role, but it’s handy to have a producer standing by and that was my fault that Mel hiccupped in the middle of my introduction because I was moving things around on her behind the scenes. Of course, here in this software platform there are some things on screen you’re seeing. Like the things that I have labeled on this PowerPoint slide. You’re seeing some pods, including a note pod in the top left portion of the screen. You see a chat pod where you can see Kenneth’s message there – Hello from Brandywine – Welcome Kenneth. And I also posted here a tech chat pod that I’d like you to use for the sole purpose of messaging with Mel and also our additional helpers from Adobe, we have Alma Patel and Alistair Lee on the session with us, helping out behind the scenes. So if you’re having any technical issues, go ahead and type to them in tech chat as opposed to the regular old chat that you’re seeing there on the left side and we can keep the separate conversation separate.

I’m going to make some changes to the screens as we go, and please notice that if you’re using your mobile version, you’ll have to make some changes on your own. So when there’s more than one chat pod displayed, please use the button that you see on the left side of your mobile app to bring up the other chat pod windows. So you’ll click on that little speech bubble and then toggle over or menu over to the other chat pods. So, it can get a

little busy when there's multiple things moving on the screen and I'm making the changes to the screen, you're not making those changes typically.

But hang onto your hats because we've got a lot to cover in just 55 minutes. I hope you're all hearing me OK. The note pod Anastasia is in the top left, it's labeled with the word "Recording" – so that's where there's just text displayed and it's different than a chat pod like the one you're seeing here on the screen. This chat pod actually looks like the newer version of the Adobe Connect application. You can see that chat is a little bit more fine-gauge and you can type your messaging in the bottom where it says "Type here" and then click send or press enter. And I see most of you have already introduced yourselves and are typing there in the chat pod.

Please notice in the top right corner of chat, you've got a pod options menu. That lets you do things like change the font size; if you've got middle-aged eyes like me, I usually make my font size about 13 pt. And then I can read the text more easily. Additionally, in that chat pod options menu, I have the ability to change my text color. So you can see that Susanne Plaumann from Berlin has changed her text color to pink, so her messages stand out a little bit better. And for me, it's a little easier to follow a thread of conversation, I see Denise Whiskin there, thanks for changing your text color.

Within that pod options menu, you also have the option to "Start a private chat with ..." So, if you click on pod options and choose start chat with, notice you can start a chat with a group or with an individual. So if you see a friend or a coworker, and you want to change notes, or exchange ideas, you can use that for that purpose. You can also use that to handle your technical troubleshooting.

If you're not in a position to use a tech chat pod like I have at the bottom, you would use, Pamela in this case, in GoTo, you're just using really the separate private chat function within the chat application itself. So you don't have a separate tech chat pod, but you do have the ability to private chat, whether you're using WebEx, GoTo, Zoom, or any of the other mainstream tools. So tech chat having a separate pod is unique to Adobe, but the ability to private chat is not.

So please, get used to using that feature set so that you can control what is displayed and what people are following in the conversation. Sorry, I didn't know about the color in those other tools. But definitely the private chat is available there. Gotcha. Pamela, I'm not sure in those. Here in this software application, we have a specific set of status tools. So we can set our status to agree or disagree or stepped away.

And you do typically see features like this in every one of the other applications that you might be using. Zoom uses thumbs up and thumbs down, sometimes applause. You'll see green check mark and red x. Sometimes there's a smiley face.

If you're using the software today on your mobile app, you might notice that you have to dig a little deeper. You have to click on the raise hand button before you can see agree or disagree. So the interface will look a little bit different depending on how users are using it.

And these are the typical introductory slides that I go to before I introduce myself in a live session. And Mel gave a good background on what I've been doing these long 20 years, but suffice it to say I've been in virtual classrooms for 20 years. So I'm familiar with the technical issues and the learner issues that come up in these live sessions.

But I want to point out to you that there are some very specific secrets. Some things that I do that I'm not sure, you might already be using these techniques, but as we get into this content, I want to find out, what are the

things that you're most interested in covering? So use the poll that I'm showing now, and you can vote for more than one option. Right now I'm hiding the results so you aren't influenced by your colleagues' answers. And as you respond, I'm going to go ahead and mute my mic and sip my tea here and read what you typed.

OK so I see a lot of excellent responses coming in here and you folks are interested in the same things I'm focused on, so we're going to be on the same wavelength for this session. So thanks so much for spending a minute to do that. I could have read you that list, of course, but my preference was to have you read it for yourself. And I've designed this session to be really interactive, but I can't interact for you. I need for you to – you know – participate. So I'm going to ask you to agree to participate in this live session. And if you can't, or don't want to, I get it, you're a grown-up, you get to make your own decisions about how you spend your time. But my assumption is because you spent the effort to log in here today that you are interested in engagement. So I want you to please agree to participate, and I'm going to broadcast the results and point out that – yep, a lot of times people respond to this question in a way that you would think is not actually helpful. But for me, at least I know where we stand. Right, at least I know that you intend to participate – or some of you do. So I'll know that I should expect some participation from some folks, but not from everybody. And that's OK.

I have another poll that I want to ask you about the kind of sessions, or the kind of events that you run. In my world, when we do recordings and webinars, even virtual conference sessions, we really don't expect them to be very interactive. We don't expect a lot of participation. We expect them to be sort of one-directional, where we're giving a broadcast or a webcast and participants are sitting passively listening.

So the types of interactions that you might include would hopefully be more robust if you're dealing with a training class. If you're wanting to really engage participants and have them apply what they're learning or have them report to you what they're learning. So I'd like to find out from you, which type of events are you doing? And like the other poll that you saw, you can choose more than one.

OK I see your responses coming in there, and it looks like a lot of you are doing Virtual Instructor-led training – 209. So I think that if you consider that most of us want to have more engagement, I'd like to suggest to you a few specific secrets you might include, ways that you might design your training.

But while we're talking about behind-the-scenes, I'd like you to get comfortable using polls. No matter the software tool that you're using, if polls are available, I encourage you to use them to get people to respond to things. Like just then. I found out a little bit more about my audience. I found out what topics you're interested in. And I found out your commitment level to this hour of training. So in a couple of minutes, I was able to use three polls and get a lot of information about 322 people. I would never have been able to gather that information face to face. And if you tried to speak up, I wouldn't be able to keep up with that either.

So it was no big deal, I just created the pod. I set the pod to have multiple choices. I added my details to the notes pod so I would remember or Mel could help out if I needed to be reminded that a poll is coming up now. And then when it came time to show the poll, I just dragged it into position. I told you about the poll and asked you to use it. I showed you the results. And then, ultimately, I hid the poll.

So it was really no big deal to show a poll. It looks kind of like this when you're creating it, no matter the software tool you're using, you're in a space where you need to fill in, type in, or paste in the text that's going to be the text. And then you're going to set it to multiple choice or multiple answer. Most software tools also have a short answer function. So people could fill in the blanks. It's a little bit different from chat in that it is anonymous. And then ultimately, I showed or facilitated the poll, and as you voted, I could see the results coming in on the right

side. But not until I clicked broadcast results did everybody else see the poll. So I'd like to encourage you to use polling because in a few minutes, I got a ton of information about most of my participants. Some decided they wouldn't participate and that's OK. But I got a lot of information in a short period of time.

So in my world, I use polls because I wanted to understand the audience needs. What question might you ask? Why would you ever use a poll? Go ahead and type in chat and let me know your reasons for asking a poll. Or where you might include a poll question. So, yes, you will be able to access a report later. You will be able to see what people have voted in those. If it's a quiz and something that you want to follow up on later, that would be the way to collect that information. OK so what I want to challenge you with is: use polls. Don't be afraid of polls because you think it's going to take longer or it's going to cause a couple of extra steps. If you've got a poll that's relevant, please include it in your training.

But there's a couple of other secrets that I want to share with you and they line up kind of like this. So there's a lot that I want to tell you. If there's too much to get to in the time that we have here, I have a handout that I'd like to provide for you at the end of our session. Also this session has been recorded and I will encourage all of you to connect with me later if you have additional questions.

So I'm going to take you through some of my seven secrets. And you're thinking "Yeah, prepare, I get it. Yup. No big deal. I prepare. Everybody prepares. What's the big deal?"

But I want to say: You're not being thorough enough. Nobody I see prepares as thoroughly as they need to prepare. Because there's so much to deal with even before you begin. So, hold onto your hats, don't type for the moment. If you're typing in chat, and I'm going to ask you to pop over to a different view of this environment and type the kinds of things that need to be prepared.

So I've organized these in categories of: What does the presenter need to prepare? Put that in the pod up above. What do participants need to prepare? Put that in the pod to the right. What content needs to be prepared? Or – what do you need to do to the content to prepare it? In the top left, think about what needs to be handled before and after the live sessions. And then, in the lower left, what needs to be handled during the live session? So when your manager says to you "Why don't you just – ?" or "Can't you just – ?" The reason we can't just is because all of these things that you're typing and more need to be dealt with – and they don't get done instantly.

So if you think your facilitator is just going to rock up to their microphone and go for it, it's not going to come out very well. There isn't going to be much engagement. Lecturing is not training. Engagement doesn't happen organically; it requires design. And it also requires preparation.

Your participants don't know how to do this. They don't know what the rules are. They don't know how to make the software work. They don't know how the features work. They need you to tell them. So, preparation of the participants is key. And not minutes before the start time, but days before. Hours before the start time. Your students are typically used to, you know, just showing up at the event and they get their manual and they get their cup of coffee and they go in for training. Here, we need them to have set up a workstation first. And purchased some hardware and possibly installed some software. That doesn't happen in an instant. So these things do need to be dealt with days, not minutes, ahead of time.

As far as the software, you think "Oh, the software's no big deal, how hard it is to create a Zoom meeting? You set the date and time. You log in and go for it." Right, you do. Except then in the moment, how do you cope when something goes wrong? Can you deliver a clear message, and troubleshoot, and type in chat to give people

instructions on how to troubleshoot at the same time? It gets harder and harder the more people are logged in. And you have to look at your vulnerabilities. Where do you not have enough support? Where do you need more help to get all these things done?

So hold up your typing for a minute and please notice that the way that we've designed this exercise is unique to the software. But if I were to do this with any other tool, I would just do it in a linear format. Dividing the questions into five separate sections. So – how do we prepare the presenter? Followed by: How do we prepare the participants? Followed by: How do we prepare the content? And so on.

So it's not that we can't do it, we just need to do it in a linear way. And Adobe, of course, is unique in the way the pods work here, and I'm leveraging them because this is the software platform that I have available to me today. If I were using a different software platform, I would try to leverage those tools. But before I move on to more discussion about the preparation, I want to share with you a link to a tool that might be useful to you. So – Oops, stand by. Not that. I'll show you that later, that's secret. More secrets.

So Mel, if you could do me a favor and just lift up the bottom hem of this pod and reveal the pod that's hiding behind. There's a little download pod that I'd like to use. So notice, in the lower right, you've now displayed a new pod that says "Select file then click to Download." So I'd like you to click on that filename. Then click the download files button. A new browser window will open in another window, another place altogether, and once you get into that other browser window, you'll have the option to download from there. What I'm sharing with you is an Excel file and in this Excel file, it's my intention to give you some resources for making your checklists and documenting your preparation. You might choose to store a document like this out on the Google. Put it out there the way I'm putting out the one in chat now so that you can have it accessible to all of your team members.

Oh, I see people are having a "not found" issue. OK, I'll come back to that a little bit later on. So thanks so much for your patience on that. But what I intended to do on that session and now this next exercise will be a little bit less fun, because we're going to talk about how that works. But the whole idea is it's possible for me to push content out to you. I can push to you a pod with a link to a browser window, like you were using with the Gartner activity earlier. So I'm going to use this one. Stand by. I'm going to open a new browser window. And this is one of my checklist items – to have participants run their own system speed test. So all I've done in order to create this – and if you've wandered off into the Ookla speed test, please come back to the Adobe window and take a look at the screen that I'm showing right now.

Mel: All right, standby everyone. It seems like we lost Karen when she went to do the speed test. We're getting her back in so please stand by.

Karen: I'm here. I'm back. So really all you're doing with these extra pod types is you're creating them ahead of time, populating them with the information that you need to have there, and then when it comes time to show it, you're just revealing it to participants. So when you go to use a tool like this, remember that you'll want to have it set up ahead of time.

And here's how it looks for forcing a browser page open. You first use a web links pod. Then you go to the Add Link option. You fill in the name that you want to have show to the participants. And then paste in the URL you want them to go to. When it comes time to show it, it displays to you as, in this case, one item in a list.

But I could have more than one item here. And then when I click that item name I can then click Browse To. By doing that I force open the window on your side – provided you don't have a pop-up blocker or something like that keeping that from happening.

So, why do it? Why is it important to have that browser window open for everybody? In my case, I wanted to quickly force everyone to see the same site. What site might you want to open? What do you think? Type in chat. OK, so there's so many places where we might want to send somebody at the end of the session – to a survey, to a quiz, to the company website, to a video, some additional assignment for them to do. So these things are pretty easy to do. And not every tool supports it, but many tools do; you just have to look for that feature and know what it is that you need.

So, here's another tip. I mean, in these last 20 years, I've called myself an online event producer and speaker coach. So I provide support to other people. But in a session like this one, with 331 people logged in, it's crucial that I have somebody like Mel Chambers on the session with me. Just look at the things that have popped up in this session so far. And I've done this every day for 20 years. What happens to your facilitators who never did this before and have no idea how to troubleshoot?

So I want to show you a similar thing to what we used a little while ago but this time I'm going to ask you in terms of polls. So I'm going to pop back over to another layout where you have multiple polls showing. And if you're on a mobile device, you'll need to use the option buttons on the left side to toggle between the open polls, but I kind of try to summarize the things that are the typical issues that need to be dealt with in these 5 categories.

So if you think about your instructor, which of these things can your presenter or instructor, facilitator, handle alone? Which are the things that they aren't afraid to deal with? And I'm going to show you the results here, so that you can compare your notes to other colleagues and see what they're saying. And it's not that your facilitator isn't smart or they're not skilled or they're not able to learn, but frankly when you're in the moment and your mouse hand is sweaty and shaking, it's really kind of impossible to just bring up that pod. Or to just make that thing happen. Or to troubleshoot somebody's audio that they can't hear on the video.

So your instructor may very well be able to handle these things OK, but do they handle them well under pressure? So I'm going to do a quick thing here, and I'm going to end all these polls and I'm going to ask you to vote again on the opposite question here: Which of these things does your facilitator need help with? So, I'm going to reopen these pods – oops, I'm going to clear the results in between and reopen these pods so you can vote again. I'm essentially just clearing the data and restarting. And that allows me to reuse the polls multiple times.

So, this time my question is, which of these things does your presenter need extra help doing? So when your manager says "Why don't you just – ?" or "How come you can't just – ?" the answer is because I need help with all of these things. And the facilitator is probably just trying to get their nerve up to deliver content in a way that they maybe haven't done before. Or they haven't been successful doing before. So keep that in mind as you plan your team members and who's going to be helping out where and when. It's not that your trainer isn't capable, it's that it's difficult to do it while you're juggling a whole bunch of other things at the same time, and oh boy there are so many other things to juggle.

So I'm going to try to download that [resources list](#) again; please try the pod that you see in the lower right. My producer has helped out behind the scenes to repost that file, and hopefully this time it's going to be downloadable. So click the file name, then click on the download files button. A new browser window will open.

And then you'll have to click download there to save as. I'll stand by and give you a chance to do that. Terrific, OK so I'll move that off to the side. And I'm advancing my slides.

It's also critical that we teach participants how to use the tools. Remember our participants know how to go to classrooms and sit in chairs and face forward and maybe write on a whiteboard or write on a flipchart with a marker but they don't necessarily know how to participate in a live event. So if you don't teach them how to participate, it's not likely that they will. Or maybe, they won't do it in the way that you intended. So please consider that you will save yourself some angst if you teach people how to use the tools up front. And remember in that last exercise, I had to tell you how to use the features in order to download that checklist file.

So it would be unlikely that you would find all those clicks on your own. It would be unlikely that you would expect a second window to open up and that you'd have to click on download again. So when you consider how all the setups have to work, and how challenging it might be for the trainer to set it up, remember the participants need help too. So in my case it was easy to do, I created the pod, I uploaded the file, then Mel fixed it. I also changed the title bar. You might not notice, but here in Adobe, you can double click on the title bar to change it to anything, including some micro instructions if you need to add them there. You could also use a note pod. But I primarily use a note pod just to keep track of the interactions that are going to happen so that when I need Mel's help, I can say to her "Hey, Mel, can you follow the notes that I added and just click the things I need you to click for me?"

So, notice the item there in, item 17, is in red because I knew I would miss that cue. This is my presenter note pod and it lives in a space off to the right in a space called Presenter Only Area or Host and Presenter Only Area."

So when you think about files that you might need to transfer, of course there's multiple steps, right? You need to upload the file, you need to make the file available to people, you need to tell them how to download the file. But the big question I have for you is: Why would you do it? What files might you transfer? OK, I see some issues with my audio here. I'll try to improve my setup.

Mel: Stand by: she's muted right now. She's just trying to probably switch to another setup.

Karen: I am trying to improve my audio:, I hope that made a difference there. Let me know if you are not hearing me. Actually, you wouldn't be able to tell me. Because you wouldn't have heard my instructions. Mel could you upgrade my second log in to Host?

So remember, at the start of this session I asked you to agree to participate. Why? Why should I not only encourage you, teach you how to use tools but encourage you to use tools? What do you think? Go ahead and type in chat.

I need buy-in, accountability, yep. I want to do two-way communications. I want to engage you the right way. I want accountability. Yeah I see that coming up a lot. Engagement. So every other webinar your participants have participated in required them to do nothing. They just sat there and listened and probably shopped online in another window. I want to point out to them – like Nancy says – I want to set expectation. I want to point out to them that I've designed this session to be interactive, and I do actually want them to interact. So I'll need them to, you know, type in chat, click on polls, and stuff like that.

Mel: So, I'm going to just pick up because Karen is switching her audio there. So let's talk about communicating privately which is really critical in these sessions, regardless of the platform that you're in. What do you and your

helpers – like myself as producer – what might you be typing in private chat? What might you be needing to communicate privately that’s really important for a successful event? Go ahead and type in chat.

Karen: Thanks Mel! It’s so good to have a producer standing by who can teach this content as I can. I’ve now switched to my other setup completely. I have two computers logged in with two headsets, two keyboards, two mice, two separate internet connections. You know why? Because I’m at the mercy of the network. I don’t control how the network behaves. But two different machines, with two different connections, have a better chance of maintaining connection than just one machine. You can check the stats on that.

So I’m so glad to see that you are typing lots of things that you might need to use – message your helpers privately. There’s a whole conversation that can go on behind the scenes – you might even be just using your phones to message each other behind the scenes. To say “Your audio is gone” or “Your video has frozen” or “Your slides aren’t advancing” or something like that. But if you don’t have any means to communicate privately, you will wish you had. I promise. So work with your participants – work with your fellow producers or team members to communicate privately in some channel.

Here in Adobe, of course, we use the Presenter Only Area – the space off to the right side that is hidden from participants, thus the name. But we can see it when we’re upgraded to host or presenter. You saw me bring in a note pod from there earlier. I won’t share with you the panicked text messages that I was getting in chat from our team members but that I get those messages over there as well. I have all of the pods that I might need to be showing staged and over here on the right side so that they’re ready to go.

So when you think about your setups and you think about doing all of your steps in advance, you might think about all of the times that our friend Mel Chambers had to type some kind of message of reassurance or of micro-instructions to audience members. To help troubleshoot or help get them back on track. Our team calls those things “pasteables” – things that are prewritten, pre-scripted, that we’re just going to copy and paste into chat. This is even more important when you’re presenting on your own, because you don’t have time to type. You only have time to copy and paste. So consider having those pasteables available.

And just to help you make this information a little bit more sticky, I’d like you to think about what messages you might pre-script that you would want to share with your own audience members. I saw that Denise, a typo in the word pasteable. Thank you for noticing. Glad to see you’re paying attention. See what engagement will do? Yes Prabu, if you’ve got a larger display, the multiple pods will look a lot better. Especially if you’ve got a large monitor. On a mobile device or on a small screen, a tablet, it’s a lot harder to see. But remember this is the only software application that behaves this way; you would be working in your normal parameters if you were in Zoom or GoTo.

Great, so I see that you’re pasting some items in there, phone numbers, audience engagement, but this – the pasteables help you maintain consistency as far as what messaging you are giving to people. What URL are you sending them to in order to get the handout? Or what instructions are you giving them in order to troubleshoot audio? And along the same lines of creating consistency in your messages, you might care about creating consistency from one session room to the next.

Now there is the functionality of the software that is like a layout, where you can have the same thing repeated from one layout to the next. But you can also have the same set of layouts or the same set of pods, or the same set of content repeated from one session to the next. So you can create something, make it as perfect as you want, load all the stuff that you want, and then every time you create a new session, base it on that basic

template. So for us, the pasteables are part of the template. The phone numbers for the hosts or the producers are part of the template. The instructions to participants as they log in is part of the template. So those things live there and we don't have to recreate it every time. Now whether you're using WebEx or GoTo or Zoom, there is such a function as using templates that you can then recreate sessions that are based on that same model. And I just encourage you to go and explore those in your application. Here in Adobe Connect, it lives under the meetings tab. Shared Meetings and Shared Templates. You can see that because my account has multiple functions. I have different templates for the type of room or type of session that I'm running. But that ends up saving just a ton of time in creating things and positioning them and getting agreement from the whole team on how that's going to work.

So my [seventh secret](#) I hope I was able to showcase for you in spectacular form. If I can't be a good example, at least let me be a horrible warning – that you need to get real about your tech. You have a fantasy version of how technology works. That your internet service provider tells you that your internet connection is 99.9% up. But that still gives you room for having some down time. They'll also promise you that your speed is some fantastic number. And it might get to that number sometimes. But a lot of times it doesn't. And then there's the outages. Just random internet outage. Power outage. Platform outage. Your computer bluescreens on you and there's your outage.

I want you to let your paranoia drive your decision-making. I want you to think in terms of “everything will go wrong all the time.” And it doesn't matter what happened last time or last week or last month or anything related to a previous experience. The only thing that matters is right now. So on a day like today, I run my Ookla system test multiple times so that I can make sure I'm on a good steady internet connection that's behaving consistently. However, I'm still confined to a wireless connection here out on the prairie, so I don't always have a great connection. I have 5 different hot spots to choose from. But they don't always work. Thankfully, Spectrum is being installed any second now.

But as we consider what kinds of plan B's you might need to have in place for your content, and for your delivery, I want you also just to think in terms of the hardware. All the things that the presenter and participants needed to have prepared in our lists earlier – how many of them are represented here in terms of duplicates. So, this is the desk I'm working from and this is the setup I'm using. And I was using the machine on the left, and now I'm using the machine on the right.

So I'd like you to type in chat what other backups you spot in this photo. OK great yeah I see your items coming in there. A backup phone. Water, keyboard, headphones, mice, modem – right I have a hot spot. WiFi booster, yup. The landline phone. Different headsets, lighting. Pen and paper. Yep, ibuprofen, I'm glad you noticed. Yeah. I've been down this road before. I've been through this for 20 years. I can tell you everything has gone wrong at one time or another. Mel can vouch for that. She's lived through it with me in multiple cases. So, don't assume that just because you're a good person, you're not going to need to have backups.

So, of the secrets I've shared with you, I'm curious to know: Which are the ones that you're likely to share with your friends? Which are the ones that you're going to take with you? And just in case you've lost track of all seven of them; I'm going to post them again in an [Excel file here](#). Which of these will you borrow and share with pride? Go ahead. OK, great I see your answers coming in there and it warms my heart.

(Note: Video feed error here.)

OK great, yeah I see your message there Sandra. [Number 6. Maintain consistency](#) – you can see that Mel Chambers had a certain structure to her session plan. So she has an introduction that she does – messaging that she puts out, instruction that she gives at the beginning. And some things that she'll use to close out the session at the end. That also helps us maintain consistency because the only thing that's different is the content in the middle. Otherwise, the session will be very similar from one session to the next.

Also you might not notice that in Adobe Connect, you can have multiple layouts. So you can move from one page or one view to the next and keep everything relatively the same except the key pods that are going to be used.

Donna, I'll take that as a compliment, thanks so much. Yeah and I couldn't do it without a producer, without helpers, and without backups. So, it's not just a matter of being prepared. It's a matter of being prepared thoroughly enough to accommodate absolutely everything going wrong all the time.

Pamela, I would say when you really need tech support but can't get it, you might borrow somebody for the first 15 minutes of your session. So if you might say to a team member or a manager "Could you just log in during the period of time that I'm wanting to kick off the session and get a good start? I don't want to get bogged down in troubleshooting. So can you just be there to help with troubleshooting until we get most of the issues sorted?"

Also, I would say that when you don't have support ahead of time, buffer the start time, so that you can give yourself 10 to 15 minutes of people logging in and saying hello and getting situated, and that allows you to troubleshoot things as they come up, but then you can still start on time. You know I had a plan B for your typing in chat just now; my plan B was to ask you this same question as a poll.

So I'm thinking not only in terms of my hardware and software needing a backup, but my interactions themselves. If for some reason my poll doesn't work – If for some reason chat doesn't work – if you expected people to speak up on their microphones and they don't – then how else can you make the activity work? So in my case, I had this backup in case I didn't have time to have you type in chat. I would have you simply respond to the poll and that's my way to wrap up this portion of the exercise. And of course, it's a review of the [seven secrets](#). You might have noticed at the beginning of our session I asked you a poll question related to the objectives that were promised by the marketing in this session. By showing that as a poll, I had you read them and commit to them yourselves. That's a totally different dynamic than me reading them to you and then saying OK now I'm going to cover this stuff and we're moving on. So think about the ways in which you can create engagement even in the smallest measures. Opportunities for people to tell you yes I can agree, yes I can hear you, or no I can't hear you.

I see Stuart's question from earlier about a way to bulk load questions and answer – possible answers to a poll. I'm not sure I understand that – bulk load questions. Do you mean like copy and paste a whole block of text at one time?

Is there a recommended time limit to virtual classrooms? I've often seen 90 minutes be the recommended amount of time. I am a fan of 75 minutes because I think it gives you 15 minutes of storming and norming and then 60 minutes of content time. But I've gone for 3 or 4 hours and not had that be an issue at all. Because when there's engagement, people are willing to stay put. But if you do go past an hour, you'll want to take breaks, just because nobody can learn when they have to go to the bathroom.

Jeff, my simple PowerPoint design is not to save memory, it's just because I like to keep it simple. If you've got a lot of visuals and graphics and colors, you have problems with contrast. Sometimes you have problems with uploading. The big gray boxes, Carrie-Ann, has everything to do with the slide size and the pod size. So my slide

size is 8.5 x 11 – normal paper size – and this pod can be adjusted size-wise any time. And Paul I'm not in a position to show you anything with breakouts right now because nothing is set up for breakouts, but if you email me, I am happy to talk to you more about breakouts.

A couple people have requested that we have some – the pod for the file downloads. I'm going to go ahead and post that file download pod again and give you the opportunity to download not only that Excel file that we were using before, but the pdf of the PowerPoint slides that we used here. Many of you were interested in a shared location for your documents.

So when you want to keep track of all the different details of your program, you might want to put a document like this, [the .xls I'm pasting here in chat](#). Put it someplace online and give your team members access to it. This is a document that has our checklists. Our keeping track of the time zones that everybody's in. Keeping track of the preparation steps for the presenters. So, take a look at that document. It is the same file that the Excel file was. The difference is, it lives in Google. And it gives us an opportunity to have a shared location for all the team members to be able to communicate with each other, as we lead up to the event itself. Would you email – would you – I'm not sure Nick I understand what your question is.

And I see that Denise is having an issue – can't select the handout pdf – So we might need to just follow up in our follow-up email and attach that.

I see Erin's message here about giving people audio privileges – and I'm not against it. But when there's 330 people logged in, I suspect that we will have a lot more conversation about people's microphones being on or off or too loud or too scratchy or not connected right. So my preference is to keep the conversation happening in chat. If I were in a training class where there's 15-20 people, maybe 50 people, I'd be more open to having people use their microphones, but I'd want them to test audio as they log in. So that when it comes time to talk, they've already run the audio setup wizard. Or they've already confirmed that their microphone is working properly. Otherwise every time somebody speaks, we spend 45 seconds just trying to agree that we can hear them. And that can burn a lot of time when I only have 75 minutes.

I see a lot of interest there in a session about breakouts, and maybe we need to go back to the vendor and do another session like that. I can talk all day about breakout, but I'm down to my last 5 minutes. Agreed, Jeff, please mute when not speaking, that is such a critical thing. When there's a lot of noise on the line, it can really cut out other people's audio and make it inaudible.

So we want to make sure that the person who we intend to hear and we intend to record, is audible and the background noise on everybody else's line is cleaned up. So, if you do want to communicate with me after this session, I'm happy to respond to your questions, or do a demonstration on breakout groups. I do live in this software tool, but I'm also familiar with some of the other tools.

