

YOUR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO DESIGN HIGH-IMPACT BLENDED TRAINING

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UPDATED

FEATURING 7
SUCCESS STORIES





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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Asha Pandey is the Chief Learning Strategist at EI Design. She heads the organization's Solution Architecting and Innovation Teams and brings her rich 16 years' experience into play to help EI Design customers transform their learning and keep pace with the changing dynamics in the Learning industry.

A regular writer for various global learning forums, Asha is one of the most recognized thought leaders in the industry. She also shares her insights regularly on a range of topics on her blog at www.eidesign.net/blog.

ABOUT EI DESIGN

EI Design is a leading Learning and Performance Support solutions provider that thrives on transforming learning – keeping it alive, relevant and impactful.

In addition to **core solutions** such as eLearning and mLearning, Migration of Legacy/Flash courses to HTML5, ILT/VILT and Blended Learning, EI Design offers a wide range of **trending solutions** such as designing learning for the millennial generation, responsive learning portal solutions, platforms for content curation, personalization of learning and approaches to predict, measure and validate the learnability of online courses.

EI Design's learning designs feature several **innovative learning strategies**, such as Gamification, Microlearning, Social Learning, Mobile Apps for learning, Videos and Interactive Videos, Story/Scenario-based learning, Branching simulations and more.

For more details, log on to <https://www.eidesign.net/about-us/>

PREFACE

“

IS INSTRUCTOR-LED TRAINING (ILT) DYING?”

No, ILT isn't dying.

But there certainly has been an increase in large-scale conversions of ILT materials to online learning.

While a lot of this is triggered by challenges on training budgets, I believe it also provides an opportunity to relook at the traditional format and enhance the training delivery.

Take a look at
the following
insight

According to the 2016 Benchmark Report: The State of Online Training, 'Technology has not decreased the demand for Instructor-Led Training, but gives instructors new tools to reach learners...The trend in Instructor-Led Learning is enablement through technology, both in hybrid and fully virtual delivery.'



HOW WILL THIS EBOOK HELP YOU?

I have created this eBook as a **step-by-step guide** that you can use as you embark on the conversion of your ILT program to a Blended Training program. These inputs will certainly help you in creating a high-impact Blended Training program. More specifically, you can use the tips and best practices to optimize your current Blended Training programs.

The eBook is structured into 5 sections, as shown here:

Section 1 – Basics

1. What is Blended Training approach?
2. What is increasing the adoption of Blended Training over Instructor-Led Training, or ILT?

Section 2 – Benefits

1. What are the benefits that learners and organizations gain if they adopt a Blended Training approach over a traditional ILT?
2. What are the challenges that you may face as you adopt a Blended Training approach over a traditional ILT?
3. How do learners respond to the Blended Training approach?

Section 3 – Deployment

1. How can Blended Training be delivered?
2. Are there any specific models that can be used to determine how to offer Blended Training?
3. How can our step-by-step toolkit guide you in transforming your ILT to a blended approach?

Section 4 – Tips and Best Practices

1. Are there any best practices that can be used to increase the impact of Blended Training?
2. What are the tips you can use to create highly effective Blended Training programs?

Section 5 – Blended Training in Action-Featuring 7 Success Stories

1. 5 examples featuring corporate training on how you can enhance the impact of ILT by adopting a Blended Training approach.
2. 2 examples featuring how you can enhance the impact of ILT by adopting a Blended Training approach in higher education.

The background of the slide features a photograph of three individuals in a professional setting. On the left, a woman with long blonde hair is seen from the side, wearing a plaid shirt. In the center, a woman with dark hair and glasses is smiling and looking towards the right. On the right, a man is partially visible, looking down at a laptop. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent yellow overlay. Two thick, light-yellow diagonal bars cross the image from the top-left to the bottom-right and from the top-right to the bottom-left, creating a stylized frame around the central text.

SECTION 1 – BASICS



What is Blended Training approach?

As the name suggests, the term Blended Training (or hybrid training) combines different learning techniques. It offers a combination that brings in the best of both forms of training, namely:

1. Instructor-Led Training (ILT)
2. Online training (eLearning or mLearning)

As it offers a blend of both formats (facilitated as well as self-paced), it maps more effectively to suit the learning expectations of a wider audience.

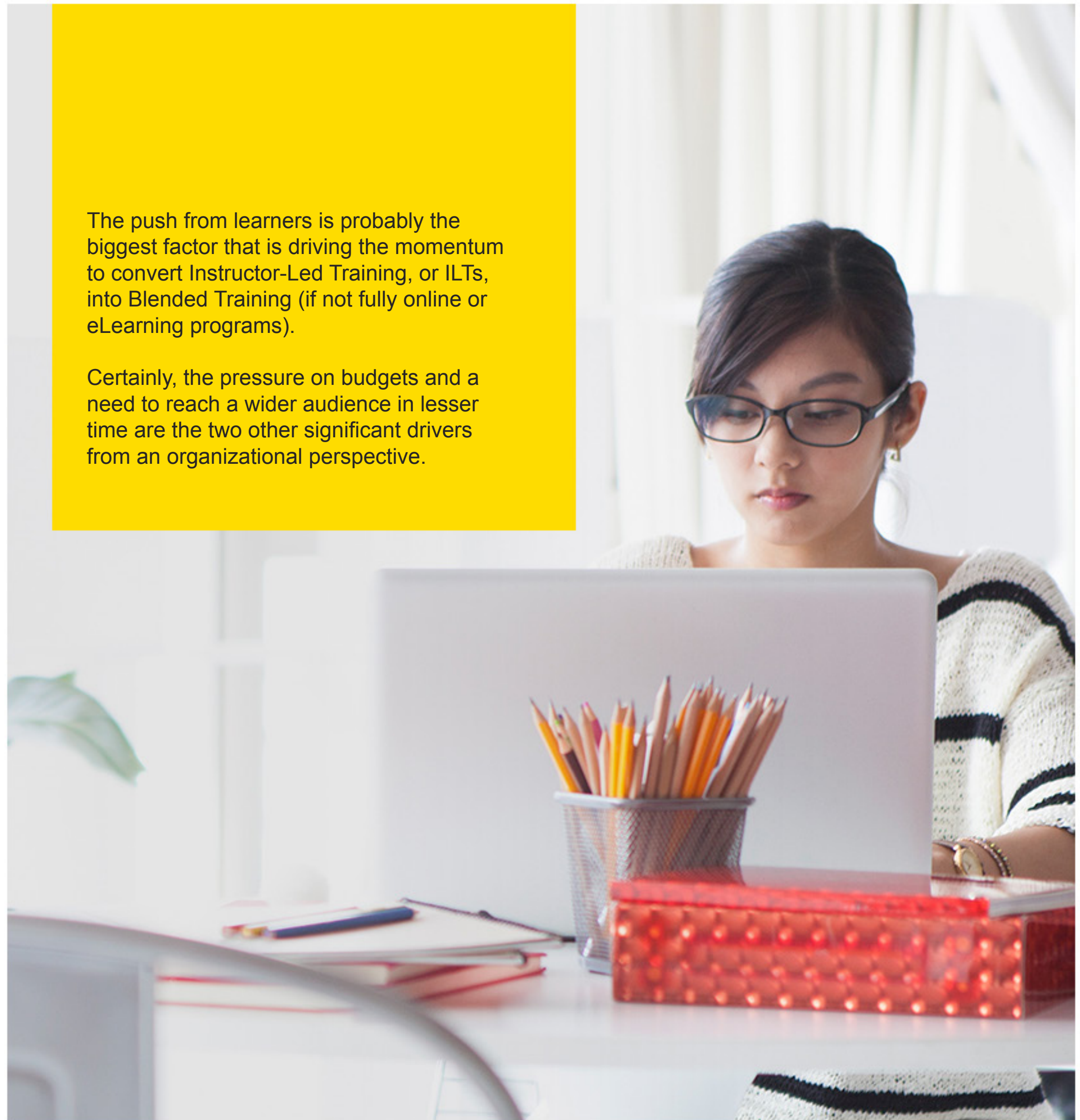




What is increasing the adoption of Blended Training over Instructor-Led Training, or ILT?

The push from learners is probably the biggest factor that is driving the momentum to convert Instructor-Led Training, or ILTs, into Blended Training (if not fully online or eLearning programs).

Certainly, the pressure on budgets and a need to reach a wider audience in lesser time are the two other significant drivers from an organizational perspective.



A dark, moody background image showing a business meeting. Several people are gathered around a table, looking at documents and a laptop. The documents feature various charts, including line graphs and a pie chart. One document is titled 'Business activity of company and sub...'. Another document has a line graph with the title 'activity statistics'. A laptop is visible on the left side of the table. A white cup of coffee sits on a saucer in the bottom right corner. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

SECTION2–BENEFITS



What are the benefits that learners and organizations gain if they adopt a Blended Training approach over a traditional ILT?

Benefits for the learners

1. The Blended Training approach is learner-centric and provides better control to the learner in adjusting the pace at which they want to learn.
2. It also gives them the flexibility to pick up the online resources (in case they miss the ILT session or to refresh their knowledge post the workshop).
3. The supplementary online training provides them a self-paced learning track. Also, the online resources are available 24x7 now.
4. The Blended Training offers a significantly better collaboration, including online discussions, messaging, feedback and a platform to communicate with peers as well as instructors.
5. Research confirms that the retention levels of online training are higher than face-to-face facilitated sessions. Furthermore, in the blended mode:
 - a. The usage of periodic online reinforcements can be used to offset the “Forgetting Curve”.
 - b. By making part of the training resources online, you can encourage learners to review the material again (at the moment of need).
 - c. The learning path can also be used to nudge learners to practice and over time move from baseline proficiency to mastery.
 - d. Additionally, challenges in form of quizzes can be pushed to keep learning current and encourage learners to review what they missed.





What are the benefits that learners and organizations gain if they adopt a Blended Training approach over a traditional ILT?

Benefits for the organizations

1. From an organizational perspective, Virtual Instructor-Led Training, or VILT, (in contrast to the traditional Instructor-Led Training, or ILT) enables organizations to reach a wider audience in a significantly shorter time.
2. As you convert an ILT program to a Blended Training mode, the seat time also becomes shorter. For instance, a 5-day face-to-face workshop may now need a maximum of couple of days of workshop, and you can balance the learning using online resources.
3. Additionally, the online framework enables the instructors to assess the learners' performance online and far more quickly.
4. More significantly, with a Blended Training approach, organizations can tap into the prevailing online strategies, like Microlearning, Gamification and Collaborative Social learning to create supplementary online trainings. Usage of these approaches provides an immersive learning experience aimed at better recall, retention and application.
5. The supplementary online courses or resources facilitate a continued learning post the workshop.



What are the challenges that you may face as you adopt a Blended Training approach over a traditional ILT?

Here are the key challenges that you may face as you transition from ILT to Blended Training. Unless offset, they would not create the required impact as you transition to the blended mode.

- 1. **No stakeholder buy-in:** Often, the business sees the need to adopt Blended Training (rather than ILT) but several key stakeholders may still be reluctant to work on the required change.
- 2. **No desire to change the curriculum:** When successful ILT programs are identified to be remapped for Blended Training mode, sometimes the instructors don't see the need to remap the existing content. They may assess that the structured PowerPoint can go online as-is. (This isn't the case and the Blended Training impact may be significantly lower if this route is selected).
- 3. **Lack of resources:** Often organizations move to the blended approach without ascertaining the resources required (during the initial phase and subsequently, as you gain momentum).
- 4. **Lack of understanding on how to blend:** Determining the right blend that would create the required impact is not easy. It is both art and science and often organizations falter in this crucial component.
- 5. **Don't know where to start:** Related to the point above, in absence of internal expertise on blending, organizations often face this challenge and don't quite know how to get this off the ground.



How do learners respond to the Blended Training approach?

Each learner has a different learning style, and they relate differently to a given training format.



Blended Training offers a broader set of options to the learners and can match a more varied set of learning styles.



Added to this is the flexibility that Blended Training provides – even if they miss the facilitated session, they have access to the same resources online now.



Today, you can design online courses or supplementary resources to support multiple devices, including tablets and smartphones (besides desktops and laptops).



Particularly, online supplementary resources can be designed using a wide range of innovative formats, like Interactive PDFs, eBooks/Flipbooks, Interactive Videos and so on.



These can be accessed by learners on the device of their choice, when they need and as often as they require. All of these help the learners retain the information and re-use it when the need arises again.

A person wearing a yellow shirt and glasses is looking at a laptop screen. A large, semi-transparent yellow arrow points from the top-left towards the bottom-right, passing over the person and the laptop. The text "SECTION 3-DEPLOYMENT" is centered over the arrow.

SECTION 3-DEPLOYMENT



How can Blended Training be delivered?

Blended Training solutions can be rendered in multiple ways, based on the nature of training.

Broadly, they map to:

1

Virtual Instructor-Led Training, or VILT

Here, the training is facilitated by an instructor (just like in ILT) but a virtual platform is used to connect learners who can be geographically spread out. The session integrates many online aspects like polling questions, online questions and breakout rooms to conduct group activities. These sessions can be recorded and made available to participants as an online learning aid. The instructor can provide pre-workshop material in an online format that is accessible to the learners. Online delivery also enables the instructors to obtain feedback quickly. Since the assessments are online, the results can be shared quickly and more significantly; this data can be used to track the learners' performance and determine the training impact.

NOTE: In this case, the primary training is facilitated or instructor-led, and eLearning or online training supplements it.

2

Blended approach where ILT/ VILT complements the online or eLearning delivery

Certain training needs cannot be mapped readily to pure ILT or pure eLearning formats. In fact, they need both components. A good example is an Induction and Onboarding program where significant parts of the training can be offered in a self-paced, eLearning format. However, to successfully induct and onboard an employee, several components of this program need face-to-face sessions. In fact, some sessions will greatly benefit with group activities.

NOTE: In this case, ILT and eLearning-based training complement each other.



Are there any specific models that can be used to determine how to offer Blended Training?

While Blended Training has its significant advantages, a lot depends on the approach that you use to “blend” the face-to-face or ILT components with online training (eLearning or mLearning).

At EI Design, we have created three models that we use to determine how you should blend the two components. Our Blended Training design approaches would map to one of the following:

Model 1

Significant face-to-face, ILT training and a small component of online training

Model 2

An even mix of face-to-face, ILT training and online training

Model 3

Significant online learning with short and focused face-to-face, ILT training



How Can Our Step-By-Step Toolkit Guide You In Transforming Your ILT To Blended Approach?

As I see it, effective blending is both, art and science.

Let me share some of the techniques we have been using. This is a **Step-by-Step Toolkit** that is particularly useful when you are looking at first-time conversion of an ILT program to a blended approach.

Step 1: Determine why blending is required

- ✓ What are the triggers that are prompting the need to transform the training format?
- ✓ Are there any challenges in the existing delivery that must be offset in the new format?
- ✓ What are the expected gains from the new format?

Step 2: Validate the impact of the new approach (to arrive at the degree of blending)

- ✓ Would the learners align to the new delivery format?
- ✓ Would the learners get an enhanced value?
- ✓ Would the program mandate be met?

Step 3: Identify the required support

- ✓ Evaluate the options for delivery including:
 - ✓ Platform to offer VILT and LMS to offer online training.
 - ✓ Instructor and learner support.



How Can Our Step-By-Step Toolkit Guide You In Transforming Your ILT To Blended Approach?

Step 4: Identify the support required to handle change management effectively.

Step 5: Review the existing content to determine its suitability to adapt to a blended delivery

- ✓ You need to do an effective mapping of classroom-based activities and exercises to online format.
- ✓ You also need to assess the current assessment strategy and determine how it should be adapted to a blended delivery.

Step 6: Once these aspects are covered, you are ready to go

- ✓ Create the Blended Training program design.
- ✓ Create an approach plan to implement it through:
 - ✓ Pilot.
 - ✓ Take feedback.
 - ✓ Re-deploy.
- ✓ **Feedback and further improvement:** After a suitable time, poll the learners and business units to determine its impact. Based on this feedback, determine if you need to recalibrate the previous blend.



SECTION 4 – TIPS AND BEST PRACTICES



Are there any best practices that can be used to increase the impact of Blended Training?

There are several best practices that we have used in successfully creating effective Blended Training program designs. Here are a few best practices from our repository:



Before you begin

- 1. **Create an effective change management program to support the transition.**
- 2. **Establish learner roles and responsibilities:** As is true for a transition or transformation, there should be clarity on how the learners and the organization would be able to leverage the Blended Training.
- 3. **Provide clear instructions and communication for the program.**
- 4. **Create an effective support system for the learners.**
- 5. **Create an effective support system for the corporate trainers.**



Lay the foundation

- 1. **Goals:** The Blended Training goals need to be identified in advance, and these should also reflect the intended gains expected from Blended Training.
- 2. **Strategy and Approach plan:** Start small, but factor for its scaling.
- 3. **Demonstrable gain:** Identify the right project and identify the right team to manage. Early success matters and provides crucial feedback to improve in the future. Select a project that adapts more easily to a Blended Training model and can demonstrate clear gains. Have a dedicated team to monitor and manage.
- 4. **Checkpoint for continuous improvement:** Use the ongoing tracking and checkpointing to gather feedback for further improvement.



What are the tips you can use to create highly effective Blended Training programs?

The impact of a Blended Training program design can be enhanced by using the following tips:

1. Identify the measures to handle **change management**.
2. **Create the required ecosystem** to offer blended training including:
 - a. Technology support.
 - b. Instructor support.
 - c. Online conversion support.
 - d. Learner support.
3. Develop content in a manner that allows you to **calibrate the mix of blending easily**.
4. **Encourage learning as a continuum:** This is vital for you to process the feedback and keep stepping up the impact of your Blended Training program. You can use the performance data to reinforce and remediate.
5. **Use the online resources to support multiple mandates:** You can use them to prep the learners before a workshop. You can also provide these as online reference materials that they can use post the workshop and on the job.
6. **Tracking:** Blended delivery facilitates keeping a track of the learner's progress far more easily than an ILT training. By the same token, it also enables you to share feedback with equal ease. Use these two aspects to keep the learners in sync with the learning mandate.
7. **Assessment strategy:** Online assessments provide you with an approach with which you can test and share feedback instantaneously. You can randomize the questions, have different set of questions for different profiles and decide which ones should be formative/summative.

SECTION 5

Examples on how you can enhance the impact of ILT by adopting a Blended Training approach

Featuring 5 examples of typical **corporate training needs** and how would they map to online conversion:

1. Induction and Onboarding training.
2. Tools or Application Software training.
3. Compliance training.
4. Professional skills enhancement training.
5. Soft-skills training.

Additionally, 2 examples from **Higher Education** that feature conversion of distance learning or campus programs to blended.

Example 1: Induction and Onboarding training

This program maps well to a blended program. Although, you can determine the increased weightage on online training vs facilitated sessions looking at your ability to manage the roll-out.

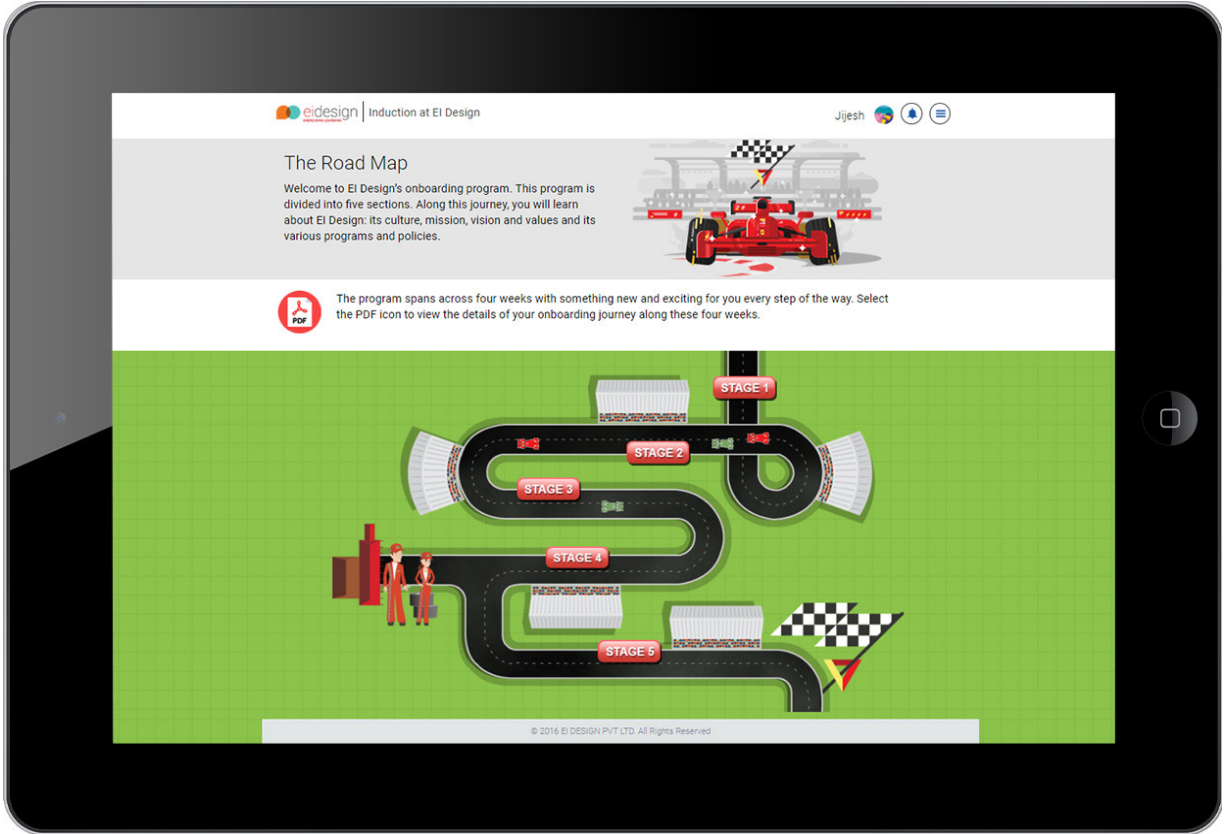
For our own Induction and Onboarding training, we transitioned from a fully ILT-based format to a Blended Training format.

Online component

The online format features **Microlearning** (largely videos) and **guided exploration** through very simple and intuitive interactivities. The entire learning journey is divided into multiple stages.

The facilitated component

Once each stage is over, there are supporting facilitated sessions. These focus on recap, reinforcement and interactions with peers and seniors. For certain profiles, coaching and mentoring sessions get added.



Example 2: Tools or Application Software training

This can be converted to a fully online training. After this, the learners can practice on the actual tool. Optionally, you could offer the practice sessions with an instructor support.

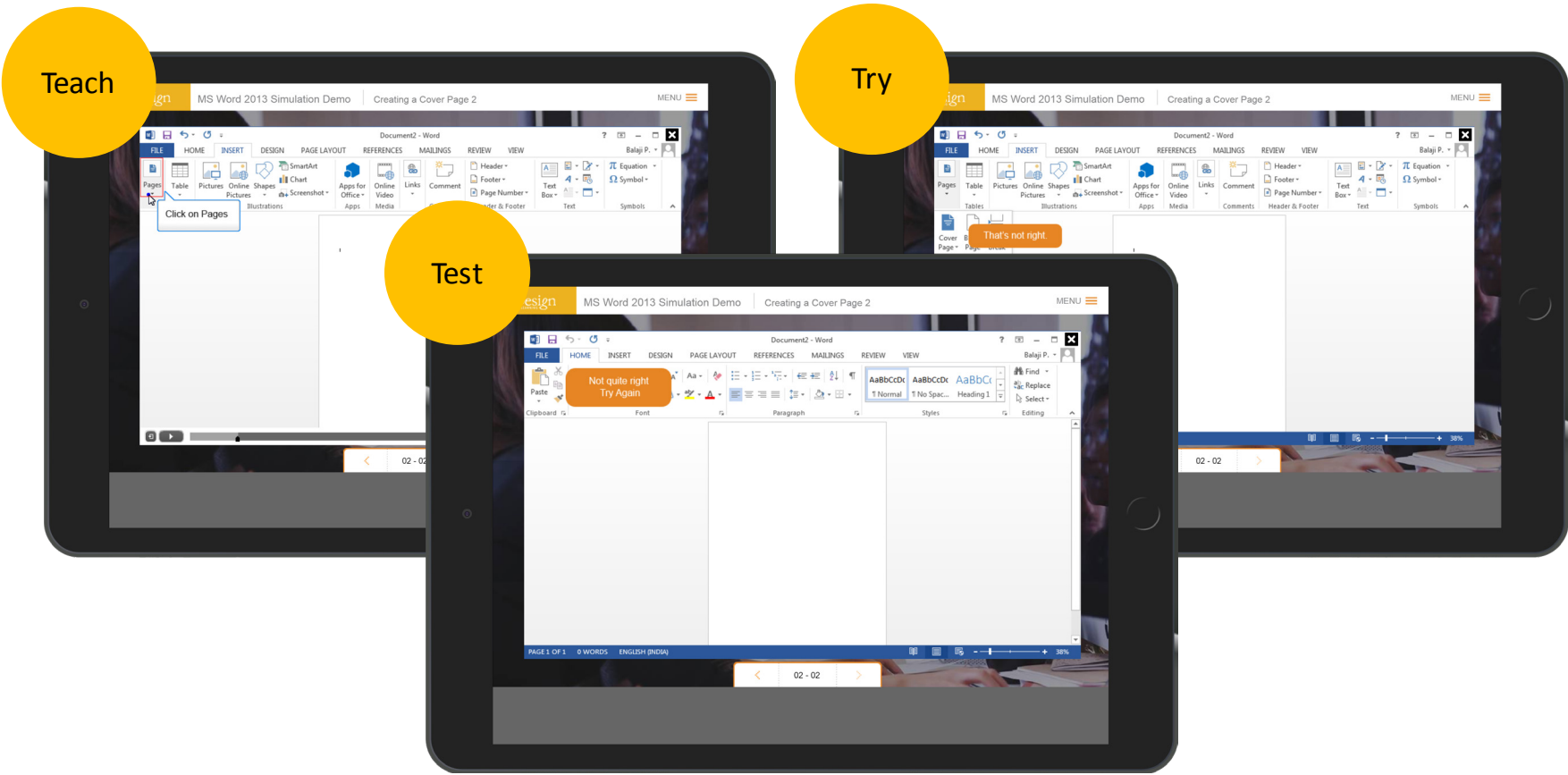
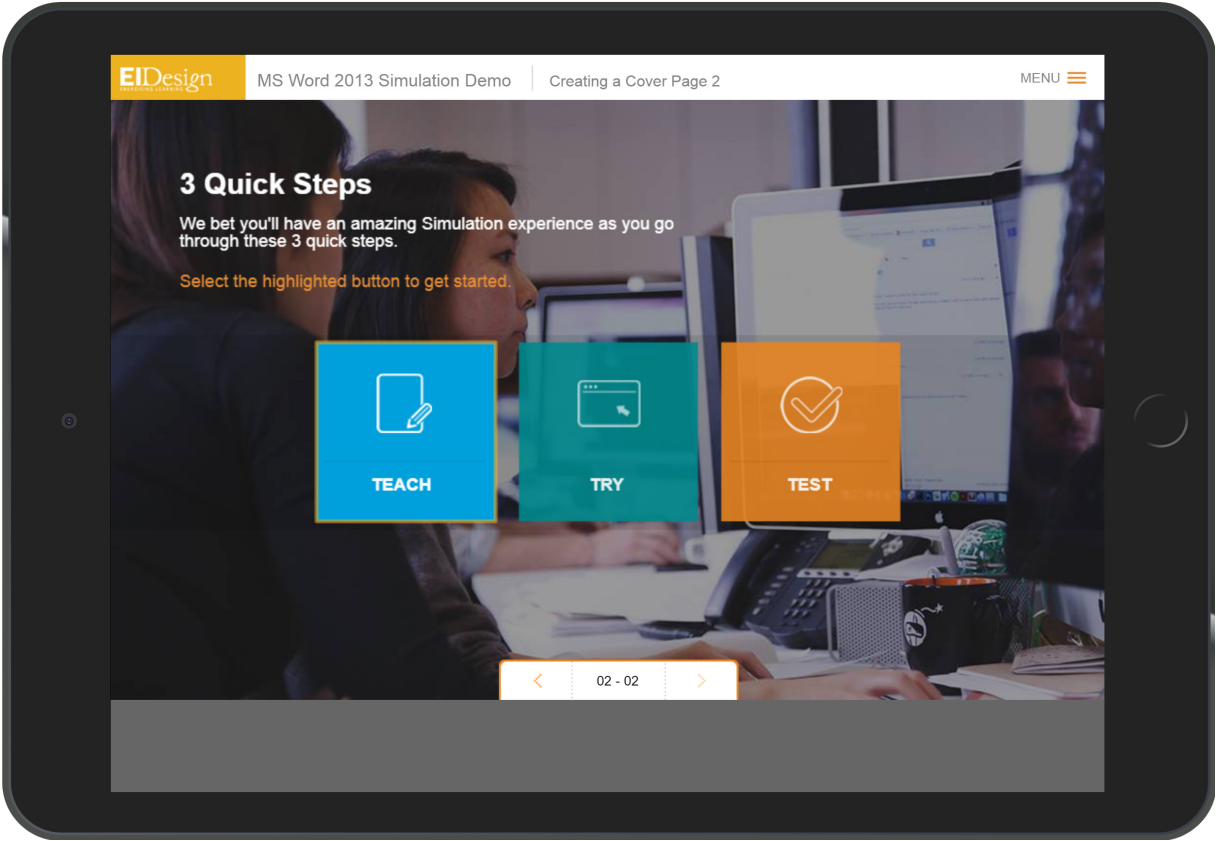
We have used a combination of **Teach, Try and Test**-based approach as shown here.

Online component

The online component enables users to learn, practice and test their proficiency on the software.

The facilitated component

Post the online training, the learners can move to a practice on the actual tool. Alternatively, the practice session can be moderated by a trainer and post the practice session, there can be another online assessment.



Example 3: Compliance training

This too can be converted to a fully online training. You can opt to increase the impact by adding Performance Support Tools or PSTs, post the online training.

A compliance training on Information Security was converted to a fully online approach.

This enabled tracking, online assessments and self-attestation by learners to be captured easily.

Online component (for primary training)

We created an online course on Information Security that uses **Scenario-Based Learning** approach.

Performance Support Tools (to trigger the required behavioral change)

We added a **Performance Support Tool or PST** that is offered 60-90 days post the formal training. This has a list of factors to watch out for and reinforces the primary learning.



Example 4: Professional skills enhancement training

This can be handled through a blended approach with a significant percentage of learning assets made available as online resources. It can be enhanced through social or collaborative learning and should have a provision for coaching and mentoring.

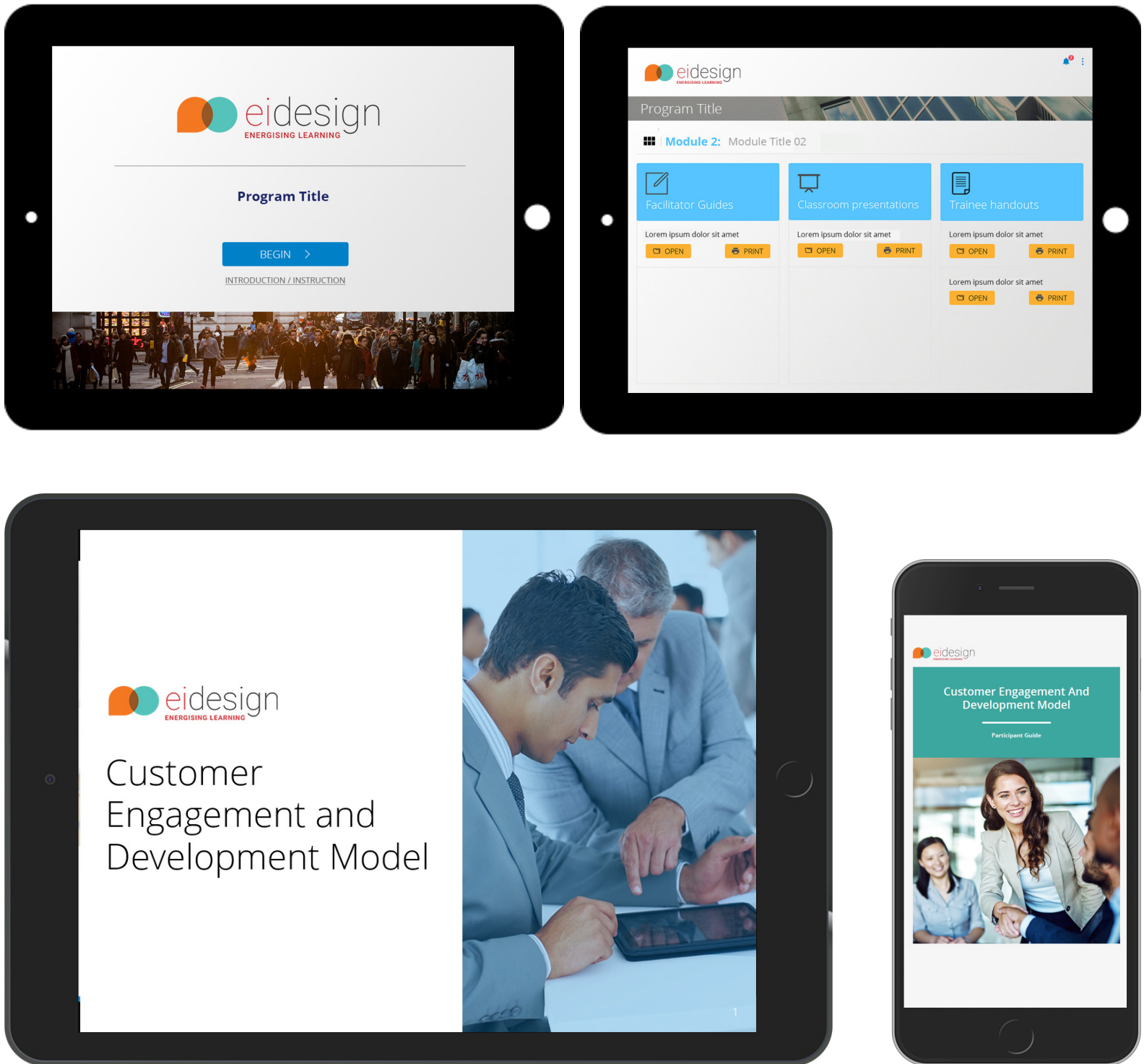
In this case, although a major part of the training (on Financial Literacy for athletes) was classroom based we digitized the classroom delivery experience through an **App**.

Online component

All the resources (ILT decks, Presenter and Participant Guides, and handouts for classroom activities) were made available online.

The facilitated component

The trainer used the App to access the resources on their tablet and manage the session (within the class or virtually).



Example 5: Soft-skills training

This too can be handled through a blended approach that provides a significant percentage of training through online resources.

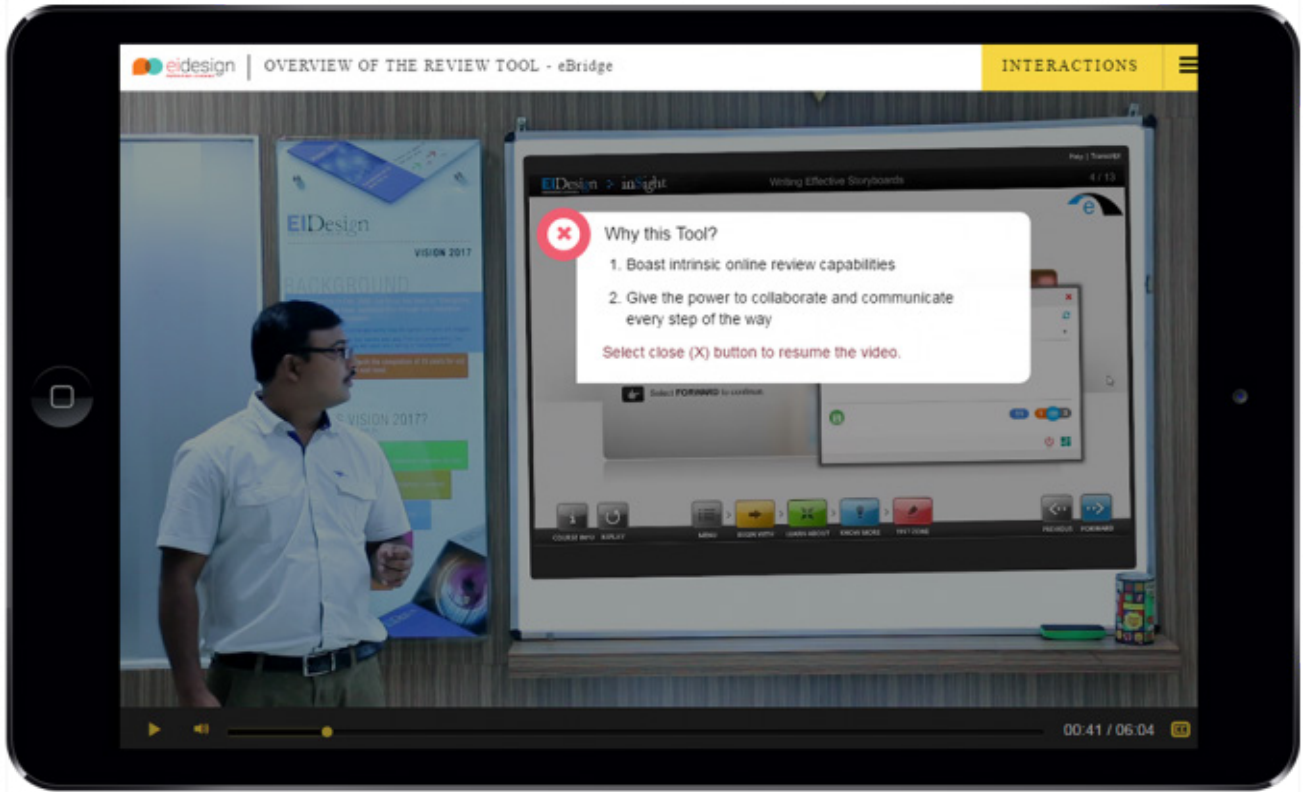
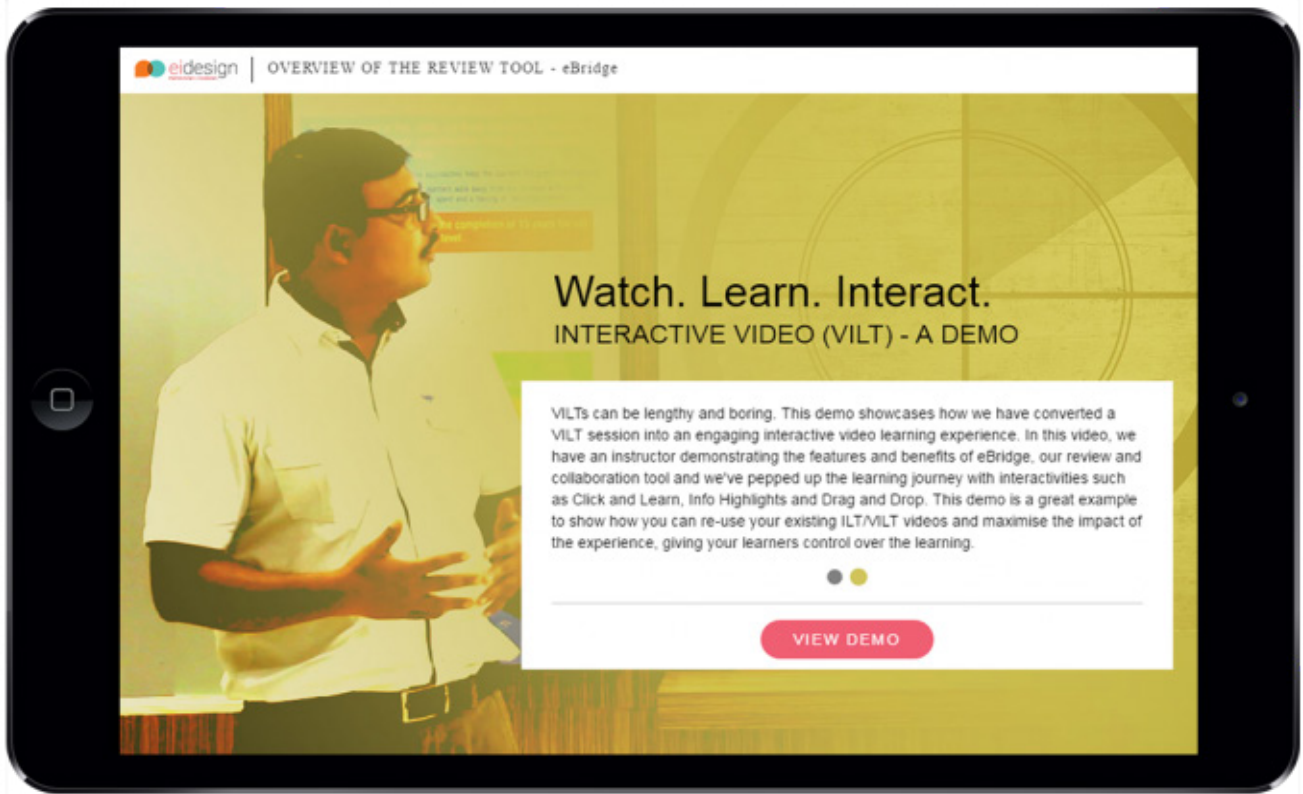
In this case, we recorded the trainer sessions and used them to create an online version of the training.

Online component

Rather than a simplistic approach of the trainer talking and the supporting PowerPoint slides appearing in another window; we opted for an **Interactive video-based** format to bring the material to life.

The facilitated component

The focus of the facilitated sessions shifted to supporting workshops with experts and peers focusing on the application of the learning, problem solving, real-life situations, best practices and so on.



Example 6: Higher Education

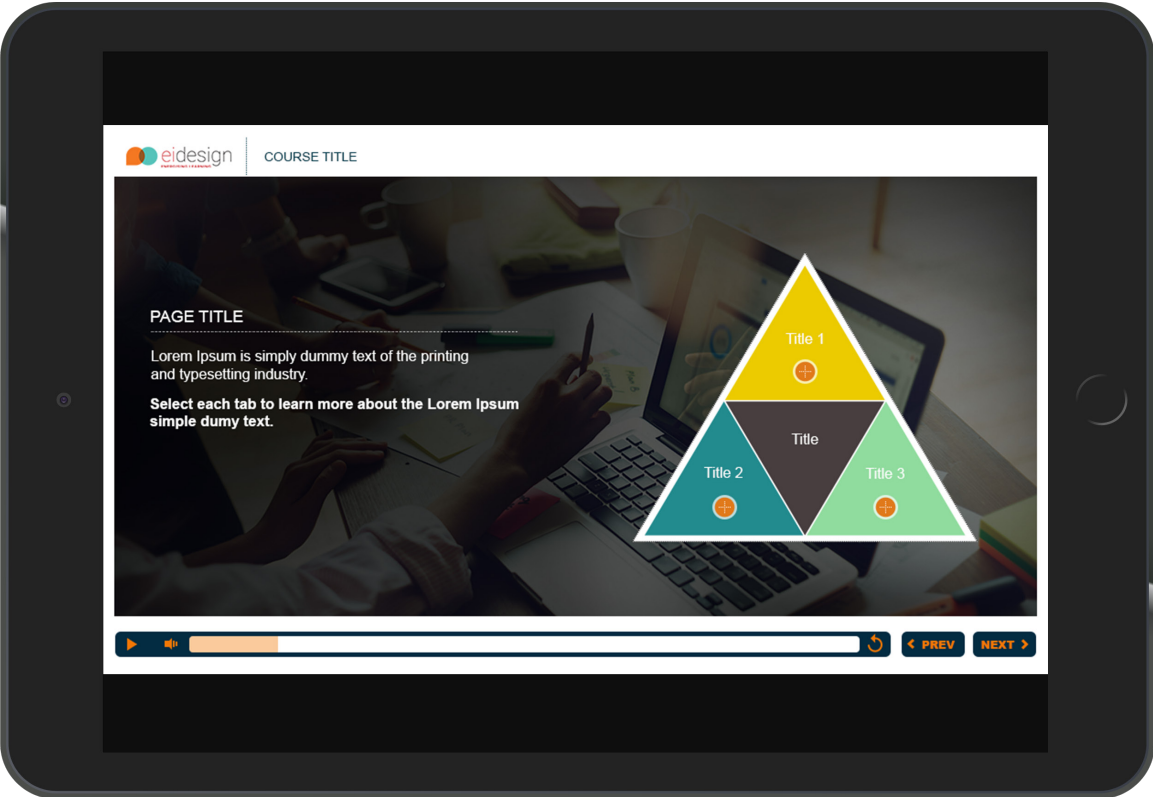
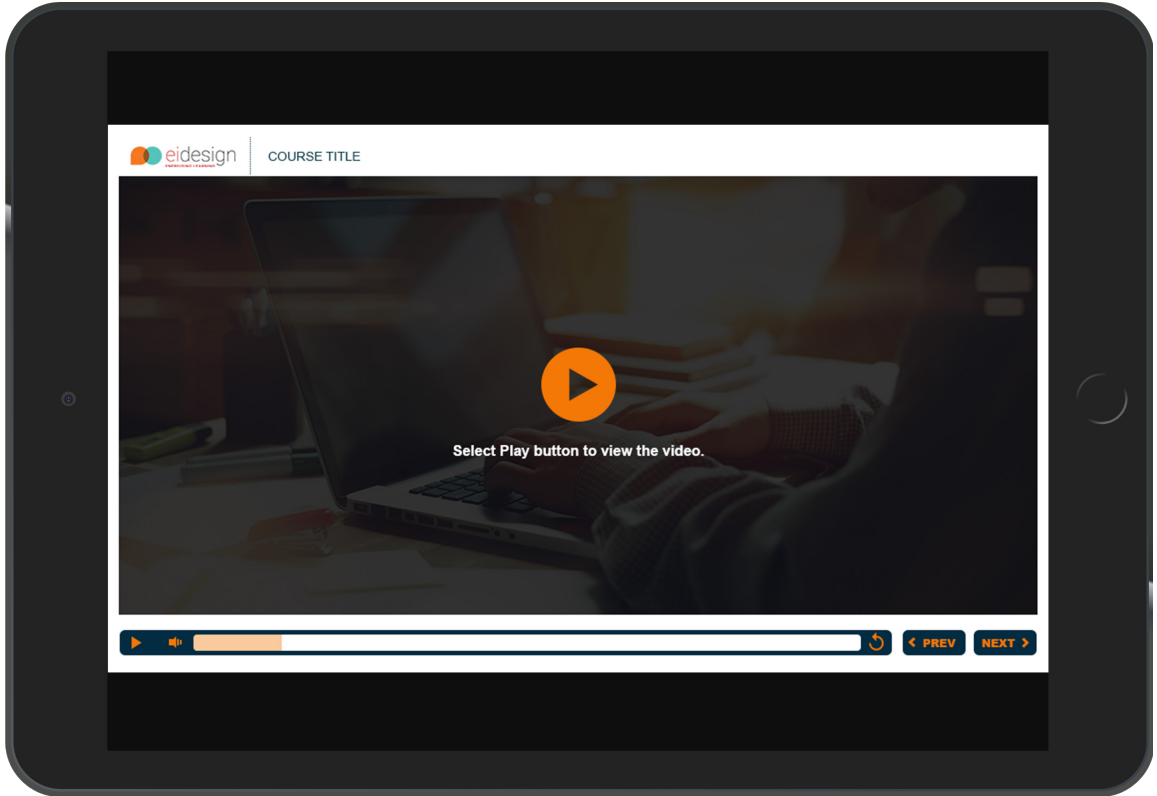
This example features the conversion of a Distance Learning program to a Blended Training approach.

Online component

We converted the existing study guides and supporting collaterals to a self-paced online mobile learning solution. The learning journey was mapped to each week of the term.

The facilitated component

End of each week of the term, the learner gets a session with the faculty member and other peers through the online platform. The focus of the session can range from threaded discussions to interaction with peers and have some online activities or quizzes.



Example 7: Higher education

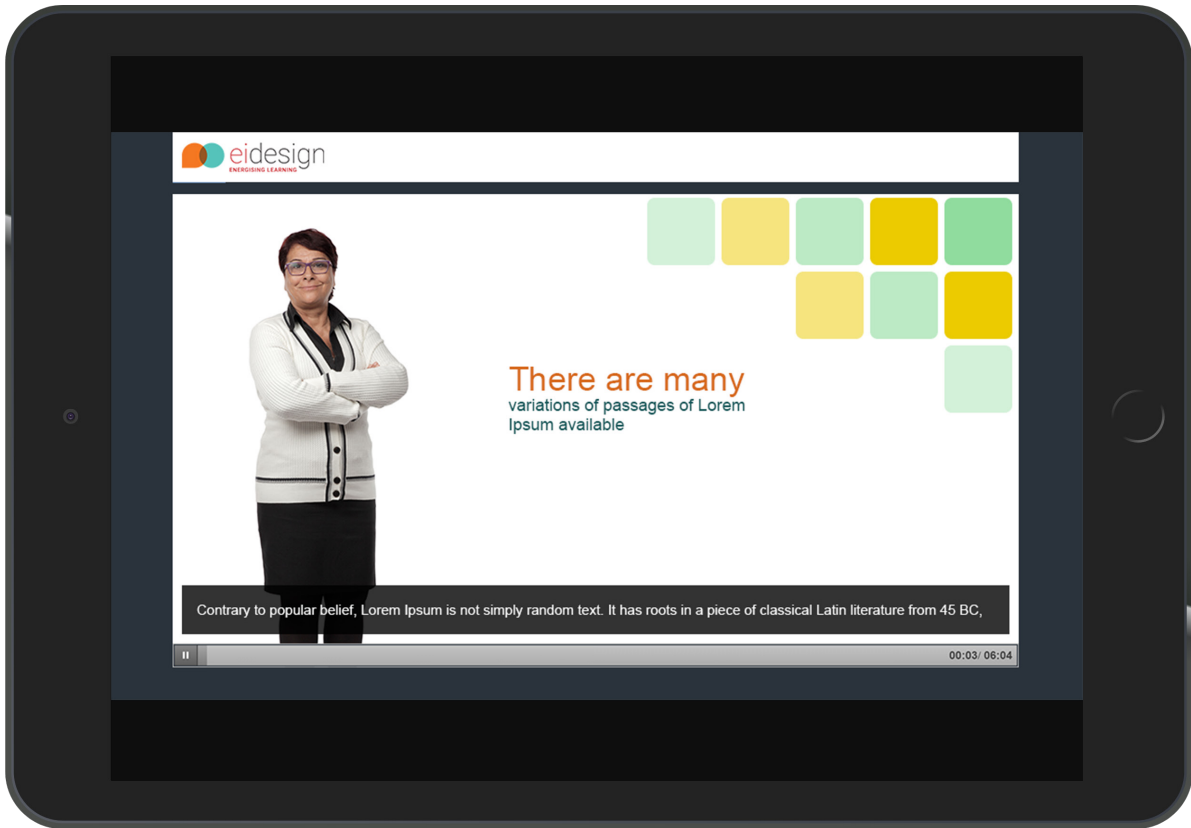
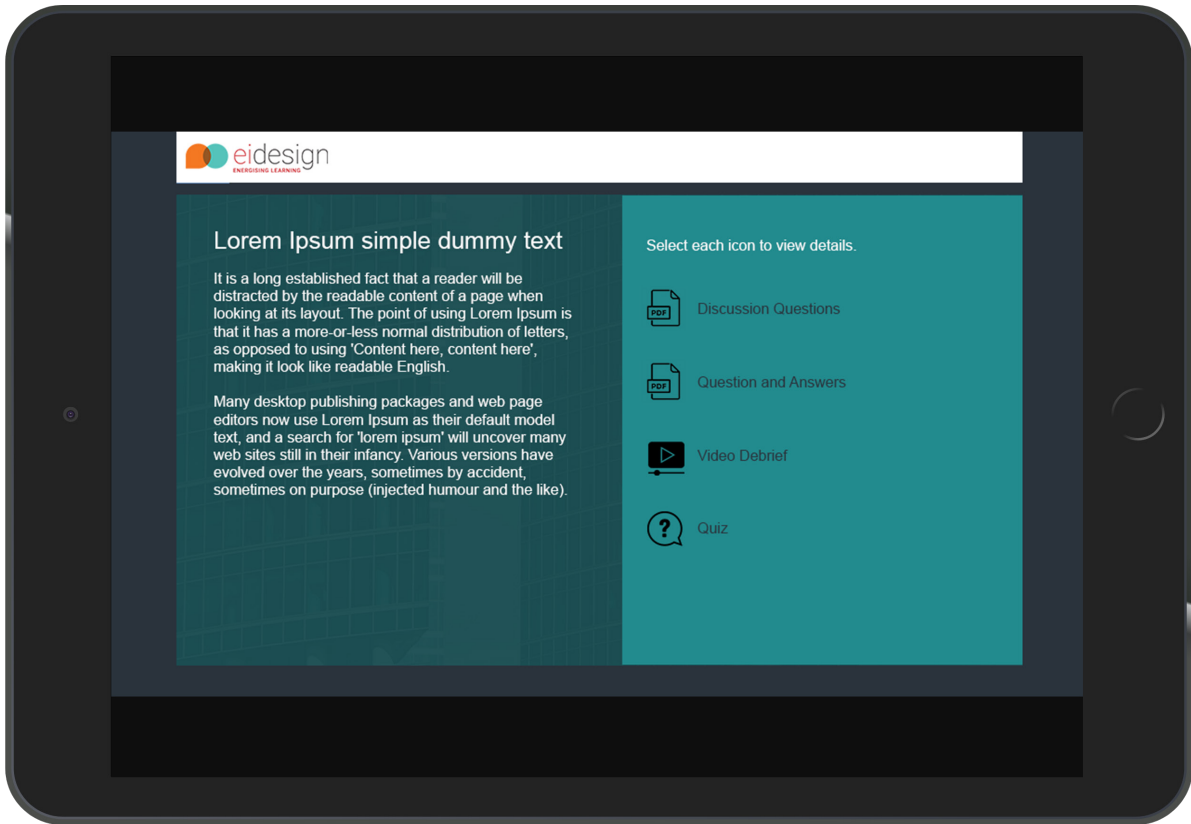
This example features the usage of faculty video as the primary learning collateral.

Online component

The learning journey here features a different combination of assets (in contrast to the previous example). It too has sections that map to each week of the term.

The facilitated component

End of each week of the term, the learner gets a session with the faculty member and other peers through the online platform. The focus of the session can range from threaded discussions to interaction with peers and have some online activities or quizzes.



SUMMARY

I hope this eBook gives you a balanced perspective on the approach you can take as you evaluate the transition of your ILT programs into Blended Training modes.

I firmly believe that a middle-of-the-road approach is often a more sensible choice if you are in the early stages of eLearning adoption. It is also a better choice where learning gains are directly linked to human intervention.

If you have any queries, please [contact me](#).



Also Read

- [Top 10 Benefits of Adopting Blended Training Approach](#)
- [How To Convert Instructor-Led Training To eLearning](#)
- [Digitize Instructor-Led Training Sessions To Increase Employee Engagement And Performance](#)
- [How To Effectively Convert Face-To-Face Instructor-Led Training Into Online Training](#)
- [Tips And Best Practices To Create Highly Effective Blended Training Program Design](#)
- [5 Reasons Why You Should Adopt Blended Training](#)
- [Video: Checklist for Instructor Led Training \(ILT\) To Online Learning](#)
- [Free eBook: Guide to convert your Instructor Lead Training \(ILT\) to eLearning or mLearning](#)

LOOKING TO ADOPT BLENDED TRAINING PROGRAMS IN YOUR LEARNING STRATEGY? EI DESIGN CAN HELP YOU WITH THAT AND MORE!

Our innovative approaches and focus areas include:

- Learning portals with learning paths
- Personalised learning solutions
- Content curation solutions
- Social Learning (collaborative learning)
- Microlearning (for both formal and informal learning)
- Millennial-centric solutions
- Approaches to predict, measure and validate the learnability or learning effectiveness of online courses
- Reporting and analytics

We use the following strategies to create immersive learning:

- Gamification
- Videos and Interactive Videos
- Apps for learning
- Decision making – complex branching simulations
- Scenario-based learning
- Storytorials

We offer a comprehensive services portfolio that includes custom online (eLearning and mLearning) and blended solutions. With a focus on performance gain, we offer a wide range of Performance Support Tools (just-in-time learning/job-aids). We also have a large Localisation practice covering over 26 global languages.

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