

CASE STUDY

Verizon's Learning and Development Team Reinvents Virtual Training with BlueJeans

Even the best teams struggle without the right tools. Verizon's Global Learning and Development (GL&D) unit has been pioneering virtual training since 2007, when the team — which is responsible for the network provider's learning requirements — took a big leap into the world of virtual instructor-led training (VILT) to remove the stigma that virtual training is boring and ineffective.

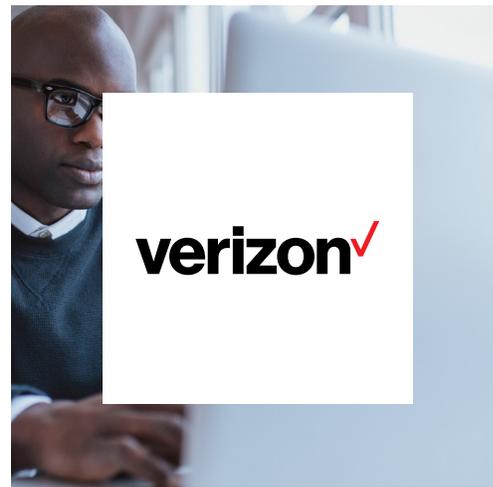
"We really caught the eye of the industry," says Jamie Freeman, Senior Manager, Learning Platforms at Verizon. "We were tapping engagement solutions like nobody else and started following the 'one to two minute' rule: to never let a participant go without touching their keyboard or mouse for longer than one to two minutes."

The team's practices and digital tools soon became industry standards. But with COVID-19 forcing GL&D to move all its instructor-led training (ILT) classes to VILT, the tools failed to hit the mark.

"We knew how to run virtual training, but our previous platform and all virtual meeting spaces weren't ready for that kind of load to be put on them," says Freeman. "All our training classes were being delivered virtually, but everything started to fail, with virtual rooms crashing and people getting kicked out of virtual rooms."

BlueJeans as a Learning Platform

As this was happening, Verizon acquired BlueJeans in May 2020, opening up the possibility of using BlueJeans Meetings as a learning platform.



Industry: Communications and technology

Challenge: As COVID-19 hit, Verizon's Global Learning and Development team converted the majority of its face-to-face instructor-led training (ILT) to virtual instructor led training (VILT) and needed a virtual learning platform to support this.

Solution: The team collaborated with BlueJeans to develop enhancements to BlueJeans Meetings that would enable the effective delivery of virtual learning.

Results: Verizon's Global Learning and Development team now uses BlueJeans for Remote Learning to deliver almost all its instructor-led training sessions virtually.

A pioneering remote learning dashboard enables trainers to control their virtual classrooms and better engage participants.

Learners enjoy seamless audio and video experiences, whether they're using Voice over Internet Protocol or mobile device.

The team saves \$350,000 a year by having fully integrated audio in its learning platform.

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– LOU TEDRICK, VICE PRESIDENT FOR GLOBAL LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT, VERIZON

But there were challenges. BlueJeans Meetings was a video conferencing platform for meetings, whereas the GL&D team’s previous platform featured advanced learning and development tools. For example, it had templates that let instructional designers develop a virtual classroom with unlimited pages.

The team needed those same capabilities. In particular, it wanted to give facilitators the controls they needed — from when participants open chats and polls to how they get information.

“If you truly want to engage every participant in your virtual classroom, you need to know what their experience is like. You need to know how they’re experiencing the information you’re giving them,” says Freeman.

Collaborating to Create Engaging Experiences

The team saw the potential of BlueJeans. It saw an opportunity to collaborate with BlueJeans and develop features for more meaningful virtual learning experiences.

“We noticed more stability in the platform and a lot better video experience. We wanted to help define what BlueJeans could look like for an enterprise learning and development organization that values high levels of engagement and learners’ experience,” says Freeman.

“So, we started working to redefine how we were going to train our instructional designers. For our trainers, we reimagined the way they worked with the BlueJeans platform as well as other tools we were bringing in to add to our level of engagement.”

Facilitator Control Through Teacher Dashboard

The result of that collaboration was BlueJeans for Remote Learning. Comprising enhancements to BlueJeans Meetings, the pack includes features and classroom management tools that support hybrid and virtual learning. It allows instructors to build custom teaching experiences without the complexities of a virtual learning environment.

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– TREVOR MAHER, GLOBAL LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, VERIZON

After rolling out Remote Learning mostly to clients in the education industry, BlueJeans is now launching similar enhancements for enterprises, called BlueJeans Corporate Learning and Training. This new pack features a large Teacher Dashboard, which provides a full view of the training session and quick access to classroom management tools.

There’s also a collaboration board, simultaneous interpretation, closed captioning in five languages, and more.

Enabling Effective Learning with Integrated Audio

The GL&D team is particularly ecstatic about the Teacher Dashboard, after recently transitioning to BlueJeans Meetings. “We needed that control. Honestly, we were dancing when we first saw the dashboard,” says Freeman.

A “wow” moment came when the team realized the BlueJeans platform includes fully integrated audio. Whether participants use Voice over Internet Protocol or a mobile device, they can join a classroom or breakout room and get the same seamless audio experience.

“The fact that I know I can play a video on my computer through screen share and users can hear the sound from that video synced, that was everything,” says Freeman. “It’s one of those few things that made us stand up and clap because nobody else does that as well as BlueJeans.”

According to Trevor Maher, GL&D Associate Director at Verizon, other platforms don’t allow the commingling of audio and video, which is critical for any training to be effective.

“In our previous platform, all participants had to use the same form of audio to speak with each other during breakout sessions,” he says.

Integrated audio saves trainers the trouble of managing audio–video connections that don’t work properly and disrupt the entire class. “And from a cost perspective, BlueJeans saves us money because we don’t need a second audio provider on top of our VILT platform. That’s savings of \$350,000 or more a year,” adds Maher.

Supporting Interaction through Greater Video Capabilities

For Jennifer Janish, VILT Consultant at Verizon, the video capabilities of BlueJeans Meetings have addressed a common complaint about the previous platform, which only allowed up to three participants on screen at the same time.

“The biggest thing about BlueJeans that people here absolutely love is I can have 30, 40, 50 people in my class, and they can all be on camera,” she says. “And every time BlueJeans makes an update, I can have more and more people on the same screen.”

Trainers appreciate this because it encourages interaction, adds Janish. “They can see all their students and what each one is doing.”

More Features in the Pipeline

Although the GL&D team has only recently moved to BlueJeans Meetings, early feedback from trainers and instructional designers has been great.

“They love it,” says Freeman. “Once trainers saw that BlueJeans is capable of giving them that control of their classroom so that they can view things the way they need to in order to interact with all their participants, the feedback was great. They’re excited about what’s to come.”

The new features BlueJeans is planning to roll out include downloadable Q&As, “weather person” mode, reusable breakout rooms, and poll display.

“This is just the beginning of the remote learning capabilities,” says Lou Tedrick, Verizon’s Vice President for GL&D. “Together with BlueJeans, we have brought the structure of how we want things to be set up for learning and development professionals. Now, BlueJeans is going to keep adding features and make the platform better and better.”

ABOUT VERIZON’S GLOBAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The Global Learning and Development team at Verizon leads all the company’s learning and development requirements — from functional training to leadership and executive development. Comprised of 850+ learning professionals across the globe, the team supports Verizon employees as well as third-party partners for a learner population of approximately 230,000.