



# **VIDEO ROLE-PLAY:** PERFECTING WORKPLACE PERFORMANCE



**Rehearsal**  
**VIDEO ROLE-PLAY**

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## INTRODUCTION

We've all heard it a million times, "practice makes perfect." However, it can be difficult to provide both new and current employees with the adequate practice necessary to train for a new position or stay at the top of their game.

In order to maximize the benefits of practice, many companies incorporate role-play into training programs. Role-play allows employees to practice their communication skills as well as their knowledge of products and content under similar pressures to those that they will experience in real work situations.

While traditional role-play is a valuable training tool, it has drawbacks that include travel and opportunity costs, limited participation, apprehensive learners, and inconsistent feedback.

How can these drawbacks be mitigated?

### **Video role-play.**

Video role-play offers all of the benefits of traditional training methods while reducing costs, increasing accessibility, and providing a platform through which employees can practice safely and comfortably.

## THE BENEFITS OF ROLE-PLAY FOR TRAINING

### ROLE-PLAY TRAINING WORKS

Companies are investing in employee education in order to gain a competitive advantage. In 2013, companies in the United States increased training expenditures by 15%, the greatest rise in training spending in the last seven years.<sup>1</sup> Research reveals that role-play is one of the most effective training methods available.

- Active learning facilitated by role-play increased student comprehension of subject matter, resulting in higher test scores than those students who were taught in a lecture-based format.<sup>2</sup>
- A survey of 198 urban policy students revealed that role-play favorably impacted advanced learning with 88% of participants reporting the ability to apply role-play concepts to real-life situations. Students reported that role-play simulations enabled the use of creative and critical thinking more effectively than did conventional tests, essays, and lectures.<sup>3</sup>
- In a study relating role-play to work performance, 90% of new sales agents whose training included role-play were considered competent for their position two weeks after training. In comparison, only 15% of agents were deemed competent in a control group that did not receive role-play training.<sup>4</sup>

### PREPARE FOR THE UNEXPECTED

Traditional training methods provide the framework for trainees to deal with well-known

and well-structured problems. However in sales, customer service, human resources, safety and other areas, unforeseen events and unforeseen human interactions quickly change the expected to the unexpected. Employees in all kinds of positions can benefit from using role-play to immerse themselves in the scenarios they will encounter on the job. Role-play helps employees work through these situations in a safe environment.<sup>5</sup>

Successfully communicating and performing in unanticipated situations requires critical thinking and the ability to react with poise and professionalism. Incorporating role-play scenarios in training bridges the gap between reacting and being prepared.

### SIMULATE REAL WORLD EXPERIENCE

Role-play creates a pressure to perform that approximates real world situations. High-performing people who interact with customers need nimble minds to respond to the unexpected. The experiential, problem-based learning afforded through role-play helps trainees to develop their thinking and their responses.<sup>6</sup>

Trainees make fewer mistakes and apply their learning faster with active, realistic learning.<sup>6</sup> This type of learning can prevent errors that have serious consequences such as angry clients, failed negotiations, or business liabilities. Role-play helps trainees to develop communication and problem-solving skills, as well as to build confidence while acting as a safety-net before they perform in the real world.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Bersin, J. (2014). Spending on Corporate Training Soars: Employee Capabilities Now a Priority. *Forbes Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/joshbersin/2014/02/04/the-recovery-arrives-corporate-training-spend-skyrockets/>

<sup>2</sup>Kern, B. (1999). Using Role Play Simulation and Hands-on Models to Enhance Students' Learning Fundamental Accounting Concepts. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 1(1), 1-27. Retrieved from <http://josotl.indiana.edu/article/view/1581/1580>

<sup>3</sup>Silvia, C. (2012). The Impact of Simulations on Higher-Level Learning. *JPAE*, 18(2), 397-422. [http://www.naspaa.org/jpaemessenger/article/vol18-2/10\\_silva.pdf](http://www.naspaa.org/jpaemessenger/article/vol18-2/10_silva.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>Munyai, N. M. (June 2011). *Effect of Role-play as a Formative Assessment Technique on Job Performance*. Retrieved from [http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/6100/thesis\\_munyai\\_n.pdf?sequence=1](http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/6100/thesis_munyai_n.pdf?sequence=1)

<sup>5</sup>Dodsworth, B. (2000). Using role play successfully. *Training Journal*, 18, 18-21. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/202941165?accountid=14552>

<sup>6</sup>Clapper, T. C. (2010). Role Play and Simulation. *Education Digest*, 75(8), 39-43. Retrieved from [http://scholar.googleusercontent.com/scholar?q=cache:mynA2nM6gU8J:scholar.google.com/+Role+Play+and+Simulation.+Education+Digest&hl=en&as\\_sdt=0,29&as\\_vis=1](http://scholar.googleusercontent.com/scholar?q=cache:mynA2nM6gU8J:scholar.google.com/+Role+Play+and+Simulation.+Education+Digest&hl=en&as_sdt=0,29&as_vis=1)

<sup>7</sup>Lowenstein, A. J., & Bradshaw, M. J. (2004). *Fuszard's Innovative Teaching Strategies in Nursing*. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, Inc.

## VIDEO ROLE-PLAY: A NEW APPROACH TO TRAINING

Video role-play training reduces the drawbacks of traditional role-play methods while maintaining the advantages. Today, companies work with limited time, tight budgets, and employees all over the globe. Using video in conjunction with the internet allows businesses to capitalize on the benefits of role-play training.

The ways in which video maximizes the advantages of role-play include:

- Reducing Training Costs
- Minimizing Time and Location Restrictions
- Alleviating Performance Anxiety
- Improving Learning and Assessment

### REDUCE TRAINING COSTS

#### REDUCE TRAVEL AND OPPORTUNITY COSTS

Recording role-play scenarios in individualized sessions cuts costs associated with travel. Administrative costs for registration, marketing, and space acquisition may also be reduced or eliminated. Additionally, reducing the time employees are pulled out of the field to attend training sessions increases profitability by minimizing opportunity costs.<sup>8</sup>

#### USE VIDEO FROM PREVIOUS SESSIONS FOR TRAINING

By recording role-plays, the videos themselves become assets for future training. This company-specific library of videos can offset the cost of filming, purchasing footage, and time spent searching for new training material.

### MINIMIZE TIME AND LOCATION RESTRICTIONS

#### MOVE FROM SYNCHRONOUS TO ASYNCHRONOUS

Traditional learning environments require trainers and trainees to be in the same place at the same time (synchronous training). Capturing video of live role-play sessions converts synchronous training into asynchronous self-study that can be done anytime, anywhere.<sup>9</sup> Trainees can review and practice in less stressful settings such as in the home or office, while trainers can assign

and assess tasks when it best suits their schedules.

#### MAXIMIZE THE POWER OF THE INTERNET

Using webcams in conjunction with the Internet to capture role-plays allows trainees to improve performance as well as to be constantly connected to their peers and trainers. With today's near ubiquitous web access, new training can be introduced almost immediately.

<sup>8</sup>Talbot, J. (2011). *Training in Organisations: A Cost-Benefit Analysis*. Abingdon, Oxon, GBR: Gower Publishing Limited.

<sup>9</sup>Sze, S., & Cowden, P. (2012). Using Asynchronous Online Instruction to Maximize Learning. *Allied Academies International Conference*, 16(1), 43-47. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1273876589?accountid=14552>

## ALLEVIATE PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

### CREATE A NON-THREATENING ATMOSPHERE

Practicing and performing role-play scenarios in familiar and safe environments can minimize trainees' anxiety. Unlike traditional role-play, during which extroverted or more experienced students often dominate the stage, video creates an equal opportunity environment and reduces the pressures to perform.<sup>10</sup>

### PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE

Video provides trainees' with the ability to review their performances and to practice as often as necessary, which can reduce their anxiety and help them master their responses.<sup>11</sup>

## IMPROVE LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

### STUDY TOP PERFORMERS

Studies indicate that viewing another person undertaking a complicated task expedites the viewer's comprehension of that same task.<sup>12</sup> Through video recordings, trainees can view the role-play responses of top performers and have the opportunity to identify techniques to borrow and practice.

### IMPROVE ASSESSMENT THROUGH PLAYBACK

Research has found that observing oneself on video encourages the comprehension of the procedural information required to solve problems.<sup>13</sup> Video provides trainees with the opportunity to assess their own role-play

responses and can draw attention to previously unknown deficiencies or mannerisms. Identifying unfavorable characteristics and re-recording responses provides trainees with a chance to think actively, self-critique, and modify their performances.

Additionally, video playback provides trainers with the opportunity to offer more detailed and consistent feedback. Live role-play sessions are conducted in real-time, increasing the chance that aspects of performances may go unnoticed. Trainers can view video role-play submissions as many times as is necessary for them to make accurate assessments of trainee performances.

<sup>10</sup>Sze, S., & Cowden, P. (2012). Using Asynchronous Online Instruction to Maximize Learning. *Allied Academies International Conference*, 16(1), 43-47. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1273876589?accountid=14552countid=14552>

<sup>11</sup>Simmons, T. (2010). Using Virtual Role-play to Solve Training Problems: How do You Train Employees to Think on Their Feet? *eLearn*, 2010 (6). doi: 10.1145/1821982.1821985

<sup>12</sup>Foti F., Menghini D., Mandolesi L., Federico F., & Vicari S., et al. (2013). Learning by Observation: Insights from Williams Syndrome. *PLoS ONE*, 8(1): e53782. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0053782

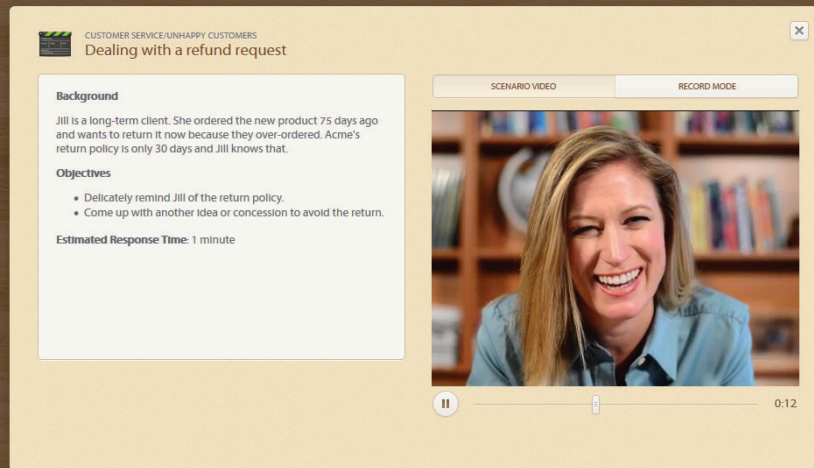
<sup>13</sup>Fireman, G., Kose, G., & Soloman, M. J. (2003). Self-observation and learning: The effect of watching oneself on problem solving performance. *Cognitive Development*, 18(3), 339-354. doi: 10.1016/S0885-2014(03)00038-8

## CONCLUSION

Role-play is an effective training method, but companies are often limited by traditional role-play, which can be expensive, anxiety-inducing, and difficult to assess effectively. By using video, companies have the opportunity to maximize role-play benefits while reducing traditional role-play limitations. Incorporating video into role-play training allows trainees to actively think and self-critique, while providing

trainers with the chance to prepare observations and criticisms before evaluating performances and submitting feedback at their convenience.

Video role-play optimizes company training investments by providing all of the advantages of traditional role-play while minimizing expenses and maximizing accessibility.



## ABOUT REHEARSAL VRP

Rehearsal Video Role-Play (VRP) is designed specifically to improve role-play training effectiveness in today's work environment. Rehearsal VRP allows companies to introduce new products and procedures to trainees instantly without the cost and delay of travel, loss of employee productivity, and the inconvenience of coordinating training sessions.

Rehearsal VRP is a revolutionary training platform that requires only a webcam or mobile device and an Internet connection for access. Trainers have the ability to create role-play scenarios for groups or individuals, and the advantages of on-demand web accessibility allows trainees to practice and submit responses any time, any place. Trainers can evaluate role-play submissions against customizable performance criteria and have the

capability to provide feedback through personal notes and/or video responses. Rehearsal VRP allows trainers to share stellar performances with the group, allowing trainees to review recordings, rank responses, and learn from one another. Video role-play submissions are stored and can be replayed for trainer evaluation, self-study, or for use in subsequent training to further enhance learning.

With Rehearsal VRP, it isn't necessary to worry about finding compatible technologies for recording, storing, sharing, and maintaining records as these features are combined into one easy-to-use system, making Rehearsal VRP a perfect choice for today's training needs.

[www.videoroleplay.com](http://www.videoroleplay.com)