How To Implement Video Learning And Animation: A Guide For Training Managers On A Tight Budget

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3 Reasons Why Video Learning Is An Essential Learner Engagement Strategy For Any Industry

Defining Learner Engagement

The goal of any training program is to give participants enough information to be able to influence their behavior. Whether that behavior is improved customer service skills for call center employees, closing skills for sales staff, or safety skills for warehouse workers, the key to getting learning to stick long enough to affect actions is engagement. Learner engagement is the extent to which people are motivated by and interacting with your material. In simple terms, the more drive they have to learn, the deeper their involvement will become and opportunities to create lasting impact will increase.

Video presents a unique opportunity to influence learner engagement--especially animation. Animated video can be an effective complement to any blended learning strategy. In corporate training, video can introduce culture, enhance self-paced modules, or deliver key messages from leadership. It's versatility, however, that has helped video become its own standalone learning strategy.
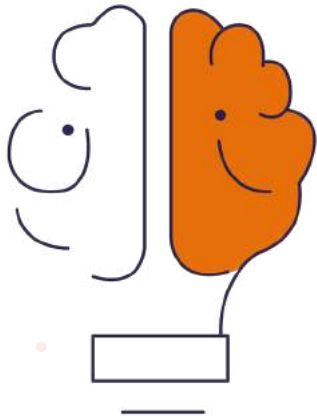
What is Video-Based Learning?

Video-based learning is when training is delivered primarily through video as opposed to other media, like podcasts, modules, live lectures, or written materials. With recent improvements in technology, streaming and on-demand video for entertainment purposes helped set the stage for video-based learning. We consume video to learn about our world. It's no wonder people watch over 1 billion hours of YouTube videos every day.

From an instructional standpoint, video is an effective tool not just for blended learning, but for any learning initiative. That's why 51% of US adults use YouTube videos to learn new skills. This exposure means students know what to expect from the medium and can focus on the content being delivered. That improved focus benefits corporate training and adult learning programs in three significant ways.

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Clearer Understanding of the Material

Animation and video in a learning environment can transform the way we grasp and engage with new material by supporting clarity. Clarity, in this instance, means the learner can identify what they are supposed to gain from the material without having to sort through irrelevant or illogical information.

For example, if you were putting together a compliance training on ethics, what constitutes a violation and how to report one would be front and center as the most important parts. Information about theories in ethics and its history are more suitable for an academic setting, not employee training, and would not be included. Because video training tends to be shorter in nature, learners get to the heart of the matter quickly, as there is no room for excessive or inessential messages. Removing clutter helps a viewer focus on exactly the behavior they should adopt.

Animated videos for training can also make the content clearer using scenarios. Through scenarios, you can introduce a concept in your video, like the appropriate steps to de-escalate an irate caller, then show an animated character walking through the desired behavior. An animated demonstration further illustrates the key points with context and removes any doubt in the learner's mind about what they should have from by watching the training video.

Better Retention

John Sweller's groundbreaking Cognitive Load Theory neatly divides our learning process into three sections: sensory memory, working memory, and long-term memory. A piece of information must be committed first to the sensory memory before it can make it to working memory and finally to long-term memory. According to the Cognitive Load Theory, learners are very selective about what information they commit to memory. If you can't appeal to their sensory memory, there's no way you'll get through to their long-term memory.

Enter video. Video combines visual and auditory cues in a way that facilitates connections in the brain, maximizing learners' memory. In fact, video helps adult learners retain a lot more information, which is the key to changing behavior. Studies have shown that students can forget up to 90% of what they learn in a traditional classroom course. However, training content delivered via video is 83% more effective. Additionally, learning in bite-sized formats like video is 17% more efficient at transferring skills to a learner's job.

With so many employees working remotely these days, having a clear path to learning retention is even more essential. Before, your company's staff could participate in routine refreshers or classroom remediations to keep their skills fresh. Now, a solid distance learning strategy is the key to maintaining, or enhancing, the skills of your workforce.
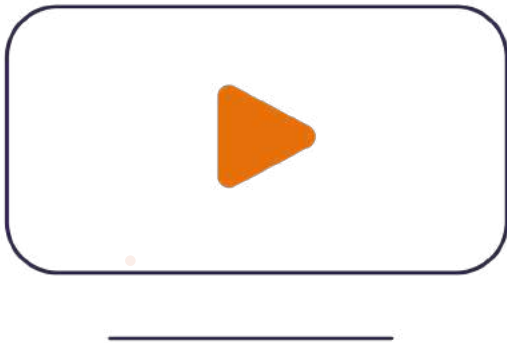
Animated videos for eLearning solve the first part of the memory equation by getting a learner to engage their sensory memory when interacting with the content. You can engage a learner's working memory by making use of simulations or reintroducing scenarios. Animation is great at storytelling and presenting a learner with a situation to think through or comment on uses higher-level cognitive functions. This re-enforces the key points of the training, boosting the chances of retention until the employee can put it into practice in the real world.

Appeals to All Learning Styles

Video learning merges audio and visual cues, brevity, and context in a way that makes it exceptionally good as a teaching method.

Visual learners are those that need imagery, charts, graphs or other depictions of the material to deepen their understanding. Simply reading words on a page or listening to someone describe a product or situation will leave them scratching their heads. To best reach visual learners, a training needs to illustrate its content. Video learning provides an easy way to show concepts and information rather than relying on the student to form a mental image based on their own understanding.

Auditory learners are those that need to hear the information to absorb it fully. These users engage best with content when there's a narrative or storytelling element to it. Listing facts or reading from a technical or policy manual, are both common examples of the wrong way to engage an auditory learner. It's not the human voice that triggers the learning, but the ability to follow the thread of a scenario for key points to commit to memory. Using video learning means your script and narrator will enable students to engage with your materials in the way they learn best.

You might be wondering how video learning can engage the third learning type, Kinesthetic learners. For that answer, we turn to animation. Animation can help a learner better grasp new material because it offers one unique element: movement. Think of it this way--would you rather watch someone point at a few indistinguishable gray objects on a desk or watch someone put each of those tools to use?

The latter is not only more entertaining, but it also allows learners to engage with what they are seeing by using both their sense of sight and their sense of hearing. Finally, when a learner can interact with the animations, they are committing the new information firmly into the long term memory bank.

Developing a learner engagement strategy

If you are ready to consider introducing video learning to your corporate training plans, you'll want to think about your strategy for actively engaging learners. To help you get started, here are a few questions to answer:

- ■ *Which learners am I trying to engage?* You should always have a clear audience in mind when starting any employee training project.

- ■ *What does engagement look like to me?* This could be something as simple as more views per course for optional trainings or something as measured as recommendation scores on the course evaluation.

- ■ *What types of content do my learners find most engaging right now?* Remember, training should always be learner-centric. That means even though you'll have your own ideas for observing and measuring engagement, your training shouldn't be built solely based on what you find engaging. Take the time to learn about what your audience likes.

- ■ *Where can video best shine?* When you're starting out, you want to target video learning to the areas it can be the most effective with the least expense. Many companies have found orientation, customer service and/or safety videos to be excellent starting points.

5 Video Learning Animation Styles And Best Practices You Should Follow

Keeping up with workplace trends and creating time-efficient learning and development programs are consistently rated in the top three concerns of L&D managers. With the pace of business information increasing every day, keeping an educated and well-trained staff is no easy task. Supervisors, C-suite leaders, and even instructional designers have to think about new and better ways to strategically implement training programs that will keep their companies competitive. Over the years, blended learning has provided a number of solutions to these concerns, but now corporate training has a new ally--animation.
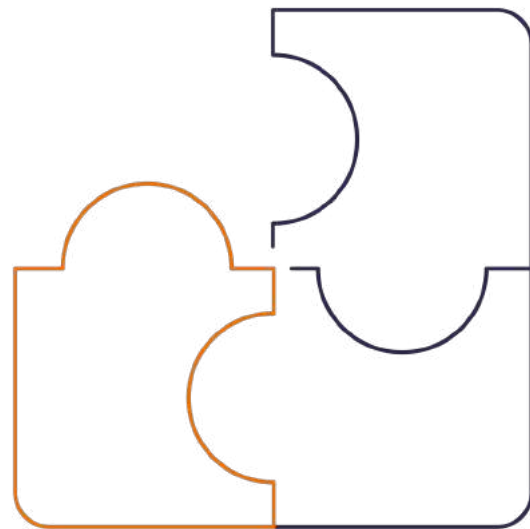
Learning and Animation

Animation is an amazing tool for eLearning, and it's not just for kids. With animation, educators can take their content to the next level, make it engaging, easy to understand, and emotionally accessible to all kinds of viewers.

Animation excels at explaining complex topics. eLearning Animation is great for emotional learning since it can keep information impartial among audiences. When it comes to learning about difficult subjects, animation is a great way to explain complex ideas in a simple stylefashion. Color and movement help to create a distinct experience that learners are more likely to remember.

Animation keeps learners focused on the content. Creators can emphasize just one action at a time, which guides viewers through a topic or event without overwhelming them. Learners have the opportunity to commit each piece to memory before moving on to the next, which increases the chances of information retention when it's time to apply or recall the concepts learned.

Animation keeps the material engaging. High engagement is important for any kind of learning program, but video isn't always thought of as a way to encourage interaction. Many programs use it as a one-way lecture rather than an experience. With animation's help, creators can develop a journey that starts with video then moves to microlearning webpages, animated widgets, or even real-time chats with an animated character.

Video Learning Animation Styles

When trying to decide on what type of instructional video to create it's important to start with the style. Animation offers a number of video types, each with its own best practices, benefits, and drawbacks. The 5 most common are discussed below.

Whiteboard

Whiteboard animation videos, also known as "doodle videos," are one of the most common these days. Its informal style makes it great for short explainer videos and with the right software, they're fast and easy to create. Whiteboard animations tell a story with pictures drawn on a dry erase board using simulated animation.

You would use the whiteboard eLearning video animation style when you want to take a minimalist, brand-neutral approach. The absence of color, minute-detail, and, in many cases, characters, means you can focus on the key aspects of a scenario or broad steps of a process. This style is all about keeping the essentials to drive home a key point.

2D Animation

2D animation is one of the most popular types of animation and is considered the most traditional type because it can be hand-drawn or completely computer-generated. It visualizes characters in a two-dimensional space, much like a cartoon. 2D animation is perfect for engaging learners of all ages, evoking emotion that motivates learners to dig into your course content.

This animation type can be incorporated into a training video as motion graphics, character lecture, or story motion.

2D motion graphics are essentially graphic design elements with some movement. This style is common in explainer videos, where visuals and characters interact, but the movements are simple because the graphics enhance the content rather than being essential to understanding it. A typical example would be bullet points fading in next to a speaker.

A character lecture is exactly what it sounds like, an animated version of a subject matter expert, member of leadership, or other speaker talking about the material. 2D character lecture adds a few more components of animation than 2D motion graphics. It's ideal when you want characters to have accurate lip-sync.

The final type of 2D animation is story motion. This can showcase a character or a scenario in a two-dimensional space. Storytelling is at the core of 2D story motion animation. It's better used for showing situations to your learners or to show situations where multi-character dialogue matters.

3D Animation

3D animation involves high-quality, state of the art eLearning animation. This immersive, realistic style of animation takes your course into another dimension—literally.

3D is best reserved for large, complex projects like simulations or working models. This animation style can be applied to characters, scenarios, or figures.


3D character animation focuses on the characters themselves over the environment. It's perfect for showing real-world situations that can be dangerous, like safety procedures. 3D can also be applied to character lectures. It has all the benefits of a 2D character animation but feels more immersive.

3D scenario animation focuses on the situation instead of on a character. This type of animation can be particularly useful in showing how to operate machinery or completing a multi-step process.

3D also excels at recreating figures and models. Showing the inner workings of an engine, the proper way to harness oneself into safety equipment, or the location of a hard to see gland become easy with 3D rendering.

Screencast
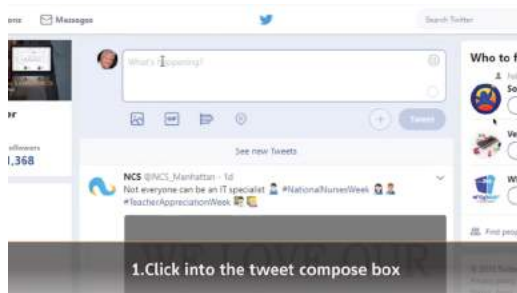
Screencasts are another effective type of eLearning video that, when used correctly, can deepen learners' knowledge. Screencasts are simply a recording of your computer screen. You can either record your screen alone or with audio, depending on the software you use.

Screencasts are great because they show, rather than tell. They're ideal for software walk-throughs or computer tutorials. If you want learners to maneuver anything on a screen, screencasts are the way to do it.

Stock Footage

Stock footage might be an unlikely addition to this list because it is often live-action film, but this pre-recorded footage can also contain typographic animations or other graphics that will support you in completing a solid training video.

Stock footage can actually be more cost-effective than doing live-action film yourself. It's a great complement to other animation styles and can keep your learners engaged by providing some visual variety. As a best practice, they can be used to break up explainer videos but shouldn't be any longer than 20 seconds. Too much stock footage will overwhelm your content and the overall video will become less effective.

Getting Started

Animation as a medium isn't just for children's cartoons—it's for engaging, emotional learning, building brands, and more! You can make a confident first step by choosing an experienced partner that will act as your guide and take the guesswork out of developing training videos for your staff.

A Deep Dive Into The Animation Process Of Training Video Production

Animation for Education Purposes

Animation has existed for over a hundred years, and ever since the first hand-drawn characters glimmered on old-fashioned movie screens, the medium has been thought of as child's play. The novelty of animation made it perfect for capturing the attention of young minds because of its fanciful storytelling capabilities, but it would be decades before its value would be understood in education.

Because it combines audio and visuals in a way that makes for a complete experience, animated videos have the ability to speak to all learner types. Animation also explains complex subjects well. Its versatility allows you to show complex machinery from any angle or depict statistical information in a fascinating way; and when telling a story, the possibilities are endless. eLearning animation can also make use of audio cues, color schemes, and characters to provide countless examples of any subject matter with ease.

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While every animated video is different, the process of creating them is a mix of standard instructional design and filmmaking practices.

Creating an Animated Training Video

Making an animated video may seem difficult at first, but there are many benefits to creating an animated training video. Unlike live-action videos, animation can cater to an educator's specific needs. Partnering with a veteran company is one way to ensure a good experience when developing your own training videos, but whether you fly solo or not, these six steps are critical.

Instructional design

This is all about setting learning objectives and an overall course goal. A learning objective defines what you want your learners to get out of your course. As the course creator, you can define these objectives by listing the skills, knowledge, or abilities your viewer should retain after watching your video. Good learning objectives:
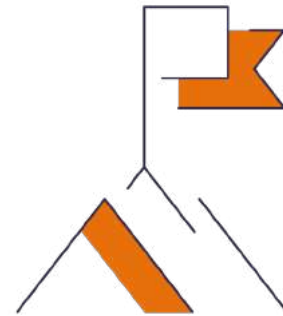
- **Are specific.** Vague objectives open the door to ineffective videos. For instance, if you were going to make a safety training video, an objective to "reduce accidents" isn't specific enough to be useful. However, if your objective was to "demonstrate proper team lifting techniques" both you and your viewer understand the video's purpose.

- **Reflect behavior.** Objectives should always start with a verb because they represent the action the learner will be empowered to take after interacting with the content.

- **Can be measured.** Learning objectives are no good if you can't measure them. You can use rubrics, pre/post-tests, assignments, and even peer reviews to determine if the learner was able to act on the instruction they received.

Scripting

Scripts help you save time while maximizing the value of your course. They are the bones of the eLearning animation. Before an animation team can craft a dynamic video, a well-written script has to be in place. An animated video script should address the message, story, character development, action, and dialogue as appropriate.

The message is what you're hoping to convey and it should relate directly to the objectives that were laid out in the instructional design stage. From there, the message is restructured into a story. Changing the objectives into narrative form makes the information more relatable. It gives the learner more context about the where, when, why, and how of the content.

Not every animation will have characters but most do. Characters add a human element to the material and can make it much more personal to a learner. Taking the time to select the aesthetics and attitudes of the characters in your animated video will give it an authentic feel. The script should also contain information on what actions the characters will take and any dialogue they, or a narrator, will say.

When taken as a whole, the script is your training video on paper, before the magic happens.

Storyboarding

Simply put, the storyboard stage allows the animation team to see how a video will play out in a tentative sketch before committing any one idea to the final project. At this stage, there is no animation, just static images that perhaps only vaguely seem to fit together as a cohesive narrative.
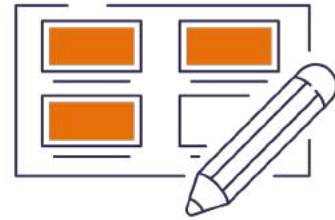
Additionally, the storyboarding process isn't frame-by-frame. Instead, only the most important frames in your video will be drawn out. Frames in between these keyframes will be added in later.

It's during this stage that the video's flow gets sorted out as the storyboards go through multiple revisions to find the best fit. It also allows the video production team to solve any technical problems before creating the finished video.

Voice Over

Quality audio and narration are an important component of any successful eLearning animation for a few reasons. First, sub-par audio degrades the professionalism of the finished product and can become a distraction from the content. Second, for auditory learners, poor audio or narration means their ability to commit the information to memory will be impaired.
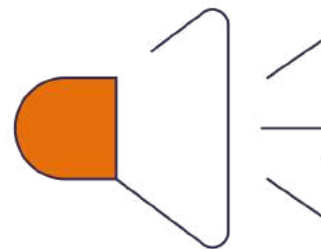
They may struggle more to simply hear what is said rather than actually understanding it. Third, the tone is a big part of animated explainer videos and audio that conflicts with or detracts from the tone the visuals set will turn viewers off rather than pull them in. Lastly, when done well, narration and sound effects make for a coordinated audio experience that can elevate your branded videos.

For a quality voice over, you can select an internal staff member with a good speaking voice and natural inflection or you can hire a professional voice actor. An internal staff member is the most cost-effective option but they will require coaching and technical support to record quality sound files. Professional voice actors cost more, but produce top-notch files and save time in the long run.

Asset Creation and Animation

It's now time to create the illustrations and actions that bring animation to life, making learning more engaging and fun! At this stage, the process will vary based on the type of animation you choose.

Whiteboard videos, sometimes called Animatics, are more like live storytelling. They can introduce company policies, or explain how to interact with customers, and focus more on interpersonal and anecdotal lessons. They are developed from the storyboards directly and don't require additional framing or modeling steps. Instead, animations are sparse and used to add emphasis to a story.

A large portion of animation production goes toward style and creating a recognizable brand. This means a lot of time is spent sharpening linework, adding color, and developing a memorable design and tone overall.

2D animation is simple, versatile, and works best when relaying nuanced or contextual information to others. Animation begins with the keyframes outlined in the storyboard, then progresses to in-between frames, coloring, and shading. A large portion of animation production goes toward style and creating a recognizable brand. This means a lot of time is spent sharpening linework, adding color, and developing a memorable design and tone overall. Once the animation is complete, the audio is added.

3D animation is best for displaying complex processes, like a delicate surgery or the inner workings of an expensive machine. By creating to-scale digital models of objects, animators can help provide learners with an accurate representation of how parts work

together at any angle. In order to recreate accurate digital depictions of any machine, system, or organs, a 3D model needs to be made. Modeler's build objects from the ground up and once they are complete, they are ready to be rigged. During this process, animators treat the models like puppets and move them around via points on the models themselves. For the animation to run smoothly, rigging needs to be precise.

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Finalization

Regardless of the type of animation you choose, your project will always go through a finalization stage. During the finalization stage, animators go through each part of the animation to make any necessary changes. For example, they might adjust the colors, alter models, clean up audio, and check for continuity errors. This is the last chance the video production team has to make the final product shine--and a good team will get it right every time.

The Animation Process & You

At a high-level, animation involves six easy to understand steps that represent hours of execution. For this reason, producing an animated video has felt too time-consuming to some. The benefit of a well-made eLearning video, however, is well worth the time invested.

The final product becomes a piece of reusable content ready to support any corporate blended learning strategy for years to come. If you're ready to take the plunge, the first step is partnering with an experienced team so you can stay focused on what you do best.

6 Video Scripting Examples Of Enticing Live-Action And eLearning Video Animations

What is eLearning Animation?

eLearning Animations are short videos, usually less than 7 minutes in length, that explain or educate the viewer. They can be produced in a variety of styles and cover any number of topics but the thing they all have in common are the instructional design principles at their core.

These videos work because a mix of auditory and visual information is best when trying to create long-term memories, and animation is a perfect marriage of the two. Animation is also versatile and can adapt to any subject matter--whether it's safety, sales, orientation, or just a simple skills review.

There are four basic types of eLearning Animations: whiteboard, 2D, 3D, and mixed media. Regardless of the training video type you're pursuing, a sound eLearning animation project can't begin without a well-written script.

How all Scripts Start

Because instructional design unites all types of eLearning animation, a training video script has to have learning objectives as its foundation. Good learning objectives are specific, reflect behavior, and are measurable. Without well-crafted learning objectives, planning your content, writing your script, and making your videos effective isn't possible.
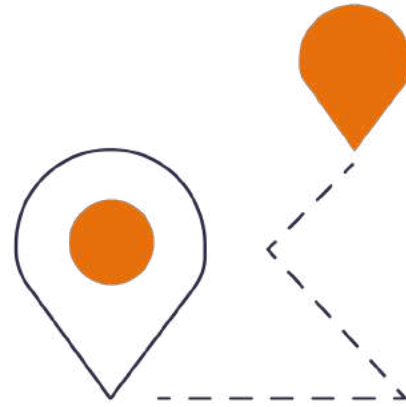
Once you have a clear direction for your video, it's time to script. The type of script you'll write will depend on the style of video you want to create.

Scripting for Lecture Videos

A lecture video is common in academic distance learning and in corporate training when identifying with a speaker is important. This video type can be live-action or use an animated character as the lecturer. The format of this video type is simple, a person, animated or otherwise, is on-screen speaking to the viewer as animated bullet points or other motion graphics appear in time with the content being discussed.

A good script for lecture videos should contain three parts: the introduction, the content and the action.

The introduction is an introduction to the speaker, not the content. When using lecture-style videos, the learner needs to know why they should put their trust in the "talking head" on the screen. If the video is for employee orientation, will the speaker be the head of HR or the company's CEO? When a viewer understands the speaker's purpose, it allows them to assign the appropriate weight to the narrator's words.

Next is the content. Your content should be structured a lot like the essays you used to write in school. Start by introducing the main idea or key concept, support it with examples or facts, briefly, then move on to the next concept. Even though it's a video lecture, lengthy explanations can confuse a viewer or cause them to disengage.

The last section is action. This is where you'll answer the question "what's next?" The video has to be explicit about what the viewer should do after viewing. Is there an assignment to complete? Should they report to their supervisor for coaching? Or will you simply inform them of where to find other resources on the topic if they need them? The point is, never leave your learner hanging at the end of a lecture, show them how to apply it and it will stick.

Scripting for Explainer Videos

Whiteboard animations tell a story with pictures drawn on a whiteboard. They aren't literally drawn on a whiteboard, but instead simulated with animation. This animation type is perfect for short explainer videos one to three minutes in length. Whiteboard explainer videos are the simplest of the animation styles and the simplest to script for. These scripts tend to be more like robust outlines than formal scripts. They include the narration or dialogue to be spoken and any notes that might be helpful for the animator.
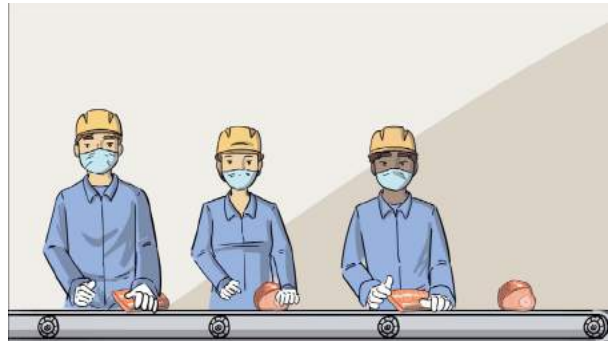
The narration should include an introduction, a question to be answered, and the answer to that question. Because explainer videos are succinct, you should limit your script to one, well-explained question and a brief conclusion that directs viewers to more information if they need it.

Scripting for Microlearning

Microlearning involves breaking down large amounts of information into easily-digestible material to increase comprehension.

Objectives for microlearning are a bit different because the video will be so short. Think of the objective as your thesis statement —— every piece of information is in support of one main idea, similar to a whiteboard video.

After your objectives are in place, you'll create an outline from your source material or through conversations with your subject matter experts. You want to make sure you're capturing your key takeaways and have complete explanations. The next step is scripting.

With [Microlearning scripts,](#) you have to keep learners laser-focused on the content if you want to change their behavior. Focus on the must-have information and eliminate anything extraneous that doesn't relate to your learning objectives.

The last element of a good microlearning script is the markup. Markups say where narration is necessary, when to rely on visuals or animations, and which shots you'd like to include. These markups will not only help your business get more mileage out of your production team but streamline your eLearning messaging early on.

Scripting for Scenarios & Situations

Scenarios and situations can be 2D animation, 3D animation, live-action, or a mix of any of the before mentioned. These scripts should be written with the following characteristics in mind: message, story, character development, action, and dialogue/narration.

During the writing process, you must keep in mind the story you want to tell and how. The first draft of the animated video script is more trial and error as you combine your research, pre-writing, and learning objectives to create the script.
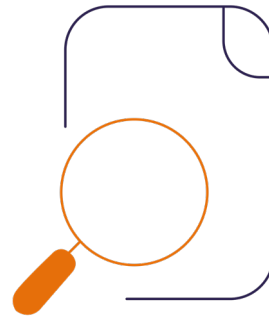
Give equal attention to dialogue and actions. Actions will do most of the heavy lifting for learners.

The narration or spoken lines from a character must be believable to drive home the point of the video. You want content that consists of sentences that are short, easy to understand, and smooth to read aloud. Keep revising until your script flows seamlessly.

Scripting for Tutorials

Tutorial videos, sometimes called how-tos, contain step-by-step instructions on how to complete a task. These video scripts follow the same formula as a lecture,: introduction, content, and action, but each step serves a different purpose.

The introduction to a tutorial video introduces the content rather than a speaker or narrator. It's a brief summary of what the video will cover that gets a learner ready for the specifics, or, allows them to select another video if the one they are currently viewing isn't the one they need.

Next is content. Much like a cookbook, the steps in a tutorial video are covered sequentially. In other video types, concepts might be explained easy-to-hard, but with tutorials, the steps must be discussed in the order they should be performed. If there are any conditions that must be met before starting the steps, like putting on safety gear, that should be reviewed prior to demonstrating the desired actions.

Last is action. A review of the points covered and any preparation relevant to completing the task should be the final points before the video's end. You also have the option to include directions to additional resources, especially if your video is one in a series or blended learning program.

Scripting for Screencast Tutorials

A screencast tutorial is sometimes referred to as a video demo. In these types of training videos, a narrator introduces the topic then the focus of the video shifts to a demonstration of what's happening on screen. This training type is perfect for teaching technology and computer applications because it shows the practicality of what a user should do but contains a personal element--the narrator.
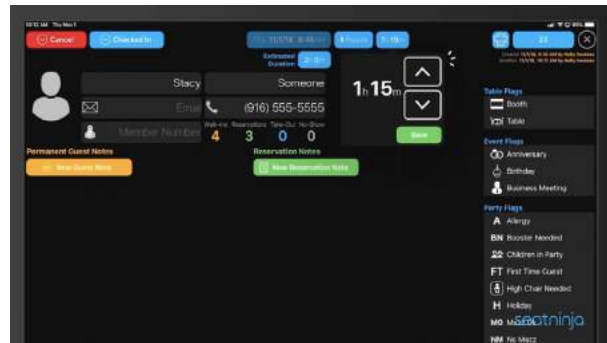
Scripting for screencasts follows the same formula as other tutorial types, but finding your own repeatable rhythm for this video type is important. The introduction should always last the same amount of time so users can predictably jump to the meat of the content if they're pinched for time. Additionally, having a brief summary of tips, like keyboard shortcuts, can help jog a viewer's memory without rewatching the full video.

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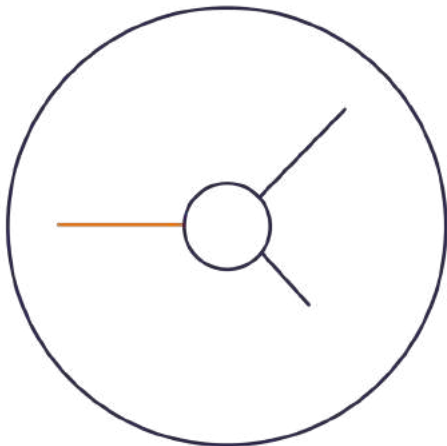
After Scripting

A finalized script is a big milestone but it's not the end of your eLearning journey. The next stage is storyboarding but before you storyboard, you'll want to check your script's length. There's a sweet spot for eLearning animation and you want to make sure your video isn't too long or too short to be effective. The easiest way to verify you have a training video that's just right is through a Voiceover length estimate tool.

A voice over estimate tool will analyze the text you paste in and give you an approximate run time for your video. If it's shorter than you expected, you can revisit the script for areas to expand on. If it's longer than you thought, you'll have a decision to make: whether to edit the video or split it into two.

The Road To Stellar Training Video Animations Is Paved With These Spot-On Storyboard Templates

eLearning animation is quickly becoming a standard part of blended learning programs for corporate entities and big companies looking to educate, retrain, or onboard their staff. Because of its accessibility, convenience, and cost-effective approach, animation has become the clear choice for learning. It offers a simplistic alternative to traditional training methods that many learning and development programs can't ignore.

But before you can create amazing eLearning animated videos, you need a blueprint to ensure that the final product is as informative, entertaining, and clear as you had envisioned it. To do that, you need a stellar storyboard.

What is a Storyboard?

A storyboard is a way to organize the parts of your video graphically. It contains illustrations of the characters or actions that your viewers will see as well as descriptions for the production team and narration or dialogue. It tells the story of your training video in a sequential fashion, highlighting the keyframes that are critical to the animation's flow.

Storyboards can be as simple or as detailed as necessary to communicate how visuals, audio, and movement will interact.

Why Create a Storyboard

There are many benefits to creating an eLearning storyboard. While forcing yourself to sit down and outline your ideas is not the most exciting process, it is an effective way to flesh out your story more thoroughly. After all, the first thing you want to do after coming up with an ingenious idea is to share it with others. Unfortunately, it can be hard to explain the amazing things you are visualizing.
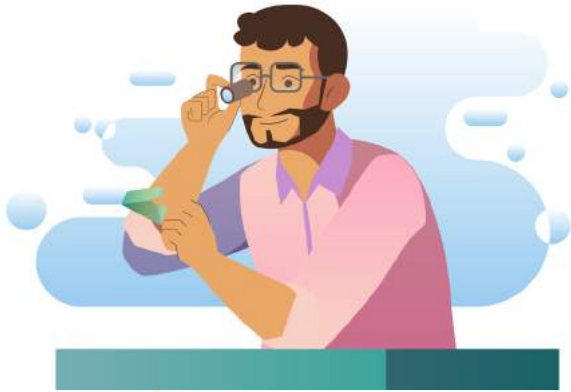
With a storyboard, you can explain your eLearning and Microlearning idea with step-by-step tangible visualizations, ensuring that no details get left out in the process. This will also prevent confusion within your team as they work with you to crystallize your vision.

Additionally, a storyboard is great for catching logistical problems with your educational video animation idea. Taking the time to expand and look closely at the dialogue, transitions, and concepts in your head can help reveal inconsistencies or production problems before you begin.

Before You Storyboard

To gather the content you need to begin the storyboarding process, you'll need to complete a few steps first, starting with your objectives.

Writing out your learning objectives, or drafting a brief for your eLearning animation, will keep you on target when it comes to your learner's needs and the purpose of the video. Next, you'll need to draft a simple outline. This outline will help you organize the content of your video more clearly. You can decide what to cut, what to add, or what to expand upon if it's all laid out plainly.

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Once the brief and the outline are done, the next step is scripting. Scripts regularly go through several iterations to get the language, tone, and flow correct. It should feel natural when read and that always takes word-smithing.

Stick with a casual, informative tone when you start writing the script. Even if your organization uses a more formal or conservative tone, you want to be both professional and approachable in your microlearning course. Academic or cerebral writing makes it difficult for learners to understand your content. Fortunately, you can be instructional and informative without putting people to sleep. That means:

- *Avoiding jargon.*
- *Substituting complex words for simple words.*
- *Writing for a 7th-grade reading level.*
- *Using short sentences.*

The final step before storyboarding is a table read for your script. A table read will allow you, and those on your team, to hear the dialogue and perform one last check for easy to understand language.

The final step before storyboarding is a table read for your script. A table read will allow you, and those on your team, to hear the dialogue perform one last check for easy to understand language.

Types of storyboards

There are three [basic storyboard template](#) types that work for most eLearning and Microlearning animated videos: visual description scripts, printable templates, and photoshop templates.

Visual Description Script Template

[The Visual Description Script Template](#) isn't considered a storyboard in the traditional sense because it doesn't have any imagery on it. Instead, it's a numbered table that has a column for audio and a column for visuals. When completing this template, you would paste the dialogue from your script into the audio column and then describe what the viewer would see in the visual column.

This template type is perfect for those who are uncomfortable with storyboarding software and/or have no interest in drawing. It's also a good place to start when trying to explain your thoughts to a production team. Many animation studios can create a traditional storyboard for you from a visual description script before they start work on the video itself.

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Printable Template

The printable template is much more like a traditional storyboard. It's made up of a series of boxes that represent frames in the video. Below each box is space to add information about dialogue, narration, sound effects, and more.

When filling in this type of template, you'd draw the visuals in the boxes and include notes about audio and/ or movement to give your team members a clearer idea of what will be animated as a part of the final product.

Printable templates also make great collaboration tools during production meetings because you can print them, share them with colleagues, and record any notes or feedback they might have directly on the storyboard.

Photoshop Template

A Photoshop Template is the last type. This template type is recommended for the more experienced digital artist. It is similar to the printable template in that it includes drawn visuals, but it stays digital.


With a multi-layered Photoshop file and digital assets, things like version control and color and composition changes are easy to manage. This template also makes presenting the video to an audience, one keyframe at a time, much more practical because it's as simple as toggling a layer on or off.

The Five Steps in Creating a Storyboard

Storyboarding can seem challenging if you're just getting started with eLearning animation but if you follow these 5 steps, you'll have a product you can be proud of:
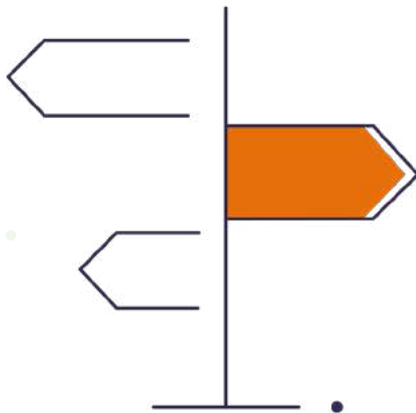
1. Brainstorm Ideas

The first thing you will need to do is zero in on a specific idea that seems to best speak to your eLearning Video goals. Chances are, you already have something in mind; however, it may be worth it to spend a few extra minutes to develop and expand your ideas more, either by yourself or with your team.
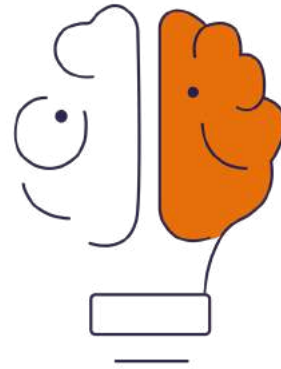
2. Chart Your Course

At this point, you will need to establish the beginning, middle, and end for your course's story. On top of a smooth flow and well-thought-out ideas, good stories also have an emotional hook. In adult learning, this is commonly referred to as the "What's In It For Me?" angle. What about your video will draw your learner in and keep them there?

How To Implement Video Learning And Animation: A Guide For Training Managers On A Tight Budget

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3. Start Creating

After you have your eLearning video idea well thought out, now the fun part begins! It is time to put your pen, pencil, or cursor to work. Oftentimes, the hardest part of the creation process is taking that first step. Jump in with both feet and don't worry about perfection. Storyboarding is an iterative process and each storyboard will look different based on the idea it is trying to communicate.
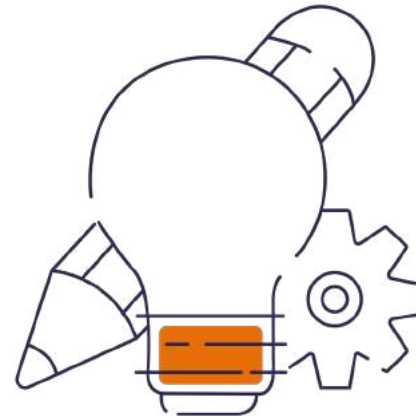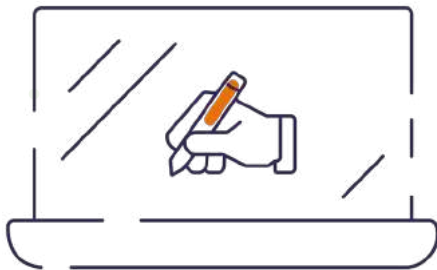
4. Add Details

Once your eLearning course visual ideas are put together on the paper, add in the details that will help your video come to life. Details can include arrows indicating motion or adding color.

5. Revise

No storyboard is ever finished after the first draft. Be sure to consult your subject matter experts, key members of leadership, or people in your target audience for feedback. Think of this step as playtesting your video before it's complete. The suggestions you get will likely make a stronger final training video animation.
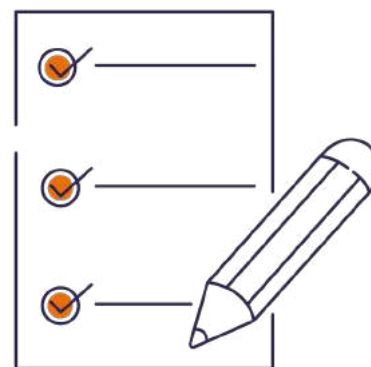
Creating Accessible Videos At Ease: From 508 and ADA To Video Transcription, Captioning And Beyond

The face of the American workforce is changing. In the last fifty years, offices have become multi-generational and evolved to include people of all races, ethnicities, gender identities, and people with disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990, and for 30 years, it has increased access and opportunity for people with disabilities in the US. It's a piece of legislation that affirms the civil rights of people with disabilities and places inclusion at the forefront of the law.

Inclusion, in this instance, is the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.

When it comes to your training programs, you want to make sure your eLearning animations and training videos have the appropriate accessibility features to ensure all your staff have access to your content.

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Accessible Content by Design

One of the best ways to guarantee your content's accessibility is to design with these 4 questions in mind:

- **Will the content experience be identical for all my users?** If not, can I make it equal? This question is at the heart of inclusion. When you're planning your lecture, course or video think about elements that may exclude others unintentionally. If you can't eliminate them, have a plan to provide an alternative.

- **Does my content accommodate a range of preferences and abilities?** This question encompasses learning styles, physical and mental disabilities. Incorporate variety in the planning stages for your content so each learner can interact with your message with fewer impediments.

- **Is my content easy to understand regardless of language, cognitive, or experience barriers?** This question has a lot to do with the way your content is written. Make sure the material isn't overly academic or too specialized for your viewer to understand.

- **Does my content communicate the necessary information regardless of my user's sensory abilities?** The last question refers to how the information is shared. For instance, if correct and incorrect answers are color-coded, someone with color blindness won't be able to gain the necessary information about correct answers due to their disability. It's about balancing communication methods in all of your content.

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What is 508 Compliance?

508 Compliance is a federal law mandating that all electronic and information technology developed, procured, maintained, or used by the federal government be accessible to people with disabilities. This means if you're an agency in the public sector, a government contractor or, in some cases, a recipient of federal funds, your videos must meet this compliance standard.

Companies in the private sector adopt 508 guidelines and use them as best practices when developing everything from marketing materials to compliance training. Now that the average employee is spending more time than ever on their computers, it's important to adhere to Section 508, especially if you are using the web for educational instruction or "eLearning."

508 compliance extends to websites and digital documents but to ensure your eLearning videos are accessible, you'll need three things: captions, audio descriptions, and an accessible video player.

Video Captioning

Captions are a written description of all the audio content in a video. More than just the dialogue or narration, captions include sound effects, music, or other information that provides additional context to a viewer with hearing loss.

There are two types of captions: open and closed. Open captioning means the captions are embedded into the video and cannot be turned off. This works well if the video is short, has very little onscreen text, or you aren't sure how the video will be used.

With open captioning, whether a person is viewing the video on their phone, in your LMS, on YouTube, or on your website, they'll have the same experience. Closed captions are the opposite. They can be toggled on or off if the video player streaming your content supports closed captioning.

Captions and subtitles aren't the same even though most people consider them synonymous. Captions are written in the same language that's being spoken in the video, while subtitles translate the material spoken into an alternative language. Providing alternate language options improves eLearning accessibility, even though it's not related to disability, because people of different ethnicities and linguistic backgrounds need to understand your content too!

If adding captions to your training video isn't an option, then you can satisfy the compliance criteria by providing an ADA compliant transcript. A transcript is a word document, created from your script, that a person can read in lieu of watching the video. The transcript should always be written in a way to provide an equal experience to the reader, which means including significant actions present in the video.

For learners who speak American Sign Language as a first language, captions and transcripts are not always sufficient. In these situations, it's best to work with the learner individually to find a solution that's right for them.

Audio Descriptions

For people who are blind or visually impaired, providing audio descriptions of a video is another way creators can make their content accessible. For example, having your subject matter expert describe what happens on-screen can help visually impaired learners understand what happens as it happens. You can also add optional audio descriptions that can be turned on or off as needed.

## Accessible Video Player

The last component of accessible video is making sure the video player itself is accessible. Many times, content is designed with a mouse in mind, meaning the user will need to click the buttons on the player to advance, rewind, pause, play, or replay the video. Learners unable to use a mouse or clearly discern the buttons on the playbar are at a disadvantage when viewing your content.

To combat this, accessible video players should have keyboard navigable features or voice-activated capabilities. You can ensure your player's accessibility by choosing a 508 compliant hosting service. They will handle the technology side so you can focus on creating content for your viewers.

Other Design Considerations

There are two additional design considerations you should keep in mind when creating accessible eLearning content: text readability and color contrast.

Making text clear, large, and visible on the screen as soon as the user interacts with it will ensure that the text is not only readable but recognizable by a screen reader. This helps those who might be using a device to have the site's content read to them. Any text hidden from view initially or masked in a drop-down menu will not be recognized by screen reader technology.
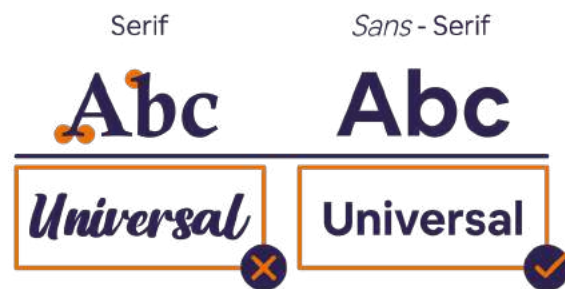
For those with color blindness or low-vision, contrast and color choice can greatly affect how they will view the video. Hue, saturation, and legibility are pivotal in helping learners understand what is on-screen. Using an online color checker will provide you with feedback on what your video does well and where an adjustment would be beneficial.

Accessibility after Production

If you've already released your eLearning content, that's okay! You can still take steps to make your eLearning content accessible to others. If you're able, consider re-uploading your video with subtitles, putting it on a different website, or including links in the description to other accessible versions of your videos that have audio descriptions.

Releasing copies of your videos dubbed in another commonly spoken language can also add to accessibility, and using your given platform's subtitle (or captions) settings once it's been uploaded can help users turn on or off subtitles directly in the video player.

Remember, always consider your target audience when making eLearning content accessible to your learners, and listen to feedback.

4 Practical Tips To Plan And Execute Your Ambitious Video Learning Projects Fast

A lot of work and thought go into crafting the perfect eLearning videos. This makes sense, as eLearning videos help guide the online learning process. They can also make learning difficult concepts more fun and dynamic for all audiences.

But for all its benefits, many people still shy away from adding eLearning animation and training videos to their blended learning programs. You can change your apprehension into action with a few practical tips.

Planning for Content

Any eLearning journey you embark upon needs to have a destination and a map to get there. Your learning objectives are the destination and the content you cover is the road map.

A learning objective defines what you want your learners to get out of your course. As the course creator, you can define these objectives by listing the skills, knowledge, or abilities your viewer should retain after watching your video. Learning objectives should be specific, reflect behavior, and be measurable.

Your learning objectives will guide you as you write your script. The script will contain what you want your learners to hear, who will deliver the message, and any notes on actions or animations you'd like to see.

After securing the final script, you need a visual aid to support your concept and ideas for the video. That's where a storyboard comes into play. A storyboard combines what is said in the script with what is seen on screen. It represents what the final training video will be in simple terms.
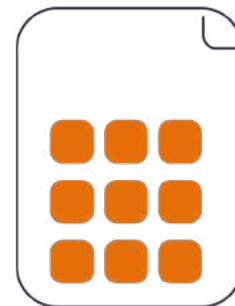
Before you can start creating the storyboard, you need to have a brainstorming session to transform your words into visuals. This is the point you might need to bring in others to help. Once the brainstorming session is done, you'll need to create a timeline to string together the storyline.

During your planning stages, you should take your time to review and revise as much as possible. Being happy with your content in planning will make for a quality training video.

Setting a Budget

Now that you have a direction it's time to determine your budget. Setting a budget means taking each component of your project into account:

You always want to start with your general scope. Understanding the scope of your project will help you prioritize learner needs to build a course that's both effective and budget-friendly. This includes figuring out how many videos you want to create, how long they will be, your timeline, and your style.
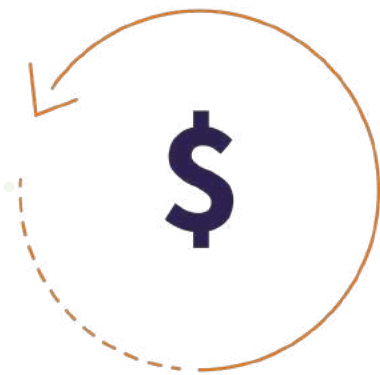
The number of videos and their length directly influence resource hours, whether you're creating the videos in-house or with an external partner. The more complex the objectives, the more involved the course will be, and the more videos it will take to explain it. Lots of videos mean lots of work and sometimes that can mean lots of additional cost, if you don't have a way to scale production efficiently.

When you need to launch your course is also a factor. If you're working on a time crunch, you can generally expect to pay more in rush fees.

A reasonable timeline would be at least six months out from your course launch date (but this will depend on your video volume, of course). Six months should give you plenty of time to design, prototype, and launch your eLearning course.

Lastly, there's your animation style. Whiteboard animations display your content as if a person is writing on a whiteboard. It's an affordable option that's good for short, quick courses. 2D animation is the most popular option. It mimics the look and feel of a cartoon and it's great for storytelling. 3D animation is perfect for realism, making it the animation of choice for complex, technical topics.

You have to understand the level of complexity needed to get your point across without overwhelming users—or setting the wrong budget for your eLearning video. Your cost per minute will also depend on the amount of animation used in your eLearning video.

Managing the Project

Video learning projects, just like any other project, have a distinct beginning, middle, and end. Many projects start out strong but somewhere after the kick-off meeting it gets difficult to stay on track and stay organized until the finished product is done.

To make sure your good ideas become training videos, look to a project management software for help.

Trello is the perfect tool to coordinate writers, subject matter experts, instructional designers, producers, voice-over artists, and entire creative teams, whether located in the same building/floor or scattered across the globe.

For eLearning video production, you can use Trello to track what needs to be accomplished and who needs to be doing it during Pre-Production, Production, and Post Production stages. This is also a unique visual way to showcase throughput – the completion of objectives, products, or in this case – videos.

To get the most out of your software, you'll need to define your stages and your team. First, make a comprehensive list of the steps in your production line. Common steps include:

- *Writing your learning objectives*
- *Scripting & script review*
- *Storyboarding & storyboard review*
- *Filming any live-action pieces for your video*
- *Animation & animation review*
- *Finalization*

The goal is to have a clear stage and list that can trigger an action.

Next, take stock of the people involved in production and sort them into teams. Each team should have an action at each stage or list. For example, when the learning objectives are done, the task card would move to the scripting team. Once the script is done, it would move to the script review stage and so on.

At each stage, think about the tasks that your team will need to accomplish for the stage to be considered "finished". Then you'll add the specific team members to the task cards they are responsible for accomplishing those tasks. Trello will notify them of changes made to the card and about task deadlines via email. This way, if the project stalls at a stage, it's easy to determine where it's stuck and which team can get it unstuck.

Choosing an Experienced Partner

Sometimes an eLearning project is more ambitious than you thought and you aren't sure you can accomplish what you want with in-house talent. Then consider hiring a professional.

Hiring a professional company means you don't have to spend money licensing development software or equipment, there's no time spent learning new skills and you can rely on their eLearning expertise to ensure your videos meet the appropriate educational and accessibility standards.

Creating an engaging video involves taking every step of the process just as seriously as the previous one. All of these small parts work together to create content that propels forward the main learning objective.

In the end, creating eLearning videos from pre- to post-production can lead to an incredible experience when it comes to creating a connection between the learner, instructor, and material.

How To Create Animated Videos On A Budget With An Expert Production Company By Your Side

Whether you need to train your staff quickly, address an HR issue, or just want your employees to learn a new skill in an engaging way, you may need to get your staff to participate in eLearning programs. While many employees and supervisors alike dread corporate training, it does not have to be mindless busywork. In fact, one of the best ways to help your learners retain important information and stay engaged during eLearning is to show them high-quality animated videos.

Animated videos have the unique ability to speak to auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learners all at once. They also support on-demand and self-paced education models because the content is reusable and accessible from anywhere on any type of device. Animation also has the ability to overcome some of the limitations of live-action videos and classroom training because scenarios, roleplay, and simulations can be built-in with ease. Yet, the biggest benefit of animation is the fact it can be used to create engaging videos.

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How to Create Engaging Video Content

There are just a few simple steps in creating engaging video content.

- **Instructional Design.** At this stage, you're thinking about what you want your course to accomplish. You'll write learning objectives that represent the behaviors you want the learners to demonstrate after viewing your material.

- **Script Writing.** Your script turns your objectives into reality. The script contains any narration, dialogue, actions, and character information that's necessary for video production.

- **Storyboarding.** Once your script is complete, it will become a storyboard. The storyboard adds the visual elements to your script, showing major scenes or keyframes. This stage is an opportunity to check the video for flow and work out any technical issues before production starts.

- **Filming & Animation.** Whether you're using live-action, animation, or a combination of both, it's time for the filming and animating to start. This stage has sub-steps based on the type of video you're creating and is typically done by professionals.

- **Finalization.** An opportunity for the production team to review the video and make any last changes before it's ready for distribution.

How to Create Engaging Video Content

As more and more businesses transition to offering remote work, the demand for eLearning videos has also increased. As a result, many companies are turning to animation companies to ensure that they have top-notch video content to share with their employees.

While working with an animation company is a good way to get videos that you cannot make in-house, finding the "right" company is often easier said than done. With so many options to choose from, it can be difficult to identify that perfect company that can deliver videos that hit the trifecta: unmatched quality and expertise, fast turnaround time, and unmatched prices.

Why Partner?

Hiring a professional company means you don't have to spend money licensing development software or equipment, there's no time spent learning new skills and you can rely on their eLearning expertise to ensure your videos meet the appropriate educational and accessibility standards.

How To Implement Video Learning And Animation: A Guide For Training Managers On A Tight Budget

Types of Companies to consider for your eLearning Animation

Each animation company will have its own payment structure, staff makeup, specialty, and workflow, but, in a broad sense, there are 4 types of companies: DIY Animation Companies, Explainer Animation Companies, eLearning Companies, and Animation-Focused eLearning Companies.

If you have the time and talent to invest in a DIY animation option, consider Toonly and Vyond. These popular businesses provide users with a web-based software that allows you to create animation with no prior experience.

While this may sound like the perfect option if you're just starting out, there are a number of limitations when using DIY software:

No out-of-the-box branding.

Some of these software companies allow users to make short videos for free, but charge a fee to remove watermarks and even more if the user wants to use their own logos and color palettes.

Generic messaging.

For the software to appeal to a broad audience, DIY companies water down the types of animations a user can create and the ways in which a message can be delivered. Using your own audio, for instance, typically costs extra and come companies will only allow you to use audio files from their libraries or narrators. If you're looking to stand out with a unique message or messenger, it will be difficult to achieve with the tools provided.

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Limited resources.

The behind the scenes programming makes the animation flow in DIY products, and that means using all of their clip art, transitions and characters. Importing and animating your own assets is often not possible.

Deceptive learning curve.

You won't need an art school degree to be able to jump into these explainer video makers, but you will have to invest time in learning the ins and outs of the program. Timing, transitions, narration, music, and graphics are all up to you now. For a simple 5-minute explainer, a new DIY user could spend up to 20 hours before developing a polished product.
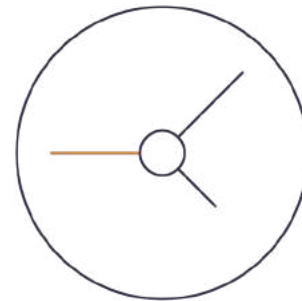
The next company type, Explainer animation companies, know the ins and outs of video marketing. This enables them to create explainer videos that capture the heart of your business or brand.

One of the most popular explainer companies, Digital Brew, offers animated explainer videos, commercials, and just about any other type of marketing content your business might need, all while promising to tell your brand's story.

If you need animated videos that are solely focused on marketing, explainer companies are a worthwhile choice. Keep in mind, however, that you will not have much wiggle room in what you can request from such companies because their pricing and production schedules are built on an advertising structure. Short videos can be as expensive as commercials. If you need extensive training videos, for example, you are going to want to consider other options.

Teaching complex topics or putting together a robust eLearning course takes more than just a few explainer videos. For that reason, many people seek the help of eLearning Companies. One of the benefits of using an eLearning company is that the video creators will be able to present information well and through many different styles. Consider a company like Designing Digitally, Inc., which tackles everything eLearning. Whether you need an explainer video or a corporate training video or even a training simulation, companies like Designing Digitally, Inc. have you covered.

The downside to working with an eLearning company is they rarely have expert video production staff in-house because they provide lots of different service types, video only being one.

The last company type is an Animation-Focused eLearning company. eLearning animation-focused companies combine the flexibility of DIY animation companies, the engagement and expertise of explainer video companies, and the smorgasbord of options available with eLearning, without sacrificing quality or affordability.

They staff expert animators and instructional designers to ensure your videos achieve the learning objectives you set out in an engaging way. Our company, Ninja Tropic, is in this category and we've produced thousands of videos for hundreds of clients and are always wanting to help others achieve their goals.

Choosing the Right Company

Though fnding the right partner might seem overwhelming, you can make a solid choice if you follow these simple steps.

Prepare before you search

Don't dive into Google just yet. Before you search for a video eLearning expert, you have to know what you're looking for. Setting your criteria before a search will help you partner with the best professional for your project. The most common criteria include what style you want for your video, how many videos you're looking to create, your budget, and your timeline.

Create a list of candidates.

Now that you have your criteria in hand, it's time to create a list of experts. You can find them through word-of-mouth referrals, tradeshow websites, or by Google search.
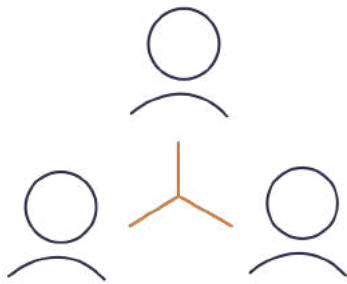
Schedule in-depth interviews.

Now that you have a list of potential video eLearning experts for your course, narrow down the list and contact the professionals that matched your criteria best. Always request a phone call or video chat— you want to speak with them and get a feel for their business first. Someone can be an expert in their field and still not be the right match for your eLearning project.
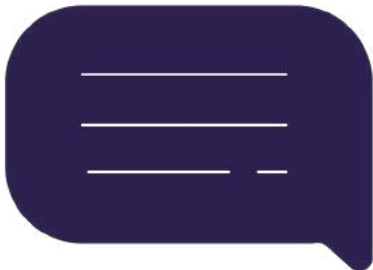
Request a quote.

Next, you'll request a quote from the video eLearning expert. This quote should not only include the price but the deliverables and a timeline for the project. You want to get at least two quotes for your project so you can compare them.

Request a sample.

Requesting a sample is a must for strategic or high-profile projects. You want to be sure that the company you're considering can produce a training video in the style you like with the quality you expect. Working with the company on a sample will also give you a taste of what it's like to partner with them before agreeing to a long-term project. If they are quick, capable and committed, you've found the right company.