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- Xebia Academy

Xebia Academy Rocks Virtual

The pandemic has had an impact on all of us, including Xebia Academy. Physical training courses had to be canceled, and we had to move to the online environment. Just two weeks into the intelligent lockdown, we were already offering virtual classes. Instructor-led live online training courses quickly became the norm, and in the last seven months, we have grown to a full-fledged online training partner.

By Evelien Roos and Willem Vermaak

We are rocking virtual! Our Customer Satisfaction Rating for physical classes is 9.1 - we score a 9.3 on our virtual ones. What are we doing that makes us so successful? We think it's a combination of a few things.

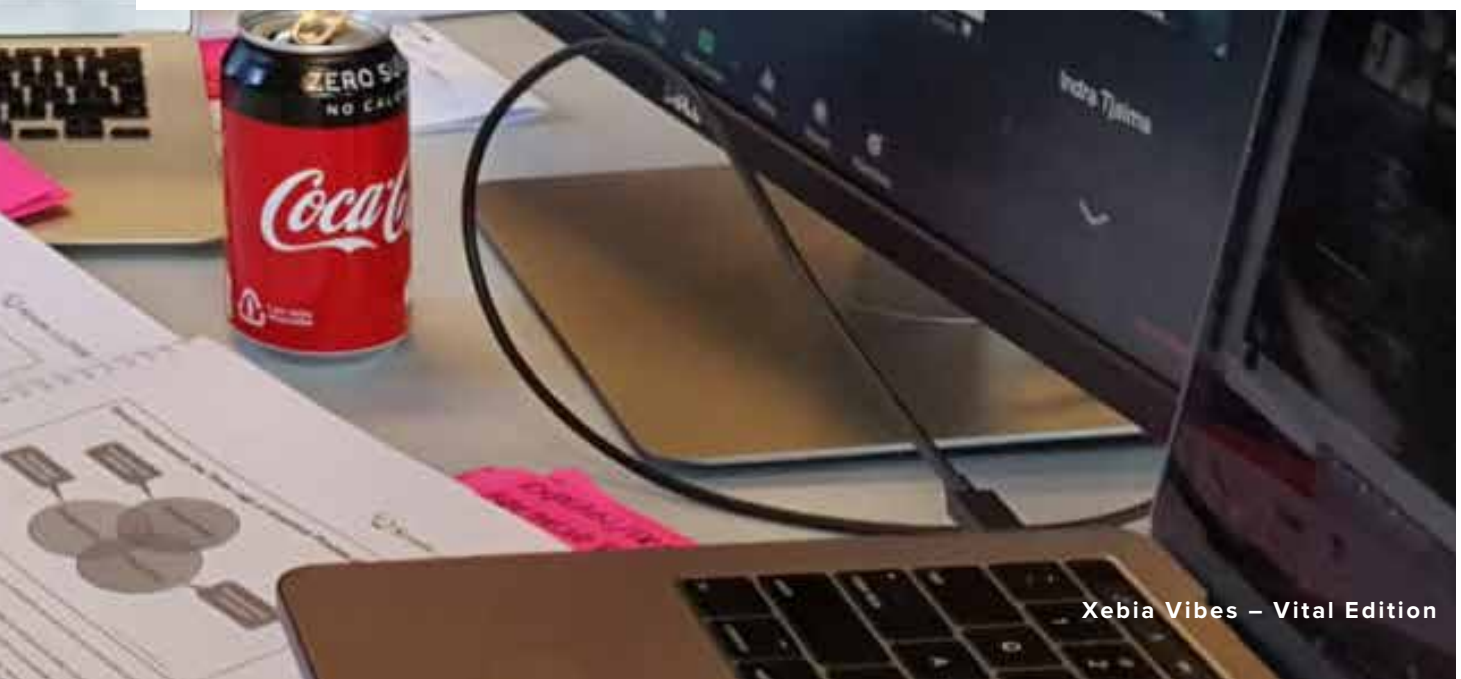
First of all, plain and simple hard work. The Academy team pulled all-nighters and worked weekends to transform our regular physical portfolio into a virtual offering. It required rebranding the site, creating new marketing campaigns, adjusting back-end tools, and asking

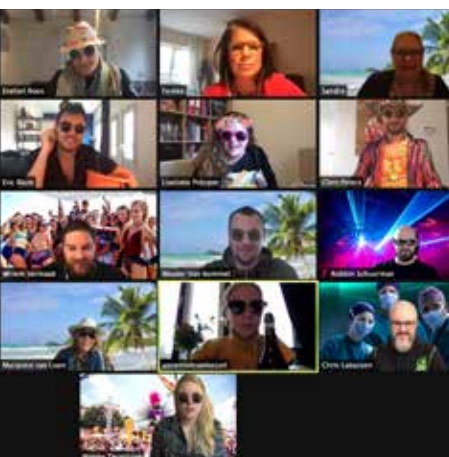
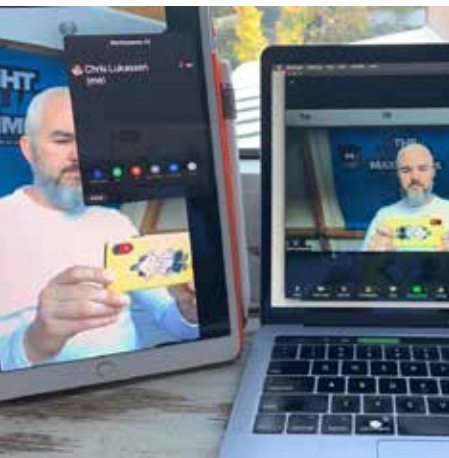
over 200 students if they wanted to follow their training online instead. Our team spent a lot of time rescheduling all participants. We aim for high-quality service and personalized attention, and it paid off! We kept the number of people declining their reservation to a minimum, and in the process, created more Xebia fans.

Secondly, our trainers quickly adopted new tools, techniques, and materials to maintain high-level Xebia quality. Miro, Mural, Zoom, MS

Teams, ProCreate, Prezi, Powerpoint, and Instruct were utilized to create outstanding online classes.

The trainers became proficient in break-out rooms, transforming Liberating Structures to a virtual format, and learned to apply "Training from the back of the Screen." Trainers put green-screens up in their attic and started to record their own training videos. If you want to see Chris Lukassen explaining Product Management with a cowboy hat and a guitar, you can! Just go to Xebia Online Academy!





If you are a trainer yourself, here are ten tips to make the most of your virtual training:

1. Think about your set-up; the use of light, a good camera, and a microphone (ensure the mic of your earbuds is not scraping against your shirt or beard) set the stage for your live virtual class.
2. Make sure you have a neutral background or use the Zoom/MS Teams' background. You don't want attendees to be distracted by the books in your cabinet or the great pictures of you, your family, and your holidays. Place your camera on the right level to ensure you look participants in the eye.
3. Use online conference tools that allow break-out rooms. The most common ones are Zoom and MS Teams. Both offer the opportunity to divide participants into smaller groups. It's as close as you can get to people working in groups in your physical classes.
4. Experiment with Miro and Mural. Create infinite whiteboards to prepare exercises and allow for team collaboration. Play around and see which tool works best for you (check out Google Jamboard and Microsoft Whiteboard too).
5. Your online training is not a copy of your classroom training. Think about what your participants need to know and what is nice to know. Leave out the 'nice to knows' and send this information to your participants through e-mail. You will need all your time in the training for the 'need-to-knows.'
6. Do a tech check before you start the training to get people acquainted with the tools you will be using. Check their audio, camera, and connection. Do so in a separate session a week before the training, at the start of the training, or send participants the information to prepare before attending.
7. Please know that exercises take longer in the online environment. People have to get in and out of break-out rooms, and they might need more time to place things on the virtual whiteboard. Add 25% extra time to the slot you allocate for tasks in your physical training.
8. Participants miss chit-chats in an online class. Incorporate social moments into your training.
9. Use visual cue cards to not disturb the flow. We often use a written or a printed card or a sticky note saying: ELMO, BRB (Be Right Back), Pass, You're on Mute, or You're breaking up. Hold them up to the camera when you need to.
10. Ask the Xebia Academy trainers for help. We have been hosting live virtual classes for a few months now. We even offer a Training From the Back of the Room Virtual Edition to learn how to craft the best online virtual training ever! Part of our role is to ensure our colleague trainers' success, so feel free to reach out!

We have noticed that, due to the current situation, organizations are freezing their training budget. However, for your employees to feel happy and energized, the ability to develop, stretch, grow, and learn is essential. We are happy to see organizations are permitting employees to attend training courses again.

We plan to keep rocking virtual together with Xebia's fantastic trainers!

If you want to know more about our training courses, need help with preparing or hosting a virtual training, or have questions about our approach, please reach out! ●