Virtual Academy's Training Management System is All-Inclusive

Training

- Build, assign, and track training for all officers' career paths
- Courses designed and customized to suit your needs
- No need to take officers off assignment...train anytime, anywhere
- Real U.S. based technical support 24/7/364

Compliance

- Easily submit real-time reports
- Instantly submit training records digitally
- Easily build, assign, and track policies and procedures
- Customizable, comprehensive Accreditation Platform

Communication

- Send announcements to groups by rank, location, department, and more
- Communicate with one, a few, or all users
- Receive announcements via email and text
- Experience the benefits of real-time collaboration between individuals and departments

How do we better serve those who serve?

MORE On-Demand Training

- Over 250 hours of timely, critical, relevant training to choose from
- Developed by national training experts including FBINA instructors
- Professionally designed to supplement and enhance direct instruction

MORE Options

- Train any time, from anywhere
- User-friendly online format
- Choose courses to suit your needs or those of your department

MORE Reliable Support

- Conferencing and real-time collaboration
- U.S.-based personal representatives available 24/7
- Unique Training Management System to track your training

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What can Virtual Academy do for you?

The Premier Resource for Public Safety Trainers

How I Found the Best Training Program for my Police Department

Mike Pomesky

One of the most significant challenges facing law enforcement today is having to develop a comprehensive financial plan incorporating progressive and relevant training for our staff. In an ideal world, law enforcement budgets would absorb unlimited training for our officers so they could receive the training they need for success. In reality, we know that is not possible.

Those factors, coupled with the increasing expectations of professionalism in the law enforcement community, led me to look at my department and how we train. Questions began to immediately arise that led me to look at instructor-led training vs. online learning options that are available out there for departments.

Instructor-led training (ILT) is the traditional and more formal version of training that takes place in a classroom in front of officers, while online learning is web-based and can be taken at any time from any internet-connected device. There are also blended learning environments.

If you're trying to find the best training program for your employees, there are a few things to keep in mind and several factors I considered for my own police department when researching options to deliver more training.

Challenges with instructor-led training:

- The high cost of implementation, both in terms of time and money
- Inconsistent messaging and teaching styles of instructors when courses are taught in multiple sessions leading to inconsistent work performance and questions by officers
- Time away from work
- Overtime created to backfill staffing shortages at the department along with overtime for the officer/staff being trained amplifies quickly
- Interruption to employee's daily tasks
- Meals, travel, and overtime costs oftentimes run training budgets out and ultimately leave training plans short of incorporating all members of the department

Online learning offers solutions to many of these challenges. These solutions allow us to maximize our training plan financially and blend our instructor-led training in a more effective and efficient way. It also increases the number of hours we can train each officer/department staff member. This, in turn, increases the professional performance of our officers and the service we provide our community.

The advantages of online learning include:

- Saving police departments money in terms of development hours, travel costs, meals, and employee time away from work
- Taking less time away from an employee's workday, as online learning takes up to 40-60% less time than classroom instruction
- Allowing employees more flexibility to access training when and where they have the time to do so
- Allowing officers to go back and review the resources enabling them to perform at their peak
- Creating personalized, custom online content that can be tailored to match the police department and community needs
- Allowing employees to pause training, reread information, test on information, and immediately get more information as they complete a course
- Increasing employee retention of information, for specific subjects

Just like instructor-led training, online courses must focus on the core principles of instructional design, relevant material, and the delivery to accurately and concisely communicate information to your law enforcement employees.

The advantages of online training are best received by an officer when the online learning course is:

- Focused on a single, accessible topic (such as search and seizure, drug interdiction, death and homicide investigation, and social media investigations) with content delivered by a national subject matter expert.
- Concise, to-the-point, and organized in small chunks to discourage scanning or skimming, and able to hold the individual's attention.
- Enhanced, but not distracted by visuals, animations, and activities.
- Proper oversight of the agency's training plan.

The most difficult challenge I have found in my own agency to overcome is the view that "online learning won't work here". In reality, after we implemented our online learning solution, the success of it was prevalent in each division of our police department. Blended learning options incorporate instructor-led training and online training. By using this approach in my police department, I have been able to accomplish more effective training for our officers and staff.

A U.S. Department of Education survey of over 1,000 independent studies showed instruction that combined online and face-to-face elements had a larger advantage than online training or instructor-led training alone. This new approach to training has enabled our police department to deliver more than 40 hours of advanced training for each officer annually. This keeps our officers and staff at their peak performance with the most up-to-date training.

> "Our officers are now receiving advanced training from national subject matter experts that, absent an online solution, would be unaffordable for us to provide."

We also produce and host our own online department training. This enables us to immediately train our officers when there are legislative updates, forensic practice changes, advanced training, or other law enforcement changes that arise. This blended approach allows us to focus on the courses that truly need to be instructor-led with more resources.