
How B2B Software Companies Leveraged Virtual Experiences for Sales & Customer Training in 2021

The 1st Annual User Trends Report



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Intro	4
○ Sales and Training Experience Trends to Pay Attention to in 2022	6
○ Increased Demand for Virtual Sales Experiences	7
○ Dramatic Increase in Self-Paced Learning	8
○ Multiple Instructors Impact Engagement	9
○ In-App Video Conferencing Has the Biggest Effect on Participation and Completion	10 11
Methodology	12
Conclusion	13

CloudShare Research Highlights Why Sales & Customer Training Have Changed for Good



Executive Summary

The demand for virtual experiences is growing dramatically, both for sales organizations and customer training teams. We've known this anecdotally for nearly two years—the new remote reality from 2020 onward accelerated the need for virtual platforms. But new data from CloudShare's own platform highlights a rapid increase in the adoption of technologies that will become the new norm: virtual POCs, self-paced learning, video-enabled training, tighter integrations, and more. This report covers the most important changes we're seeing for sales and customer training teams.

Introduction

Buyers expect more from sellers in 2022 than they did even just a few short years ago. At the same time, customers expect better training experiences from the platforms they choose to work with.

COVID-19 did little to mitigate these expectations. If anything, the last two years have accelerated the demand for excellent virtual experiences that carry all the way through the customer journey, from dynamic POCs to onboarding, product training, renewals and expansions.

It's time to stop thinking about sales demos and POCs as entirely distinct from onboarding and customer training. Instead, both sales and training pros should focus on creating virtual software experiences designed to keep prospects and customers engaged.

CloudShare's platform data points to several trends that support this new way of thinking: increased demand for virtual POCs and demos, a major shift in self-paced learning, and dynamic features in training (like multiple instructors and video conferencing) heavily impacting engagement and retention.

These are the trends to pay attention to in 2022 and beyond



01

Virtual Sales and Training Trends to Pay Attention to in 2022

It's no secret that virtual experiences are key to standing out in a newly remote B2B world. But as we dug into our own platform metrics from the last couple of years, it became clear just how critical it is for sales and training teams to invest in better experiences for prospects and customers.



The demand for virtual sales experiences has exploded, with **virtual POC environments growing by 368%** in 2021.



Self-paced learning is more important than ever, with these experiences growing by 365% last year.

These are our main takeaways



Introducing multiple instructors is a great way to increase engagement in virtual instructor-led training; **courses with more than one instructor** saw a 20% higher completion rate and 53% higher attendance.



Interaction is key to engagement, with courses offering video conferencing boasting a 67% completion rate.

02

Increased Demand for Virtual Sales Experiences

Gartner predicts that 80% of sales interactions will be digital in the next three years. At the same time, three-quarters of B2B buyers say their last purchase was very complex or difficult.

That's a gap sales teams will need to figure out how to close in the next year or two.

As forward-thinking organizations start to look for ways to engage buyers digitally, it's no surprise that CloudShare saw a sharp increase in demand for virtual sales experiences. We saw a 368% increase in the number of virtual POC experiences delivered on the CloudShare platform from 2020 to 2021, with a 311% increase in activity on those same POC environments. In other words, not only were there more POCs, but there was increased user activity throughout the POCs.

COVID-19 accelerated a trend that we were already seeing pre-pandemic: buyers are looking to explore solutions in an easy way, and smart sellers are moving to meet that demand.

03

Dramatic Increase in Self-Paced Learning

In a recent CloudShare [survey](#), we found that 42% of SaaS leaders say scheduling is their number one barrier to effective training.

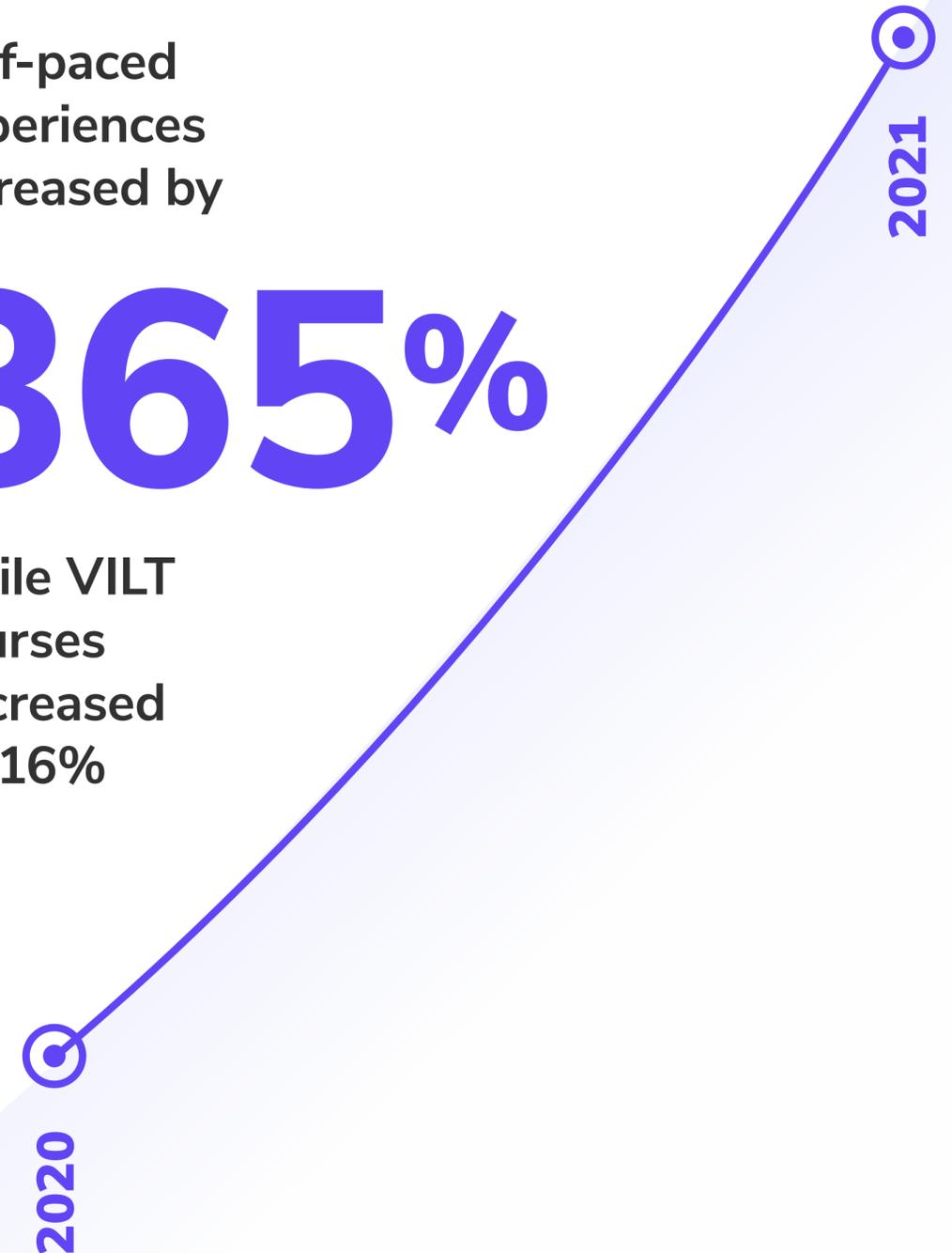
That's one underlying factor behind the shift to self-paced learning in virtual environments. While virtual instructor-led training (VILT) still has a major place in onboarding and complex product training, CloudShare saw a major shift in 2021: VILT courses decreased by 16%, while self-paced experiences increased by 365%.

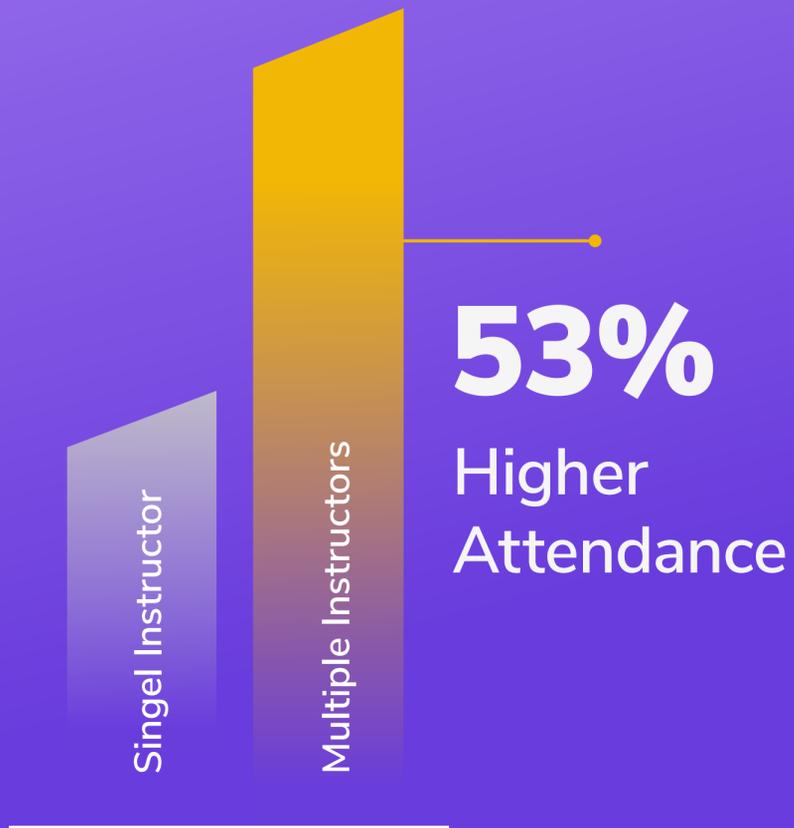
We expect this trend to continue as, first, companies look for more efficient ways to introduce sales enablement content to prospects and, second, customer trainers look for ways to scale onboarding and product training.

Self-paced experiences increased by

365%

while VILT courses decreased by 16%





04

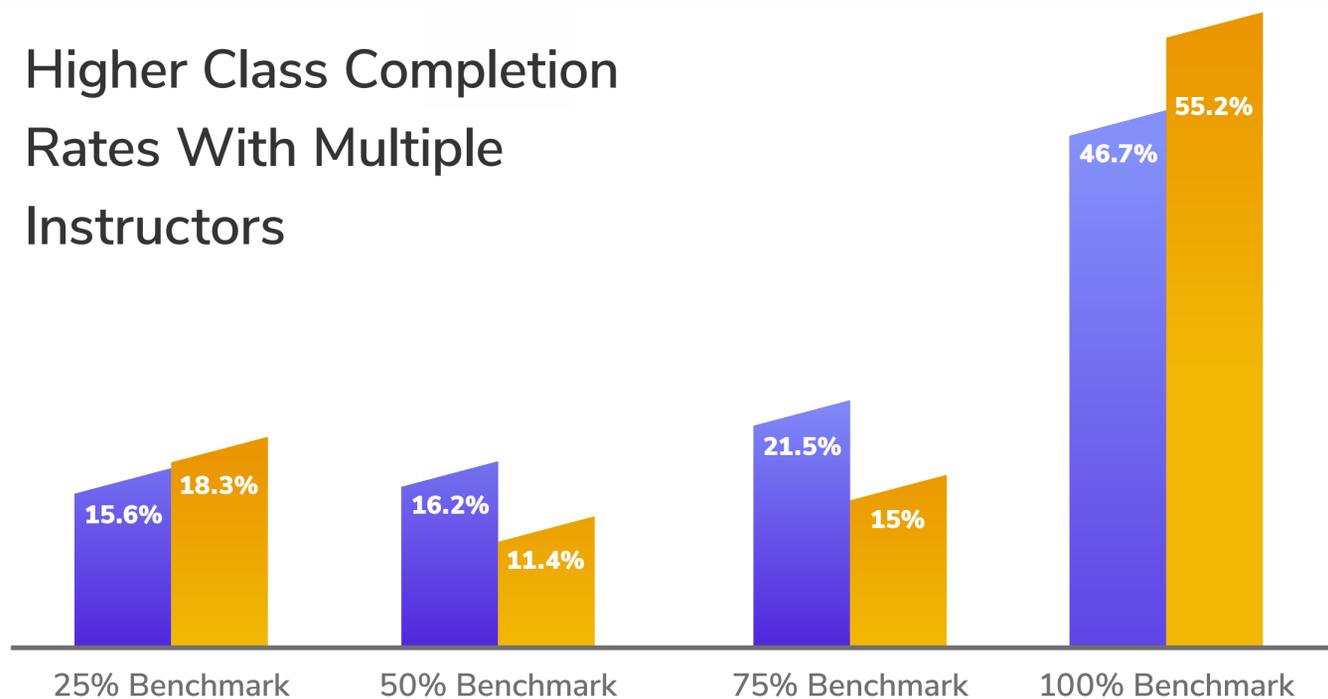
Multiple Instructors Impact Engagement

While self-paced learning is growing, live engagement still holds an important place in prospect and customer interactions.

One specific way to boost engagement is to bring multiple instructors into your VILT environment. When CloudShare customers used the multi-instructor feature, they saw an average of 53% higher attendance and a near 20% increase in class completion rates.

One-on-one attention is key to giving your customers the ROI they're looking for in training, and bringing multiple instructors into a virtual environment is an effective way to achieve that goal in a digital world.

Higher Class Completion Rates With Multiple Instructors



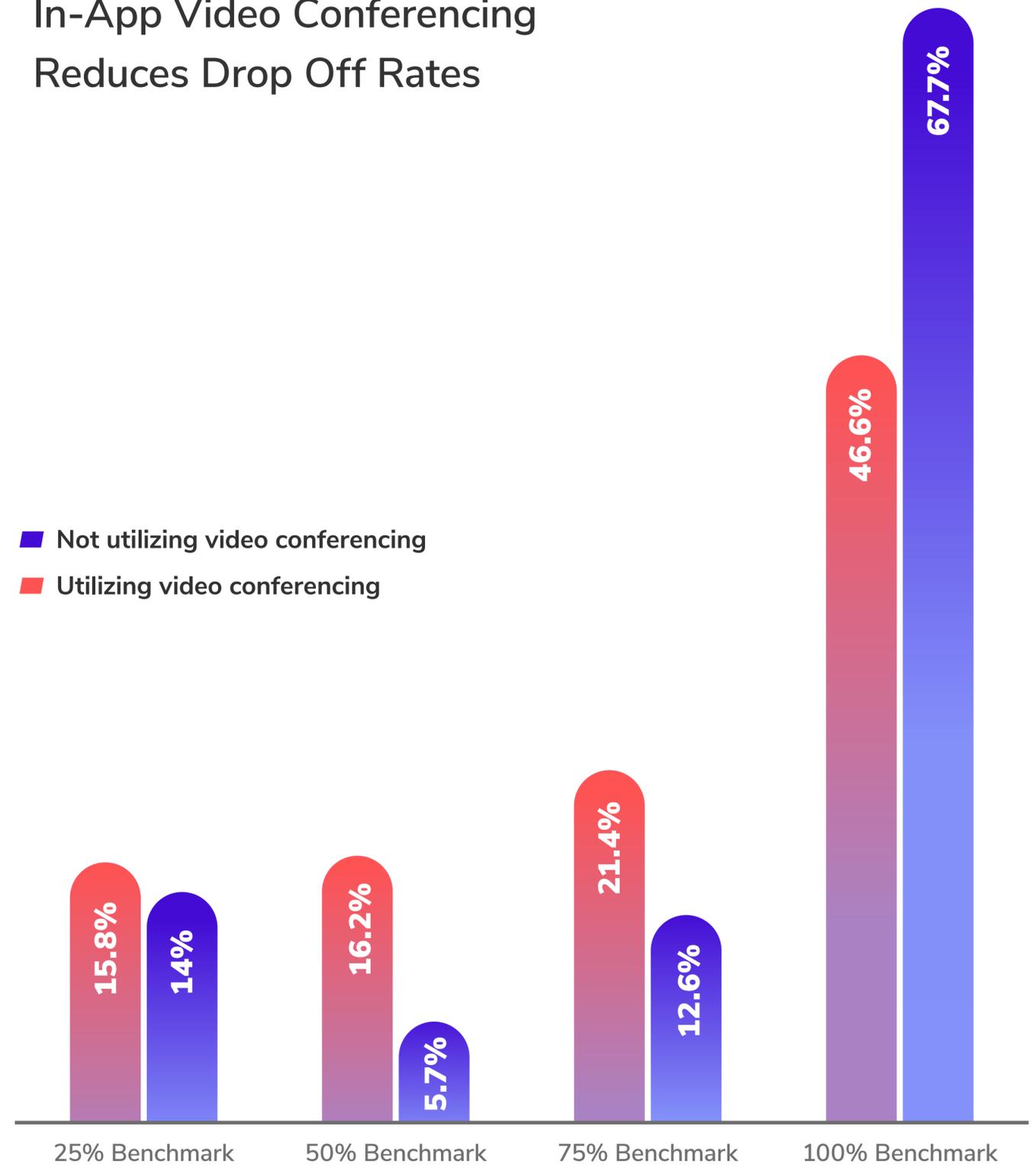
In-App Video Conferencing Has the Biggest Effect on Participation and Completion

Speaking of engagement: video conferencing affects participation like no other CloudShare feature.

In-app video conferencing brings class completion rates up to 67%, compared to just 46% when trainers and learners have to switch back and forth between materials and video conferencing.

Many companies lean on multiple solutions to keep a class going: Zoom for video conferencing and their LMS for course content, for example. But, while you'll want to introduce flexibility with self-paced learning, data from this report shows making VILT courses highly engaging starts with in-app video conferencing.

In-App Video Conferencing Reduces Drop Off Rates



Methodology

The data in this report was collected and analyzed directly from the CloudShare database. This dataset was produced solely by the use and operation of the CloudShare platform of more than 500,000 unique users. All data refers to these users, from any company (excluding CloudShare's internal use) that have accessed and leveraged the platform between 2019-2021.

Conclusion



What This Means for Sales & Customer Training Teams

CloudShare has seen the growth in demand for virtual training experiences first-hand, with a **17% increase in training users** across the globe between 2020 and 2021.

This demand is coming from the training industry—a field that is already harnessing virtual experience technology—and sales operations leaders looking for new ways to engage prospects.

It also means that future-looking companies are increasing their investment in the space: nearly **two-thirds** of businesses affected by changes due to COVID-19 spent more on training in 2021 than they did in 2020.

There's no question that delivering exceptional customer experiences is essential to sales, onboarding, renewals and expansion. The only question is how soon companies will adapt to the changes we've seen in the last two years.



About CloudShare

CloudShare is a leading software experience platform, helping software companies increase customer acquisition and retention by creating highly engaging, hands-on virtual POCs, demos, and training environments.

CloudShare's virtual experiences are easily replicated in the cloud and purpose-built to generate user engagement that ultimately impacts key business metrics such as repeat purchase rates, lower support costs, higher win rates, faster sales cycle, and more.

We are proud to serve leading global software companies such as Palo Alto Networks, RSA, Motorola, Atlassian, SAI Global, ForgeRock, Salesforce, and many more.

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with our expert
team today

