



Avaya Spaces Helps HR Training Entrepreneur Level-Up in a New Reality



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Typically, HR trainings are best done in-person. When COVID-19 hit in March 2020, bookings at Michelle Halloran’s HR practice were abruptly and severely impacted due to the quarantine measures. The business lost bookings and was faced with zero demand as training sessions could no longer be held physically in a single room.

Halloran HR Resolutions Ltd. an HR Practice, based in Galway, Ireland, is a successful consultancy company offering a variety of training services to both public and private sector clients. The training provided includes Dignity at Work (anti-bullying/anti-harassment training); Management Development Training; Management Coaching; Workplace Mediation Services; Workplace Investigation Services and HR and Employee Relations services.

Typically, all training activities would be held face-to-face and in public venues such as hotel conference rooms. However, when COVID-19 hit in March 2020, bookings at Michelle Halloran’s HR practice were abruptly and severely impacted due to the quarantine measures. The business lost bookings and was faced with zero demand as training sessions could no longer be held physically in a single room.



CHALLENGES

- In-person training impossible with COVID-19 restrictions.
- Clients using different systems with little experience using video solutions.
- Security concerns using web-based platforms.

VALUE CREATED

- Ability to conduct training via video and continue booking training sessions.
- Simplicity of Avaya Spaces is easy for clients to use on any device.
- Training sessions take half the time as there is no travel or complicated AV logistics involved.

SOLUTION USED

- Avaya Spaces®

A Changed Work Environment

Michelle would not have envisioned that her training, which promotes best practice for people management, was something that could be successfully done without being physically in the same room as the trainees.

Prior to the pandemic, a training day usually involved an early start and travel to the training location. She would need to liaise with IT/AV staff at the venue to ensure the presentation technology was set-up and working properly before conducting a full day of training then travelling home.

Traditional Challenges

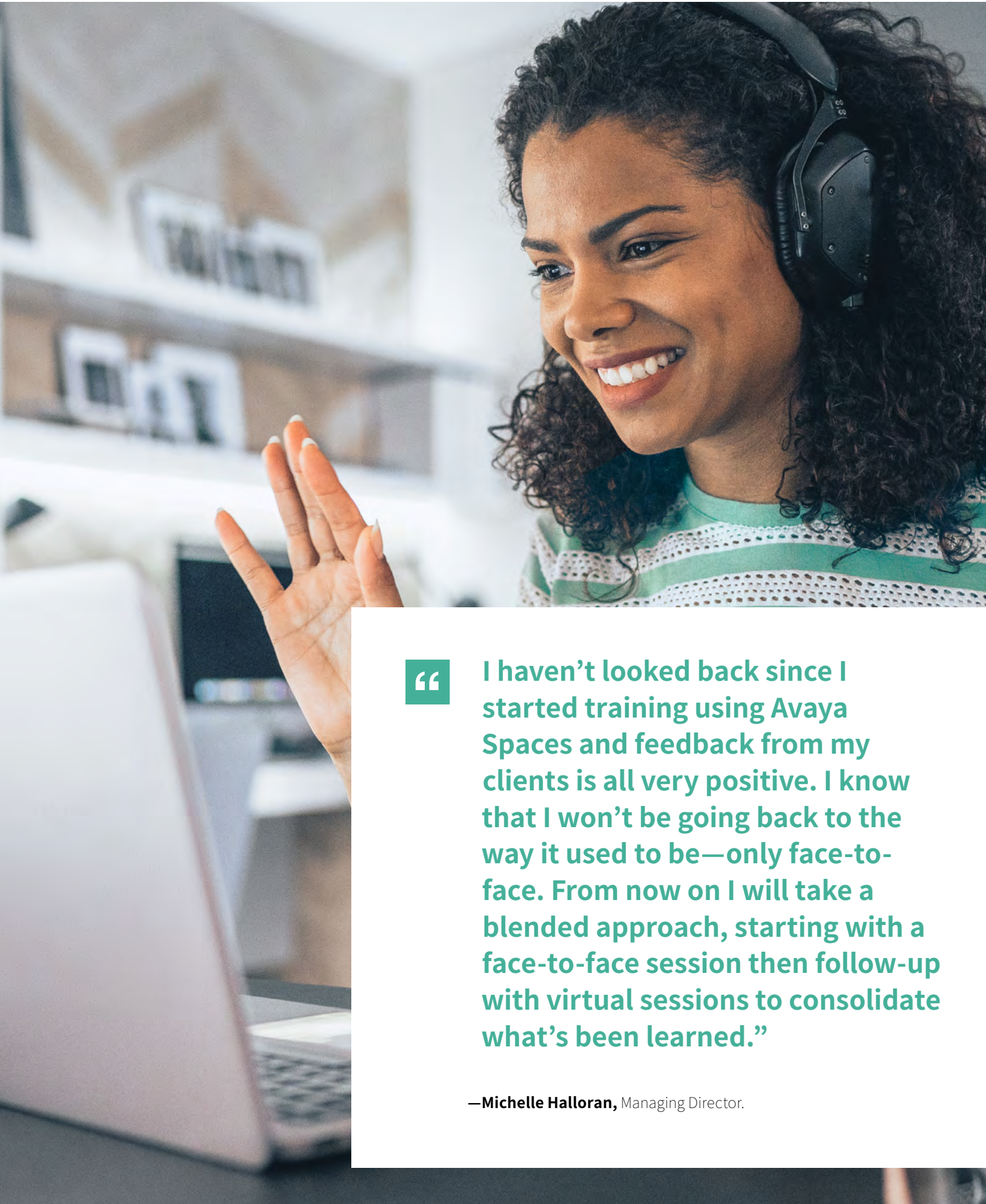
A day's training session doesn't just happen without a lot of preparation work during the weeks or even months prior to the event and on the day itself. Scheduling a day when busy executives were able to get together at the same time for a training session was a typical challenge as well as finding a venue at a location that suited everyone. Once a venue was agreed, the quality of its IT and AV connectivity could be a challenge, taking up much of Michelle's time as she worked with IT admins to ensure her presentations would be delivered clearly and smoothly to her audience.

These logistical challenges had the potential to negatively impact the business. If Michelle was unable to find a suitable date or venue location, it was possible that she would lose the booking. Having to postpone sessions would also have an adverse effect on cash-flow and business planning.

An Online Training Space

Whilst looking for alternative platforms to continue her training business, Michelle discovered the 60-day free trial of Avaya Spaces, a robust online video collaboration solution. To join an online training session, her clients would only need a browser, an email containing a one-click link to the Avaya Space where the training was being held, a PC with a camera and the time blocked out in their diaries. Although this is a very simple user-model, Michelle was unsure if her clients would be open to this new way of conducting training sessions.

"Many of my clients had never even been on a video conference call before and there certainly was a concern from them as to whether this could actually work," said Michelle. "My audiences are varied and are not typically IT savvy and I was very worried they wouldn't be able to join the online training or wouldn't understand the interface."



I haven't looked back since I started training using Avaya Spaces and feedback from my clients is all very positive. I know that I won't be going back to the way it used to be—only face-to-face. From now on I will take a blended approach, starting with a face-to-face session then follow-up with virtual sessions to consolidate what's been learned.”

—Michelle Halloran, Managing Director.



The Best of Both Worlds

Fortunately, one of the public sector departments she works with decided to take Michelle's online training offer using Avaya Spaces and Halloran HR Resolutions Ltd. conducted its first successful online training for a group of nine managers learning about "Providing Meaningful Performance Feedback."

"Thankfully everything went amazingly well, and they had no issues. Thumbs up to Avaya on the ease of use," said Michelle. "Since then, because of having to work from home for so long, people have generally become more used to online tools so proposing an online training session is no longer asking them to try something completely unfamiliar."

Using her newfound understanding of Avaya Spaces, now all Michelle needs to do ahead of a training session is send all the participants a template email with a few simple instructions – how to open a browser, how to open the Avaya Space with a single click on the link, how to check audio and video is enabled – the rest is down to her training experience and expertise. This has significantly minimised the amount of logistics required as compared to a traditional physical training.

On Avaya Spaces, Michelle Halloran can show presentations, interact with her audience and share documents with participants all on a single platform. Far from longing for the time that she can return to a fully face-to-face business model, she recognises the opportunities this platform will provide post-pandemic to allow her to grow her business. She has continued to expand her offerings using Avaya Spaces and intends to go on using the platform into the future taking a hybrid approach, mixing online with face-to-face meetings as needed.

"Face-to-face is still very valuable as it enables me to read the room, connect with my audience, receive energy from the room, and more easily watch others' reactions to the person speaking. All this helps me pitch the best level of training more intuitively," explains Michelle.

"However, it is definitely possible to achieve an effective result on a virtual platform and there are so many other benefits that I shall be offering a blend of both face-to-face and online training from now on."



Resulting in more Effective Training

Using Avaya Spaces, Michelle has found it much easier to identify a training time that works for all the attending executives. Being able to join an online training from anywhere made it easier for participants to commit to a time, resulting in fewer last-minute dropouts or cancellations. She also found that participating from home makes the trainees more relaxed and therefore more engaged. Being able to take the breaks between training sessions in their own home rather than in an unfamiliar venue, was also a big plus. All these contributed to a more engaging and satisfying training experience.

“A workshop session used to never be less than one full long day, including travel time. With virtual sessions it can easily be half a day,” said Michelle.

As the trainer, Michelle also found that online sessions had benefits. Her travel time is reduced, and from a technology point of view, Avaya Spaces is more reliable than being at a venue that is unable to connect its AV hardware with her laptop. With less worry about these other aspects, Michelle can focus mainly on delivering an effective training to the participants.

Avaya Spaces has changed Michelle Halloran’s business in a way she never thought of. Since deploying this solution, the results came thick and fast. She’s gone from zero, having lost all her bookings at the start of the pandemic, to an increase of almost 30 percent and growing.

“I haven’t looked back since I started using Avaya Spaces and feedback from my clients is all very positive,” said Michelle Halloran. “I know that I won’t be going back to the way it used to be—always face-to-face. From now on I will take a blended approach, which provides everyone with more options. We will start with a face-to-face session then follow-up with virtual sessions to consolidate what’s been learned. I’ve found that if you once have a face-to-face meeting, then you can have a very comfortable conversation over the Avaya Spaces platform the next time.”

Halloran HR Resolutions

Michelle Halloran (BSc. MSc. CMCIPD, Dip Training and Education, MII Member) is an experienced independent HR / People management trainer, workplace investigator, workplace mediator, consultant and coach to the public and private sector in Ireland with over 30 years experience. She worked previously in HR Management and in general management, in Ireland, the UK and Europe, across various sectors including the Public Sector, financial services, manufacturing, investment banking, information technology, and customer (contact centre) services. **Learn more at www.hrconsultant.ie.**



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