



Improve Your Office Productivity

Tip 5: 8th May 2007

Developing ICT Skills for Your Staff

Without the appropriate technical skills your business operations could be disrupted, efficiency and productivity levels will fall and you run the risk of missing deadlines and eventually losing customers.

So the IT skills gap exists, but how do you work out exactly where the gap is in your business and what kind of skills your staff need to develop?

1. The first step is to carry out an IT training needs analysis. This can be done by an independent consultant or designated personnel amongst your staff.
2. Identify the problem – decide which business issues need to be addressed through IT. For example, you might need staff with programming skills to set up new databases of client information for your firm.
3. Collect information – interview your staff so you understand their current IT skill levels. If you have no one qualified to do that, engage the services of an independent consultant.
4. Analyze the information – review the interview results to work out where you have to concentrate your training effort.
5. Develop a training action plan – define what training is need and by whom and how soon

Many smaller companies rely on on-the-job training where an experienced member of staff shows other employees how to use specific applications. This approach is relatively cheap but it can result in lost time for those doing the training and because they're not professional trainers you could find bad habits are being passed around the business.

Another option is to bring an external trainer into the business. It's important that you manage any external trainers by setting clear goals and tracking the progress of the training. Start with a practical training brief which covers the objectives you want to achieve. And after training sessions ask your staff to review the teaching, ask them if it was relevant to their job and to their level of knowledge.

If pulling in external trainers is likely to bust the budget a more cost-effective solution might be to send your staff on public courses delivered by professional training providers. One big benefit of this approach is

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