

10 IT TRAINING SUPPORT TIPS FOR TRAINERS & MANAGERS

Effectively meeting the needs of IT professionals is no easy task. It requires responsiveness and a proactive approach to their training and development needs. The payoff for proper delivery of programs and tools for this segment of your workforce is significant – easier recruiting, better retention rates and lower turnover-related costs, and greater productivity for both your IT staff and the non-IT professionals that they enable.

To assist you, we at Safari Books Online have developed the 10 tips as material to refresh and augment your ability to deliver real value to your IT workforce.

- 01> IDENTIFY CLEAR OBJECTIVES:** Having a clear set of measurable (and realistic!) objectives is the foundation for effective delivery of any IT training support. Program specific metrics may include end user satisfaction and instructor performance ratings. Post-program metrics could cover aspects such as improvements to retention, sales and revenue, operations, and internal/external customer satisfaction.
 - 02> UNDERSTAND INTERNAL AUDIENCE SEGMENTS:** Understanding how your audience is segmented – from your perspective and theirs – enables you to make informed planning, customization, and tradeoff decisions. This will significantly improve your ability to design a program that fulfills the training needs of critical roles within your organization.
 - 03> MAKE ALLOCATIONS USING THE 80-20 RULE:** Trying to equally meet the needs of everyone normally results in meeting the needs of nobody, according to the Pareto Principle. When tailoring your program to meet the needs of your IT staff, target the 20% variable – staff, curriculum, etc. – that will have the greatest 80% impact on the objectives you set. If you find that doing this make a particular program unsuitable for other audiences, then consider creating multiple programs or re-evaluating the goals of your program.
 - 04> ENSURE RELEVANCY:** Relevancy in this sense is represented in two forms: relevancy to objectives and relevancy to the audience. For ensuring relevancy to your audience, ensure that you have a continuous feedback loop. Survey your audience before and after developing your program, to make sure it delivers what the audience needs in addition to what the organization needs.
 - 05> COVER THE DOS & THE DON'TS:** One of the most common mistakes in training and learning is to only teach and/or learn the Dos, when the Don'ts – and the rationale for these – are equally as instructional. It's been said you can't learn the rules until you learn how to break them and the same can be said for IT work.
 - 06> USE REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES:** Training on technologies and processes is helpful, but there is no replacement for showing these aspects in action. Use real - world examples – integrating the Dos and Don'ts – to enhance learning by your IT staff. These examples are great for training events and as part of an on-demand set of reference materials.
 - 07> INCLUDE CERTIFICATION WORK:** Certification work is a great win-win for the organization and the IT staff who participate in training and development work. Organizations realize: better morale and job satisfaction, improved product consistency, reduced costs, and increased sales and competitive advantage. Staff member benefits include recognition and reward, a method for keeping up with changing technologies, and future career development advantages.
 - 08> SUPPLEMENT WITH NON-TECHNICAL TRAINING:** Providing business and communications training support, even for as little as 5-10% of your program, will enable your staff to operate and interact with others more effectively. Benefits include better collaboration, greater efficiency, increased pool of capable management candidates internally, and support for a positive working environment.
 - 09> HAVE A WEB 2.0 STRATEGY:** Training and learning today happens in formal and informal ways. Having a Web 2.0 strategy will help you to help your IT staff, by delivering structured access to unstructured learning resources such as subscription content sites, readers and RSS feeds, wikis and project management tools, blogs, podcasts and video, and other resources. It also will help to identify proper ways to navigate through obstacles such as firewalls, bandwidth limitations, and other issues.
 - 10> TAKE A PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH:** Ensure the sustainability of your training and development efforts by approaching your work as a program rather than series of projects. Doing so with resources such as subscription-based information resources will enable you to systemize your efforts, so you can focus more on the high impact activities such as content areas of focus rather than administrative minutia.
- BONUS:**
- 11> SUBSCRIBE TO A DIGITAL LIBRARY:** One cost-effective way to act upon each of the tips above and support your technology staff with a resource they will use is to provide an on-demand digital library like the one Safari Books Online provides. This type of library contains a growing collection of content from top technology and business publishers – books, certification guides, videos, code fragments, and more.