

# High-Performance IT

## IT Staff Training

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## **The Best practice IT Standard is:**

That all technical staff have been formally trained by the product vendor for each product in use.

1. A product must be from a reputable vendor who provides training, technical support, and a technical upgrade path.
2. At least two members of staff must be trained at product purchase.
3. Free, off the Web products are not allowed unless there is an extenuating circumstance due to the inherent risks they introduce and potential negative effects on system upgrade paths.

I am a great believer in keeping staff training levels up to date. Unfortunately, in times of cost cutting and budget restraints, training is usually the first cost centre to be cut, this I have always resisted as the benefits of keeping product training up to date are substantial. The importance of training cannot be overstated.

Companies invest large amounts in hardware, software and services but often fail to train or fall behind in the training of their staff in these products (e.g., hardware, systems and applications software, software suites and utilities). Failing to train staff on products they use is simply an inefficient and often costly use of those assets. Having untrained staff using IT products is also a risk, and when training on new technologies falls behind, capability and productivity suffer as does staff morale and the professionalism of the IT department.

### **Product training ensures:**

1. Proper product installation and integration.
2. Proper OS and systems software configuration set-up.
3. Proper Application interface set-up.
4. Proper application of product functionality.
5. Risks of introducing the product are reduced.
6. The use of scripts decreases.
7. Capacity management integration improves.
8. Security integration is better.
9. Staff morale and confidence improve as staff are vendor qualified.

### **When a staff member who has been working on a product without training, then subsequently goes for training, this is what tends to happen.**

1. Software gets reinstalled.
2. OS and systems software configurations get changed.
3. Application interfaces get changed.
4. New functionality is used, software and business outcomes improve.
5. Risks are reduced.

6. The use of scripts decreases.
7. Capacity management improves.
8. Security gets tighter.
9. Morale and confidence improve.

### **Performance Assessment**

The Performance Assessment is to do a thorough audit of all products in use and match against each - staff training needs. The Roles and Responsibilities template also recorded staff training and training needs.

### **Conduct a Product/Training Audit**

1. Record on a spreadsheet the following items. (Some items may need to be grouped, like hardware types as the volumes may be high).
2. Desktop and Mobile hardware.
3. Server Hardware.
4. Network hardware.
5. Systems software.
6. Utilities.
7. Infrastructure toolsets.
8. Applications development toolsets.
9. Applications.
10. Legacy systems.
11. Other.

### **Against each product, record:**

1. Staff member name who has been trained on the product.
2. Staff member name who requires training on the product.

### **Questions to ask:**

1. Which products are in use without staff training?
2. Which staff need vendor training on which products?
3. Which products are in use that are not vendor supported?
4. Which products are Web freebies?
5. How many staff have been trained on legacy systems?
6. Are there individual staff training plans in place?
7. Is staff training up to date with new technologies?
8. Is there a shortage of critical skills?
9. Are skill shortages due to lack of staff, staff turnover or lack of training?

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