

Trillium Consulting

NEWS BYTES

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Trillium's Mission:

“Helping organizations use technology to accomplish their business goals.”

About Trillium

Since 1989, Trillium Consulting has helped clients to effectively implement PC technology.

Trillium Consulting provides expertise in information technology planning, implementation and education. We accomplish this through training, documentation and project management services.

Trillium is a Microsoft Certified partner specializing in the deployment and support of server and desktop solutions.

In This Issue...

The last few years have brought new and exciting technology to the corporate environment, and we've had the opportunity to consult on several key technology migration projects for our clients.

In this issue, you'll read about some of the successes and lessons learned from various projects, with a focus on training, end user support and working remotely.

www.trilliumconsulting.com

The ROI on End User Training

It's 8:00 at night and your 13-year old son/daughter/niece/nephew has just finished typing a homework assignment ... in Microsoft Word ... complete with pictures and charts. Is he or she going to need basic PC application training when he or she enters the job market? Probably not.

Consulting and Training Together

Today's workforce is increasingly computer savvy, and new employees entering the job market know more about computers than ever before. So how does IT training meet the needs of employees? The answer: By offering training that is targeted to how the technology will be used and increases productivity by building performance-based skills.

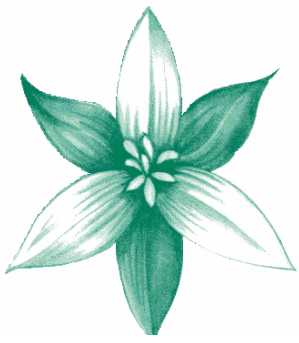
The concept of performance-based training isn't new, but it is even more critical given today's economic environment. Businesses demand more bang for the training buck and that means a quantifiable return on investment (ROI). IT Training programs that are aimed at job-related tasks deliver that return. According to the March 2003 issue of *Training* magazine, Dayton, Ohio-based NCR "recovered 5.66 weeks of labor by providing Microsoft Excel training to financial associates. While this produced a dollar savings of just \$7,400 over a 12-month period, the overall ROI was 510 percent."

Training for Results

To get results like NCR, training must go beyond the basics of saving, printing and formatting files to address topics such as "How do I use my Access database to create a merged letter in Word" or "How do I use Excel to produce the specific reports I need, then include charts in my PowerPoint presentation?"

Once employees understand the basic features and functions of an application, training can help them apply their knowledge in specific ways that make them more productive

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ROI on Training

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with both daily tasks and special projects. In addition, training can be tailored to meet the needs of individual departments. Marketing departments, for example, have different training requirements than financial or legal departments. For training to be successful, it must be targeted to specific job tasks. This may be as simple as attending a half-day class such as “Mail Merge using Microsoft Word” or “Data Analysis in Excel.”

For more complex topics, however, it requires that trainers have a thorough understanding of the needs and requirements of course participants. By meeting with a key representative from the group and by reviewing specific training objectives in advance, instructors can customize course exercises and may use actual business examples during the class.

More with Less

Trillium recently completed Microsoft Access training for a large Seattle-based retail corporation. By using an example that mirrored the actual database they use to track inventory and orders, course participants returned to their desks with a database design ready to be built and were immediately productive. Most importantly, because training was focused, less time was spent in the classroom achieving the desired skill set.

“You just saved me 10 hours a week,” commented one participant. That’s the ROI for training. ♦

Ensuring Success: How pre- and post-migration support can make or break your IT deployment project

Any IT upgrade project is only as successful as the end users perceive it to be. Many companies have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in desktop upgrades, only to hear the users – the people you’re trying to help – complain about “down time” and “liking the old stuff better.” Thorough planning and support, both before and after end user migrations, can alleviate some of the end user stress and lead to more successful IT projects.

A proven, successful end user support plan involves three key components:

■ *Ongoing communications before the upgrade.*

As part of a project support plan, make sure communication with users occurs frequently, in advance, and in as many ways as possible about the details of the upgrade. Emails and demonstration-style expos can generate excitement and keep people informed.

■ *An in-person, pre-migration “handshake” by a support team member.*

Develop an end-user pre-migration checklist and make sure a project team member contacts each user, or a representative from each department, prior to the upgrade. During this handshake, the team member assists the user in preparing for the upgrade by going through the checklist, explains the major changes and benefits of the new computing environment, troubleshoots any questions or concerns, and explains what to expect after the upgrade.

■ *Immediate, post-migration “SWAT” support following an upgrade.*

During post-migration support, SWAT teams verify users can log on, change their password, and use key applications. Support team members assist with mapping drives, setting up printers, configuring PDA’s, locating files, etc. They also might demonstrate new remote access technologies and assists with anything else the user requests.

The Frank Russell Company in Tacoma, Washington, recently completed an upgrade to Terminal Services, Windows XP and Office XP. John Stingl, CTO, said, “The pre- and post-user migration support that Trillium’s SWAT team provided was invaluable for maintaining Business Unit support of the project. The team worked with each associate to ensure comfort with the new environment and address any problems or issues that arose.”

A recent informal survey for another client conducted by Trillium indicated that users had a 96% satisfaction rate with IT projects when post-migration support teams were available, versus a 72% satisfaction rate when post-migration support teams were not available. ♦

Remote Connectivity: Best Practices

Organizations are looking to remote access technologies to help their employees be more productive when away from the office. According to a recent report by the Gartner Group, by 2005, 40% of mobile workers will use a wireless LAN to access email and corporate data.

Over the past several years, Trillium has been involved in the planning, implementation and support of different types of remote access programs at various clients. The tools being used vary depending on end user needs, corporate security concerns and available technology.

Based on our experience, the following best practices might be helpful as you implement your Remote Connectivity program:

- Establish rules for “strong” passwords that must meet a minimum length (usually 7 characters), must include at least one number and symbol, and cannot include portions of the users’ name.
- Provide company-owned equipment, or set policies regarding downloading company data to non-company owned PCs or other equipment to ensure users have a clear understanding of legal and security implications.
- Establish a simulated “remote” machine and connection in your IT Department. This can be used for a wide variety of purposes, including testing new procedures, allowing support personnel to simulate and troubleshoot issues and training of end users.
- Meet with your “road warriors” to learn how they are working today and the greatest challenges they face when they are traveling before implementing a new remote access tool. This information may lead the organization to make different choices and ensure that the remote access technology will improve productivity.
- Make sure users know not to leave themselves logged in at airport kiosks or other unsecured areas. Have documented best practices and technical practices for log-out times.

Be sure to include documentation and supporting materials for Remote Access technologies in your Remote Connectivity project plan, both for end users and for technical support teams. This documentation should include not just features and functions, but your corporate best practices as well. ♦

Marketing your Training Program

You’ve got a state-of-the-art training room, the latest in computer hardware and software and a premiere training firm (Trillium, of course) providing quality instructors and course curriculum - but folks just don’t seem to be signing up for classes.

Here are some ideas for marketing your training program and increasing your class enrollments:

- Work with your HR department to provide training schedules and information to new employees.
- Arrange meetings with different departments to find out what types of training are appropriate for their needs and what topics are of particular interest to them.
- Create and maintain a training website with schedules, registration information, class descriptions and pre-requisites.
- Use creative titles for your classes. “Creating Effective PowerPoint Presentations” or “The Artistic Touch in PowerPoint” may attract more interest than a standard “Introduction” or “Intermediate” title.
- Promote your classes by sending emails to users who might be interested in training classes. If you’ve just held an Introduction to Access class, be sure to email participants about an upcoming Intermediate Access class.

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Microsoft Quick Tips...

Add Folder Shortcuts to the Places Bar in Office XP

Instead of repeatedly “drilling down” to access frequently-used folders in Office XP applications, you can add folder shortcuts to the Places Bar in the Open and Save As dialog boxes. To do this, select the folder name in the Open or Save As dialog box, then click on TOOLS, ADD TO PLACES BAR. If you want to use smaller icons, or move, delete or rename the folder shortcut, just right-click on the folder shortcut and make the appropriate selection from the menu that displays.

Adding a Favorite in IE 6

Did you know that to add a web page to your Favorites, you can display the web page, then press CTRL + D?

Color-coded Sheet Tabs in Excel 2002

In Excel 2002, you can color-code sheet tabs for easier identification or grouping of related sheets. Here’s how: just right-click on the sheet tab, then choose TAB COLOR. Select the color you want, then choose OK.

Getting a Map to a Contact in OWA



In OWA, you can easily create an Expedia map of a contact’s address. With the contact open, click on the GENERAL tab, then click on the drop-down Mailing Address to select the address you want to map. Click on the DISPLAY MAP FOR THIS ADDRESS button to display the map.

Contact us:

Trillium Consulting

(425) 957-4649

1 (800) 844-1450

trillium@trilliumconsulting.com

For online information:

www.trilliumconsulting.com

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