
THE NUMBER ONE SOFTWARE TRAINING MISTAKE

This is perhaps *the* biggest software training mistake made by software developers and software buyers alike. **This mistake is so wide spread today in business that most people will not recognize it even when told.** It is like a fish being unaware that it is swimming in water. It is not the development of any individual training course or module. *The focus has been on delivering training, not on what people are learning, not on outcomes and results.*

Failure to planning the entire program (no strategy) can also lead to:

- people are trained too soon and they forget what they learned
- people are trained too late and have to make do with no training in the meantime and make a lot of mistakes
- they get training they don't need
- they don't get enough training or the wrong kind
- they don't know where to get help when they need it

One-Shot Training – What's Wrong?

Today the common practice for learning new software is to deliver a *single* course, whether it is in the classroom or self-study e-learning. But research has shown over and over again that people tend to forget the large majority (up to 75% - 80%) of what they learn in a class within a few days.

Information Overload

Furthermore, the longer the training, the *less* people actually retain due to information overload. The additional information delivered in the training actually erases what they would have remembered in a shorter course! (Don't believe me? Try this right here and now for yourself.

- Read this number one digit at a time like you were giving it to someone as a password. Then close your eyes and repeat it. 638379. If you are like most people you got 5-6 digits.
- Now try this one. Remember to say each digit separately in your mind. 846725434859036- Now, close your eyes and see how many you can remember. Again, if you are like most people, you can't even remember as many as you did the first time! **That is, you learned less when presented with more information.)**

This means that “boot camps” and “one week” training programs simply overload the learner with information. The learners actually waste a good chunk of their time. Sometimes they get frustrated. The worst part is they don't learn as much as you had hoped and maybe never do!

No Assimilation and Integration Time

Another thing that is wrong with intense learning experiences is that there is no assimilation or integration time. People need time for the brain to make connections between what they are learning and what they already know as well as interconnections among the topics presented. These connections support the brain's associative memory and problem-solving capabilities. If concepts are not integrated, they are of limited use in the real world.

Limited Practice

Intense programs typically have limited opportunity to put the concepts into practice, especially if one is learning how to use software. Practice cements the topics learned as well as their integration. Being able to actually setup and run several reports will enable the learner to remember far longer and far better than a single exercise.

Bottom Line

Without well-designed, time-released training programs, people don't really get skilled, the software is not used to its potential, ROI suffers, and possibly significant opportunities are missed or the competition takes over the lead.

Practical Corrective Action

Put together a comprehensive learning program for the software that delivers the training in digestible chunks over time. *People need time to assimilate and master one chunk of material before moving on to the next or the next is lost.*

Have a learning professional develop a learning program that includes:

- Diverse Needs Assessment Techniques
- Diverse Content
- Different Audiences (different levels of software users)
- Diverse Methods (classroom, e-learning, reading, OJT)
- **Time Released Training** (reduce overload, continued development)
- Just In Time Training
- Diverse Expertise
- Diverse Measurement Approaches

Solution

You are experts in the technology and the content area (industry or function) but not in learning. Engage people who are learning professionals to ensure you have the highest quality learning programs you can deliver with your software.

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