Software: Only as Useful as the Users Are Trained

By ABBIGAIL KRIEBS, Associate Editor, Industrial Distribution

I love Evernote. I use it every day for dozens of things. I keep a list of books that I want to read on it, RSVPs for events, and even my To-Do list.

Evernote is a smartphone app that you can also download to your personal computer. Aside from handling lists, you can also import images or ideas that you want to save for later, and once you sign in with a single account on both devices (or even more), your Evernote account automatically updates the content on both in real time. It is amazing.

My husband, however, doesn’t see the point. When I became an Evernote junkie, I was so excited to show him this great program that I felt was going to simplify my life. I showed him how to download the app and demonstrated how anything that I created would automatically also end up on his phone. He was impressed, and I, with lofty dreams of how this was going to transform our channels of communication and list-sharing, began using Evernote compulsively.

My short-lived bubble burst, however, when I discovered that my husband didn’t love Evernote as I did. In fact, he even *uninstalled the app from his phone.* My disbelief was incredible. Why would you get rid of such a perfect tool? Why abandon the club? His response: “I didn’t use it.”

I think the issue was more that he didn’t know how to use it, or never really started and therefore did not realize the benefits. He had this great piece of technology right at his fingertips, but he didn’t take the time to familiarize himself with it

enough for it to visibly add value to his life.

All too often, business fall into the same trap with new technologies. They are impressed with what it promises that it can do, but never take the time to fully learn and implement these promised wonders of productivity. They may not have planned adequate employee training on the new program, or maybe they didn't give employees enough time to adjust to the new software before expecting to see significant ROI results, and so they throw in the towel on their investment too soon.

Programs that focus on Customer Relationship Management, Business Intelligence, Management Dashboards, and Order Processing are wonderful – as long as you know how to use them well enough to make them a daily part of your work routine. According to Jim Dickie at destinationCRM.com, less than 40 percent of companies that have purchased CRM software use it at least 90 percent of the time. That means that at least sixty percent of companies that invested a significant amount in CRM software aren't seeing a real ROI for their time and money involved.

Statistics like these call for a new strategy. As with any adoption of new software, training seems to be a key factor in whether or not your employees will be successful in implementing the new tools at their disposal.

A couple of years ago, Cisco-Eagle, an industrial distribution company, was having some major in-house issues trying to keep all of their client information streamlined and in a usable format. They decided to implement CRM software, but made sure to implement it slowly and while providing adequate training for all employees. They had an in-house administrator training at the very beginning which seemed to propel them toward success, with an eventual 94 percent of their employees adopting the software with little to no issue.

While technology training is incredibly important, it also tends to be both an expensive and daunting task. It doesn't always have to be. There are lots of resources available to personal and business users alike that are helping individuals to get a better grasp of the ever-changing field of technology.

Questions about software implementation or going mobile? Or do you have helpful tips about using technology that you would like to share with other readers? Leave your comments below or email me at abbigail.kriebs@advantagemedia.com *[1]. We always love to hear from our readers.*

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