

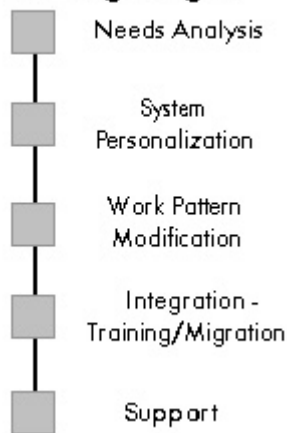
The Stages of a Training Program

A recent study by the Canadian International Development Research Centre identifies that “organizations use a major portion of their time for the acquisition of knowledge.” It goes on to state: “The best tool to acquire knowledge is training. Training investments must be continuous and must meet precise organizational and personnel requirements. An organization that wants to rely on knowledge management must include the principle of continuous learning into its business values.”

The most important aspect of a migration program must be training if the organization wants to master the change. In fact, the success of a migration project is often based on the quality of its training program and of the knowledge transfer derived from it.

In an Enterprise Management Framework, it makes more sense to have training focus on performing work for the organization rather than having the user become an expert. A successful training program should include:

Training Stages



- A complete needs analysis to identify workflow patterns and knowledge levels within the organization. The results from this analysis will also be used to design the informatics solution itself.
- The integration of needs and work habits into the technological solution.
- A custom training program focused on the technological solution.

The result will be a training program focused on organizational requirements, not generic application operation. This is *task-oriented training*.

The training plan should thus begin with a comprehensive look at organizational habits and existing productivity or operational issues. For example, if the new tool is a word processor, some immediate questions

arise: Which documents are the most used within the organization? Do document-creation standards exist? How does the organization propose to organize information and how does it want to share this information? What are employee work habits in regard to word processing? The answers to these questions will assist the application of automation in the system migration.

The second step is performed with individual users. What tasks do they perform on a regular basis, and are there any relationships between groups of tasks? How can these tasks be assisted by information systems? Do users have specific communication patterns? With whom? At what rate? How? The answers to these questions will aid in the design of solutions that specifically meet users' needs. The comparison is easy. If a person wants to write a letter without a computer, he or she finds a pencil and a pad of paper and then writes the letter. The use of a computer system should be as easy as that.

Why should organizations invest in the development of a multitude of word-processing experts? Why should organizations think that users are interested in seeing their work habits and methods integrated into an office automation application or that they should be responsible for this integration? Why imagine that this approach can possibly lead to increased productivity? Nevertheless, this is exactly what many corporations think today because they still use traditional training approaches.

It is, in fact, trainers and technicians that are the subject-matter experts. It should be their responsibility to analyze organizational and user needs in order to adapt office automation tools to business requirements. The training program can then focus on demonstrating how to use the tool within the specific organization, not how the tool works generically. Users learn how to write a letter for Corporation XYZ, not how to create their own formats.

In this instance, the office automation tool becomes secondary to the task. It is the task that matters; the tool used to perform it can be any tool.