Avoid the 4 Worst Work-From-Home Training Fails

Exciting, New Ways to Boost Work-From-Home Performance

Get Control!®
University

How to Produce Tech-Savvy,
Home-Sourced Superstars

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93%[i]

Need help organizing digital information.

80%

Of their day is spent immersed in technology.

21%

Of every home-sourced workday is wasted.

11%

Feel proficient with everyday technology tools like Teams, SharePoint, or Outlook.

Let's discuss the needs of your people in a brief phone or webchat.

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Avoid the Four Worst Work-From-Home Training Fails

The Challenge: According to Harvard Business Review[ii], the transition from office to home can be tough. In an almost 100% virtual world, technology, communication, and time management challenges abound. As a result, home-based workers often feel overwhelmed, isolated, and exhausted.

Efforts to help these workers frequently fall short. For example, a trainer urged an at-home worker to "get organized" yet offered no specific digital folder best practices.

Where did we go wrong? So many productivity pain points track back to a failure to consider everyday technology skills. According to Harris research, less than 11% of all digital workers feel proficient with universal tools like Outlook, Google search, and mobile devices[iii]. In other words, most work-from-home colleagues lack facility with the tools they use most!

In virtual meetings, where most are reluctant to use webcams, employees miss important non-verbal cues like a skeptical glance or a knowing nod. Communication and collaboration also suffer. Gone are lunch discussions and chats by the water cooler. Maybe this is why 92% of work-from-home colleagues want to boost their virtual meeting skills.

And where is the measurement and progress plan for these employees? Homebound workers and Learning and Development professionals both need to develop KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) so that their work-from-home people have a clear path to excellence. Today – these do not exist.

This paper lays out the four most pressing challenges faced by your work-from-home colleagues and provides solutions. Our hope is that *Get Control!* Training -- designed to optimize remote job performance – can play a role in your organization's work-from-home evolution.

Get Control! University(GCU) is a virtual tech and time management learning center designed for remote colleagues. All research, unless otherwise noted, has been culled from 83,323 surveys conducted by GCU.

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Failure #1: Ignore Digital Organization

What is your work-from-home team's #1 productivity pain point? Our research is crystal clear. Over 93% of work-from-home professionals struggle to organize their digital documents and email. In short, their files are a mess! According to IDC, the average cost of disorganized knowledge work is over $5,000 per employee per year[iv].

Almost every task performed by knowledge workers requires source files. It might be an email with valuable instructions, a PDF form, or a spreadsheet – but whatever it is, it should be quick and easy to reach. Incredibly, only 19% of work-from-home colleagues receive training that improves their digital organization and search skills. Incredibly, professionals spend 30% of the day, searching for information. One full day per week is wasted due to the weak nature of these search efforts![v]

The Solution: Offer targeted virtual training that helps remote colleagues get organized. Focus on these crucial KPIs:
- Build a versatile yet straightforward organization system for email, documents, and websites.
- Master PC shortcuts and mobile navigation to file and find things fast
- Create numbered email folders with consistent sub-folders for repeat assignments
- Develop file naming conventions that reduce confusion and search fatigue

It is also essential to know when to browse and when to search. Try this: click into your Outlook email search rectangle (Gmail users can click the tiny triangle drop-down in their search area). Look up, and you will see several fantastic narrowing tools. Click on **From:** and type the last name of a colleague to isolate all their email. Then click **Attachments** to see only email from them with attachments. In a flash, you will see useful results. This method is easily twice as fast as typing three to four keywords, yet less than 10% of all professionals use it.

Failure #2: Forget the Importance of Digital Communication

The number of digital communication tools used by work-from-home colleagues is exploding: text, chat, desktop share, web meeting, email, phone, to name a few. It is rare for anyone to receive coaching on the clarity of their e-messages. Also, many employees aren't sure which tool is best for each kind of job. They may frustrate colleagues by under or over-communicating. Just one poorly worded email, text, or chat can confuse a colleague or strain a relationship.

The Solution: Provide clear instructions on how to choose the right tool for the job.
- Texting a client? Be aware that texting might make them feel uncomfortable.
- Sending a long email? Shorten it up and put the most critical point up front.
- Having a severe disagreement with a colleague? Turn on the webcam and discuss it face-to-face.
- Sending the same email over and over? Create a template that can be added to a new message in two clicks to save time and lock in clarity.
- Feeling mad? Step. Away. From. Your. Device. Wait 24 hours, cool down and try again.

Failure #3: Watch Meeting Results Fall Off a Cliff

Your winning personality can shine through in a live meeting, but in a virtual session, you can lose your audience to Tik Tok in a flash. Instead of sticking to the agenda, your virtual audience can tune out and get lost in a mire of memes.

The Solution: Use virtual meeting techniques that boost interaction and engagement. One best practice is to always turn on your webcam. In 100 virtual presentations made by our team, only 5% of the clients initially turned on their webcam. However, after our salesperson activated their webcam, an additional 25% turned on their webcams. The result was an increase in client engagement and sales.

Once the cams are rolling, meeting participants stop playing Candy Crush and start participating. You can reclaim meaningful gestures like a thumbs up, a knowing smile, or a virtual team high five. You may notice a new haircut, a trophy on a shelf, or puppy dog running into the room. Upgrading to webcam makes every meeting more interesting.

Web meeting chat is another great tool that can boost engagement. When used creatively, chat can make the meeting feel like a live social media event.

Many people clam up in virtual meetings because it's so awkward when two people try to talk at the same time. We call this a HUGO. It begins with people talking over each other, proceeds to a long awkward pause, and then at the same time, both people say, "You go!" – while the rest of the people roll their eyes. Chat eliminates this confusion and fosters a more productive discussion. An excellent KPI for virtual meetings is to increase meeting-focused chat by 30%.

Another best practice is to ask participants to type an "l" into the chat when you *like* a colleague's comment. Typing "pd" means you *politely disagree*. And typing a "w" means *"Wow!"*. These simple letters can bring a meeting to life, foster engagement, and help everyone get more done.

It's also incredibly engaging to ask everyone to respond at once. At your next virtual team meeting, ask:

- What's your favorite movie? (Icebreaker)
- What's the number one thing that slows you down at work? (Survey)
- Do you think we should do the trade show or buy a mailing list (Poll)
- Does anyone have a useful tech tip they want to share (Productivity mining)

Suddenly, the meeting becomes much more enjoyable. And that's essential because every virtual business meeting is in a life and death battle with Facebook, Netflix, Facebook, and Words for Friends.

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Failure #4: Never Measure Tech Proficiency

Once workers leave the office, it gets harder to evaluate each team members' tech proficiency. How can Learning and Development help work-from-home colleagues if they can't establish their baseline skillset? Consider your home-sourced workforce. When it comes to everyday technology, can you rank your people from first to worst?

Do you know who:
- Constantly loses documents?
- Gets the most done on their smartphone?
- Writes the most confusing emails?
- Is the best with Excel?

I'm guessing that you'd be guessing at the answers to those questions. And that's odd! Your people spend 90% of their days on tasks like email, virtual meetings, chat, and search. Yet their actual level of skill is only vaguely understood.

The Solution: Good news! Work-from-home measurement tools do exist. Feel free to ask us about the one we've developed and deployed for our clients. It's a diagnostic tool called the *Tech Quotient Assessment Tool (TQAT)*. It measures tech proficiency in much the same way the Myers-Briggs tool measures emotional intelligence.

As we've discussed, improving TQ demands the development of crystal clear KPIs (Key Performance Indicators). For example, most email systems allow you to create time-saving templates in seconds. So why don't we establish a KPI for them? The KPI could be the number of total email templates created x the number of times they are used in a day. So, if someone has five templates and uses them ten times a day, that person's score is 50. That's just one KPI that could light your people's way to work-from-home excellence.

Conclusion: Deliver Powerful, Targeted Training and Measure Results

Training is critical. It must feature stellar content that is focused on high volume tasks and technology like Office 365. Once extremely relevant training is created, it must be well-marketed and delivered by world class trainers. The Future of Work at your enterprise must also include an objective way to measure and improve TQ (Tech Quotient) over time.

Contact us today at info@getcontrol.net if you'd like to chat about Get Control! University.

[i] GetControl.net Workforce Survey, 1995-2020, n=83,321 – All unreferenced data points emanate from this research.
[ii] https://www.extension.harvard.edu/professional-development/blog/challenges-managing-virtual-teams-and-how-overcome-them

[iii] The Harris Poll – Harris Interactive Inc., *The Digital Skills Gap*, 2014

[iv] https://www.slideshare.net/PingElizabeth/the-hidden-costs-of-information-work-2005-idc-report
[v] https://blog.xenit.eu/blog/do-workers-still-waste-time-searching-for-information