

Free Tech Report
Executive IT Info Series

*"Virtual CTO" Tim Gillen reports on
current business technology issues*

4 Tips for Getting the Most Out of Your Technology Investment

How many times have you purchased new software or hardware, and avoided the help menu or user manual? Experts reason that about 90 percent of all features included with software go unused! Much of this comes down to lack of training for individuals using the technology - they use what they know and need most, and avoid anything that would require study or practice to implement. It's human nature to take the path of least resistance, but with a little motivation you could better benefit from the money spent on technology for your business.

Instead of letting your technology investments continue on underutilized, here are 4 tips for getting the most out of your technology dollars:

1. Put the client in the driver's seat of communication.

You can improve the quality of customer service offered by your company through the use of simple technology. The more connected you are to your clients, the happier they are with your work. Use technology to give your clients a way to initiate discussion with you, either through blog interaction or a discussion forum. Set up instant messaging so clients can contact appropriate staff members as necessary. It's simple technology, but will result in improved client retention, repeat customers and better communication.

2. Create a business culture of continuous improvement.

One of the most amazing aspects of technology is how quickly it is updated and improved. Just when you think you have the best of the best, new technologies and processes are created to improve productivity. Even in the sometimes mundane office environments, new ideas will enhance efficiency and productivity. Encourage staff and consultants to let the new ideas flow - continuous improvement is the key for making the most out of your technology.

3. Take advantage of training opportunities.

If the cost of sending staff to training courses is a bit much, and you're unable to conduct monthly training seminars on your own - consider bringing in vendors and experts whenever a new version of software is released. You can also have managed service providers deliver training virtually as needed, in order to keep your staff up to date with the programs and tools used in the office.

4. Internal email newsletters with tips.

Most businesses recognize the value of sending newsletters to their clients to keep in touch and establish relationships, but what about internal newsletters among staff members? Send a weekly email to your staff with a single technology tip that explains how to do something that will improve their productivity or make their lives a little easier. Keep it fun

and add a cartoon or a quick quiz to keep the staff looking forward to their weekly newsletter. Your ideas for topics can come from training and seminars you attend, or from questions the staff asks the IT department. If one person doesn't understand something, there are probably a few others who also don't understand - but aren't speaking up about it.

Timothy Gillen CNE | MCP
CEO & President
"Virtual" CTO

AskTim@terrapiIT.com