

Got Software, Now What?



Software should be intuitive and designed with the user in mind. Though a properly designed software will reduce the amount of training needed, software still requires some degree of training and different users will require different types of training.

When purchasing software, consider the training program at the beginning. There are good ways and bad ways to train users on software, so start thinking and planning early. Keep in mind that training is also not a one-time thing or just a formal meeting. Think about how you will continue to train members and how to create a community to share tips and tricks throughout the organization. Here are some items to consider when thinking about software training.

Training Starts Prior to Buying

When purchasing software, include all related layers of the organization in the process. This doesn't mean that the decision will be made by all the users, but it is helpful to have different perspectives providing feedback and input. This helps eliminate the potential for purchasing software that is ineffective for an entire user group. Nothing is worse than training users to use a software when they know it won't solve the issue they face. Ownership and understanding are a great first step of software training.

It is also helpful to have an understanding of user skill before beginning. Software that requires programming knowledge is probably not the best choice if most of the users have limited programming experience.

Bigger Picture

Like data, training needs context. Software is a tool; it's a means to an end. All training should begin with the why. What is your organization hoping to improve by using the software? What problem are you trying to solve? How will this advance the organization's mission or goals?

If the software company provides the training, they should begin with how the software fits into the bigger picture, but don't rely on them to provide your organization's perspective. Provide the bigger picture at the beginning of the training, when inviting members to the training, or during a pre-training meeting. Most importantly, leave room for questions. The more users understand the importance of the software, the greater the likelihood they will be to accept and learn the software.

Software Access

This may seem obvious, but make sure all users have access to the software, preferably prior to the first training. When purchasing software, look for software that has an intuitive design. That means that if you give users access to the software prior to the training, they should be able to figure out how to use basic features. If users have access to the software prior to the training, they won't come in cold and may have specific questions to ask during the training

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sessions.

Caution: when training multiple users try to group by skill and familiarity level. Having other users ask questions related to step 253 is not helpful for the user who needs to start with step 1.

If users can't access the software prior to the training, make sure they at least have the software to use as they leave the training. A great way for users to forget how to use the software after learning is to wait one week or one month before they get access. Only schedule training after you are sure users will have access to the software immediately after the training.

Mix of Resources

Not all users are created the same. Some may prefer to figure the software out on their own and ask questions if they have them. Others prefer to be walked through the software first. Therefore, give your users access to different types of resources from live training to documentation to videos. The software company should be able to provide these resources.

Caution: resources are great but people are important too. Speak with the software company about the type of continued support you will receive. How to log into the software is easily answered by a manual, but there may be questions that come up that are better served through a discussion with the software company.

Moderation

How should you respond to: what amount of knowledge is needed to effectively utilize the software? The correct response is another question: by whom? The purpose of training is not to create experts who know every feature and capability on both the admin and client side. It is to make users effective at using the software based on how they will use it in the future. If there is a feature or capability that the users won't use, skip it and provide the information as a reference material. Don't overload them with information that they don't need to know.

About HanAra Software

HanAra Software connects deep industry knowledge with innovative technology to provide integrated data management and predictive maintenance solutions for process plant management. Through the implementation of HanAra solutions, plants enjoy results including reduced costs, increased efficiencies, and ultimately improved plant safety. HanAra Software combines solutions with training and care programs to support clients every step of the way.

HanAra Software is the United States headquarters of South Korean-based BNF Technology. BNF Technology is a professional software development company that provides optimized software solutions for operational management of process plants. Coal-fired, combined-cycle, seawater desalination, and petrochemical plants use our solutions. Since the year 2000, BNF Technology has provided various solutions to more than 250 units across two continents to help them achieve operational excellence.