

Skills shortage a great opportunity for NZ business?

With unemployment at a 17 year low, smart employers are promoting and training existing staff to fuel business growth. Until now there were limited options open to small and medium businesses. Customised training was too expensive and the generic training available was too general. Now Extra Mile Training, an innovative new training company, offers a viable alternative: In-house and small group training, specifically targeting relevant subjects, at times to suit the growing business.

TRAINING NEEDS OF WORKERS NOT RESEARCHED!

When Extra Mile Training researched the training needs of working Kiwis they were surprised to find so little information on this subject. Dr Phillipa Reed, CEO of the Equal Employment Opportunity Trust agrees "We cannot find any recent New Zealand research on the computer training needs of people who came through the education system before computer skills training was available in schools".

The 2001 Census shows 87% of legislators, administrators and business managers are over 30. This large section of the workforce simply missed out on the opportunity of formal computer training at school. It isn't that they can't cope with technology; they just haven't had the chance to learn! Many of them own or are employed by small and medium-sized enterprises that make up 97% of New Zealand business. They have transferred their manual office skills to a computer. They are good at what they do but often find it difficult to advance their skills because of the technology barrier.

MICROSOFT AGREES!

Computers are everywhere but few small and medium enterprises really understand how to get the most out of this sizeable investment. The 2001 conference, "Catching the Knowledge Wave", highlighted the importance of developing a skilled workforce that can take advantage of new technology. Many business owners are battling against the assumption that they understand modern technology. Administration staff are paddling in the shallows having learned their computer skills on the job. Other New Zealanders are simply afraid to get their feet wet, not knowing how to get started. Even



Microsoft recognises that people use only 10% of the functionality of their products.

WHERE DO YOU FIT IN THIS SCENARIO?

Do you understand how to manage your email? How do you react when a dialogue box appears and claims that you have completed an illegal operation? Do you find it hard to admit to younger staff that you don't understand what is really happening?

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Many Kiwis find it hard to admit their lack of computer knowledge. The more Extra Mile Training relates stories of disasters and mishaps, the more people share their own stories with us. And the problem effects anyone from receptionists through to CEOs.

The average age of the workforce is 40 and rising. It is vital that we take this opportunity to increase our skills and face the future with confidence. Once the fear of technology is removed it becomes a positive tool for growth and creativity.

Business technology and in particular the office computer is here to stay. Used by skilled operators they are a tool to grow your business and improve productivity. You just need access to the right training.

When did you last talk to your staff about their training needs or career plans? If you feel insecure about your own skills you may not want to discuss your employees' needs. We can help you to assess the training your business requires. Staff will appreciate the opportunity to improve their skills and you

will have a well trained workforce to grow your business.

WHAT'S REALLY REQUIRED?

Small and medium sized businesses need targeted, practical training that is relevant to how they operate. Most training courses are too generic which can make it difficult to apply the new knowledge when back in a work situation. Extra Mile Training provides customised tutorials or small classes which cover subjects that are tailored to your own business operation. We start by checking that everyone has the basic skills and then we develop from there. This is a great team building exercise as the group knowledge grows.

THE SOLUTION!

Train on your own systems or at Extra Mile Training, at times scheduled to suit your business. Make good use of any quiet times and build a solid base of knowledge. With the appropriate targeted training, you may find that the office manager you were about to advertise for, already works for you. Training existing staff gives you a competitive advantage by providing continuity through knowledge retention. Current employees know your business, so can take on a new role quicker.

Visit our website at www.extramiletraining.co.nz Check out our courses and assess your own knowledge with our online, confidential, quiz. We are confident we can help your business achieve its goals through cost effective skills training. ■

How to beat staff retention problems!

ARE YOUR STAFF BEING HEADHUNTED BY YOUR COMPETITORS?

DO YOU VALUE YOUR CURRENT STAFF AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO YOUR SUCCESS?

HAVE YOU CHECKED HOW YOUR EMPLOYEES FEEL ABOUT WORKING FOR YOUR COMPANY?

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A WAY TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS WITH A WELL TRAINED WORKFORCE?

Times of low unemployment offer opportunities for higher wages and better jobs that can tempt any employee who feels dissatisfied or undervalued. Staff retention can become a problem when there are a lot of jobs available. The cost of recruiting and training a new employee, providing you can find them, is high! The loss in productivity & sales, together with high staff turnover creates circumstances that no business can afford.

When you are recruiting new staff the ideal candidate may be hard to find. A prospective employee with a good attitude can be trained to fit the job and they will be trained in your systems not someone else's.

Training is a valuable tool in business growth. When it becomes an integral part of the business, existing staff can see a way to progress to a better position. They take a greater pride in the business and look for ways to enhance their role and strengthen customer relationships. Staff stability brings consistency to your customer service.

AFFORDABLE TRAINING

Extra Mile Training offers small or medium-sized businesses access to quality, targeted training at an affordable price. Our Training Network provides you with the benefits of

an in-house training department without the cost.

Training doesn't need to be complicated or expensive. We identify areas in your business that need improvement and organise training in small steps to fit your needs and budget. We build a training programme for your situation. From Microsoft Office to MYOB Accounts, your staff will enjoy learning with our friendly and supportive tutors and their increased confidence will be reflected in their performance.

Extra Mile Training creates a Company Training Profile so you can see the areas already covered. You can check overall progress and plan for future business developments. Detailed employee training records also show progress and allow new staff to be quickly brought up to speed.

Courses in more specialised areas such as setting up databases or developing a website are facilitated by our team of associated tutors. Our tutors currently work in their field of expertise so their knowledge is strategic and up-to-date.

HOW CAN EXTRA MILE TRAINING HELP YOUR BUSINESS?

BUSINESS WRITING

Effective proposals and reports can make a major impact in a sales situation. Discover a system that makes your business writing more readable and effective.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Does your receptionist have a clear set of instructions to apply to phone calls and queries? Do you know what level of professionalism your customers are receiving? The first point of contact needs to be clear, friendly and a positive representation of your company.
- Is your customer service consistent? Repeat business often depends on reliable service.

ACCOUNTING

- Does your business use a computerised accounting system such as MYOB? Do you understand how it works and what reports you can generate to help you manage your business? Extra Mile Training offers help with the set up and operation of MYOB.

OFFICE EQUIPMENT

- Learn how a photocopier can be used to send and receive faxes, work as a scanner and cut down on paper wastage.

- Extra Mile Training can advise you on equipment which improves your office efficiency. Our independent advice can ensure you find the best solution.

COMPUTERS

- Use your computer system effectively, reducing errors and maximising productivity.
- Understand how your computer network operates and what you need to do to maintain it. Computer leasing companies often assume you understand more than you do.
- Do your salespeople use laptops? Are you confident they use them properly? Do they backup to the network regularly? If the laptop was stolen how much time and information would you lose?

Contact Extra Mile Training now to discuss how we can help your business. ■

Over 156 office hours wasted!

We recently met an office lady who spent 3 hours every week for over a year typing out pay slips because she wasn't shown how to generate them automatically when new software was installed! That cost the company over \$2500! How much is this sort of thing costing your company? One Extra Mile Training course would have given an 800%+ return on investment!

Hear about the CEO of a \$5 million, 4-branch operation who asked their Accounting Software Support Person "What's a Bank Rec?" His Office Manager was away on maternity leave, so he simply stopped paying his accounts until she returned! The situation became quite desperate because no one could cover her position, including the CEO! Admitting it was a start, but it took pressure from creditors to get to this stage. How do CEO's assess the training requirements of staff if they can't admit their own training gaps? ■



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