

Training and Support Measures

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E-working requires planning and making changes to where and how work takes place. Being aware of the potential problems can make it easier to successfully e-work. Employees moving into an e-working arrangement require specific training both to replicate existing processes for contact and workflow in a new environment, and also for dealing with the environment itself. Managers and non e-working team members also need training in order to ensure that all are fully on board with the e-working initiative.

Training Interventions

In the project a number of specific training interventions were made throughout the project. The analysis of the questionnaires conducted before and during the initiative guided the project co-ordinators in relation to specific training requirements. The training focussed on the following areas:

The e-office

- *Office space design, ergonomics and environmental factors*
- *Health and Safety and compliance with legal requirements*
- *Ensuring separation from family functions*
- *Office security, file protection and personal security*
- *Addressing childcare issues and deciding on childcare options*

Psycho-social issues

- *Developing a newer, more proactive working style*
- *Avoiding isolation*
- *Establishing boundaries between work and home*
- *Developing starting up and winding down rituals*
- *Establishing a support network*
- *Avoiding over work*
- *Social network associations*
- *Dealing with distractions and interruptions*
- *Maintaining self motivation and focusing on short and longer term goals*



Manager / employee issues

- Establishing the e-team
- Ensuring good channels of communications between the e-team
- Developing a behavioural contract and an e-working agreement
- Dealing with co-workers concerns

Communications

- Writing skills
- E-mail and voicemail etiquette
- Call forwarding and messaging

Communication Technology

- Ensuring IT equipment is sufficient
- Basic knowledge of technical support
- Maintenance of equipment, software and virus updates

The training allowed managers, e-workers and non e-working members of the e-team an opportunity to address their concerns in an open learning environment and to develop strategies to suit the team's needs and the business requirements. The e-team training event was perhaps the most unusual and was designed specifically to address the concerns and issues raised by the participants during the initiative. It involved a collaboration of managers of e-workers, e-workers, and non e-working team members.

Implementation

A dedicated IT support team was put in place in each participating organisation and each organisation had a nominated contact person to support the teams throughout the initiative. An e-working website was designed to support all those involved and to provide regular information and support materials. Details of the training were posted on the website. An e-worker magazine was produced to provide information on developments and to provide feedback in relation to the questionnaires. It also provided anecdotal information from e-workers during the project.

For further information go to www.familyfriendly.ie/ease-to-eworking



“If the individual is the right type of individual and the type of work that they do suits e-working, I think its not a difficult decision to make at all.

If it is work that's portable, you can bring it home.

It also lends itself to getting done more efficiently because for some work, you need undisturbed time. E-working can be applied to that kind of work in a very, very effective and very productive way where I feel sometimes in an open plan office environment there can be distractions from other people looking for information from you which doesn't happen at home.

But, like I said, the environment at home has to be right ”

Bill Bhandal

Project Manager, eircom