

HP customer case study: After considering numerous options, managers choose HP Desktop Mentor to help employees over the hurdle of learning new software.

Industry: Technology

Desktop Mentor at HP

Training tool prepares users for Microsoft® Vista®, Office® 2007 migration



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—Kris O’Brien, Manager, Communication and Training, with HP’s IT infrastructure team

Objective:

Provide a training tool that facilitates desktop software/technology upgrades with minimal job interruptions.

Approach:

HP’s internal infrastructure team chose HP Desktop Mentor from HP Education Services to become the standard for training for desktop technology rollouts.

IT improvements:

- Significant reduction in Help Desk calls
- Faster transition to new desktop software

Business benefits:

- “Dip in, dip out” approach with minimal business interruption: employees can access Desktop Mentor as needed and return to work
- Long term reference resource for continuing education
- On-site classroom training not required

We’ve all experienced it: New software that ultimately will make us more productive is puzzling the first time we use it. Sometimes we even get stuck. As staff at Hewlett-Packard prepared to begin rolling out new notebook PCs loaded with Microsoft Windows® Vista and Microsoft Office 2007, managers knew there was just that kind of possibility.

“Industry analysts have said that the new features in Vista and Office 2007 represent the most significant change to the desktop environment since Office 97,” acknowledges Kris O’Brien, Manager, Communication and Training, with HP’s IT infrastructure team.

“Employees will see big differences in the applications.”

With the rollout affecting 250,000 employees worldwide, minimizing business disruption is the primary goal. O’Brien’s team researched training solutions to help employees over the software hurdle. The solution they liked best—HP Desktop Mentor—was in-house and straight out of the proud tradition of HP Innovation.

“The goal is to minimize business interruption for individual users, eliminate the need for them to log calls to our Help Desk, and help them get up and running on the new software more quickly than the average user,” says O’Brien.

Innovative training solutions

Desktop Mentor is an online, self-service support tool designed to promote user productivity and is available to any customer from HP Education Services. It is different from conventional online learning, which requires users to complete lengthy, sequential tutorials. Instead Desktop Mentor is filled with “Show Me’s”—interactive tutorials that take minutes and are easily reviewed during the business day. “Show Me’s” allow users to experience the look and feel of new software even before it is on their PC.

Customer solution at a glance

Primary application

Desktop IT training

Primary software

• HP Desktop Mentor

"We're encouraging users to use Desktop Mentor even before they upgrade, so they have a chance to review the content even before they have the new software," O'Brien says. "We don't want people to have to invest hours and hours trying to get up to speed with the applications when they upgrade."

Colin Livingstone, a Solution Architect with HPES, notes that a leading IT consulting firm has estimated that without appropriate training, it will take users from 2-4 weeks to become fully productive in routine tasks using the new software. He expects Desktop Mentor to cut that by more than half.

"We're giving them a glimpse of the new features, and a way to get their questions answered quickly to get over the initial hurdle. Then we're also leaving them with a resource for future reference."

"Dip in, dip out" approach to software support

Desktop Mentor allows users to quickly "dip in and out" for answers to specific questions. "When we designed Desktop Mentor, we had in mind that most people just want to get on with their job," explains Livingstone. "It's designed to let users get in and get out fast."

When an organization's IT group "rolls out something new" to users it can mean new interfaces and/or new processes—a new way of working which can be a hurdle to productivity. Desktop Mentor is designed to protect people's productivity and provide an ongoing resource so they can quickly go back to it, again and again, for self-service support and avoid calling the Help Desk.

Desktop Mentor fits the bill. This cost effective solution eliminates the logistical nightmare of traditional, high volume end-user education (scheduling, managing rooms/instructors, distribution of materials). In HP's case, it's being deployed as part of "Grow @ HP," an existing Learning Management System available on the internal network. "We wanted it to be easily available," O'Brien notes. "The primary reason any online system fails is poor ease of access."

HP's initial use will cover Windows Vista, Office 2007 and a new, automated backup solution called Follow Me Data. Users are learning about Desktop Mentor

through a combination of email and internal website communications designed to prepare users for the coming changes.

Accessed through the browser, Desktop Mentor is organized around typical business tasks. Each task is broken into topics, including the skills needed to perform the task. Following this approach, users discover new ways to get things done, or tips to improved performance, quickly and easily.

Various levels are available for learning each application. A novice can ramp up and get started quickly. Intermediate users can choose specific topics where they want to improve their skills. Advanced users can master best practices for improved proficiency.

In addition, Desktop Mentor offers the ability to find out what's new, to execute a search for a particular area of knowledge, test the user's skills, and generate a personalized list of topics for future reference.

Desktop Mentor encourages long-term retention giving the user an opportunity to select only the most relevant subject matter.

Looking ahead

O'Brien says that based on its initial experience, the IT infrastructure group at HP has decided to make Desktop Mentor the standard training tool for new desktop technology introductions.

"Our immediate goal is to make the transition to Vista and Office 2007 as seamless as possible," she says. "But with a view to the longer term, we want to drive usage to Desktop Mentor so employees become familiar with it. It's not a one-time thing. As our employees become more and more familiar with it, it will become second nature for them to use in the future."

She expects to use Desktop Mentor in the near future to roll out Office Communicator, a new Microsoft solution for instant messaging. "Technology never stands still," O'Brien notes. "Our training goal is to make technology transitions as seamless as possible, and to prepare employees for both the present and the future. We think Desktop Mentor is a great tool to accomplish that goal."

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