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Outlook Conundrum

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Abstract:

The objective of the eventual recommended action plan is to improve employee's skill and use of Microsoft Outlook. For the benefit of the business, employee performance, and in keeping current with modern business communication technology steps must be taken to correct the situation concerning the minimal use of Outlook by employees. The following is an account of the details of the situation, an explanation of how the chosen tools were evaluated, a look at the top three options, and the stances behind those options chosen to be presented.

The objective of the eventual recommended action plan is to improve employee's skill and use of Microsoft Outlook. It is a sad fact that currently the business in wasting the money it invested in Outlook as the employees are only making minimal use of it. Steps must be taken to correct this situation for the benefit of the business, employee performance, and in keeping current with modern business communication technology. The following is an account of the details of the situation, an explanation of how the chosen tools were evaluated, a look at the top three options, and the stances behind those options chosen to be presented.

The main issue is that employees are not making use of Microsoft Outlook in a manner satisfying to management. While the matter may seem simple, it is a bit more complicated than it looks on the surface. One might concur that the employees simply need a bit of training to put Outlook to better use. While this may be true for several employees, this is not necessarily true for the majority. One should not assume the problem is simply a lack of knowledge. The personnel's reluctance to fully utilize Microsoft Outlook is not singularly the problem of not knowing about the benefits of Outlook. Due to the diversity of the workplace, there are differing levels of technological experience and personality types. The lack of enthusiastic users of Outlook may be due to problems such as computer literacy deficiency, lack of communication skills, and fear or resistance to change. These issues would most definitely affect the effective use of a technology based tool such as Microsoft Outlook. As a matter of fact they are building blocks beneath and upon which the use of Outlook is dependent on. Therefore the best tool for this situation is one that evaluates the conditions of these possible issues as well as the employees' current understanding of Outlook, before the most productive tool can be proposed.

A rubric was constructed of the criteria of the best assessment of the problem factors. The criteria consisted of the tools ability to: determine the computer literacy skill level of employees,

offer employees training in Microsoft Outlook, assess skill of employees in Microsoft Outlook, assess employee online communication skills, assess the attitudes toward change of management and employees, show before and after results of program, and offer affordability. Each tool was graded according to these standards. Most tools only cover a few at most. There are however three tools that covered most of the criteria.

The highest rated as per the criteria rubric is ESkill Testing. ESkill is a professional employment skill testing company. ESkill offers expert assessment in every area needed with result information mapped for easy reference. This is the simplest option for management. No one needs to spend extra time building and monitoring employee assessments. Every aspect of the Outlook problem is addressed, assessed, and presented to management so the best next-step action can be taken in a professional, organized, timely manner. The only downfall for this tool option is that it is the most expensive. The cost is dependent upon the whole number of employees and charged on a per employee basis.

The second highest rated is the Microsoft Outlook Demo and Testing offered through Microsoft's website. This site gives excellent training and assessments that are available at any time. The employees can access training material and retest at any time. The tutorial will not progress until the employee has passed the quiz at the end of each section. At the end of the tutorial a full assessment is given. There is also a help search engine if an employee has a specific issue they wish to research. The benefits to this type of training are that it is completely free and the employees can take it at their convenience. The cons are that the other issues surrounding the problem such as computer literacy, communication skills, and resistance to change are not addressed. The problem may not truly be solved by simply making training available if these issues are true barriers.

The next highest rated is Tech Atlas. Tech Atlas is also a professional skill testing company. Its services are mainly offered for non-profit organizations, but for consultations fees can be hired by other companies. Tech Atlas deals mainly with issues involving improving inner company communication, such as organizational culture and employee relationships. While this option offers much in the way of improving office workings, it is unclear whether Outlook would be addressed. It is likely that it would be, however, contact with the consultant would have to be established first. Another downfall is that Tech Atlas is most likely the most expensive option.

To improve employee's skill and use of Microsoft Outlook is the objective of the eventual recommended action plan. For the benefit of the business, employee performance, and in keeping current with modern business communication technology steps must be taken to correct the situation concerning the minimal use of Outlook by employees. The above was an account of the details of the situation, an explanation of how the chosen tools were evaluated, a look at the top three options, and the stances behind those options chosen to be presented. Eskill, Microsoft Office Training, and Tech Atlas are the top tools that offer the company the best encompassing choices. There is still the choice of bestowing the responsibility of this problem and its component issues upon someone in the company. In that eventuality the designee could utilize several of the free assessment options. This would, however, take up time and so money the company may not have to spare. These will be factors of the decision facing management.