

LESSON 4

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

KEY POINT IT IN THE OFFICE

Do you have regular access to the net?

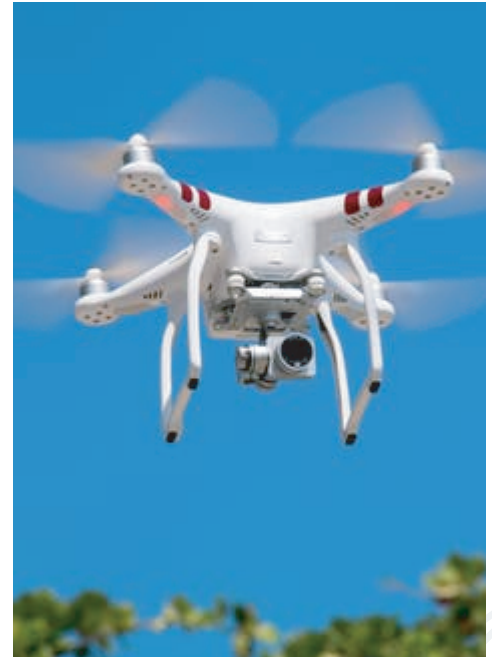
Do you use the net for personal use while at work?

Is there a policy for internet use in the company?

Do you think there should be restrictions on internet use professionally?

Do you think there are activities on the net that help you in your work?

Nowadays computers are having a staggering impact on our work activities. Emailing, surfing, blogging, and e-commerce are having an immeasurable influence on companies which have to adjust to the new work methods. The following is a report from the New York Times on Information Technology in the office.



Objectives Discussing IT points

Time 60 Minutes

Vocabulary IT technology and management vocabulary.

Key Points The impact of IT

Grammar in at on whether if.

Objectives To develop IT communication competencies

VOCABULARY AND EXPRESSION BUILDERS

Costing The activity of finding a price.

They were costing the project.

Resurfaced To appear again.

The problem resurfaced.

Unmonitored Not followed. Not checked.

The budget was unmonitored and there were problems.

IT Information Technology.

The IT department is great.

Staggering Incredible.

The price was staggering.

Immeasurable Very big.

The increase in the value of the company was almost immeasurable.

Bypassing To go around.

They bypassed the city using the beltway.

Scrutinize To evaluate closely.

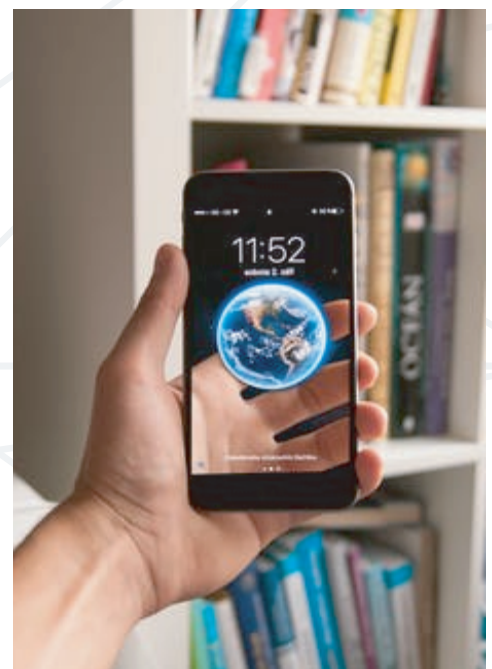
They scrutinized the team with an audit.

Curb To reduce.

They had to curb their activities. They were too busy.

Numbers aside To disregard numbers. To not consider.

Numbers aside it is not a good project.



VOCABULARY AND EXPRESSION BUILDERS

Nowadays Currently.

Nowadays the internet is the source for information.

Precursor Something just before.

The precursor to the airplane was the train.

Let alone If when considered against.

I will not help let alone call to find out where the problem is.

Investment banker A person who looks for investments for a bank.

The investment bankers solved the financial problem.



What goes on behind closed doors is confidential.

To be coached is as good a strategy for executives as it is for athletes.

One of the most important aspects of coaching is psychology.

Most people can benefit from coaching but it is not for everyone.

The interpersonal skills a person demonstrates boils down to communication.

COMPREHENSION BUILDERS

The New York Times

Jill Watson

Time wasted on line.

Until recently the question of whether internet is costing companies in productivity has been difficult to monitor. This issue has resurfaced again in a new report published by the New York Times addressing the matter regarding this topic. Statistics seem to indicate that unmonitored internet use is cutting as much as 15.5 percent of company productivity. This is much higher than expected. Of course, these are not figures that affect all businesses but the average business. Still, the numbers are staggering.

Email. (This activity consumes 4% a day of productive employee time)

Perhaps the biggest time waster is personal emailing. This situation is practically impossible to monitor. If your teams are connected to the internet they will have access to email and they will use it for personal reasons.

Chat (This activity consumes 1.5% a day of productive employee time)

Frequently, companies permit for users to download chat programs such as Skype, Yahoo Chat, or Microsoft Chat. This seems to be one of the easiest situations to scrutinize. An IT manager can restrict access to certain sites on selected terminals, but the user software can be easily downloaded bypassing the site itself. In some companies Skype is used as a communication tool. In this case it is virtually impossible to monitor.

Blogging (This activity consumes 1% a day of productive employee time)

Another area of time consumption is blogging. There are so many blogs available that if there is access to internet there will be access to blogs.

COMPREHENSION BUILDERS

Buying on line. (This activity consumes 2.5% a day of productive employee time)

A favorite past time for shoppers is buying on line while at work. Sites such as Ebay and Amazon are favorites. Whether it is possible to monitor or not, this is a major time consumer.

Reading magazines and newspapers. (This activity consumes 2% a day of productive employee time)

With all of the press from around the world it is easy to see that everyone will want to access their favorite newspapers and magazines. If you use the net for information, this activity can be part of your job.

Surfing (This activity consumes 4.5% a day of productive employee time)

General surfing on the net consumes a lot of time and energy from the typical productive office. If an employee has access to the net it is virtually impossible to curb.

Perhaps one of the most important questions to ask is if these activities should be regulated let alone monitored. Office regulations should be stipulated and professional behavior should be set as a standard. Perhaps keeping the office environment healthy is a better objective than micro-management. Also, if they didn't have the internet, they would probably find other nonproductive activities. Happy employees are more productive.

Jill Watson
The New York Times.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the biggest time waster?
 - a. email
 - b. surfing
 - c. blogging
2. What is Jill Watson's conclusion?
 - a. It doesn't matter if employees use the net.
 - b. Office dynamics are not important.
 - c. Net use should be regulated.
3. Do all companies restrict chat use?
 - a. Some companies use chat for communications.
 - b. Yes, companies try to restrict chat.
 - c. No, some let people use it for fun.
4. According to the New York Times article is micromanagement good?
 - a. Yes, It stops internet abuse.
 - b. No, it will damage office environments.
 - c. Yes and no. Some companies use micromanagement for supervising bad employees.

WHAT KIND OF A COACH DO YOU NEED?

Coaches will tell you they're as unique as snowflakes. Maybe that's so, but it's also helpful--and pretty easy--to boil them down into four distinct personality types. The challenge is to find the one who best suits your own personality and goals.

The Informal Coach: The Friend

What they promise:

Best friends provide a shoulder to cry on, listen to your problems, help you put this in context, and work with you to create strategies for change.

The reason to use one:

You're overwhelmed with your workload and constantly struggling to catch up. You have trouble negotiating interpersonal relationships with staff and often feel isolated from your employees and executive team.

The traps:

Not taking responsibility. A best friend may help you find more excuses than solutions, so if you walk away from coaching sessions always feeling that you're perfect and your problems are everyone else's fault, you probably need to think about finding a new coach who will do a better job of holding you responsible.

The Motivator: The Guru

What they promise:

More than an expert on running a business, the motivator can be a psychologist with a powerful philosophy on management, leadership, and motivation. In some cases, he or she will arrive with books, DVDs, and seminars they'll encourage you to use.

The reason to use one:

You're fine with technical and financial matters, but need a purpose, a motivation to do the difficult things, as well as a psychological structure for making decisions.

The traps:

Losing perspective. It's easy to get caught up in the cult of personality that most motivators cultivate. Keep your direction, retain your scepticism, take away what's valuable, and ignore the rest.

The Number Cruncher: The Accountant

What they promise:

Number crunchers go deep into your business, performing quantitative analyses, putting processes under a microscope, and working with you to create by-the-numbers metrics to measure performance and achieve your goals.

The reason to use one:

Interpersonal issues aren't the problem; understanding the basics of running your business is. Matters like finance and accounting lead to panic attacks.

The traps:

Becoming an emotionless robot. Not every challenge can be reduced to a number. Make sure you use the number cruncher in matters where metrics are helpful and don't apply spreadsheet lessons to the human side of managing.

The Drill Instructor: The Sargent

What they promise:

A drill instructor will correct your bad habits by getting in your face, establishing strict schedules, and forcing you to stick to them. Expect lots of tough, tough love. Many are former military personnel and athletes.

PART TWO

From the New York Times Article on the impact of the internet on our offices.

Consider the following.

The investment banker John Roth was recently heard saying that all of the predictions made by start-up companies during the dot com bubble are actually starting to become true. Who would have believed that in 2006 Ebay would have a value of a few billion dollars. This is nothing compared to the \$25 billion value of Google. Numbers aside, how about the different applications on the net. There have been an equal amount of surprises too. Communication costs are being reduced significantly. Amazon, Skype, Hotmail, MSN are all multibillion dollar companies that did not exist 10 years ago. These are just a few of the many companies that are providing services that save time and money. How does this impact our organizations?

Reduced expenses is probably the most important affect the net has had on our office, to the point that nowadays a small activity has the ability to present itself as a large company.

Better research and reduced study time are contributing to the office of the 21st century. Prior to the arrival of the net, only large companies could have access to certain types of information and as with one of the precursors to the net, Lexus Nexus, was an expensive service. This meant a significant advantage for the big guys.

Consider just-in-time solutions. The combination of communication, information flow, and significant intranet solutions, overhead cost are reduced significantly. This means that companies do not have to carry excessive stock.

Faster communication permits for better client service. It also means that there is more pressure on companies to respond to business needs.

So before we worked slower, inefficiently, with poorer customer service. The winner is the consumer.

The New York Times

Questions

1. According to the article all of the predictions for the internet are _____.
 - a) becoming true
 - b) were exaggerated
 - c) reduce office productivity
2. How does internet speed up communications?
 - a) Through email.
 - b) Through blogs.
 - c) With on line shopping.
3. Just-in-time solutions contribute to _____.
 - a) office dynamics
 - b) wasted time on line
 - c) communication and information flow

PART TWO

4. Many _____ did not exist 10 years ago.
- a) chat sites
 - b) blogs
 - c) billion-dollar internet sites

GRAMMAR REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

The reflexive pronouns are
Singular myself yourself himself herself itself
Plural ourselves yourselves themselves

Reflexive pronouns are used to express an action that is on the subject.

Examples

The new CEO introduced herself to the executive.

The dog hurt itself when it fell.

The project manager and the Account Executive prepared themselves for the client.

1. Julia did a great presentation. She can complement _____.
 2. The project was a disaster. The project managers blamed _____.
 3. We've got a technical problem. I hope we can help _____.
 4. You must meet the new manager. You should introduce _____.
 5. If the marketing director works too hard she can make _____ sick.
 6. If there is an attempt at an aggressive takeover we must defend _____.
 7. There was no market so the company couldn't sell _____.
 8. He had not met his new client yet so he introduced _____.
 9. Let me introduce _____. My name is Frank.
 10. The technician had to repair the machine _____.
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