

Training Protection Pack

Your Guide To an Effective IT Training Program



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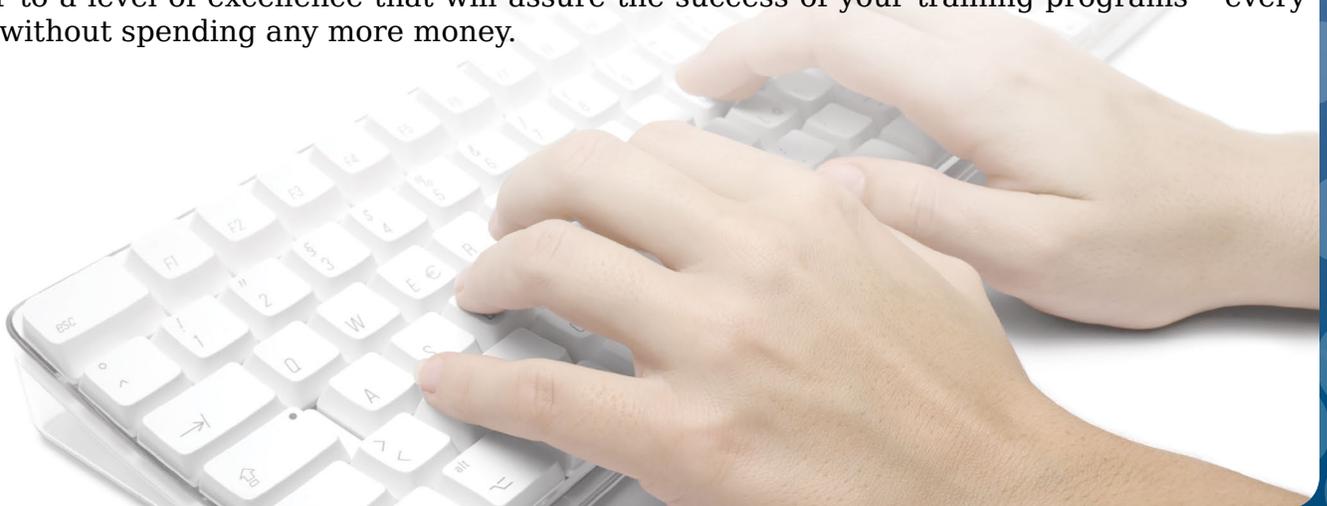
Introduction

My name is Roland Van Liew, and I'm the President of Hands On Technology Transfer, Inc. (HOTT). Our company is a premier provider of IT software skills training across the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. We've developed powerful strategies for development and delivery of training that allow us to guarantee excellent value and quality – every time. I'm going to show you how you can achieve better results through your IT training so you can keep your software skills up to date and razor sharp. I'm also going to tell you about the biggest problems you'll have with most IT training – and how to overcome them all.

Over the past few years we've delivered training for thousands of companies and tens of thousands of individuals. Each year we train over six thousand students in highly complex technical topics. During that time we've heard from countless clients who come to us to fix problems that occurred because they failed to take even the simplest steps to assure that their training events go smoothly and deliver real competence to their staff. So, why am I telling you all this? You need to make absolutely sure that the people you take your advice from regarding software skills training really know what they're talking about. And given the fact that you're going to spend tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands, or even millions of dollars on IT training, I want you to feel confident that the information that you're about to receive is credible, is accurate, and most importantly, will save you money and headaches. And let me clarify something. I'm not here to discourage you from looking at alternate providers. There are lots of good providers out there. But there's a lot of really bad training going on too. There are too many unethical providers who will over-promise, underdeliver, hope for the best, and simply walk away from a training disaster. This report will help you avoid that.

There are lots of articles in training magazines, with all kinds of top ten lists of questions to ask and qualities to look for in training. But I've never seen any that focus on real ways to save money and assure that students achieve real competence in IT training. The focus of these articles is broad, and so concerned with including every delivery technique that they don't provide the information you need to assure quality in highly technical IT training, which has its own unique perils and pitfalls.

So the first thing I'm going to discuss are the 6 most important characteristics that are absolutely necessary for an IT training program to successfully achieve its purpose, and be well received by the people attending. Then I'll reveal the 10 questions you should ask to systematically raise the bar to a level of excellence that will assure the success of your training programs – every time – without spending any more money.



Achieving Excellence In Software Skills Training

First, let's talk about the 6 critical characteristics of excellent software skills training. Then I'll show you how to ask questions that assure that these characteristics are present in the training you buy.

First: Make Sure The Course Content Is Task Oriented and Focused On Competency

This sounds almost obvious. But advertising pitches from e-learning providers and certification test providers emphasize almost everything but competency, so sometimes the focus gets sidetracked to convenience of delivery or cost control or passing multiple choice tests with 70% correct answers – anything but competency itself. Although certification has become increasingly popular as a way to assure a baseline of knowledge, certification doesn't make anyone an expert; it doesn't even mean that someone's fully competent. It only means they've assimilated enough information to pass some baseline tests.

The only way to really assure competency through training is to determine what tasks the trainees are going to need to perform in their job, and have people actually perform those tasks during the training. This hands on practice, if it's thorough and well structured, serves to increase the student's real level of experience. Some theory can be imparted through talking and studying, and that's a necessary part of learning, but when the topics are complex and highly technical, an equally essential ingredient is hands on practice to build competence, confidence, and clarity of understanding. I call this a "Learn and Do" mode of learning.

The real question for training executives, and really, anyone looking for technical training services, is how this competency can be most effectively attained in the least amount of time. Let's face it, the time of software programmers, system administrators, and database administrators is very valuable. So there's a temptation to try a quickie lecture-seminar approach to learn a new topic in a day or two without any practice. There might be demos and graphic presentation of computer output using an active projector. I like to call this "Watch and Forget" mode. Studies have shown that anywhere from 60 to 70% of this kind of information is quickly forgotten. There is often very little understanding and certainly very little retention.

Some companies marketing these kinds of training sessions like to call them "boot camps." That's a bad joke. These sessions aren't boot camps. They're learning vacations. There's no real knowledge assimilation going on. And there are a lot of certification training providers who tout the same approach. "Come to our intensive boot camp and we'll stuff your head full of the information you'll need to pass the exams." Well, that's not a boot camp. That's a test cram session. If you want to cram for a test, that's fine. But the real bad joke is this – these firms charge 30%, 40%, even 80% more than hands on alternatives. They administer the tests as part of the training. They have to. Retention is going to be minimal with this approach.

So hands on practice and expert instruction are certainly important to a competency building training experience. But one potential problem with live training is that if the instructor is inferior, students may not learn as much as they would with a better instructor. Quality design of materials and an emphasis on hands on practice can assure a solid baseline of learning, and we'll talk more about that later, but the instructor has a huge bearing on the student's overall experience and perception of the course. There's going to be some variance in live training programs. The question is, how to make the baseline consistently excellent.

In an effort to assure a consistent baseline of learning, some companies have experimented with technology – based techniques such as video, CBT, and most lately, “e-learning.” One obvious problem with these approaches is that, if the student has a question, there is no instructor to ask.

Nor can the students discuss their individual problem domains with an expert while they are learning. The better e-learning designers attempt to anticipate questions and program in mechanisms to allow students to get appropriate responses but think about it: How hard is it to anticipate even a majority of questions about architectural, syntactical, and semantic issues that pertain to complex technical topics like programming with Java or managing Linux systems? It’s not only impossible; it’s extraordinarily expensive to even try. The very best e-learning products have attempted to address this problem via scheduled on-line chat sessions, or instructor availability via e-mail.



These are better than nothing, but obviously not as effective as face-to-face discussion between an instructor and student. e-Learning has its place for certain types of fairly simple, straightforward, relatively short training programs. But the fundamental problem with e-learning is that, at the end of the day, it’s simply trying to emulate a good live training program. It can’t ever be as good – the only question is, how close can it get? The answer is, not very close. The cost to produce good e-learning delivery is so prohibitive that, if you are concerned with quality at all, you will never receive the value from e-learning that you can get by simply using a quality live training provider. And psychologists have shown that social interaction and discussion with others during training boosts retention to close to 80%, as opposed to just 40% retention with technology-based training using visual and audio only.

What do students prefer? Polls and studies show that instructor-led training is far and away the preferred method, way ahead of e-learning, CBT, video training, and other so-called technology-based solutions. A survey conducted by Campaign for Learning, KPMG, and Peter Honey shows that 42% of training coordinators accept the claim made by e-learning providers that students can focus the presentation to their individual needs. But the same survey shows that only 7% of the actual students feel that the presentation can be focused to their needs. There is an enormous disconnect between what is being sold and what is actually being provided. In short, e-learning does not save money for technical training (unless you were paying too much for live training in the first place, and we’ll talk about that too) – e-learning does not save money and just can’t deliver the hands on, skill building experience that live training does for complex IT topics.

So what would keep you from using instructor-led solutions for all your training requirements? As we’ll see, certainly not cost. Lack of consistency? Risk of failure? Well, as with anything, there are certainly potential pitfalls. But they can usually be avoided and we’re going to show you how. Even when delivery problems occur, they certainly can be remedied if – and this is important – if you have a training provider who’s committed, who’s excellent, who’s experienced, and who believes in real customer service. When was the last time you heard of an e-learning provider making good on the complaints of an individual student, and taking extra steps to make sure that student achieved the goal of technical competence? I’ll bet you’ve never even heard of that happening. The issue here is making sure that students get trained effectively, and that means in a time-effective, cost-effective way that builds real skill. e-learning can be time-effective; it can even be cost-effective sometimes if you have the right kind of students and relatively simple learning requirements. But for highly technical topics like software engineering, e-learning is actually more expensive and just doesn’t get the job done. For hands on, problem solving type tasks – computer system administration or programming, for instance – e-learning is just not an effective choice.

Well, right now you may be thinking, “How can he be saying that e-learning is more expensive? e-learning costs a few hundred dollars per course to deliver.” Well, e-learning providers define a “course” to be a few hours of video, some instructions to perform labs, and perhaps some ancillary reading. This is roughly equivalent to a day of live, instructor-led training with labs, except without the instructor help during the hands on part. E-learning solutions cost an average of \$300 to \$400 per course – typically just a few hours – and don’t offer the learning impetus provided by direct interaction with a subject matter expert, right there, not only to answer questions, but to administer substantive, challenging hands on exercises. There’s no way e-learning courses can design in substantive labs because then students will occasionally get stuck. And who will be there to get them unstuck? This is the second major issue to address when evaluating your technical training. And that is:

Second: A Solid Focus On Hands On Practice

As I’ve just emphasized, the real purpose, the real goal of any training, is building competence. The only way to assure that every student comes out of technical training with true competence, is to have every student perform tasks in the form of realistic, well structured hands on exercises. Good training programs should also minimize the amount of time spent learning, and maximize retention. **A hands on approach assists in meeting all of these goals. And good labs are the only way to test and guarantee that students come out of training truly competent.**



Unfortunately it’s not easy to create labs that are fully illustrative and task oriented, yet don’t take too much time for students to complete. Solutions have to be coded to show an optimal approach, and lab environments have to be installed and tested. This is a lot of work. Most individuals and firms that perform live training don’t put enough emphasis on the structuring of hands on labs during the course development process. It’s easy to fall into a trap of focusing on presentation aids, slides, student handouts, and the like. But in the final analysis, these are all less important than really comprehensive, thorough, in-depth labs.

Many training programs fail in this respect. We have periodically had students come into class having already taken training from another vendor, whether it be CBT, e-learning, or just a poorly taught live course. They’ve had to go through training again because – even though they “successfully” completed the course of instruction – they really didn’t understand underlying architectural concepts and they couldn’t really DO much.

I’ll give you a concrete example. I was teaching an X/Motif Programming class in Kansas City for a major communications firm, and one of the students had already been through a 5-day class with another well-known training provider. But this poor guy couldn’t even lay out a form. Not only couldn’t he lay out a form, but he didn’t even understand that attachments could be placed on each side of a user interface component. He had done all the labs in that course. But they were fill-in-the-blank exercises and were so easy that he was able to complete them without understanding a darned thing. During our course he not only learned how to lay out a form, he actually coded his application GUI and hooked in the back end logic.

Similarly, we get people in our Korn Shell programming classes who’ve been through UNIX training with other vendors but don’t understand basic shell syntax. This is real basic stuff and indicates a fundamental problem with the design of the training program. We get people in our database programming classes who have taken training elsewhere yet don’t understand the fundamental differences between types of JOIN statements, even as simple as Left Join vs. Right Join.

Now these other training providers often use the latest equipment, the latest instructional aids and the most expensive venues. That is not the problem. The problem is they don't have the proper focus on comprehensive, competency-building exercises and they don't have passionate, committed instructors who can overcome the obstacles imposed by their substandard course design. To produce well targeted, competency-based, skill-building lab exercises, upper management has to be really focused on competency-building course structure, and resist the temptation to emphasize visual appearance of courseware, readiness for certification tests, or tight development guidelines that de-emphasize the importance of the labs.

The name of our company – Hands On Technology Transfer – indicates the importance we place on the development and delivery of a quality hands on experience. Our courseware development emphasizes the hands on work as the central focus, not an afterthought.

This central focus assures that the exercises are designed to facilitate and accelerate learning, and provide real insight. It allows exercises to be more complex and realistic because the time devoted to creating them, and providing well tested starter files and data files to support them, is adequate for the demanding nature of IT training.

There's an issue when this kind of emphasis is placed on truly engaging and challenging exercises. Most students are going to have trouble at some point during the week. The instructor has to be available, and has to be trained to constantly check on students' progress without being asked directly by the students. But even with instructor-led training, this kind of attention isn't possible in very large classes. That's why our public classes are kept small, with an average of between 6 to 12 students per class, and never more than 16. That leads into our next point, the third major issue to consider when evaluating training programs.

Third: Small Class Size

Small class size is an objective measure that you can use to help assure that students receive the direct interaction they're paying for. What good is it to have an expert providing assistance if you can't get his or her attention to answer a question, provide recommendations, or discuss your particular problem domain. One of the most valuable services an instructor provides during face-to-face training is the opportunity to discuss how the topic at hand affects the student's own work – how the information can be applied in the student's own problem domain.

During my college years, I took a physics class taught by a Nobel Laureate. He was a great guy, and the lectures were engaging to a certain extent. The problem was, there were three hundred students in the class. Do you think that any of us ever actually got to ask the instructor a question? Of course not! Check out competitors' classes and you may see twenty, even thirty students in a programming class. I myself took a class years ago on Computer Graphics from a major vendor and there were over 30 students in that class. We never got to ask the instructor much of anything. So I know how it feels. My pledge to you is that your team will never have that kind of experience in a training program from Hands On Technology Transfer.

“The small classroom environment made me feel comfortable enough to ask lots of questions. The labs and examples were clear and good hands on experience. I like the fact that I got to save my lab work and take it home with me.”

– A.L., Exxon Mobil

Fourth: Control Of The Courseware

One of the most important factors that can lead to a failure in course delivery is substandard course design and courseware. This is one area that training coordinators seem completely unaware of. I've been delivering and managing training programs for over 30 years, and I don't think I've been asked even a dozen times: "Where does your courseware come from?" This is the best-kept secret of the technical training industry. Many training providers, even the largest ones, often concentrate first on winning the business, and then on finding an instructor and placing responsibility for providing courseware on that instructor. That means you're getting one person's perspective reflected in the material, and that material is going to be only as good as that particular person's writing skill allows. And more often than you know, that instructor is a complete unknown to the training provider. The training provider has no more idea than you do of how well the training is going to come off. You might as well buy a textbook. You'd be better off.

Sometimes a training provider will lease material from a company like Element-K or IT Courseware or whomever. Particularly at this level of highly technical software skills training, it can be cheaper to lease material rather than develop it in house. But this can be a devastating mistake. It is almost never a good idea to use leased courseware. We've already talked about the importance of task-orientation and hands on practice. Leased courseware falls far short in these areas. It takes extra effort and substantial knowledge to create robust, well documented exercises. Companies that provide courseware for lease have to provide exercises that appeal to the lowest common denominator. Furthermore, leased courseware cannot assume that complex software setup will necessarily be available to support competency-based labs. As a result, lab exercises in leased courses can border on the trivial, and are rarely complete in the sense of exercising all the skills being taught.

Let's take an example. Suppose your training provider wants to lease courseware for an Java EE Frameworks course. The courseware provider cannot provide detailed lab instructions for deployment of the framework because there are slight differences depending on the particular server being used so the labs cannot not delve deeply into any aspect of the Java Enterprise Architecture.

Here's another example. Suppose your training provider is delivering administration training for Microsoft operating systems. They can use Microsoft Official Curriculum materials, which are available for lease, but that curriculum is product-based, not task-based. And do you think the official curriculum is going to provide you with a perspective on alternate configurations that might save money or increase reliability by using competitive products? And, although the product-based official curriculum maps well to the certification tests, it's not the most efficient way to get important task-based information across. There are many redundancies in the product-based offerings. Our task-based course in Windows System Administration covers just as much material in five days as the official curriculum does in 8 days, and our Windows Active Directory class also covers in 5 days what the official curriculum covers in 8 days.

As a third example, suppose your training vendor leases a student guide for Linux system administration. It is a guarantee that the guide will emphasize easy stuff like adding users or checking the file system, because that's what course developers do when their performance is measured by page count and not by excellence in the classroom. The material will have next to nothing about critical issues like interfacing to foreign file systems using Samba or setting up a web server such as Apache. Labs on these issues? Forget it. They can't assume that a web-enabled environment or heterogeneous environment that includes foreign machines will even be available in the classroom.

For all these reasons, we develop and own our courseware. We don't lease courseware. We don't use textbooks. That means the student guide is developed to provide first-rate support for presentations. It also means we can place special emphasis on the hands on exercises. And our staff constantly updates the information. Our instructors improve the content for both the student guide and the hands on exercises, using both direct feedback from students and their own observations of what works best in the classroom. This just isn't possible with leased courseware.

Ownership of materials also keeps our variable costs down. We hope you'll notice that those cost savings are being passed on to you, our customers.

Finally, ownership of our courseware means that when we deliver training at your facility, we can focus the presentation as appropriate, and at no extra charge to you. We don't have to mix and match books to get the pieces we need, or omit a book for cost reasons even though it may contain important information.

Now, given that the design of the course is task-based and competency-driven, and that the courseware and labs have been designed to be excellent and robust, we need to worry about the instructor. That brings us to our fifth major issue:

Fifth: Instructional Quality

The single most important factor in the success of any training program is the expertise and teaching ability of the instructor. HOTT standards are the highest in the industry. Most training providers require 90% "good" to "excellent" ratings from students, with the bulk in the "good" range being acceptable. HOTT requires 98% approval rating with 80% "excellent." Otherwise that instructor is not allowed to continue teaching for us. **HOTT standards are so high that out of the hundreds of resumes we receive from instructors who are currently delivering related training courses for other providers, only a tiny fraction are good enough to bring on to teach for us! Guess where the rest are teaching?** You guessed it – our competitors.

We know that professionals want to learn from professionals. Our instructors are not new to programming, nor are they new to the industrial training environment. Our management understands that you don't throw an instructor unfamiliar with a technology at a class just to "preserve the deal." You've heard the stories – and you might even have been the victim of this – where a supposedly reputable training provider tosses a book at an instructor who's never even used the product and says, "OK, class is tomorrow, just stay one day ahead of the students." That sounds ridiculous, but it happens all the time, especially now that leased courseware is available for many topics.



Our instructors are cross-trained in multiple related technologies. That means they're not just one step ahead of the students. They know about and can contrast competing technologies. HOTT upper management has been in the computer training industry since 1979; we have the contacts, the know how, and the commitment to provide excellent instruction every time. That rock solid commitment is backed by the most powerful money-back guarantee anywhere.

Does your current provider provide such a guarantee? Probably not! Does an e-learning vendor provide such a guarantee? Never! Studies show they'd be refunding tuition 57% of the time! Whenever you attend a course from HOTT, you'll be receiving training from someone who has advanced formal training and has worked with the technology for some time. Their experience and cross training means they can thoroughly answer questions that pertain to the specifics of your team's problem domain. HOTT will never serve up an inexperienced, certified-last-week, self-taught-to-some-unknown-extent instructor, who will try to stay one step ahead, or maybe behind the students!

One secret that many training providers don't want you to know is that they are what we call "Virtual Training Companies." A Virtual Training Company has no instructional staff and owns no courseware. It is a marketing company that makes money by selling training. When a sale is made, an instructor broker is contacted to provide an instructor, usually with pay rate and geography the deciding factors, and courseware is provided by the instructor or leased from a courseware leasing company. These virtual training companies add no value and subject you to substantial risk of failure. You should always ask whether your training provider uses staff instructors, and if they are using a consultant for your training, why they are doing so and how much direct experience do they have with that consultant.

All right, given that qualities of materials, quality of the hands on labs, and quality of instructor are all there, what's the final ingredient for sustained success in software skills training? Well, you need to be able to afford to train your people cost-effectively and conveniently. The current economy brought substantial cuts to many corporate training budgets. And that brings us to our sixth crucial element: Convenience and Cost Control.

Sixth: Convenience And Cost Control

There are several factors to examine in order to minimize the total cost of training. One obvious factor is the tuition rate. **Our tuition fees remain among the lowest available for instructor-led IT training.** We have no registration fees and no cancellation fees. That allows you to plan in advance and make changes if necessary without any hassle and without any financial penalty. You can check course fees on our web site at www.traininghott.com.

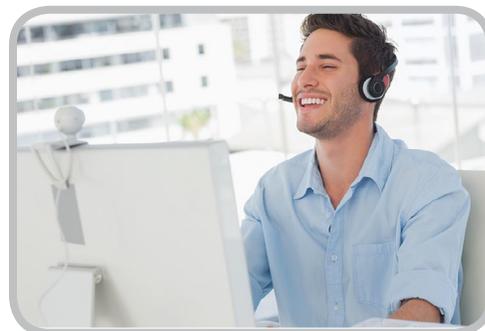
A second factor is convenience. If a class isn't offered at a convenient place and time, it's not going to save as much of the time and hassle of learning new material, and that's a real cost. **HOTT offers classes in dozens of cities, at regular intervals, usually seven or eight weeks apart.** We are possibly the only company that offers multi-course tracks that don't have to be taken as a continuous block. Unlike a so-called "career institute" or self-styled "certification boot camp," we don't require that students take one course after another in a quick sequence. That's because classes are scheduled frequently, with a focus on competency and retention.

It's OK, in fact desirable, for a student to take some time away from the classroom between classes to solidify the knowledge gained. Exam cram session providers cannot afford to allow a hiatus in the middle; students simply won't retain the knowledge they need to continue. And traditional career institutes don't provide scheduling flexibility because they don't run classes often enough for students to conveniently schedule breaks from training. But with the flexibility of HOTT's regular public schedule, students can continue to devote attention to their job and avoid taking a three-week or four-week continuous chunk away from their employer. This is particularly important to self-employed consultants or people who are key contributors in their work environment.

A third consideration in controlling costs is to minimize or eliminate travel expenses. HOTT runs public classes all over the country, so there's a location near you. Besides the convenience factor, public enrollment classes in your area help minimize travel costs. **HOTT courses are scheduled at frequent intervals so you don't have to wait more than six weeks to attend a public class in your area. We only consider canceling classes that have three or fewer students. What other training provider can say that?**

For students who are not near a metro area with a conveniently scheduled class, HOTT offers hotel and air travel packages at a substantial discount. For students who can't travel, we offer a remote attendance option that provides attendees with full duplex video and audio participation in a live class, performing the same hands on exercises using the same equipment as the students actually sitting in the classroom.

None of HOTT's offerings are "virtual." Remote attendance is not "e-learning," nor is it a "webinar." All remote attendees participate in a real live class, with the opportunity to interact with the other students and of course the instructor, in real time. Studies show that this social interaction boosts competency and retention substantially. We always emphasize personal attendance where possible – but when it isn't possible, remote attendance really is the next best thing to being there.



If a scheduled class doesn't run, you can certainly reschedule to the next one, but if you choose to relocate instead to another city, HOTT's standard policy is to pick up the student's overnight accommodations during the training.

And, when it comes to scheduling training at your site, you won't find anyone easier to work with. Our large team of both staff instructors and consultants allows us to respond to almost any scheduling need. Because we own our own courseware, and because our managers have technical, not marketing backgrounds, we can offer customization with less hassle and at lower cost than just about anyone. Have you ever had trouble setting up a specialized class with a training sales rep who could barely spell your course title? Try us and you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Classes we deliver for groups at your site are extremely cost effective. We can train even relatively small groups at a cost less than web-based learning or CBT programs that inherently deliver far less in the way of content or quality. If you compare our cost structure to other quality technical training programs, you'll find we are an obvious choice to provide the solutions you need.

All right, so now we've covered the major issues that determine the quality of software skills training, and revealed a few secrets about how industrial training really works. But how do you determine whether a particular provider meets the standard of excellence that you'd like to set? **That brings us to the second major portion of this report: The ten questions you absolutely must ask to be sure that your training will be excellent and successful and build competence – every time.**

10 Questions You Must Ask to Ensure Your Training Will Be Excellent, Successful, and Build Competence – Every Time

1. Does the training emphasize facilitated hands on practice?

Hands on practice, facilitated by an expert instructor, is the only way to assure competence and retention of skills. Training structured to spend less than 50% of the time engaged in hands on practice will likely be ineffective in building competence.

2. Do they own their courseware?

You should be leery of providers who don't create their own courseware. Off-the-shelf courseware cannot provide the same emphasis on comprehensive hands on exercises which is key to learning and retention of complex topics. Ownership of our courseware allows us to continually upgrade the content, using both instructor and student feedback regarding what works best.

3. What is the source of your instructors?

If all of the instructors are consultants, watch out. You are dealing with a virtual training company. A Virtual training company has no instructional staff and owns no courseware. It is a marketing company that makes money by selling training. When a sale is made, an instructor broker is contacted to provide an instructor, usually with pay rate and geography the deciding factors, and courseware is provided by the instructor or leased from a courseware leasing company.

4. Are the instructors experienced and cross-trained or are they newly certified in just one area?

HOTT's instructors are experienced professionals, cross-trained in several technologies. They can relate the strengths and weaknesses of products and present alternative solution strategies when they are warranted. Only a tiny fraction of all instructors teaching for our competitors who apply to teach for us meet our strict standards and are

considered qualified to teach for HOTT.

5. What is the size of your public classes?

Large classes assure some students will not receive an excellent training experience. HOTT's open-enrollment classes are kept small, generally 8-12 students, and usually never more than 16, assuring each student gets personal attention.

6. Is the training provider flexible when it comes to scheduling or switching study tracks?

HOTT offers unparalleled flexibility and convenience. We offer both on site and open enrollment solutions to minimize your cost and maximize your convenience. Our on site training manager will coordinate with you and your technical staff to arrange a mutually convenient time to conduct the on site training class. At HOTT there are no penalties for rescheduling or switching study tracks. You are in control of when, where, and what you study.

7. Is there a competency guarantee to ensure quality?

HOTT assures competency, cost effectiveness, and overall success. If we fail, you get your money back – it's that simple. Every student who completes our classes will be competent in the technologies taught and able to put their knowledge to use in real workplace situations the moment they walk out the door. If not, we will retrain at no charge or provide a refund.

No one else in the industry offers guarantees as strong as these.

8. If a student fails a certification exam or simply feels they need additional preparation, does the training center allow them to take the class again at no charge?

HOTT strives to make every student comfortable within their newly learned skill-set. If a student is not, they have the option to retake all or part of the course again for no additional charge. If a student lacks confidence we will work with them to develop the understanding that leads to confidence as well as competence.

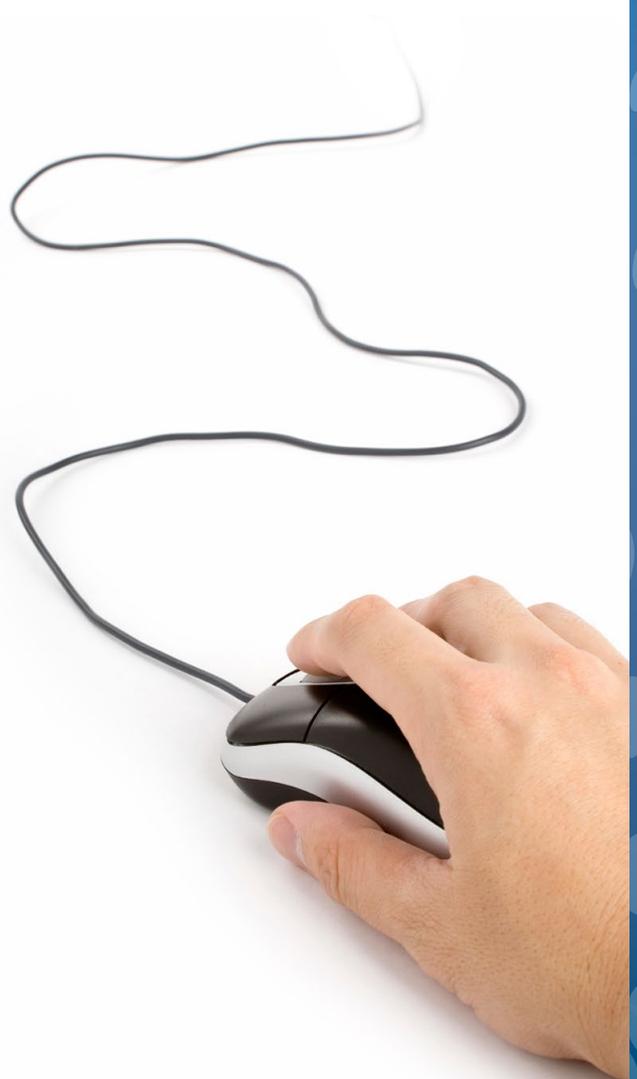
9. How much can travel expenses be minimized?

HOTT minimizes your travel expenses in several ways. We schedule classes at regular intervals across the United States so there should be a class near you. If your local class cancels and you'd prefer not to wait for the next one, we'll pay your hotel expenses at an alternate location. For students who are not near a metro area with scheduled classes, HOTT also offers fixed-price packages covering air and/or hotel. For students unable to travel, HOTT offers Remote Attendance capability with full duplex video and audio so the experience is as close to sitting in the live classroom as possible. HOTT also provides lab equipment with instructor remote access/control capability so that facilitation can be as timely and effective as for students physically in the classroom.

HOTT offers on site training as a cost-effective alternative for larger groups. However, if your IT staff is distributed in multiple locations it may be more convenient and cost effective for some of them to attend our public classes. There is a 10% discount for 3 or 4 students attending the same class on the same date, 15% for 5 or more. Students can change their registrations at any time without penalty. There are multi-course tracks available in a variety of locations, so students can take a single week of training and then wait to take the rest.

10. What is the total cost per student week of training? In addition to tuition, are there hidden fees, charges or other expenses?

HOTT has no registration fees, cancellation fees, or any other fees other than tuition. HOTT's prices are among the lowest in the industry for instructor-led training. When deciding on a training provider, you want to compare total costs including tuition, travel, and time away from work. HOTT concentrates on efficiency through condensed training. We take less time to teach you the skills you need to be effective on the job. Our training effectiveness, multiple locations, and reasonable tuition combined, provide you the best overall value.



HOTT's Unbeatable Guarantees That Others Can't Touch

Competency Guarantee

Our goal is to assure that every student will gain full understanding of the technologies addressed during training. We guarantee that upon completion of training, every student will be competent to perform business tasks utilizing those technologies. If not, we will mentor or retrain at no charge, even if that means personal tutoring for one or two people that just didn't get what the training was supposed to deliver. No one else in the industry offers a guarantee like this.

Cost Effective Guarantee

HOTT's prices are among the lowest in the industry for instructor-led training. For extensive individual needs, HOTT's Training Pass provides an extremely cost-effective option. And we can often charge far less than you'd think to bring a tailored program right to your facility. In any case, we offer training at the lowest total cost available from any source.

Success Guarantee

HOTT guarantees you will never have a training failure. The most common sources of training failures are improper lab setups, poorly constructed lab exercises, and poor instructors. HOTT ensures your training success from the beginning. Our Training Managers are technical people who understand how to focus the training plan to your needs. Our instructors will always contact your technical lead before any class begins to assure that the audience, focus, and competency goals are clear. We own our courseware, so adjustments aren't just made on the fly; if necessary they're also made in the courseware at no additional charge. We make sure with you that the lab is set up properly before the class begins. And, most importantly, we only use seasoned instructors who have direct industrial experience with the technology being taught, and who have a track record of excellent – not good – results. HOTT guarantees your training event will be successful. If there are any perceived problems with skills learned during the training, we will rectify at no additional charge, even if that means mentoring individual students to assure competence.

