



IMPLEMENTATION OF ICT SKILLS FOR THE STUDENTS OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT IN SKILL BASED JOBS



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Volume 2



SKILLS

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ICT SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is an attempt to understand the ICT Skill in the Workplace. ICTs have also changed how workplaces are organised. ICTs allow employees to be more flexible in where, when and how they work, giving rise to the concept of mobile or virtual offices. Mobile offices are usually built for temporary purposes, usually within moveable, temporary buildings (such as an old shipping container). They can be completely virtual, with employees using mobile computing devices (such as laptops, tablets and smartphones) to create an office space outside of the business environment. Virtual offices can also be rented spaces that give businesses a physical address and office-related services (such as a telephone exchange) without the business needing to sign business leases or hire administration staff. ICT skills are essential for many careers and are often looked for by potential employers. There are endless benefits of technology in the workplace that can transform your business into a more successful, mobile, and modern organization. ICT can manage, analyse and transmit large amounts of data, ICT systems can save time in the workplace and make us more productive. ICT systems are used to analyse financial data, such as whether a company is making a profit or a loss and how much it earns from each customer, as well as managing staff wages.

Keywords: ICT, employees, business, workplace

Introduction

ICT skills are abilities that help you understand and operate a wide range of technology software. This can include helping users with tasks on computers, such as making video calls, searching on the internet or using a mobile device such as a tablet or phone. ICT skills can also include any direct interaction with technology, including turning on a computer, using hardware to print and copy documents and using digital cameras to capture photographs or video footage. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is an element of many industries, allowing companies to use different tools to complete everyday tasks such as sending emails and using programming languages to build proprietary business software. Having any level of competency in ICT skills can allow you to pursue a job that involves working with technology. Understanding what these skills are and how to develop them can help you no matter what profession or career path you choose to explore.

ICT is formed of several different components, including:

- **Hardware**– computers, printers and other physical technology devices
- **Software**– operating systems and programs installed on ICT hardware devices. These are used to create files such as spreadsheets, databases, presentations and text-based documents
- **Communication Systems**– telephone lines and wireless signals, which enable connections with other ICT users and the internet
- **Online Data Sharing Platforms**– for example, using a video-calling application such as Skype or sharing files on a cloud-based system

Each of these components enables ICT users to view, save, edit and share information. Efficient use of ICT systems can help to streamline business processes. This can lead to more effective use of time and resources.

Virtual offices are especially popular with new businesses, as there are lower starting and administrative costs, and a higher degree of flexibility and efficiency since staff members do not have to handle day-to-day administrative tasks.

This has led to a change in how companies employ staff. The rise in flexi-time schedules (where staff work hours that suit them and not according to rigid timetables) and mobile offices has led to something called the decentralisation of labour. In the past, employees all worked at a central location according to a fixed time schedule (for example, at an office from 9 am to 5 pm). Now, employees can be scattered across the globe, all working at separate times (that may or may not overlap with others) and in different places. Employers and employees are able to keep in touch using the internet and several software programs (such as Skype or email).

ICTs have also led to the rise of office automation. In some companies, ICTs have completely replaced the need for reception staff to answer telephones and take messages, due to messaging services and cellular technology.

The Need for and Importance of ICT in Different Industries

The uses of this tool depend on which industry it is being utilized. Here are some, but not all, of the fields that use information and communication technology today.

Education

The education sector is one of the fields that benefit from the services of ICT. Education is considered to be an integral part of everyone's growth and development. Proper education can help anyone gain an advantage over societal inequalities. Education is even considered as one of the strongest instruments in fighting poverty. So, it should always be an educator's goal to provide high-quality education.

ICT is being used in different parts of the education sector. Some uses may benefit the students, the management, or both.

Online Services

As mentioned above, ICT involves features such as internet connection. So, it also offers online services. These kinds of services are essential as the majority of us heavily rely on technology. Software such as GoSchooler has features such as online classes, examinations, and even online fees payment. ICT allows educators to schedule classes and hold them on their allotted time.

With this, a good ICT tool can host online exams from building one to assessment. It is highly beneficial that an educator can do these tasks on software. It helps them create a more efficient learning process.

Paying school fees is one of the things that parents must handle on a regular basis. However, as parents or guardians also have other things to attend to, having different payment options provide convenience. An ICT tool such as the school management software provides easy payment channels to parents. It even makes fees collection easier for the school.

Smoother Communication and Access

The ICT, from the name itself, hosts communication between teachers and the students. Software such as GoSchooler has different communication methods. One is the student's notice board that can be used for mass announcements to all stakeholders.

It can also send updates through bulk text messages or emails. The tools make it easier for teachers to target their students and update them with the things that are school-related. This way, students are kept in the loop which allows them to attend to their responsibilities better.

There is also software that offers mobile application access. It is important that children can access their educational materials anytime, anywhere. Mobile access gives them this kind of accessibility and helps ensure continuity of learning.

Employee Payroll

It was mentioned above that the uses of ICT do not only revolve around services for the students. ICT tools also bring advantages to school management. Payroll is an important part to keep your employees happy. So, keeping an organized payroll is a must.

ICT tools or software usually take care of the employee data. This includes their personal information, job descriptions, salary, and even their attendance. So, this tool should also be able to compute and give out salaries on time. These are just some of the services of ICT in the education sector. That is why the need for and importance of ICT in this sector are always being emphasized.

Health Care

Just like education, health care is one of the most important basic services. A prosperous society thrives on proper health care services from its government. The benefits of ICT in this sector can also be seen on both the patients' and medical practitioners' sides.

One of the services ICT offers is patient record keeping. Through the years, hospitals have to deal with patient records that are manually written and stored. With the presence of ICT, data input and storage are now automated.

Automation removes a significant amount of time spent on writing the details and looking for these records. This gives the medical professionals more time to attend to their patients. The benefits of ICT in this sector go way beyond patient information storage. This innovation is also recognized as an important part of finding new cures and solutions to medical issues. Most diseases today can be treated with the help of technology such as CT scanners, MRIs, ECG, and EEG machines.

The need for and importance of ICT are not just limited to simple data storage. This tool presents several ways of helping and creating better solutions in different industries.

e-Commerce

This industry refers to the act of buying and selling goods and services through the internet. It includes marketing via the internet, management, product shipping, and payments.

This method of purchasing goods and services is now one of the most in-demand as it makes transactions easier. Business owners can post their catalogues online and create a virtual shopping experience for their customers.

Customers can then purchase the items through the internet as well. Even if this transaction is done online, there are a lot of logistics involved. So, an ICT tool that can help upscale e-Commerce transactions is beneficial.

ICT software can help business owners deal with their clients with automated responses. The tool can also manage inventory with data input and analysis. Just like in the

educational sector, ICT tools can also host online payments. Making it easier for customers to purchase and pay for the goods they want.

ICT Skills in the Workplace

Here are some tips for developing ICT skills in the workplace:

- **Be patient:** Some of your work may involve teaching others how to work their technology. Staying calm and patient during these encounters can allow you to be approachable as a teacher, which can help you develop your collaboration and critical thinking skills.
- **Discuss technology:** It's helpful to be open to discussing technology with coworkers of all levels of expertise. This can allow you to develop your interpersonal relationships with your coworkers and give you the opportunity to display your ICT knowledge to them.
- **Organize your passwords:** There are several online accounts you may use in your work that require passwords. It can be beneficial to use a password management system or other security measures to help you track this data and develop your organizational and data management skills.

Offices Then and Now

A job that is slowly being phased out of existence due to ICTs is the receptionist or switchboard operator. Their job was to take calls and direct those calls to the correct department or person in a company. This is now handled by automated responses, like those used by large service providers such as MTN or Vodacom. When you dial their customer support number from your smartphone, an automated message plays, asking you to select a number to be put through to the correct department to help you with your query. In some cases, you might not even need to speak to a person, since there may be a computer on the other side of the line that is programmed to answer your questions with a series of automated responses.

Another change that ICTs have brought to the workplace has been the rise of bring your own device (BYOD) policies. As smartphones and tablets have become more cost-effective to buy, there has been a rise in the number of companies adopting a BYOD

policy. BYOD means that businesses can avoid the costs of purchasing computing equipment for new staff members, as staff are encouraged to bring their own computers. Staff can also tailor their computers to their needs. However, BYOD is mostly only cost-effective for small to medium businesses, as larger businesses have the buying power to decide with ICT providers to get the best devices for their staff.

BYOD policies also allow staff to take their devices home, meaning that businesses have a lower insurance risk as they do not need to keep expensive technology on their premises.

Benefits of Technology in the Workplace

1) The Ability to Streamline Repetitive Processes with Automation

Over 40% of workers surveyed in McKinsey report say they spend at least a quarter of their work week on manual, repetitive tasks such as sending emails and entering data. Leveraging automated technology in the workplace puts these tedious processes on autopilot so your employees can spend more time focusing on higher-return business ventures, such as building new client relationships or providing more attentive customer service. Automated processes are also more accurate. For example, using a software solution to automatically collect, upload, or sync data into a system of record reduces the risk of an employee accidentally inputting the wrong number that could skew an entire data set.

2) Overhead Cost Savings with Remote Work and BYOD Devices

Companies of all sizes can experience significant decreases in operating costs by letting their employees work from home and use their devices. It makes sense—with fewer employees in the office, organizations need less space, materials, and utilities. With BYOD device policies, you aren't on the hook for purchasing expensive new hardware every time you hire an employee. As a large-scale example, American Express claims their remote work program has not only improved productivity, but also saved \$10-\$15 million annually in real estate costs. A Cisco study also found that companies save an estimated \$3,150

annually per employee that uses their device between hardware costs, data plans, and the value of time savings.

3) Higher Employee Productivity and Satisfaction

When you give your employees access to the tools and technologies, they need to do their jobs, and let them use them in the way that works best for them, they'll be more efficient and engaged—and therefore much happier. In fact, highly engaged business units have 41% less absenteeism, 17% more productivity, and achieve 10% better customer ratings and 20% more sales. When both a higher quantity and quality of work is being produced by your employees, it drives revenue and boosts profit margins. Happy employees are also more likely to stay loyal to your company long-term rather than going to work for the competition, which also saves you on turnover costs.

4) The Ability to Better Serve Customers

Technology in the workplace has allowed businesses to better market to their customers and provide faster and more personalized customer service. From leveraging data to determine where to place targeted ads, to participating in social listening to uncover your customer's pain points, to providing immediate service through live chat bots or automated emails, and more, there are nearly endless opportunities for technology to enhance your user experience. This can go a long way in differentiating your brand from others, leading to long-term loyalty and higher revenue.

5) The Opportunity to Tap into Non-Local Talent

Remote work policies can help businesses break down talent barriers by opening up a wider pool of candidates. Before the rise of remote work, employers were limited to hiring talent that was already in their local area or willing to relocate for the job—but this usually meant having to reimburse their relocation expenses, which could drastically increase the cost of a new hire. Now, businesses can attract and hire the best talent and industry specialists no matter where they live with attractive remote work policies.

The Impact of Technology in the Workplace

Overall, the impact of technology in the workplace is incredibly strong. There is now an application, software, or platform that can help enhance almost any business

initiative—whether that’s to foster collaboration between remote employees, improve customer satisfaction, build a stronger company culture, drive revenue, or eliminate wasteful inefficiencies.

If you aren’t taking advantage of the benefits of technology, your business can quickly become stagnant or even worse, fall behind the competition. In a world where organizations are rapidly investing in new workplace technologies and adopting the latest and greatest business tools, this can be incredibly detrimental.

Ignoring future workplace trends and being slow to implement technology in the workplace can give your competitors who have prioritized getting ahead of the curve a huge advantage over you. This can negatively affect workplace morale, decrease revenue, and give your brand a poor reputation amongst consumers.

So, do you want more efficient employees who are able to produce both a higher quantity and quality of work? Are you looking to improve engagement and job satisfaction to reduce turnover costs and keep your top talent working for you? Is driving revenue and business growth a major goal for your company? If you want to accomplish these objectives, having access to the right is absolutely necessary. Ready to get started?

At Protected Trust, we simplify technology in the workplace while empowering people to communicate so they can achieve their greatest potential from anywhere on the planet. We do this with a vision of a modern workplace, built on an ecosystem of Microsoft Teams and the Microsoft 365 platform.

How Introducing ICT is Affected in the Workplace?

Some of these positive effects include employees' improved ability to do their job and to share ideas with co-workers, as well as more flexible working hours. The negative effects include increasing work demands and hours, higher stress levels, and the difficulty to disconnect from work when at home.

Conclusion

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are changing jobs and the workforce. Jobs differ in their ICT task intensity – the frequency with which ICT tasks are undertaken – with jobs in occupations such as software, finance, sales and marketing generally more ICT task intensive, while jobs in areas such as accommodation and food, and health and

social work tend to have relatively lower ICT task intensity. If you'd like to learn more about how implementing Microsoft technology in your modern office can help transform collaboration, mobility, and security, schedule an introduction with one of our experts today.

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