

**An investigation into the barriers and issues experienced
by trainers when establishing and undertaking information
management training programmes**

by

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Abstract

Training is an integral factor of information management. Employees must be competent in their abilities to create and maintain the information they produce on a day to day basis. Where training programmes exist it is important to understand what it is that makes the training more or less successful. At present local government authorities and training are both under researched areas in relation to information management. Local government authorities must adhere to the requirements of the Public Record Act 2005 and, therefore, must provide training. This research investigated the barriers and issues experienced by information management professionals within local government authorities when developing and implementing training programmes for other employees within their organisation. A survey questionnaire was sent to selected local government authorities in order to ascertain the barriers, issues, and challenges experienced. The questions were split into six categories and the findings into three; the people problem, resources, and successes. Organisational and information culture were found to be both barriers and enablers in regards to success. Resourcing, while an important factor, was identified as less of an issue than work environment/cultural issues. As an under researched topic further research is still needed into how to overcome barriers and develop successful training programmes.

Keywords

Information Management; Training; Local Government; Information Culture; Organisational Culture

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Background

Information management training is an under researched area at present. Training is an integral part of any organisation's records management programme. Training enables the end users (the trainees) to be able to make informed decisions when creating and using information. It is an important tool for ensuring that the records of the organisation are created, captured, and managed in a satisfactory manner. If employees are trained by the information management team in best practice and how to use the systems and resources allocated to them correctly, the organisation can have some assurance that the records they create and maintain will be of evidentiary value, authoritative, authentic, and accessible.

Study objective

This research investigates the issues and barriers faced by trainers when undertaking information management training programmes. The specific organisational environment that is the focus of this research is local government. This report seeks to identify any common characteristics or themes which are presented as barriers within training programmes. This knowledge will be beneficial in developing more successful outcomes for the trainers.

This research adds to the small body of knowledge already available on the topic of training and compliments the work already undertaken in this field thus far. Local government recordkeeping, like training, is also an area in which not much research has been conducted. The more research conducted into issues experienced when developing and providing training will allow information management professionals to develop more potential solutions.

The rationale and significance of the research

Training is not only an important aspect of maintaining a healthy records management programme, it is also a legislative requirement for government agencies that are subject to the Public Records Act 2005 (PRA). The mandatory Records Management Standard for the New Zealand Public Sector states that under Principle 7: Manage Records Systematically,

Requirement 7.2 “Staff must be trained to create and maintain records”. Requirement 7.3 states that “Trained staff must be assigned to carry out records management functions and activities” (Archives New Zealand, 2014, p.23-24). Development of training programmes is also a requirement of the ISO15489 standard. The standard states that: “Programmes for training in requirements for records management [...] should encompass the roles and responsibilities of, and be addressed to, all members of management, employees, contractors, volunteers” (As cited in Oliver & Foscarini, 2014, p.92).

As well as adhering to the PRA, local government must comply with the requirements of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA). Although LGOIMA does not specifically mention training as a requirement in order to properly manage council information adequate end user training is required. Training is an underlying factor in the success of managing information, which when done properly means compliance follows.

Others who could also benefit from this research include organisations without existing training programmes, or who are implementing a new system (such as an ECMS) and need to train staff in how to use this technology, or organisations who are looking to update or redevelop an already existing programme.

Local government is specifically of interest as not a lot is known about it in regards to records management practices. That is, not a lot of information management focussed research has been done on these types of organisations. Local authorities have a somewhat ambiguous position in that they are included under the PRA, but are not a part of the Archives New Zealand auditing programme (King, 2013, p6). This makes these organisations especially interesting as they are subject to the requirements of the PRA but not audited for compliance with the legislation.

Research Questions

1. What are the barriers and issues experienced by trainers when establishing and undertaking information management training programmes?
 - 1.1 What are the contributing factors to the barriers and issues?
 - 1.2 What are the contributing factors behind the successful training?

Definition of key terms

Training: “a process by which someone is taught the skills that are needed for an art, profession, or job” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.). The training this report focuses on is the on the job training provided by records management staff employed by councils.

Information management: "Activities within the management... of records of an organisation which facilitate the systematic capture, control, maintenance, dissemination and disposition of the records of that organisation. Records management is primarily concerned with capturing complete, accurate, and reliable documentation of organisational activity for current purposes" (Archives New Zealand, n.d.).

Information culture: “...is an emerging complex system of values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that influence how information is used in an organisation. It exists in the context of, and is influenced by an organisational culture and wider environments” (Douglas, 2010, P.307 as cited in Oliver & Foscarini, 2014, p.9).

Local government: “...is the system of locally elected members representing their communities and making decisions on their behalf... They work closely with central government and with other organisations, public bodies, businesses and citizens” (Local Councils, n.d.).

Organisational culture: “...is a pattern of basic assumptions – invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration – that has well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members, as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein, 1984 p. 3).

Literature Review

Introduction

The research problem this report investigates are the barriers and issues experienced by trainers when establishing and undertaking information management training programmes. There is a gap in the literature on information management training as, at present, not a great deal of research has been done in this area.

The selection criteria for literature discussed in this report was based on its relevance to the topic of training. However, literature did not necessarily need to be specifically focused on training within information management. The decision not to solely focus on information management was due to the lack of quality literature that met that specific requirements. Furthermore, good quality literature with interesting concepts pertaining to training exists outside of information management literature. The existence of this non information management based literature influenced the selection criteria for literature used within this report.

Two main themes came through in the literature; the need for and importance of training, and the issues in relation to training people and developing programmes/assessing needs.

Theoretical Frameworks

Organisational culture is at play within Clarke's (2003) workplace politics as it determines the way in which individuals interact with one another and behave. Organisational culture "...is a pattern of basic assumptions – invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration – that has well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members, as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems" (Schein, 1984 p.3).

Organisational culture, in regards to information management, is also an influencing factor in the way that employees view and value information (Oliver & Foscarini, 2014, p.18).

The Information Culture Framework is an assessment tool for evaluating the cultures within an organisation (Oliver & Foscarini, 2014, p.17). The various factors of the framework are

divided into three levels each containing several other factors which can be used to assess the overall culture of an organisation. The Information Culture Framework assessment tool was used during the research for this report as some of the factors described were considered to reflect the potential barriers/issues identified by trainers/trainees.

The conceptual basis for this research is recordkeeping informatics and the records continuum theory (Oliver and Foscarini, 2014, p13-15). A record cannot fulfil the four stages of creating, capturing, organising, and, if relevant, pluralising if the users and creators cannot adequately use the guidance or systems provided to them.

Theme one: The need for training.

The idea that training is needed is universally agreed upon within the literature. The development, implementation, and success of training programmes is an important topic of research because once successful training is implemented both the staff and organisation will reap the benefits. Chapter five of Foscarini and Oliver's (2014) book addresses training and the need for it. The chapter specifically looks at training and the related competencies as well as outlining some of the known issues in relation to providing training, such as information and digital literacy. Within organisations the need for information management training can be seen in the awareness, processes, and practices of the staff.

Wright (2013) examines a specific government department in Canada to determine the relationship between records management training, the perceived levels of competency, and the levels of compliance amongst staff. The study was conducted using surveys. The findings showed that 83% of the overall respondents reported to have not received any records management training. A majority, however, understood the need and importance of proper training (p.22). Furthermore, Wright's survey also asked the respondents how they would prefer to receive training; whether it be high level, in depth, a workshop or one on one (Wright, 2013, p.22). One of the barriers faced by some teams in relation to records management training is resources. Knowing how employees would prefer to be trained means that time and money is not wasted attempting to develop a programme that is not the preferred option. Unfortunately, no information was provided by Wright about the 17% of staff who did receive records management training.

An interesting twist on the need for training is presented by Kim (2014) who looks at training needs for University students in relation to information security awareness. The results showed that while 78% of the students who responded to the survey understood and saw a need for information security awareness training, the majority of them (76.1%) did not participate in this kind of training at University or at work (Kim, 2014, p.122). The results from both Wright (2014) and Kim (2014) showed that whilst participants understood and appreciated the need for proper training a majority of them had not acquired/been provided with any. When researching the potential issues related to providing and receiving records management training the potential disparity between the perceived need to provide training and the uptake or want for training by the intended trainees may be a problem area to look out for.

Theme two: Issues/problems in relation to training.

Training related issues discussed in the literature were wide ranging and included focussing too much on policy, not being aware of competencies, the inadequate skills and knowledge of the trainers and trainees, and not understanding what training is needed. A case study by Johare (2006) looked at the education and skills needed by records professionals in Malaysian Federal Ministries and the training that is necessary to facilitate satisfactory management of electronic records. A questionnaire survey which collected a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data was used for this study (Johare, 2006, p.4-5). Inadequate skills and knowledge of records management staff has the potential to be an issue.

Oliver and Foscarini discuss how records managers tend to focus on developing procedures that must be followed and the attempt to make these procedures mandatory (p.93). These procedures then become a main focus of records management programmes which, in turn, become the centre point of the training delivered to staff (p.93). This is an interesting point and one that was not identified in the other literature that covered this theme. Compliance focussed training takes the focus away from giving people the skills they need in order to carry out their everyday work and can be seen to be quite intimidating. Oliver and Foscarini seem to be able to look at the topic from both a theoretical (the Information Framework

being used as the theory p.91) and a practical standpoint by using their own professional experiences as well as literature to inform their scholarship.

Another issue raised related to information competencies, specifically information literacy and digital literacy (Oliver & Foscarini, 2014, p.95-97). Information literacy and digital literacy are two areas where people both undertaking and delivering information management training would need to be competent. Training could not be successful if the person involved does not possess the skills required to take on board the new skills or processes the trainer is trying to teach. The idea that a person must possess the appropriate skills in order to be able to take on board training or to train others is backed up in the Johare's (2007) survey findings (the surveys sent to the National Archival Institutions). The survey findings were part of the research Johare conducted into finding a universal model for electronic records management training for information management professionals.

Some of the problems indicated by the survey results included a lack of coordinated skills training in electronic records management as well as insufficient knowledge and skills in electronic records management (Johare, 2007, p.11). Johare looked at the skills and training needs of records professionals and the training needed by this group to become proficient at electronic records management. This article provided a different perspective from other literature discussed in this report as it focussed on what training was available and needed by information management professionals rather than on how best for them to deliver training to others within their organisation. Johare's research poses the question; if the people in charge of providing the training have been insufficiently trained, how are they, in turn, meant to provide training for others?

Clarke's (2003) presentation of a case study, involving an organisation that used the training needs analysis, offers another set of issues in relation to training; that is workplace politics. The organisation in this study employed the training needs analysis (TNA) to determine performance problems and training needs amongst case workers. Some of the case workers had professional qualifications whilst others did not. The results from the TNA were broken up into groups segregated by rank and whether or not the staff member possessed a qualification. A variety of methods were used to collect data which included surveys, focus groups and semi-structure interviews (p.143). The results showed an interesting split in opinion around training. The staff who were without qualifications did not feel they needed

higher education training in order to carry out their jobs, whereas those with qualifications ranked the training as highly important to their role (Clarke, 2003, p.124).

This article is discussed in this report because workplace politics can have a significant effect on, not only the organisational culture of a company, but also the receptiveness of training. The popularity of the training programmes and the success of the implementation can be influenced by the attitudes of the employees as well. Workplace politics could be a potential factor/barrier in the effectiveness of training.

Almost all of the literature examined used case studies, interviews or surveys as the method for gathering information. All of the literature, although often addressing different aspects of training, picked up on the need for training whether it was professional, higher education or in house. Some of the relevant issues or barriers which have already been discussed in the literature provide a good starting point for readers when considering the research conducted within this report.

Research Methodology

Research Design

An online survey was used for data collection. In order to fully address the research problem a predominantly quantitative mixed methods survey was utilised. The survey was largely made up of multi choice questions, some with open text options for additional comments. An email survey was the ideal method for this project as travelling around the country to conduct interviews was not a possibility. Despite the inevitable risk of a lower return rate with email surveys, the benefit of allowing exposure to multiple people without the need to travel made it the most viable option (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012, p.191).

To explore any additional issues raised by the participants some qualitative open ended questions were included. This gave the participants an opportunity to further discuss the challenges and benefits experienced when providing training to staff. Participants were asked to answer twenty questions in total; fourteen quantitative and six qualitative. Several of the quantitative questions also contained an 'other' answer category that allowed the participants additional opportunities to discuss their views.

The survey was primarily aimed at information management employees who are responsible for developing and providing training to other staff within the organisation. However, participation from other records management professionals within the team was also encouraged. Their views on the training programme being provided by their team were also important.

It was estimated that the survey would take around twenty minutes of the participants time to complete.

Research Questions

The survey was broken down into six sections. The first section (questions 1-4) aimed to gather background information about the organisation and team that the participant belongs to. Questions related to the size of the organisation and team as well as the overall resources available at a team level. Section two (questions 5-7) focussed on training

resources; what does the information management team undertaking this survey have available to them to carry out training. The third section (questions 8-10) asked about potential records management training topics and which of these topics participants were currently providing training for. Section four (questions 11-13) asked participants about various training techniques. The fifth section (questions 14-16) looked into the contributing factors behind the effectiveness and/or perceived successes of the training provided. The final section (questions 17-20) provided the participants with an opportunity to further explain any factors that have perceived influence over the effectiveness of the training they provide.

Population and sample size

Currently in New Zealand there are 78 local government authorities. Local government authorities were selected for this study because as an organisational group they are currently under researched. Although they are not audited by Archives New Zealand, local authorities are still required to adhere to the requirements set forth by the PRA. Therefore, these organisations are required to manage information in accordance with the PRA. Organisations are required to employ staff to manage information and provide training. As mentioned previously a survey was sent out to the staff responsible for records management within the selected organisations. Some of the organisations are quite large in terms of staff size so it was not practical to survey all staff with records management responsibilities included in their role description. Instead staff were selected based on their role and whether or not this included training based responsibilities, for example, do they help develop training programmes or are they responsible for providing training. Participant selection was also based on whether or not participants were a part of the information management team and had, therefore, seen and/or experienced the training provided. Consistency of the selection criteria relied on the understanding of the team manager. In order to comply with the HEC approval for this research the records manager from each participating organisation had to be contacted first and asked to identify relevant survey participants from within their teams. Following this the survey was either sent directly to

the manager to disseminate amongst their employees or, in the cases where contact details were provided, sent directly to the employee.

The population was limited to bigger organisations in order to make sure the scope of the research was manageable. Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin City Councils were selected as these organisations govern the largest cities in New Zealand. In an attempt to get a decent sample size the larger regional councils for these districts were also included; Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Wellington, Canterbury, and Otago (note Auckland does not have a district council).

Participants were identified from seven of the eleven organisations which were contacted. No response was received from the records managers of three of the local government authorities. Therefore, there were no participants from these three organisations as the survey link was never provided to them.

Assumptions

Larger local government bodies were selected as the population because it was assumed they were more likely to have dedicated information management staff and also because they are larger organisations with considerable staffing numbers. It was assumed that with a larger overall employee base that some form of records management training would be provided by the information management team. Larger organisations would, in theory, produce large volumes of both physical and electronic records whilst carrying out their business activities. Therefore some form of document management system would be employed. These systems require user training.

Basic assumptions were also made around resourcing. For example, it was assumed that the participants would have the necessary resources to be able to complete the survey, such as a computer, internet access, and the time required to complete a response.

Data collection

Qualtrics was used to develop an anonymous online survey for this research. Data was collected by sending out the survey to selected participants. The survey responses were later downloaded from Qualtrics. In total 18 responses were received. However, only 14 participants completed the survey in full.

Data Analysis

Excel was used to collate and analyse the survey results. Each question was broken down into an individual excel sheet and responses counted. Common themes that emerged within the results were noted. Where appropriate the data has been displayed in graph format to enable a more effective visualisation of the results.

Results

Responses and Respondents

Due to the nature of the identification process it is difficult to know the exact number of individuals who received the survey excepting the instances where contact information was provided by the managers.

Only 14 participants completed the survey in full providing for a 73% overall response rate. All responses were included for analysis regardless of whether or not they completed the survey in full. The survey was sent out on April 29 2015 and 11 responses were received on the first day. An additional six surveys were started between April 30 and May 4. After a reminder email was sent one additional response was received.

A large proportion of the surveys took the participant 35 minutes or less to complete (13 responses). Five took less than 10 minutes, with the shortest recorded response time for a completed survey taking only 2 minutes and 49 seconds. The longest recorded response time for a completed survey was 3 days 19 hours and 55 minutes. It was estimated that the survey should take participants around 15-20 minutes to complete which, for the most part, was a fair estimation.

Section One: Organisation and Team Context

The purpose of this group of questions was to gain some background insights into the environment, resources, and awareness levels within the local government bodies.

Question one: How aware are the rest of the organisation about your team and what you do?

This question was presented in the form of a Likert scale. The range was from 1-10 with 1 representing 'Unaware', 5 representing 'Some Awareness', and 10 representing 'Very Aware'. When asked about their perception of how aware other staff members were of the information management team and what they do a large majority (89% or 16 responses) scored this question with a 5 or higher. The largest response (28% or 5 responses) was placed at 6 on the scale. The lowest rating given on the scale was a 3 (11% or 2 responses)

which indicates a low but not a completely non-existent awareness level. Two respondents placed their organisations awareness level of their team and what their team does at 10 on the scale, indicating the perception that their team has a high profile and other employees are very aware of their existence.

Question two: How many staff are employed by your organisation?

This question regarding the size of the organisation was asked as it was assumed the size of the organisation in conjunction with the size of the team could have an effect on the resources available, and staffing numbers within the information management team. The question also sought to provide contextual data about the numbers of employees who theoretically would need training from the information management team.

None of the respondents were employed by an organisation larger than 2000 employees. The responses were fairly equally split between the 0-500, 500-1000, 1000-1500, and 1500-2000. The highest number of responses (6) was received for the 0-500 employees' category, and the lowest (3) was for the 1500-2000 category.

Question three: How many staff are employed specifically in records management roles?

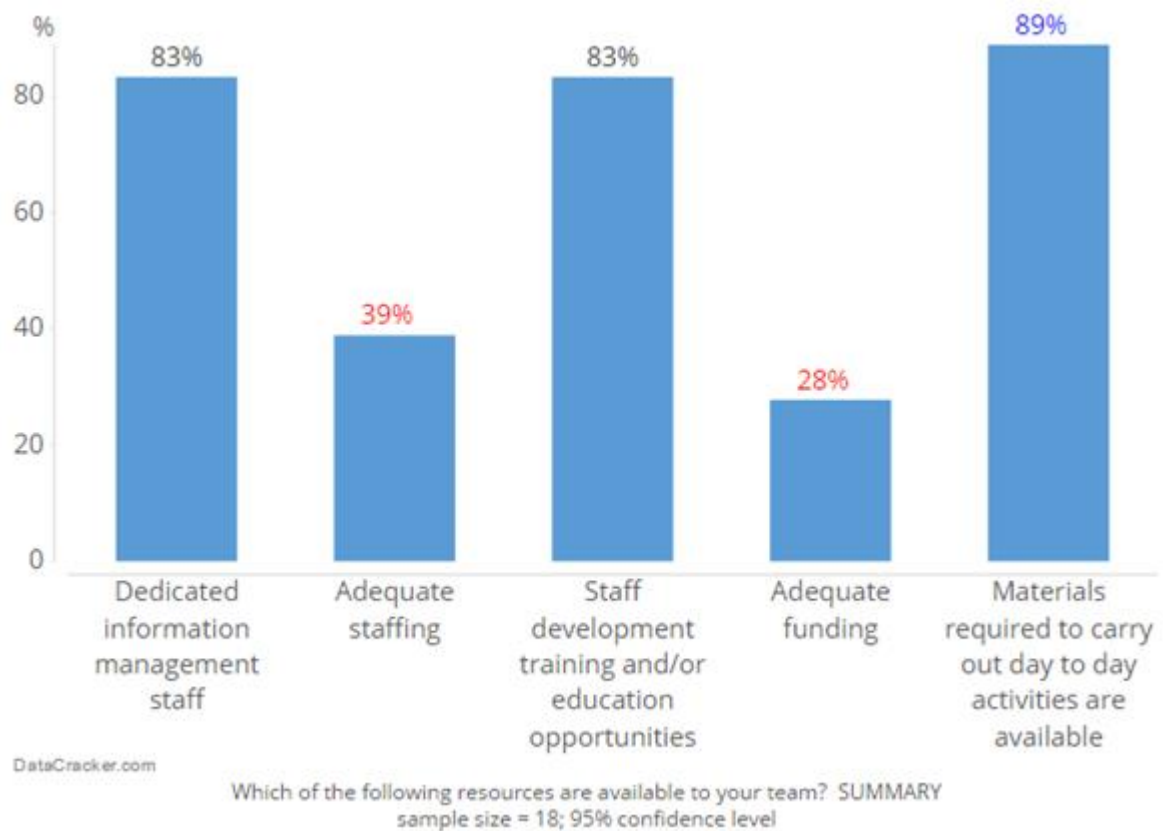
Many roles within an organisation have some sort of records management responsibilities, especially some administrative positions. Staff numbers are important when looking at what training is provided and how frequently. A larger organisation (1000-1500) with a relatively small information management team (0-5 people) would presumably find it difficult to provide an intensive training programme. This issue is one of the reasons this question was included in the research. The results were fairly evenly spread with six respondents indicating 0-5 employees, five respondents for the 5-10 category, and seven for the 10+ employees category.

Question four: Which of the following resources are available to your team?

The data from this question shows an interesting result; the resources that are in the control of the team scored highly, whereas the resources out of the teams' control, such as the funding and staffing, scored lower. 'Materials required to carry out day to day activities are available' scored the highest with 16 out of the 18 respondents selecting this. This is not surprising as it is generally assumed that computer equipment, filing resources, etc. should

be available. Second equal with 15 of the 18 respondents indicating these resources are available were 'Dedicated information management staff' and 'Staff development and/or education opportunities'.

Figure 1.



Section two: Training resources

This section investigated the time, resources and topics associated with providing staff training.

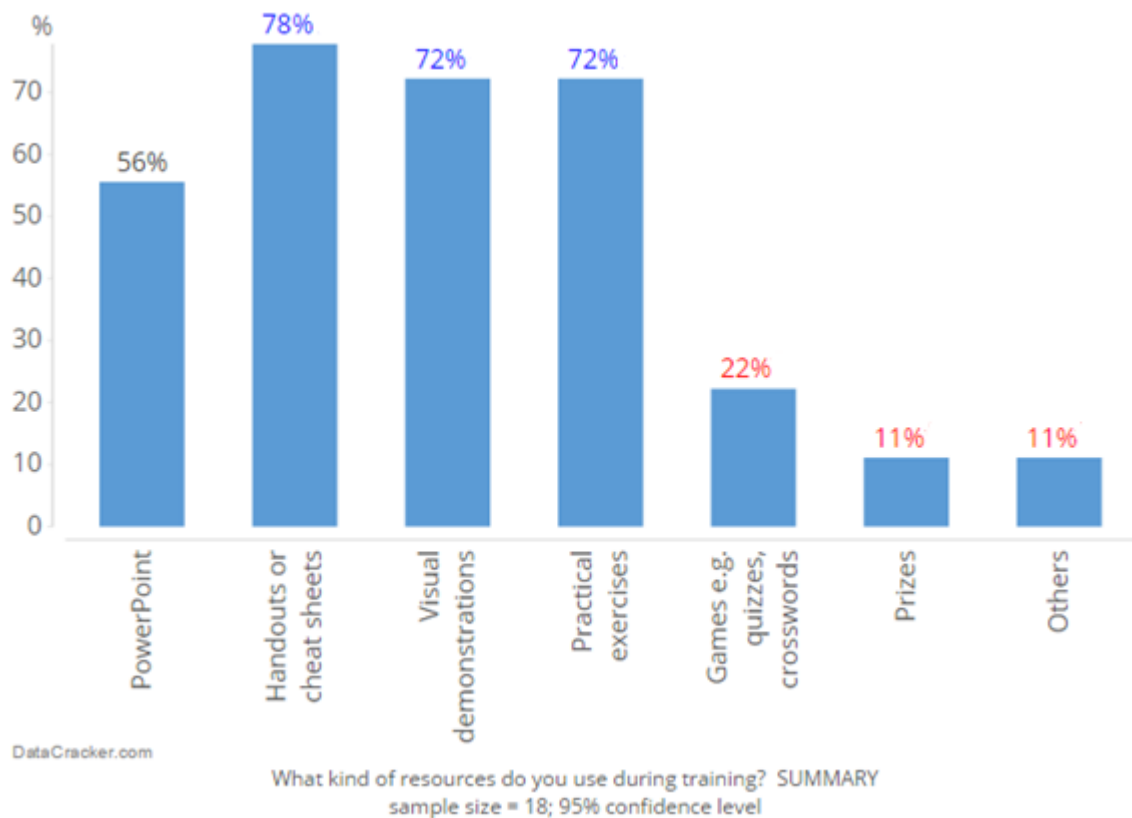
Question five: How much time do you currently invest into training employees outside of your team in information management?

The largest proportion of responses (56% or 11 respondents) indicated that only between 1-10 hours of training was provided per month by their team at present. The options for 10-20 hours per month and 20+ hours per month each received 17% (or 3 responses each).

Training provided on an adhoc basis received two responses (11%). No responses were received for the option 'training is not currently provided'.

Question six: What kind of resources do you use during training?

Figure 2.



The top four resources used by participants were handouts or cheat sheets (14), followed by visual demonstrations (13), practical exercises (13), and PowerPoint (10). Prizes and Other ranked the lowest with only two responses each.

The two additional comments received in the other text box are as follows. One participant reported that: “Staff are given a 2 hour training session when first starting on how to use our edrms with 'how to' tips and guides and encouraged to make contact when having problems. No follow up training is encouraged in our organisation. They are not told anything else about records or document management by anybody in the records team.” The other participant stated: “Tours of records/archives areas and a hand on approach to get staff thinking about where information goes once it leaves their desks.”

Question seven: How often do you update the resources?

When asked how often training resources are updated a large majority of participants (15 or 83%) indicated ‘whenever business needs dictate’. Only two participants said training

resources were updated on a quarterly basis. The final participant responded saying that training resources are not updated at all.

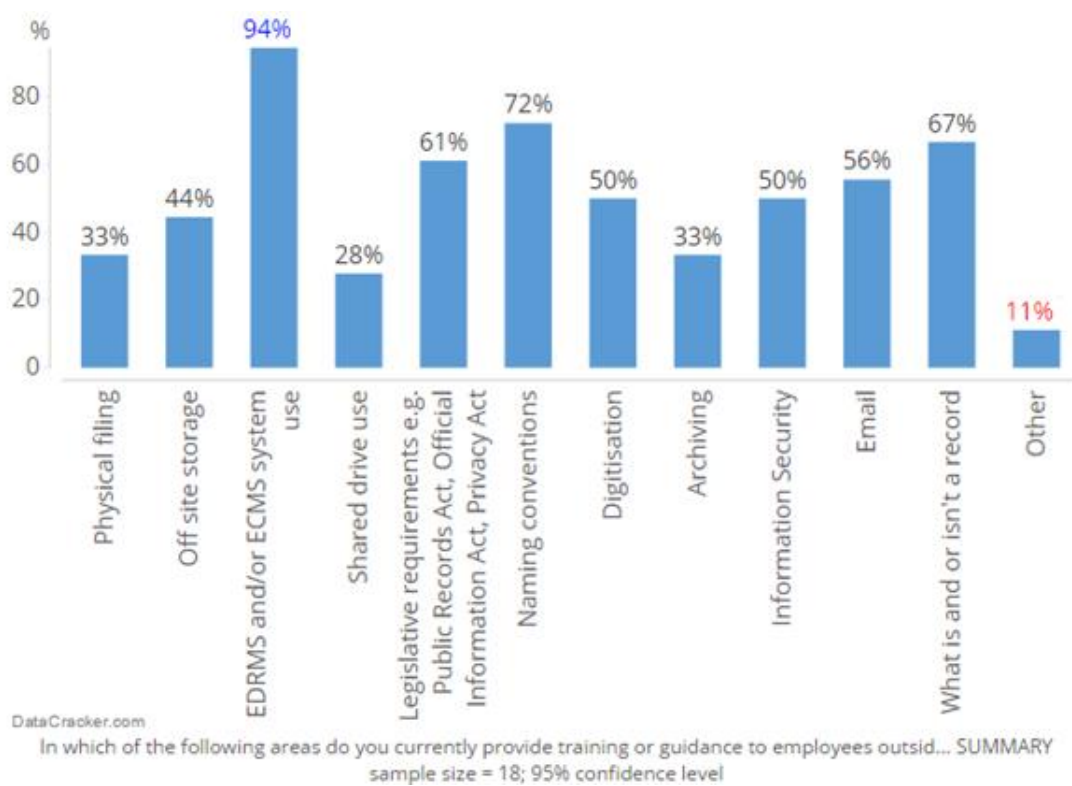
Section three: Training topics and success

Section three focussed on the various topics within information management that training and/or guidance is provided for. This section also inquired, not only into what topics are used within training, but the effectiveness of the training.

Furthermore, this section sought to find out what contributes, in the participant’s opinion, to the success of a particular training topic. As such two open ended questions as well as multiple choice questions were asked in this section.

Question eight: In which of the following areas do you currently provide training or guidance to employees outside of your team?

Figure 3.



Question eight was multiple choice and looked specifically at training topics. The most frequent area in which training and or guidance is provided to staff is ‘EDRMS and/or ECMS

system use' with 17 (94%) participants indicating they provide training for this topic. The smallest results were received by shared drive use (5 or 28%), physical filing (6 or 33%) and archiving (6 or 33%). While two responses were received in the 'Other' category no further information was supplied in the text box as to what these other training topics are.

Question nine: Please explain which training topics are considered more successful and why?

The most successful training topic as identified by participants was EDRMS/ECMS system use with 13 mentions. Second equal with four mentions each were naming conventions and email. All of the training topics received at least one mention excepting archiving. Several responses also noted multiple topics as being successful. Participants indicated this to be because multiple training topics were covered at once during one session instead of being offered on an individual basis.

Question ten: Please explain which training topics are considered the least successful and why?

The results of this question were split more equally with three participants mentioning EDRMS/ECMS as the least successful topic. This was followed closely by legislative requirements, naming conventions and what is or isn't a record each with two mentions. The next least successful training topics, with one mention each, were physical filing, digitisation and email. No participants mentioned offsite storage, shared drive use, archiving or information security. Two participants answered that no training was currently provided, one specifically noting that resourcing was a reason behind the lack of training.

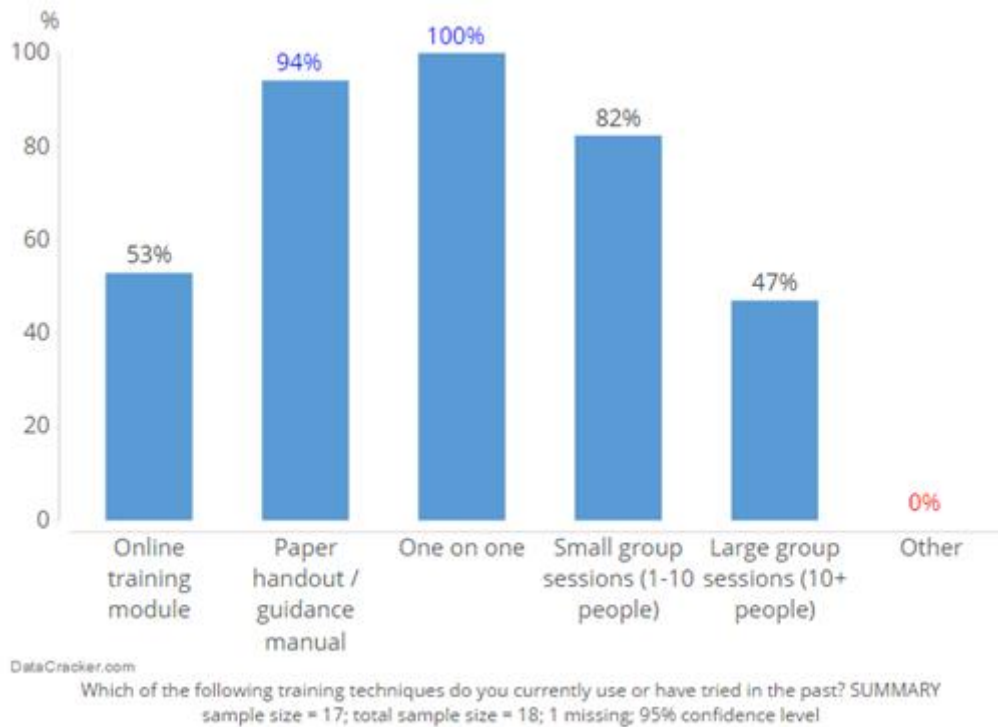
Section four: Training techniques

Question eleven: Which of the following training techniques do you currently use or have tried in the past?

At this stage in the survey one participant dropped out taking the total number of respondents down to 17. All participants indicated that one on one training was a technique that they currently use or have used in the past. Paper hand outs and/or a guidance manual scored second highest with 16 responses. The lowest response was from large group

sessions of ten or more people with eight. No responses were received for the other category.

Figure 4



Question twelve: Are there any other techniques you use that are not listed above?

A few additional techniques were mentioned at this point in the survey, including refresher training sessions, quizzes, and regular catch up sessions. Quizzes were mentioned by two of the five participants who commented on this question. Online training modules were specifically mentioned in this section, however, it is not clear why the participant brought this up as this was one of the techniques offered as an option as part of question eleven.

Question thirteen: Of these techniques please rank them in order of most to least effective (1=most, 6=least)

Question thirteen asked participants to rank the six training techniques provided in order of perceived effectiveness. For these results the amounts of each number assigned to each technique were counted and the most predominant number was assigned to the technique. The technique ranked most effective by participants with 12 number one rankings was one on one training. Second place went to small group sessions with ten participants ranking this

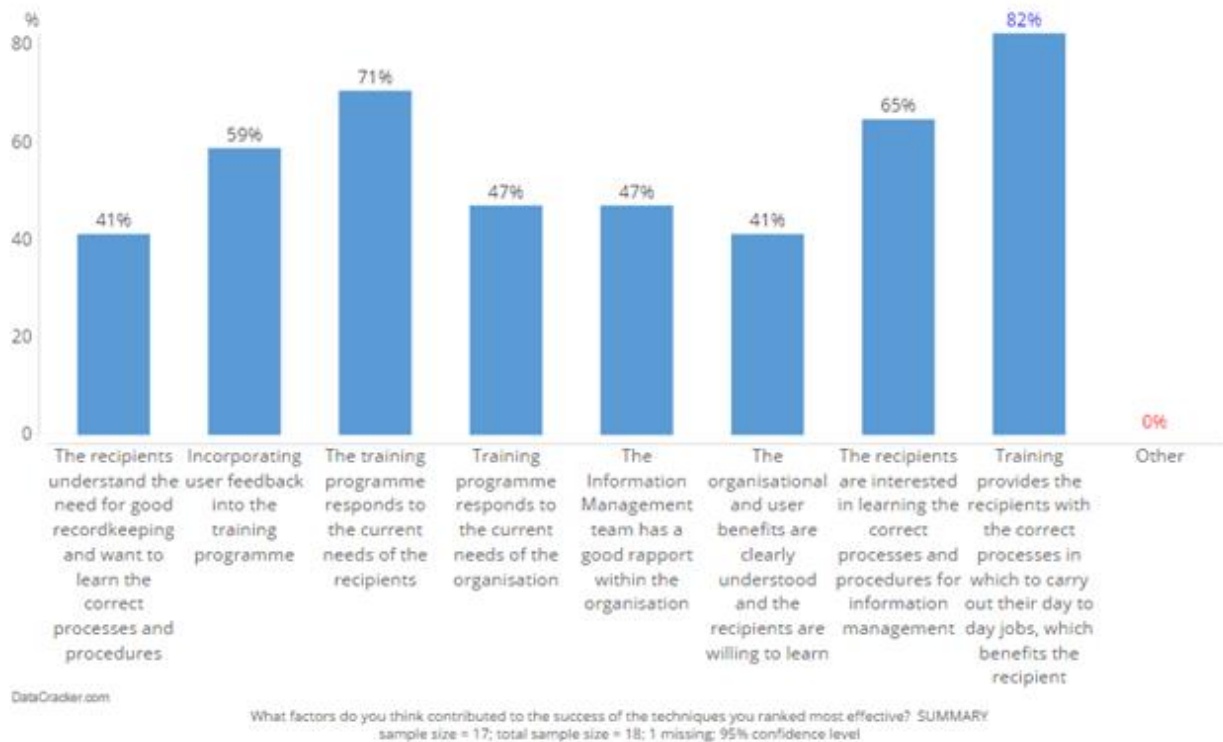
technique second. Paper handouts and/or guidance manuals were ranked third by ten of the participants. Fourth was online training modules with nine responses. Large group sessions were ranked fifth with eight responses. The other category was ranked in sixth place excepting one participant who ranked this as 1. The 1 ranking in the other category could be due to the participant not understanding the ranking process or because they use another technique which they rate highly. However, there was no mention of such a technique in the responses to the prior question.

Section five: The effectiveness and success factors of training

This section asked questions about the contributing factors behind the effectiveness and/or perceived successes of the training provided.

Question fourteen: What factors do you think contributed to the success of the techniques you ranked most effective?

Figure 5.



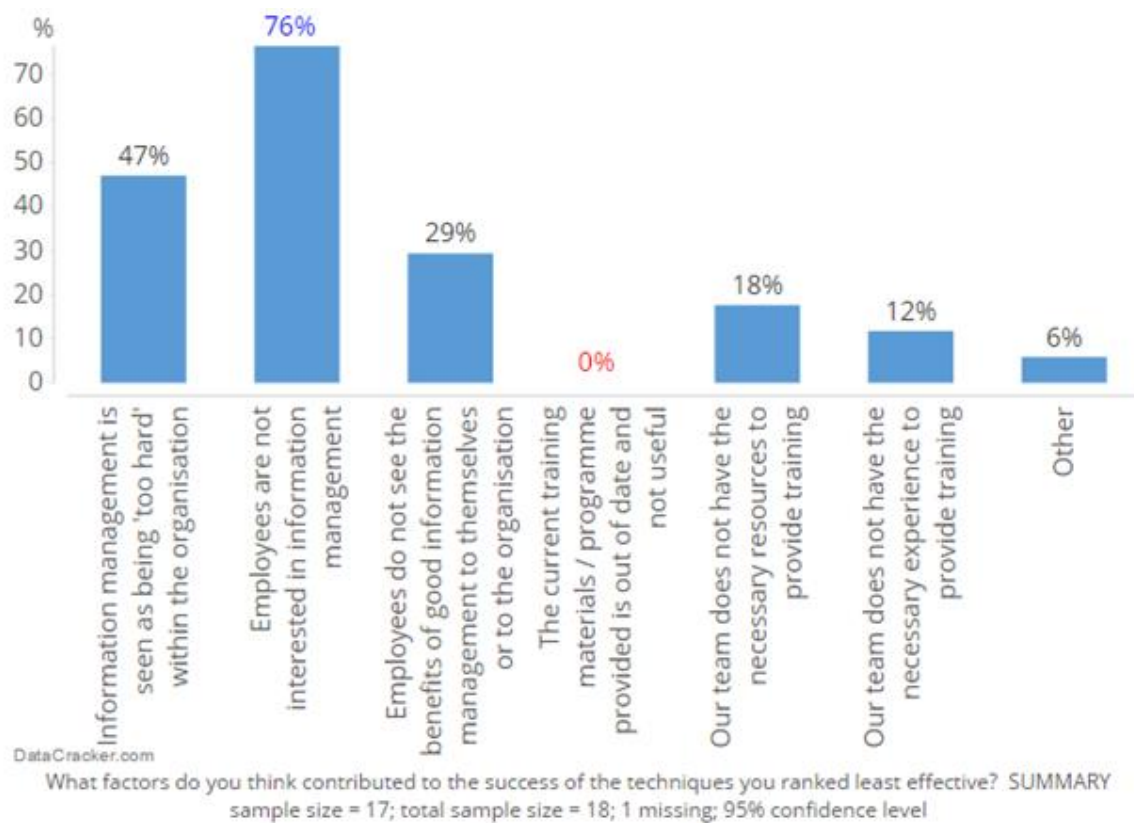
Question fourteen was a multi choice question which looked into specific factors that could positively influence the effectiveness of the training provided. The highest ranked statement was 'Training provides the recipients with the correct processes in which to carry out their day to day jobs, which benefits the recipient' with 14 participants selecting this. The two other higher ranked factors with 12 responses each were that the training programme responds to the current needs of the recipients and that user feedback on training provided is incorporated back into the training programme. Again, there were no responses to the other option in relation to this question.

Question fifteen: What factors do you think contributed to the success of the techniques you ranked least effective?

Question fifteen looked into specific factors that could negatively influence the effectiveness of the training provided. Thirteen participants indicated that one of the more common factors is that the employees are not interested in information management. The second highest response was received in relation to the statement that information management is seen as being 'too hard' within the organisation with eight participants selecting this statement. No responses were received for the statement that the current training materials/programme provided are out of date and no longer useful.

The statements which received the two highest responses for question fifteen were both attitude based. Question fifteen asked respondents about the success of the techniques ranked least effective. The highest ranked statement was that employees are not interested in information management with 76% followed by information management is seen as being 'too hard' with 46%. This was mirrored in question seventeen which asked participants about challenging factors when conducting training. Again, the joint top response was that the employees are not interested in information management and show a lack of willingness to learn. In relation to question 17, one participant stated that "...in some instances [the training is] influenced by long term staff attitudes".

Figure 6



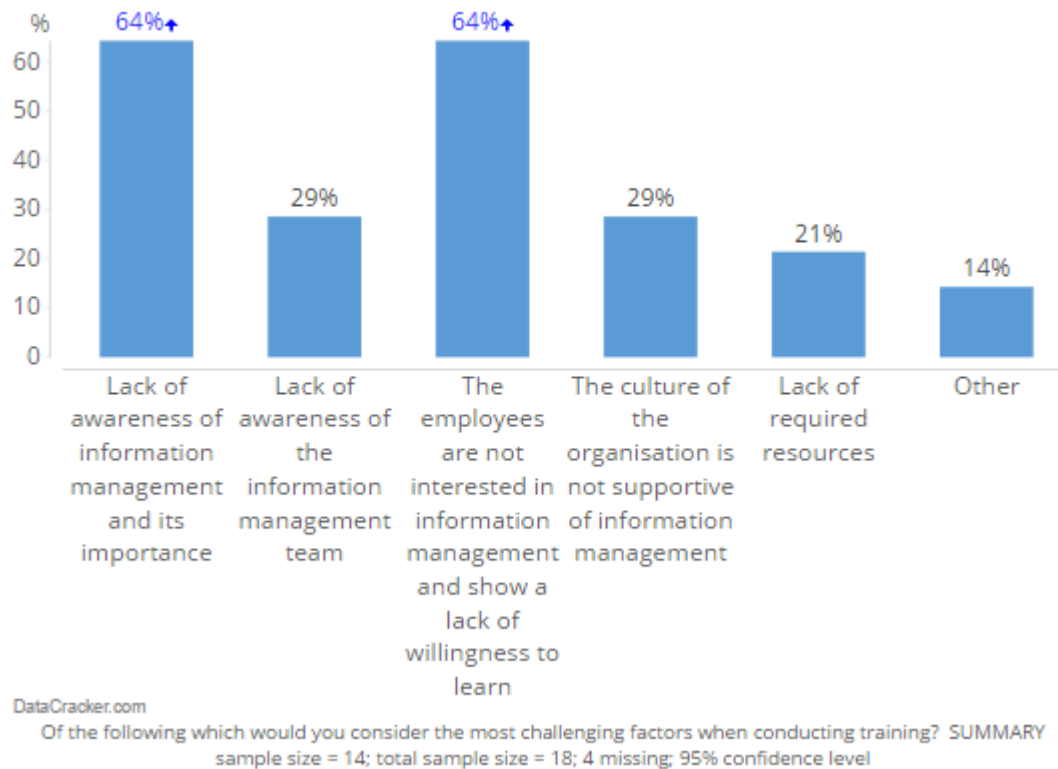
Question sixteen: How do you measure the effectiveness of the training programmes you provide?

Directly following up with training participants was the most popular method of measuring effectiveness with 11 survey participants selecting this option. Second equal was monitoring systems and process for errors and picking up areas of weakness and providing retraining where necessary with seven responses each. Participant feedback forms followed closely with six. There were four participants who selected the option which stated that there are no current methods of measuring the effectiveness of their training programmes. Email survey had only two responses. There were no comments in Other category.

Section six: Factors

Question seventeen: Of the following which would you consider the most challenging factors when conducting training?

Figure 7



At this stage of the survey an additional three participants dropped out bringing the total number of participants down to 14. The two most challenging factors indicated by respondents both with nine were ‘lack of awareness of information management and its importance’ and ‘the employees are not interested in information management and show a lack of willingness to learn’. Two comments were received for the other section of this question. Comment one “Lack of time and in some instances influenced by long term staff attitudes”. And comment two “In a busy organisation everyones day job is providing time pressures, taking any time away to deliver any training is seen by some as an imposition”.

Question eighteen: Are there any factors not mentioned above which you find challenging when trying to provide training?

One theme that came through in the responses to this question was that the organisation and other staff members do not view information management as being important. Of the four participants who commented in this section three indicated that information management was not viewed as being important to the organisation. Also mentioned were resourcing issues, namely funding, information related competencies (digital literacy), and the issues that arise because of the organisation being devolved physically.

Question nineteen: Are there any factors not already mentioned that have worked particularly well that you would like to comment on?

Only two participants decided to comment on this question. One mentioned that a part of the success they have experienced was to do with having a dedicated training team working closely with the information management team. The second suggested that success was enabled by both positive vocal back up from upper management and closing down the shared drive environment. It is assumed that this comment is in relation to implementing a new EDRMS/ECMS.

Question twenty: Are there any further comments you wish to make about training staff within your organisation?

A theme that was noted in the responses to this question was support from upper management. Support was mentioned by two of the four participants who chose to respond to this question. Also mentioned was information overload, in that the timing of training needs to be carefully considered given the vast amount of new information being provided to staff when they first start employment. Emphasising the benefits to the user as well as staff attitudes and behaviour towards information management were also discussed in this question.

Discussion

Barriers, issues, and challenges identified by survey participants can be divided into two main categories. The first is resources and the second, to borrow a phrase coined by Oliver and Foscarini (2014), 'the people problem'. The successes identified will also be discussed; what influences or factors contributed to positive training experiences?

The People Problem

The issues identified within this research which relate to the people problem include behaviour, attitude, habits, digital literacy, awareness, lack of support, interest, information culture and organisational culture.

Digital literacy and information overload are two of the issues already identified in the literature as training needs (Oliver & Foscarini, 2014, p.95). Both of these factors are a part of tier two of the information culture framework and fit in under information related competencies (Oliver & Foscarini, 2014, p.17-18). However, digital literacy was only mentioned as an issue by one participant. As a majority of the questions were focussed on the training programmes and not the competencies of the staff this is not overly surprising. The comment was made in response to question eighteen which specifically asked if there were any factors that had not been mentioned that the participants find challenging when trying to provide training. The participant's response is as follows: "Some staff are not computer literate enough to use the EDRMS, if I hear the question "what is a right mouse button" I know I am doomed..." Information overload was also only identified by one participant "Timing of induction training needs to be reviewed as within the first few days when information overload is an issue..." Information overload is an issue for obvious reasons; if the trainee is overwhelmed by the content they are less likely to retain any new information presented to them. Information related competencies are key factors in providing training in system use and perhaps a shortcoming of this research is that not enough user competency questions were included. Therefore, this area is not able to be investigated further at this stage.

Information culture relates to the values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours that have an influence on how information is used and valued within an organisation (Douglas, 2010, P.307 as cited in Oliver & Foscarini, 2014, p.9). As such the behaviour, attitudes, and habits of staff are a contributing factor to the success of training. If information is not valued or where attitudes are negatively focussed these attributes can create issues when trying to provide training.

The attitude of staff towards information is an important contributing factor to the success of training. The need for training is recognised by information management professionals, but, due to the negative information culture adopted by some individuals, training is not always a success. Kim (2014) discusses the perceived need for training vs the uptake of training provided to college students. In Kim's research she found that while students saw the need for training (78%) a large majority of them (76.1%) did not participate in the training provided (Kim, 2014, p.122). This disparity is somewhat mirrored in the responses of this research. The need for training is recognised by the information management staff and most likely by other employees of the organisation as well, but not by all. And where managers or senior leadership are not supportive or leading by example the task of training can become more difficult.

When a management layer sabotages [information management] by being heard to say that this is all too hard and why can't we just use the C drive like at home, people in that area have poor adoption of information management practices.

A concept that can be seen to be at play here, other than the organisational culture, is workplace politics. Clarke (2003) investigates the ways in which workplace politics influence a particular group of employees. If, like described in the response to question twenty, a manager is negative in their opinion of information management and is vocal about this with their staff workplace politics dictates that the environment will reflect these attitudes. As such information management staff are not only trying to train staff, but in some cases they are also required to attempt to influence and persuade others into seeing the benefits of this training. A participant in the survey noted that: "...changing staff behaviour when they have been here a while is the biggest challenge..." When asked are there any other factors not already mentioned which the participants find challenging, one responded by

saying “...some staff believe their roles are too important to require them to manage their own information and expect this to be performed by minions.”

The organisational culture when negatively focussed on information management can be a detrimental factor in the success of training.

Our biggest problem is the lack of support we receive from our executive and management staff. The majority do not believe that our current system is anything more than a ‘dumping ground’ of information and struggle with using it mainly because they fail to see the significance of using it effectively.

It is part of the responsibility of the trainer to recognise where these negative attitudes exist and combat them. As one participant suggested it is “...important for the staff to be made aware of how having good information management skills would be beneficial to them in the long run.” Shifting the focus of information management from being too hard to being a necessary process that benefits the work of the user is not always an easy task.

The first level of Oliver and Foscarini’s Information Culture Framework pyramid shows the factors of information culture that are extremely difficult to change (2014, p.17). Value accorded to information is a part of the first tier. As witnessed within some of the responses to the survey used for this report, the attitudes and beliefs of staff in relation to the value of information and its management is a factor in why some training is not effective or successful. In other words the “...culture of the organisation does not see IM as that important”. The “Recognition and awareness of the need to manage certain information for the purposes of accountability” (Oliver & Foscarini, 2014, p.18) is recognised by the trainers. The problem then becomes how to convey this importance to others. Training fits into the second tier of the framework as the factors from the first tier inevitably influence the availability and content of what the information management teams are able to provide their organisations (Oliver & Foscarini, 2014, p.18).

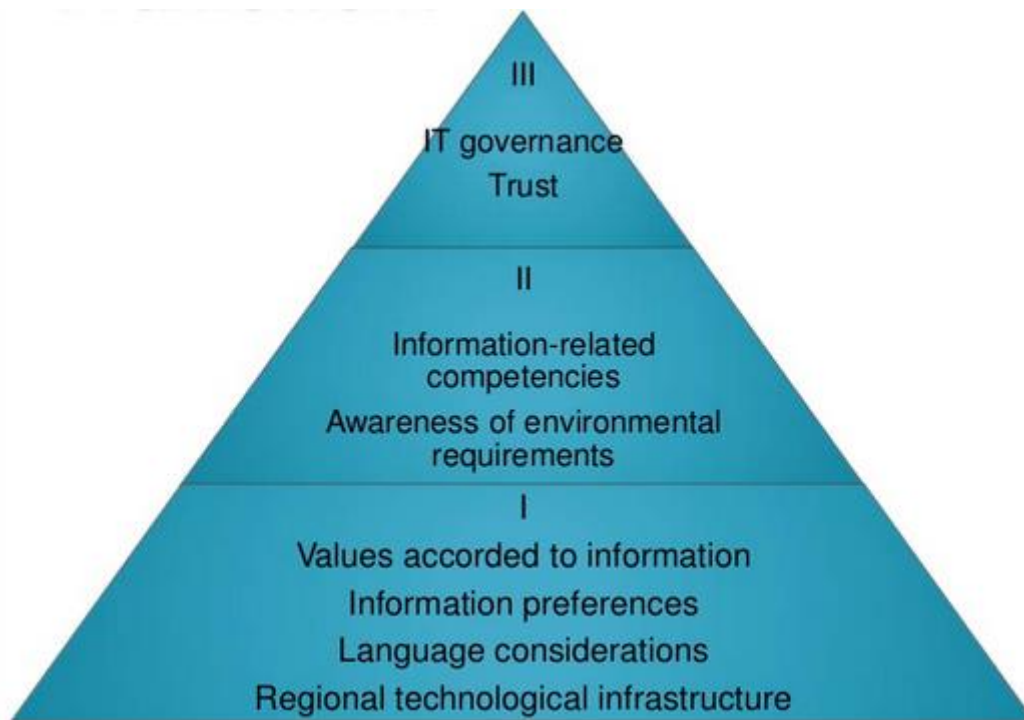


Figure 8, Information Culture Framework, Oliver & Foscarini, 2014, p.17.

Resources

Time, money, staff, and equipment are all essential resources for almost every workplace activity. Resources, or lack thereof, were identified as an area of potential contention when trying to undertake training. Adequate funding is a fairly obvious barrier as money is a key resource for any team.

In our organisation every job has to be accounted for money wise, so the cost of training in document management is not seen as an important part of an employees job, which in turn makes it difficult to conduct on-going training.

Question four of the survey asked participants about which resources were available to their team. The lowest scoring response was adequate funding (28%) followed by adequate staffing (39%). The highest response for this same question (89%) was that 'materials required to carry out day to day activities are available'. So, while the material resources needed to carry out business as usual are there for most of the participants, there is still a lack of necessary resources in regards to staff and funding. One participant stated that: "No

training [is] provided currently in IM topics that really needs to be available to the business. This is due to lack of resources and investment in IM beyond the ECM.” These results are given some explanation in a couple of the responses to question ten which asked participants to explain which training topics are considered the least successful and why. Two participants brought up the issue of resourcing within this section with one stating that “...training needs to be resourced and formally outlined.”

When asked how much time was currently spent training staff in information management the majority of respondents (56%) indicated that only between 1-10 hours per month was spent. Then when asked how often training resources were updated a large majority (83%) indicated that this was only done when business needs dictated. Considering that practices and processes within information management do not change constantly it would be a safe assumption that most training resources would be updated maybe every few years or so. The exception, of course, would be the development and implementation of a new system, such as an ECMS. This would require a large amount of time and training resources to be created and redeveloped. The point in bringing up these two questions in particular is that as time has been identified as a restraint for providing training it is important to differentiate between the time of the information management staff and other employees. If 1-10 hours per month is spent on training and most of the resources do not require updating or additional work then time really should not be a negative factor or barrier to training for the information management staff. So why then is time considered as a challenge? It would appear that this relates back to information culture and the idea that information may not be valued within an organisation. This quote from a participant’s answer in response to question seventeen sums it up nicely: “In a busy organisation everyones day job is providing time pressures, taking any time away to deliver any training is seen by some as an imposition”. If training is not a mandatory requirement employees must be willing to voluntarily give up time from their day to participate in training. And, depending on how information is valued, this task could either be relatively straightforward or rather difficult.

In comparison to survey options aimed toward the culture of the organisation, answers relating to resources received a noticeably lower number of responses. For example, the top joint responses to question seventeen, which asked about challenging factors when

conducting training, related to the culture of the organisation and the lowest response was given to the option 'lack of required resources'. The same is seen with question fifteen; the top two responses related to the culture of the organisation and the lowest responses were received by the statements 'Our team does not have the necessary experience to provide training' and 'Our team does not have the necessary resources to provide training'. Resourcing, while a contributing factor for some participants, appears not to be as big of a challenge as cultural influences.

Successes

In regards to [training] being successful, it is hard to explain as it depends entirely on the individual and how accepting they (and their manager) are of electronic information being important to the organisation. Personally, I find that if the staff understand the importance of considered and organized document management then they are more successful in their training and understanding of document management.

Lack of support from management was identified as a barrier when trying to provide training. Where the support is positive and both the organisation and management understand the benefits of good information management the training provided is viewed as being more successful. This is reflected in several of the comments received.

Vocal back-up from top management about the importance of information management has been key...

The best results are gained when the top two levels of an organisation lead by example and undertake the training themselves and communicate down the expectation that this is important and is not optional.

As well as having the support of management, advocating the benefits of good information management practices was identified as a contributing factor to success. Showing the trainees ways in which good practices would make their jobs easier was mentioned as a reason why certain topics were considered more successful; "Everyone is pressed for time

and a clear demonstration of how good document management practices will aid them in information discovery later on, and how to perform it quickly and effective[ly] – these make for good training outcomes”. Another method mentioned was enabling staff to, not only help themselves, but to help others within their area through the use of system ‘super users’ to “act as positive role models for best practice and act as a point of contact to get feedback”.

Of the training techniques provided one on one training had been used by all of the participants. One on one training was also the preferred method by participants with it being ranked first (most effective) in question thirteen. It is safe to say that this training technique is viewed as being successful by the survey participants. This was an interesting result as it directly conflicted with the results of Wright’s (2013) study which surveyed the employees of a government agency, not just the IM staff, and asked them among other things which method of training they prefer to receive. One on one training received the lowest score with only 8% of Wright’s participants favouring this method (2013, p.22). It would be an interesting area for further research if employees from within these same eight organisations were asked about preferred training methods to see if the results of this study correlate with the preferences of the potential trainees.

Limitations

A limitation of this research was that it had a negative focus. The focus was on finding out what was going wrong rather than what, in particular, worked well. By providing an ‘other’ text box option it was hoped participants would have an opportunity to express any additional views they may have.

The questions did not fully address the issues of trainees attitudes and experience levels. For example, no questions were asked or answers offered that a training technique could be less successful because the receiver does not possess the necessary skills, i.e. is not digitally literate.

A further limitation was that in some instances the link to the survey was provided to the team leader/manager who was then asked to distribute it amongst relevant staff rather than the link being provided directly to potential participants.

Conclusion

This research has identified several factors which could be described as barriers or issues when developing and implementing information management training programmes. The organisational culture, behaviours, and attitudes of employees can have both a negative and positive effect on training. Where the information and organisational culture are negative, training is less successful. The correlation between positive support from upper management and a more successful training programme is supported by the responses of the survey participants. Many noted that the influences of higher management had an effect on the attitudes of staff towards information management and training.

Resources are an underlying factor to the success of training. Where the required resources are not available difficulties are experienced when trying to provide adequate training. The research has shown that, while resourcing is an issue for some, the predominant factor for most participants related back to the 'people problem'.

This research has identified some of the factors that can be difficult to overcome when developing and implementing training programmes. The implications for practice are that in order to deliver successful training the information management team needs to become fully aware of their work environment. What are the attitudes of staff, management, and the organisation in general towards information management? Where the view is positive work must be continued to ensure that this is maintained over time and that attitudes do not sour. If a system fails or information is lost it is easy for staff to lose faith in information management processes. The attitude towards information management in some cases can be linked to the information management team itself, so a positive culture must be maintained. Where the organisational and information culture are negatively focussed the information management team must attempt influence these attitudes in a positive capacity.

Areas for future research include further investigating into how to overcome the challenges identified in this report. How can an information management team overcome negative information and organisational cultures? Changing attitudes is regarded as being quite difficult. Further research into how to successfully change such attitudes would be beneficial to those who are, at present, faced with a negative information culture in the workplace.

Research into the view points of the users (the trainees) of organisations on what works and what does not along with a recorded perspective of their attitude towards information management would be beneficial. In this research only the trainer's perspective is examined. Lastly research into the competencies of the users and how this affects training ought to be explored further. For example, how much do information related competencies affect training and how much of a problem is it when users are lacking? Further research into how to combat these kinds of issues would be beneficial to the information management profession.

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Firstly thank you to my supervisor Gillian Oliver for all of your help and support. This would not have been a possibility for me without your encouragement.

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Amy Carnie



Word Count: 9,907

Appendix

1. Survey Information Sheet:

Survey Information Sheet

Research Project Title: An investigation into the barriers and issues experienced by trainers when establishing and undertaking records management training programmes

Researcher: Amy Carnie, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington

As part of the completion of my Master of Information Studies, this study is designed to investigate any barriers and issues faced by information management professionals when developing and providing training programmes to other employees within their local government organisation.

I am inviting information management professionals working within local government organisations to participate in this research.

Victoria University requires, and has granted, approval from the School's Human Ethics Committee.

Participation is voluntary, and you will not be identified personally in any written report produced as a result of this research. Anonymity is also assured for your organisation, which includes any possible publication in academic conferences and journals. All material collected will be kept confidential, and will be viewed only by myself and my supervisor Dr Gillian Oliver, Information Studies Programmes Director in the School of Information Management. The research report will be submitted for marking to the School of Information Management, and subsequently deposited in the University Library. Should any participant wish to withdraw from the project, they may do so at any point before they have submitted the survey.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at carnieamy@myvuw.ac.nz or telephone [REDACTED], or you may contact my supervisor Dr Gillian Oliver, Information Studies Programmes Director, at gillian.oliver@vuw.ac.nz or telephone 04 463-7437.

Amy Carnie

2. Email sent to local government information/help desks:

Hello,

My name is Amy and I am a master's student at Victoria University of Wellington. I am in the process of undertaking a research project on the topic of records management training within local government organisations.

Could you please provide me with the contact information for your Records manager / Information manager or whoever within your organisation is responsible for managing information/records. I would like to contact them to discuss whether or not they would like to be a participant in my research.

Kind regards,
Amy Carnie

3. Email sent to information/records manager:

Hello _____,

My name is Amy and I am completing my Master of Information Studies degree at Victoria University of Wellington. I am in the process of undertaking a research project on the topic of records management training within local government organisations.

I would like to send a short survey to you and your team members to fill out. The survey is anonymous so you and your organisation would not be identified in any way. It would require maybe around 20minutes of your time.

My research question is: What are the barriers and issues experienced by trainers when establishing and undertaking records management training programmes?

I know a lot of surveys get sent around but I would really appreciate it if you would volunteer to be a part of my research and provide me with contact information for your team so that I can send them the survey as well. Again it is voluntary so if I send the survey to one of your team members and they do not want to participate then they are not required to.

The survey will be being sent out hopefully this week once I have identified participants. You will be able to request a copy of the report once it has been completed.

Also please feel free to ask any questions you like.

Kind regards,

Amy Carnie

4. Email sent to survey participants:

Hello,

As part of the completion of my Master of Information Studies, this study is designed to investigate any barriers and issues faced by information management professionals when developing and providing training programmes to other employees within their local government organisation.

I am inviting information management professionals working within local government organisations to participate in this research.

Participation is voluntary, and you will not be identified personally in any written report produced as a result of this research, nor will your organisation be identified. Should any participant wish to withdraw from the project, they may do so at any point before they have submitted the survey.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at carnieamy@myvuw.ac.nz or telephone [REDACTED], or you may contact my supervisor Dr Gillian Oliver, Information Studies Programmes Director, at gillian.oliver@vuw.ac.nz or telephone 04 463-7437.

Below is the survey link, thank you for taking the time to participate in this research.

http://vuw.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_3w4KeUo7G9Ks0a9

Kind regards,

Amy Carnie

5. Reminder email sent out to participants:

Hello,

http://vuw.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_3w4KeUo7G9Ks0a9

This is a reminder that the survey will be closing shortly, and this is your last opportunity to participate if you have not done so already.

As part of the completion of my Master of Information Studies, this study is designed to investigate any barriers and issues faced by information management professionals when developing and providing training programmes to other employees within their local government organisation.

I am inviting information management professionals working within local government organisations to participate in this research.

Participation is voluntary, and you will not be identified personally in any written report produced as a result of this research, nor will your organisation be identified. Should any participant wish to withdraw from the project, they may do so at any point before they have submitted the survey.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at carnieamy@myvuw.ac.nz or telephone [REDACTED], or you may contact my supervisor Dr Gillian Oliver, Information Studies Programmes Director, at gillian.oliver@vuw.ac.nz or telephone 04 463-7437.

Kind regards,
Amy Carnie

6. Information management training survey:

Section 1

Q1 How aware are the rest of the organisation about your team and what you do?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Q2 How many staff are employed by your organisation?

- 0-500 (1)
- 500-1000 (2)
- 1000-1500 (3)
- 1500-2000 (4)
- 2000+ (5)

Q3 How many staff are employed specifically in records management roles?

- 0-5 (1)
- 5-10 (2)
- 10+ (3)

Q4 Which of the following resources are available to your team?

- Dedicated information management staff (1)
- Adequate staffing (2)
- Staff development training and/or education opportunities (3)
- Adequate funding (4)
- Materials required to carry out day to day activities are available (5)

Section 2

Q5 How much time do you currently invest into training employees outside of your team in information management?

- 1-10 hours per month (1)
- 10-20 hours per month (2)
- 20+ hours per month (3)
- Training is provided on an adhoc basis (4)
- Training is not currently provided (5)

Q6 What kind of resources do you use during training?

- PowerPoint (1)
- Handouts or cheat sheets (2)
- Visual demonstrations (3)
- Practical exercises (4)
- Games e.g. quizzes, crosswords (5)
- Prizes (6)
- Others (7) _____

Q7 How often do you update the resources?

- Quarterly (1)
- Yearly (2)
- Whenever business needs dictate (3)
- We don't update these resources (4)

Section 3

Q8 In which of the following areas do you currently provide training or guidance to employees outside of your team?

- Physical filing (1)
- Off site storage (2)
- EDRMS and/or ECMS system use (3)
- Shared drive use (4)
- Legislative requirements e.g. Public Records Act, Official Information Act, Privacy Act (5)
- Naming conventions (6)
- Digitisation (7)
- Archiving (8)
- Information Security (9)
- Email (10)
- What is and or isn't a record (11)
- Other (12) _____

Q9 Please explain which training topics are considered more successful and why?

Q10 Please explain which training topics are considered the least successful and why?

Section 4

Q11 Which of the following training techniques do you currently use or have tried in the past?

- Online training module (1)
- Paper handout / guidance manual (2)
- One on one (3)
- Small group sessions (1-10 people) (4)
- Large group sessions (10+ people) (5)
- Other (6) _____

Q12 Are there any other techniques you use that are not listed above?

Q13 Of these techniques please rank them in order of most to least effective (1=most, 6=least)

- _____ Online training module (1)
- _____ Paper handout / guidance manual (2)
- _____ One on one (3)
- _____ Small group sessions (1-10 people) (4)
- _____ Large group sessions (10+ people) (5)
- _____ Other (6)

Section 5

Q14 What factors do you think contributed to the success of the techniques you ranked most effective?

- The recipients understand the need for good recordkeeping and want to learn the correct processes and procedures (1)
- Incorporating user feedback into the training programme (2)
- The training programme responds to the current needs of the recipients (3)
- Training programme responds to the current needs of the organisation (4)
- The Information Management team has a good rapport within the organisation (5)
- The organisational and user benefits are clearly understood and the recipients are willing to learn (6)
- The recipients are interested in learning the correct processes and procedures for information management (7)
- Training provides the recipients with the correct processes in which to carry out their day to day jobs, which benefits the recipient (8)
- Other (9) _____

Q15 What factors do you think contributed to the success of the techniques you ranked least effective?

- Information management is seen as being 'too hard' within the organisation (1)
- Employees are not interested in information management (2)
- Employees do not see the benefits of good information management to themselves or to the organisation (3)
- The current training materials / programme provided is out of date and not useful (4)
- Our team does not have the necessary resources to provide training (5)
- Our team does not have the necessary experience to provide training (6)
- Other (7) _____

Q16 How do you measure the effectiveness of the training programmes you provide?

- Participant feedback forms (1)
- Email survey (2)
- Directly following up with participants (3)
- Monitoring systems and processes for errors (4)
- Picking up areas of weakness and providing re-training where necessary (5)
- We do not have any current methods of measuring the effectiveness of our training programmes (6)
- Other (7) _____

Section 6

Q17 Of the following which would you consider the most challenging factors when conducting training?

- Lack of awareness of information management and its importance (1)
- Lack of awareness of the information management team (2)
- The employees are not interested in information management and show a lack of willingness to learn (3)
- The culture of the organisation is not supportive of information management (4)
- Lack of required resources (5)
- Other (6) _____

Q18 Are there any factors not mentioned above which you find challenging when trying to provide training?

Q19 Are there any factors not already mentioned that have worked particularly well that you would like to comment on?

Q20 Are there any further comments you wish to make about training staff within your organisation?