



Turning Vans to Training and HR Advantage

By: **MIKE RIMMER**, Communication-IT Manager. ABK

Date: July 9 2005

We all know that training is beneficial to a workforce. Hardly rocket science. It's all very well in theory, but taking staff to training centres is timely and expensive, and having key staff absent from the organisation can have a negative business impact.

So how do we equip staff with the necessary IT skills for an increasingly e-based business world, without the cost, complication and disruption to business continuity associated with off-site training?

IT on Wheels

One solution is to use a mobile computing resource centre - on-demand IT on wheels, right to your door. Such satellite vans bring a wireless network, broadband connectivity and all the hardware required for an in-house training session, without any of the hassle of installing a specific computing infrastructure or removing it after use. Wire- and cable-free, a mobile computing solution such as this can be taken anywhere, and custom-designed to meet the training requirements of individual companies.

Designed for maximum mobility and usability, the satellite van brings all the technology needed in a corporate environment directly to your door. The mobile units come equipped with multi-media laptops, a range of digital equipment, scanners and networked Broadband Internet access. Simply by pressing four buttons, the user can initialise the server and lock it in to a fixed signal for consistent Broadband and unique bandwidth access.

The 100 base Ethernet connectivity is ideal for a host of business functions, with DSL/T1 digital line for 2-way real-time transmission of video, voice, IP and data via satellite for video-conferencing and other activities – an ideal means of delivering guest speeches remotely or hosting a live question and answer session with the company CEO.

Training - No Strings Attached

Simplicity and functionality are key advantages of a mobile computing solution such as this. Operating on a wireless local area network, there are no wires trailing around the site and staff have access to the server from wherever is convenient for them to work. This flexibility means that organisers can deliver more innovative and varied forms of training. Staff are not restricted to sitting in the ICT suite for long spells, but can instead benefit from tailor-made and flexible training programs, which can take place in the actual working environments where they will be needed.

Research by US analysts Gartner suggests that poorly trained staff need on average 300 - 600% more support than trained staff, making on average 50% more errors and taking more than four times longer to

complete a task than a trained colleague. The benefits of a convenient, on-demand training solution speak for themselves.

The van represents a cost-effective and time-saving approach to company training. An on-demand service, the van comes directly to your door, when you need it, avoiding lost man hours travelling to a training venue and ensuring that key staff remain on-site to deal with pressing business needs. The van also removes the need to invest and manage expensive hardware solutions – as the resources are maintained and managed by the provider.

Delivering the Remotest of Remote Access

Look north of the border and take a leaf out of the book of the Young Scot organisation, which is using a mobile satellite van to take computing facilities and Internet access to the Highlands and islands, providing ICT training and web access to communities in some of the remotest corners of the country.

There are no cyber cafes or home broadband connection in the small fishing villages and rural communities on the Isle of Skye or the Outer Hebrides. Young Scot has set out to challenge the status quo, providing a truly mobile computer resource and helping to bridge the digital divide.

The organisation is providing a computing infrastructure that would otherwise be economically unviable to install. The van has removed many of the obstacles that previously restricted access to Internet on the islands. A truly mobile set-up, the satellite van does not need cables or wiring to be installed, taking away the organisational headache of preparing for the technology to be installed and of disposing of the solution afterwards.

Effectively a plug and play mobile ICT classroom, the satellite van provides instant IT in a box, delivering high-speed Internet access and the latest information on health, entertainment, politics and the arts. Simply pressing four buttons creates a wireless network which can support up to 250 users, wherever they are, be it in a local community hall on the Western Isles or a village school in the rugged expanse of the Highlands.

Mobile computing solutions such as this enable organisations to deliver on-site and in-situ training solutions, which simultaneously eliminate the inconvenience of having key staff off-site for extended periods of time whilst also delivering flexible training solutions exactly where they will actually be needed in an organisation.