

Members: [Log in](#) | Not Registered? [Register](#) for free extra services.

Boston Business Journal

Choose Another City:

Site | News | Companies | Jobs

Keywords [Search Archive](#)
[HOME](#) [NEWS](#) [SMALL BUSINESS](#) [SALES & MKTG](#) [REAL ESTATE](#) [EVENTS](#) [COMMUNITY](#) [CAREERS](#) [CITY GUIDE](#) [MORE TOPICS](#)
[Local tech news from MHT](#) [Book of Lists](#) [Subscribe - 4 Free Issues](#)
IN DEPTH: OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT[Boston](#) > [Print Edition](#) > [Industries](#) > [Technology](#)[Subscribe to Boston Business Journal](#)

Friday, November 3, 2006

Software trainers don't foresee a return to glory days

Boston Business Journal - by [Chuck Green](#) Special to the Journal
[Print](#) [Email](#) [Reprints](#) [RSS Feeds](#) [Add to DeLicio.us](#) [Digg This](#) [Comments](#)

A few years ago, Chip Mann was a go-to man.

"I was offered work 10 times a week," said the software trainer. "There were a lot of big training companies and I'd get requests that would basically equate to every day of the week."

Then came 2000-2001 and the dot-com bust, and the "whole industry went belly up. Companies cut IT budgets, so they weren't training as much. A lot of training companies went out of business."

The 54-year-old Townsend resident is also a Microsoft Access developer, which helped his marketability -- somewhat. "I got calls here and there, but it was like one day a month."

Things improved a bit more for him over the past year -- he teaches about seven or eight days a month now -- but while Mann and others say action seem to be picking up, they don't expect the software training field to see anything to compare to its dot-com heyday anytime soon.

Kiersten Kaye of Boston sold her services as a freelance software trainer from 1998 to 2001 because the market was ripe. Since then, Kaye, 37, has worked in-house human resources roles for both an international high-tech consulting firm and a high-tech public relations agency. "At this juncture, I am conducting a job search for a manager/director level role specializing in employee development and retention."

Evaluating the software training market from a human resources perspective, Kaye, who was a full-time software trainer for an IBM subsidiary from 1996 to 1998, is only mildly optimistic about the ability of the industry to restore itself to its heyday state.

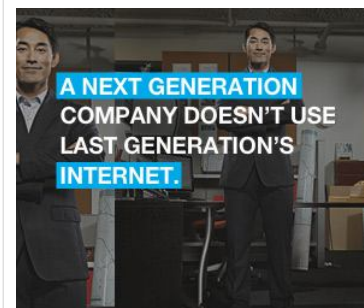
"As an HR person, if I need my people trained, I am going to investigate the most cost-effective options. That generally means I will purchase an off-the-shelf training solution like Web-based or computer-based training. Organizations that hire trainers to deliver training, nine out of 10 times, bring in the trainer for the value-add -- the warm fuzzy -- because they have the budget and want to ensure their employees receive individual care and attention in the learning process," noted Kaye.

Elizabeth Brown, founder of Softeach Inc., a national software training and consulting firm based in Newton, is somewhat more confident about the market for software training.

"I think the demand for computer/software training is growing," said Brown. "The demand for on-site customized training has grown tremendously. Companies need to increase productivity to stay ahead of competition by utilizing their technology to the max with computer training."

However, her outlook for public classroom training isn't nearly as upbeat. "It has definitely peaked. People are frustrated when classes get canceled, and there's self discipline involved in online training. The only way companies have gotten their people to do online training is to make it mandatory. I think online training does better in a university environment, because they combine it with on-site, face to face classes."

Sid Lejfer, president of Waltham-based Harvest Solutions, a customer relations management firm, beats the drum for online training. "There's a big cost benefit for clients; they don't have to fly people in or do regional training. Today you really can do it anytime, anywhere, anyplace. That being said, it's still important to have face-to-face



Search for Jobs powered by onTargetJobs

[View Boston Jobs - 1610 jobs today](#)

Small Business Center

Successful profiles, funding news and advice related to small business

[Visit the Small Business Center](#)

Sales & Marketing

Sponsored by **Hoovers®**

Research companies and get powerful sales tools to help you succeed

[Visit the Sales & Marketing Center](#)

Commercial Real Estate

Stay up to date on the latest news from within the commercial real estate industry

[Visit Commercial Real Estate](#)

Beating the Recession

News, analysis and ideas that defy the odds and the times

[Visit our Beating the Recession page](#)

LARGE-IMPACT DIGITAL SIGNAGE

NEC DIGITAL SOLUTIONS SMALL-TO-MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESS WHITE PAPER


Email Alerts

Get the latest local business news delivered to your inbox. [Sign up Today!](#)

Featured Boston Jobs

- [Sports Program Director](#) - Amherst Skating Club
- [Director, Research Computing Services](#) - Harvard Business School
- [Associate Director/Director of Clinical Operations](#) -

powered by **HelpWanted Boston.com**

between the student and instructor."

As a former software trainer, Pamela Conway, director of business development for Wakefield-based CompuWorks Systems, a computer training company, said the best method depends largely on the needs of students. "I've always liked classroom time with students. I think there's value in both. I think there are things companies have to consider when looking at both types of training, like the students themselves. What are their expectations and what training environment will make them successful?"

To succeed in the market, Conway says, it's important for software trainers to be "strong in more than just the core desktop applications." She said they must have a firm command of applications like Microsoft Project, Microsoft VBA, Adobe Flash and DreamWeaver and other similar higher-end applications.

"With Office 2007 on the brink of hitting the market," she noted, "someone who knows SharePoint from enduser all way up to the technical side to development, and has the ability to install SharePoint will be huge, especially with the push Microsoft's making with SharePoint."

Given the ability of many today to work with software programs, Tony Holowitz, owner of computer training company John Anthony Group in Arlington, believes the need for trainers might be somewhat diminished.

"When I started my business, people were learning the basics, but they're more experienced now. Although many software programs can do lots of things, people fall into their niche and don't go much further. In most cases, that's adequate."

Print Email Yahoo! Buzz

READER COMMENTS

(0) Comments

You must be logged in to add a comment. Please [Login](#) or [Register](#).

Contact the Editor Need Assistance? More Latest News →

More News Headlines Popular News Stories

Related Industry News

- [Spansion files for Ch. 11 bankruptcy protection](#) [Austin]
- [Facebook investor details why bid for Twitter fell through](#) [Greensboro/Winston-Salem]
- [Bombardier to build electric commuter trains](#) [Pittsburgh]
- [Hyperformix completes \\$3.8M funding round](#) [Austin]
- [ICT Group rejects Aegis buyout offer](#) [Philadelphia]

Latest News

- [Bingham cuts 39 lawyers and staff](#)
- [Marblehead investment adviser charged](#)
- [New York investor buys 7% Cendela stake](#)
- [Spire fails to regain Nasdaq compliance](#)
- [Human Capital: People on the move, Mar. 9](#)

Business Pulse Survey
When will things get better?



CITY GUIDE SPOTLIGHT - BOSTON



- [Attractions in Boston](#)
- [Cocktails in Boston](#)
- [Hotels in Boston](#)
- [Restaurants in Boston](#)

EXTRA

Best sports teams

We rank the best sports teams -- by both records and receipts.

- [Survey: What is your favorite sport to watch?](#)

Business Service Company

- [Senior Sales Operations Analyst](#) - LogMeIn, Inc.
- [President and CEO](#) - PowerOptions, Inc. Massachusetts Health and Educational Facilities Authority

[Search Jobs](#) | [Post Resume](#) | [View More](#)

[Post a Job](#) | [Feature a Job](#)



FEATURED RESOURCE **POST A JOB**

[Post a Job & Receive a FREE Premium Salary Report](#)
Post a job online with bizjournals.com and get a PayScale Salary Report - FREE (a \$99 value)! Report contains:

- Salary & Hourly Rates
- Bonus & Benefits
- Skills, Experience & Education

[Click here to redeem this offer](#)

Boston Real Estate powered by [LoopNet](#)

Featured Property
Rate: \$22.00-\$22.00
Building Size: 37,500 SF
Use Type: Lease

→ [More Boston Real Estate](#)

Boston Business Directory
Massachusetts Articles

Search Press Releases

[View all Boston Press Releases](#)
[View ALL Press Releases](#)

Search by Company, Organization, or Keyword

Content provided by PR Newswire. [Learn more about this service.](#)