

5 Ways to train employees on Microsoft Office. Which one should you choose?

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Category: Technology made easy

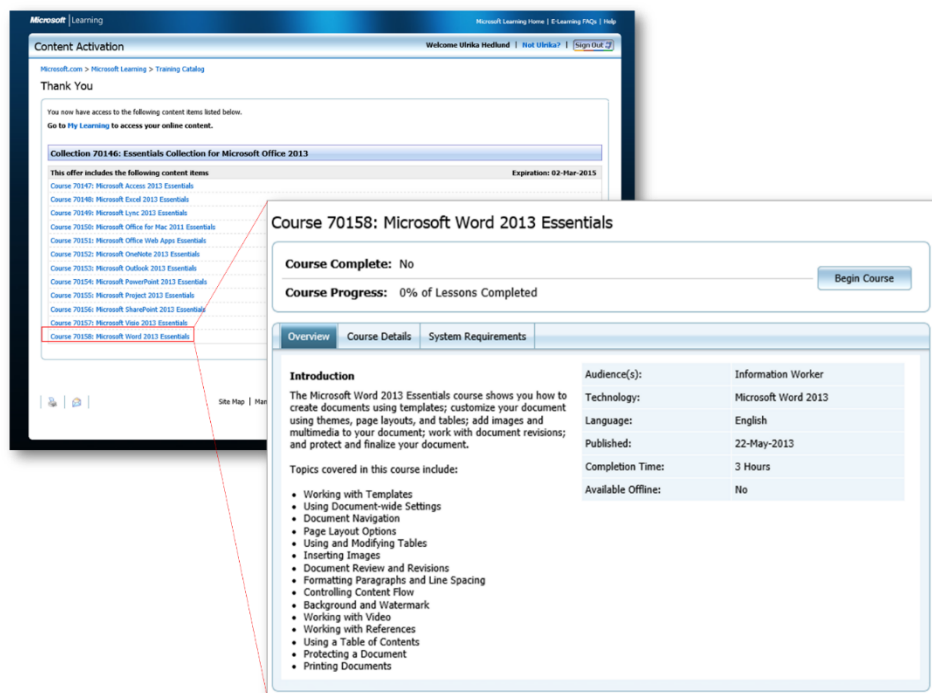
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Source: <http://www.businessproductivity.com/5-ways-to-train-employees-on-microsoft-office>

Employees in most organizations are expected to know how to analyze data in Excel, create a presentation in PowerPoint and write a report in Word. Even though Microsoft Office is used by business professionals for numerous hours a day, very few employees have actually been trained on how to use Microsoft Office. Here lies an enormous potential for organizations to increase employee productivity enabling employees to save time and produce higher quality work. The question is how do you train employees on something they have been using for years (albeit earlier versions) and that everyone uses differently? How do organizations planning to roll out the latest version of Microsoft Office, Microsoft Office 2013, go about training their employees? There are a number of options available for organizations today, some traditional and others, that have emerged recently fueled by requirements from today's YouTube savvy, impatient workforce.

1. Microsoft's e-learning courses

When organizations purchase licenses for their employees to use Microsoft Office they have the option to include e-learning from Microsoft as part of the volume license agreement (through the [software assurance benefits](#)). The e-learning catalog contains online courses on each Microsoft Office product, for example [Course 70158 "Microsoft Word 2013 Essentials"](#). This course, which is three hours in length, walks the user through common tasks like working with templates, inserting images, working with references, etc.



The screenshot shows the Microsoft Learning interface. The top part displays a 'Content Activation' page with a 'Thank You' message and a list of available courses. A red box highlights 'Course 70158: Microsoft Word 2013 Essentials'. A callout window provides detailed information for this course.

Course 70158: Microsoft Word 2013 Essentials

Course Complete: No Begin Course

Course Progress: 0% of Lessons Completed

Introduction
The Microsoft Word 2013 Essentials course shows you how to create documents using templates; customize your document using themes, page layouts, and tables; add images and multimedia to your document; work with document revisions; and protect and finalize your document.

Topics covered in this course include:

- Working with Templates
- Using Document-wide Settings
- Document Navigation
- Page Layout Options
- Using and Modifying Tables
- Inserting Images
- Document Review and Revisions
- Formatting Paragraphs and Line Spacing
- Controlling Content Flow
- Background and Watermark
- Working with Video
- Working with References
- Using a Table of Contents
- Protecting a Document
- Printing Documents

Audience(s):	Information Worker
Technology:	Microsoft Word 2013
Language:	English
Published:	22-May-2013
Completion Time:	3 Hours
Available Offline:	No

Comment: The benefit of these e-learning courses is that they are included as part of Microsoft's volume license software assurance package at no extra cost. The downside is that they are lengthy and feature-centric. It is difficult for organizations to persuade their employees to take these online courses.

2. Microsoft Office courses through "all you can eat" training providers

In addition to the e-learning courses provided through Microsoft Learning, there are a number of other online training providers who offer Microsoft Office courses as part of their online course library. One such example is Lynda.com where organizations can sign their employees up for a monthly or annual subscription to access their full library of online courses. In the Lynda.com course library you have courses on Microsoft Office applications that range from one hour to ten hours, for beginners as well as advanced users.

The screenshot displays the Lynda.com interface for the course "Word 2013 Essential Training with David Rivers". The top navigation bar includes "Subject", "Software", "Author", and "New courses" menus, along with a search bar. Below the navigation, a banner reads "Start learning with our library of video tutorials taught by experts." with a "Get started" button. The main content area features a video player showing a Microsoft Word document titled "Company Bio" with a "Watch course introduction" overlay. To the right of the video player is a table of contents with the following items:

Item	Duration
Introduction	5m 47s
Welcome	1m 7s
Using the exercise files	40s
1. Getting Started with Word 2013	29m 15s
Opening, closing, and reading documents	4m 32s
Using the new bookmark feature	2m 19s
Creating new documents with templates	6m 5s
Saving documents	3m 41s
Opening and editing PDF documents	3m 5s
Printing documents	3m 50s
2. Editing Text	19m 22s
Inserting new text	2m 19s
Selecting text with the mouse or keyboard	2m 45s
Rearranging text with Cut, Copy, and Paste	4m 0s
Finding and replacing text	6m 13s
Undoing and redoing actions	3m 5s
3. Formatting Text	19m 51s
Introduction to fonts	5m 44s
Choosing the right font and font style	6m 37s
Changing text case	2m 27s
Adding pizzazz with special text effects	5m 3s
4. Using Paragraph Formatting	21m 35s

Below the table of contents, the course details are listed: "Word 2013 Essential Training", "5h 9m", "Appropriate for all", "Jan 29, 2013", "Viewed by 14,944 members in 121 countries. 9 members currently watching". A description follows: "Start building better documents with Microsoft Word. In this course, author David Rivers teaches you the basics of creating, editing, and formatting documents in Word 2013. Discover how to leverage templates and building blocks to create a stylish document with instant purpose; collaborate with other writers and editors; create numbered and bulleted lists; and work with tables. Plus, learn to automate these tasks with macros, and use the proofing tools in Word to check spelling and grammar and more." Topics include: "Creating new documents", "Saving documents and document versions", "Editing PDFs in Word", "Cutting, copying, and pasting text", "Finding and replacing text", "Undoing mistakes", "Adjusting paragraph and page formatting", "Applying themes and styles to documents", "Illustrating with pictures, shapes, and clip art", "Creating and saving macros and Quick Parts", "Checking spelling and grammar", and "Tracking changes and inserting comments". Subjects listed are "Business", "Productivity", and "Computer Skills (Windows)". Software listed are "Word Processing", "Teacher Tools", and "Education". Student Tools are also available. Software listed are "Office", "Word", and "Office 365". The author is "David Rivers".

Comment: The advantage of Lynda.com is that the training is taught by an expert in the subject and that the courses are very comprehensive. The downside is that the current Microsoft Office courses are very feature-centric and might not appeal to business professionals who already know how to use Microsoft Office. Another downside is that you have to subscribe to the full course library – you can't purchase the rights only to Microsoft Office courses.

3. Stand-alone Microsoft Office courses through training platforms

Organizations and individuals can purchase stand-alone Microsoft Office courses through course platforms such as [Udemy](#), [OpenSesame](#) and [BizSnack](#). Here you can select to purchase only the courses you are interested in. Organizations wishing to purchase courses in larger volume for their employees can get attractive discounts. There are a number of course providers that offer Microsoft Office courses through these platforms. Companies like [Infinite Skills](#) and [Simon Sez IT](#) provide traditional courses that walk users through how to use the products like using the Ribbon and editing and saving documents. [Business Productivity](#) offers scenario-based courses that show users how the products can be used in real life to effectively perform common business scenarios like writing a resume in Word or taking effective meeting minutes in OneNote.

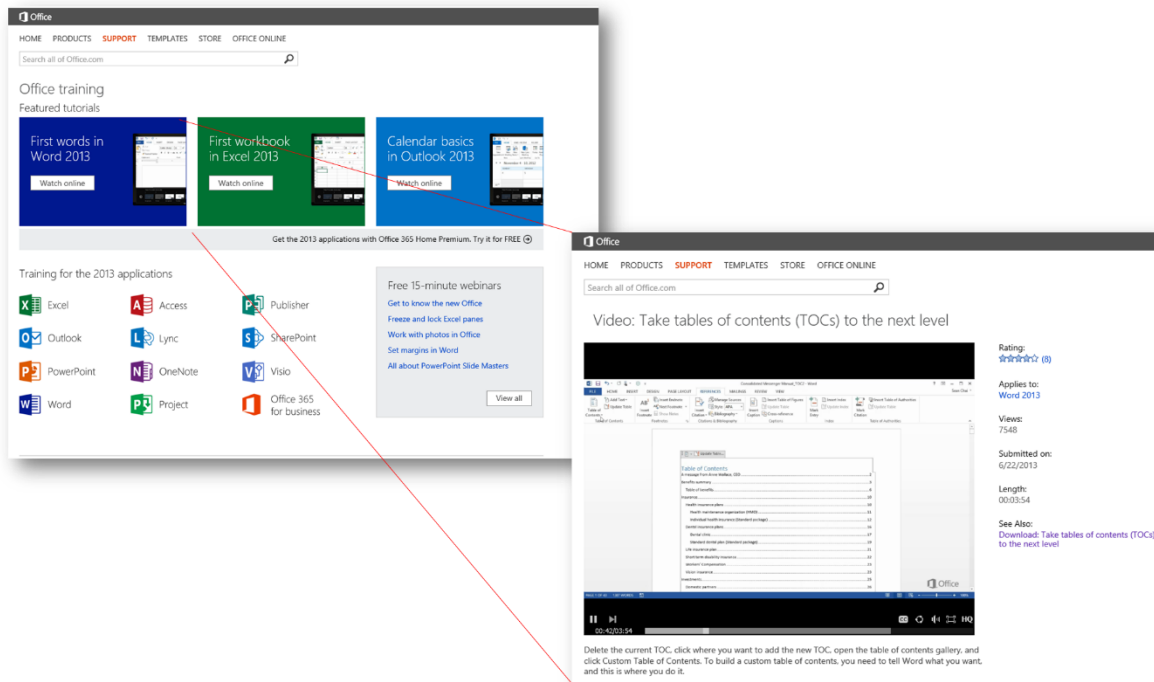


Comment: The benefit with these course platforms is that you can purchase only the courses you are interested in. The various course providers offer different capabilities as an added value for their students. Udemy for instance enables you to download courses offline on your iPad/iPhone or Android device, post completed course certificates to social networks and set up a unique Udemy site with selected courses for your organization. Bizsnack have included gamification in their platform enabling students to earn points and badges. The downside to some of these platforms is the sheer number of courses, there is just too much to choose from making it difficult to quality assure the content. (This is where BizSnack is different since they have pre-qualified their content and only provide courses from a selected number of course publishers/instructors).

4. Microsoft online video tutorials

Lately Microsoft have begun to publish short video-based tutorials on the [Office.com](#) web site. These video tutorials are about 3 minutes in length and cover common tasks performed in Microsoft Office. The video tutorials cover Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced tasks and

can be viewed online or downloaded as a PowerPoint presentation with the videos included. Organizations can freely use these tutorials to educate their employees.



Comment: The benefit of these videos is that they are free and short and show users how to perform common tasks. The downside is that they are very feature-centric and not comprehensive.

5. Scenario-based training videos through corporate Intranets

Organizations looking for a new, modern way to increase employee productivity and use of Microsoft Office, can provide their employees with scenario-based training videos accessible through the corporate Intranet. [GetSharpVideos](#) is a video collection provided by [Business Productivity](#) containing 10 minute "Scenario"-based videos and 1 minute "How-to" videos that showcase how to effectively perform common business scenarios using Microsoft Office. The training videos combine workplace best practices with effective use of Microsoft Office. Here employees can search their Intranet and find the training video they need when they need it.



Comment: The benefit of GetSharpVideos is that the training videos are short and impactful, and instead of showing features, they show how Microsoft Office can be used in real life business scenarios. This makes the videos attractive to business professionals who already know how to use Microsoft Office, but are interested to know how to get the best use of Microsoft Office. The downside is that implementing GetSharpVideos might be more complex since it requires IT involvement to publish the videos through the corporate Intranet.

Which one should you choose?

When you are selecting which option to choose you need to consider numerous factors. How knowledgeable are your employees? What is your budget? What is the culture within your organization? In many cases you will probably need to combine different training offerings. For instance, if you have new employees who have never used Microsoft Word before, then a 3 hour course that walks through the features of the product might be necessary. However, if the majority of your workforce already know how to use Microsoft Office, short, scenario-based videos that show how newer versions of Microsoft Office can effectively be used in day to day business scenarios might be a better option.