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Dos and Don'ts: Workplace Internet and E-Mail

So, everyone at your company now has access to the Internet and e-mail. Great! Now make sure it stays that way, by following a few simple "DOs and DON'Ts."

THE DOs

DO provide all employees with training about the best and most efficient use of e-mail and Internet searching-you want to get the most out of your investment.

DO make rules about Internet and e-mail use-prohibit or limit personal Internet use and e-mail correspondence, for example. A clear, written policy will go a long way toward preventing abuses.

DO educate employees about sharing financial or credit information only at secure sites.

DO make sure your employees know why they have Internet access-it should become a tool to do their jobs better, not a hindrance or a distraction.

DO create good policies and procedures both for retaining important documents and for destroying outdated or sensitive data.

DO designate an employee or a department to be in charge of technical problems with the Internet-your employees shouldn't waste their time trying to fix problems they aren't trained to fix.

DO protect confidential and sensitive e-mail content by managing your in- and out-boxes or by installing encryption software.

THE DON'Ts

DON'T allow electronic mail to replace written memoranda about important issues or face-to-face meetings with your staff.

DON'T spy on your employees-give them passwords and respect their privacy. But make sure they know that their computers, including the contents, belong to the company.

DON'T let an e-mail virus destroy your data. Make sure there is a system for monitoring such viruses, and keep critical data backed up or duplicated.

DON'T allow employees to access pornography or other offensive material at work-you are responsible if a hostile work environment results.

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