WeChat or QQ Groups for Professional Training and Discussion

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Abstract. To facilitate on-the-job training of hi-tech, high-caliber and highly-educated personnel, this paper discusses the establishment of WeChat or QQ groups for professional training and discussion (“WeChat/ QQ groups” or “the groups” for short), including determination of topics, selection of group master and group members, the mechanism of interaction, the frequency of information release, the ratio of professional release to non-professional release, taboos, inappropriate contents, matters needing attention, and two relevant cases. Jobs requiring hi-tech and highly-skilled personnel demand continuous improvement of professional knowledge and skills and modern communication technology develops very fast, indicating that it is necessary and feasible to set up WeChat/QQ groups. Easy to establish and use, a WeChat/QQ group is a platform for adult students to study and exchange professional knowledge. On such platforms students can realize autonomous learning and interaction, thus making on-the-job training more effective.

Keywords: WeChat, QQ, in-service personnel, occupational education, on-the-job training

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Introduction

The regularity of vocational training is a subject that needs persistent research which must keep up with the times\cite{[1]-[6]}.

Now, since almost 100% working adults have smart phones, it is possible to set up WeChat/QQ groups as a popular platform for professional learning so that group members can study, discuss and share professional knowledge in their spare time. The groups may play an irreplaceable role in vocational training.

Sophisticated hi-tech labor positions and rapid application of new technologies and new equipment require employees to continuously learn and master new knowledge, new technology and new skills; otherwise, they will not be able to stay competent for their work.

Members of a WeChat/QQ group can have online discussions about work-related problems in a timely manner despite their geographical distances. Offset by the large increase of WiFi places, network traffic expenditure is no longer an obstacle to using video, image and audio functions of smart phone Apps. By means of video, image, audio and text communication, they can make demonstrations, provide guidance, draw upon each other’s experience, and exchange ideas about how to resolve these problems. This form of learning and instruction will play an increasingly important role in vocational education, actual production activities, and handling of accidents and anomalies.

Therefore, WeChat/QQ groups are an effective way of professional learning and interaction especially suitable for those engaged in sophisticated hi-tech professions, and should arouse the attention of teachers and managers of vocational training in electric power enterprises.

Establishment of WeChat/QQ groups

Name of the WeChat/QQ group. The name of a group can be in the form of “personalized name + the subject for discussion or the scope of group members”, which is intuitive, personalized, simple and clear in subject. The name of a WeChat/QQ group should be personalized, simple and easy to remember, as is a basic requirement. The “subject for discussion” can be a specific professional topic, a direction of professional discussion, or the contents to learn. The “scope of group members” can be the name of the training class, the name of the enterprise, or the name of the group of people interested in the same topic.

Group master. The group master should be a person who has a profound understanding of the profession, is willing to share his/her experience with others, and has the energy and time to answer the questions raised by group members. This can gather together a lot of people who seek to improve themselves by overcoming difficulties they meet in daily work and study and create a good atmosphere of constructive discussion within the group. The group master can be either the teacher or the monitor of a training class.
**Group members.** Group members can be students of the same training class, engineers of the same discipline, members of the same R&D team, persons interested in the same professional subject or topic, like-minded persons, or employees of the same enterprise or similar enterprises. Group members should be selected on a voluntary basis.

**Main topics or fields for discussion.** Main topics or fields for discussion include main technical concerns, courses of the training class, professional books, professional question banks, latest developments in related fields, hot-spot technologies, conference news, standard solicitation notices, and other topics in which the group members have common interest.

**Measures to keep a WeChat/QQ group staying alive**

Releasing information of common concern: For a WeChat/QQ group consisting of the students of the same training class, information related with the training class should be released in a timely manner. For a WeChat/QQ group dedicated to a particular research direction, it is necessary to release latest technologies, hot-spot technical issues, difficult professional problems, conference news, standard solicitation notices, and other technical issues of common concern.

Timely response of group master and group members: reading, identification and recognition of the work and contributions of group members. The persons who release information should be encouraged and applauded.

Discussions about non-professional topics: This can make the WeChat/QQ group more attractive, enrich cultural life, make life more interesting, and enhance group members’ mutual understanding and friendship.

The ratio of professional content to non-professional content: This ratio can be 8:2 or 7:3. Non-professional contents are related with daily life, major events, forecast (storms, blizzards, heavy smog, sharp temperature drops, etc.) and notifications.

The amount of information released within the group should be moderate. Too frequent releases or too much information will be ineffective because group members do not have so much time to read it. If the information released is too small in amount, however, the WeChat/QQ group will gradually lose its attractiveness and receive less and less attention.

A group member had better know what the other members are specialized in. Group master can, via private messages, inform group members that some group member excelling in a professional field raises or releases a professional question for more in-depth discussions. Failures or accidents, urgent to be handled but not to be done by professional technicians having no enough required capabilities, are more likely to be treated rapidly by experts or engineers invited directly by on-site technicians or indirectly by their group master or group members. The video, image and audio functions of WeChat/QQ can greatly improve the understanding of experts or engineers over on-site situation, thus making solutions or detailed technical guidance available through these remote tools. In the professional discussion group for technicians often required to rapidly treat failures or accidents, group members
consciously acquaint themselves with specialties of the others, which is highly beneficial for them to rapidly handle failures or accidents in the future.

**Taboos and inappropriate contents for WeChat/QQ groups**

**Taboos.** Taboos for WeChat/QQ groups refer to national, commercial and departmental secrets (including technology secrets), politically sensitive topics, personal privacy, vulgar language and other contents regarded as taboos in the Internet community.

**Inappropriate Contents.** Inappropriate contents include, not limited to, video contents with a huge network flow; single messages that are too long to read; vulgar contents; advertisements.

**Matters needing attention**

Referenced professional contents shall be marked with the source so as to avoid IPR infringement. Consideration should be given to the affordability of group members who have different monthly data flow limits for their mobile phones. Most of the released information should be in the form of texts or small-flow photos so that members with lower monthly data flow limits can afford to remain in the group.

The master or active members of the group should, via private messages, encourage introverted members to express their opinions and take an active part in discussions. Since everyone is different in work intensity and life pressure, it is inappropriate to raise too many questions to those who are too busy to participate in discussions.

Due to differences in age, education background, and work experience, different members of the group may consider the same problem from different perspectives. So, all members should be inclusive and respect different opinions expressed.

As the issue of personal information security is becoming more and more prominent nowadays, group members shall pay special attention to this issue in their daily exchanges, and avoid releasing the information concerning family status, bank accounts, ID card numbers, etc., in the WeChat/QQ group. To avoid affecting the normal work, life and study of its members, the WeChat/QQ group may adopt “disturbance-free messages” as the mode of reminding.

**Cases of WeChat/QQ Groups**

Here are the cases of two WeChat/QQ groups, one of which is established based on the nature of enterprises, and the other is set up based on the division of profession. The first group discusses the professional topics related with the “Power Dispatching & Control Center” and the “Electric Power Research Institute”; the second discusses issues concerning power dispatching automation and power plant (station) automation.
The WeChat/QQ Group Established Based on the Nature of Enterprises. In “(Power Dispatching & Control + Power Research Institute) Big Family”, “Big Family” is the personalized name of the group, and “Power Dispatching & Control + Power Research Institute” concisely indicates that members of the group are employees of the Power Dispatching & Control Center and the Electric Power Research Institute. The group holds discussions in two professional directions. One is the Power Dispatching & Control Center’s dispatching operation, mode of operation, relay protection, automation, etc. The other is the business of the Grid Technology Center, the Status Evaluation Center, and the disciplines on the power-supply side.

Topics for discussion include intelligent substation relay protection, power switch operation, the principle and operation of intelligent substation equipment, the protection setting and calculation of station service electrical system, etc.

The WeChat/QQ Group Established Based on Division of Profession. In “Power Sink – Station Automation”, “Power Sink” is the personalized name of the group, and “Station Automation” is a professional field. The topics for discussion include power plant automation, remote terminal-unit technology and equipment for substation automation, power system control, and other related issues.

The topics for discussion also include the latest information released from the Journal Automation of Electric Systems, new ideas on power grid development, wind power forecasting, etc.

Conclusions

WeChat/QQ groups are an auxiliary teaching tool suitable for on-the-job training of hi-tech, high-caliber and highly-educated personnel. If properly used, it will greatly improve the effect of vocational training and benefit group members. WeChat/QQ groups may play a very positive role if measures are taken to avoid touching confidential, private or politically sensitive topics or contents.

References


