



upskilling in a hurry.

How to upskill employees on using essential technology.

The key to upskilling employees on essential technology is to recognize that different learner types and different generational audiences like to learn in a variety of ways. There is truly no “one size fits all” when it comes to technology adoption. You are most likely facing a workforce with multiple levels of readiness, from early adopters who are extremely tech savvy, to those who are self-proclaimed “technically illiterate.”

Here are some effective strategies to quickly upskill your workforce:

01. Walk them through it.

Use learning technology that is embedded in the actual tool or platform (e.g. [WalkMe](#)). This is the digital version of a teacher over your shoulder showing you how to navigate through the new technology, click by click.

02. Give a live, but virtual, tour.

Some people prefer to learn through live interactions. For this reason, offering live virtual sessions can help orientate new users. It's essential that your virtual meeting platform allows for video conferencing — seeing faces gives it that in-person feeling. A best practice is to keep the groups small (12 max) so that you can lead the group through the content click by click, and use screen sharing to test and validate learning.

03. Deploy your tech heroes.

In every organization you have technically advanced people who enjoy nothing more than to show the world just how savvy they are! Leverage these individuals by making them “technology heroes” and partnering them (through mentorship programs) with those needing additional support. You could even use these individuals to conduct tech clinics that anyone can sign up for.

04. Support is pivotal.

There is nothing more frustrating for new users than being stuck without support in sight. Ideally, you should offer both live and on-line options. Chat boxes are great and can offer real-time assistance to avoid frustration. Others might prefer connecting with a human through a support line or video conferencing.

05. Harness the power of search.

Offer on-demand learning paths, videos and quick reference guides with FAQs. If you're low on resources, there are many materials available on the web. A simple Google search will yield a smorgasbord of videos, manuals, and how-to's that you can use to curate a custom learning path in your learning management system (LMS) or internal intranet site.

06. Develop internal trainers.

Assign targeted product experts on your team as go-to resources for certain technologies. You'd be amazed how quickly people can learn something when under the pressure of having to teach it. A best practice is to rotate technologies quarterly, so that eventually everyone on the team is competent with the various technologies.

07. Rethink how work gets done.

Many organizations wrongfully embark on digital transformation journeys by overlaying technology on their regular operating procedures (e.g. conducting a virtual meeting like you do a live one). In order to successfully make the transition, you need to re-engineer how your team gets work done. From a behavioral perspective, this is the only way to ensure that your new technology is a logical step in the workflow process and feels intuitive to your employees.

08. Mind the gaps.

Create a feedback loop (ideally through a community chat function) so that you can easily spot development gaps and offer timely support.

09. Make it fun!

For some people, learning new technologies can be difficult and can bring out every hidden insecurity. Celebrate early adopters and find ways to make technology engaging. For example, we once had an entire meeting on [Google Hangouts](#) where everyone chose a digital hat, mustache or fun background to work against.

10. Avoid tech shaming.

I've witnessed numerous occasions when an employee was mocked for not being able to login, turn on their camera or unmute. It's important we practice compassion and realize that everyone learns at different speeds. By creating a supporting, non-judgmental environment, your learners who are struggling will have the psychological safety to ask for support.

Will methods vary for someone who lacks digital skills and someone who just needs a refresher?

A module-based approach to upskilling in technology is best. This allows you to quickly scale your learning from beginner to advanced. A variety of skill paths will also ensure that new users do not feel overwhelmed and more advanced users are not bored. These learning pathways should be tied to career paths and leveraged as development support during performance management conversations. A best practice is to include badges, certifications or titles as you progress through to mastery. After all, who doesn't like a badge!

Millennials and Gen Z employees are usually tech savvy, yet Baby Boomers, who could be in managerial roles, may be less familiar. How do you create a learning environment free of ageism?

This is a stereotype. My father is in his early seventies and has more followers than me on Twitter. We need to discourage these stereotypes in the workplace. Assume that there are tech savvy individuals at all ages, and there are individuals who struggle at all ages.

To help combat this ageism, I like to highlight and celebrate early adopters from all age groups. Make sure you identify "technology heroes" from multiple generations and engage them to help upskill the organization through mentoring and apprenticeship programs.



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