



Why Your Firstline Workers Aren't Using Digital Tech The Right Way—And How to Fix It

Most firstline mobile workforces of today have a varied makeup including veterans who've been on the job for decades, inexperienced workers recently out of school, and everyone in between. When you combine new digital solutions firstline workers must use with the diverse workforce and growing skills gap, many organizations are facing a significant training challenge.

This guide explores that challenge, including why it exists and how to fix it.



The challenge with firstline workers and technology

Firstline mobile workers increasingly rely on technology to do their jobs, whether it be handheld devices to scan inventory, hands-free augmented reality headsets to increase efficiencies or any other digital solution.

Initial and ongoing training is a must for technology solutions, but many organizations struggle here.

The impact of today's employment dynamic

Today's employment dynamics make technology more important than ever for firstline workforces. Near-historic low unemployment is making it hard to fill roles, particularly with skilled workers. At the same time, the workforce is aging into retirement, and organizations are losing critical skills and expertise.

Technology can help fill the skills gap more companies are facing today. Digital solutions can help capture and transfer critical knowledge to newer employees, creating efficiencies as the workforce shifts. In order for that technology to be used effectively in the field, workers must be adequately trained up-front and supported long-term.

Training firstline workers isn't easy

Unfortunately, training these types of workforces on technology can be a challenge. Veteran workers have done the job a certain way for many years and may be resistant to change; they will need plenty of ongoing training to help them tweak their processes and feel comfortable with unfamiliar tech. Younger workers need to learn the entire job, including the technology solutions.

While organizations likely have training programs for the base skills and processes of a role, traditional training methods don't typically apply when training on digital tools. Training leaders often aren't sure how to provide the necessary digital training and ongoing support these firstline workers need. Effective digital training must ensure long-term adoption and proper usage of on-the-job technology tools. The goal isn't one-time training but rather continual engagement and usage of these digital tools.

Perhaps the biggest hurdle of all is time. Firstline workers are mission critical, and operations leaders don't want them out of the field. Whether implementing a new digital solution or providing ongoing training on field technology, training leaders regularly meet resistance to any activity that will result in downtime.



There are serious consequences when workers aren't trained properly

When firstline mobile workers aren't fully trained on the technology tools they use for their job, they won't be as efficient and productive as they could be.

- When workers don't understand how a digital tool works due to lackluster training, they won't use it correctly (or at all), missing out on the efficiency and other benefits the technology provides.
- When a company rolls out a new digital solution, inadequate training will equal poor adoption, wasting all the time and money spent creating that solution. Adoption and engagement of new technology tools are critical to achieving a return on the investment.
- When new workers come on board, they must learn how to do the job correctly, which includes any digital solutions. Without proper tech training, these workers will never learn how to do their job the right way, exacerbating the growing skills gap mentioned earlier.
- When workers aren't trained on how to use the tools they need for their job, or feel frustrated by the technology they're expected to use, poor morale and job satisfaction are likely.

The future of digital training & adoption... today

The solution to all of the above problems is digital training tools for initial training, adoption, and ongoing engagement, designed to guide workers on how to use their technology tools on the job. This type of training offering is just emerging in the context of field operations and firstline mobile workers.

The inspiration: Digital Adoption Platforms

Technology solutions such as Digital Adoption Platforms (DAP) have recently emerged to address similar challenges for enterprise web applications such as CRM and ERP. Companies like WalkMe, Assima, and AppLearn offer “guidance and navigation” tools that help users quickly learn and understand SaaS and cloud applications.

Digital Adoption Platforms provide in-application training and glean insights on user engagement. The result is real-time help for workers using the technology, along with powerful analytics for leaders to understand usage patterns and monitor adoption. This technology solves the challenges outlined above by:

- ✓ Providing an immersive training experience for solution implementations, new employee training, and ongoing employee engagement, ensuring employee understanding and adoption
- ✓ Supporting the training team with contextual training tools specific to the technology the worker needs to learn
- ✓ Ensuring workers are using technology how they should be, for maximum efficiency and productivity
- ✓ Ensuring ROI from a technology solution implementation because workers will learn, implement, adopt, and use the tool
- ✓ Enabling user analytics to see how workers are using technology, identify issues, measure adoption, and help to iterate future versions of the solution



Tailoring DAP for firstline workers

DAP technology is the perfect model for a digital training solution for firstline mobile workers. However, for industrial firms and companies with large field forces, current DAP solutions in the market today aren't quite the right fit, as they focus largely on training office-based staff on cloud-based applications such as ERP and CRM. Digital adoption and engagement solutions for firstline workers need to include:

- ✓ A focus on non-standard or custom mobile applications; often firstline workforces are using or being newly introduced to home-grown or custom-built digital solutions.
- ✓ The ability to run natively on a variety of mobile devices; in many cases, these devices are not standard consumer-grade mobile devices such as iPhones or iPads, but industrial-grade mobile handhelds.
- ✓ The ability to make use of native device peripherals and sensors (such as barcode scanners and GPS) that are part of the digital solution.
- ✓ Training and adoption approaches for employees uncomfortable with technology; large portions of firstline workforces have not traditionally used digital applications for work and need extra guidance and assistance.
- ✓ The ability to track and document usage and adoption; digital applications are increasingly being used to track compliance for industry regulations and/or worker and environmental safety issues.

Skylful's solution for firstline workers

Skylful is the only company delivering a training and adoption platform focused exclusively on firstline mobile workforces. We offer a Digital Adoption Platform that is tailored to fit the unique needs of firstline workers.

Because Skylful works exclusively with organizations with large field workforces, we understand the technical and business needs deeply. Our DAP solution is compatible with any custom application and tailored to address the needs of all firstline workers, regardless of technical expertise or experience. (We also build custom apps for firstline workforces, so we understand the process from strategy to execution to adoption.)

For more information, contact us.

