

# Manufacturing & Construction:

Keep the Wheels Spinning  
& Upskill Your Workers  
in 7 Steps

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# Why you Need to Upskill your Workers

The Manufacturing & Construction Industry has existed for hundreds and hundreds of years. It's a necessary and proud industry, that has evolved as humans evolved. From working with our bare hands to letting robots lift the heavy machinery, humans have created products we did not know we needed and constructed skyscrapers reaching for the clouds.

Now, we have reached a point where the technical evolution happened the day before yesterday. And this is one of the main reasons that **the right upskilling of your construction and manufacturing workers is key for success**. However, before you go into a high-level business mindset, which is also important, of course, then you must also **consider your workers** on the floor.

Times are changing. Automation takes over more and more human tasks - and your workers feel that too. **Upskilling and reskilling are both key for your future success in the market**, but also for your workers **feeling safe and equipped** to handle that future.

Before we move on to the steps for you to create and execute on an awesome upskilling and reskilling program for all your workers, then consider these stats about the workforce in the manufacturing and construction industry, and the industry as it looks right now:

- In 2030, it's estimated that there will be [a shortfall of 2.1 million skilled jobs](#) in the manufacturing industry
- The global manufacturing industry is experiencing [growth and annual increase](#)
- 52 % of construction workers in the US were born [between 1960 and 1979](#) and more than [45 % of the workforce](#) in the manufacturing industry is more than 40+ years old
- The global construction industry is estimated to generate an output of [\\$14.4 trillion dollars by 2030](#)
- Construction demands are growing globally where a [\\$94 trillion dollars investment](#) in infrastructure is needed in the next 20 years
- [45 % of construction workers](#) spend more time than expected on non-optimal activities and 14 hours per week is spent on non-optimal activities like dealing with mistakes and rework
- [8 out of 10 global construction employers](#) find it hard to recruit new people
- [Only 5 % of all jobs are fully automatable](#) but about half of all job activities can be automated - making lots of room for acquiring new skills and learning new tasks for a current or future job role

# 01

## Step 1: Map Out the Skills you Need

Maybe you sit in a smaller manufacturing company with around 100 workers. Or maybe you are in a global enterprise with thousands of workers spread over multiple locations. However, no matter what type of organization you are in, you need to **start figuring out what skills your workers need for them and your company to succeed in the future.**

Ask yourself questions like:

- What future trends do we see in our market?
- What does our latest employee engagement survey show about workers feelings about mastering their work responsibilities? Do some departments stand out?
- What departments need to grow?
- And in what areas do we need to grow?
- What tasks do we need to handle to succeed?
- And what skills are needed to handle these tasks?
- What skills are in demand in our market?
- What job postings are most recurring in our market?

We can give you a little head start with some of the most **in demand skills in the manufacturing and construction industries** right now:

- Soft skills like conflict management and communication
- STEM skills (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)
- Language & translation skills
- Critical thinking, problem solving, and analytical skills
- Digital skills



# 02

## Step 2: Who Needs Upskilling and what about Reskilling?

Now, you have mapped out the skills you need to keep the wheels spinning, it's time to **find out who's most suited to gain them.**

Almost everyone wants to learn new skills or develop how they handle their tasks. So, first and foremost, you can probably expect that every worker in your organization wants to gain new skills. However, some might 'only' need to acquire new skills to handle future tasks suited for their job role. While others might need to move on to a completely different job role, but within the same company. The latter is called **reskilling**, and this is becoming a more frequent exercise in the manufacturing and construction industry, where more tasks are getting automated.

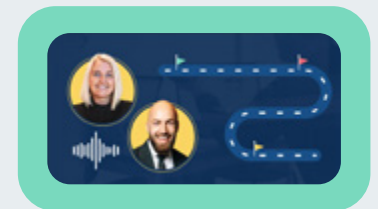
Instead of losing good people, it's way better **to retain them with a good reskilling program.** Furthermore, you will give them a little engagement kick, now that they can use their current skills with the newly earned skills from the reskilling program in a new exciting role. So, reskilling is not only good for business, but also great for the overall **employee wellbeing.**

### Leader vs. Expert?

A good worker is also a good leader. Or is that always true? On the contrary, this is rarely the case. **When you must upskill and reskill your workers, you might also need more leaders to handle the future changes.** And what better place to find these leaders than among the ranks? However, leadership is a skill that must be learned, just as well as advanced math or a new language. So, instead of plunging your newly appointed leader into the job role straight away, **always remember to get them the right learning about being a great leader for a team.** Also, remember to get in touch with your good worker about their wishes for the future. Maybe they don't want to become a leader, but even better at their field and become a true expert instead.



**Listen to the podcast [WORK 3.0](#) and get even more insights about the modern career path and all the twists and turns it can take.**





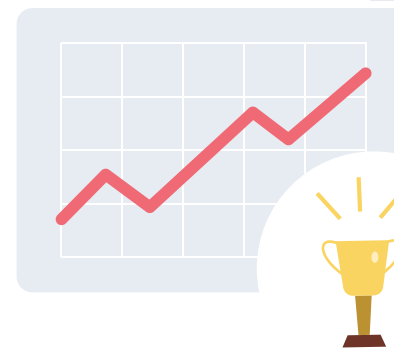
## Step 3: Convince the Stakeholders

Before, we move on to the next steps, it's important that you stop for a minute, and **plan to convince the C-Level and stakeholders in the company about why this is a good idea in the first place.**

You have now mapped out the skills needed for your company's future success, and what departments and people should gain them. This is one of the perfect arguments to do further development on the upskilling and reskilling project and will be cool to showcase for the decisionmakers too.

One of the strongest convincing arguments is **WHY you need to upskill and reskill your workers.** For example, if you don't do it, soon your company might have to turn off the engines or shut down the construction site, because you cannot live up to the demands in the market, because you have a shortage of skilled people who can handle those demands. So, always be sure to have that strong argument with you to present to the stakeholders.

Furthermore, such a grand scale project can be time-consuming and costly. So, you need to have your numbers in order and a plan for how



to reach the goal and getting everyone up to speed with the right skills. If you plan to use digital learning as part of the upskilling and reskilling program, it's already a great budget argument, as it's often cheaper than training on the floor.



**[Download the PPT-template for digital learning](#) and fill out the blanks to get a head start to convince your stakeholders.**



## Step 4:

# Create your Upskilling & Reskilling Program

Now, you've been granted the big, fat, nice yes to continue developing your upskilling and reskilling program, it's time to get more into detail and come up with specific action points.

But firstly: **Consider your audience.** What is the best way for them to learn new skills? If you move into a more digital direction, then some might need extra help to even get to the digital courses and/or learning blocks you have provided for them. More about that in the next step.

Some learn the best when they can visually see something, while others learn the best if they can test the learning in real life. There are [four different learning styles](#), and the one suited for you might not be the one best suited for someone else. Using a digital authoring tool in an [LMS or learning platform](#) when creating learning content for the audience is a great way to hit multiple learning styles, which surely will retain the learnings better for more people.

But going digital only will rarely be the best solution for your workers. As with the different learning styles, most of us learn the best, if we both get the digital introduction to handle the task, discussing the learning with our peers ([social learning](#)), and get to try the task in real life. Mixing up learning activities is called [blended learning](#), which will make the learning stick even more and give your workers an even better learning experience.

# 04

On a final note, when creating your upskilling and reskilling program, it's now more important than ever to translate the parts available to everyone into **multiple languages**, so all your workers can understand and get most of it.



### Add Safety Training to your Program

As an extra, and often need-to-have addition to your upskilling and reskilling program, it's a good idea to put an updated version of your safety training to the mix. Workers who have been with you for a long time might have had a rundown of your procedure when they started many years ago, and it might seem far away, while new workers need an improved version, if a lot of changes have happened in the manufacturing space or construction site.

Safety training does not only have to be on-site, but it can be a good idea to do a digital prep of the workers with videos about procedures and adding a quiz about what's the right and wrong action to do in a specific situation on-site.

Keep in mind that [64 % of fatalities](#) happen due to the 'fatal four' - falls, electrocution, being crushed, and being struck by an object. At the same time, contractors blame lack of training, unskilled workers, and budget cuts for these accidents, and many can be prevented with the right safety training.

# 05

## Step 5: Prep your Workers for the Exciting Change

As mentioned in the former step, you might need to convince not only the stakeholders, but also some of the workers, that learning new skills digitally is a good idea. That is, if you are adding digital learning to your upskilling and reskilling program, of course. **They need to know: ‘What’s in it for me?’** And not get a presentation about the cool features of your new learning platform, and why it is good for the company. You should, of course, also do this, but not as the first thing.

The workers need to **get intrigued** at first. They must get the feeling, that this is a good idea for them too, and not just another corporate strategy exercise.

**Why do they need upskilling and reskilling?** Yes, it’s great for business growth, but hit the feeling of that they can get even better at their work, and get an easier workday, because they are better equipped and skilled to do the daily tasks. And this will in the end also make them happier. That is the core.

**Campaign for the change.** Both digitally on, for example, the intranet, on screens, but also on posters at the manufacturing or construction site. You should do this both before you launch the upskilling and

reskilling program, but also when you have pushed the button. Use catchphrases where you remember the feelings of the workers – not the C-Level. For example, ‘Get an easier/better workday – Learn more at xxx or Go to xxx and get you next skill.’

Remember to set up the campaign in more languages as well. Everyone should get the message and understand why they should upskill and reskill to improve their workdays and wellbeing.

Get more inspiration to get all your workers onboard with your new upskilling and reskilling project in [The Guide to LMS Implementation and Learner Adoption](#)

Download ↓





## Step 6:

# Make Learning Engaging - Microlearning and Stretched Learning

If we go back to the learning content in the upskilling and reskilling program, it's important to **keep the content engaging and relevant to your audience**. They need to get the hands-on practice on the floor and on-site, and these learning activities should also be kept in a short time-loop for the workers to really understand, how to handle this task better without information overload.

And now, that we are talking information overload. If you use a blended learning strategy, where you mix learning activities on-the-floor and digitally, it's even more important that you keep the digital content short and concise to avoid information overload. This type of content is called [microlearning](#).

Microlearning takes often no longer than **3-5 minutes** to complete. With that in mind, it does not have to be boring. If your authoring tool in your learning platform has the right features, you can still create challenges, interactions, and give learners instant feedback to make learning stick and make the learner experience more engaging. Mix up different multimedia formats in your microlearning, for example,

video, images, quiz, sound, and interactive elements like drag'n'drop, heatmaps, and the like.

[Stretched learning](#) is another great way for your workers to reflect on the new learning and avoid information overload. The concept of stretched learning is that you don't bundle a lot of learning activities on top of each other but spread them carefully over time instead. This is a good exercise, especially, if it's one of the first times that your workers need to upskill or reskill in a more structured way.



# 07

## Step 7: Evaluate and Improve

You have now pushed the launch button, and your upskilling and reskilling program is rolling. But hey - now is not the time to lean back and move on to your next project. You will, of course, evaluate your program to make it even better.

Be sure to **send out evaluations about the program** after a decent period, when you can see that most of your workers have been through the first learning activities – both on-site and online. You can, for example, ask these questions:

- What do you think of our recent training in relation to former training activities?
- Have you used the training on-the-floor in your work?
- Have you used the digital training in your work?
- Were some activities harder than others? (Give a multiple-choice list with examples of activities)
- What training activities did you especially enjoy? (Give a multiple-choice list with examples of activities)
- Do you have inputs to future training activities?

If you have used digital learning content in your upskilling and reskilling program, it's also a good idea to backtrack the completion rates, and how well the workers completed the different learning modules. In that way, you can see, if some parts are too easy or too hard to complete, and maybe you can update the content and adapt it to the right level for your workers.

Another exercise is to have focus groups where workers from different departments, age groups, and backgrounds join the sessions and share their inputs on the upskilling and reskilling program.

**Remember: Evaluation never ends.** And you can always find ways to improve your learning activities to create even more engagement and joy of work for your workers.



What do you think of our recent training?



Have you used the digital training in your work?

## Bonus Step: Consider Employer Branding

Now, that you have upskilled and reskilled your workers in-house, it's time to attract even more workers outside of your business. And to earn new skilled talent in the future, it's a good idea to invest in your employer branding.

Unfortunately, both the manufacturing and construction industries are getting worse reputations according to [Deloitte](#), and therefore, **it's becoming more necessary to invest in employer branding to attract and retain talent.**

Furthermore, you will need all kinds of workers in the future. As an example, if we look at the current state of the industries only 29.2 percent of the workers in manufacturing in the US are female, and this is the case for only **11 % of workers in construction**. To attract all kinds of workers, and not just the ones that are male and 40+, you will therefore need to **invest in new workplace initiatives and be sure to promote them to the outside world.**

To get your inspiration going: Flexible work forms, creating a better workplace culture, easier re-scheduling, greater employee benefits,



bonuses, and, of course, providing better learning experiences as this, your new upskilling and reskilling program, are great examples to elevate your employer branding.



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by making them better**

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