

TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION BEST PRACTICES

***A guide to more
successful user adoption***

By THE CONTENT ADVISORY



INTRODUCTION

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION DEPENDS ON A SUCCESSFUL END-USER ADOPTION OF THE TRANSFORMATIVE TECHNOLOGIES.

From workforce changes to technological advancements, organizations across industries and geographies face continual pressure to acquire and implement the latest, greatest technologies in the name of digital transformation and business process optimization. And with every new tool or existing solution's update, they face challenges that stand in the way of the technology truly making an impact and seeing, let alone maximizing, any return on their investment.

End-user adoption is one of the most common challenges and critical to the success of any workforce enabling technology deployment.

Unfortunately, end-user adoption is often overlooked or not given enough focus as part of the selection and subsequent technology implementation plan. Many organizations don't even have any end-user technology adoption practices or technology-focused training programs or initiatives. Regardless, an end-user adoption strategy is crucial to ensuring adoption, acceptance, and continued productivity.

This guide will help you plan for and execute a user adoption strategy that will help increase users' adoption of technology while realizing the bonus of boosting your teams' overall confidence, engagement, and job satisfaction.



Adoption v. Transformation

Digital adoption is the missing link in digital transformation. While digital transformation is the process of adding and upgrading your technology, digital adoption refers to the users' ability to fully maximize the full range of the software's capabilities.

Digital transformation aims to enable greater efficiency, more innovation, and a better customer experience. Digital adoption is the key to actually making that happen. After all, if users can't actually use the digital tools as they are intended, none of the related goals and ROI will ever reach their full potential.

ITS ALL ABOUT CHANGE MANAGEMENT

“CHANGE, YAY!” SAID NOBODY, EVER.

Unfortunately, change is a constant when it comes to keeping up with today’s business technologies. Whether implementing a new content management system, or upgrading an existing document and email management application, organizations need to stay current in the solutions they use to empower their employees and support the business. At the heart of that success is prolific and ongoing user adoption.

The keys to securing employees’ ongoing commitment are to engage them early in the process and then treat them as you would a customer. Here are seven easy steps to follow to increase overall user adoption of any technology:



1 CONDUCT A NEEDS ANALYSIS



2 DEVELOP A LONG-TERM TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY



3 DESIGN END-USER CENTRIC SOLUTIONS



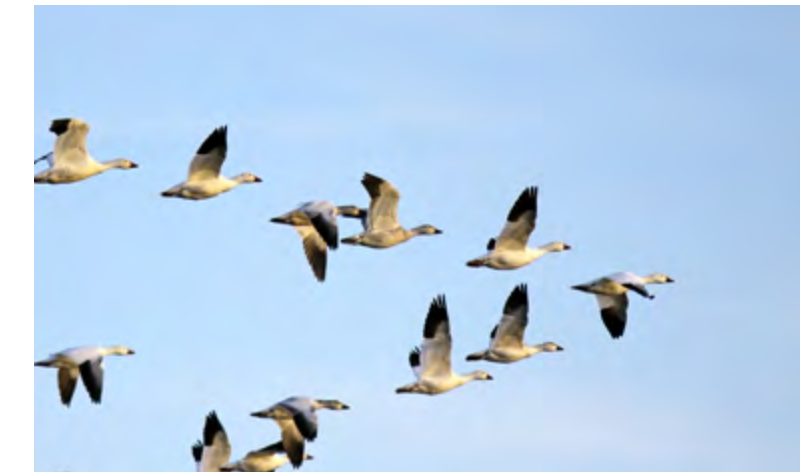
4 PILOT TECHNOLOGIES WITH THE INTENDED END-USERS



5 EXECUTE A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY



6 PROVIDE CUSTOM END-USER TRAINING AND ONGOING SUPPORT



7 EVALUATE, ADJUST, MAINTAIN

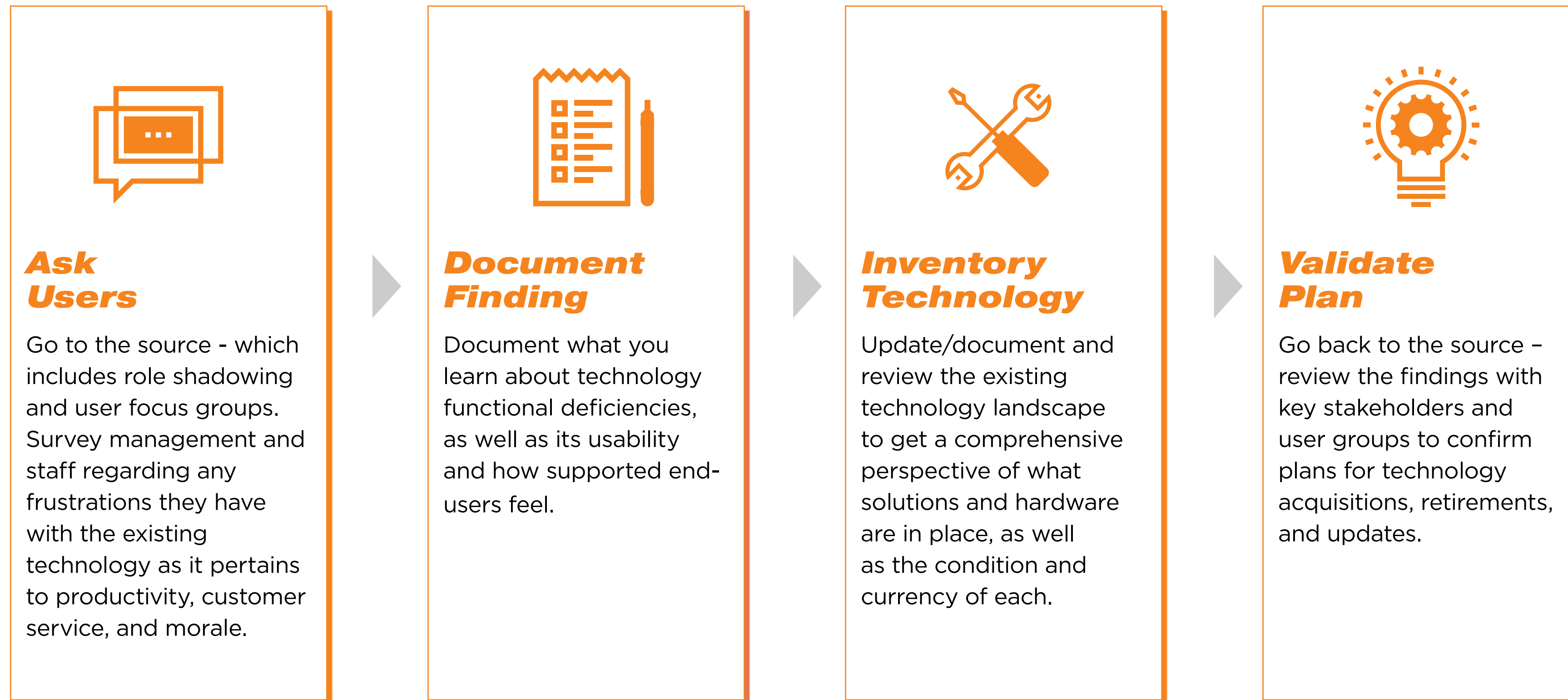
1 CONDUCT A NEED ANALYSIS



1 CONDUCT A NEEDS ANALYSIS

To understand what employees need most to get their jobs done, an important first step is to complete an analysis of the technology landscape and its users' needs.

Including the end-user in this assessment ensures the user's needs are at the center of the ultimate solution development and is the first step to getting their buy-in to adopt the technology that is adopted and maintained.



The needs analysis should consider current and future state possibilities and include process, people, and technology needs.

2

**DEVELOP
A LONG-TERM
TECH STRATEGY**



2 DEVELOP A LONG-TERM TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY

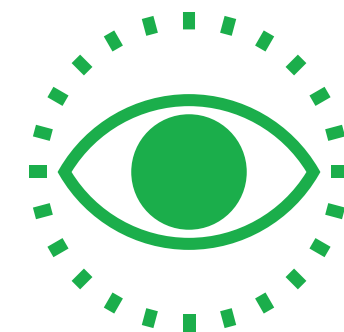
Now that you have the users' and organization's needs identified and know what you have on hand in terms of technology, it's time to plan for the future.

TIME IS MONEY



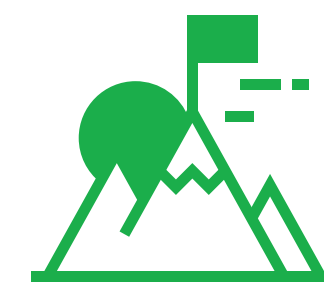
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Fewer technology changes can significantly improve user adoption. Implementing a long-term strategy helps businesses better understand their future needs, minimize changes, and look for options that enhance existing operations rather than completely replace existing ones.



2

Creating awareness of near- and longer-term technology-related changes helps ensure employees are aware of the organization's future direction and goals and how the changes may impact their day-to-day roles. That increased awareness can translate into higher engagement and productivity.



3

Enable preparedness when changes impact employee workflows—having a line of sight into what is coming next or after next will allow the planning/training/change management team(s) to prepare in advance of when their services are needed.



There should be a roll-out plan when each department must make the transition that slowly introduces the technology to give teams the time required to utilize it properly. Some changes will be minor, like tweaked interfaces, while others will be major, such as improved functionality.

Developing and maintaining a long-term Technology Roadmap is time well spent. A roadmap that considers the features and functionality the business and users need from the technology moving forward helps prioritize and optimize IT spend in terms of time and resources reap the most benefits across the board, such as:

3

DESIGN END-USER CENTRIC SOLUTIONS



3 DESIGN END-USER CENTRIC SOLUTIONS

Gathering requirements, running focus groups, and keeping open lines of communication and feedback can be time-consuming but, these are critical-path steps to creating a solid foundation for future buy-in and trust in the technologies and solutions used across the organization.

IF IT AIN'T BROKE, DON'T FIX IT.

Effective technology implementations should always include input from end-users. Upgrading hardware and software to increase business productivity is generally a smart move in the quest for increased efficiencies, effectiveness, and profitability. But change for the sake of upgrading to the latest and greatest tech isn't always the right thing to do. Make sure the motivation and rationale for changing up a solution are to better meet the needs of the business and/or users.

IF THEY DON'T LIKE IT, THEY WON'T (WANT TO) USE IT.

Once the decision to invest in a new or update an existing technology is made, engage affected users from the first project planning call. User experience is about solving problems and helping people attain goals - which is difficult to do if you don't include them. In addition, user expectations have changed dramatically with the ushering in of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Employees expect the same, or higher, usability in their work tech as they have in their personal devices. So be sure to provide end-users with an opportunity to provide input throughout the project, including activities like workflow development workshops and user acceptance testing.

92% of workers say that having the right technology to help them work efficiently directly impacts their job satisfaction.



TIP

Meeting those expectations makes good business sense. Delivering a great end-user experience doesn't only benefit staff. It benefits the organization and technology teams too. After all, what makes end-users happy makes IT look good – in the eyes of staff and management.

4

PILOT TECHNOLOGIES WITH THE INTENDED END-USERS



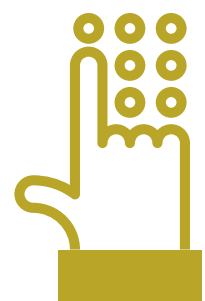
4 PILOT TECHNOLOGIES WITH THE INTENDED END-USERS

A Proof of Concept (POC) or Pilot program is a great way to ensure the selected technology or upgrade functions as it should, and that it meets the needs of end-users, IT, and the business,

GET LOTS OF INPUT

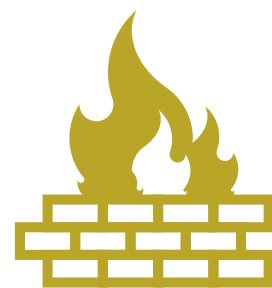
It can be easy to tap the shoulders of a few colleagues and friends of IT to participate in the POC, but that would be a mistake. The pilot should include and evaluate the technology, process, and workflow it will impact.

Pilot participants should include:



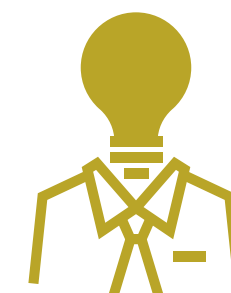
Early adopters

Early adopters, users that can then champion changes and assist in training in their respective areas.



Power users

Power users of the current solution who can provide deep insights into what are improvements or deficits, and where there are gaps.



Planned new users

Planned new users who will provide feedback from a neutral, unbiased standpoint and are a good representation of how the solution functions and its performance overall.



Management and teams

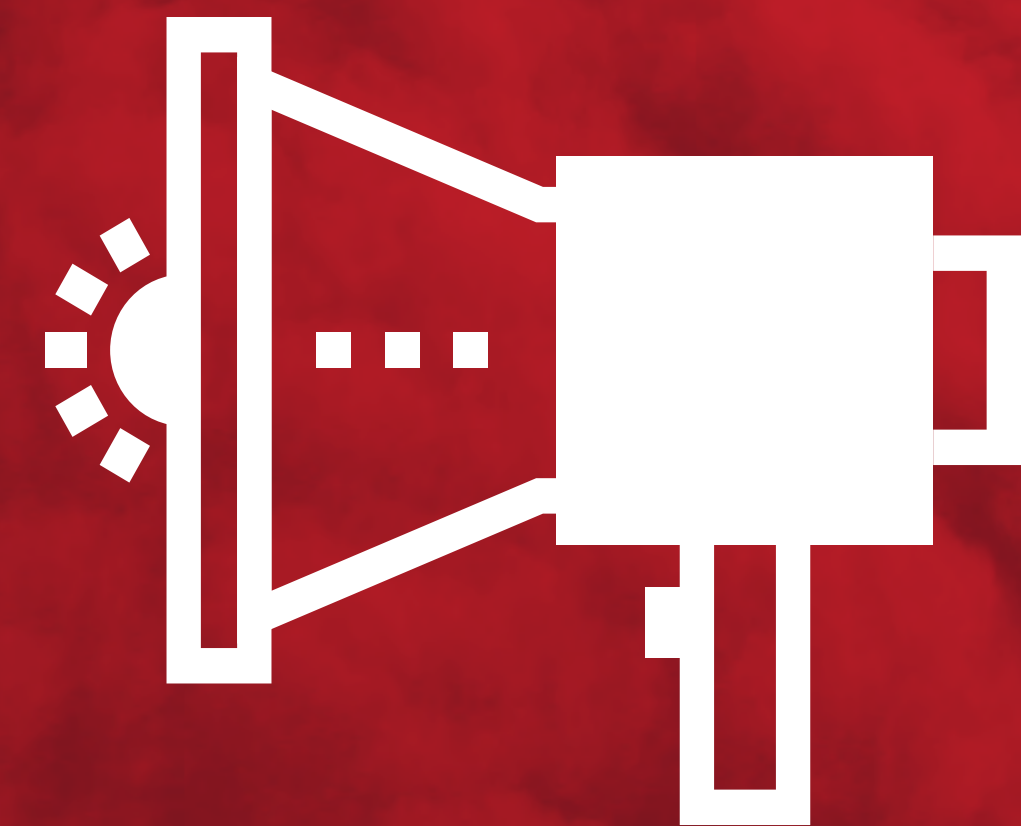
Senior management and the impacted teams' leadership are often overlooked as POC participants but including them not only does it show support for their teams but provides the first-hand context for how this new tech will potentially help or hinder their employees.



Be sure to allow time for modifications before the program is expanded to the larger group.

5

**EXECUTE
A COMPREHENSIVE
COMMUNICATION
STRATEGY**



5 EXECUTE A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

This might sound obvious, but technology should serve a specific purpose and enhance the work-life of employees. Unfortunately, low adoption of new technology is often perpetuated because the value of the latest tools is lost on the employees being told to use them.

COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE.

Good communication is essential when it comes to any changes in a business. Employers should announce changes in advance, and give employees time to embrace the idea of change and be fully aware of the benefits the transition will bring. Confusion surrounding technology at the beginning can lead to frustration and resentment and contribute to low adoption.

To generate excitement and eager anticipation for the launch of the new technology solution you want people to adopt :

Plan a Fun Event

Get help from your marketing and PR teams to build excitement and help plan a fun event.

Engage Leadership

Engage leadership to share the positive aspects and impact the new tech will have.

Engage Employees

Show employees real-life examples of how the latest tech makes their life better.

Engage Super-Users

Engage Super-Users – you know, the ones that have been at every planning and decision meeting – to lead the event.

Aside from the main launch event, support the change initiative with ongoing emails, centralized updates on the company intranet, meetings, and video chats to reinforce and communicate the change.



Second, a Super-User or two is the main point of contact for other users to field questions and concerns pre-and post-launch. They can also provide coaching assistance once the new technology has after launch.

6

**PROVIDE CUSTOM
END-USER
TRAINING AND
ONGOING SUPPORT**



6 PROVIDE CUSTOM END-USER TRAINING AND ONGOING SUPPORT

Just like you wouldn't send out an email addressed "to whom it may concern" to a family member, you shouldn't train employees with generic, vendor-issued materials.

PERSONALIZATION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS.

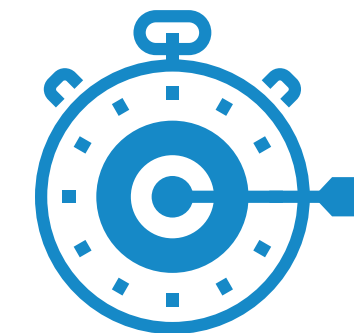
Take the time to customize the training for each distinct user group like Super-Users, Administrators, and general users. Make sure that features and functionality are well defined but focus more on how the new technology will support users in THEIR workflow. Custom training should be role-based and designed to focus on what users truly need to know on day one of the launch of the new solution.

Customized training means:

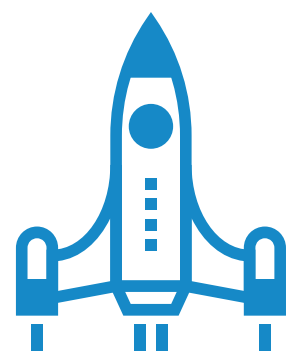
The learning environment mirrors the actual system that will be used right down to the color and labeling of the labels and buttons.



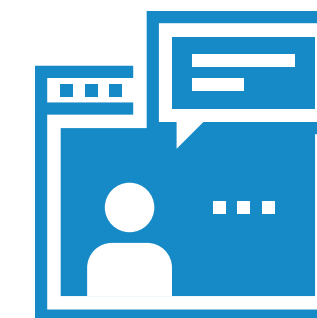
Training takes place before and as close to "go-live" as possible to facilitate system familiarity and skills retention.



Trainees have the chance to test and use the system as much as they need to build their level of comfort and confidence.



Offer training in multiple modalities - online, self-directed modules and activities, instructor-led sessions tailored to different roles and responsibilities.



TIP
Training doesn't stop at go-live. Make sure to offer continued support to users with ongoing training options and in-person support.

7 EVALUATE, ADJUST, MAINTAIN



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NOT EVERYONE WILL BE A BELIEVER.

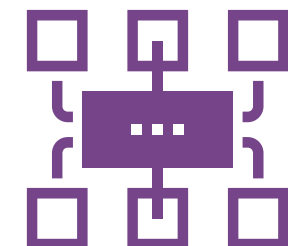
Even after all the involvement, training, onboarding, communicating, and hands-on use, there will undoubtedly be some users who balk at the change and resist adoption, or for whom the updated or new solution just doesn't work as well as they had expected. Trepidation and resistance are typical, and to be expected, so plan for it. As part of the roll-out:



Include formal opportunities for users to provide feedback on how the technology works for them and their ideas for improvements to be rolled out in future releases.



Track data and feedback that can continually help to improve the solution's performance and usability.



Integrate the technology where possible, and it makes sense with other parts of the organization's tech stack to streamline workflows and minimize friction for users.



Keep users in the loop on planned changes for the new system.

Keeping the lines of communication open and including the users in the ongoing maintenance and evolution of the technology, user adoption and satisfaction will be higher, and complaints and a desired return to the old system will be lower.



Schedule to routinely conduct a Technology Needs Assessment to ensure that your company is on track with its stated goals.

A survey of digital marketers found that 63% of US firms felt that a digital focus would be critical in the next few years.

Despite this need, the same survey found that only 18% of digital marketing firms provided essential training support (Digital Marketing Institute).

ENGAGE USERS EARLY, AND OFTEN, TO IMPROVE ADOPTION

Today's industry-leading operational and customer experience management solutions offer far more functionality than ever before. This expanded scope, combined with the ability to integrate with other enterprise applications, further increases their overall value to the organization. However, this complexity also increases the risk of a failed implementation due to low user adoption.

This, combined with shorter and shorter technology implementation and adoption timelines thanks to the move to the cloud, SaaS, AI, and other emerging technologies, businesses need to be more proactive in planning for and investing in end-user training and engagement to realize a return on the investment and maintain a satisfied and productive workforce.

Consistently following the seven steps and tips found in this guide can help ensure every technology implementation and upgrade that follows will be smooth and met with enthusiastic end-users and high adoption rates.





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