

VocoVo

eBook

A guide to rolling out best practice training initiatives



A four step guide to rolling out best practice training initiatives

Employee training is an ongoing process. Whether the topic is how to use specific pieces of technology, store policies or the products on offer, delivering training to colleagues just once isn't enough. In fact, it's a commonly held belief that a person needs to see or hear something at least seven times before the message sticks.

However, it appears many retailers aren't currently following this approach. According to VoCoVo's Retail, Disconnected research, **30%** of retail workers say they haven't received sufficient training to confidently use the tech implemented within their store, rising to **35%** in the UK. This lack of confidence could result in colleagues shying away from using the technology or using it incorrectly. Ultimately, this can impact customer service and employee productivity and even damage team morale.

84% of UK decision makers

are confident in the effectiveness of the training they offer to allow shop floor staff to adopt smart technology.



This disconnect could point to the fact that despite shop floor staff receiving some training, it is not regular enough for the information to truly sink in. As implementing new smart devices is a significant investment for many retailers, it is therefore essential they readdress their training initiatives to arm colleagues with all the information they require to confidently and fully leverage the solutions at their disposal.

But it's not just technology that employees need regular training on. Store environments are constantly evolving with new products, offers, promotions and even policies. Consequently, retail workers require frequent and thorough training on each of these elements to best serve customers and ensure they are giving them the most up-to-date information.

Whether training new starters or experienced team members, creating robust programmes and following best practice will help to ensure employees are making the best use of technology and being armed with all the information they need to deliver excellent customer experience (CX). Let's look at four ways senior decision makers can improve the effectiveness of their training initiatives.

Step 1

1 Get ahead of bad habits

With every new device implemented in store, or every update to an existing piece of technology, delivering immediate training to those using it is vital to avoid bad habits creeping in. Without proper guidance from the outset, it's easy for both new starters and more established colleagues to misuse technology, or be unaware of certain functionalities. This means it's likely the technology isn't being used to its full potential, eroding return on investment.

This can lead to frustration among employees who instead of feeling empowered by technology, feel stressed about using it. The purpose of implementing smart devices is not to cause anxiety, but to make colleagues' lives easier. But once bad habits have been established, it's hard to shake them, which can then negatively impact colleagues and cause a knock-on effect on CX.

If colleagues aren't using the technology correctly and effectively, they will be more prone to making mistakes. This will likely mean keeping customers waiting while they search for information or technology functionality, causing frustration or even walkouts.

Having colleagues visibly misuse or struggle with technology on the sales floor can also have a negative effect on the store or brand's image as a whole, as customers lose confidence in staff and next time choose to shop elsewhere. To avoid such a bleak scenario, retail decision makers must ensure they nip bad habits in the bud.

As well as rolling out an immediate training plan to disseminate information on how to correctly and most effectively use the technology, retailers should share the impact that poor or improper use of the technology could have. This will accelerate return on investment as colleagues will be able to begin using the technology straight away, helping to unlock greater efficiency and productivity and boosting morale by empowering colleagues to do their job better.



Step 2

2 Repetition is key

76% of colleagues

are covering additional roles and responsibilities due to labour shortages in their stores.

Regular training will ensure that those individuals are given the skills and information needed to carry out what's asked of them.

Colleagues are much more likely to succeed when retailers don't treat training as a one-off exercise. Whether it's their first day on the shop floor, or they've been asked to cover a Click & Collect desk for the first time. Only offering training on new technology at the point of implementation is a common but costly mistake. For training to be effective and to ensure best practice is maintained, it should be revisited frequently. This includes instances when new smart devices come in which might impact existing functionalities or when new policies are introduced.

Even the most established colleagues can benefit from regular refresher sessions, to help them feel more confident in their ability to serve customers and be on top of the

latest promotions or changing technology features. After all, not being up to date on policies and products prevents employees from providing customers with the most current information, which can result in missed sales. Ongoing training is, therefore, in everyone's best interest.



By regularly repeating training sessions, store managers can be sure that everyone, whether new to the business or department or a long-standing colleague, has the latest information on how to best serve their customers. With the confidence gained from training, whether it's on how to take advantage of the in-store technology integrations or new health and safety protocols, all colleagues can feel more empowered to provide excellent experiences to their customers and shape a great workplace culture.

Step 3

3 Don't underestimate peer-to-peer training

Many human resources professionals follow the 70:20:10 training model:



70:20:10

On the job skills

Peers and colleagues

Formal training sessions

As well as the more formal training initiatives, retailers shouldn't underestimate the power of learning by osmosis. In fact, many Human Resources professionals follow the 70:20:10 training model in which **70%** of skills are learnt on the job, **20%** through peers and colleagues, and **10%** through formal training sessions. This highlights just how important hands-on experience and the insights of peers can be in helping individuals learn the skills and information they need to do their job effectively.

On-the-job training has huge benefits for both the individual and the retailer, as employees tend to pick up

their responsibilities quicker, become independent faster and therefore deliver more immediate business value. This is key to combating the effects of the ongoing labour shortages.

Utilising smart technology can help retailers make it easier for employees to communicate with and learn from one another on the shop floor. For instance, through the use of connected headset technology, a well-established colleague can talk to a new starter about the various processes on the shop floor at the same time as doing them, without having to pause.

This more relaxed form of training can help put new starters, or even those who have been with the business for some time, at ease and make them feel more comfortable and confident in asking for help from peers, instead of having to go through more formal channels.

Additionally, long-standing members of the team will have a whole range of knowledge that isn't always captured through formal training plans. Creating a single, open channel of communication with smart technology will help to disseminate information more widely, preventing crucial insights from leaving the building once colleagues retire or go to work elsewhere.



Beyond these practical benefits, learning from peers on the job can also help to improve relationships among colleagues, boost morale and foster a better working environment. Every workplace has inside jokes or perhaps unique lingo which new employees would appreciate being included in to make them feel welcomed and part of the team from the get-go.

Step 4

4 Go straight to those in the know (or not, as the case may be)

When it comes to training, the disconnect between decision makers and colleagues on the shop floor highlights how important it is to regularly check in with colleagues on their confidence with technology.

Asking those who are directly impacted about their confidence and challenges will help to highlight any gaps in knowledge, as well as training materials and information, so re-training can be targeted.

This will also help to account for the fact that some individuals learn faster than others and for the differences between demographics. Whilst younger, more tech-savvy colleagues might need less time to grasp all the functionality of smart in-store devices, other colleagues might need more.

By asking colleagues how confident they are in using the technology and advising customers on products, store managers give them a forum to speak out about any challenges they are experiencing. This will allow retailers to deliver training sessions tailored to the individual's needs, whether that's a sit-down meeting or more practical on-the-job training under the supervision of a more experienced colleague.



Additionally, by going directly to the individuals, retailers will be able to speed up the onboarding process and create an engaging refresher training experience. It will also help to remove any stigma around not being able to effectively use the technology or not fully grasping the latest in-store promotion and allow shop floor staff to be open about to be open about their challenges, knowing they will receive the support they need to overcome them.



Conclusion

Never underestimate the power of training.

Going forward, putting a greater focus on it will help retail decision makers maximise their smart in-store technology investments and ensure store floor colleagues are regularly receiving the information they need to deliver better CX. Whether it's training for new starters or refresher sessions for longer-standing colleagues, done correctly, it can make them feel safer and improve efficiencies while labour shortages resolve.

By implementing solutions like connected headset technology, retailers can realise significant value in terms of customer service as colleagues respond to queries quicker and more accurately. Smart technology is a brilliant facilitator of efficient and effective on the job training. But that's only if it is used correctly.

By following the four steps in this guide, retailers can help to ensure that shop floor workers receive regular, adequate training to set them up for success, give them the confidence to use the technology in their stores effectively and better serve their customers. With technology delivering a wide range of benefits for retailers, colleagues and customers alike, robust and consistent training initiatives will ensure everyone can reap those benefits.




VoCoVo

About VoCoVo

Established in 2016, VoCoVo drives transformation in retail communications to maximise operational efficiency and enhance customer experience for leading global retailers. Now connecting over 250,000 associates in 21 countries through voice, their retail-ready hardware, software, and smart integrations power store teams across Grocery, Home & DIY and Fashion.

VoCoVo is growing fast and is trusted by household names in the UK, Europe, Australia, and North America. The company has a list of accolades, from regional Business of the Year and Innovation awards to 5th place in the Sunday Times Tech Track 100.

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