infor

Create a company culture of digital transformation and continual improvement

Whether it is e-commerce, the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, or digitally connected global supply chains, food and beverage (F&B) manufacturers are investing in IT solutions in order to take advantage of innovative technologies and opportunities for growth. Unfortunately, in efforts to achieve a quick return on investment (ROI), companies often overlook a fundamental element that needs to be in place before true transformation can occur: workforce buy-in.

What's the problem?

Digitization can be complex and overwhelming. Companies may have concrete goals they want to achieve, but they're often delayed by nebulous deployment plans that require experimentation and proof-of-concept projects. This type of uncertainty can breed worry. Talk of modernization, automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence (AI) can be red flags to personnel, triggering fear of job elimination. Complications encountered during early-stage testing can also cause the workforce to be reluctant participants, skeptical about the upheaval and potential benefits.

When today's workers entered the job market, topics like data science and machine learning (ML) may have been science fiction. Personnel may feel their skillsets are not aligned with evolving expectations, which can add to the tension. Furthermore, trying to retain outdated organizational structures and antiquated job descriptions will create roadblocks with personnel down the line. Teams that are locked into set processes and hesitant to forge new paths can quickly derail the entire digital transformation process.

Creating a culture of change

Enterprise-wide modernization in the F&B industry requires a workforce that is well-prepared, receptive to big ideas, and willing to execute new tactics. Likewise, having an open mind to change can yield organizational and personal opportunities. Building a company culture that values innovation and collaboration is a necessary first step in a successful digital transformation. With expectations and priorities well-defined and feedback loops in place, managing workforce resources—from entry-level trainees to business unit managers—will be easier and more effective.

Technology can help create an environment where personnel feel engaged and aligned with enterprise goals. Workforce management solutions, as well as functionality within modern enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions, can help F&B manufacturers recruit, retain, and engage a highly productive workforce. Here are some examples:

Recruiting

- **Workforce management**: A modern workforce management solution will help the company manage staffing requirements, forecast future needs, track current skillsets, track compensation, and identify opportunities for training and advancement.

- **Talent science**: Talent science applications can provide advanced functionality that's valuable in optimizing skills and opportunities. Using data science and AI, talent science solutions can help anticipate employee aptitude for certain skills and necessary training for a role that substantially evolved during digitalization.

- **Consumer-like user interfaces**: Skilled workers are in high demand. Today's labor market is highly competitive, with employers offering enticing perks that will appeal to today's job hunters. The type of software deployed in the plant is one of the features that recent graduates consider. Tools with attractive, highly intuitive user interfaces, like consumer devices, help appeal to job candidates.

Retaining

- **Business intelligence (BI) and analytics**: BI tools help a company to retain workers and reduce the stress of employee churn, and help workers contribute to the digital reimagining of processes. Incorporating AI and ML are valuable in scheduling the right people in the right place. These technologies are also valuable in planning seasonal hiring needs, compensating for discretionary time off, and identifying patterns in sick-days and absenteeism. Advanced BI solutions give managers access to easy-to-use reporting tools, dashboards, and the ability to track departmental metrics.

- **Mobility**: Equipping personnel with mobile solutions is becoming more and more important. Research firm Strategy Analytics predicted that 1.87 billion people will be mobile employees by 2022, comprising **42.5% of the total global workforce**. When working from remote locations, employees still need access to centralized data regarding accounts, products, services, and inventory.

- **Extended networks**: Connecting with peers and colleagues, while also collaborating with customers, suppliers, and supply chain partners, is high priority in a digital enterprise that focuses on innovation and new product development. It's important to give personnel tools that support visibility, data sharing, and communication—beyond the walls of the factory.

Engaging

- **Big-picture insights and results**: Personnel tend to support new ideas when they participate in planning, which leads to positive benefits and an understanding of the big-picture goal. Reporting tools can help managers collect results from digitalization projects to share with personnel. Ultimately, this will help personnel feel more comfortable with change. Upheaval with a purpose is easier to accept than random acts of upheaval, which can seem disconnected and chaotic.

- **Automated workflows and guided decision-making**: New procedures can be hard to embrace. Therefore, it's important to plan for training periods when implementing new technology. Take advantage of built-in workflows, automation of tedious processes, guided decision-making tools, and AI-assisted knowledge bases. These will help push relevant information to personnel, allowing them to make well-informed decisions that align with company strategy.

- **Social platforms**: Social media platforms play a role in enhancing the communication, morale, and decision-making necessary for successful workforce digitization. Embedding social capabilities as part of a company's digital overhaul will allow personnel to connect and collaborate on key topics in a controlled setting. The guiding principle, "social with a business purpose," can help personnel understand when and how socialization is useful, and when it becomes a distraction.

Final takeaways

Organization-wide digitalization is necessary to keep pace with change and new market expectations. However, workforce perceptions and attitude toward change can either be an asset or a roadblock. To ensure a smooth transition to new digital concepts, the workforce needs to be educated and given opportunities to participate and embrace technology. Helping employees understand the overarching goals is the first step. The next is demonstrating its value and outlining the benefits. Lastly, arming personnel with technological tools will improve their own work experience and soon show them firsthand the advantages of accepting technology in the workplace.

Modern IT solutions, from workforce management solutions to reporting and analytics, will help an organization plan the use of resources and control labor costs, while also enhancing the employee experience. Digitalization can transform an F&B manufacturer's plant and provide a solid foundation for future growth. Above all, beginning with the creation of a culture of change will ensure that larger digital initiatives get off the ground successfully.

AUTHOR
Mike Edgett
Industry & Solution Strategy Director, Professional Services, Infor

infor

Gold
Channel Partner

Follow us:

GODLAN

Godlan, Inc.
15399 Canal Road
Clinton Township, MI 48038
586-464-4400
info@godlan.com
www.Godlan.com