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The Guide to Digital Work Instructions

Practical Strategies for Boosting Efficiency and Reducing Costs

Manufacturing is in the middle of a workforce shift. Job complexity is growing, but the ability to recruit and train the workforce has not kept pace.

With roughly 25% of manufacturing workers nearing retirement, the industry stands to lose invaluable operational expertise over the next decade.

90% of leaders report that skills shortages are impacting productivity.

Manufacturing also faces high turnover, with an annual rate of 37%. With two thirds of companies struggling to retain skilled teams, making consistency in performance a challenge.

Lastly, recruiting has become more difficult. Public perceptions impact recruiting, with 54% of leaders citing a negative image as a recruitment barrier.

It can sometimes take months to get frontline workers up to speed, which is why **50% of companies are investing in knowledge-sharing** tools to bridge gaps and appeal to new talent — the time is now.

These challenges make digital work instructions a must have. Clear, accessible guides capture essential knowledge, transfer skills, and support an enabled workforce.

Dozuki has helped companies **reduce process documentation time by 50%**, driving significant improvements in efficiency, knowledge transfer, and learning initiatives.

This guide will help you become the next success story.

The Workforce is Shifting

A wave of retirements in manufacturing is draining the industry of its ability to meet production demand, transfer knowledge, and retain a skilled workforce.

Create Work Instructions That Work

Effective work instructions are more than just a documentation tool — they are essential to employee learning and operational excellence. When work instructions are digital, accessible, and user-friendly, they empower employees to quickly acquire new skills, reduce errors, and perform tasks with confidence.

With a purpose-built platform like Dozuki, your process documentation will drive initiatives across your facility:

- Capture expert knowledge from seasoned frontline experts
- Train and upskill employees quickly in multimedia formats
- Reduce quality errors and waste
- Minimize downtime and improve changeovers
- Retain talent and expertise
- Support continuous improvement

Research shows digital work instructions can enable workers to complete repairs 21% faster and with a 26% lower perceived workload than traditional paper documents.

Whether your goals are in production, quality, compliance, or safety — digital work instructions can move the needle.

1.
Start Simple

Chances are, your existing work instructions are text-heavy, paragraph driven documents that are notoriously tough to get through. It's time to rethink that.

The average American adult reads at a ninth grade level. Be sure to write instructions in plain language and use bullet points, so workers can comprehend quickly and easily.

Always lead with the most important information. Cut out the narratives and anecdotal information to get straight to the meat of your documentation. Bad work instructions are the norm. Documentation is often created to check a box for audit or compliance purposes. Once made, work instructions are stuck in paper binders or buried in complex file systems like Sharepoint.

78% of manufacturers report using outdated or ineffective work instructions. While companies have some form of documentation, it's failing to meet the needs of operators, engineers, and managers.

Start Simple

For Authors

- Write in plain language and prioritize clarity. Avoid jargon and complex terms.
- Use bullet points to structure steps for quick scanning, making it easy for employees to follow.
- Focus only on essential actions to minimize cognitive load and help operators retain the information.

For Trainers

- Simplify instructions to make it easier for trainees to absorb foundational concepts before tackling complex tasks.
- Emphasize concise, actionable steps that trainees can recall on the job without needing frequent reference.
- Reinforce the idea of 'less is more' in each session, helping trainees focus on key steps.

For Leaders

- Encourage a culture of simplicity in documentation, which supports clarity and reduces errors.
- Monitor the time saved and error rates to assess the impact of streamlined instructions on productivity.
- Advocate for training content that is direct and to the point, as it reduces time to proficiency for new employees.

2.
Teach, Don't Describe

Think of your audience like a classroom full of students. Don't just demonstrate how a process is supposed to work. Use instructions that teach the reader as they progress through each step.

Break complex procedures down into easily followed steps. If you have too much content for one step, it's a sign you need to break it up even further. Phrase things like you're teaching the process to someone who's never seen it before.

Work instructions can become an integral part of how employees upskill within your organization. Take advantage of your controlled procedures by making them the foundation of your education and training programs.

Teach, Don't Describe

For Authors

- Frame each step as a learning opportunity, explaining the purpose behind each action.
- Incorporate "why" statements wherever appropriate to deepen understanding, especially for critical tasks.
- Break down complex steps further when necessary to prevent confusion and enhance retention.

For Trainers

- Approach training sessions with an instructional mindset, emphasizing understanding over rote memorization.
- Guide trainees by asking reflective questions about why each step is performed.
- Focus on building confidence by enabling trainees to comprehend each process step-by-step.

For Leaders

- Support a teaching-first approach in operational documentation, which enhances skill development and reduces errors.
- Encourage trainers to build employee capability by focusing on competency, not just task completion.
- Measure improvements in employee confidence and error reduction after adopting this instructional method.

> **Pro Tip:**
> Start sentences with a verb. This gives procedures an active voice and frames instructions as a command, rather than a suggestion.

3.
Make Accessibility a Priority

Access to documentation is the biggest obstacle to an employee's success. When information is difficult to find, they are discouraged from following established standards and create risk by trying to figure things out on their own.

Work instructions should be simple to find and easy to access in any environment. Those that are tethered to large paper binders, or hidden in complex content management systems, restrict the flow of information.

Make your work instructions as accessible as possible by delivering them in a digital format.

Digital documentation tools are easily searchable and can leverage QR codes to instantly access specific documents. This provides real time savings and ensures that workers on the job have access to accurate information from anywhere.

Make Accessibility a Priority

For Authors

- Embed QR codes or hyperlinks within documents, enabling easy access to details.
- Organize digital instructions logically, making information easily searchable.
- Prioritize accessibility in all documentation formats, ensuring that materials are compatible with digital tools.

For Trainers

- Ensure trainees know how to access digital instructions.
- Create and place QR codes for guides around your facility for access via scan.
- Promote digital familiarity in training sessions so employees feel confident retrieving information on the job.
- Use a system that provides process knowledge translation in multiple languages.

For Leaders

- Invest in digital platforms that allow real-time access to instructions, reducing downtime and improving efficiency.
- Encourage an "on-demand" approach to information access, reinforcing the value of autonomy in the workforce.
- Track reductions in downtime or increased efficiency from implementing easily accessible work instructions.

"To get the information people need, right where the work is being done is so impactful. Dozuki is a game-changer."

Learning & Development Change Coach Johnsonville

4.
Standardize the Format

Whichever format you use to present your work instructions, keep it consistent. It's not uncommon for authors to use different styles to present information within a company, but it can be prevented.

Stick to an agreed-upon format and follow it.

This allows people to spend less time deciphering the instruction and more time learning how to do the work.

A standardized format also creates a clear baseline for employees to suggest process improvements.

# Standardize the Format

For Authors

- Use consistent templates to make guides universally readable and recognizable.
- Establish guidelines for headings, fonts, and spacing, improving readability and reducing the chance of misinterpretation.
- Implement bullet points, bolding, and numbering systematically to create a predictable, scannable layout.

For Trainers

- Familiarize trainees with the standardized format, so they quickly know where to find information in each document.
- Incorporate the format into training materials, enhancing comprehension.
- Reinforce the predictability of document structure, making trainees comfortable with the layout on day one.

For Leaders

- Standardization reduces cognitive load, allowing employees to focus on task accuracy and efficiency.
- Monitor the impact of format consistency on speed and error rates during processes, demonstrating value to stakeholders.
- Champion standardized documentation as part of a company-wide effort to support productivity and clarity.
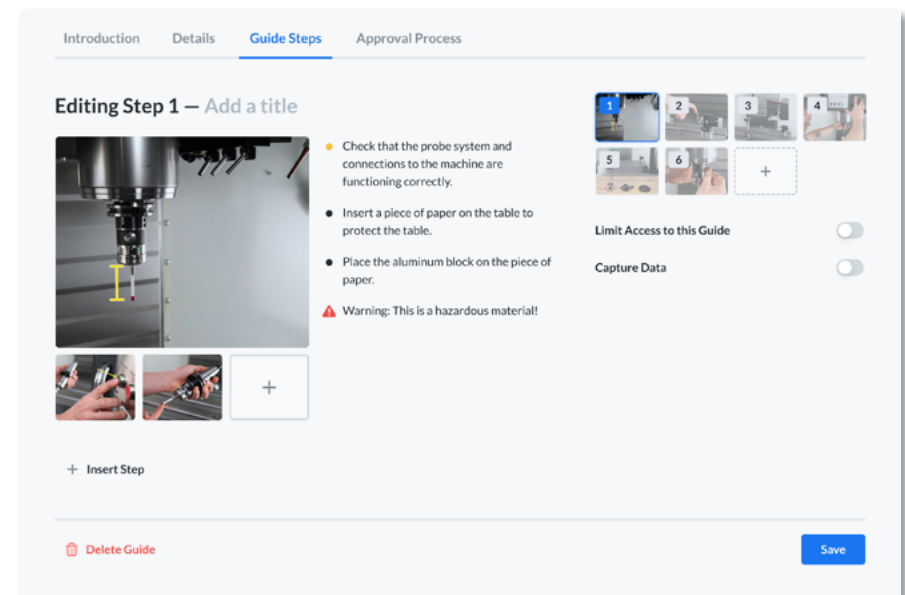
Creating standardized digital work instructions in Dozuki

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General Mills: Automating Training Efficiency in Food Processing with Dozuki

High employee turnover, expanding production lines, and outdated training systems slowed worker onboarding, sanitation, and workflows at the General Mills Hannibal, Missouri facility.

Training for basic daily tasks previously took up to 8 months, sanitation training stretched over a year, and changeovers caused up to 6 hours of downtime. These issues cost the company time, resources, and money.

General Mills turned to Dozuki to streamline and modernize their processes, and achieved remarkable improvements across their operations.

By adopting Dozuki, General Mills not only enhanced productivity but also fostered a more capable and satisfied workforce.

At the core of these productivity gains was a foundation of digital work instructions in the Dozuki platform:
- New worker training times accelerated by 62%
- Sanitation training improved by 66%
- Changeover improvements cut downtime by 75%

Watch the Full Webinar

5.

Demonstrate with Visuals

People are visual learners. Supplement written work instructions with visuals to communicate faster and with more accuracy.

Whenever possible, use visuals that demonstrate the action clearly. Images can also be useful in the form of diagrams or schematics.

Videos also help you quickly demonstrate movements that can't be captured in an image. This also helps mimic and scale one-on-one training environments.

Demonstrate With Visuals

For Authors

- Supplement instructions with clear images, diagrams, or video clips to mimic hands-on training, ensuring all visual assets are high-quality and relevant.
- Use visuals to show complex steps in action, helping operators understand the process without extensive text.
- Label images with brief descriptions, keeping the focus on the action.

For Trainers

- Incorporate visual aids in training modules to support learning for visual learners and reinforce comprehension.
- Allow trainees to leave comments or ask questions to better understand the visuals in the context of the task.
- Highlight key components or stages in visuals for focus.

For Leaders

- Invest in visual tools for documentation, as visuals can significantly cut training time and reduce errors.
- Track improvements in comprehension and task execution when visuals are introduced, highlighting their role in quality improvement.
- Advocate for the use of high-quality visuals as a standard for all critical process documentation to improve overall employee performance.
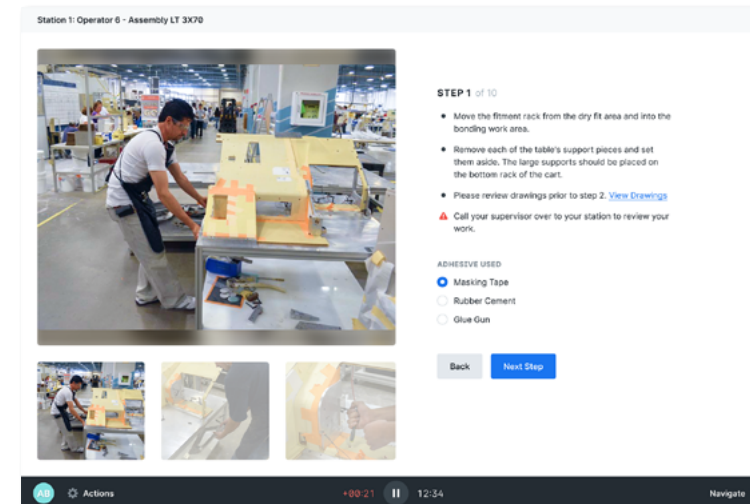
The visual-first format in Dozuki makes instructions clear and easy to understand

"The core elements of learning haven't changed. We've found that everyone wants to learn from the expert, everyone wants visuals, and everyone needs repetition and practice."

Michael Muileburg,
Manager of Operational Technology at 3M

6.
Simplify the Language

The average American reads at a ninth grade level. Write work instructions that are simple and can be easily understood by a wide audience.

Traditional work instructions get bogged down with technical industry jargon and run-on sentences. It's time to focus on trimming the fat.

The average person spends just seconds scanning the words on a page, absorbing only about 20% of the text. The more concise you are, the more information employees will retain and apply to their work later.

This also has the added benefit of internationalization. When sentences are simple and clear, they become much easier to translate and share across languages.

Simplify The Language

For Authors

- Use straightforward, direct language to ensure the instructions are universally understandable, avoiding industry jargon where possible.
- Break down complex sentences into simple, clear statements, which also makes translation for international teams easier.
- Trim any redundant words or phrases, keeping each instruction concise and focused.

For Trainers

- Emphasize the importance of clarity when training, using examples to show how simplified language aids understanding.
- Encourage trainees to summarize complex instructions in their own words to confirm comprehension.
- Regularly review worker feedback to identify language barriers and adapt language where needed.

For Leaders

- Foster a company-wide expectation for clear, simplified documentation, making this a standard for all departments.
- Analyze error rates and rework costs to evaluate the impact of simplified language on accuracy and efficiency.
- Support clear communication as a company value, encouraging continuous improvement in documentation quality.

> **Pro Tip:**
> Front-load or highlight useful details. This ensures that the most essential information is communicated.

7.
Update Regularly

Employees frequently have to adapt their workflows to solve day-to-day problems, causing work instructions to quickly become outdated and neglected.

To get more out of your work instructions, make sure all documented procedures reflect the current best practices. Employees need to trust that information is accurate and current. Perform routine audits and ask workers if they're still following the documented procedures.

By creating work instructions from the floor, it becomes easier to identify inefficiencies and opportunities for improvement in the process.

Regularly capturing and updating knowledge is key to sustaining long-term gains.

Update Regularly

For Authors

- Set up a routine for reviewing and updating documentation to keep pace with process changes, technology upgrades, and new best practices.
- Use digital platforms that allow for version control, so each iteration is recorded, and employees always access the latest version.
- Encourage feedback loops from workers to keep instructions current and relevant.

For Trainers

- Integrate update notifications into training sessions, so employees are aware of and understand new changes.
- Emphasize the importance of referring to controlled instructions to avoid errors from outdated information.

For Leaders

- Prioritize continuous improvement by allocating resources for regular documentation audits.
- Measure the impact of regular updates on compliance and efficiency, demonstrating the ROI of accurate documentation.
- Encourage employees to proactively report discrepancies, fostering a culture of shared responsibility for up-to-date information.

"Dozuki makes it easy to broadcast updated work instructions quickly so everyone is in the know."

Dustin Olender,
Director of Strategic Development, AML Oceanographic

8.

Leverage AI to Create 10x Faster

Creating digital work instructions can feel like an insurmountable task. Often becoming the bottleneck in achieving a smooth digital transformation.

CreatorPro from Dozuki accelerates the process of capturing and digitizing frontline operations.

What once took months now takes days.

Your teams can digitize knowledge 70% faster, allowing your organization to get real-time value from its digital initiatives that much faster.

Leverage AI to Create 10x Faster

How AI Enchances the Process

Dozuki CreatorPro ensures that essential knowledge is captured quickly, without burdening teams with additional documentation tasks.

- **Instant Digitization:** Once a process video is recorded, CreatorPro immediately transforms it into a clear, standardized guide. This speeds up the creation of training materials and work instructions.

- **Visual Clarity:** Dozuki automatically extracts high-quality visuals from the video, including images or diagrams that help illustrate complex steps, making instructions easier to follow and understand.

- **Seamless Deployment:** With the digital instructions in place, you can deploy them directly from the production floor, enabling new hires to be trained faster and ensuring they meet operational, quality, and safety standards from the start.

- **Multilingual Support:** CreatorPro can automatically translate the narration in the video into multiple languages, making the documentation accessible to a global workforce. This helps improve communication and ensures compliance, even across diverse teams.

Learn More

CASE STUDY

Reducing Training and Changeover Times with Standardized Digital Work Instructions in Dozuki

A Fortune 100 industrial products manufacturer partnered with Dozuki to create a scalable, multi-facility digital training solution based on a foundation of digital work instructions.

Facing a wave of retirements among veteran employees, the company needed to capture and transfer essential, experience-based knowledge to a new generation.

These improvements enabled less-experienced operators to follow clear, standardized instructions, minimizing reliance on veteran workers. Within two years, the company scaled

to over 100 facilities, empowering their workforce and boosting productivity across operations with Dozuki.

With the Dozuki platform, the company achieved:
- 50% reduction in new employee onboarding time
- 50% decrease in authoring time for work instructions
- 40% reduction in changeover labor time
- 40% faster training times

Read the Full Case Study

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Digital Work Instructions in Dozuki

Dozuki is a digital solution that boosts productivity, quality, and safety by engaging and upskilling the frontline workforce with accessible knowledge and know-how.

Since 2011, Dozuki has been dedicated to enabling a connected workforce across a diverse range of manufacturing industries. Over 520 companies trust Dozuki to support their operational needs at scale.

Visit dozuki.com

Dozuki Customers...

• Reduce process documentation time by 50%

• Cut new hire training time by 75%

• Minimize changeover times by 63%

• Increase overall equipment effectiveness (OEE) by 50%

Enabling the Frontline Workforce Since 2011