

Your action plan

# Building a resilient frontline workforce



Axonify™

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# A plan to keep your business moving forward

The coronavirus pandemic has introduced a level of business disruption that we've never seen before. Stores and restaurants are closed. Customer spending habits are shifting. The fundamentals of how work is done are changing on a daily basis. No one entered this time of disruption with a plan and we've all been learning as we go.

What's clear is the role the frontline will (continue to) play in bringing our next normal to life. The frontline workforce is proving they are essential to our organizations and our communities. Their resilience will be the key to our recovery. They need your help to get ready for what comes next—whether it's tomorrow, next week or six months from now.

Everyone wants to do their best work while staying safe. However, without the right information and support, frontline employees can't perform effectively or confidently. That's why we've curated proven practices from operations, human resources and talent development teams—in hundreds of companies across dozens of industries around the world—into a single blueprint.

## What's in it for you?

Whether you're in grocery or manufacturing, hospitality or logistics, financial services, retail or food service, we hope you can benefit from the shared experience of your global peers to better understand the seven most influential factors in building a resilient frontline.



On the pages that follow, we'll walk through each of these areas and provide step-by-step guidance on how you can apply the proven practices within your organization. All of the information in this blueprint is agnostic. You can leverage these concepts in a variety of ways, regardless of the specific content or technology used.

There's no time to waste in mapping out your frontline resilience strategy. So let's dive in.



# Your frontline priorities

Disruption puts every business in a unique position. Even organizations in the same industry are impacted in different ways. This distinctiveness continues as business decisions are influenced by regional regulations and customer needs. This action plan is designed to meet you where you are and develop the capabilities you need most to build a resilient frontline. As disruption evolves, organizations typically fit within one of the following three statuses.

Look for the disruption status icons below as you read through this guide to see how they affect each area being explored.

## What’s your disruption status?

		
<b>Normalize</b>	<b>Restore</b>	<b>Shift</b>

Your business continues to operate through disruption. You’re doing your best to work through the changes while developing a new plan to implement as your organization finds its “next normal.”

Your business has been heavily impacted by disruption. Your operation is shut down or extremely limited. You must develop a plan to bring your business back to life safely and efficiently.

Your business continues to operate through disruption, but you have made major changes to how you operate. You must develop a plan to sustain some (or all) of these changes into the future as you find the next normal for your organization.

## Sur-thriving in a state of continual change

As disruption persists, your organization may change status based on operational needs. Different functions or divisions within the business may also find themselves in separate statuses. In every case, frontline performance is a critical part of your resilience plan. After all, even the best plan will fail if the frontline can’t execute. Your business won’t survive in the short term (and thrive in the long term) if you don’t put the right focus on your frontline.

# Some things to set you up for success

Although this **action plan digs into seven areas that most significantly impact frontline resilience**, you may identify only two or three that you need to develop. Or, you may decide that all seven will play important parts in your business resilience plan. As you adopt these practices, keep the following priorities in mind.

- 
- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>1. Safety</b>     | Resilience is about people, not employees. Your staff is concerned for themselves and their families. You need your employees and customers to trust that your organization is taking every precaution possible to protect their safety. Your resilience plan must be people-first. |
| <b>2. Simplicity</b> | Your plan should keep everyone in your team on the same page at all times. People don't have time to deal with convoluted processes or unreliable technology, especially on the frontline.  |
| <b>3. Speed</b>      | Change will persist. It will move faster than your traditional processes. Your plan should keep up with the changing needs of your business and your people.  |
| <b>4. Scale</b>      | You may start slow, but disruption doesn't allow for too much trial and error. Your plan should help you make smart decisions to accelerate through early success. You must be able to expand on your ideas without adding disruption on the frontline.                             |
| <b>5. Compliance</b> | Stakes are high. Risk is everywhere. Regulation is coming. Your plan should help you mitigate risk and keep up with new requirements, without adding more headaches.  |
| <b>6. Impact</b>     | Your plan isn't about learning, but learning will be its foundation. It's about impact: creating measurable results for your business through a high-performance, highly resilient frontline workforce.   |
- 

**Who is considered a frontline employee?** They usually work in hourly or commissioned roles and interact directly with your customers and products as part of their everyday work. They are grocery clerks and retail associates, contact center agents and healthcare workers, delivery drivers, hospitality employees, professional sales teams and more. And they make up approximately 80% of the global workforce.















# Get focused

## Assess your frontline resilience

This document focuses on the seven most influential factors in building a resilient frontline. They are proven practices you can apply to prepare your frontline in times of disruption.



Every organization is in a unique position based on how they've been impacted by disruption. So resilience planning needs will vary. You may also have a variety of frontline enablement practices in place that you can leverage as part of your resilience plan. The current disruption status of your business may help you determine which capabilities are most relevant right now.

	 Restore	 Shift	 Normalize
 <b>1. Communications</b>	Orange	Green	Blue
 <b>2. Access</b>	Orange	Green	Blue
 <b>3. Reinforcement</b>	Orange	Green	Blue
 <b>4. Reboarding</b>	Orange	White	White
 <b>5. Cross-Training</b>	White	Green	White
 <b>6. Onboarding</b>	White	White	Blue
 <b>7. Compliance</b>	White	White	Blue

# How to use this assessment

This assessment will help you identify gaps in your existing frontline resilience capabilities. You can then prioritize your actions moving forward and focus on the most important parts of this blueprint based on your needs.

---

**First:** Select a response to each capability statement in the charts on the pages that follow.

**YES** = We can do this consistently right now

**NO** = We are unable to do this consistently right now

**N/A** = This concept is new for us

You can leave the **PRIORITY** column empty for now. We'll come back to it.

---

**Second:** Add up your responses

- If you respond **YES** to three or more items within a section, then you may already have that capability covered.
  - If you respond **NO** or **N/A** to three or more statements within a section, then you should review the information for that factor within this blueprint in greater detail.
- 

**Third:** Explore and learn

Review the sections of this document that are most relevant for you based on the assessment on the next few pages. Then return to this chart and prioritize each of the areas you will need to work as part of your larger frontline resilience plan.

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Need help? Reach out at [axonify.com/hello](https://axonify.com/hello)

# How does your organization stack up?

	Yes	No	N/A	Priority
<b>1. Communications</b>				
We reach our entire frontline with timely messages within 3 days.				
We make it easy for employees to access on-demand information in the flow of work.				
We reinforce important communications with ongoing training and coaching.				
We report on our frontline communications to ensure messages are received in a timely manner.				
<b>2. Access</b>				
We leverage devices available in the workflow to make training and support easy to access.				
We use mobile devices to make training and support easier to access in the flow of work.				
We have a BYOD policy that promotes the use of employee devices within guidelines.				
We leverage single sign-on and other integrations to maintain IT security and ease of use.				
<b>3. Reinforcement</b>				
We find natural stopping points in the flow of work to provide reinforcement activities.				
We provide access to reinforcement training through devices available in the flow of work.				
We build reinforcement activities that fit seamlessly into the flow of work.				
We use engagement tactics that motivate employees to access training almost every shift.				



## 4. Reboarding

We've identified critical changes in job behaviors that will impact performance when employees return.

We build right-fit training resources that focus on changing employee habits safely and quickly.

We deploy communications and training before employees return to the workplace.

We reinforce new job behaviors with ongoing training and coaching.

## 5. Cross-Training

We provide targeted training on new job tasks and roles that focus on just what employees need to know and do to get started.

We personalize training based on each employee's proven knowledge and skill.

We provide on-demand resources right away so employees can solve problems quickly.

We reinforce knowledge on new job tasks with ongoing training and coaching.

## 6. Onboarding

We avoid firehosing employees with information by focusing on just essential job knowledge.

We provide on-demand resources right away so employees can solve problems quickly.

We provide personalized learning paths so employees get the right level of support.

We reinforce important onboarding topics with ongoing training and coaching.

## 7. Compliance

We always clarify the true regulation requirements before building compliance training solutions.

We maintain compliance without having to chase people down to complete their training.

We reinforce important compliance behaviors with ongoing training and coaching.

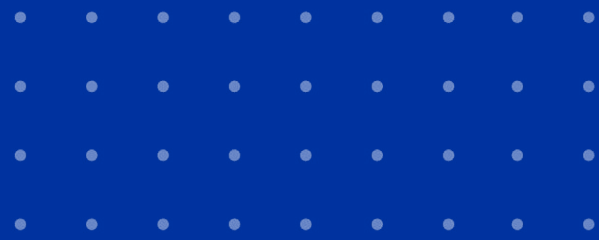
We report on changes in employee knowledge and job behavior related to compliance regulations.



**All done? Head to the section(s) that your organization most needs to focus on.**

Up next

7 areas to explore



# The 7 most influential factors in building a resilient frontline

A traditional frontline support strategy—with a heavy emphasis on event-based training—isn't designed to make your people resilient. It simply can't keep up with the demands put on the frontline during times of disruption. This can result in an abrupt breakdown of frontline support. People may still receive basic job training, but the use of inconsistent, ad hoc practices introduces new, potentially long-term challenges for your organization. If you don't have the right drivers in place, you put your employees, customers and business at risk.

## When your frontline has the support to succeed, your business will too

The insights in the next seven sections will help you solve some of the most common challenges in frontline performance. Together, they form a blueprint for building a frontline workforce that's ready for whatever comes next, from updated operational processes and role requirements to new regulations and technologies.

Disruption waits for nobody, so let's get started.





## Disruption status



Normalize



Restore



Shift

Communications has stood out in every conversation we've had about frontline resilience.

This section of the guide will walk through four steps for rapidly improving your frontline communications.

1. Digitize

2. Simplify

3. Prioritize

4. Reinforce

**“In pandemic planning and most things HR, the answer is communication, communication, communication.”**

Aston Moss, General Manager,  
Human Resources,  
Briscoe Group Limited

**B** BRISCOE  
GROUP LIMITED

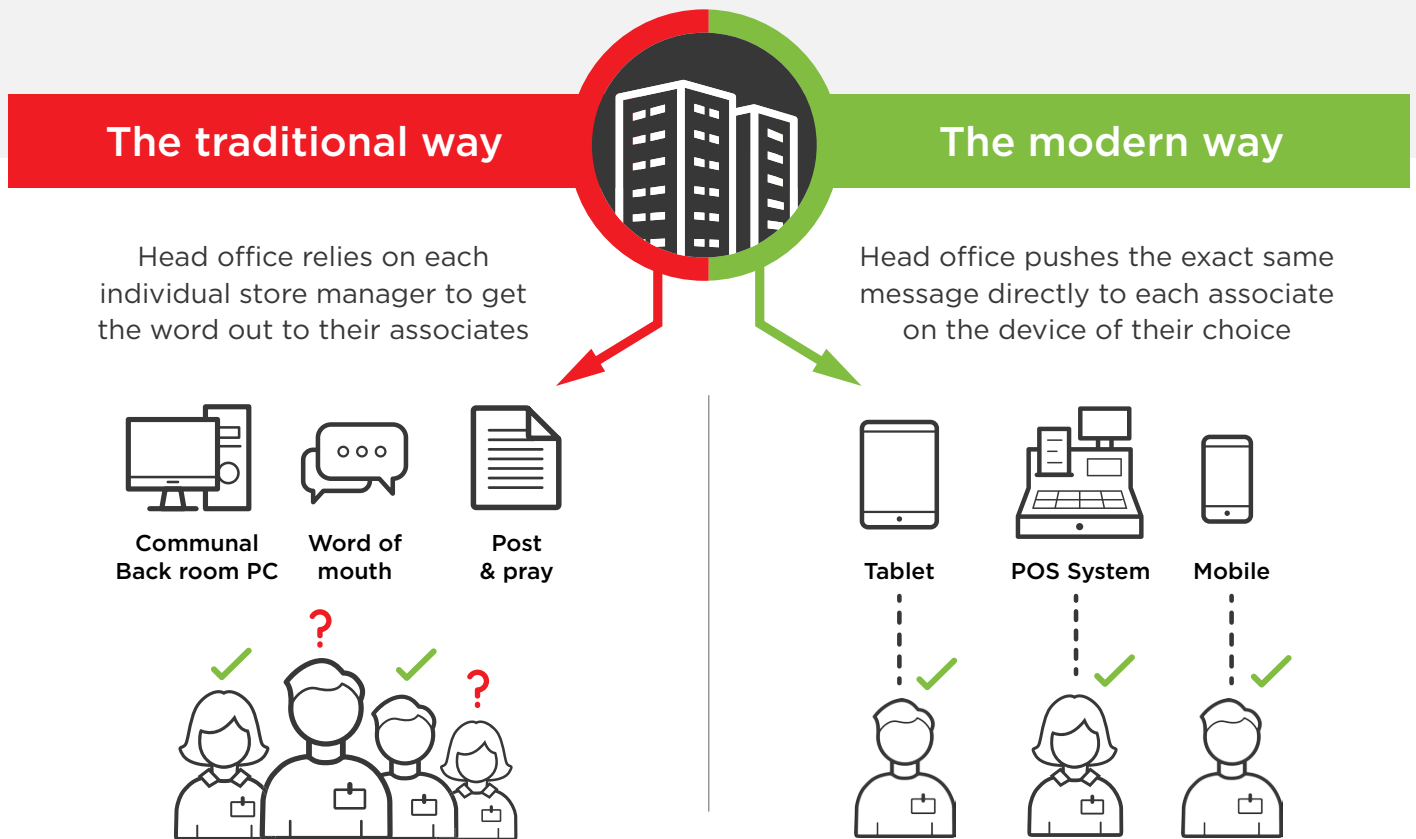




## Keep your entire frontline on the same page—no matter how fast things change

The workplace is in a constant state of change. Safety guidelines. Job processes. Product availability. Employees are having a hard time keeping up with it all. This is especially true for those who don't have a work email.

Unfortunately, frontline employees end up relying on the same-old slow, inconsistent methods, including bulletin boards, time clock postings and team huddles. Without the latest information, they can't do their jobs safely and productively. And management can never be sure who received the message or who didn't notice the latest flyer. Since awareness is the first step to resilience, prioritizing frontline communications makes a lot of sense.





# Communications

## 5 steps for rapidly improving your frontline communications

### The traditional way

**Broken telephone.** Corporate office sends a message to regional management. Regional management forwards the message to team management. Team management shares the information in a huddle and posts the email on a bulletin board ... when they get to it. This process slows down essential updates and leaves a ton of room for error.

**Hard to find.** Frontline people waste too much time hunting for information, which often means information just goes unnoticed since they don't have the extra time to spare. At home, frontline employees can solve complex problems through a simple Google search. Give them the same experience at work.

**Too much noise.** A message may be extremely important to your department. But every other department also has their own very important messages for the frontline. When every message is "critical", employees get bombarded with information and the really important stuff gets lost.

**One-and-done.** People won't do their jobs differently just because you told them to once. You may believe your communications are actionable, but if you want people to change their behavior, you have to tell them—over and over again.

### The modern way

**Digitize.** You can eliminate the cascade problem and get important information from anyone in the company directly to everyone on the frontline using digital communications. A bring your own device (BYOD) strategy that takes advantage of personal devices can give employees even greater control over their workplace communications.

**Simplify.** Effective frontline communication requires a balance of push and pull. Push the most important messages directly to employees to ensure timely awareness and application. Make this information, along with less critical messages, available to employees on-demand via a knowledge hub or company intranet. Make sure everyone (senders and receivers) understand how each channel is used. Make simplicity and consistency the hallmarks of your frontline communications plan.

**Prioritize.** Work across departments to push only the right messages via the right channels at the right time. Make everything else easy to find on-demand when people need it. Don't just focus your communication plan on work topics. Reinforce your company culture by including motivational and inspirational messages with company updates.

**Reinforce.** Continual reminders help your people identify the most important information and put it into practice in their everyday work. You can reinforce knowledge using a blend of tactics. Use a quick activity with scenario-based questions to challenge their ability to apply their knowledge before each shift. Managers can also reinforce important workplace behaviors through on-the-job observation and coaching.



**Proven practice!** The Briscoe Group in New Zealand leveraged their brand ambassadors, including world-class athletes, chefs and musicians, to share video messages of inspiration and hope with their furloughed retail staff via their learning and communications app during a multi-week nation-wide lockdown.



[axonify.com/communications](https://axonify.com/communications)

Up next

Access



## Access points and BYOD

### Disruption status



Normalize



Restore



Shift

**Getting frontline employees the timely information they need to do their jobs is challenging under the best circumstances. Big disruptions increase the challenges exponentially, especially if they can no longer rely on shared devices to stay informed. So, there's never been a better time to rethink your bring your own device (BYOD) policy.**

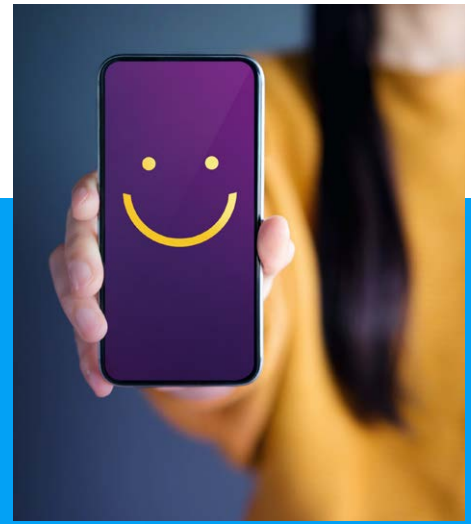
In this section you'll dig into six proven tactics for implementing an effective BYOD strategy for your frontline workforce.

1. Use a disclaimer
2. Integrate with single sign-on
3. Design a simple experience
4. Gate network access
5. Provide a stipend
6. Integrate with existing mobile apps

**“During a time where physical distancing is key, we are grateful that the Axonify app eliminates the need for sharing devices and gives our Team Members a safe and accessible platform where they can continue their training, while social distancing.”**

Crystal Hay, WM Training & Communications Coordinator,  
Home Hardware Distribution





# Get your frontline the information they need—on the devices they're most comfortable with

Disruption creates a persistent and potentially overwhelming state of change for frontline employees. They need constant access to timely information and training in order to do their jobs. But the frontline has been historically difficult to reach due to the nature of their work and limited available time on the job.

Getting information to frontline employees is even more challenging if they have to leave work for an extended period, as they can't rely on shared devices, such as break room kiosks or office computers. Many employees who continue to report to work have expressed safety concerns about using shared devices. Frankly, even a shared device requires an employee to step away from their work for too long. During a time of disruption (and beyond), they need better access if you want them to do their best work.



Using mobile devices for learning is proven to drive frontline training frequency up by as much as

# 42%

Source: Axonify 2018 Global Benchmark Report



Personal devices can help organizations overcome these challenges.



Employees can protect themselves by using the devices they're already carrying (and cleaning).



They can access job information from home if needed because their device is always with them.



Using the device in their pocket to find a job aid or complete a practice activity is a lot more convenient than leaving their work area to find a shared device.



### 6 proven tactics for implementing a BYOD strategy for your frontline

Legacy IT baggage, security concerns, bad technology and legal considerations have limited the use of personal devices on the frontline. But that hasn't stopped employees from continuing to carry (and use) their smartphones at work. Here are some ideas for meeting them where they are with a BYOD strategy.

#### Use a disclaimer

Add a disclaimer to your mobile learning app login screen that states the rules regarding employee access. For example, your disclaimer may state that hourly associates can only use the app during scheduled shifts in accordance with company or regulatory guidelines. By logging in, employees are agreeing to this statement and can be held accountable as needed.

#### Gate network access

If you have to limit employee training to times when they are physically at work due to internal or external regulations, you can still allow them to use their own devices. Restrict access to your mobile learning app to your specific wifi network. If someone tries to access the app away from the workplace, they won't be granted access.

#### Integrate with single sign-on

Leverage single sign-on integrations so employees can use the same credentials for your mobile learning app as they do for other workplace systems. This will simplify the user experience and mitigate a range of potential IT and security concerns.

#### Provide a stipend

Some employees may be concerned that using their own devices for work will increase the data usage on their monthly phone bills. First, be sure to select a mobile learning app that can deliver high-quality content without hogging network bandwidth. Then, consider providing each employee with a small stipend to pay for the added data typically required for personal device use. This expense can likely be offset by the budget you will save by not buying and maintaining additional workplace devices.

#### Design a simple experience

Employees won't spend time in your mobile learning app if it's a frustrating, low-value experience—regardless of the device they use. Design a simple experience that focuses only on the information each employee needs. Direct employees to the training that will provide the most value. Build content that is short and searchable so it can be used for rapid learning and problem solving.

#### Integrate with existing mobile apps

Are you already using other mobile apps, such as time and attendance tools, that employees access on their personal devices? Integrate your learning app with these platforms so you can take advantage of your existing IT infrastructure. With a well-designed integration, employees may not even notice they are using multiple apps



**Proven practice!** At a North American sports retailer, 78% of their digital training is completed on personal mobile devices. Their legal team created a user agreement that every employee must digitally sign before they begin their training, which is only permitted during working hours.







# Reinforcement

## Disruption status



Normalize



Restore



Shift

**People forget. It's how our brains work. Unfortunately, in workplace training, we often forget that people forget. That's why we're so disappointed when people don't change their on-the-job behavior after training. But chances are they barely remember anything they learned if it isn't reinforced.**

This section will present six steps to making learning stick on the frontlines through high-impact reinforcement activities.

Step 1: Find 5 minutes

Step 2: Find an access point

Step 3: Identify high-value topics

Step 4: Design right-fit activities

Step 5: Engage

Step 6: Measure and adapt

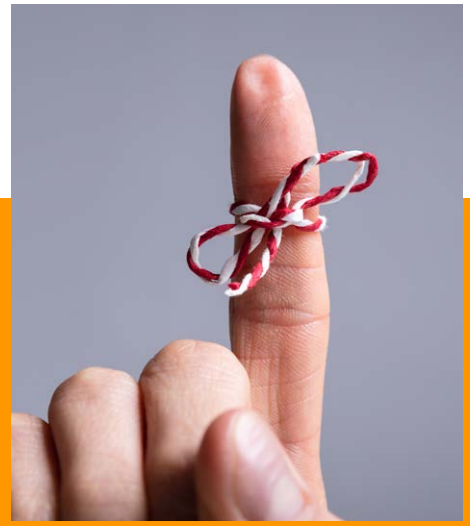
**“Education is no longer viewed as an event, but as a series of well-timed and sequenced interactions that give employees the skills they need to be successful.”**

Global Logistics Training Manager





# Break old habits and build new ones—FAST



Reinforcement is an essential part of any modern frontline training strategy. Think of it like practice. This is how you overcome people's natural tendency to forget and make sure they have the information they need top of mind so they can make the right decisions. This is especially important during times of disruption. As the operation rapidly changes, employees have to change the way they do their work. In some cases, they must break habits they've built over the course of years on the job. This can't happen overnight. And it certainly won't happen after watching a single video or reading a flyer on the bulletin board.

### Some good news.

While many organizations don't apply reinforcement and therefore limit the impact of their training, it doesn't have to be that way. Reinforcement activities are easy to build and fit seamlessly into the frontline workflow. Plus, reinforcement builds knowledge and confidence so employees are ready to do the right things when it matters most.

## Here are six steps to making frontline learning stick through high-impact reinforcement activities.

### ☑ Step 1: Find 5 minutes

Time is a major obstacle for frontline training. Luckily, reinforcement only takes a few minutes during an employee's shift. Explore the workflow for your frontline audience. Answer questions such as ...

- How do they use their time during their shift?
- Where do they spend their time both on shift and during breaks?
- How and where do they begin and end their shift?
- Do they regularly attend any meetings?

Find natural stopping points within the typical day that you can use for simple, targeted practice activities. Most employees have 5 minutes available at some point in their day, even when things are disruptive.



**Proven practice!** A logistics team realized their lift truck drivers were required to charge their batteries for 5 to 10 minutes at least once per shift. After they positioned a training computer next to the battery charging station to provide daily reinforcement training, they quickly saw participation skyrocket to over 90%.



# Reinforcement

## ☑ Step 2: Find an access point

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How will you get the training to your frontline employees? For digital solutions, such as question-based and adaptive learning, you'll need an available, internet-connected device.

Do frontline employees use devices on the job, such as point of sale systems, mobile devices or desktop computers?

- Do they have access to devices in the breakroom or near the time clock?
- Are they permitted to use their personal smartphones for work purposes?
- Are you able to move an existing device or position a new device closer to their workspace?

You may decide to use a range of access channels based on what's most convenient for employees. You may also consider non-digital reinforcement activities, such as huddle meetings, sign postings and other low-tech options, if needed.

## ☑ Step 3: Identify high-value topics

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Remember, employees won't engage in daily training just because you provide content. Make sure every reinforcement topic meets three criteria:

1. It will clearly help employees do their jobs better.
2. It will support a current business priority.
3. It can be delivered via the available channel(s).

## ☑ Step 4: Design right-fit activities

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Your solution design will be informed by the steps you've completed so far. It has to fit within the available time (5 minutes or less), be delivered via the chosen access point(s) and effectively reinforce the selected topic(s). Depending on your available resources, you can use a variety of tactics to reinforce essential job knowledge. These may include:

- Questions
- Scenarios
- Brief videos
- Stories
- Reflection

Microlearning is a great fit for reinforcement. You can apply a range of content options that fit within the available time. It also takes advantage of proven learning science principles, such as spaced repetition. Combining microlearning with question-based learning allows you to take advantage of a concept called retrieval practice, which strengthens long-term retention through the application of knowledge.





## Reinforcement



**Proven practice!** A national telecommunications retailer let employees earn points for completing daily training. They could then redeem their points for tickets in prize drawings. They quickly achieved over 94% participation in voluntary training.

### ☑ Step 5: Engage

Just because you built it doesn't mean they will come. Employees have to be "sold" on the value of dedicating 5 minutes of their busy day to training. Engagement tactics must also align with your culture. For example, if you have a naturally competitive team, gamification tactics— including points, achievements and leaderboards—may work best. Consider a rewards program that recognizes employees for their continued dedication to their development.

Ultimately, the best way to engage frontline employees in continuous learning is to provide clear value. Help them solve real problems and do their jobs better, and they will come back to learn.

### ☑ Step 6: Measure and adapt

Ongoing reinforcement provides you with an opportunity to pulse check what your frontline employees know (and what they don't know). This will help you better adapt your reinforcement to meet individual needs. It can also help you understand how effective your initial training and onboarding programs are based on employees' ability to retain and apply the information they learned.

Employees may not perform to expectations even if they know what they should do. Performance is influenced by a range of factors, including environment, processes, tools, engagement, safety, etc. By measuring both knowledge and behavior, you can determine if there is a disconnect between what an employee knows and what they're doing on the job, and recommend the appropriate solution.



[axonify.com/reinforcement](https://axonify.com/reinforcement)

Up next

Reboarding



# Reboarding

## Disruption status

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Restore

When the pandemic started many organizations were forced to close their doors temporarily, with no real plan in place to bring staff back (and quickly). Industry, region, regulation and public health will all play a factor in your company's restoration strategy. No one can afford to make a mistake by reopening a business without a plan. You'll need the right components in place so your frontline employees can return to work safely, productively and confidently.

This next section outlines eight steps companies in heavily disrupted industries are applying to reboard their frontline workforces.

1. Get aligned on your reopening plan
2. Identify critical frontline job changes
3. Build right-fit training and resources
4. Start frontline reboarding early
5. Implement focused job training
6. Continue to communicate
7. Reinforce critical behaviors
8. Measure impact

A US-based furniture retailer had to reboard their sales associates making sure they were quickly up to speed on new standard operating procedures brought on by the pandemic.





# Get your frontline back to work safely and efficiently

After restrictions lift, employees will return to a very different workplace than the one they left in many cases. You'll ask them to do their jobs—things they've done the same way for years—very differently. You'll also ask them to balance their personal concerns with the need to return to work. This makes reboarding a critical part of many frontline resilience plans.

So, how can you bring people back to work safely and efficiently in a way that inspires employee, management and customer confidence?

### What's the plan?

Organizations may have a process for bringing individual employees back to work after a leave or a business continuity plan to overcome the impact of natural disasters or seasonality. But most don't have a plan for shutting down and then restarting large portions of the business after a period of weeks or months.

## Eight proven steps for successfully reboarding frontline workforces

### ✓ 1. Get aligned on your reopening plan

Reboarding will be driven by a collection of stakeholders, including operations, safety, human resources and training. Get everyone on the same page regarding the company's overall strategy or you won't know how to integrate your frontline workforce into the big picture. Ask your partners for critical strategy details, including:

- When do we plan to reopen?
- Will we reopen all at once or will it take place in phases based location/region/country?
- What parts of our operation will reopen immediately? What parts may be delayed or remain shut down?
- What will our customer experience look like when we reopen?
- How will our product and service offerings change over the short and long term?



# Reboarding

## ✓ 2. Identify critical frontline job changes

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Once you understand how your business will operate over the short term, you must determine how these changes will impact frontline job performance. Specifically, how will frontline employees be expected to change their on-the-job behaviors based on the current operating environment?

- Will employees be required to complete new screening processes before starting work?
- Will they be required to complete new job tasks or use new tools/equipment/technologies?
- How do you expect them to interact with customers (service, purchases, payment, returns, etc.) based on new operating guidelines?

Avoid the temptation to stay high level with this information. Break new employee expectations down to specific, measurable job behaviors. Clarify what “good” should look like in real life, on-the-job execution. You’ll need this information to build training, resources and communications that leads to sustainable real-world behavior change.

## ✓ 3. Build right-fit training and resources

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Build just what you need to execute your reboarding strategy. Your employees won’t have time for days or weeks of training. Likewise, your team won’t have weeks or months to build lengthy online courses and job training programs. Instead, use a results-focused approach to design solutions to help the frontline quickly (and safely) develop critical on-the-job behaviors.

Your reboarding solution should include components such as:

- **Job training checklists.** Managers and trainers will use these guides to ensure consistent and comprehensive on-the-job training for every employee.
- **Assessments.** Knowledge and skill assessments will ensure employees can meet new requirements in the real world, not just complete the training.
- **On-demand resources.** Employees will need access to performance support on-demand so they can get help solving problems as they come up on the job.
- **Reinforcement activities.** Employees are likely to forget new information or slip into old habits due to the speed of change. Using 2 or 3 minutes every shift for targeted practice activities will make sure new learning sticks and new habits form.
- **Coaching tools.** Frontline managers will play a critical role in reinforcing the right job behaviors through continued observation and coaching. They may need their own training and resources as well as actionable data to proactively identify and close frontline performance gaps.





# Reboarding

## ✓ 4. Start frontline reboarding early

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Kickstart your reboarding process before your employees fully return to work so they're prepared for the changes they'll encounter. Remember: you may be reboarding groups of employees in phases based on location.

Leverage personal devices to provide digital communications, training and resources to employees while they're still at home. Have a backup plan for employees who may not own a smartphone or computer. By starting your reboarding process early, your employees will be ready for hands-on training as soon as they walk through the door. This will also help you get managers and trainers ready for the roles they'll play in the reboarding process.

## ✓ 5. Implement focused job training

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Once frontline employees are back in the workplace, focus their training on topics that will help them do their jobs safely and productively.

- Provide trainers with clear instructions and comprehensive guides to make sure they cover topics consistently and thoroughly.
- Use digital training to introduce new topics and cover essential regulatory requirements.
- Conduct practical assessments to make sure people really know how to do their jobs based on new expectations.

## ✓ 6. Continue to communicate

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People may be back on the job, but changes will continue as long as disruption continues (and beyond, based on the nature of frontline work). Establish consistent communication channels for your frontline. Maintain your frontline communication plan. Review reporting to determine if messages are being seen in a timely manner. Survey employees to determine what is/ is not working and adjust accordingly.







# Reboarding

## ☑ 7. Reinforce critical behaviors

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People won't change the way they behave just because you tell them to. This is especially true when someone has been doing things a certain way for a long time. To make the learning stick, you have to provide opportunities for reinforcement.

- Reinforcement can come in a variety of forms, including:
- Introduce daily training by asking employees 2 or 3 scenario-based questions at the start of each shift.
- Supply guided practice activities employees can complete by themselves or with a peer.
- Provide managers with coaching recommendations to support critical job changes.

## ☑ 8. Measure impact

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It's more important than ever to know if your solutions are having the intended impact. Your reboarding plan must have clear, measurable outcomes. This may include a variety of metrics, such as health and safety, compliance and customer satisfaction. You may not have time to rethink your approach to learning measurement, but you can quickly introduce meaningful metrics to your reboarding plan.

- Partner with business stakeholders to track changes in business metrics that are influenced by frontline performance.
- Track how many communications you're deploying to your frontline and how quickly they are being read/acknowledged.
- Measure knowledge changes in critical topics through ongoing reinforcement activities.
- Provide managers with observation guides they can use to track and coach to changes in essential job behaviors.





## Disruption status

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Shift

**This period of significant disruption has many organizations turning to cross-training their employees to meet demand. But you need certain mechanisms in place to rapidly cross-training your workforce to meet new operational needs.**

This next section dives into the key things you should be considering if you're preparing to cross-train frontline employees to thrive in your new environment.

1. Essential job knowledge/skill requirements
2. Data on existing knowledge and skills
3. Personalized learning paths
4. On-demand resources
5. Reinforcement activities





# Get your frontline ready to roll—whatever the role

Disruption can lead to sudden changes in operational demands and role expectations. To meet new or increased customer needs, you may have to shift frontline employees into new roles with minimal time for training. For example, in-store retail associates may suddenly become at-home customer service agents. The ability to put people into the right places at the necessary times, regardless of their current role, is an important part of business resilience.

## What is cross-training?

Cross-training is the practice of rapidly upskilling or reskilling employees to take on additional job tasks or entirely new roles. It has strong similarities to onboarding in that an employee is learning new topics. But you shouldn't use the same plan for both onboarding and cross-training. Existing employees bring knowledge and experience to a new role. Putting them through the same foundational training as new employees will likely waste their time and slow their transition into the operation unnecessarily. Here are the things you need to have in place to rapidly cross-train frontline employees to meet new operational needs.



**Proven practice!** Employees at a regional grocery chain were moved into contact center roles to help with increased online orders. They were provided with a social knowledge base where they could ask questions and share new information. The team collaborated on how to solve new problems together, which reduced the need for additional training.



# Cross-training

Rapid cross-training requires...	Why it's important	What you should do
<b>Essential job knowledge/skill requirements</b>	Each role should be broken down into essential knowledge and skill topics. (Note: This isn't a comprehensive list of everything someone would possibly need to know to do this job as effectively as possible. It's more targeted.)	Focus on the minimum behaviors you expect an employee to execute in order to get started.  Use other tactics to fill in the blanks and get the employee into the role as quickly as possible.
<b>Data on existing knowledge and skills</b>	To avoid wasting an employee's time with training they don't need, you have to know what knowledge and skill they are bringing to their new role.	Compare the knowledge/skill requirements of their existing role to the new role to find overlaps. Review data from past training as well as on-the-job observations and key performance indicators to identify their existing expertise.
<b>Personalized learning paths</b>	Personalization ensures employees cover only the topics they need so they can get into the operation quickly and with at least foundational knowledge and skill.	Get clear role requirements along with an understanding of existing capability. Rely on an advanced learning and data platform to personalize individual learning paths at scale
<b>On-demand resources</b>	After their formal training, employees can use these resources to solve problems on the fly and continue learning as they become more experienced in their new roles.	Provide a simple, searchable knowledge base with easy-to-use job aids and performance support tools. Make sure employees know where to go to get timely help if they have questions.
<b>Reinforcement activities</b>	Changing roles, even temporarily, can be an overwhelming experience for many employees. So it's important to reinforce essential job knowledge that may be forgotten after their expedited cross-training.	Use brief reinforcement activities, such as question-based learning, reflection, and scenarios, to give employees the opportunity to practice their new skills for a few minutes every shift. Help managers target their observation and coaching activities on essential job skills for newly cross-trained employees.



[axonify.com/on-the-job-performance](https://axonify.com/on-the-job-performance)

Up next

Onboarding



# Onboarding

## Disruption status



Normalize

Onboarding shouldn't be a program with set start/end dates. It's the beginning of an ongoing learning and support experience that will be an integral part of a new employee's everyday work. The beginning may be more programmatic to make sure an employee is ready to handle the basics of their job, but the training doesn't stop once they step into the operation.

This section outlines seven practices you can apply to modernize your frontline onboarding to focus on what matters most up front, then continue to build knowledge and confidence over time.

1. Identify essential knowledge and skills
2. Build solutions that fit
3. Personalize their path
4. Start early
5. Begin performance support immediately
6. Assess knowledge through application
7. Reinforce and expand

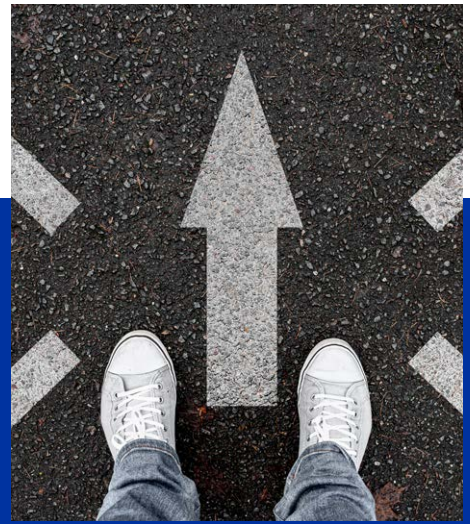
76%

of employees believe training in their first week is the most critical factor in their decision to stay or leave, according to The Aberdeen Group.





## Onboarding



# Accelerate your speed to contribution so people can do the jobs they were hired to do

How long does it take you to get a new employee into the operation when your business hasn't been disrupted? A few days? A week? Two months? Whatever the duration may be, it's probably too long.

Your frontline employees were hired to do a job. Your managers need them to start doing that job ASAP. Now factor disruption into your traditional onboarding program. Management may need new hires in-role almost immediately to handle a surge in customer demand. You may also need to augment your reboarding program with rapid onboarding to fill staffing gaps. Regardless, traditional onboarding that firehoses new employees with information they can't possibly remember to apply on the job just doesn't work.

**“Our onboarding ramp time reduced dramatically, from 35 days before Axonify to 10 days after Axonify. That’s saving us thousands of dollars per person.”**

Gianna Venturi, Chief People Officer  
Eyemart Express



### A modern approach to onboarding

Here are seven practices you can apply to modernize your frontline onboarding and get people to work safely and efficiently.

#### Identify essential knowledge and skills

**Cut off the firehose.** A new employee already has plenty on their mind on the first day. Their questions about when and how they get paid will always trump your “Four Pillars of Great Customer Service” course. You can't include every possible topic in your structured training.

**Work with subject matter experts.** Clarify which topics are absolutely essential before an employee can enter the operation. If it's a need-to-know item, it should be included as formal training, such as a video, online course or classroom session. If it's nice-to-know, meaning it will not be immediately applied on the job, it should be provided as performance support.



# Onboarding

## ✓ Build solutions that fit

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Once you know exactly what knowledge and skills need to be covered during formal training, build the right solutions for those topics. The best solution for every topic will not be a course. Use the full scope of your learning ecosystem to provide resources that fit into the working experience. Some topics may require videos while others can be covered with job aids or learning questions. Your onboarding solution will likely be a blended learning experience that leverages assets such as:

- Job training checklists
- eLearning
- Videos
- Practice activities
- Job aids
- Question-based learning

Courses will still be needed to cover more complex topics, but they should be limited due to the required time and focus for completion.

## ✓ Personalize their path

---

Some of your new employees are also new to this type of job. Some are new to your company but have been doing this kind of work for years. So everyone needs personalized support based on their existing knowledge and skill.

- Apply adaptive learning principles and technology to quickly identify and close each new hire's knowledge and skill gaps.
- Allow experienced employees to accelerate their onboarding while you reinforce challenging topics with less experienced team members.
- Provide managers with actionable data during your onboarding program so they can provide targeted coaching.

## ✓ Start early

---

Preboarding is an established but not commonly applied training practice, especially on the frontline. People typically begin their training on their first full day of work. But this can lead to early confusion and potential safety considerations, especially during times of disruption.

- Use digital resources and personal mobile access to deploy introductory training so the new hire can come to work prepared for their first full shift.
- Make sure they are ready to handle any unique safety or security considerations.
- Provide them with a foundational understanding of their role so job training can accelerate the onboarding process.





# Onboarding

## ✓ Begin performance support immediately

---

People don't need to be trained on how to look up information. You just need to provide a simple, searchable experience and they'll take it from there.

Provide new hires with a knowledge base they can use to supplement their formal training. This will allow you to focus on just essential, need-to-know topics while they can look up everything else on-demand. This performance support can continue into the operation, allowing employees to take even more control over their learning and problem solving experience at work.



**Proven practice!** A large contact center operation in North America built a shared knowledge base for all of their agents that is filled with easy-to-understand information on their processes and products. They make this available to every new hire on day one as a way to narrow their formal training to critical job skills.

## ✓ Assess knowledge through application

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Passing a knowledge test doesn't mean someone is ready to do the job, especially if that job is complicated or dangerous. Knowledge assessment is important to determine if people actually know the information, but it doesn't tell you if they have the confidence and capability to apply it in real world situations.

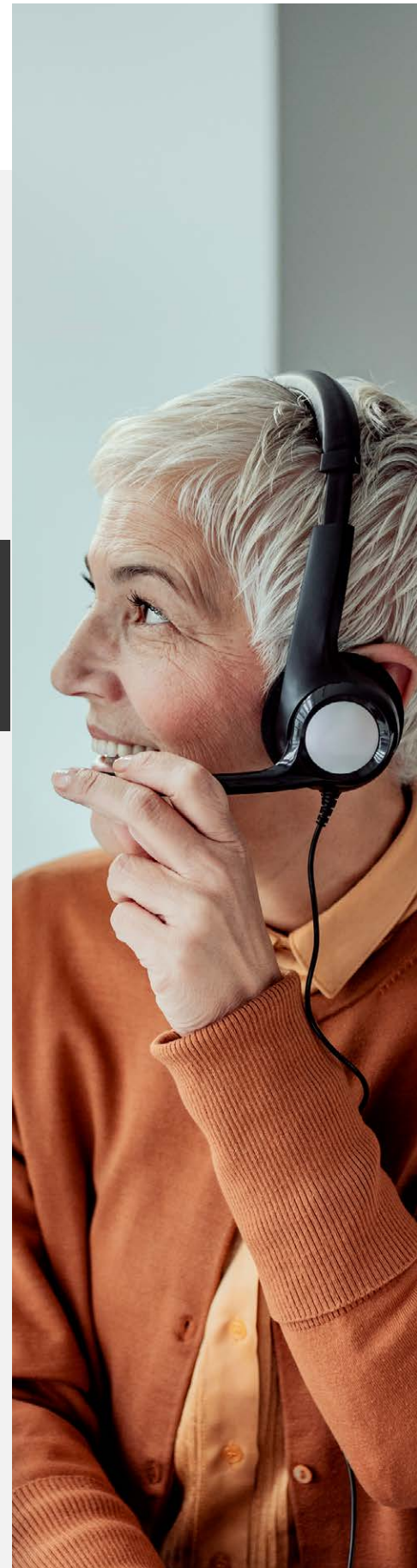
- Use practical assessments to test a new hire's ability to execute essential job tasks.
- Build assessment rubrics with detailed behavior expectations trainers and managers can use to determine if the employee is ready to work on their own.
- Use the data collected during assessments to target your continued reinforcement.

## ✓ Reinforce and expand

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Training shouldn't stop once formal onboarding is completed and an employee is working on their own.

- Continue to reinforce essential job knowledge, especially topics skills that may not be applied regularly, through daily training and coaching.
- Introduce new topics—the stuff you didn't cover during formal training because it wasn't essential—as part of this continued training as employees increase their knowledge and master the basics.



[axonify.com/onboarding](https://axonify.com/onboarding)

Up next

Compliance





# Compliance

## Disruption status



Normalize

Disruption adds complexity to the annoyance of compliance training. When you have to focus on just what's required to keep the operation going, compliance may take a back seat. But, regulators will come knocking eventually, and your delinquency list will become a liability. Disruption also often leads to the introduction of new and enhanced regulatory requirements. This means you'll have to add new training on top of the training employees already haven't done.

This section outlines the five steps you can take to modernize your compliance training strategy:

1. Clarify the requirement
2. Build a right-fit solution
3. Embed training into the workflow
4. Reinforce critical behaviors
5. Report meaningful results

Frontline teams are discovering if you break compliance training down into short, targeted modules, you can get it done faster and with greater impact.





## Mitigate risks to your people and your business

Let's face it: compliance training is annoying. Employees don't see the point. Administrators don't want to chase people down. Even the people who require compliance training usually don't like doing the compliance training. But the requirement for compliance training isn't going away, especially in today's environment. And failing to maintain compliance introduces risk to your business.

How will you catch up with overdue compliance training across hundreds or thousands of frontline employees? And how will you handle new and updated compliance requirements as part of your company's next normal? You need a modern approach to compliance training.

**Regulation will never go away. Large-scale disruption can make it even more complicated. Compliance training must be a cornerstone of your frontline resilience plan. Otherwise you'll keep chasing people around to complete courses and waste your valuable L&D resources on checking boxes.**

### Go beyond checking boxes

Yes, you still need to check the boxes. But you also need to mitigate real risks to your business and help employees make real-world decisions that will keep them and your customers safe. Here are five steps you can take to modernize your compliance training strategy.

#### 1. Clarify the requirement

What does the regulation really say about employee training? Companies are risk averse by nature. That's why Compliance and Legal departments tend to pile extra requirements onto the actual external regulation. Call it an "oops buffer." If you don't hit the internal requirement, you still probably met the external one. Unfortunately, this is what leads to boring compliance courses jam packed with information that no one will actually remember.

Some regulations will still require employees to complete long, boring courses. But you can make them the exception rather than the rule.

- Work with your Legal and Compliance partners to understand the actual requirements for employee training.
- Help them understand the range of options you have for reliably and consistently meeting these standards so they don't have to "augment" regulations unnecessarily. They may be under the impression that a "long boring course" is the only option for meeting the requirement at all.



# Compliance

## ✓ 2. Build a right-fit solution

---

Once you clarify the real compliance requirement, build a solution that fits your employees' actual needs. Your people won't have time to complete a long list of compliance courses. Focus on the desired outcome and what people will be expected to do on the job as related to the regulation. Then, work backwards to determine the right-fit solution.

- Could you cover all required information in a short video?
- Could employees just read the new policy and download a job aid?
- Could you assess people's existing knowledge and let them skip the need for new training altogether?

Build a simple, non-disruptive solution that focuses on what employees actually need to know/do and can consume quickly and easily.

## ✓ 3. Embed training into the workflow

---

Your employees may have dozens of past due compliance topics by the time your business emerges from disruption. That's in addition to new requirements added by your partners and regulators. Your business will also be running lean. Employees will be adjusting to new processes as they try to stay safe and productive. You're not going to be able to remove them from the operation to complete compliance training.

**Make it part of every shift.** Compliance training should fit into your everyday learning approach. Employees won't have hours in their day to spare, but they will have a few minutes before their shift or after a break.

**Make right-fit solutions.** Things like short videos, assessments and job aids can easily fit into their available time. Long courses can be broken down into smaller chunks to allow for episodic consumption over time. By embedding learning into the daily workflow, you'll eliminate the need to chase people down to complete their compliance training.



**Proven practice!** A large global logistics operation uses five minutes during their warehouse workers' shifts to reinforce critical safety behaviors, which are covered during the compliance portion of new employee onboarding. Devices are positioned within the workflow so employee can complete practice activities during natural stopping points in their day.



# Compliance

## ✓ 4. Reinforce critical behaviors

---

There's some piece of important information in the compliance training that will require employees to make the right decision or behave in a specific way on the job. But how will employees find the critical need-to-know information buried under a pile of nice-to-know fluff?

**The answer: reinforcement.** People won't change their behavior just because you told them to, especially if they've developed habits during lengthy careers. Ongoing reinforcement separates the need-to-know from the nice-to-know and contextualizes new information to on-the-job application. These activities, including question-based learning and coaching, can easily fit into the few minutes frontline employees have available in their day. Rather than asking employees to memorize regulatory information, challenge their ability to apply the most actionable details in real-world situations.

## ✓ 5. Report meaningful results

---

If a regulator checks in, you must be ready to show that employees are up to date on the latest requirements. Typically, this means course completions and maybe a few test scores. But this data doesn't actually prove that employees know what to do on the job in the moment of need.

You'll still need to report on content consumption. A modern approach will help you check those boxes more quickly than ever, without any extra administration.

Adding daily reinforcement will also provide you with more timely, actionable data. Rather than just relying on evidence of when someone completed the training, you'll have proof of what they know right now and how their knowledge has changed over time. This data can be used to power advanced reporting, including learning impact measurement and highly personalized, adaptive learning.



[axonify.com/compliance](https://axonify.com/compliance)

Up next

Build your action plan



# Build your action plan

Where do you begin when developing a frontline resilience plan? The answer will depend on your organization’s current disruption status(es) and related needs. Everyone will apply the information in this document differently. But we all have the same goal: to help our frontline employees develop the knowledge and skills to do their jobs safely, confidently and productively.



## Let’s get started!

Use the pages that follow to start building your frontline resilience plan. Repeat the process for each frontline audience that you support.

**Remember:** different organizations are experiencing different disruption statuses. Which status does your frontline audience fall into?

## Which frontline audience do you support?

---



**Normalize**

Your business continues to operate through disruption. You’re developing a new plan to implement as your organization finds its “next normal.”



**Restore**

Your operation is shut down or extremely limited. You must develop a plan to bring your business back to life safely and efficiently.



**Shift**

Your business continues to operate through disruption, but you’ve made major operational changes. You must develop a plan to sustain changes into the future.

## What are your top 3 performance priorities for the frontline audience you just identified?

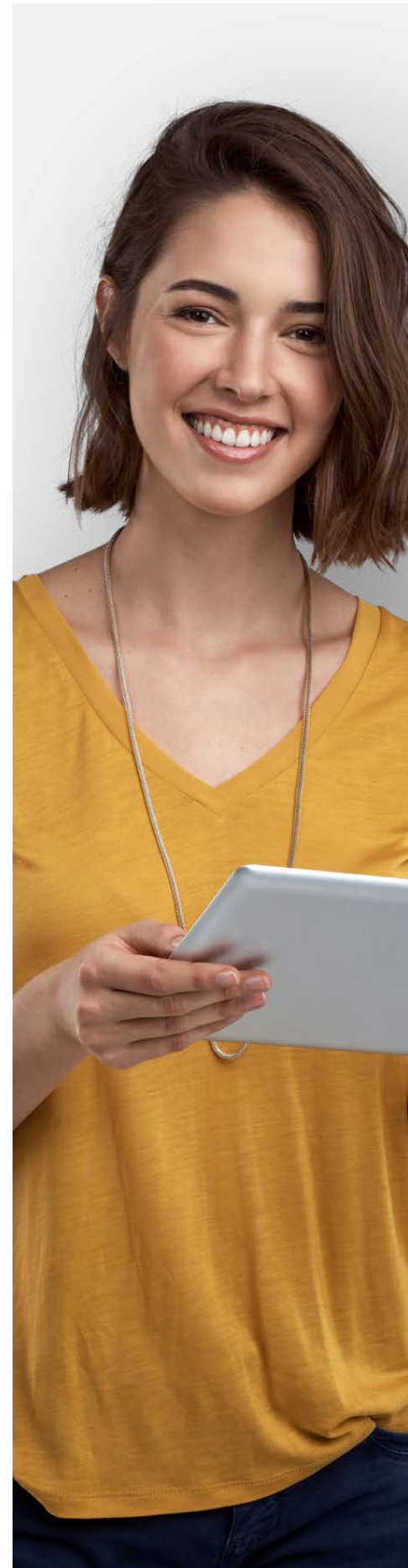
What are the specific knowledge and behavior improvements needed on the frontline to build resilience and help your business move forward within its current disruption status?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Where do you need to focus?

Check the boxes below to indicate which of the 7 areas covered in this guide you should focus on in building your most resilient frontline. Use the Priority # column to rank each of your selected areas based on order of importance.

	Required	Priority #
 <b>1. Communications</b>		
 <b>2. Access</b>		
 <b>3. Reinforcement</b>		
 <b>4. Reboarding</b>		
 <b>5. Cross-Training</b>		
 <b>6. Onboarding</b>		
 <b>7. Compliance</b>		



Complete the execution steps for each of the areas that you identified as high priority in the last step. You can refer back to the detailed breakdown for each area earlier in this blueprint document, as needed.



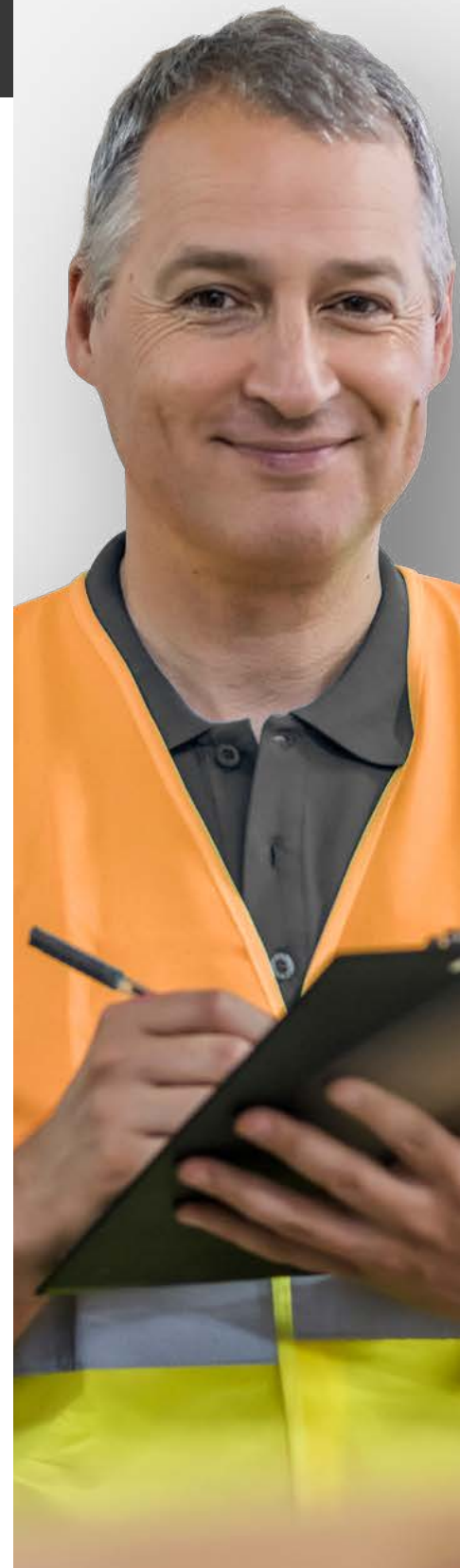
## 1. Communications

- Partner with your internal communications team to assess your existing frontline communications capabilities.
- Identify hardware and software options for shifting to digital communications (if not already in place).
- Collaborate on a process for simplifying and prioritizing frontline communications across all departments.
- Establish a single-source for on-demand information.
- Integrate your communications plan with your reinforcement strategy to drive long-term retention and on-the-job application.
- Implement your frontline communications plan.



## 2. Access

- Identify existing hardware and software options for making frontline communications and training more easily accessible in the flow of work.
- Work with HR and IT partners to explore the potential for a BYOD policy.
- Survey your frontline workforce regarding the option for BYOD.
- Partner with IT to set up all required security settings and integrations (if applicable).
- Partner with Legal and HR to introduce user agreements related to BYOD (if applicable).
- Implement your enhanced access plan.



Complete the execution steps for each of the areas that you identified as high priority in the last step. You can refer back to the detailed breakdown for each area earlier in this blueprint document, as needed.



### 3. Reinforcement

- Identify available time periods within the typical frontline workflow (5 to 10 minutes in duration).
- Identify access points for communications and training during these periods.
- Prioritize reinforcement training topics to deliver during these periods.
- Design reinforcement content.
- Build an engagement plan to motivate employees to complete daily training.
- Implement daily reinforcement training.



### 4. Reboarding

- Partner with operations stakeholders to align on your reopening plan.
- Identify changes in frontline performance expectations.
- Build right-fit training and resources to address required knowledge and skill for each change.
- Launch your reboarding program as early as possible to prepare employees for their return to work.
- Implement focused job training and practical assessments in the workplace to ensure consistent execution.
- Continue to reinforce essential job knowledge with daily training.







## 5. Cross-Training

- Identify which roles employees will shift into.
- Clarify essential job knowledge/skills for these roles.
- Determine existing knowledge/skills for employees who will shift into these roles.
- Build personal learning paths with focus on essential knowledge/skill only.
- Establish a single-source for on-demand information.
- Implement your cross-training plan.
- Continue to reinforce essential job knowledge with daily training.



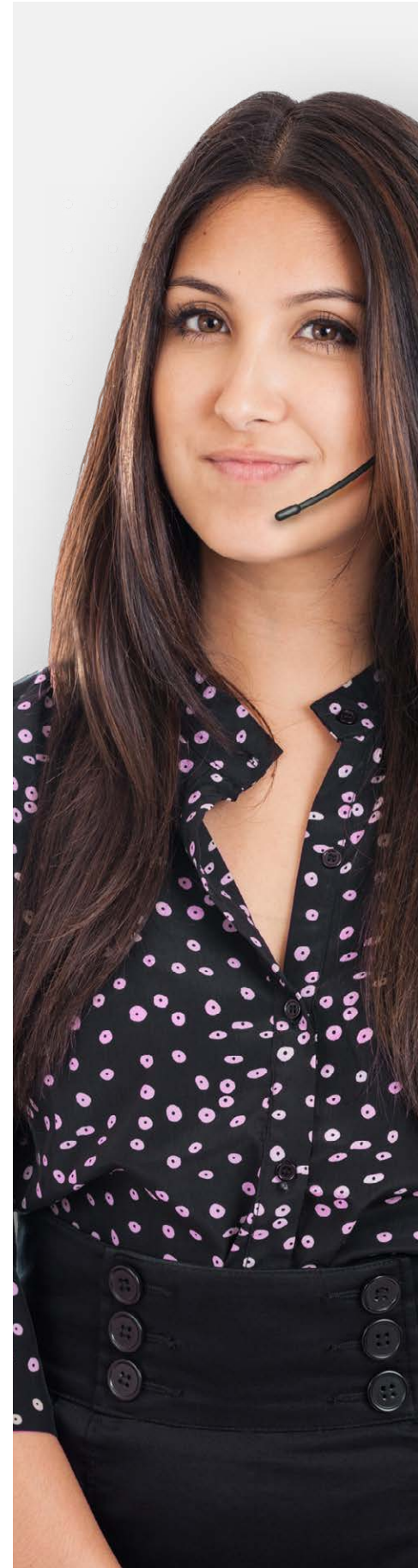
## 6. Onboarding

- Clarify essential job knowledge/skills for each role.
- Establish a single-source for on-demand information.
- Build right-fit training content with focus on essential knowledge/skill only.
- Build application-based training assessments.
- Implement your onboarding plan.
- Continue to reinforce essential job knowledge with daily training.



## 7. Compliance

- Clarify your existing/new compliance requirements by role.
- Build right-fit training solutions that meet requirements.
- Integrate compliance training with your overall frontline resilience plan based on requirements (onboarding, daily training, cross-training, etc.).
- Continue to reinforce compliance-related job behaviors with daily training.
- Generate required compliance reporting for internal and external stakeholders.



Up next

Where do you go from here?

## Where do you go from here?



Now that your assessment is complete, it's time to start pulling in the people you need to help execute on your plan.

If you're not sure how to get started, reach out at [axonify.com/hello](https://axonify.com/hello) and we'll help you figure out where you can go from here.



If you want to learn more about the many ways Axonify helps to build resilient frontline workforces, you can keep exploring over at [axonify.com](https://axonify.com).

Axonify is the modern learning solution for frontline employees that actually works. Because when you give your frontline the tools to succeed, your business will too.

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