



Upskilling employees checklist

Do your employees have the skills your business needs now and in the future? We've listed five key steps you can work through to develop a plan to upskill your workforce.

1. Look at where your business is headed

Upskilling employees through training and development can take years, so it's important to think about the future. Look at your forecasts, and company goals and vision, to think about what skill sets are needed now and over the next few years.

2. Recognise the benefits against the costs

Upskilling might seem challenging and expensive. However, the economic impact on your business can be huge. Furthermore, costs should be balanced against the alternatives, including potential redundancy pay-outs or the expense of hiring and onboarding new employees.

3. Get input from employees

Making employees part of the conversation is essential to any upskilling strategy. Without staff input, leaders risk wasting time and money on training that's irrelevant or unsuitable.

- **Measure current skills:** A survey is a quick way to gauge capabilities across your organisation. Ask staff to rank their proficiency in different areas from one to ten – you may find out that you already have some of the skills you need in-house, but people haven't had the chance to use them.
- **Map out career paths with employees:** Talk to staff about where they want their career to go and the skills they need to get there. This gives you a better idea of where skills could sit – plus showing staff you're invested in their future won't hurt your retention rate.
- **Find out how people like to learn:** An upskilling strategy will fail if you don't know how to make the knowledge stick. Whether it's online or in person, theory-based or practical, find out how staff prefer to learn.

Tools and templates



4. Create a roadmap for upskilling

Once you've thought about which skills are most important for both staff and the business, you can start planning the implementation.

Define your objective: Determine the percentage of the workforce that you want to upskill. Prioritise jobs that are under threat from technology or industry changes, and employees or areas that could add the most value.

- **Design a skills plan:** Ensure the overall upskilling initiative is closely aligned with the strategic goals of your business.
- **Quantify the skills gap:** Use the survey results and any additional staff feedback to quantify the gap between the current skill level and the future job requirements. IT systems can help here.
- **Choose a provider:** When choosing a training provider, communicate your objectives clearly and check they can deliver the skills in a way that will engage your employees. Research customer reviews and testimonials before making a decision.
- **Deliver:** Have IT systems in place to track learning and development and capture feedback. Support your employees through the process, giving them time or additional resources to boost their learning.

5. Keep an eye on future trends

The economy is always changing and new technology is constantly being introduced. Make sure your business continues to learn and adapt.

- **Predict changes in your industry:** Read industry news and publications to stay ahead of trends.
- **Look at skills that can unlock growth:** Speak to other leaders in your network to find out which skills have had a significant impact on their organisation.
- **Foster a culture of open communication:** Your employees are often best-placed to identify skills gaps or growing trends amongst customers. Ask for suggestions and encourage them to share ideas about potential training opportunities.
- **Keep knowledge up to date:** Upskilling your workforce is an investment, so don't let that knowledge go stale. Set aside some time each year for refresher courses if necessary.