



The Guide to Better Work Instructions

Practical advice for modern manufacturing



The Guide to Better Work Instructions

Good work instructions go beyond just documenting a process. They enable employees to learn new skills quickly and perform their jobs better.

Traditional instructions rely on generic tools like Excel or Powerpoint and fail to support employee performance, let alone meet the complex needs of modern manufacturers.

This guide will teach you how to write better instructions that allow you to:

- Capture expert knowledge
- Train and upskill employees quickly
- Reduce quality errors
- Reduce downtime
- Retain talent and expertise
- Support continuous improvement
- And more...

Create Work Instructions That Work

10 Quick Tips

1. Keep it simple, avoid walls of text
2. Know your audience
3. Be specific
4. Include clear photos and videos
5. Make it easy to navigate
6. Use lists
7. Test it out with a beginner
8. Incorporate feedback loops
9. Stick to a process
10. Implement standardized version controls



“In manufacturing, you are constantly learning and growing. The technological change is enormous.”

*Executive Director,
The Manufacturing Institute*

Growing Industry Challenges

The manufacturing industry is rapidly evolving.

Complexity of manufacturing jobs is growing, but the industry's ability to recruit and train the required workforce has not kept pace.

With over a quarter of the domestic workforce being over the age of 55, the onslaught of retirements (aka: the Silver Tsunami) is also impacting how knowledge transfer is managed.

A shortage of experienced workers to mentor newcomers means businesses need to rely on capturing and distributing organizational knowledge. That makes creating work instructions that are meant to teach someone a procedure, rather than just document, an essential project.

Traditional training methods are failing because they rely on an abundance of expert mentors to train new hires. As these experts retire, it's time for companies to look towards solutions to supplement traditional classroom education and training methods.



What is the “Silver Tsunami”?

The growing wave of retirements in manufacturing, with thousands of experienced workers retiring daily. This talent loss is draining the industry of its ability to train and retain a skilled workforce.

The Cost of Bad Work Instructions

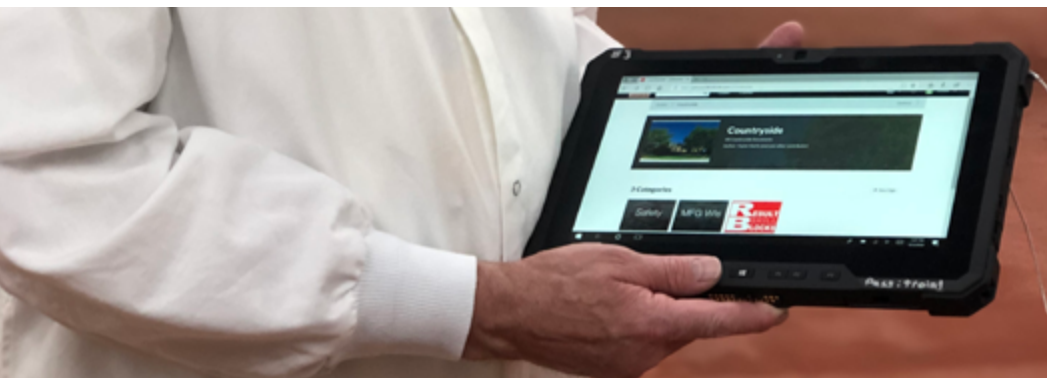
Bad work instructions are the norm. Documentation is often created to check a box for audit or compliance purposes. Once made, work instructions are stuck in paper binders or buried in complex file systems like Sharepoint.

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.

This translates to higher quality costs, increased downtime, and higher turnover.

An investment in work instructions is an investment into your people. When fully leveraged, work instructions are an integral part of how you teach new skills, test for competency, and implement process improvements.

Stop wasting time on sub-par work instructions and invest in your documentation. Invest in employee performance.



“Experts are already busy doing their jobs, they can’t spend the time they need to properly train new hires. Better work instructions can help with training.”

*Michael Muileburg,
Manager of Operational Technology at 3M*

How to Create Better Work Instructions

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, write instructions in plain language and use bullet points, so your workforce 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.

Pro Tip:

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

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.



“To get the information people need, right where the work is being done is so impactful for us. Dozuki has been a game-changer.”

Learning & Development Change Coach, Johnsonville

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.

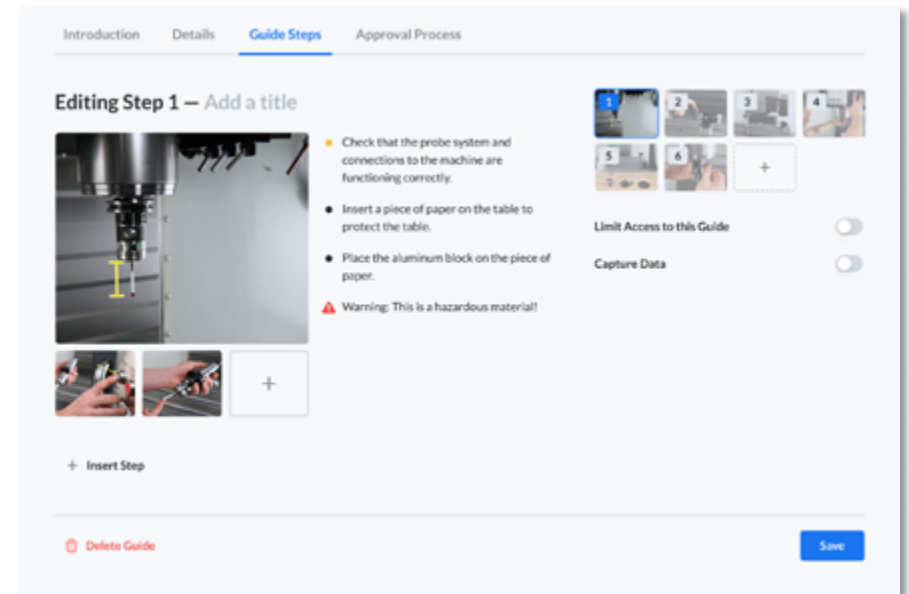
Standardize the Format

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 employees to spend less time deciphering the document and more time learning how to do the work.

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



Creating standardized work instructions in Dozuki

Pro Tip:

Choose a format that supports bullets or numbers to break up the text. This makes it easier for employees to comprehend.

CASE STUDY

Fortune 500 Food Manufacturer Teaches New Hires to Perform Complex Changeovers

A new employee was only a few weeks into their training. With no previous manufacturing experience, he was tasked with performing a complex changeover.

On a good day, this critical process takes 3-4 hours. But this challenging changeover was actually causing 6-12 hours of downtime, even for expert employees.

For this business an hour of downtime costs tens of thousands of dollars. At the extreme, the company was *losing over \$300,000 in downtime every changeover.*

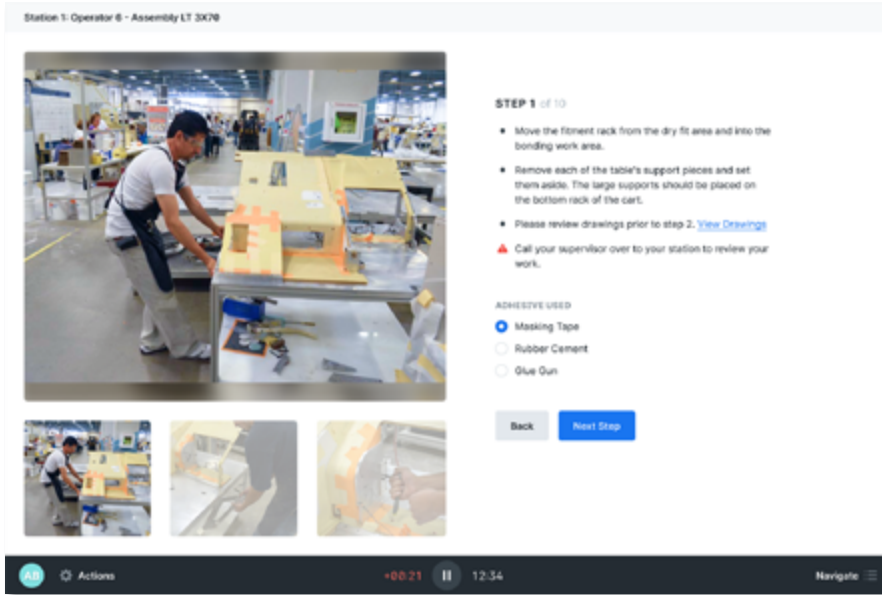


After documenting and standardizing the procedure in Dozuki, downtime plummeted.

With these added visuals, the new employee was able to perform the entire changeover in just 90 minutes, without supervision — a massive cost and time savings.

These work instructions in Dozuki have become critical in having new hires perform a process correctly and instantly reduced downtime costs.

Station 1: Operator 6 - Assembly LT 3K78



STEP 1 of 10

- Move the filament rack from the dry fit area and into the bonding work area.
- Remove each of the table's support pieces and set them aside. The large supports should be placed on the bottom rack of the cart.
- Please review drawings prior to step 2. [View Drawings](#)
- ▲ Call your supervisor over to your station to review your work.

ADHESIVE USED

Masking Tape

Rubber Cement

Glue Gun

[Back](#) [Next Step](#)

KB Actions 00:21 12:34 Navigate

The visual-first format in Dozuki makes instructions clear and easy to understand

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.

“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*

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.

Pro Tip:

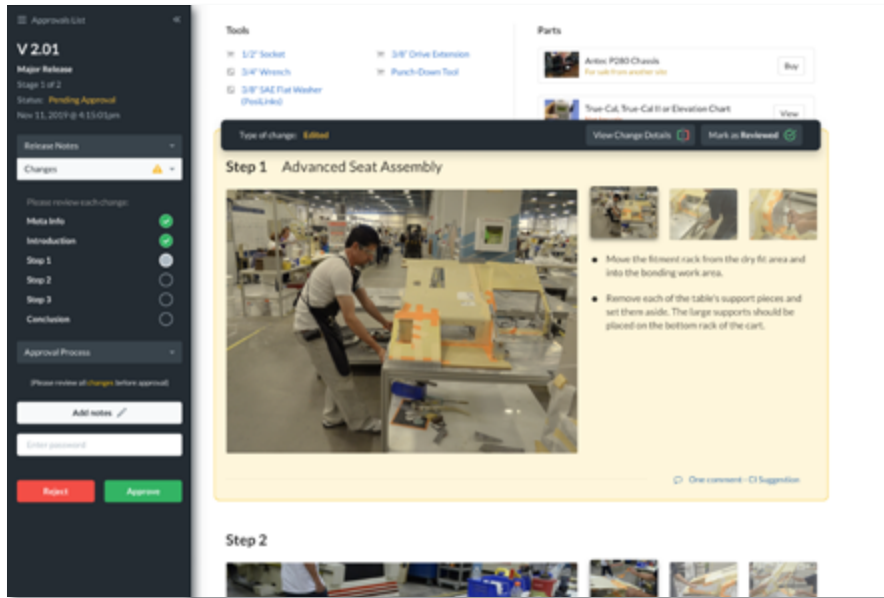
Front-load or highlight useful details. This ensures that the most essential information is communicated.

Consult with the Experts

Nobody said this was easy. Creating and distributing work instructions can be a substantial challenge, depending where your organization is in the process. Consult with experts to avoid mistakes.

The Dozuki Professional Services team provides guidance in creating effective work instructions that make training and reskilling employees easy. After working with hundreds of businesses, our experts are well equipped to help elevate your work instructions and provide a baseline for your continuous improvement efforts.

To learn more about our services, visit our [website](#).



Distributing updates in Dozuki is streamlined with fully automated, customizable approval workflows

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 operators 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.

“Dozuki makes it easy to broadcast updated SOPs quickly so everyone is in the know.”

*Dustin Olender,
Director of Strategic Development, AML Oceanographic*

Work Instructions with Dozuki

Dozuki is the leading digital work instruction tool for over 500 industrial businesses across the world.

Our platform enables better employee performance by improving how you create, control, and communicate procedures.

Hundreds of businesses have already leveraged the [Dozuki platform](#) to implement standardized work instructions and transform their manufacturing operations.

Dozuki Customers Have:

- Improved communication by 67%
- Reduced authoring time by 57%
- Reduced employee training time by 90%
- Managed 100% seasonal workforce turnover

To learn more about how we can help your business visit our website at www.dozuki.com and schedule a demo.

