

## Tips for building a learning culture in your workplace

This section provides tips for building a learning culture. You will find:

- what is a workplace learning culture,
- why a learning culture is important
- tips for building a learning culture in your workplace

### What is a workplace learning culture?

Simply put, a learning culture in a workplace provides opportunities for learning in a supportive environment using a set of organizational values, processes, and practices that encourage individuals—and the organization as a whole—to increase knowledge, skills and performance.

A workplace with a learning culture sees every problem, difficulty and obstacle as a learning opportunity. A learning culture is not a quick fix for the latest challenge but rather a way to respond effectively to changes over the long term. A learning culture provides a safe environment for learning where employees feel valued, respected, empowered and motivated.

### Why a learning culture is important

Culture can be seen by some people as too abstract and not really relevant to them; however, the fact is, a business' learning culture affects the day-to-day interaction between co-workers and the way in which changes, issues and problems are managed. The benefits of a learning culture are numerous:

- **Increased employee retention and loyalty:** employees have increased morale and motivation, which leads to increased satisfaction, loyalty and productivity.
- **Deals with Change:** employees are able to adopt and adapt with change.
- **Increased performance:** employees develop and share new skills. It improves communication and cooperation, leading to increased employee and business performance.
- **Improvement to safety:** employees better understand procedures and processes leading to improved safety practices.

### Tips to help you get started

- **Make learning available to all employees.** Promote learning and training at every opportunity - in newsletters and other communication tools. Post and distribute brochures for training and upskilling programs. When implementing new procedures and documents, seek input and follow-up to see if additional help or instruction is needed.
- **Treat mistakes as learning opportunities.** This fosters continuous improvement within a business and an individual. Encourage employees to learn from mistakes rather than being afraid to admit their mistakes for fear of disciplinary action. Ask employees what they need help with and what can be done to provide it. Monitor common mistake areas to identify improvements to training, procedures and processes.

- **As part of your orientation and on-boarding assign a mentor to new employees.** This ensures they know who to go to when they have questions about specific activities and tasks. This fosters learning between coworkers and acknowledges that it is okay not to know everything.
- **Host learning events.** These can occur when drivers attend staff meetings and training. For example:
  - Offer refresher courses on performing inspections, completing logbooks, calculating loads and load securement, etc. Provide job aids such as samples of completed documents, math calculations and instructions for future reference.
  - Have a representative from the local college, school board or literacy program give a presentation on available upskilling and ESL programs to generate interest and awareness.
  - Offer a plain language session open to all staff. Focus on a work document drivers are having difficulty with. These sessions might help you discover where clear language, clear formatting, consistent terms, visuals and time to interact might pay off.
  - Provide lunch or a gift card as an incentive for participation.
- **Encourage supervisors, dispatchers and senior drivers to share their skills and knowledge.** Provide training and support for them to engage in training, coaching, peer-tutoring and mentoring of others. They can reinforce building skills with every opportunity. They have more chances to ask questions, teach problem-solving and demonstrate how to write something up, prepare documents or complete calculations.
- **Encourage employees to identify their skills and individual learning goals.** Build learning plans into performance reviews and assists employees in meeting these goals by providing access to learning opportunities and through financial supports.
- **Support and acknowledge learning.** There are many ways to do this. The most common is financial support (covering course costs, increased salary or pay). Another way to acknowledge learning is when workplace structures or practices change as a result. For example, a workplace procedure is rewritten as a result of drivers' participation in a clear language workshop. Finally, acknowledge learning achievements.
- **Encourage reading**
  - Read every day and encourage others to read too. How? Make it easy for people to read on their breaks and during lunch by having the newspaper available.
  - Recycle your magazines in the break room. Find a place for a 'take a book, leave a book' basket or shelf where people can share a book and find something to read.
  - Make books and reading part of what your company values. Give books as gifts and rewards.