

5 STEPS

TO GETTING YOUR TEAM ON BOARD WITH AUTOMATION

One of the most stressful parts of automating is often not the technology itself, but communicating it to your team. Deciding to automate is one thing; getting employees on board is another. Change is hard enough, but when people worry about losing their jobs, it becomes even harder. That's why communication, transparency, and early involvement are key.

Here are 5 steps to getting your team on board:

1 EDUCATE ON THE BENEFITS

Help your team understand how automation helps them, not just the company:

- **Reduces Daily Strain:** Automation takes over the most physically demanding tasks like lifting, stacking, and repetitive motion, helping prevent injuries and fatigue.
- **Creates More Stable Shifts:** With fewer no-shows and staffing gaps, your team can count on smoother, more consistent workdays.
- **Opens Opportunity for Upskilling:** As automation handles the repetitive work, employees can shift into more rewarding, less strenuous roles with opportunities for skill development and growth.

"We literally hand palletize 50-pound boxes. I can't ask my employees to do that. We can be more efficient and level up their skills at the same time."

– James Shutts, CEO of Uncle Crumbles

PRO TIP: Be transparent about your goals, whether it's eliminating temp labor, improving ergonomics, or stabilizing workloads during labor shortages. Framing automation as a tool that supports, not replaces, people helps reduce fear and build trust.

2 INVOLVE YOUR TEAM EARLY

Instead of employees showing up to work only to find a robot on the line, involve them in the decision-making process early on. Ask operators, engineers, and laborers about the pain points in production and how automation could solve the problem.

This not only improves buy-in, but it often results in better outcomes. No one knows the day-to-day challenges better than your frontline team, and their insights can help identify the most valuable automation opportunities.

PRO TIP: Early input shows you value their experience and often leads to smarter automation decisions.

3

FOCUS ON TRAINING AND UPSKILLING

It's important to remind employees that adding automation is meant to transform their jobs, not replace them. To get them on board, offer training programs to help employees develop their skills in operating and maintaining these systems.

When employees have the necessary tools to work alongside automation, the transition is much easier. Upskilling can also open up career paths, creating longer-term opportunities for growth and retention. We've seen former packers and stackers transitioning to line managers firsthand through upskilling opportunities.

PRO TIP: There's no better guarantee for a happy and productive workforce than having them grow with you.

"[Employees] can spend more time talking about their kids and what they are doing this weekend while monitoring the machines, instead of manually working really hard."

– Don Barnes, President of ALTA Foods

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START SMALL

You don't have to go full-throttle with automation. It's easier to start small and automate the simpler, repetitive processes first, and build yourself a win. This is often at the end of the line with packaging and stacking boxes. Starting small reduces risk and gives your team time to adapt to change at a manageable pace.

This also allows employees to experience the benefits of automation firsthand. Be sure to gather feedback from employees before continuing to automate other processes. When workers see how automation improves their workday, whether through fewer injuries, more consistent shifts, or better workflow, they become advocates for scaling it further.

PRO TIP: Use feedback from the first rollout to inform your next project. Small wins pave the way for bigger ones.

5

CELEBRATE WINS AND RECOGNIZE CONTRIBUTIONS

As automation starts delivering results, make sure your team sees and feels the impact of their contributions. Recognize the people who helped make it happen, from the line workers who provided insights to the technicians who supported implementation.

Whether it's improved safety, fewer staffing shortages, or hitting production goals, highlight the outcomes and credit your team for the role they played. When people feel ownership over the change, they're more likely to support it moving forward.

PRO TIP: Host a quick team meeting or shout-out session after the first few weeks of success. Let team members share what's working and how it's improved their day-to-day. Real voices go further than metrics alone.

"People want to feel like they're growing. Automation is giving them new pathways to do that within our company."

– Lori Roberts, Senior Executive Project Manager at Wyandot Snacks



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