

Your 5-Step Plan to Get Started with Robotic Layout Technology



It's not a big secret that technology adoption in construction lags behind other industries. Despite technology's proven capabilities, it's estimated only 12% of construction companies have started to adopt technology like robotic process automation and other digital solutions.

But even though construction companies are slow to get on board, there's little doubt that, once adopted, technology can help general contractors and trades do their jobs better. In addition to enabling faster, more accurate processes and helping to control labor and other costs, it can also help you increase productivity, which is especially important when productivity is an ongoing concern.

Yet the problem with technology adoption isn't so much the technology piece as the adoption itself. Not only do you have to make the case to the company decision makers holding the purse strings, you also have to convince skeptical workers to move away from traditional, manual ways of doing things.

Urging workers to take up a new tool is often the biggest obstacle to overcome since they're the ones who actually have to learn and use the new system every day. If your team doesn't believe in the benefits of the technology or if they experience too much frustration with it, they'll likely revert back to their old, manual, and more comfortable ways. If this happens, the benefits will never be fully realized, nor will your return on investment.

But just because it's hard to get people to change doesn't mean change isn't necessary. And there are things you can do to make adoption easier and more successful—like having a plan in place that makes the transition go smoothly while also teaching your teams to learn, use, and ultimately embrace the new tool.

Choosing the right technology to ease your team in can also make a huge difference. Layout is a great place to start. The process typically requires a two-person crew and several hours, if not days, to complete. But you can experience significant productivity gains and bottom line improvements when you arm your team with robotic layout technology.

Specifically, robotic layout technology provides:

1. Greater precision: using a robotic layout station is more accurate than manual layout, reducing the risk of mistakes and rework
2. Increased efficiency: using a robotic layout station automates the layout workflow, saving significant time and requiring only one person to operate
3. Proof of work: a robotic layout station provides a record of where you've placed things and why should you need to provide proof of progress or defend your work

So how can you get your team bought in? Here's a five-step plan.

5 Steps to Get Your Team on Board with Layout Technology

1. Get buy-in from all stakeholders

Understanding your team's daily workflows, processes, and current layout tools is key to knowing how the new layout solution will fit in and improve the way things are done currently. Begin by learning about your team's current pain points and then make the case for how the new tool will address them.

You also need to show decision-makers how the technology solution can enhance the overall business.

- Will it make your firm more cost-effective? More efficient and productive?
- Will it support your firm in winning more bids and becoming more competitive?

Make sure to hit all the important points so decision-makers can more easily visualize what a return on investment will look like. Their buy-in will also help create a more supportive environment for your end users since it shows that company leadership is committed to improving workers' jobs and processes.

2. Put a change management team and process in place

Change management sometimes sounds like a fancy buzzword, but in reality it's a critical piece of the technology adoption puzzle. As you get ready to roll out the new layout solution, gather the experts who can help resolve any technical issues that may come up and assign a leader or two who can manage the people who will be using the new solution every day.

Working together, the change management team can help integrate the tool into current workflows and get answers to workers' questions. They can also bring any concerns to company leadership and reduce the stress that can cause resistance to the new system.

In practice, change management requires a lot of communication, specifically with those who are most impacted by the change. But as a philosophy, it's really about making the process of change as productive, transparent, and pain-free as possible before, during, and after deployment, which further paves the way for successful adoption.

3. Develop a training plan

Every new system comes with its own learning curve. While technology solutions developed specifically for the construction industry are more intuitive and user-friendly than many realize, you still need to provide your users with focused and ongoing training until they're comfortable using the system and can demonstrate competency.

Create a training plan that gives users plenty of time with the new layout tool in real-world settings to ease the learning curve and build confidence among users. When they can see what's possible, they'll be eager to learn more. And even if only a few days of training are needed to master the tool, those few days are essential to your team's success and shouldn't be short-changed or overlooked.

4. Follow a realistic rollout schedule

No matter how eager you may be to put the new layout solution in place, it's not as simple as setting it up one day and pressing "Go." Depending on the size of your team or the number of construction projects that are in play, you may need to introduce the solution in phases or at least give plenty of heads up to users so they know when the new tool should be fully incorporated into current workflows.

Set up a realistic schedule with dates and times to help everyone prepare for when their daily workflows and processes will be impacted. Following a schedule will also help you track important milestones and understand what still needs to happen before you can effectively call the rollout complete.

5. Evaluate and course correct

Even with the most detailed planning and comprehensive training, the rollout of a new tool can still come with a few hiccups, so it's important to ask for and accept honest feedback. Once the tool is deployed, talk to users and evaluate how it's working out, then determine what needs to be modified or done differently to ensure the technology integrates well with your workflows and established processes.

How quickly and easily your team begins using the new technology is the ultimate test of how impactful the new technology will be. Paying attention to their feedback and needs is essential to smoothing technology implementation and ensuring real and lasting success.

Add Robotic Layout Technology: A Great Place to Start

All phases of construction—from design to layout to the build itself to post-project analysis—can benefit from technology solutions. And though there may be upfront concern about adopting a new solution, it doesn't have to be an uphill battle.

If you're a general contractor or in the steel, concrete, or MEP trades, your workflows and processes can be greatly improved by a robotic layout station. Many construction companies are already experiencing the greater accuracy, speed, and efficiency an easy-to-learn robotic layout station provides. And you don't need a CAD department or software to take advantage of it.