

## CASE STUDY

# Major retailer gets workers productive faster by providing just-in-time learning at the frontline

When you're a retailer that has just weeks to open a new distribution center or roll out a wave of new procedures, how do you get new supply chain workers to be productive fast and safely, without training that takes them off the floor? And how do you do that in a way that frees management time to build culture and worker loyalty in a rapid change environment?

These were the questions facing supply chain learning leaders supporting rapid growth and increased e-commerce at a large US retailer. They had an LMS learning system in place but needed to reach frontline workers with real-time rapid skill building.

*"When you ask workers to leave what they are doing to learn you lose productivity. That traditional learning approach assumes a job role and processes stay static. That isn't how supply chains work today. We needed a better way to reach workers as they work and provide them learning at their moment of need." — Director Supply Chain Learning*

**COMPANY**

Large retailer with more than 1500 stores, multiple distribution centers and more than 200,000 employees distributed across the US and Canada.

**KEY CHALLENGES**

- ✓ Reduce off the floor training time & productivity loss
- ✓ Equip workers to be productive, confident & safe faster
- ✓ Find way to get new task and safety guidance to the frontline fast
- ✓ Shift away from low-retention classroom training & job shadowing not always possible for managers
- ✓ Meet worker expectations to learn "at a time of need" while doing tasks

**SOLUTION**

Implemented Smart Access mobile performance support platform equipping supply chain workers with instant self-serve learning, personalized to their activity and role. Workers gain new skills while staying productive on the frontline.

**RESULTS**

- ✓ New task upskilling happens in 1-2 minutes, without manager assistance
- ✓ Reduced time to create & distribute new training from 8+ weeks to 1 week
- ✓ Significantly reduced on-the-job training time for managers
- ✓ Measurement of employee learning and training effectiveness in place to guide future improvements

## The learning lag challenge

It was taking months to get new learning content into workers' hands — often six months from kickoff to deployment with their large LMS platform. And there was no way to reach workers with new learning directly at the warehouse and store floor.

The Director and Senior Manager of Supply Chain Learning knew they could dramatically increase productivity, and likely improve hiring and retention, if they could improve training speed and effectiveness. This training time savings would save the retailer millions each year.

*“Jobs with Uber and others have given workers the experience that they can start a job, learn how to do it on mobile and contribute within 24 hrs. The skillsets we need to build are more complex - but we need to have competitive training so workers can be successful quickly and continue to learn. Then we offer a culture to stay with.” — Director Supply Chain Learning*

Besides accelerating new learning, learning leaders were looking for a solution that would meet several key requirements:

- ✓ Support continuous, instant skill development and safety at the frontline
- ✓ Filter up exactly the personalized learning workers need for their role at the moment they need it - no search lag or distracting information that can sap confidence and time
- ✓ Accelerate turnaround time for new learning at the floor
- ✓ Reduce training support time needed from management
- ✓ Identify learning gaps that might inhibit productivity or show a worker is struggling

## Implementing frontline training

In 2020, the retailer began implementing Smart Access in the midst of the COVID pandemic. If ever there was a rollout that could go sideways this was it, but Smart Access committed to provide not only technology but a change playbook to help the retailer make the shift to faster training and reskilling.

Smart Access gives workers instant access on their mobile device to personalized microlearning, right for their situation and easy to consume on the job. Workers scan nearby stickers at key locations or equipment to access skill building relevant to that task or start from quick links on their device.

Today, the retailer's valued workers use Smart Access to learn from day one on the job. When workers have questions about a task, rather than leaving the frontline to find information or look for a manager, they use Smart Access to access micro task guidance that keeps them confident, in action, safe and productive. And as operations need to shift, new learning content can be developed and distributed rapidly - so workers remain confident even in a rapidly changing environment.

The retailer achieved real-time learning on the supply chain floor by extending their learning tech stack beyond HRIS and LMS with Smart Access mobile performance support technology.

### Rollout Path



*“The value of working with Smart Access is that they deeply share the goal of productivity at the frontline. They help break down work processes into bite-sized tasks and help evolve your existing learning content into instantly consumable formats like quick tips,*

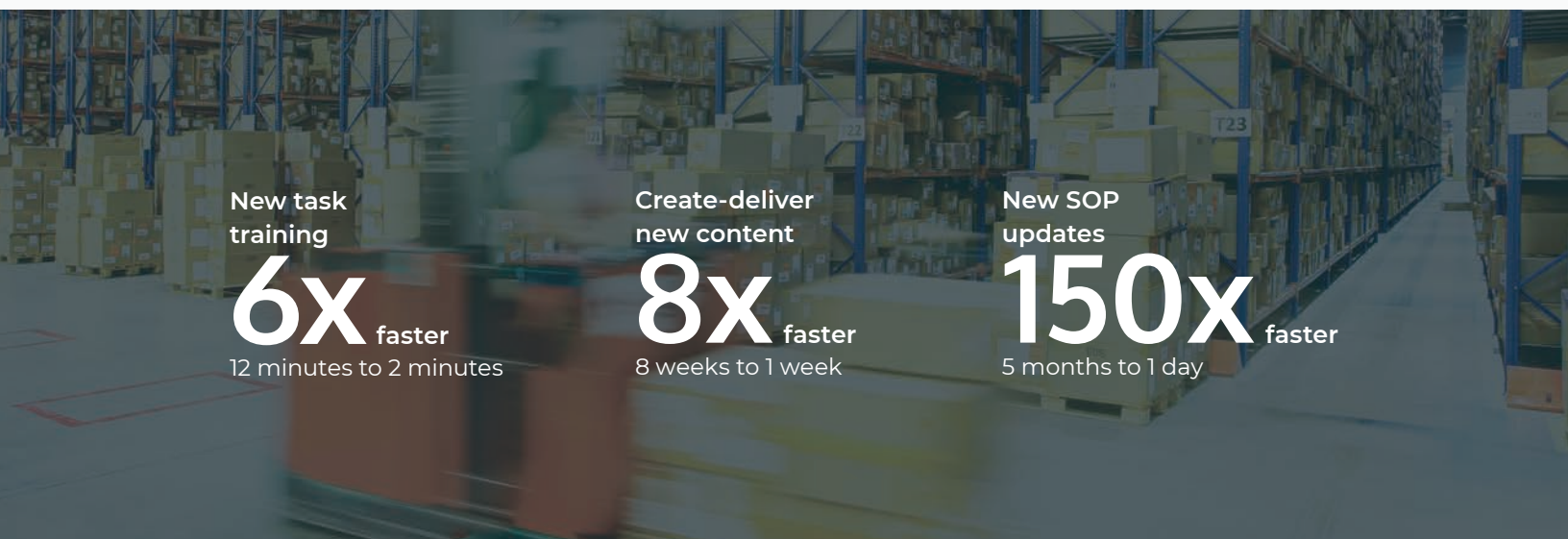
*videos, or slide series that are effective at the frontline. Now, any worker or manager can perform the next right action with confidence & competence, without leaving the frontline.”*

*- Senior Manager Supply Chain Learning*

## The business results of faster frontline learning

The major retailer is experiencing several upsides of delivering functional learning at the frontline and making it simple to retrain. New hires are contributing to productivity faster. Plus managers are relieved of the time intensive role of training new hires on tasks, which lets them focus more on building culture towards the goal of retention.

- ✓ New task upskilling happens in 1-2 minutes, without manager assistance
- ✓ Reduced time to create & distribute new training from 8+ weeks to 1 week
- ✓ Significantly reduced on-the-job training time for managers. Managers have more time to focus on culture building and retention
- ✓ More fluid workforce across roles and locations - aids organization in staffing at peak times, or as operations need to shift
- ✓ Analytics help identify opportunities to improve content, operations or support individual workers



## The next opportunities for impact

The retailer foresees the most valuable impact of Smart Access will be on rapid ramp-up time for new hires. With analytics in place to track gains in productivity and any learning obstacles, the retailer is equipped to help workers better perform from day one.

*“Having learning accessible to workers on mobile devices, making it easy for them to gain proficiency fast as a new hire. Today that’s a competitive advantage for us and at some point soon it will be a necessity for all retailers.” — Director Supply Chain Learning*

**We’re pioneering the future of work and pushing the bounds of modern retail productivity.**

**We can get your pilot up and running in just 30 business days.**