The Connected Worker in Food & Beverage

9 Real-World Stories of Factory Floor Transformation

How manufacturers can bolster food safety and drive productivity with a connected worker solution.

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The State of Food & Beverage Manufacturing

The food and beverage (F&B) manufacturing sector is one of the most essential and dynamic industries in the global economy. In the United States alone, F&B processing establishments employed 1.7 million workers in 2021, representing 15.4% of all U.S. manufacturing jobs and just over 1.1% of total nonfarm employment. Yet, despite its critical role, the industry faces a confluence of challenges that require innovative approaches to sustain growth and profitability.

Top Challenges for Manufacturers in 2025

Labor Shortages & Workforce Retention
The F&B industry struggles to attract and retain workers due to changing demographics, competition for talent and high turnover, which disrupt operational efficiency.

Rising Costs & Squeezed Margins
Inflation and rising costs of materials, packaging and logistics force manufacturers to manage shrinking margins without sacrificing quality or profitability.

The Push for Automation
Automation, driven by labor shortages and cost pressures, is transforming F&B operations but introduces challenges in worker training and technology integration.

Evolving Consumer Expectations
Consumers demand sustainability, ethical practices, and product variety, adding complexity to production while requiring manufacturers to maintain quality and adaptability.

Food & Beverage Specific Concerns

Food Safety Compliance
Strict regulations and the potential for recalls place immense pressure on manufacturers to ensure safety and traceability at every step of the supply chain.

Seasonality
Seasonal fluctuations in demand and ingredient availability require agility in production planning and inventory management.

Product Changeovers
A growing number of SKUs and shorter product life cycles make changeovers more frequent and complex, increasing the risk of errors and downtime.

How a Connected Worker Solution Can Help

A Connected Worker Solution addresses the critical challenges facing food and beverage manufacturers by leveraging technology to empower employees, streamline processes and ensure compliance.

Tackling Labor Shortages and Workforce Retention
Connected worker platforms accelerate onboarding and training with digital work instructions and interactive modules, reducing time-to-competence. By fostering a culture of learning, they empower workers and improve retention.

Managing Cost Pressures and Improving Margins
These platforms streamline workflows, reduce waste, and minimize downtime through real-time performance tracking. This helps manufacturers absorb rising costs without sacrificing profitability.

Enhancing Food Safety and Compliance
A connected worker app digitizes processes like CIP, quality audits and metal detector checks, ensuring regulatory compliance. Automated tracking and electronic signatures improve accountability and reduce contamination risks.

Improving Consistency and Predictability
Move the needle by standardizing processes with digital SOPs, integrated workflows and analytics dashboards. This minimizes variability, ensures consistent outcomes and enables data-driven decision-making.

The food and beverage manufacturing industry stands at a crossroads, with significant challenges threatening its traditional ways of working but also unparalleled opportunities to innovate and evolve.

By adopting connected worker solutions and other advanced technologies, manufacturers can tackle today's obstacles while preparing for a more sustainable, efficient, and competitive future.
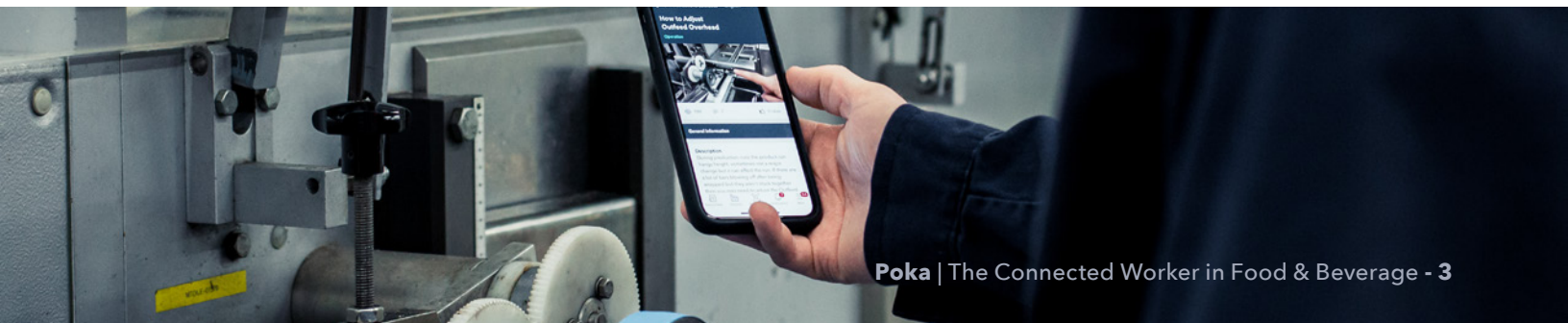
- Chapter 1 -

Supporting Standard Work with a Connected Worker App

In food and beverage manufacturing, standard work is essential for ensuring consistent product quality, safety and regulatory compliance across production. Uniform processes minimize variability and reduce errors, helping companies avoid costly recalls and meet strict industry regulations.

A connected worker solution supports these goals by digitizing work instructions and SOPs, and making updated procedures accessible to frontline workers on the factory floor within the flow of their daily work. This digital access improves adherence to standards and reduces variability across production lines and sites. This ensures a consumer enjoying their favourite food brand in Paris, France will be the same as in Paris, Texas.

Connected worker platforms also enable seamless sharing of best practices across teams and locations, fostering continuous improvement. In this chapter, we'll explore how industry leaders use these capabilities to enhance productivity and quality.

Case Study #1

Implementing Standards Across Global Sites

A leading global confectionery manufacturer, with over 130,000 employees across multiple divisions, faced challenges with giving associates easy access to critical operational knowledge across its worldwide sites. Written documentation, stored in multiple locations and systems made it time consuming to find answers when they were needed quickly.

To streamline access to operational knowledge and ensure standardized work practices across the globe, the company adopted Poka as a corporate standard to centralize training content, compliance documentation and work instructions in support of its Supply Excellence initiative.

The Results to Date

Increased visibility into revision and approval history

Improved new site start-up time

Standardized products across all sites

Workers and quality team creating and updating work instructions together

Ability to ramp up 1-2 deployments per week

The company deployed Poka across more than 100 sites, using its platform to standardize and share digital work instructions in multiple languages.

This setup allowed employees to quickly access critical SOPs on factory floor iPads by scanning QR codes, making learning faster and more engaging.

With 7,000 digital work instructions now viewed over 90,000 times, the company has created a centralized hub of operational standards that supports excellence across all global sites.

Case Study #2

How Bel Group Ensured a Successful Equipment and Facilities Startup

Bel Group, a global dairy producer known for brands like The Laughing Cow and Babybel, launched a new plant in Sorel, Quebec, in 2020 to expand their Mini Babybel production.

Faced with challenges typical of a new facility— such as building factory expertise from scratch, importing specialized equipment and creating a cohesive plant culture—Bel Group sought an effective solution to streamline onboarding and standardize processes.

Watch the Video ▶ 24:57
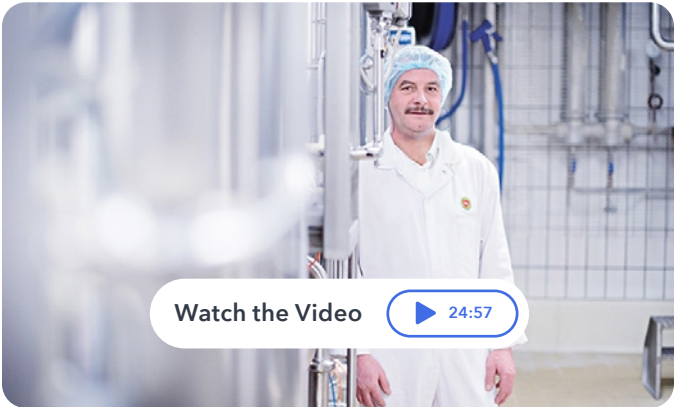
Poka enabled Bel to centralize knowledge, manage skills efficiently and empower employees to quickly access digital work instructions and troubleshoot guides. This setup allowed Bel to overcome skill gaps, share equipment expertise, and establish operational standards swiftly.

Adoption and Usage Rates

81%	**123**	**121**	**81%**
Connection Rate	Calls for Help per Month	News posts per Month	Work Instruction View Rate

Read the Complete Case Study

- Chapter 2 -

More Efficient Training & Skills Management

Efficient training and skills management are critical in food and beverage manufacturing, where maintaining product quality, safety and compliance depends on a well-prepared workforce. The high turnover rates common in the industry make it essential to onboard new workers quickly and effectively, minimizing learning curves to maintain productivity and quality standards.

A connected worker solution streamlines training by centralizing digital work instructions and providing employees with on-demand access to resources directly on the shop floor in the flow of work. This approach not only shortens employee time to value but also empowers workers to update and refresh skills as needed, ensuring they remain experts in evolving processes and standards.

Additionally, a connected worker platform helps manufacturers track skills development and training progress, making it easier to identify gaps and assign targeted learning plans. This data-driven approach supports faster upskilling and cross-training, building a more adaptable workforce ready to meet the demands of a dynamic production environment.
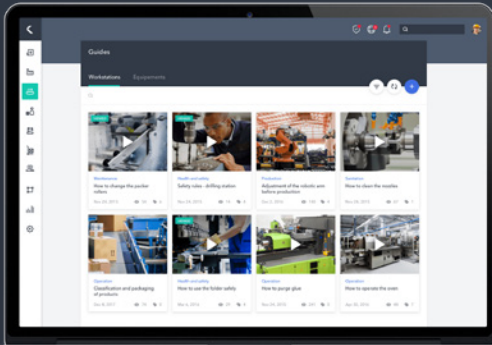
Case Study #3

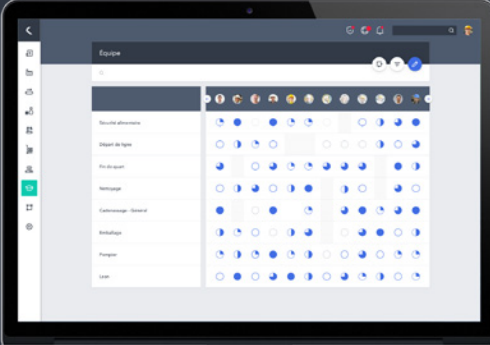# How Danone Reduced Shadowing Time by 40%

Danone's Specialized Nutrition division faced significant training challenges at its Zoetermeer plant in the Netherlands, where over 600 SKUs are produced for customers in 55 countries.

With new operators required to learn around 200 complex procedures during a three-month shadowing period, inconsistencies across trainers led to variations in task performance, and infrequently accessed written instructions stored in a document management system compounded these issues.

Realizing the limitations of this approach, the plant's Learning and Development Coordinator sought a more effective solution that would enhance knowledge retention and improve operational efficiency.

Danone implemented Poka to provide training through micro-learning video lessons accessible on iPads, allowing operators to learn directly at their workstations by scanning QR codes linked to relevant tasks.

This visual and self-paced approach enabled operators to quickly understand complex tasks, reducing the need for extensive shadowing. As a result, Danone reduced shadowing time by 40% and sped up skills setup by 75%, as managers could assign and track training through Poka's skill matrix.

This digital shift empowered operators to take control of their learning, minimizing interruptions to other workers while ensuring consistent, accurate task execution.

Danone's experience demonstrates how a connected worker platform can optimize training in food manufacturing, enhancing both productivity and employee engagement on the production floor.

Case Study #4

Leclerc Group Future-Proofs Against A Retiring Workforce

For the Leclerc Group, employee retirements have made preserving best practices more challenging. With over 110 years of experience in the food industry, Leclerc recognized the value of a tool that could effectively capture and share employees' knowledge.

Poka provided an ideal solution, helping Leclerc manage unplanned downtime and establish consistent, standardized training.

Leclerc's Time Savings with a Connected Worker App

-75%
Self Learning Time

-5.9%
Equipment Downtime

-31%
Start-ups and Changeovers

Poka greatly improved Leclerc Group's training, productivity and safety. Training videos have cut learning time by 75%, and the platform's easy access to information has reduced equipment downtime by nearly 6% and cut start-up times by 31%.

Leclerc employees reported stronger collaboration and communication between management and staff, fostering a cohesive and engaged workplace culture.

Additionally, Poka's video-based safety resources have helped foster a safer work environment, reducing accidents through enhanced awareness of best practices.

"**Problems that used to take hours to solve are now resolved in a few minutes.**"

Marcela Muñoz
Business Unit Manager at Leclerc

- Chapter 3 -

Improving Food Safety Across Production

Ensuring food safety across production is a critical priority in the food and beverage manufacturing industry. With growing regulatory demands and increasing consumer expectations for transparency and quality, maintaining safe and hygienic production processes is essential for both brand reputation and public health. Even a minor lapse in safety protocols can lead to contamination, costly recalls and potentially severe health risks for consumers.

A connected worker solution offers powerful support in this area by bridging gaps in real-time communication, access to safety protocols and consistent training across all levels of production. Frontline workers can access and update safety instructions instantly, report issues as they arise and follow standardized procedures to mitigate risks. These capabilities create a unified, proactive approach to food safety that enables swift responses to potential hazards and minimizes variability in practices across shifts and sites.

Implementing a connected worker platform can also enhance visibility and accountability. Supervisors and quality control teams can monitor safety metrics, track compliance with hygiene protocols and address potential gaps in procedures with greater accuracy and speed. By equipping teams with the knowledge and resources they need to maintain high safety standards, connected worker solutions empower manufacturers to prioritize safety at every stage, setting the stage for a deeper exploration into case studies where these solutions have made a measurable impact.

Case Study #5

How Riviera Bolstered SQF Compliance Audit Scores

Riviera struggled to maintain consistent product quality due to limited visibility on the factory floor. Quality issues often went unresolved, and paper-based, word-of-mouth communications led to gaps in tracking essential training records, which affected compliance with industry standards.

"Although Riviera was consistently passing our annual inspections, we weren't satisfied with a score of 86%. We knew we could do better, so we committed to investing in our workforce and making the necessary improvements."

MAISON
RIVIERA

Amelie Provost
HACCP & SQF Manager at Riviera

To address these issues, Riviera adopted Poka's worker support app, giving each worker a tablet for easy access to training resources and SOPs. Poka enabled real-time reporting of quality issues and allowed management to track and resolve them quickly, while video micro-lessons made training faster and more accessible.

With Poka, Riviera saw a 9% reduction in fruit waste and significantly improved audit scores, jumping from an 86% to 91% compliance score with zero non-compliance issues.

The platform streamlined audits, reducing the time required from one hour to just 10 minutes. Workers now have clear accountability for their training and skills development, which has bolstered quality control, increased efficiency, and empowered employees to support operational excellence.

- Chapter 4 -

Reducing Downtime to Maximize Output

Reducing downtime is critical to maximizing production output in food and beverage manufacturing. Unplanned stoppages, whether due to equipment failure or inefficiencies in operations, directly impact production schedules and profitability. In an industry where demand is constant and time-sensitive, minimizing downtime ensures that operations remain efficient, responsive and cost-effective.

A connected worker solution plays a key role in addressing downtime by providing real-time access to critical information. With instant access to troubleshooting guides and standard operating procedures, workers can resolve issues more quickly, minimizing the time spent offline. Additionally, proactive maintenance tasks and seamless communication between workers and management help prevent potential disruptions before they occur.

In the following pages, we'll explore case studies that demonstrate how food and beverage manufacturers are leveraging connected worker platforms to streamline operations and reduce downtime. By empowering employees with the right tools and data, these companies are improving efficiency, reducing delays and ultimately driving greater output and profitability.

Case Study #6

How Nestlé's Mount Sterling Facility Digitized Training to Minimize Downtime

Nestlé's Mount Sterling, Kentucky site, home to Hot Pockets® production, struggled with unplanned stops caused by inconsistent and inefficient training methods. Manual, paper-based processes lacked accountability and created gaps in skills, impacting productivity and increasing operational costs.

To address these challenges, Nestlé implemented Poka's connected worker solution, focusing on key improvements:

Digital Training Transformation: Over 300 work instructions and 75 skills were digitized within seven months.

Learner Accountability: Operators now manage their training, requesting endorsements when ready, boosting ownership and engagement.

Real-Time Dashboards: Supervisors gained instant visibility into team skills, aligning training efforts with operational goals.
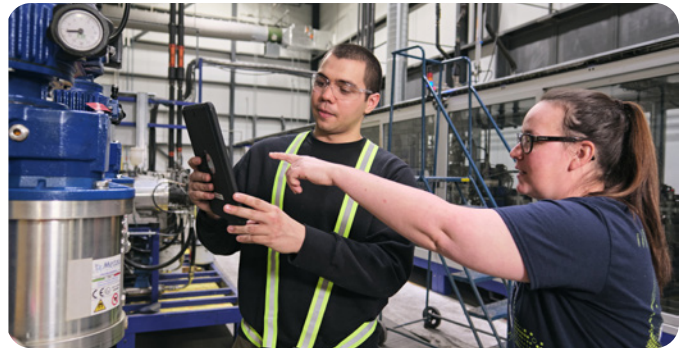
The Results: Fewer Stops, Greater Efficiency

Poka has elevated training at Nestlé from a routine task to a strategic priority. By providing actionable insights, the training team now plays a vital role in decision-making, helping to drive operational success.

Since adopting Poka, Nestlé has seen significant operational gains:

2.9%
Reduction in Unplanned Stops

27%
Reduction in Training Hours

100%
Digital Training

> "Now, we can quantify training and make data-driven decisions that directly impact operations."

Heather Grant, Nestlé
Training Manager at Nestlé

Case Study #7

How C.H. Guenther Reduced Production Downtime

C.H. Guenther, a food manufacturer with over 150 years of experience, operates its Pioneer Frozen Foods plant in South Carolina, employing 200+ people and producing dry mixes, doughs, pancakes and cinnamon rolls.

Before Poka, communication at the Pioneer plant relied on radios and face-to-face conversations, leading to inefficiencies and recurring issues like incorrect product deposition, causing downtime.

Introducing iPads with Poka's platform allowed workers to share images, videos and troubleshooting guides, speeding up problem resolution. A recurring line issue was solved quickly by making it visible to the maintenance team, and standard work instructions helped employees adapt to new tasks faster.

C.H. Guenther Usage Statistics

2,600
Documents

300
Skills

70,000
Forms Completed

57,000
Training Opportunities

These changes reduced downtime significantly. The line issue, which cost 40 hours of lost production annually, was resolved, and an untrained employee was able to operate a new workstation within an hour, preventing further delays.

Lessons Learned

The C.H. Guenther team shared several key takeaways for those looking to implement Poka.

Perfection can be counterproductive
It's better to have 200 effective standard work instructions than 20 flawless ones.

Focus on your employees
In this case, the true customers are your workers, so prioritize their needs.

Respect employees' time
Keep videos and work instructions concise and to the point.

Embrace Poka's flexibility
Once set up, continuously improve and add content to keep it relevant.

- Chapter 5 -

Driving Continuous Improvement Across the Organization

Driving continuous improvement is critical in food and beverage manufacturing, where operational efficiency, product quality and safety are paramount. In an industry marked by tight margins and high consumer expectations, companies must constantly refine their processes to stay competitive. Fostering a culture of continuous improvement ensures that businesses can respond quickly to challenges, optimize their workflows and reduce waste, leading to sustained profitability and success.

A connected worker solution can play a pivotal role in driving continuous improvement by enabling real-time communication and data sharing across the shop floor. With access to digital work instructions, issue reporting and performance tracking, frontline workers are empowered to identify inefficiencies, share insights and collaborate on problem-solving. This visibility fosters a proactive approach to addressing operational challenges and capitalizes on the collective knowledge of the workforce.

By leveraging a connected worker platform, manufacturers can standardize processes, enhance employee training and continuously track key performance metrics. This technology not only facilitates immediate fixes but also lays the foundation for long-term improvements. Over the next few pages, we'll explore real-world case studies that demonstrate how connected worker solutions have helped food and beverage companies drive continuous improvement and elevate their operational performance.

Case Study #8

# How Barry Callebaut Identified and Prioritized Improvement Opportunities with Poka

Barry Callebaut, a leading chocolate manufacturer, faced challenges in identifying and prioritizing continuous improvement (CI) opportunities due to a reliance on manual, paper-based forms and time-consuming data processing. The lack of integration between data sources and the complexity of analyzing and reporting data hindered efficient decision-making across multiple plants.

By implementing Poka Analytics, Barry Callebaut automated their data capture and analysis processes. The platform consolidated information into user-friendly dashboards, providing real-time insights into key areas such as foreign material reporting, 5S audits and employee skills matrices. This streamlined data analysis, eliminating the need for manual manipulation and improving the speed and accuracy of reporting.

> **"We improved our data analysis and decision-making with Poka Analytics because everything is easier to see, easier to treat and then to make decisions with this information."**
>
> **BARRY CALLEBAUT**
>
> **Ailana Pereira**
> Reliability and Continuous Improvement at Barry Callebaut

The adoption of Poka Analytics led to significant improvements in decision-making, efficiency and resource allocation. Barry Callebaut was able to process data more quickly, saving time and reducing manual effort. The integration of data from multiple sources into a single dashboard enhanced visibility, enabling more informed, timely decisions and freeing up resources for strategic initiatives.

Watch the Video ▶ 18:20
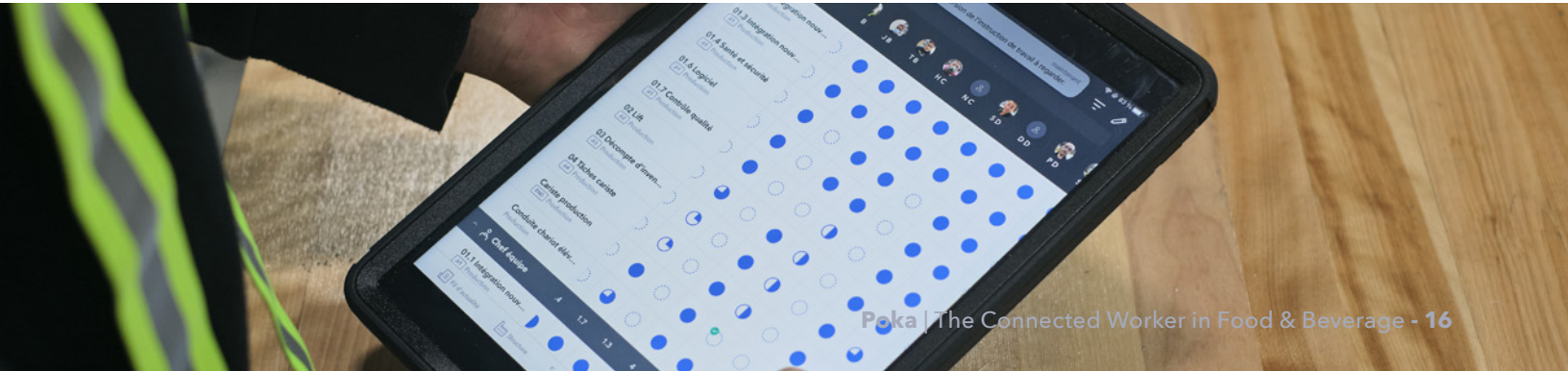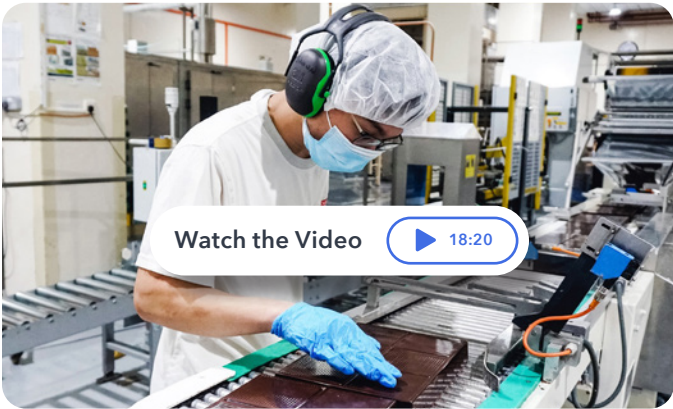
Case Study #9

Premier Foods Engages Workers to Drive Operational Performance with Poka

Premier Foods struggled with attracting and retaining workers in a competitive labor market. Their existing training and engagement systems were outdated, relying on notice boards and TV screens. They needed a solution to enhance workforce engagement, efficiently upskill employees and drive continuous improvement.

In March 2024, Premier Foods implemented Poka's connected worker platform on three production lines at their Ashford site. Using iPads, operators accessed digital work instructions, training materials, forms and troubleshooting resources. Poka's user-friendly interface and real-time communication empowered workers to take control of their training and development.

The pilot led to higher worker engagement, faster skill development and better management-worker relations. Poka streamlined SOP creation, cut paper costs, and improved issue detection with digital forms. Real-time access to team skills data boosted efficiency. As a result, Premier Foods plans to expand Poka at their Ashford site and explore global adoption.

Worker Feedback

"It's great that I can read things in my own language."

"Being able to grab a tablet and get on with my training is great if the line has stopped."

"It's so much better than constantly having to find someone to ask questions."

"I love that we can edit SOPs in real time. We're the ones that know what's happening on our lines and if something has changed."

Management Feedback

"As a manager, it's so easy to see how my team's getting on with their training rather than having to ask the training (team) or navigate through loads of folders online to find the information."

"I can see my whole team's skills, and then I can go and speak to my team about their training."

"I can immediately update something straight away if it's changed. It's so much easier."

- Chapter 6 -

Food & Beverage Manufacturing Use Cases

In the food and beverage manufacturing industry, the need for strict quality control, safety and efficiency demands real-time communication and easy access to information. Connected worker solutions empower operators with the tools and data they need to perform critical tasks efficiently, from quality checks to training compliance. By bringing essential information and digital workflows to workers on the shop floor, these solutions help manufacturers meet regulatory standards while maintaining high production quality and worker safety.

Connected worker apps address some of the most pressing operational challenges in this industry, enabling streamlined processes for tasks such as Cleaning in Place (CIP), abnormality reporting, metal detector checks, and quality audits. With centralized, accessible data, operators can complete these essential activities more accurately and report issues instantly, preventing delays and reducing potential waste. This connected approach also strengthens traceability, which is crucial for compliance with food safety regulations.

Ultimately, a connected worker platform supports the continuous improvement of manufacturing processes. With features like real-time training, audit compliance, and safety monitoring, it ensures that workers are both prepared and equipped to respond to changes and uphold best practices. This chapter will explore specific use cases that demonstrate how a connected worker solution can enhance productivity, safety, and compliance across the food and beverage manufacturing industry.

Top Use Cases to Consider for Food & Beverage Manufacturers

Cleaning In Place (CIP)
Reduce sanitation cycles and regulatory risk to ensure regulatory compliance, reduce quality issues and minimize planned downtime by following best practices and providing thorough operator training.

Abnormality Reporting
Identify and resolve abnormalities quickly through improved visibility, communication, and root cause analysis, minimizing rework, scrap, and recurrence over time.

Metal Detector Checks
Ensure product quality, safety, and productivity while reducing recalls and downtime through consistent equipment checks, rapid issue resolution, and enhanced task visibility.

Quality Audits
Establish safe, compliant processes and improve OEE by scheduling, collecting, and acting on audit data to lower quality costs, reduce waste, and catch issues early.

Top Use Cases to Consider for Food & Beverage Manufacturers
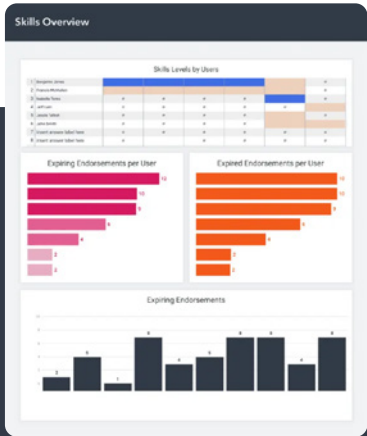
Training Audit & Compliance Management
Reinforce a learning culture and meet training requirements with instant skills visibility, compliance tracking, and efficient digital skill assignments.

Safety Audits
Enhance safety, efficiency, and compliance by minimizing incidents, increasing accountability, and fostering a culture of safety with digital tracking and communication tools.

Product Changeovers
Boost OEE and changeover efficiency with integrated digital training, tasks, checklists, and analytics, reducing downtime and inconsistencies.

**Explore all of Poka's food and beverage manufacturing use cases.**

About Poka

Empower Factory Workers to Drive Plant Performance and Productivity

With Poka, workers are able to perform tasks, solve problems, collaborate with others, and learn continuously - right from the factory floor. The result is a more engaged, versatile and autonomous workforce.

Book a demo

Discover the world's most complete connected worker platform at **poka.io**.
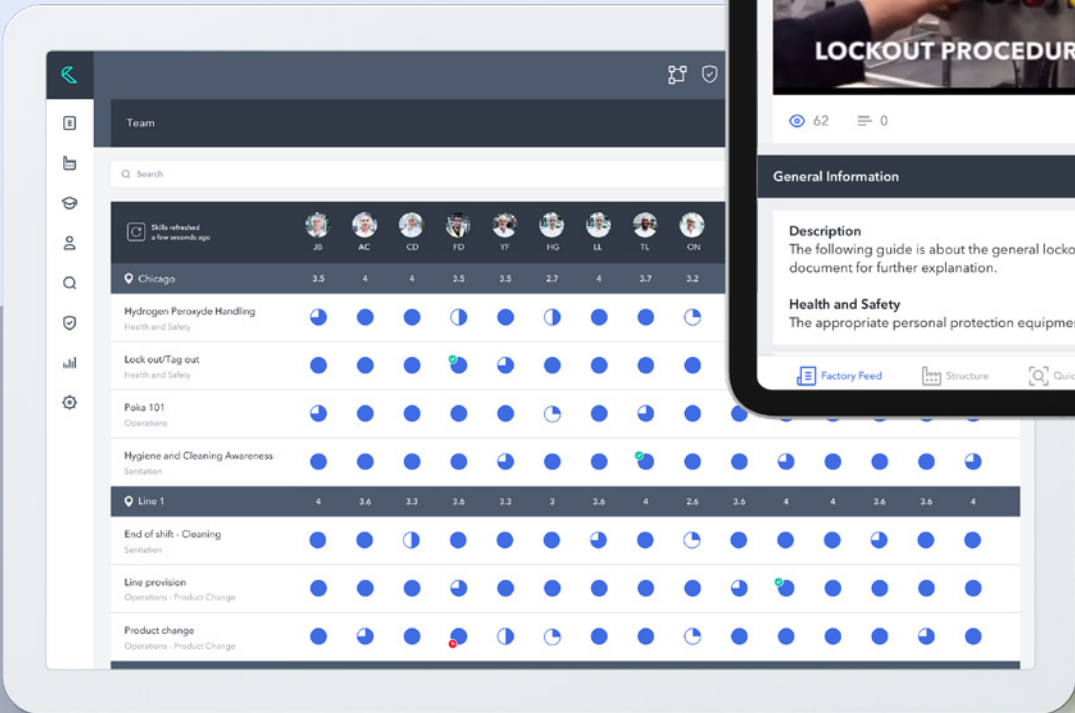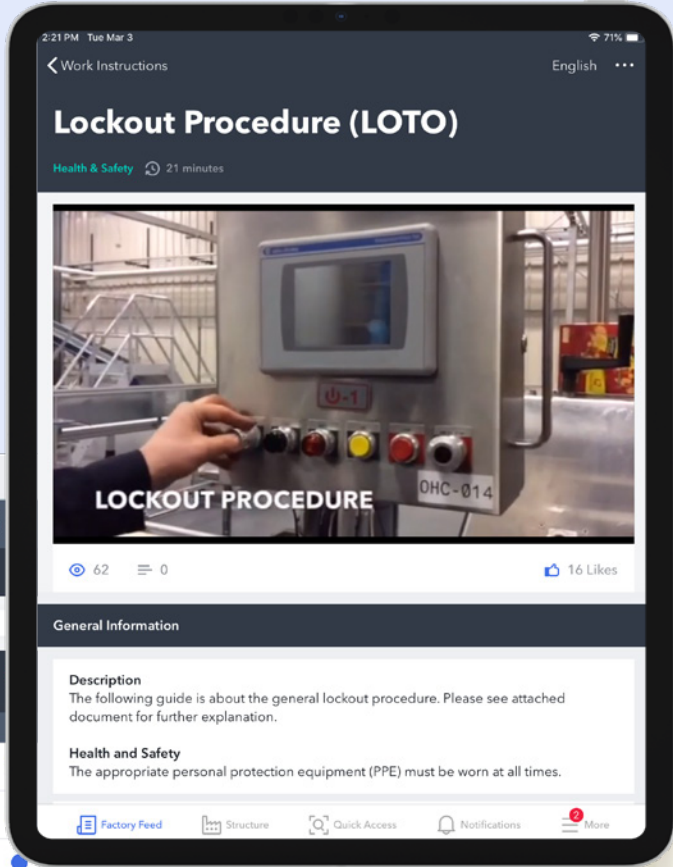
The Proven Power of Poka
See how Poka transforms operations on the factory floor by watching a demo today.

Watch Video