

# Activate your Frontline to Drive Operational Performance.

5 Lessons from Today's Leading Companies

How Empowering Individuals, Connecting Teams, and Driving Improvement will Elevate Operational Performance from the Frontline



## Introduction

### **Meet the Velocity of Change with Your Frontline**

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Quality

Cost

Delivery

People

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## Introduction

The rate of change in business is faster than ever. Companies must meet customer expectations, take on Industry 4.0 initiatives, and stay ahead of the competition while keeping an eye on safety, quality, cost, delivery, and their people. New ways of engaging your Frontline, the very people who make it all happen, can be the key to staying ahead of the curve.

Your Frontline team is closest to the work, customer, and issues essential to staying competitive and elevating operational performance, especially now.. Every organization needs to assess whether its Frontline is aligned, equipped and motivated to meet the challenges of today's speed of business.

In this eBook, we'll look at the impact the Frontline can have on operational performance through a new lens of speed and growth in the face of disruption and the velocity of change. We'll explore the driving forces that impact and engage the Frontline. And, we'll reveal information about technology that can help you leverage your Frontline to survive and thrive in the new decade.

1. Accelerating Speed of Change
2. The Frontline is at the Center of Your Success
3. 5 Keys to Activating the Frontline
4. How Technology Can Help



**Meet the Velocity  
of Change with Your  
Frontline**

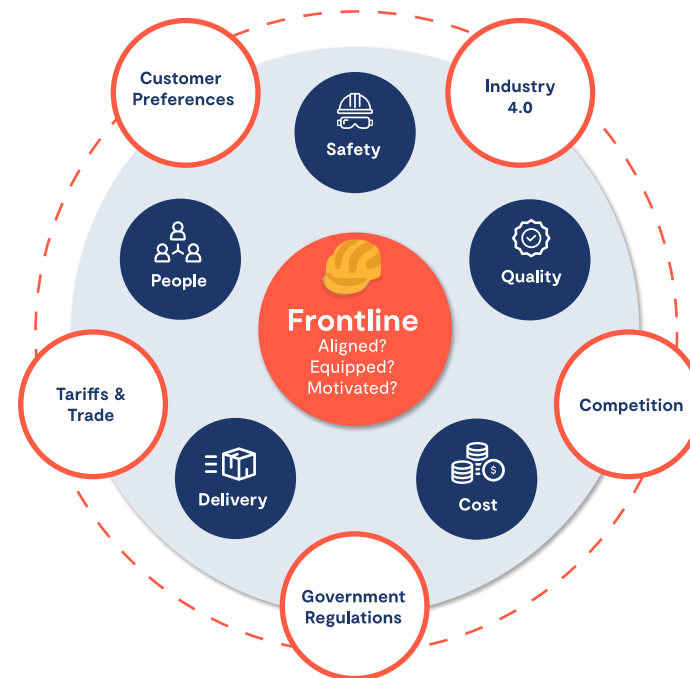
## Meet the Velocity of Change with Your Frontline

Your Frontline workforce is your greatest asset for remaining competitive in a rapidly changing market. Customer preferences, Industry 4.0 initiatives, new competition, increasing or changing government regulations, and new tariffs and trade issues all contribute to the velocity and complexity of change your business is facing.

Building a strategy for growth in this changing climate requires focused innovation and improvement across each of the Five Pillars of Operational Excellence: Safety, Quality, Cost, Delivery, and People (SQCDP).

Your Frontline is the epicenter of creating strength within each pillar and meeting your operational goals. The Frontline is closest to the processes and products, and a powerful force for influencing company culture toward the right objectives. Frontline workers' commitment to company goals and their attitude toward improvement is contagious to those around them. If your Frontline is working, your company is working.

As you empower your Frontline people and enable their participation in the success of your organization, you will ensure you have a deeply motivated, highly engaged team that can help you compete and succeed in today's dynamic market.



## 6 Reasons Your Frontline is Your Best Defense in a Hyper-Changing Market

The Frontline is a strategic asset. Frontline workers possess six factors that make them unique in their ability to improve your performance:

- 1. COMPETENCE** They are closest to the situation, closest to the actual work being done, and in many cases, closest to the customer.
- 2. CREATIVITY** They are able to think beyond the current perspective and want to contribute more strategically.
- 3. CULTURE** The Frontline is the center of your workers' culture and attitude. It is essential that they align with your company's values and strategic goals.
- 4. COMMITMENT** Frontline workers take pride in their company and in their work. They are dedicated to your success vs. competition.
- 5. CONTAGIOUS** Your Frontline workers' attitude can be infectious across individuals and teams.
- 6. COST** They're already on your payroll. Engaging them in meaningful activity that drives your success is one of the most cost effective strategies possible.



More product lines means more changeovers that means adjusting our workspace and processes to maintain safe conditions. It takes too long to identify, and implement those changes.

**Andre, Operator**



We need to deliver faster with more variety and reduce lead time. Keep innovating, or miss customer commitments. I have ideas but can't get management to listen. Maybe it's time to move on.

**Jenn, Assembly**



It's hard to keep my team focused on quality as we have to do more, faster, and for less. Without the visibility, ability to take action, and engaging associates, I am seeing the quality slipping.

**Maria, Supervisor**



We have to uncover all the cost control opportunities if we want to stay competitive. Everyone needs to find, test, and implement ideas that improve our efficiency and manage costs.

**Jake, Analyst.**

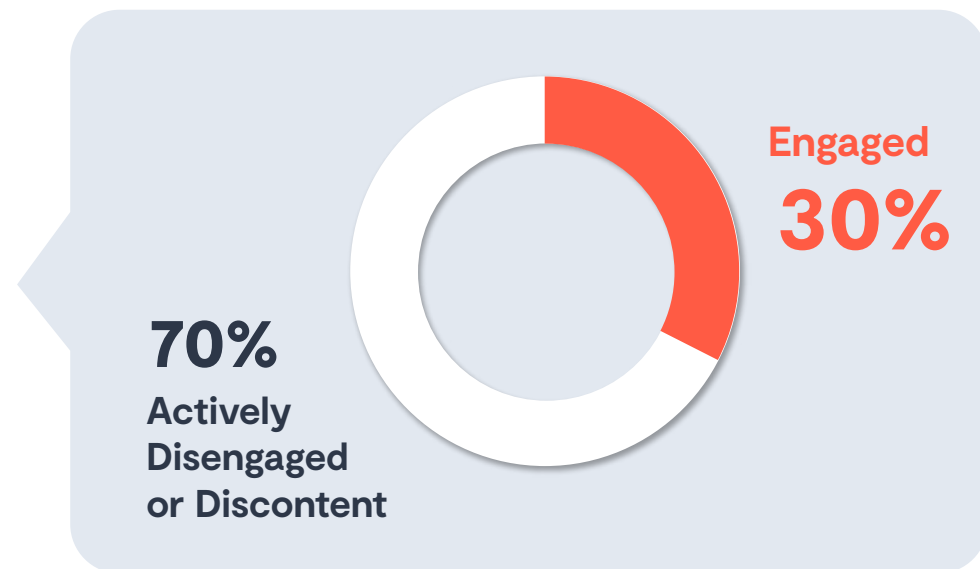
## An Engaged Frontline is a Competitive Advantage

To compete and remain relevant, you must create a culture that engages your Frontline to drive operational performance. Across all industries, only 30% of US employees are engaged. Even worse, only 25% US Manufacturing employees are engaged. Engaging your Frontline can dramatically improve the productivity of your organization.

Studies show that companies can achieve a \$2.5M annual benefit from just a 1% improvement in Frontline employee retention. (This estimate is based on an organization with 5000 frontline employees earning \$50k per year.) Increasing Frontline involvement in strategic issues across the SQCDP pillars increases interest in the company's success and daily engagement. In manufacturing, the Frontline is especially ready to embrace new ways to engage in their work. They are much more likely to leave company where they are not engaged and feel excluded from strategic involvement.

### Engage Employees

Disengagement =  
turnover, wasted potential



Gallup Poll 2017 of 100 million full-time American workers

<sup>1</sup> <https://hbr.org/2018/08/how-to-motivate-frontline-employees>

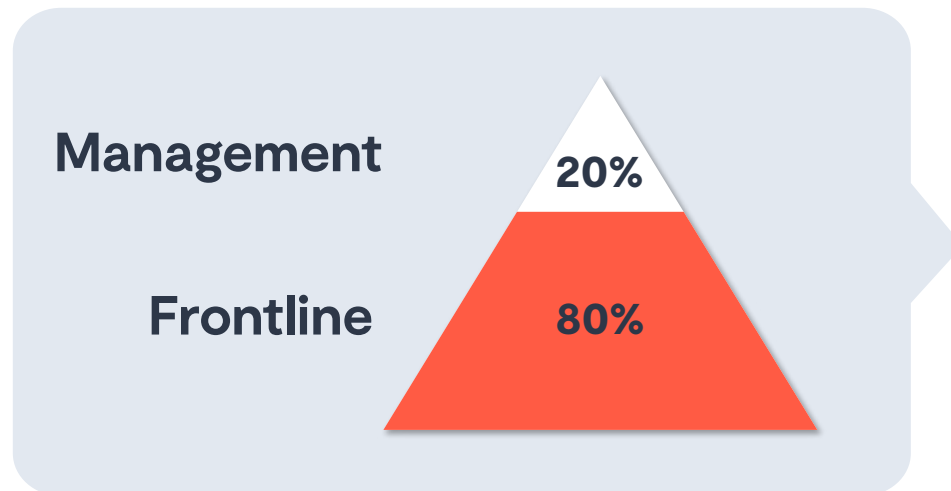
## Your Frontline is a Wealth of Operational Improvement Ideas

Companies that engage the Frontline and harvest the innovation that comes from their ideas will be the winners of the next decade. Statistics show that the Frontline is a go-to source for innovation. The Frontline discovers not only most of the ideas, but also the most relevant ideas.

**80%** of improvement ideas come from the Frontline. You cannot afford to leave those ideas untapped.

**60%** of a company's management ranks are frontline managers. In manufacturing, the Frontline is especially ready to embrace new ways to engage in their work. They are much more likely to leave company where they are not engaged and feel excluded from strategic involvement.

**500%** increase in organizational improvement rate to 12-17% from the 2-2.5% per year where improvement is consciously managed.



### Capture Ideas

Can't afford to miss out on the majority of improvement insights

Alan G. Robinson, Isenber School of Management, University of Massachusetts.  
Presented at NE Lean Summit, Hartford CT, Oct 2019

<sup>2</sup> <https://hbr.org/2011/05/the-frontline-advantage>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/operations/our-insights/the-future-of-manufacturing-your-people>



## Understand the Changing Frontline

Frontline employees are affected by market forces and cultural change. They are digitally connected and aware of the competition and market trends. However, these changes can be leveraged to drive improvement and engagement. Smart organizations can capitalize on these forces of change by involving Frontline team members in strategies to successfully navigate change and uncover new opportunities.



### **Workers have evolved:**

They are digitally native and carry smartphones.

Individuals are looking for more flexibility and individualization.

Workers are informed and expect more day-to-day decision making.

Workers change jobs more often, increasing their exposure to new ideas and methods of work.

### **Technology has evolved:**

Technology is ubiquitous. Smartphones and tablets, not issued or controlled by the company, are on today's frontline and in the pockets of the workers.

Mobile devices are more powerful than PCs were even five years ago.



### **Company investment strategies have adapted:**

Investment in technology for the Frontline is increasing by over 30% annually.

Targets are solutions that drive productivity, employee experience, or streamline processes.

There is a premium on quick-to-implement, quick-to-produce results technology.

Companies are moving away from large-scale, expensive projects that may or may not bear fruit.

Today's leaders allow all Frontline employees to participate in improvements and innovation. They also recognize individuals for their contributions which drives engagement and operational improvement.



**Your Frontline is Your  
Key to Successful  
SQCDP**

## Your Frontline is Your Key to Successful SQCDP

Whether formally or informally, you've already focused on the Pillars of Operational Success in your organization. Innovations that directly improved Safety, Quality, Cost, Delivery and your People are the ones that will strengthen your defenses in a competitive, changing landscape.

Innovations that actually open new business opportunities are also often found in the Frontline. Building, implementing and measuring a continuous improvement plan for each of the SQCDP Operational Success Pillars will not only improve the bottom line, but foster innovation and competitive differentiation.





## Safety

You need to create a safe and healthy workplace. However, yet there are structural and organizational issues that keep you from achieving the highest safety possible:

- A “compliance only” focus
- Regression or lack of sustainability
- A culture of “top-down policy” rather than individual responsibility

Your Frontline team is closest to safety issues and is full of ideas about safety improvements. Using technology, you can capture safety issues that are identified by your Frontline, address the issue through continuous improvement methodology, and track safety improvements. Over time, you can gather valuable data about safety issues and monitor trends to improve overall safety across your organization.

### Innovations in Safety with Rever

Rever allows your Frontline to easily identify, address, and track safety concerns. Safety concern can be immediately captured when identified. Employees are able to submit suggestions for improvement, try solutions, and recognized when successful safety innovations are implemented. By leveraging your Frontline team, you can create a safer and healthier workplace to elevate operational performance while engaging your team.

Rever's mobile App and SaaS platform empower the Frontline to report and address safety issues, while providing leadership with broad insight, faster resolutions, and real-time reporting on safety concerns.

- Mobile App – anyone can report and address issues
- Workflow – transparency to status, ownership, impact
- Virtual Team – right people to address the issue
- Dashboards – analyze and report on safety improvements

*“Rever has allowed us to move from a safety compliance program centered on policy enforcement, to a collaborative lean safety program where everyone is involved and improving safety and working conditions. Not only has this created a safer workplace, but a more productive and engaged group of associates.”*



## Quality

To compete, you must deliver the highest quality products and services possible. Many organizations focus on quality and yet still face challenges that affect their corporate reputation and bottom line such as:

- Late and delayed detection of defects
- Unresolved issues and operating conditions
- No accountability of root cause for quality issues
- Inability to efficiently tackle the root cause of quality problems due to lack of proper tracking of time, place, and person.

Your Frontline can be the most effective at identifying, reporting, and resolving quality issues. Using a digital platform, you can accelerate issue resolution and elevate operational performance. You can also avoid late detection of quality defects, which often worsens the impact on the customer and productivity.

With an empowered and engaged Frontline, you can achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction by consistently delivering the highest quality products and services possible. while improving operating conditions and avoiding frustration with employees and customers.

### Higher Quality with Rever

Rever's mobile App and SaaS platform empower the Frontline to identify and address quality failures, while providing leadership with real-time visibility and analysis to rectify quality lapses and tackle the root cause.

- Quick Fix Flow – anyone can address a problem on the spot
- Assignment – accountability to where, when defects occur
- Central Database – share learning across teams and sites
- Dashboards – analyze and report on quality issues

*"We have always talked about quality being everyone's responsibility. With Rever we are finally able to empower all our associates to report and address quality issues quickly. Rever also lets us track defects for analysis of trends and root causes."*



As you address market and competitive pressures, you must also control costs and find efficiencies that improve the bottom line. Finding new cost-effective processes, identifying machine abnormalities, or keeping operations within target operational performance levels is key to cost savings. Yet companies are often challenged to control costs because:

- Bottlenecks for implementing ideas. Limiting not only implementation, but also delaying feedback to employees.
- Only the experts can contribute ideas. Ignoring those closest to work causes them to lose faith in the system.
- Focus on big wins, not the ongoing 1%. Stifling a continuous improvement culture.

You can leverage your Frontline to discover, test, and implement cost saving improvements. Once proven, cost saving strategies can be rolled-out across the company. The impact is significant. Use the following model to determine how much you can save with a digital process improvement tool.

### Controlling Costs with Rever

Rever's mobile App and SaaS platform empowers the frontline to drive operational improvement initiatives while providing leadership with the data insights to drive programs, recognize individuals, and report performance impact.

- PDCA Flow – anyone can drive an improvement idea
- Gamification – everyone is motivated and recognized
- Dashboards – analyze and report on activities
- Challenges – campaigns to drive specific improvements

*"Rever has made it easy for everyone to get involved. It's no longer about forcing a quota of new ideas upon associates and creating a backlog of ideas. We now have associates actively coming up with ideas that they themselves address through experimenting and implementing solutions. It has completely changed the innovation culture."*



Meeting customer expectations with on-time delivery is essential. Frontline team members are closest to delivery and are often able to identify and address issues that will delay product delivery. Today, many organizations are hampered by delivery delays that can be avoided. Getting the Frontline more involved can help avoid the following:

- Delayed response time extends downtime
- Maintenance, not operators, are in control
- Losing expertise and experience

Your Frontline can quickly capture and share details, discover ideas for problem resolution, and test solutions. By identifying potential issues with delivery quickly, companies can reduce delays and improve customer satisfaction.

### Improving Delivery with Rever

Rever's mobile App and SaaS platform empowers the frontline to drive operational improvement initiatives, while providing leadership with the data insights to drive programs, recognize individuals, and report performance impact.

- Quick Fix Flow – provide insights on machine opportunities
- Machine Abnormalities – categorize issues by standard TPM list
- Dashboard – Analyze performance and detect recurrent issues

*"Rever allows everyone to immediately report and address an outage, defect, or blockage. Because all the information is captured and centralized, we can see patterns and dig into root causes of issues."*



## People

It is essential to engage and inspire employees to contribute their best. Keeping your people engaged requires empowering them and recognizing for taking action that helps the company succeed. Today, companies find that the Frontline is frustrated because they:

- Lack accountability and recognition
- Lack a voice and the ability to drive change
- Are unable to collaborate

Your Frontline can be engaged by allowing them to report and address issues and be recognized them for their contributions.

### Improving the Satisfaction of Your People with Rever

Rever's mobile App and SaaS platform empower your Frontline to drive operational improvement initiatives, while providing leadership with the data insights to drive programs, recognize individuals, and report performance impact.

- Mobile App – everyone has a voice to participate
- Workflows – allows anyone to drive improvement
- Gamification – everyone is motivated and recognized
- Dashboards – analyze and report on engagement



*“Everyone is involved and accountable in improving our performance and making this a better place to work. Rever has brought our programs to life by enabling individuals to see how their ideas impact the company, and to be recognized for their contribution.”*





## **Five Components to Activate Your Frontline NOW**

## Five Components to Activate Your Frontline NOW

There are five keys to activating the frontline which can yield results quickly. Technology can help companies facilitate the process quickly and begin to recognize improvements across the Safety, Quality, Cost, Delivery or Productivity (SQCPD) Operational Pillars.



### Educate

Provide frontline employees with an understanding of lean principles and reinforce training with tools that can use every day to allow their actions to drive a lean culture.



### Empower

Give employees the ability and authority to implement ideas. Develop a process, define roles and responsibilities so that individuals can take action and innovate to solve problems.



### Connect

Create a network for collaboration and communication among individuals across teams. Communication will foster the sharing of ideas and the reuse of solutions. It also provides visibility across the organization.



### Measure

Publish activity and performance data to motivate participation. You can't improve what you don't measure. Drive participation by setting goals, running campaigns, and tracking results.



### Recognition

Celebrate success across the organization to reinforce participation by everyone on the frontline. Accountability and recognition will build and grow your organization's lean culture.



## Educate

Provide your Frontline team with an understanding of lean principles and reinforce training with tools they can use every day to allow their actions to drive a lean culture. As they increase their understanding of continuous improvement, innovation, and participation, they will increase their engagement and improve their contributions to the company.

### What you can do:

- Provide training on lean principles
- Teach in the classroom and the gemba walk process
- Provide templates and instructions
- Host improvement events and celebrate as a group

### Expected Results:

- Employees are more confident in taking action
- Increase the number of ideas and improvements submitted by your Frontline
- Higher quality, more significant ideas will begin to be suggested by employees
- Deeper employee engagement



*National Center on the Educational Quality of the Workforce conducted a study of more than 3,100 U.S. workplaces and found that on an average if there is an increase in workforce education by 10%, it will lead to increase in productivity by 8.6%. <sup>4</sup>*

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.yourtrainingedge.com/how-can-training-help-in-increasing-employee-productivity/>



## Empower

As you give employees the ability and authority to implement ideas, engagement and contribution increases dramatically. Start by developing a process, defining roles, and assigning responsibilities so that individuals can take action and innovate to solve problems. Don't forget to recognize those that contribute meaningfully to encourage other team members to participate in the future.



### What you can do:

- Encourage and reward experimentation
- Remove fear and risk
- Establish appropriate authorization and sign-offs
- Provide ownership and accountability

### Expected Results:

- Faster implementations and reduced idea backlog
- More engaged individuals
- Increase of creative experiments across the company
- Increased learning and Frontline skill levels

*"Empowerment helps to explain the effects on both employee creativity and citizenship behavior. Empowered employees are more likely to be powerful, confident individuals, who are committed to meaningful goals and demonstrate initiative and creativity to achieve them. They typically have the freedom to generate novel ideas and the confidence that these ideas will be valued."*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> HBR and Academy of Management study 2017 <http://amj.aom.org/content/38/5/1442.short>



## Connect

Often, Frontline employees are siloed and interact only with their direct team members or co-workers they see regularly at work. Collaboration and idea sharing can be a great motivator to employees, and a way to extend the value of their ideas across the organization. Your company will benefit as you create a network for collaboration and communication among individuals across teams. Communication will foster idea sharing, solution reuse, and instill best practices.

### What you can do:

- Multi-disciplinary workshops
- Create virtual teams
- Provide a communication and sharing platform
- Reward teamwork and celebrate individuals who foster collaboration

### Expected Results:

- Faster problem solutions
- Shared idea flow between teams
- Increased employee participation
- Reduce duplication of efforts when addressing the same issues



*"None of us is as smart as all of us."  
Ken Blanchard, best selling author of One Minute Manager*



## Measure

Your Frontline will become more engaged if they see results and understand how their contribution to the overall effort helps the organization succeed. One way to help your Frontline understand and value their contribution is to publish activity and performance data to motivate participation. You can't improve what you don't measure. Drive participation by setting goals, running campaigns and tracking results.



### What you can do:

- Identify the metrics most important to you
- Report regularly on those metrics to everyone
- Publish real-time dashboards on activity and impact
- Make decisions based on data – accountability

### Expected Results:

- Impact is quantified, reported, and recognized
- Resources aligned to company objectives
- Recognition of '1% Continuous Improvements'
- Smarter decision on targeting improvement areas

*"You can't manage what you can't measure."  
Peter Drucker, Management Consultant*



## Recognize

Employees (and really everyone) enjoy recognition for their success. As you engage your Frontline in improvement and innovation, be sure to celebrate success and publish them across the organization. Success helps reinforce participation by everyone on the Frontline. Accountability and recognition will build and grow your organization's lean culture.

### What you can do:

- Establish clear targets and goals
- Track activity (and impact) by individuals and teams
- Be consistent in timing, rewards and recognition
- Transparency in all aspects of the program

### Expected Results:

- Higher engagement by employees
- Activity will drive culture of improvement
- Higher velocity of quality ideas
- Increase teamwork



*"People work for money but go the extra mile for recognition, praise and rewards."  
Dale Carnegie, Leadership Training Guru*



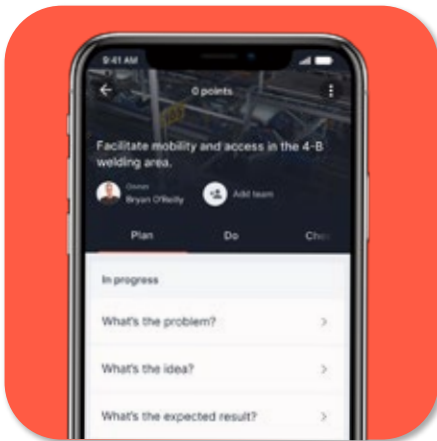
## **How Rever Can Help**



## How Rever Can Help

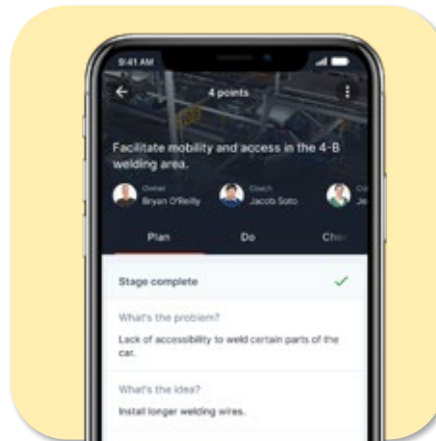
Rever is a SaaS platform (accessed via a smartphone, tablet, or PC) that empowers anyone to identify new ideas and issues, activate a virtual team to implement a solution, and track the impact of that solution. Managers use Rever's SaaS platform to align efforts around specific objectives, track real-time activity, analyze performance impact, and drive participation with gamification.

Since all the activity and information is centralized within Rever, real-time dashboards and actionable insights are available to analyze the frontline engagement and the impact in operational performance such as safety, quality, cost, delivery, and revenue.



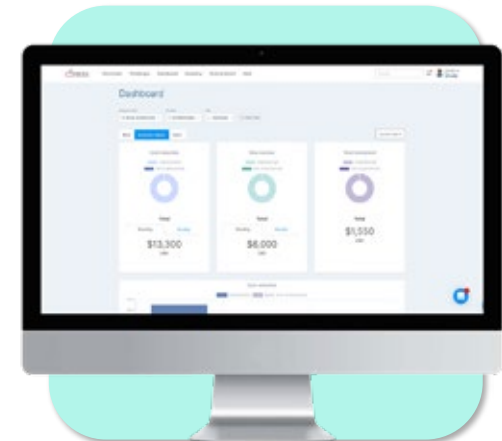
### **Empower the Frontline:**

With tools to take action on acute problems, innovation ideas, and ongoing issue leveraging a standard workflow and approval process.



### **Connect the Frontline:**

To collaborate across teams and share learnings by leveraging mobile devices.



### **Drive the Frontline:**

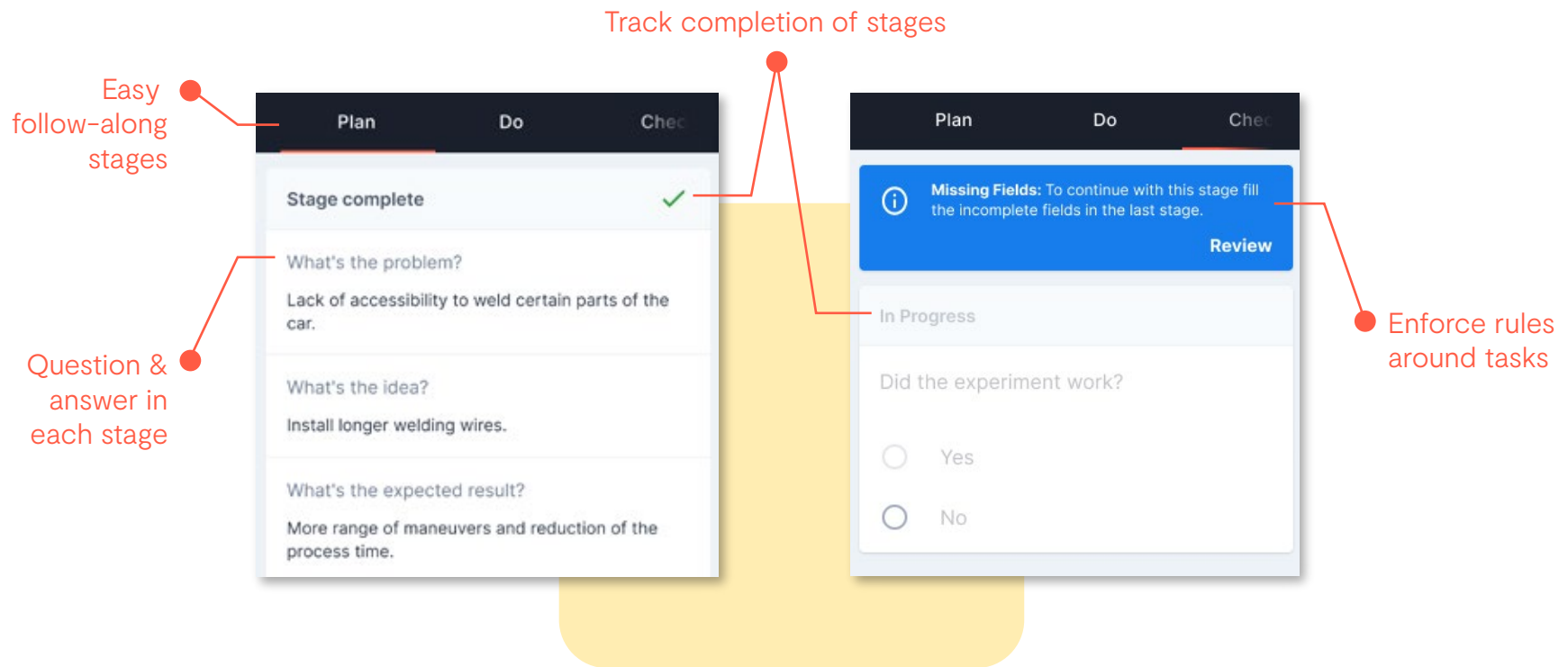
By aligning on company objectives, recognizing contributors through gamification, and using real-time dashboards to analyze results.



## Educate

### Anyone can Engage in the Program

Rever allows anyone to engage in innovation and problem solving programs, resulting in higher engagement from the individuals at the frontline to elevate operational performance.

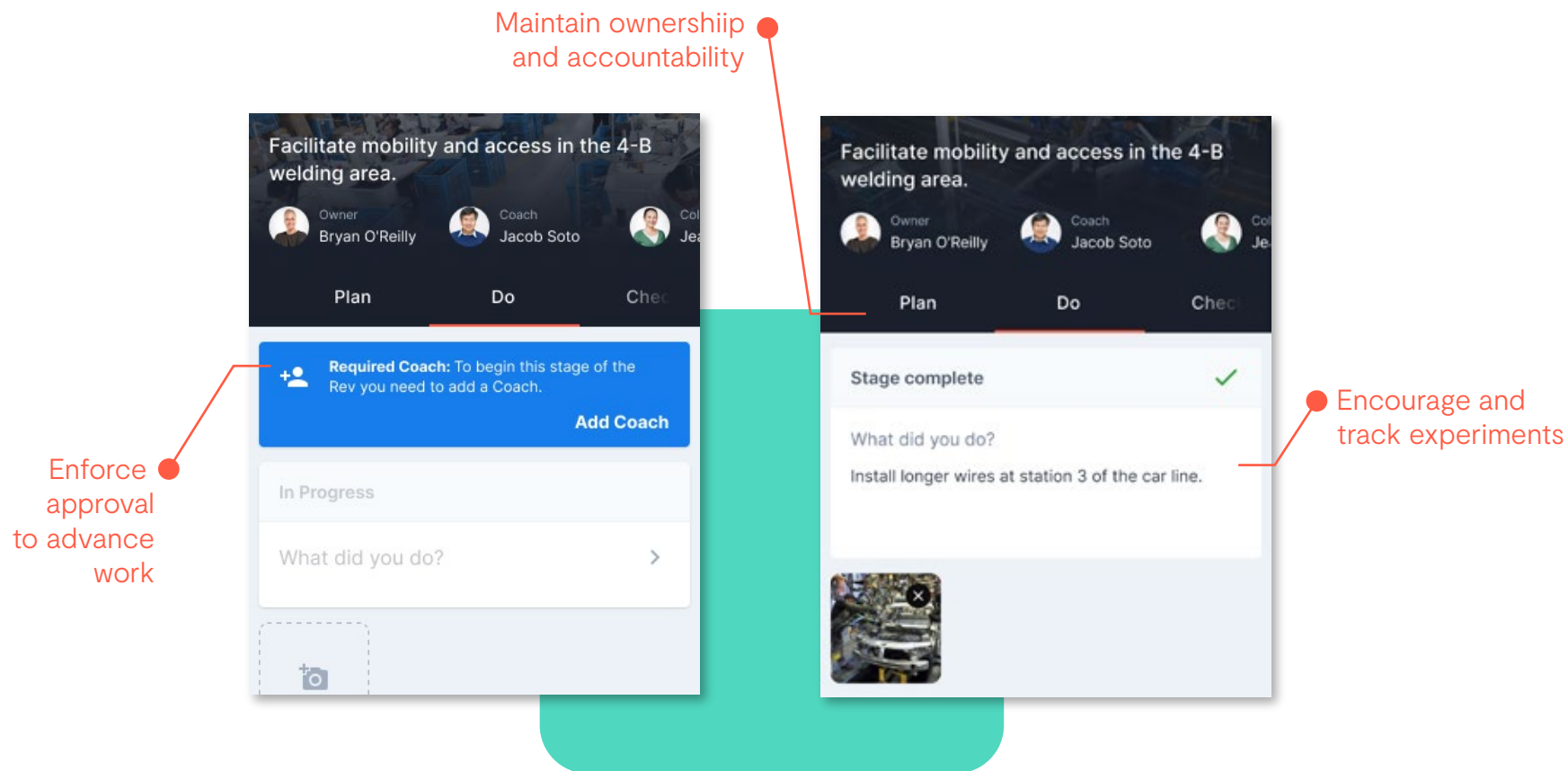




## Empower

### Everyone can Implement, not just Suggest

Rever allows everyone to follow a systematic methodology to implement solutions, resulting in an increased volume of higher quality ideas being realized faster.





## Connect

### Encourage Teamwork and Communication

Rever allows individuals to collaborate across teams, resulting in higher frontline engagement, increased teamwork, and reducing duplication of efforts.

The screenshot displays the Rever app interface. On the left, a task card titled "Facilitate mobility and access in the 4-B welding area." is shown. It lists team members: Owner Bryan O'Reilly, Coach Jacob Soto, and another team member. Below the list are tabs for "Plan", "Do", and "Check". A "Stage complete" notification with a green checkmark is visible. The task description reads: "What's the problem? Lack of accessibility to weld certain parts of the car." On the right, a "Comments" section shows three comments. The first comment by Amanda Butler (June 11) discusses base kits and colorway. The second comment by Jean Allen (June 15) discusses vaporwave aesthetics. The third comment by Jacob Soto (June 15) is partially visible. Red callout lines point to specific features: "Create a virtual team" points to the team list; "Suggest and share solutions" points to the top right menu icon; "Comments, notes and attachments" points to the comments section.

Create a virtual team

Suggest and share solutions

Comments, notes and attachments

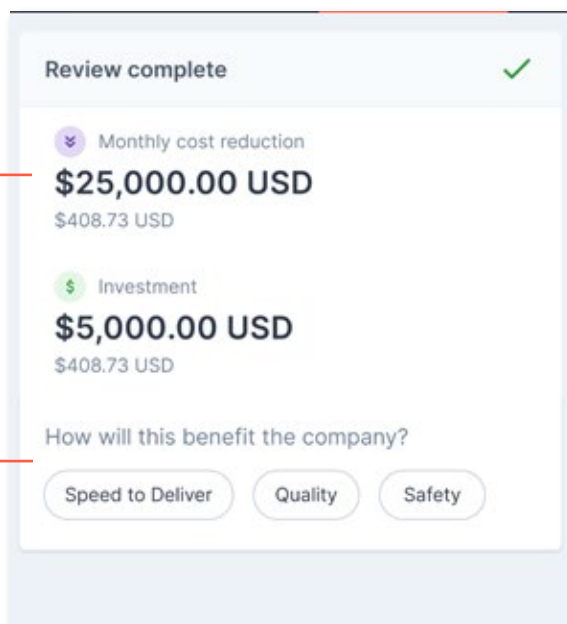


## Measure

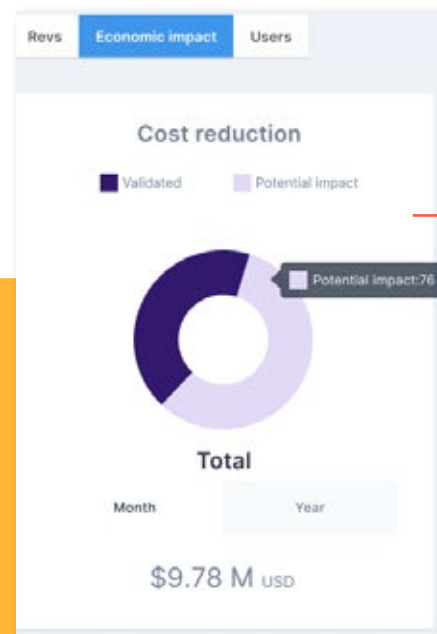
### Measure Results and Track Activity

Rever allows leaders to access and publish real-time program metrics, resulting in program transparency that drives executive sponsorship, spurs frontline participation, and supports data-driven decision.

Quantify  
the impact  
of an idea



Classify  
benefits  
for analysis



Report  
on impact



## Recognize

### Drive and Reward Participation

Rever allows individuals to track their activity level by earning points, resulting in higher activity rates and participation. Rever also lets leaders recognize and reward individuals based on their activity metrics, which reinforces positive behavior and elevates frontline participation rates.

Gamify to drive participation

The screenshot displays two main components of the Rever app. On the left, a task completion screen for 'Facilitate mobility and access in the 4-B welding area.' shows a '4 points' reward and a list of participants: Owner Bryan O'Reilly, Coach Jacob Soto, and another participant. Below this, a 'Stage complete' notification with a green checkmark is visible, followed by a text input field asking 'What's the problem?' with the example text 'Lack of accessibility to weld certain parts of the car.' On the right, a 'Top users' leaderboard lists five individuals, each with a profile picture, name, and a score of 300 points. A red line connects the 'Gamify to drive participation' text to the task completion screen, and another red line connects the 'Comments, notes and attachments' text to the leaderboard.

Top users		
	Amanda Butler	300
	Bryan O'Reilly	300
	Jean Allen	300
	Jacob Soto	300
	Roger M. Blackwell	300

Comments, notes and attachments

## Conclusion

Companies have an often untapped resource in their Frontline team. Leveraging this wealth of ideas and innovations can help companies meet the challenges of rapidly changing, often highly- disrupted industries such as automotive and manufacturing.

There are Five Pillars of Operational Excellence that can strengthen companies as they face unprecedented challenges meeting customer preferences, addressing Industry 4.0 challenges, facing competition, dealing with changing or evolving government regulations, and new tariffs or trade issues. These pillars are all improved by leveraging the power of ideas and improvements generated by the Frontline team. The pillars are:

**1.Safety    2.Quality    3.Cost    4.Delivery    5.People**

In order for companies to thrive during the new decade, they realize that they can strengthen each of the pillars by empowering the Frontline. One of the best ways to empower and engage the frontline is through a digital idea management system such as Rever. Using the Rever mobile app and platform, companies not only save millions by retaining and empowering employees, they excel in safety, quality, cost control, delivery, and the satisfaction of their employees.

Most importantly, companies that embrace and include the Frontline in their innovation strategies create a highly-engaged culture and improve employee satisfaction, which is the root of great products, great customer service, and growth.

