

Reimagining Upskilling And Reskilling Amid Digital Transformation In Logistics Industry



Companies need to encourage their employees to embrace upskilling, reskilling, and mentoring as a way of life says Mehernosh Mehta, CHRO, Gati Limited




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30 August, 2023
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The growth of the domestic logistics industry and its mission to enhance cost and operational efficiency are primarily based on three pillars - infrastructure development, technological adoption and manpower competencies. However, given the heightened focus on infrastructure development to strengthen transportation and multimodal connectivity and technology integration to build resilience, the necessity to build competent human capital is often relegated to the background. The interplay of infrastructure development and technological advancement overshadowing the significance of human resource development is something India can ill afford at a time when the country aims to improve its position in the global logistics performance index.

Skill gap scenario and the need for digital fluency

According to The World Bank Study on Logistics Competencies, Skills, and Training published in 2017 says so. As per the report, along with India, countries like China, The United States, The United Kingdom, Vietnam, and the Republic of Korea are finding it challenging to recruit people with the required skillsets in logistics and supply chain management sector.

As a major part of the logistics workforce in India is semi-skilled. Upskilling and reskilling should get the priority they deserve as the domestic logistics market is poised to grow from \$ 250 billion in 2021 to \$ 380 billion by 2025 at a compound annual growth rate of 10-12% percent.

The integration of data-driven technologies, such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, the Internet of Things (IoT), and advanced analytics, has changed the functional dynamics of the logistics operations. These technologies provide real-time insights, enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and improve decision-making across various aspects of the supply chain. The ongoing digital transformation has triggered the evolution of traditional supply chain roles and the process calls for developing a workforce adept at utilizing and

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traditional supply chain roles and the process calls for developing a workforce adept at utilizing and understanding these data-driven technologies. That makes upskilling, reskilling, and mentorship critical for building a futuristic and digitally proficient human resource for the logistics industry. As a report by Accenture titled 'Where's your supply chain workforce headed?' rightly points out to the fact that all supply chain roles will need digital fluency, upskilling has become indispensable for the employees to remain relevant and productive in their roles.

Efficiency gain through upskilling and mentoring

Upskilled human resources can utilize data-driven tools to streamline processes, make informed decisions and optimize resource allocation processes. This will result in operational efficiency and productivity. Data-driven insights empower employees to make informed decisions that can positively impact strategic planning, operational efficiency, route optimization, and overall supply chain performance.

In addition, experienced employees can serve as mentors to guide newer employees in understanding both the traditional logistics practices and the newer data-driven approaches. This helps in preserving institutional knowledge and fostering a culture of continuous learning. Logistics companies can establish mentorship programmes that connect experienced employees with those looking to enhance their skills in data-driven technologies. Alternatively, companies can implement metrics to measure the effectiveness of upskilling and reskilling initiatives in terms of improved performance, efficiency gains, and employee satisfaction.

In this phase of technology transformation, logistics companies that invest in workforce skill development and embrace a culture of continuous learning will be able to navigate the challenges and grab growth opportunities created by data-driven technologies.

Upskilling is not mere transfer of technical skills

However, in today's dynamic technological landscape, upskilling and reskilling initiatives must transcend the mere transfer of technical skills related to a specific technology or application. Instead, they should foster a broader mindset and skill set that empowers employees to adapt, innovate, and excel in a continuously evolving digital environment. Even the National Logistics Policy envisages a policy framework for upskilling and reskilling the workforce.

Upskilling and reskilling must empower employees with the ability to think critically, learn continuously, and navigate the digital landscape effectively, rather than just teaching them how to operate specific tools. This holistic approach will enable employees to thrive in an ever-changing environment and contribute to the long-term growth of their organizations as well as for the logistics industry as a whole. Human resource is the backbone of the logistics industry. Companies need to encourage their employees to embrace upskilling, reskilling, and mentoring as a way of life. Such practices eventually foster a cultural shift within an organisation.

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