

Home > People > Staying relevant in today's digitally mobilised logistics, supply chain management industry

PEOPLE

Staying relevant in today's digitally mobilised logistics, supply chain management industry

Despite the opportunities digital transformation presents, the lack of skilled talent in India hampers its full potential.

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In today's competitive landscape, professionals in the supply chain industry must upskill to stay relevant amidst rapid digital transformation. Upskilling is imperative for survival and growth, ensuring professionals remain valuable and competitive in the job market, fostering long-term success and better career opportunities. For managers and professionals aiming to enhance their digital processes, upskilling is essential to effectively navigate and leverage digital tools.

The imperative for upskilling in supply chain

Upskilling is crucial in this age. While digital transformation presents a great opportunity for the logistics and supply chain sector in India, a lack of skilled talent hinders its true potential. According to KPMG, only 18 per cent of logistics companies in India have adopted data analytics, a key technology, that can greatly improve business efficiency. Another study by McKinsey in 2023 highlights that Fortune 500 companies place 22 per cent of procurement employees in analytics teams. This suggests that companies will need to invest and increase the number of data profiles available to scale through external hiring of data-savvy profiles or reskilling of existing teams. According to a news report, the World Economic Forum states that investment in upskilling could boost India's economy by \$570 billion and add 2.3 million jobs by 2030. Addressing the digital skills gap is crucial for the successful digital transformation of India's supply chain and logistics sector.

Job profiles such as supply chain managers, logistics analysts, and operations supervisors now require proficiency in digital tools and technologies, including data analytics, automation, and blockchain. Digital platforms and software improve inventory management, transportation efficiency, and overall operations. For instance, predictive analytics enables supply chain managers to forecast demand and mitigate risks, while blockchain technology ensures transparency and security in shipment monitoring. By enhancing their skills, logistics and supply chain professionals can stay current and drive innovation and efficiency within their organisations.

Transitioning to smart logistics

The shift from traditional logistics to smart logistics is akin to moving from using a compass to GPS. Digital transformation in supply chains integrates technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), the Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain, and Big Data Analytics. Modern technologies allow for route optimisation using machine learning, predicting disruptions with analytics, and enhancing customer experiences through real-time data. This shift improves efficiency and supports sustainability and risk management.

That said, while the integration of new-age technology promises increased efficiency, transparency, and resilience, the effectiveness hinges on the availability of skilled professionals capable of managing and optimising these digital tools. A McKinsey survey found that 93 per cent of companies aim to build more resilient supply chains, and 90 per cent plan to enhance digital capabilities through reskilling or new hires.

The need for upskilling in India

Indian professionals are keen on obtaining certifications to advance their careers. As per a report by TeamLease, the logistics industry will create 10 mn jobs in India by 2027. There will be a growing demand for professionals with expertise in data analytics, automation, AI, and supply chain management. Thus, certifications in supply chain management can significantly enhance career prospects. Executive education for mid to senior-level professionals is gaining popularity. Companies are prioritising skilled candidates, making upskilling essential. For logistics and supply chain professionals, online upskilling courses offer a lifeline. These courses are more than just educational programmes—they are pathways to mastering advanced technologies and methodologies crucial for smart logistics.

Online courses as a solution

Online courses in supply chain management delve into logistics planning, business strategy, supply chain modelling, and design. These courses arm professionals with the technical and managerial prowess needed to tackle sector-specific challenges. The online format offers unmatched flexibility, allowing professionals to juggle work and study, applying new insights in real-time. Moreover, the global nature of online courses brings together a diverse cohort, enriching the learning experience with varied perspectives. This diversity mirrors the interconnected nature of modern supply chains, preparing professionals for global challenges without the need for relocation or hefty expenses.

These areas equip students for roles like Project Manager, Supply Chain Manager, Material Manager, Demand Planner, and Sourcing Manager. Each role demands a unique blend of skills and expertise, all fostered through targeted online education. Supply Chain Management (SCM) is an essential aspect of business operations, often acting as the backbone of an organisation.

In summary, the tremendous expansion of the logistics and supply chain management business may be attributed to technological advancements and digital transformation. Professionals can take advantage of this by enrolling in an online supply chain management course to prepare for leadership roles in management, consulting, or executive positions. Investing in future-ready online courses and continuously upskilling is essential to thrive in the evolving global marketplace. By focusing on continuous learning and upskilling, supply chain professionals in India can ensure they remain at the forefront of industry innovation, driving both personal and organisational success in the digitally-driven future.