

Re-skilling the Workforce – After COVID/Before COVID

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 All Distribution Industries, All Manufacturing Industries, Distribution, Manufacturing, Miscellaneous



We all know that the world is going through a major change that will lead to us running our lives differently than we did **BC (Before COVID)**. What some businesses are beginning to realize though is that their workforce will need to learn new skills AC/DC (After COVID/During COVID).

There's an old joke:

A CFO says to the CEO, "We are investing a lot in training our staff. What if they leave?"

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For several years, organizations like the World Economic Forum, Gartner Research, and others, have been urging manufacturers to start on a transformation journey to embrace the new opportunities of the **Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and digitization**. Some companies have made the decision to embark on that journey, and one of the things they have found is that you can't transform your business if you don't give your staff the chance to reskill and re-educate themselves to understand what the 'new business' needs, how it will be different, and how their own work will change.

The COVID-19 pandemic is going to affect how we operate and work so much that businesses which don't consider reskilling and re-educating their workforce will lose their market position and maybe worse, their most valuable staff.

Why reskill

Companies that are now re-strategizing to help them position themselves for an AC/DC life are also learning that the new technologies of 4IR and digitization require them to change their internal skilling and education programs, according to the **World Economic Forum**. Companies may also want to offer re-skilling to their staff as a substitute for lay-offs, which is perceived as one of the dangers of digitization.

In a report on the future of work, McKinsey has forecast that by 2030 over 30% of the working population will need to change occupations or upgrade their skills. **Businesses are already finding that they cannot hire all the new skills** they need. Re-skilling should be seen as an investment to develop an organization's internal talent so that the business can undergo the transformation required to compete. Internal talent development also gives a faster ROI than taking the time and effort to hire from outside. By putting off re-skilling now, businesses risk not being able to cope in the AC/DC world.

How to reskill

By now it's obvious that we won't return to the world of work we knew BC. Working from home if possible is going to be a standard for many months to come. Therefore, organizations will need to look at learning options that are not location dependent. The old approach of classes and in-person teaching will be replaced by learning offerings that are delivered via the cloud. That being the case, a greater emphasis on self-study will be required, so employers will need to give staff time for learning. In a **World Economic Forum study** it was reported that while 78% of employees wanted to learn new skills, 38% did not have enough time to do so.

Consultants and analysts alike have stressed that re-skilling for a new digital future must involve re-education programs at every level of the organization. **This, in turn, will require a different and greater level of support for staff** as the nature of work evolves and people need assistance in adjusting.

The McKinsey report on the future of work suggests a three-phase approach to re-skilling.

1. Identify the skills gaps between the current status and what will be needed in the new digital future.
2. Look at how work will need to change for the digital future.
3. Plan how to implement training at scale, focusing not just on the training itself but on how internal policies and practices will have to be changed.

Organizations will not just be digitizing their operations but their learning as well.

Learning elements	Before (non-digitized)	After (digitized)
Direct by	Educator	Student, peers
Learning approach	Passive, planned	Active, on-demand
Teacher	Lecturer	Coach + community
Learning pace	Fixed to class	Open, adaptive
Unit of control	Course	Concept, skill
Progress tracking	Testing	Applied usage, peer evaluation
Location	Classroom	Anywhere
Role of technology	Content delivery, testing	A virtual, co-created, participative learning environment

Source: [Digital transformation of learning](#)

What to look for

If you are looking for new staff to help you with your ERP system, be prepared to wait – it takes 50% longer to fill a technical position than other roles

[<https://www.zdnet.com/article/us-companies-facing-a-huge-tech-talent-deficit-in-2020/>]. Instead, consider staff currently working with your ERP system who have the potential to learn new technical skills.

The solution to re-skill your staff will need to have online access to a comprehensive library of documents and videos, courses and certifications via a desktop or mobile device. It should not be a one-size-fits-all solution because people learn according to what they need for a role, at their own pace, and in their own way, so the training offering will need to provide a range of tailored educational material, programs, and formats to suit every learning style and preference.

An ERP skills system should encompass several goals

For learners	For managers and companies
Become well-versed in the ERP and use it to its full potential.	Access to a fully functional bespoke learning management system with the facility to administer, measure and monitor the progress of each user
Stay up-to-date and informed about manufacturing, distribution, and 4IR	
Monitor own progress	
Compete with one another on the leaderboard	
Become part of a community for learning and Sharing to obtain a certification	
Allow third-party partners to learn about new features and functions to better support customers	Provide operational improvements and cost savings through valuable insights into how educational and organizational objectives are being met
Enable end-users to learn how to use the ERP to perform day-to-day activities	
	Educate, inform and train users who can, therefore, improve the efficiency and productivity of your organization

efficiently and productively

Modern online training applications include a number of features to help learners.

- Knowledge checks to assess understanding of the content.
- Material that helps staff prepare for exams.
- Learners can work through and complete courses anytime, anywhere.
- Learners can return to the place within a course from where they left off.
- Awarding credits and badges for completing courses and programs.

Every CEO knows that the best way for their business to succeed is to have energized workers. Businesses have spent the last decade or so focusing on improving the customer experience, now is the time to add the employee experience in the same way. By investing in re-skilling, a company can transform its staff from passive observers of disruption to active leaders of positive change.

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