

Reskill the skillers

Today, the survival of many organizations depends on their plans to leverage cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to transform their workplaces into augmented environments.

A recent IBM study found that, as a result of AI and intelligent automation, millions of workers will need to develop new skills or even be transitioned out of companies to different jobs in the next three years. Half of the surveyed organizations had done little to rethink their training strategies to respond to this urgency.

For that digital transformation to happen, organizations must avoid the costly “buy, not build” talent strategy that involves opting for expensive new hires instead of retraining their current employees.

Instead, as 2020 kicks off, they need to launch a reskilling revolution that places their employees at the centre of the digital transformation, focuses on them as human beings with unique capabilities and helps them to collaborate with new technologies.

ISTE.

But do those helping to lead the “reskilling revolution” meet the requirements of the future of work?

There is a desperate need for innovative, even disruptive approaches for training that involve many types of learning. Training can be responsive, adaptive, personalized, mobile, self-service or on-demand, self-directed, experiential, collaborative, social. Some training must be available at the moment employees need it, also called just-in-time training, or during the flow of work.

Some of these training methods use game-based learning, or gamification, and emergent technologies such as simulation, augmented reality, virtual reality, mixed reality or cross reality, to name just a few.

Learning and development teams

Training experts will help future workers adapt to the inevitable digital change. These include learning and development teams, also known as learning engineers, learning experience designers, instructional designers, educational technologists, experts in talent and organizational development, training

specialists or performance consultants. Whatever they're called, they'll be at the forefront of training workers to collaborate with the technology to improve productivity and business performance.

Yet these teams themselves are experiencing the digital transformation and also face an unknown future. They too need training.

Learning and development teams need a host of new skills themselves. (Unsplash).

Many predict AI will have a considerable impact on the field of educational technology. Its presence in education is expected to grow by 43 per cent by 2022.

The application of AI in education includes profiling and prediction, assessment and evaluation, adaptive systems and personalization of learning and intelligent tutoring systems.

Block chain, another disruptive technology, has the potential to oversee lifelong learning and global learning itineraries. As learning becomes a continuous and ongoing process, block chain can document all learning activities and connect learning records across different institutions.

This could lead to a drastic change in the role of learning and development teams to include, among other things, applying data science and advanced analytics to organizational learning.

Typically, these teams lead the development of employee knowledge, skills and competencies and work to improve the overall talent pool in the organization. They also provide employees with personal growth opportunities, which drives engagement and retention.

Today, their responsibilities have evolved and are focused on helping existing and future workers find their place in the workplaces of tomorrow. They also address the resistance to change for many, from managers to the rank-and-file.

The need for lifelong reskilling

Similar to all groups navigating the digital transformation, learning and development teams need to be able to collaborate ethically, critically, responsibly and sustainably with machines and emerging technologies.

In addition to technical skills, they require uniquely human capabilities that include the ability to negotiate, motivate, persuade, co-ordinate and identify and solve problems. They will be expected to take initiative, to be critical thinkers, great collaborators and communicators, curious, creative and adaptable. They

will need a global mindset, diversity acumen and empathy, to name just a few requirements.

While the traditional role of learning and development teams requires a well-defined set of knowledge and skills, action is required worldwide to help them evolve and develop competencies that reflect their changing roles.

To help their organizations compete in the digital era, learning and development professionals will have to completely reinvent themselves. They need to engage in continuous learning, to develop new skills, new capabilities and lead the change.

Up skilling and reskilling should be a priority for these teams so that they can determine efficient training strategies for their organizations.

Yet there's a gap in the literature when it comes to the training, up skilling and lifelong learning once these experts are in the field.

A wealth of information

In the age of ubiquitous information, books, podcasts, magazine articles, blogs and webinars are abundant. Some come with free access; others demand registrations. This requires not only handling the overwhelming amount of information, but also filtering it critically.

Conferences also offer excellent exchange spaces for those who can afford them. Many learning and development professionals engage in conversations on social media in an active attempt to stay close to the trends.

But these random "staying up-to-date strategies" aren't documented or studied well. This needs to change.



Branson has long championed empowering employees.

Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin Group, once said: "Take care of your employees and they'll take care of your business." Today, we add, take care of your learning and development teams and they will take care of your employees.

For a winning digital transformation, every organization should establish the up skilling and reskilling of their learning and development teams as their critical 2020 New Year's resolution.

Most New Year's resolutions do not stick.

This one should, and it must.

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