

Navigating the future of logistics: The role of upskilling and automation

In today's rapidly evolving world, where technology is reshaping industries at an unprecedented pace, the logistics sector stands at the forefront of transformation.

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As the demand for efficient and seamless supply chain operations continues to grow, companies are not only adapting to change – they are proactively shaping the future of logistics through a strategic blend of upskilling and automation.

According to Andile Luke, chief people officer at Unitrans, the future of logistics is a blend of human expertise and technological advancement. “At Unitrans, we believe that by investing in upskilling and automation, we can create a workforce that is agile, adaptable, and ready to meet the challenges of the future,” Luke says, adding that Unitrans is committed to providing its employees with the skills they need to succeed in the digital age and to creating a work environment that is conducive to innovation.

Upskilling: Empowering the workforce of the future

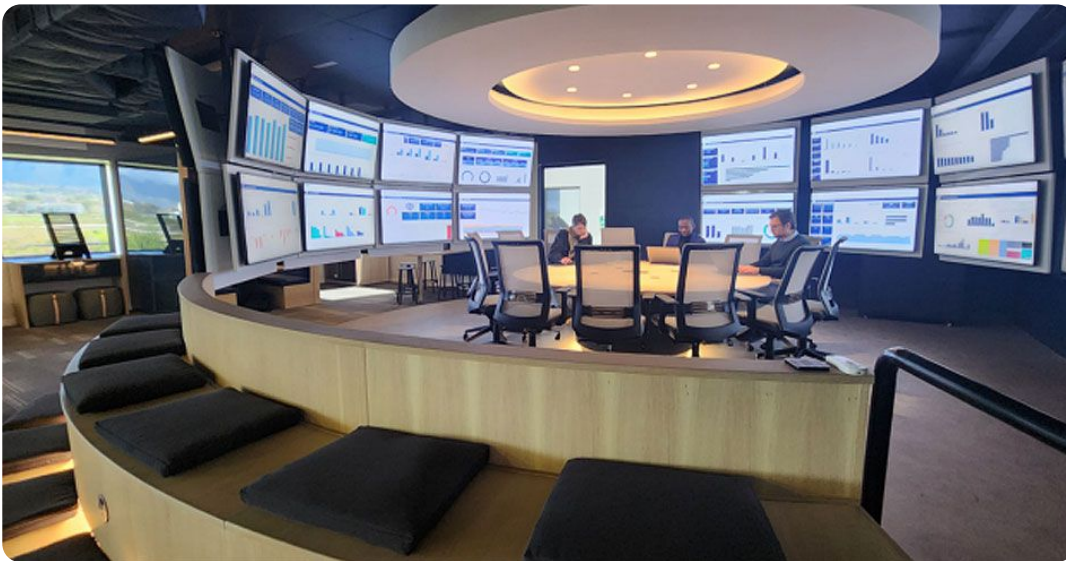
As technology continues to reshape logistics processes, the skills required to navigate this new terrain have evolved. Unitrans understands that its workforce is the backbone of its operations, and investing in the professional development of its employees is key to staying ahead.

“The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) has brought technological disruptions in most workplaces. In the logistics industry, the adoption of new technologies and systems has transformed the way operations are managed, and this trend is set to continue,” explains Abdullah Moerat, human resource development manager at Unitrans.

According to Moerat, fleet management solutions as well as advanced automation, self-driving vehicles and robotics are shaping the future of the logistics industry. “At Unitrans, we understand the importance of upskilling our employees to survive and thrive in such a vibrant and constantly changing environment. Prioritised skills include digital acumen and data analytics to enable employees at all levels to interact and interpret data accurately and enhance data-driven business decisions,” he says.

In this vein, for Unitrans drivers, it is essential to understand the highly computerised vehicle functions which enhance safety, and efficiency among other key benefits. Our supervisors and managers are enabled by means of monitoring technologies to deal with various on-road challenges – the objective is to create and enhance a culture of safety, while improving driver performance and proactively addressing negative drive behaviour.

At Unitrans, we're actively enhancing the skillsets of our logistics workforce, including technical employees operators, and drivers. Our initiative involves providing technological training over the coming years, equipping them to effectively engage with the evolving trucking industry. While technical proficiency and operational safety remain crucial, the emphasis is shifting towards tech-savvy staff who can readily embrace new methods. This ensures our employees are well-prepared and adaptable in a digital-driven landscape. Through robust training programmes, we're cultivating expertise in data analysis, supply chain optimisation and advanced software utilisation, fostering informed decision-making, a culture of continuous learning, and a drive for innovation.



Automation: Optimising efficiency and performance

Running parallel with workforce upskilling, automation has emerged as a game-changer in the logistics industry. It not only enhances efficiency but also reduces the risk of errors, optimises processes, and enables a more streamlined supply chain. Unitrans has recognised the immense potential of automation and has integrated it into various aspects of its operations.

A showcase example of this is the Unitrans Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Kenilworth, Cape Town. The Unitrans Centre of Excellence represents the commitment to continuous improvement and innovation in the transport industry. By harnessing cutting-edge technologies and leveraging the power of data, Unitrans aims to optimise our operations, mitigate risks, and enhance security measures. This initiative will enable Unitrans to provide a diverse range of value propositions, cementing its position as industry leaders.

Key values that underpin the Unitrans Centre of Excellence include:

Big data utilisation: In an era defined by data-driven decision making, Unitrans recognises the immense potential of big data. The CoE is equipped to extract meaningful insights from vast amounts of information enabling Unitrans to make smarter, more informed business decisions. By analysing patterns, trends, and customer preferences, Unitrans can proactively adapt its transport and supply chain solutions to meet

evolving market demands.

Business intelligence: With the Centre of Excellence, Unitrans remains dedicated to fostering a culture of business intelligence throughout our organisation. By leveraging advanced analytics and predictive modelling, gaining valuable foresight into market dynamics, enabling Unitrans to identify new opportunities and drive sustainable growth.

Centralised operational excellence: The CoE serves as a hub for operational excellence, consolidating expertise and best practices. By centralising knowledge and experience, processes are streamlined, resource allocation is optimised, overall efficiency is maximised. This will ultimately lead to enhanced customer satisfaction, strengthened partnerships, and increased profitability.

Pioneering the future: Unitrans' vision

In a world where the logistics industry has evolved far beyond its traditional origins, the days of manual record-keeping and physical paperwork are but a memory. In their place, a dynamic digital ecosystem thrives, powered by real-time data, analytics, and interconnected systems. With the rise of e-commerce, globalisation, and ever-heightening customer expectations, precision, speed, and scalability now reign supreme.

At Unitrans, we understand that thriving in this ever-shifting landscape necessitates embracing the potential of upskilling and automation. As the industry continues to surge forward, we remain steadfast in our commitment to harnessing these transformative forces, ensuring our enduring competitiveness and pioneering spirit.

By combining the power of upskilling and automation, we are driving efficiency, enhancing performance, and exceeding customer expectations.

Find out how we can benefit your organisation, [here](#).

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