LTIMindtree

Keep Your Workforce Job Ready

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Industry Scenario

Today's digital-first economy presents significant opportunities to businesses globally to unlock a range of benefits like customer-personalization, better commercial performance, and future-proof operations. The advent of newer technologies like AI, automation, IOT, blockchain, cloud, metaverse are enabling newer ways of doing business. At LTIMindtree we have been the forerunner in partnering with businesses to accelerate such digital transformations. One of the critical success factors observed for such time-sensitive transformational journeys are availability of right skills. The 'right skills' here, refer more to the job readiness of the employees rather than academic or certification skills. Though e-learnings and Edutech companies have democratized academic learnings and offered individuals the opportunity to get certified on different technologies, job-readiness remains underrated.

What is being 'Job Ready'?

Since Job-readiness is more used than understood, it will be good to simplify it a little more, before we begin to address it.

On job readiness, Gabe Dalporto, CEO of Udacity, said - "The talent shortage has reached a crisis pitch. If companies do not invest in talent transformation, they are destined to fail. The lack of job-ready digital talent has become an existential threat to businesses around the world."

Job readiness essentially, comprises of 5 aspects -

1. Technical Skills

Technical Skills are specific learned abilities
which helps one to complete their tasks

2. Soft skills

The term is self-explanatory. These indicate range of
attributes like professionalism, communication,
Initiative, problem solving, conflict management, team
work etc.

3. Processes and SOPs

Knowledge of best practices, process and SOPs is very
important aspect of job-readiness. These days there are
various technical and non-technical frameworks/tools
ensure that processes and workflow get followed
in projects

4. Experience

Experience indicates employees understanding of
practical world complexities, stakeholders, and ability
to handle pressure. This is most influencing factor
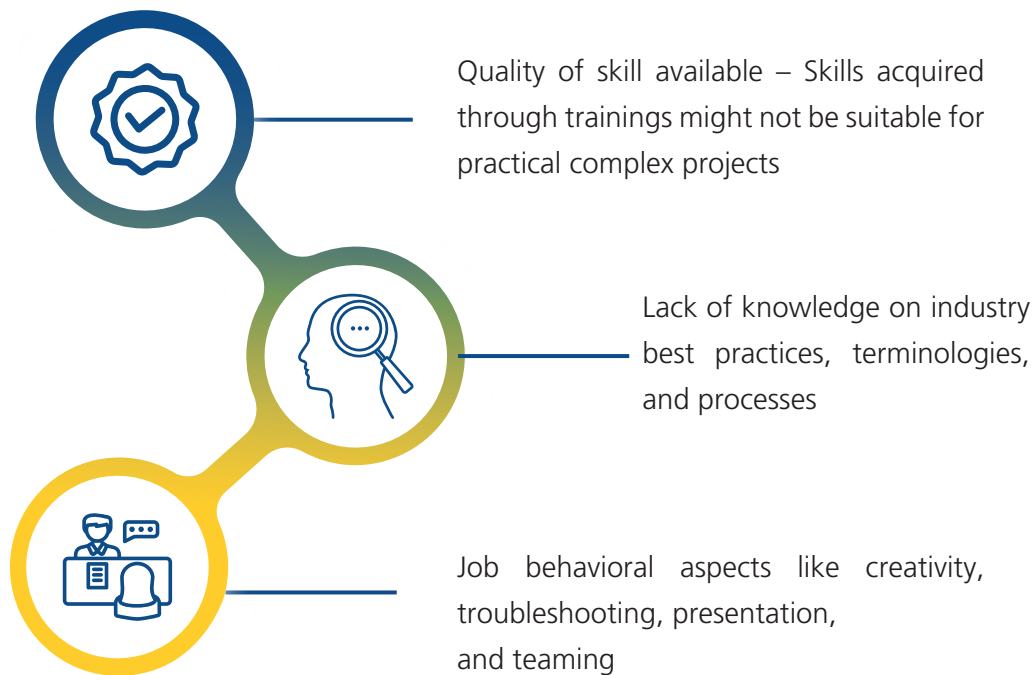for competency

5. Competency

A competency is more than just knowledge and skills.
It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by
drawing on behavior & attitude in context of the job
or project

While the first three dimensions is enabled by academia knowledge, the ability to apply that knowledge in the right manner depends on the other two dimensions. These two dimensions are what, generally impact the "job readiness" the most

Though organizations maintain a sufficient workforce, there are job-readiness challenges when mapping available resources to IT transformation programs. The common ones include -

Quality of skill available – Skills acquired through trainings might not be suitable for practical complex projects

Lack of knowledge on industry best practices, terminologies, and processes

Job behavioral aspects like creativity, troubleshooting, presentation, and teaming

Repercussions of not addressing job readiness challenge strategically can lead to revenue loss, lower-quality work, low employee morale leading to attrition.

What can be done to improve Job-Readiness?

Out of 5 dimensions of job readiness listed above, the last 2 dimensions of work experience and competency remains as gap for most of trained or certified folks and generally left to external circumstances / available project requirements to fill that in.

We at LTIMindtree firmly believe these gaps can be mitigated in institutionalized way using a platform. A real life like simulation platform can be used by employees on on-going basis to gain work experience. Having simulation platform would be an ideal solution at enterprise level and will go long way to keep workforce job ready. Medical, Aviation, Military are heavily invested in simulation learning. It allows learners to hone skills and gain experience in handling challenging & unseen situations at no risk and minimal cost. Simulation also helps understand how to navigate all possible good and bad scenarios which is extremely unlikely in any other form of learning.

During Simulation, Learners are placed in a live virtual environment in which scenarios are recreated to resemble actual work-related challenges. If they don't make the best decision, they are normally redirected to the same situation until they develop their expertise. In this way, learners keep on identifying the best solutions to practical issues and later apply them to address actual issues that arise during work. It not only cuts down the costs of preparing formal learning environments but also puts continuous learning at employees' fingertips.

Detailing some more benefits both for employees and organization in addition to job readiness as below

Employees	Organization
Improved Employee Confidence: • Confident about dealing with high-pressure & conflicting situations • Safety Net Learn allows to learn from mistakes in a safe & supportive environment	One touch environment provisioning for Simulation Lab saves on lot of setup cost and efforts.
Personalized Learning - Learning experiences are individualized	Lab can be expanded to various technologies and job requirements through plugins
Continuous Learning - Being able to self-initiate & practice areas of weakness, until competency is developed is at employee fingertips	Insights from simulations can be used to align and tune training content and methodology.
Time boxed situations increase the ability to manage the time and stress better	Complexity of situations, performance & timely completion targets can be auto configured using AI/ML

Personalized learning through Simulation Lab

Personalized learning is one of key trend in education sector post edutech explosion. Personalized learning means creating engaging learning experiences customized to each learner's strengths, needs and interests, to a level that learner can explore more knowledge independently, raise queries and have discussions.

Although learners may learn at different pace, it will be ensured that they meet the minimum standards required to reach a particular level of competence or certification.

Personalized learning needs to be one of core principle of simulation Lab to ensure its optimum adoption across enterprise comprising of employees with varied skills and competence.

Let's look at classic example of how personalized & diversified work experience can be driven through simulation Lab. With support engineer with good technical skills but low on ITIL processes/procedures, he was assigned environment and customer ticket like real-life scenario in simulation Lab. His user workflow was set according to ITIL processes, and he was required to complete entire ticket lifecycle till closure within given SLAs, procedures and stakeholders' communication including ticket initiator. With multiple such assignments with varying complexity in simulation Lab, support engineer not only got working knowledge but also confidence for his job readiness in infra support engagements

At same time, another support engineer with strong process knowledge but just trained on DB technologies, was assigned environments and corresponding ticket on DB stack of varying possibilities/complexities. Solving multiple such tickets with varying complexities, support engineer got working knowledge of DB support giving him job readiness of DB support engagements.

Simulation with personalization is an effective way of boosting employee productivity (as high as 70% compared to other who do not undergo simulation). Projects in simulation lab can help aligning employee profile to job demands. It goes long way in elevating employee morale and engagement.

Whats Next?

The next wave which will reimagine education, is going to be delivered by 'Metaverse'. Globally, several companies, startups and universities are exploring

metaverse in education. Adding credence to predictions is flurry of strategic moves by large tech companies like Facebook (rebranded to "Meta"), Microsoft, Apple AR/VR headset to name just a few. These are signaling a paradigm shift towards a more connected, immersive digital future.

In world of edutech, Metaverse can democratize lot of things which are currently restricted to classrooms/Labs and on-job situations. Stakeholder interactions can be more immersive and engaging in world of metaverse. Possibilities are humongous.

In simulation Lab, trainees can have very close real life like work experiences when backed by Metaverse. This can completely be game changer improving job readiness as it will significantly improve employee self confidence in terms of stakeholder management, conflict management, presentations and using/understanding appropriate technical and industry jargons in stakeholder communication.

Conclusion

Simulation platform serves as golden opportunity for both employer and employee to keep job readiness as prime focus rather than just skills. A personalized and role-based simulation help employees gain confidence by giving them work exposure not only on technology stack but also on procedural frameworks like ITIL or PMP, adherence to deadlines and quality of work. Simulation Lab can have different technology plugins to keep it catering to a broader segment of employees – freshers / laterals and also aligned to various business demands.

About the Author

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Swati is a seasoned transformation leader with over two decades of IT experience and a strong track record of project & program management. Swati is part of a core team of the LTIMindtree automation unit, leading the charge to create digital solutions to simplify, reimagine, and transform processes in the EdTech space. She is passionate about learning new things, and democratizing technology and holds various certifications - TOGAF, PMP, AWS Cloud practitioner, etc.

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