

Make Innovation HAPPEN



MIH Knowledge Article: Skills to Tills - Future Skills

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food and drink

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IT'S TIME TO INSPIRE



How enhanced technology is shaping the future of workforce skills

Technological breakthroughs within the industry are shifting the way we work and skills required in workforce. Within the next decade, jobs performed by humans and those performed by machines will undergo major transformations. Companies are seeking to adapt new and emerging technologies to reach higher levels of efficiency and productivity, expand into new markets and compete with new products. Increasingly, employers are seeking workers with new skills to retain a competitive edge for the businesses.

According to the World Economic Forums latest 'Future of Jobs Report 2018', four specific technological advances are set to dominate in the period between 2018-2022: ubiquitous high-speed mobile internet; artificial intelligence; widespread adoption of big data analytics; and cloud technology.

New technologies could drive business growth, create new jobs and increase the demand for specialist skills, however, they can also replace job roles when certain tasks become automated. Skills gaps are major barriers to the adoption of new technologies and could therefore delay business growth.

From automation processes to new and up-skilled labour

According to the respondents of the World Economic Forum report, nearly 50% of companies expect that automation will lead to some reduction in their full-time workforce by 2022. However, 38% of businesses expect to extend their workforce to new productivity-enhancing roles, and more than a quarter expect automation to lead to the creation of new roles in their enterprise.

Investing in automation and artificial intelligence technology are crucial to shaping the future of jobs in the food and drink business, which comes along with the necessity of up-skilling workforce.

For example, retailer Morrisons improved its product availability by using the artificial intelligence technology Blue Yonder to stock shelves, an efficient algorithm system that predicts the exact levels of stock required in each of its 491 stores, across 130 categories and 26,000 products. According to Morrisons, there has been 30% less product gaps since using this innovation, also enabling them to improve their predicted Christmas sales. The advantage is that no jobs will be lost by using this technology as employees would spend more time on the shop floor and other departments.

Another example is the innovation of 'Fingopay', world's first payment by finger vein biometric technology being tested in UK supermarkets. Fingerprints were found to be vulnerable to being hacked as they can be easily copied from finger smears left on phone screens. Compared to fingerprints, finger veins cannot be stolen or copied and provide the most secure way of recognition today. Biometric recognition has great potential to be the payment technology of the future. Testing the new innovation of finger vein payments in the UK is a ground-breaking step forward in the retail and financial technology industry.

By 2022, approximately 54% of all employees will require significant re- and upskilling. In particular, skills in analytical thinking and innovation, as well as technology design and programming are likely to grow in prominence. Data Analysts and Scientists, Software and Applications Developers, and Ecommerce and Social Media Specialists are emerging job roles that are significantly based on the use of technology.

Also, human skills, such as creativity, critical thinking and negotiation will likewise increase their value. Expected growing roles will be Customer Service Workers, Sales and Marketing Professionals, Training and Development, and Organizational Development Specialists as well as Innovation Managers.

Growth opportunities

Investing in technology and human capital is critical for businesses long-term growth. Adopting new and improved automation processes could create new jobs and benefit businesses productivity. It is fundamental that food and drink manufacturers invest in specialised skills needed to provide a prolonged successful future.