LEVERAGING MODERN TOOLS

TO CREATE A FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE

MERCER | mettl

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INTRODUCTION

The world is changing at a fast pace and to survive, you ought to beat the competition and an agile business can make this happen.

In that case, what do companies need the most?

A future-ready workforce and advanced thinking!

To drive value from your valuable assets- your employees- who are progressively self-reliant and digitised, companies will require scientific, data-driven and more people-centric approaches to employee development.

To empower your employees, who, with the right skills, behaviour, personality and attitude can impact business outcomes manifold, leaders need to renovate their workforce planning. In this webinar, you will learn about the latest line of actions, top companies are incorporating to create a multi-skilled workforce for tomorrow.

1. How are companies striving to stay competitive by building a future-ready workforce?

2. What are modern tools and techniques that are helping organizations do the same?

3. How do they overcome the challenges faced while incorporating these strategies?

Well, we'll cover each of these aspects and certain others in this piece based on the webinar conducted on 17th April 2019, where we were joined by:

Sukhmeet Singh
Senior Principal, Career
Consulting Leader at
Mercer India

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"The pace and ability at which an organization is able to effectively innovate will be the determining factor of competitiveness in the future. The future is now.

Kaihan Krippendorff
Founder, Outthinker Network

UNDERSTANDING FUTURE READINESS

The world is changing at a fast pace; companies are getting bigger, competition is getting fierce and technology more advanced. Innovation is now faster and more frequent.

How to deal with this? How to react adequately to this change in a blink of an eye?

According to experts, while placing a right individual in the correct position at the appropriate time is the right step, it won't suffice in today's volatile world. Reason being, skills and competencies relevant today might become obsolete tomorrow. This is when agility comes to mind. Organizations need to hire people for their flexibility, adaptability and agile mindset.

"Future Readiness is about projecting the current skills that are making you successful today, into the future"

Anirban Barman Roy
Chief Revenue Officer
at Mercer Mettl

It's about how skills and competencies will evolve in the future, how will some of those which are relevant today be obsolete and how can we add on new ones going forward, he added. The fact is, companies need to stay agile to stay alive. Agile organizations respond faster to market changes, be it tech disruption, the shift in market conditions or new competitions. What makes an agile organization is the high power of agility which comes from the sharp and multi-skilled workforce. It not only brings in quick results but also drives changes at the speed of a speedboat.

CHALLENGES FACED WHILE EXECUTING STRATEGIES FOR FUTURE READINESS

While organizations are preparing themselves to be future-ready, there are some real challenges they face in terms of perceive what is future readiness and then executing the same.

The real challenges come when you are not able to retain your talent, when your leadership is not ready to mentor and coach your staff. As per a study,
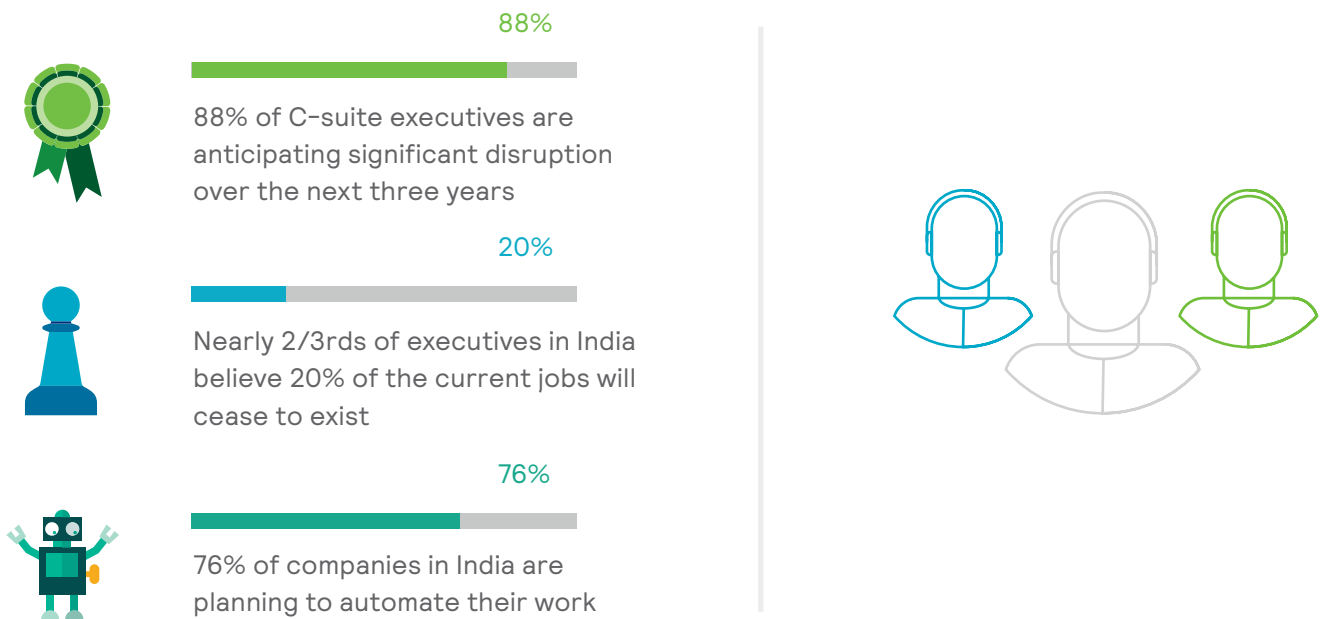
65% of managers will not be competent enough to do their future jobs.

When it comes to retail, manufacturing and construction industries where different age groups starting from baby boomers to Gen-Z are involved, introducing new HR interventions becomes challenging for the companies.

Here are some facts and figures from **Mercer's Global talent Trends 2019** stating the need for an agile workforce in organizations.

88%

88% of C-suite executives are anticipating significant disruption over the next three years

20%

Nearly 2/3rds of executives in India believe 20% of the current jobs will cease to exist

76%

76% of companies in India are planning to automate their work

The challenges that organizations are facing are significant.

- They do not know what skills are needed for future

- Not many can quantify the skill gaps.

nearly 36% of the companies feel this

- A significant proportion of companies are not able to keep pace with ever-changing skill requirement.

- Reskilled talent will leave.

and about 55% of the companies say this

These figures indicate that there is a high demand for a process to be in place. Although there is a considerable contribution of automation in HR management strategies, artificial intelligence has led to a lot of development and digitization with incoming chatbots to improve employee self-service, to identify the risk of leaving, to have a conversation with employees, and so on.

Fundamentally, it all starts with intelligently defining a competency framework. If you want to measure where you are with respect to the future skills and build training programs based on these skill gaps, it becomes extremely crucial to create a competency framework. And the framework must not be here-and-now but should also project how some of the competencies might look in the future and what is required to measure people on those competencies.

Sukhmeet shared the process and presented how to execute this for all organizations. He started by dividing competencies into two broad categories:

PERSONAL

This constitutes the behavioral and leadership competencies reflected in strategies. They tend to cover the How part of doing a job - customer orientation, partnership, analytical skills, communication, etc.

FUNCTIONAL

This comprises the underlying knowledge and skills, technical and domain-specific skills required to deliver on-the-job from a What perspective - knowledge of tools, concepts, etc.

He listed down the following steps:

Define the competency framework: To understand both behavioral and technical competency requirements for a particular job-level

Assess the capability gaps: Based on the current job-level, role, potential level, lateral movement to another function

Action Planning: After identifying skill gaps, companies need to come up with action-oriented employee development programs. It could be peer-to-peer learning, online podcasts, webinars, etc.

Periodic Checkings: To track progress, ensure course correction, measure progress against the action plan and see whether they actually deliver better results on the ground.

Here, Sandeep shared the industry's standpoint. *"Business dynamics are not static, and companies do review employee development plan. It's crucial and relevant to define competency framework not only on the organizational level but also on their career level based on organizations' future needs. The focus should be on current and future behaviors which influence business results"*, he said.

Tools & Techniques To
Implement Future Readiness

The approach of any tool or technique that companies are deploying, serve three primary

Identify

Measure

Develop

IDENTIFY

It is crucial to identify some of the skills that are important for organizations to remain competitive; more or less within the universal set which are the subskills on which people can be trained quickly.

To be future-ready, organizations are looking for adjacent skills their employees should learn. That depends on how trainable your resources are and how quickly can they be trained on a diverse skill set. This can be answered through learning agility. It measures the extent of trainability that is required to move from one skill to another. Next step is to map those identified skills as per employees' trainability in the form of proximity index or skill adjacency matrix to understand the immediate steps needed to be future-ready.

MEASURE

It becomes important to understand where the organization stands with respect to the skills in the present. This can be achieved by gauging the gaps that lie in between. In order to measure technical competencies, organizations should look for partners who can advise how specific technologies and different tools are evolving to strategize the process.

- **Custom assessments basis skill framework**- to ensure your teams have the understanding, ability and functional knowledge to perform specialized jobs

- **Simulations**- to simulate an actual case to assess the candidate's approach, problem-solving and analytical ability in a real-life work scenario.

On the other hand, to gauge behavioral/personality/leadership competencies, there is a suite of assessments:

- **Virtual AC/DCs**- A complete online suite of scientifically validated tools & assessments that virtually recreate real-life work scenarios.

- **360 Evaluations**- Gather structured feedback to achieve employee developmental goals

- **Leadership profilers**- Comprehensive assessments that provide insights into leadership styles and a leader's work-oriented personality

- **Behavioral profilers**- Get insights into personality, traits and work behaviors

DEVELOP

This step is necessary to check how all of this contributes in creating an individual or an organization level development plan and to establish the ROI of learning or skilling program incorporated based on these insights.

Kirk Patrick Model is one of the standards of measuring ROI and learning intervention. Based on this scientifically approved and widely used principle, there is a defined process that we at Mercer | Mettl incorporate for measuring the effectiveness of various programs.

- Define the competency framework
- Do a pre-assessment basis the framework
- Enable organizations to provide relevant training
- Multiple assessment interventions post-training,

To measure the effectiveness of your training program and to know the ROI of your efforts.

Read This
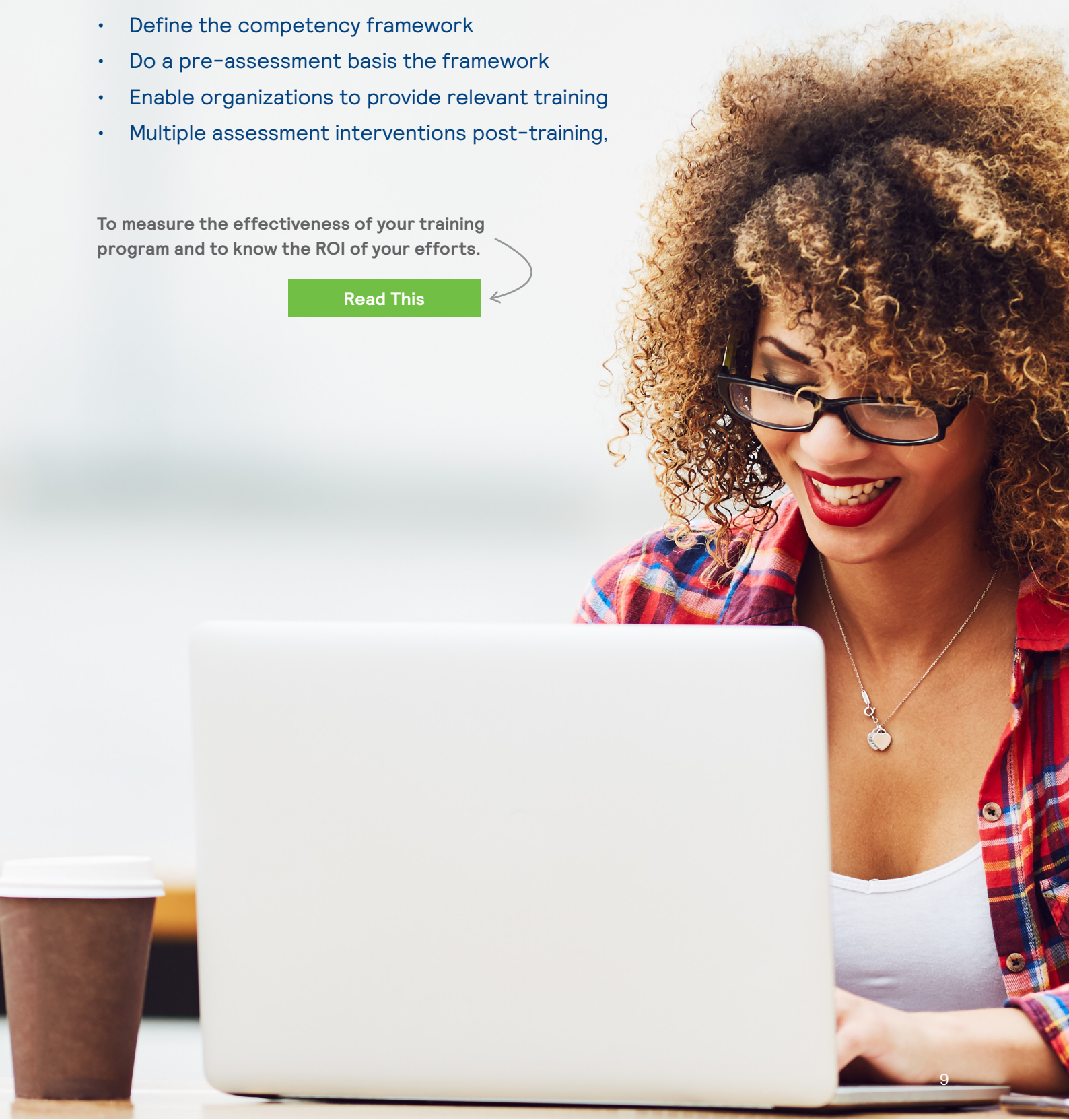
REAL-WORLD ADOPTION OF THESE TOOLS

The starting point for any such initiatives includes running these with clear objectives, having clear deadlines, detailed results, robust action plans and having a clear roadmap of development and success. Sandeep added, *"In my previous organization and even the current one, we selected tools which were relevant for our business. This is where the role of a partner comes in."*

In addition to this, Sukhmeet talked about some of the client cases and real-life examples. He shared cases of hiring an incumbent in top 5 Indian IT companies, for senior to mid-level roles. Be it external hiring, lateral movement or promotion within, they always deploy an assessment process and ensure that each candidate clears that, in order to move forward. Where the quantum is not high and people are from diverse locations, online assessments become much handier.

Sukhmeet further said, *"When looking for specific skill set assessments such as customer focus, business acumen, adaptability and agility, IT companies tend to deploy case simulations, in-basket exercises, psychometric tests, as well as tools like event interviews and a roleplay (virtually over a skype call). Then they come up with feedback report for an individual and those who make the cut move forward to the next round of structured interviews."*

He cited another example of a leading FMCG company in India that was hiring for sales managerial role where the job-role sensitivity increased the risk of failure. They incorporated tools like performance rating, feedback from managers and shortlisted 150 out of 600 candidates. Then, they deployed online assessments constituting psychometric, cognitive and in-basket assessments which further filtered the candidates to 30 out of 150.

Post this, they deployed physical assessment centers over two days wherein they conducted role plays, detailed case studies, and more.

At this juncture, Sandeep added, *"People performance is enhanced manifolds if they work on their development area. Based on the level of progress of organizations, whether it's a startup or an already established business, they should go ahead with relevant tools."*

MEASURING THE ROI OF INCORPORATED TOOLS

A bad training can destroy good staff, causing the best employees to flee and the remainder to lose all the motivation.

Three core things that identify how well-structured your L&D programs are:

1. **Systematic**– It includes whether the efforts are competency-based and if there is a defined competency framework on a job, organization and department-level.

2. **Scientific**– This is determined on the basis of using the right tools to identify skill gaps, focus L&D efforts in the right direction and utilize all the possible means to segment the training in the correct direction.

3. **Measurable**– This depends on how you can see the improvement.

HOW MERCER | METTL HELPS

Based on job, seniority and organization-level, Mercer | Mettl provides a suite of tools to identify skill gaps and track results.

Set of pre and post Assessments	Help identify competency based skill gaps and measure the effectiveness of training incorporated
Assessment & Development Centres	Identify training needs and high potential leaders
Learning Agility	Measure an individual's ability and orientation to learn new things
360 Degree Feedback	Gather structured feedback to achieve employee developmental goals
Suite of Leadership Assessments	Provide an individual's insights into leadership styles and work-oriented personality

SUMMARY

- We talked about future readiness, the definition where the competency framework should be forward-looking.

- We identified particular skills and competencies, and how it will transform in the future.

- We covered how organizations are implementing a 4-step process in identifying and deploying a competency framework and what has been the experience of some of the leading companies in doing that

- We looked at the impact and the use of tools & techniques around that as a strategy and tactics to implement future readiness.

- We discussed how these tools could identify, measure and develop the future-ready workforce

ABOUT US

At Mercer | Mettl our mission is to enable organizations to build winning teams by making credible people decisions across two key areas: Acquisition and Development. Since our inception in 2010, we have partnered with 2900+ corporates, 31 sector skill councils/government departments, and 15+ educational institutions across 80+ countries.

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