

# IT Firms Find New Ways to Reskill Senior & Mid-level Managers

As digital becomes core to business, firms are working at ensuring seniors remain relevant; low attrition also makes it essential for cos to upskill execs

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**Pune:** Before the Hexaware senior management could enter their annual leadership review in December, they had to ensure that they had got their certification for Amazon Web Services (AWS) completed. This included chief executive R Srikrishna and two levels of managers below him.

"This was to send out a clear message to all our managers that if we can reskill and train ourselves, so can you," Srikrishna said.

The company has revamped its training programme for senior managers with a focus on skills needed for specific roles, which typically would be done by people in the over-40 age bracket.

Last year, Persistent Systems introduced Orbit, a dedicated training programme for people with 10-15 years of work experience. "We first have classroom sessions for managers in new technologies, after which they select one area for intensive training," said Sunil Sapre, the company's chief financial officer. For some leaders, this has resulted in a change in career track, he said.

As digital becomes core to the business of IT service companies, these firms are working at ensuring that the mid- and

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Many seniors, however, aren't willing to undergo training



senior-level managers remain relevant and are coming up with newer ways to train them. For many of the mid-size IT firms, digital accounts for almost half of their revenue, and almost all new deals are happening in this space, making it imperative for the senior management to be familiar with it. Further, even as attrition hovers around the 18% mark for these firms, there's almost no attrition at senior levels, which makes it essential for the companies to upskill their senior talent. Not that it's always easy to do this. Many people at that level aren't willing to put themselves through training. This, in turn, makes it harder for the organisation to find relevant jobs for them.

Analysts said that while firms

are investing in training using digital platforms, training people in classrooms has actually come down.

Pareekh Jain, founder of Pareekh Consulting, said there are three areas where either IT companies are investing or professionals are investing on their own. "These are technical, managerial and language skills. In technology skills, hot skills in demand are digital skills such as data analytics, AI, cloud, cybersecurity, IoT, Industry 4.0, etc. Companies are investing in online platforms and MOOCs in partnerships with Udacity, Coursera, EdX, Upgrad and in-house courses," Jain said. "However, I don't see companies investing heavily in classroom trainings for reskilling mid-level professionals. In fact, the number of training days/employee/year is

coming down for few IT firms."

For L&T Technology Services, domain knowledge in the verticals it operates in is important, given the focus on product development and product design. "As an organisation, we have mandated six days of training for every employee. This is a strategic move from our end as we want our senior professionals to get high-level exposure. In some cases, we have even allotted monetary benefits to individuals identified for skill enhancement and advised them to select programmes relevant to their functions," said Keshab Panda, MD, LTTS.

At Zensar, where digital comprises almost half the overall business, the company has overhauled its training programmes to ensure every employee undergoes some level of training in digital skills.