INDUSTRY 4.0 COMPETENCES – USING THIS KNOWLEDGE TODAY
PART 2

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Why is research on Industry 4.0 competences important for employers?

An employer might see these competences and think:
"I want all my employees to have these competences… I should provide them with more training to develop these further".

A perfect 'all-rounder' or 'MVP' employee: knowledgeable, self-starter and self-motivated, eager to learn, team player yet an individual worker, can give a presentation to a prospective client one day, then after can write a detailed report on the effectiveness of the improvements requested. Some of your employees even may be able to do most of the things outlined in the 4IR competences, some may only possess a fraction of them. Should we as individuals, or our employees, strive to have all these competences? Would that make us more effective? Would it make the organisation more efficient?

Poszytek et al. stated a lack of knowledge and specialists as barriers to the development of Industry 4.0, as well as a lack of culture and internal training. Can we really have a good organisational culture if we shape our employees and develop their competences to the required industry processes? Or would organisational culture improve if we shape the industry processes to the already present competences and strengths of employees?

Well, as employers by aiming to develop all the competences in employees we reduce the presence of potential specialists. If we carry out internal training which does not interest our employees or is not in line with their preferred strengths and preferred competences, we risk harming organisational culture. Notice the use of the word *preferred* here. Many of us have various strengths or things we are good that, however that does not mean we enjoy carrying out these tasks or utilising these skills. Employee A may be really good at giving presentations and speaking in front of an audience, can memorise all notes, crack a joke, and engage a crowd really well. But once they go home, they hope to never do it again because they much more prefer to only make the presentation slides and present to clients 1 on 1. Only to find out that next month they have been asked to do it again because of how well it went, and as they are awaiting a promotion, they feel they can't say no. Whereas, employee B, a very talkative individual who often goes off topic dreams of presenting in front of a big crowd, which would be their preferred task, but has had no training, or training offers from the employer, as there is someone else for the job.

As employers it is essential we ask our employees:

- What are your preferred strengths?
- What are your preferred competences?
- What are your preferred tasks?

Rather than what they can do well. As doing something well, and let's face it there are many talented individuals who have a variety of skills, does not mean it will motivate us, engage us, drive us, and want us to come back the following morning into work. If we ask our employees what they enjoy doing the most, rather than focusing only what they are good at, we improve organisational culture and can carry out specific and contextualised individual trainings, to develop those specialists we really need.

Why is this important for students or recent graduates?

Firstly, graduates looking for work in the world of 4IR who either have these competences and can apply them or are very eager to learn them in the context of the required industry and sector, will be the top recruitment targets. Knowing what competences employers are looking for, as well as what they lack, means a small upper hand at the interview, as one can really tailor their answers and stories to these 4IR competences.

Secondly, it means early on in their professional careers students can learn what their preferred strengths, preferred competences, and preferred tasks are. Undergraduate degrees provide students with various modules and assessment tasks as they aim to make them well rounded individuals. Students acquire various skills during their degree, and can certainly use specific programmes, but the question remains: do they prefer that over another task, or can they simply do it well? How much energy does it cost them to carry out this task, which although they are really good at, they do not enjoy it as much. Once students are aware of their preferences, and not only their strengths, but they can also communicate this to their prospective employers. If the employers are willing to listen to these preferences, they may have a future employee that enjoys their work and thereby is more self-motivated and autonomous in the long term.

What's next? – Industry 5.0

RThe world, and European Union in particular, is pushing the notion of sustainability and sustainable development into not just business industries but also our ways of life. Culture is changing, and with it so is the economy, and so are the competences required for this new paradigm. Just like Industry 4.0 was developed on Industry 3.0, Industry 5.0 complements the existing Industry 4.0 through research and innovation transforming Europe to "a sustainable, human-centric and resilient industry… [moving towards] stakeholder value," (I4EU, 2019). Industry 5.0 places the wellbeing of the employee at the centre of the production process (I4EU, 2019). To do that, we need not only a sustainable industry, but a sustainable workplace: one which employees want to come back to every day. This means focusing on their preferences as a driver for recruitment, rather than only their skills and strengths.

The DISC assessment

One method for employers and students alike to analyse these preferences is the DISC assessment, which places individuals into four personality strengths, revealing their preferred strengths and tasks. This assessment can be used to put together teams which work well together, identify preferred working habits and work style preferences. It can serve as a vital starting point in learning about not only what we are good at, but also what would cost us the least amount of energy to do and hopefully allow us to develop a fulfilling working life.

Find out more

Read Part 1 of the article to find out more about:
- What is Industry 4.0?
- What are competences?
- What are Industry 4.0 competences?

References

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