

THE PARADIGM SHIFT OF LOGISTICS PROFESSIONALS KEY COMPETENCIES DUE TO THE PANDEMIC

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The logistics industry is one of the most influential in human life, and every day we can see its dependence on it - light and heavy industry, supply of medicines, transport mobility - all these are daily elements of modern man, without which life can no longer be imagined. It is logical that logistics as a discipline is becoming increasingly popular in the labor market and evolving. External environmental factors, the changing modern world, relentless trends, and tendencies - all this affects logistics, develops it changes, and directly determines the near future functioning of humankind. The current state of the pandemic in the world, which still cannot be called post-cognitive, is one of the significant external factors that influenced logistics and caused a paradigm shift of critical competencies of logistics professionals today and will affect in the coming years due to its consequences.

Traditionally, man has always been and remains a central link in the logistics industry, but technology development has resulted in logistics. Today, a hot topic for logisticians worldwide is the introduction of technologies that will increase the overall level of efficiency, competitiveness of businesses, economies, the world. According to the research of the World Economic Forum Future of Jobs 2020 [1], the world's leading companies already use such technologies as Big data analysis, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and e-commerce and predict their inseparability in everyday life of modern logistics specialists. Accordingly, modern logisticians should expand their competencies according to trends and analyze their suitability for logistics activities (Fig. 1).

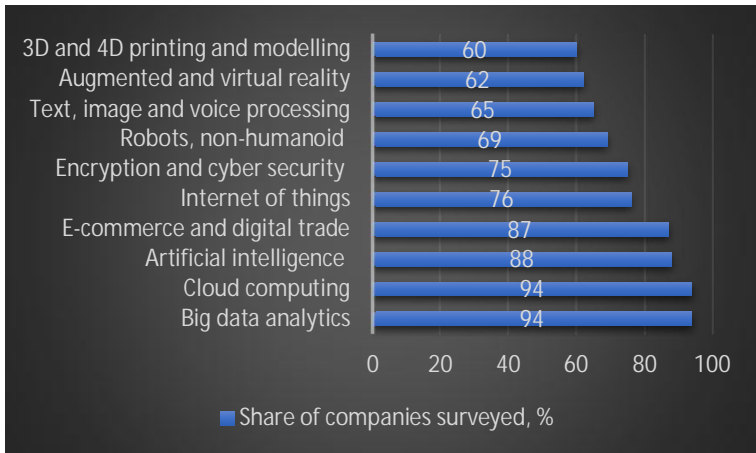


Fig.1. Technology adoption in industry by share of companies surveyed

Calculated and plotted based on Future of Jobs Survey 2020, World Economic Forum

Regarding the key competencies of professionals, today's logistics industry needs specialists with hard skills and soft skills. A common belief is of high importance, in fact, the personal qualities of the employee, his compliance with the corporate culture and team of the enterprise, the psycho type. According to research, the following competencies are becoming increasingly popular:

- Active learning and learning strategies following the rapidly changing environment, which dictates constant movement, change, improvement of processes;
- Complex problem-solving, which provides a basic level of management;
- Analytical thinking and innovation
- Technology use, monitoring, and control as basic skills;
- Technology design and programming, the basics of which are provided by disciplines in the field of "Logistics";
- Systems analysis and evaluation that directly correlate with analytical thinking;
- Service orientation, i.e., customer orientation, satisfaction with quality, and gaining positive experience from the service;

- Quality control and safety awareness as an additional core competency in the low touch economy;
- Leadership and social influence;
- Emotional intelligence as a personal competence of modern man;
- Attention to detail, trustworthiness
- Management of personnel
- Resilience, stress tolerance, and flexibility
- Reasoning, problem-solving, and ideation
- Critical thinking and analysis [2,3].

This list is based on traditional competencies (analysis, evaluation, leadership) and those slightly modified in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic that defines the logistician's portrait now and shortly. Yes, companies are forced to apply new or hybrid strategies to operate and secure their place in the competitive market. As a result of the pandemic, companies have often implemented such strategic solutions as process digitalization, video conferencing, using digital tools, home office, or even restructuring (Fig. 2):

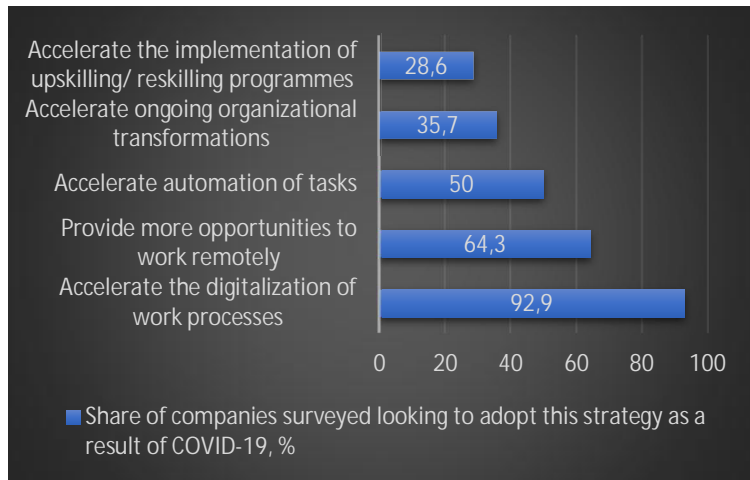


Fig.2. Impact of COVID-19 on companies' strategy as adopted strategies
 Calculated and plotted based on Future of Jobs Survey 2020, World Economic Forum

Undoubtedly, such strategic changes or new technologies in implementation were associated with various human resources and financial or physical barriers. The lack of critical competencies needed by a modern logistics professional is, in fact, a significant barrier that correlates with the value of human resources, knowledge, and capabilities. At the same time, as it turned out, finding and providing a favorable environment for talent development is also difficult for employers [4]. Especially if the rate of environmental variability is very high, which is provoked by a pandemic, another barrier is regulatory institutions, or simply bureaucratic processes, which provoke a decrease in the efficiency of specialists, demotivate and, as a result, reduce the efficiency of business operations [5]. Thus, barriers to change are outdated systems, increased environmental variability, and new living conditions in a low-touch economy (Figure 3).

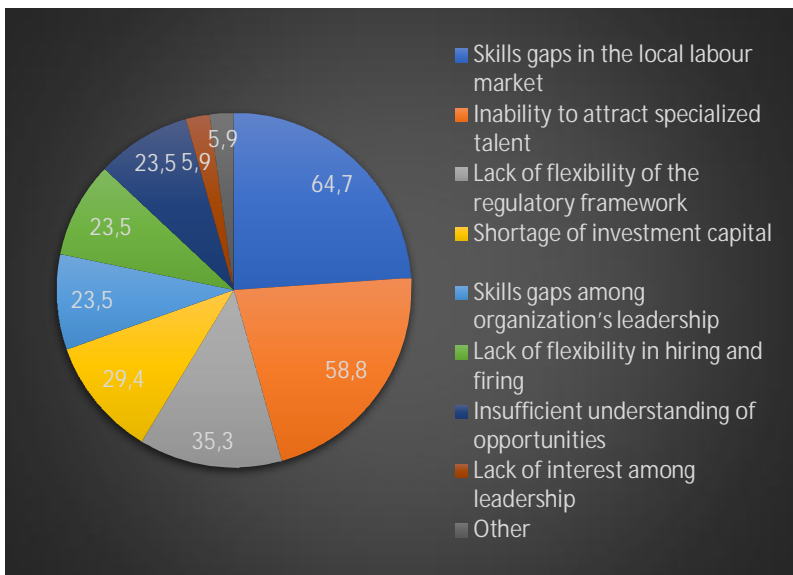


Fig.3. Barriers to adoption of new technologies by share of companies surveyed
 Calculated and plotted based on Future of Jobs Survey 2020, World Economic Forum

Thus, a paradigm shift in the critical competencies of logistics professionals is inevitable and natural due to the evolution of business, technology development, their presence in everyday life, and changing values of consumers in the industry, without which the existence of logistics is as impossible as for consumers without logistics. The pandemic has become another significant factor influencing the change in the professional competencies of specialists. The market of supply and demand of specialists also organically coexists with the "new" normality. Traditional knowledge and skills are not enough. Respectively, raising technological awareness, developing soft skills, working on emotional intelligence, team and project enthusiasm in conjunction with the latest technologies and modern requirements - is a prerequisite for a successful career as a logistician. The pandemic has shown the importance of flexibility and adaptability to ensure livelihoods and logistics as essential industries should develop ahead.

References:

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