

What effects does the digital transformation have on health and employability of the people? A short reflection about the needs beyond technologies around digitization.



“People are the Motor of Digitalization”

Empowering technical competence.

When it comes to digital transformation, often technologies, processes and business models are at the forefront. The fact often lost sight of is that people are the motor of societal transformation and each individual is themselves affected by digitalization. “We should actively shape the digital transformation, first and foremost for and with people,” thinks Markus Dohm, Managing Director of the Business Stream Academy & Life Care at TÜV Rheinland, one of the largest private education providers in Germany. What competence requirements for the individual does the digital transformation entail? A plea for rethinking – from the boss to the employee.

“In the discussion about the opportunities and risks of digital transformation, what must come to the fore is the preservation of Employability.” Markus Dohm, TÜV Rheinland

Everyone is talking about digital transformation. Digitalization affects every company and every sector. It changes all business models – some slower, some faster – and some even radically. In Germany there are also very good examples of where companies saw an opportunity in it and have already been on their way very successfully – and generated new jobs. Despite that, in Germany there is still reticence prevailing around the country. This is reflected in the rather sluggish modernization of the workplace. But also in the fact that numerous job descriptions are waiting to be freed from the whiff of the 1950s and adapted to the digital reality. Our training system also still has a significant backlog in terms of digital enhancement. We have to make it clear that digital transformation threatens traditional jobs and we need strategies today for a successful tomorrow. The Centre for European Economic Research in Mannheim has ascertained that in Germany, automation could cost five million jobs in production alone. Experts estimate that 50% of all administrative duties from bookkeepers to clerks will be displaced. We must ensure that these people are in the position to keep pace with development instead of being overrun by it.

In Germany's companies, digital leadership is in demand: The competence to guide companies in every phase of the digital transformation properly and successfully and in such a way that further development is possible. This further development not only encompasses numbers and products, it first and foremost involves the ability to build motivation and competence in people that will bring about value creation in the context of disruptive change.

Because technical progress is accelerating. And for companies that do not want to lose connection with their markets, it is a critical moment when knowledge acquired once, in school, colleges or the dual education system, becomes obsolete more and more quickly. This doesn't only apply to organizations but also to individuals. The capability to rapidly familiarize oneself in new areas of responsibility and constantly educate oneself, gains ever more importance; and that importance being to not lose one's own job or even being able to assume new responsibilities.

In the discussion about the opportunities and risks of digital transformation, what must come to the fore much more strongly is what we at TÜV Rheinland call the preservation or the building of “Employability”. And companies have a vital interest in it – not least in the face of demographic trends and the lack of specialized personnel. But employability, that is the “capacity for being employed”, is more than just pure manpower: It has to do with the capacity to cope with continuous change in such a way that individuals and companies can benefit. Employees must not only be qualified but rather also motivated and healthy. Here in the context of the digital transformation, companies have a much stronger obligation than before in the area of operational health management.

What effects does the digital transformation have on health? To reconcile the protection of employee health and competitiveness of the company is a challenge. In a study by the Barmer Health Insurance Fund, industrial psycholo-





photodune ©Pressmaster

gists and occupational physicians from TÜV Rheinland have seen it again confirmed: The working population perceives the pressure to change and adapt to the technological pressure, they complain about information overload. Being constantly reachable through multiple channels – this can become a burden. 23% of respondents feel emotionally drained by their work. There are significant correlations between digitalization, emotional fatigue (burnout) and conflicts between work and family. One in four states that today's work requirements impact their private and family life. That is a development that no-one wants.

Companies that establish operational health management or further professionalize it have demonstrably fewer sick days, and even personnel turnover and outflow of talent are relatively low. Organizations must learn to be able to not only accept, but also to actively shape the change. This includes making employees aware of the opportunities and risks of digitalization and training their abilities in self-management. That can, for example, be a learning process to practice digital abstinence from work in free time. For some bosses

that can already be a large concession to the employee. But managers also need support in regard to requirements and design options of digitalization. They must learn to achieve work hour flexibility and offer home office options and also to lead at a distance with a virtual team. Only flexible companies will create and fill jobs that arise through digitalization. It is imperative that there is a mental evolution and an error culture that takes errors and failures into account and allows for them on the way to success.

In an era in which corporate innovations and business growth are based primarily on knowledge, creativity as well as communication and social capabilities, preparedness and capacity for innovation is demanded and also intensified direct responsibility and openness for lifelong learning. These are core virtues of the digital age. A path forward may be work-integrated learning scenarios using motivating formats. These may also ease the mental burden in the best case. This means that employees obtain exactly the knowledge and the competences at the exact time in which they are needed to handle new responsibilities.



istock © Warchit

Learning products should become more modular, and more of a permanent fixture in work processes. They must be customized and adapted to the needs of companies and employees. As one of the largest private training providers in Germany, TÜV Rheinland has developed an innovation learning architecture that takes into account the requirements of Learning 4.0: The participants' level of knowledge decides what they learn – keyword competence-based learning (see graphic) – and they decide for themselves, when, how long and where they learn. Content is provided in diverse media formats from e-learning via podcast to Gamification as well as face-to-face training. Continuing education management in the company is performed centrally and is platform-based, systematic, goal-oriented and documented without gaps. And: The knowledge and skills are certified by an independent party. This is good for the employees but also good for companies – and as part of the digital transformation definitely a competitive advantage for both sides.

**Markus Dohm, Executive Vice President,
TÜV Rheinland Academy & Life Care**



ABOUT MARKUS DOHM AND TÜV RHEINLAND

Markus Dohm has been Managing Director of the Business Stream Academy & Life Care at TÜV Rheinland since 2015. An economist and graduate engineer in structural engineering and environmental technology, he has a diverse wealth of experience from different technical and management positions in industry, the military and at TÜV Rheinland to draw on. As Managing Director of the Business Stream Academy & Life Care, he is responsible for the global service products of TÜV Rheinland in the area of health management, work safety and qualification of technical and management personnel. This business stream combines competences related to people in workplaces and their professional environment. With the motto "Motivated, qualified and healthy," TÜV Rheinland is the first choice for workplace safety and health. Furthermore, it is one of the leading technically-oriented learning service provider that connects analog and digital learning solutions (including e-learning & Gamification) with customized platform products for systematic business continuing education management. With comprehensive products for work safety and personnel qualification, TÜV Rheinland provides an important component for individuals and organizations to master the digital transformation and be able to take advantage of opportunities.

www.tuv.com/academy

TÜV Rheinland
Am Grauen Stein
51105 Cologne

www.tuv.com/academy



® TÜV, TÜEV and TÜV are registered trademarks. Utilisation and application requires prior approval.