

Published Date:	29 Nov 2024	Publication:	The Economic Times [New Delhi]
Journalist:	Saumya Bhattacharya	Page No:	6

HUL Training its Execs in Tech Tools to Get Future-ready

The firm is leveraging digital tools and AI to optimise operations and unlock efficiencies

Saumya Bhattacharya

New Delhi: Hindustan Unilever (HUL), India's largest fast-moving consumer goods company, expects digital tools and technology to play a crucial role in building both business and leadership capabilities.

The company is positioning itself for significant growth by focusing on talent development, technological innovation and workforce adaptability, said BP Biddappa, executive director and chief people, transformation and sustainability officer for HUL and Unilever, South Asia.

As the local unit of the UK-headquartered Unilever builds on its reputation as a CEO factory, HUL is shaping leaders and integrating cutting-edge tools like artificial intelligence (AI) to maintain its competitive edge.

"The Indian market is incredibly dynamic, and we anticipate significant growth for Unilever here, as well as for the broader industry," said Biddappa. "We're highly optimistic about the potential of this market. Our top priority is ensuring we have the right talent in key roles and building the necessary capabilities for future success. This includes developing talent who can grow into strong general managers for the business."

In terms of leadership and digital capabilities, HUL is focused on three areas: build from within (by building capability and through the Digi-Commerce track), buy (through programmes such as DigiPivot and InsideIIM) and groom (through mentorship by leaders).

HUL is also leveraging digital tools and AI to optimise operations and unlock efficiencies. AI is already integrated into supply chain and marketing functions, with applications ranging from pricing optimisation in procurement to enhancing digital communication strategies.

"While some of these applica-

What's In the Syllabus

Rise of AI, digital disruption has made upskilling important

HUL'S TRAINING MODEL EMPHASISES ON

Fostering curiosity about emerging tools, trends

Data privacy and governance focus areas, too



BHAVIN G

tions are still in the early stages, we see significant potential for AI to provide substantial business advantages," said Biddappa. "In areas like procurement, where we manage large volumes of raw materials that are often sensitive to price fluctuations, AI can help us analyse vast amounts of data to optimise pricing and decision-making. This capability is key for achieving cost efficiency in our supply chain."

The rise of AI and digital disruption has placed upskilling at the forefront of HUL's workforce strategy. Continuous learning is no longer optional. It is essential to sustain business, according to the company.

"There's often concern that AI and generative AI might eliminate jobs, but in reality, these technologies won't just change jobs—they will transform them. Our priority is to ensure that our people are continuously upskilled to adapt to these disruptive changes. With the vast amount of information and capabilities available through digital platforms and AI tools, companies that can harness these effectively will gain a significant edge," said Biddappa.

HUL's training model emphasises hands-on learning, fostering curiosity about emerging tools and trends. Another critical area of focus in learning is data privacy and governance.