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Syed Fazal Uddin

Research Scholar,

Department of Management

and Commerce, School of

Commerce and Business

Management, Maulana Azad

National Urdu University,

Hyderabad, Telangana, India

Badiuddin Ahmed

Dean, School of Commerce and

Business Management,

Maulana Azad National Urdu

University, Hyderabad,

Hyderabad, Telangana, India

Corresponding Author:

Syed Fazal Uddin

Research Scholar,

Department of Management

and Commerce, School of

Commerce and Business

Management, Maulana Azad

National Urdu University,

Hyderabad, Telangana, India

Employee training and development: An essence of successful e-commerce industry

Syed Fazal Uddin and Badiuddin Ahmed

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Abstract

The E-commerce industry is dynamic and plays a vital role in the economic development of any nation and India is no exception. Information technology has forced traditional businesses to go digital to remain competitive, as every company is trying to reach its customers in no matter of time, so there is immense competition in the e-commerce industry to gain a competitive edge over the others. Keeping all this in view e-commerce industry must focus on training and developing their employees. The success of any business depends on the ability of its employees, they cannot be ignored they must be well trained to perform their duties in the best possible way and must be developed so that they can take on any upcoming challenges in the ever-changing dynamic e-commerce industry. This conceptual paper brings insights into the importance of employee training and development in the e-commerce industry for gaining a competitive edge in today's highly competitive business world.

Keywords: E-commerce, training and development, globalization, information technology

Introduction

Background: Globalization has opened many ways for a business to go beyond their territory and information technology has made it possible for any organization to reach its customers within no time, and this trend has changed the pattern of how industries work and impacted globally. Almost all companies use internet technologies for their day-to-day businesses, all businesses are becoming information-based enterprises. Today's current electronic commerce is causing major changes in the economic environment that affect every industry sector due to the exponential pace of technological advancement.

Furthermore, the growth of electronic commerce has led to a fundamental shift in consumer behaviour, expectations, and buying patterns. As online shopping is very convenient and the availability of a vast collection of products and services at their fingertips, consumers now demand seamless digital experiences, personalized recommendations, and fast delivery options. This shift has bound businesses to adapt or revise strategies and operations to meet growing customer needs and preferences. As a result of this change globally companies across industries are investing heavily in digital transformation initiatives, such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, etc. to drive innovation and enhance their competitive advantage. E-commerce platforms have become a critical determinant of success for businesses seeking to thrive in the global marketplace, so every change needs adaption and adaption does not come overnight it is a process. However, adapting to these changes is not an overnight process; it requires deliberate effort and investment in employee training and development. Not only employees must develop technical skills to use new technologies, but they must also undergo behavioural development to effectively respond to evolving consumer demands and market trends. Therefore, organizations must prioritize ongoing training initiatives to ensure that their workforce remains agile and adaptable in the dynamic e-commerce environment.

Objective of the study

To explore the importance of employee training and development in the e-commerce industry.

Employee training and development: "Training is the process of teaching new employees the basic skills they need to perform their jobs" (Dessler, 2008)^[2]. And "employee

development programs include a variety of teaching techniques, schedule, and helping learning environment that ensures employee to improve their skills and later apply on their jobs.” (Gerbaman, R.V. 2000) ^[4]. Training and development are integral components of organizational initiatives aimed at enhancing the skills, knowledge, and overall performance of employees. Training involves targeted activities to impart specific skills or knowledge relevant to current roles, utilizing methods such as workshops and on-the-job experiences.

On the other hand, development encompasses broader efforts to groom employees for future responsibilities, emphasizing competencies, leadership qualities, and a deep understanding of organizational values. Together, these processes contribute to a skilled, adaptable workforce, fostering individual growth, job satisfaction, and overall organizational success, particularly crucial in dynamic industries with evolving technologies and market trends. “In the workplace, training is required. Employees lack a clear understanding of their obligations and responsibilities without it. Programs that give employees knowledge, new abilities, or chances for professional growth are referred to as employee training” (Elnaga, A., & Imran, A. 2013) ^[3].

Employee training and development helps the organization and its workers achieve a variety of objectives, including performing duties to the best of their abilities, preparing for future challenges, raising morale, fostering a sense of security, increasing employee engagement, and enhancing general competencies required to carry out a given job. Organizational leaders should also utilize systematic methods to evaluate the performance of their workforce. These methods are based on several factors, such as aptitudes, skill level, motivation, organizational culture, and role perceptions. Employees will be able to support the company in establishing its competitive posture in the modern global market with the right training and development opportunities and efficient employee performance assessment techniques.

Employee training and development constitute continuous, ongoing processes within any organization. These initiatives aim to enhance existing skills, abilities, and knowledge, or introduce new ones, to improve current or future employee performance. This improvement is achieved by augmenting an employee's capacity to perform through learning, often involving a shift in attitude or an expansion of skills and knowledge. The necessity for employee training and development becomes evident through an analysis of employee performance and work-related attitudes. When there is a disparity between actual performance and the required standard, both employee and organizational productivity may suffer. Although eliminating this gap is challenging, it can be significantly narrowed through well-designed and effective training programs.

E-commerce industry: Electronic commerce is known as e-commerce. It refers to doing business electronically for both commodities and services. E-commerce refers to conducting business over the Internet and information technology. “Selling and purchasing goods and services, as well as sending money or data, over an electronic network—most commonly the Internet—is known as e-commerce” (Agrawal, R. K. (2018) ^[1]. The utilization of digital information and electronic communications is known as e-commerce. utilizing technology in business transactions

to establish, modify, and reshape connections to generate value within and across organizations as well as between individuals and organizations. Thus, it can be understood in the simplest way that it is the trading of goods or services over computer networks, such as the Internet.

The various technologies used in electronic commerce include online transaction processing, supply chain management, Internet marketing, mobile commerce, electronic funds transfers, electronic data exchange (EDI), inventory management systems, automated data gathering systems, e-mail, and other technologies may also be used, in the e-commerce. “The phenomena of e-commerce are dynamic and rapidly evolving. Managers must swiftly determine the direction of the industry in such a setting and acquire the skills necessary to compete, and make strategic alliances.” (Storey, V. C., *et al.*, 2000) ^[6] From the standpoint of business processes, e-commerce deploys technology to automate corporate transactions and operations. From a service perspective, e-commerce is a means of reducing service costs while improving product efficiency and expediting service delivery, which caters to industry, clients, and management's needs.

E-commerce is well known for enabling commercial communication and transaction formation at any time and from any location. Through the internet, commerce may be conducted by anyone, whether they are in the US or another country. Because of the strength of e-commerce, geophysical obstacles can vanish, opening up opportunities for all consumers and enterprises worldwide to become suppliers and buyers. “Advantages of e-commerce are cost savings, increased efficiency, and customization. To understand electronic commerce, it is important to identify the different terms that are used, and to assess their origin and usage” (Agrawal, R. K. (2018) ^[1].

Growth of the e-commerce industry: India's e-commerce industry has expanded thanks to rising earning people the increase of smartphone adoption and internet users have increased dramatically, as well as rising earnings. According to IBEF “The use of smartphones and the internet has increased dramatically in India. With 830 million internet connections in 2021, the “Digital India by 2026, there will be one billion smartphones worldwide, a huge increase from the current base.” This has benefited India's digital industry, which is projected to grow to \$1 trillion by 2030. According to the website investindia.gov.in “The India's online shopper base to be the 2nd largest globally by 2030, with nearly 500-600 Mn shoppers”. “The Indian e-commerce market has been growing steadily, and by 2034, it is expected to surpass the US and become the world's second-largest e-business market” (Kadam, M. B. 2019) ^[5].

A report by IBEF published in August 2023 has stated that “The Indian E-commerce industry has been on an upward growth trajectory and is expected to surpass the US to become the second-largest e-commerce market in the world by 2034” and has also mentioned that “India's e-commerce sector is expected to reach US\$ 111.40 billion by 2025” which shows the growth. Also, India's e-commerce industry has grown thanks in part to the country's rapidly increasing internet user base and smartphone penetration rate as well as rising income levels. The e-commerce industry in India has completely changed how business is conducted there” “By 2026, it is anticipated that Indian e-commerce will have grown to US\$ 163 billion at a compound annual growth rate

(CAGR) of 27%.”

Importance of employee training and development in the e-commerce industry

Training and development for employees are vital for every industry and e-commerce is no exception to it. E-commerce is dynamic due to its volatile market trends, evolving technologies, shifting consumer behaviours, and intense competition. So, to have a competitive edge organization needs to focus on developing its resources and human resources are the most important resource of any organization. Continuous employee training is essential to ensure the success and competitiveness of e-commerce businesses like any other business.

The ever-changing landscape necessitates ongoing efforts to equip staff with the latest skills and knowledge, enabling them to adapt to emerging trends and leverage new technologies effectively to perform their duties in the best possible way and prepare themselves for future challenges. There are certain areas in e-commerce business like customer service excellence, product knowledge, digital marketing, technology, cyber security, data analysis, adaptability to industry trends, supply chain and logistics, compliance, regulations, etc., all these functions can be enhanced by employee training and development.

Employee training and development are important in the fast-paced and ever-evolving e-commerce industry. Here, the dynamic nature of market trends, evolving technologies, and shifting consumer behaviours demands constant adaptation. Organizations must equip their workforce with the necessary skills and knowledge to stay competitive and ensure operational excellence. From mastering customer service and product knowledge to staying abreast of technological advancements and digital marketing strategies, employees play a vital role in driving success in e-commerce ventures. This multifaceted approach encompasses various aspects such as data analytics, supply chain management, and regulatory compliance. By investing in comprehensive training programs, e-commerce businesses empower their employees to navigate challenges effectively and capitalize on emerging opportunities, thus contributing significantly to the organization's growth and success.

Discussion and Conclusion

The e-commerce industry has undergone significant transformation since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, evolving far beyond traditional brick-and-mortar stores. Moreover, online stores, e-commerce sites, and social platforms have expanded their shopping tools to enhance the digital shopping experience. To remain competitive in this rapidly changing landscape, businesses must prioritize employee training and development to effectively leverage new trends and technologies. The globalization of commerce and the rapid growth of information technology have fundamentally reshaped various industries, including e-commerce. Direct-to-consumer models have become increasingly predominant, allowing producers to bypass wholesalers and connect directly with customers, thus reshaping traditional supply chains. This shift presents both challenges and opportunities for every industry including e-commerce.

However, e-commerce also offers significant opportunities for wholesalers and manufacturers to establish brand

identity, connect with customers, and streamline supply chain operations. Additionally, the growing importance of internet-connected infrastructure underscores the need for continuous investment in cyberspace to support the expanding e-commerce business. In conclusion, the e-commerce industry's ongoing evolution necessitates a proactive approach to adapting to new trends and technologies in order to thrive in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Employee training and development has always remained an important human resource function to prepare employees for the current duties and for future job, as we see rapid changes in everything and everywhere, it is crucial to adapt to these changes to keep oneself updated with the latest development happening around. Every industry needs to update itself along with the development happening around to stay competitive, considering the rising number of online shoppers, organization must make sure their employee are equipped with right attitude, working style, technology etc. E-commerce industry which relies heavily on the use of information technology, should create a learning environment for their employees so that they can prepare themselves with the latest technology, changing buying patterns of the customers, changing payment pattern and so on. E-commerce industry should not overlook the importance of employee training and development but use this as a tool to stay ahead of competition by preparing employees to the fullest of their potential, a competent workforce is help the organization grows which ultimately grows the e-commerce industry as a whole.

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