



SUPPLY CHAIN INSIGHTS

HOW DIGITALIZED HR CAN MAKE FOR HAPPIER EMPLOYEES

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DHL Supply Chain – Excellence. Simply delivered.



Data can often seem an abstract concept that's far removed from increasing your employees' satisfaction. But at DHL Supply Chain we believe that data has a central role to play in nurturing happier, more productive employees who – at a time of severe talent shortages – are less likely to move on and sufficiently skilled to take the next step up in their careers.

As the world moves, tentatively but steadily, into the post-pandemic era, HR teams worldwide can leverage the enormous push for accelerating digitalization and focus on shaping the future. And for most forward-thinking large businesses, that future will be heavily informed by data. In fact, if working with data – collecting, collating, analyzing and leveraging it – isn't a priority for your HR department, your organization is likely to lose ground to competitors over the coming years. Because, when it comes to defining and achieving your strategic goals, data is an essential, invaluable tool.

Of course, harnessing data is no small or simple task. Gathering timely and accurate data alone can be enormously challenging, particularly in large, multi-faceted businesses with employees working across dozens – perhaps even hundreds – of locations. Over time, these scattered teams are likely to have developed divergent ways of working, resulting in disparate data that cannot be readily collated and analyzed. In some cases, there may be no systems in place for collecting any data whatsoever.

At DHL Supply Chain, we're constantly working to improve consistency and implement standardization across our global systems and processes. It's an ongoing journey, and we're by no means at our destination just yet. But week by week, our systems become more standardized, our datasets become

more comprehensive and revealing, and our decision-making becomes more data-driven as a result.

Much of that decision-making in HR is centered on improving the workplace for all of our employees, both in terms of their day-to-day experiences and their long-term career paths. We have a moral imperative to keep our colleagues skilled for the needs of today's and tomorrow's business world, engaged, safe and happy, of course, but supported by a strong business case. Dissatisfied employees invariably want to leave the organization they work for, draining away talent and incurring unnecessary recruitment and onboarding costs.

In sectors prone to high turnover, those costs can soon spiral.

However, by analyzing and leveraging data, HR departments can keep staff feeling engaged, informed, and motivated. To give you a real-world example: We know that for an employee working in an organization as large as DHL Supply Chain, reaching out to HR – for whatever reason – can feel intimidating and arduous.

The last thing they want is to be passed from pillar to post while simply attempting to, perhaps, retrieve information regarding their payroll history.

However, by looking at the requests or searches an employee previously made via DHL platforms, we can more accurately predict what it is they'll need next from HR. Increasing the level of personalization using HR services, and relevance for employees helps make their interaction fast, frictionless, and stress-free. So when an employee reaches out to HR, they no longer need feel like they're searching for a needle in a

haystack. In fact, we'll hand the needle straight to them – with little to no searching required and continuously making it easier for them to access what they were looking for more quickly in future.

Over the coming months and years, we'll be looking at bringing personalized and proactive HR content directly to our Smart Connect app, empowering employees with relevant, valuable, and actionable information when they open it on their mobile device or laptop. Say, for example, that an employee still has two weeks of annual leave available, and the year-end is approaching. Through Smart Connect, HR can proactively reach out to that employee, letting them know that they still have vacation time left that can't be carried over, and checking to see if they had considered taking some time off. By cross-referencing with their work schedule, we would even be able to suggest dates that might be suitable. Following on from this, resulting operational needs could be met by automatically providing other available employees with the ability to view and select open shifts using flexible shift planning solutions.

The value of this for an employee who's focused on work during daytime hours, and their family in the evening, is obvious. This is information that they'd otherwise perhaps let slip, simply through lacking the time or the awareness to go looking for it. But it's information that will have a quantifiably positive impact on their life.

These personalized HR services needn't be limited to the Smart Connect app. We're in the early stages of planning for their use via smart assistants, allowing employees to instantly access, for example, the relevant DHL policy on parental leave simply by asking Alexa, Siri, Cortana, or Google Assistant.

Personalized, data-driven HR also allows us to advise employees on potential career paths at DHL Supply Chain.

To help employees grow within the organization, we are implementing AI-based techniques internally as well as outside.

Our staff can upload profile information, including skills they want to develop and areas of DHL's work that interest them.

The system points managers to people whose suitability for a vacancy might not otherwise be obvious. Leveraging the same in-house talent marketplace, functionality currently in development will enable the matching of employees to short-term projects which can be carried out without leaving their existing post.

Harnessing the power of AI, we can join the data-dots to uncover openings and opportunities particularly suited to an employee's individual skillset, or to areas that they've shown an interest in – either consciously or otherwise – and to push related learning modules as recommendations to help close any gaps.

Often, these re-deployments would never have been considered by either the employee or their line manager. That's partly because they'd simply have been unaware of them – in a business the size of DHL, it's impossible for any human to keep abreast of every new job opportunity. But it's also because AI can make connections that people, with their hardwired assumptions and blind spots, may miss.

Being able to retain talent in this way is a hugely exciting development: by making employees happier in their work, the better we get to know and understand them.

From a wider business perspective, by engaging and nurturing our people through leveraging data, we aim to maintain their loyalty and make any career moves internal, rather than losing their skills.

