

Industry 4.0 driving growing demand for tech skills in supply chain

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The rise of Industry 4.0 is driving demand for technology specialists in the supply chain, according to 1st Executive.

An analysis by the specialist procurement and supply chain consultancy found that firms in the UK are increasingly seeking professionals with technology skills to work within the supply chain. This comes at a time when Industry 4.0 –where a string of new technologies including AI, the internet-of-things and cloud computing combine to drive sweeping changes – is beginning to impact the manufacturing and supply chain arenas, driving greater demand for tech specialists. Firms in Italy, Germany and France are already partnering with professional bodies to develop robust training programmes to meet the demand for these skills and the UK supply chain has been warned to follow this lead if it wants to remain globally competitive. 1st Executive's analysis compared client job specifications with those from the same period 12 months ago and found firms were now increasingly seeking professionals with technology experience or expertise to operate in the supply chain.

James Tucker, Managing Director of 1st Executive, comments.

"Firms have sought technology expertise for the past few years, however over the past six months this demand has increased enormously and that's largely down to the rise of Industry 4.0. It's now critical to have professionals with the skills to take advantage of this new revolution within the supply chain. Tech has almost boundless potential and can make processes much more efficient than they currently are, but if the UK wants to remain competitive in the global markets then it's critical that firms within the supply chain have people with technology-led skill sets in their own teams. Many firms are already actively targeting tech specialists to work for them, but the truth is that there aren't enough professionals in the market with these skills to meet the anticipated demand. That's why training and upskilling is so critical. In many European countries, firms are already partnering with professional bodies to develop robust training programmes to meet this demand for new skills, and organisations in the UK will have to do the same if they want to remain competitive."

Marco Taisch, an expert on Industry 4.0 and Director of the Executive Course in Manufacturing Management at MIP Politecnico di Milano School of Management, who is already developing courses with increased technological focus for the next generation of supply chain professionals, agrees:

"Industry 4.0 will drastically change the supply chain arena and has already driven a much greater need for professionals with advanced technology skills. And it appears that firms in the likes of Italy, Germany and France have been proactive and have already developed large-scale training programmes to ensure the workforce possess the requisite skills. These changes will infiltrate into the industry at a rapid pace and any nations not preparing to meet the anticipated demand could rapidly fall behind the curve and start to lose competitiveness without these skills in place. It's critically important to ensure that firms in the UK can keep up to speed with those in the rest of Europe, particularly with so many enormous political shifts set to take place in the next few years which could end up impacting the UK's position in the global market."

Bruce Callander
BlueSky PR
T: 07725331476
E: bruce@bluesky-pr.net
W: www.bluesky-pr.com