

The Herculean Task

As the logistics sector gains in importance, hiring and retaining talent has become the dire need of the hour, notes **Chander Agarwal**, Executive Director, TCI.



Globalization has called for movement of products across boundaries in a quest to source a better quality product at a competitive price and also focus on efficient logistic management of supply chains from source to destination. With globalization also comes competition, because of which one can already see a shift in the business scenario, wherein companies are increasingly focusing on their core competencies and outsourcing their logistics requirements in order to optimize costs and bring in efficiencies.

Growth Opportunities

As newer retail formats emerge in the country, the need for efficient and effective supply chain management is becoming more pronounced. With a buoyant economy, the emergence of India as a manufacturing hub and the boom in exports and imports, the logistics and supply chain management sector will witness strong growth opportunities. In addition, the evolving business landscape and increasing competition across industries, is creating the need for more efficient and reliable supply chain management and logistics services.

A widespread perception also exists that the logistics industry is not a good paymaster when compared to other industries, especially the IT industry. However, this is not the case as the sector pays remuneration at par with industry standards in order to attract and retain talent. The logistics sector also faces certain other constraints like lack of awareness about career opportunities in the industry and inadequate marketing of the sector. The sector, too, needs to package and market itself effectively. The advent of good business schools which focus on logistics as a core subject, and good management degrees with a technical bent augur well for this industry.

Job Profiles

The scope of jobs in the field of logistics and supply chain management is wide and covers all levels, right from the manual to the specialist. Therefore, the academic background requirements vary from graduation to a specialized degree. Some of the profiles which are available at multifarious levels are basic truck drivers, pilots, ship captains to supervisors of material handling, logistics IT manager, controlling manager, warehouse manager,

distribution manager, operations manager, fleet/transport manager, inventory controller, materials handling engineer, planning manager and system analysts.

The sector currently employs about 40 million people, a number that will rise rapidly with exponential growth expectations in the sector. With the scope of outsourcing growing apart from normal transportation to inbound logistics management, outbound logistics management, material management, growing expectations of customers to provide end-to-end solutions and strict requirement of compliances, the sector is becoming increasingly complex and more service oriented. The skill sets required for jobs has also changed dramatically during the last few years.

Correspondingly, there has not been an increase in manpower to match these skills. To meet this greater-than-ever necessity, logistics majors such as TCI have begun training manpower in-house. Nowadays, logistics forms an important part in the supply chain management of a business organization. Therefore, a number of job opportunities are available in this field. Logistics, as a career option, brings with it challenges, responsibilities, travel opportunities and satisfactory remuneration too.

Necessary Skills

The nature of the work in supply chain management is such that one must have the ability to handle complexities. Some other skills that an individual must possess are:

- A person must develop a global mindset with a focus on meeting local requirements, as also a high awareness of the local market, business trends, policies and issues affecting the industry as a whole.
- A high level of commitment and a customer centric approach is a desired personality trait for a logistics or warehouse manager. It is critical because employees are expected to be on time, pick orders accurately and put in extra effort to beat schedules.
- Warehouse and store supervisors require effective communication skills and adherence to SOPs to provide excellent customer support.
- The knowledge of basic computing skills in warehousing procedures is also desirable. Employees necessarily must have knowledge of the use of personal protective equipment, fire safety, warehouse security, safety procedures and manual lifting techniques. 🌞

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