

Emerging technologies and why HR should upskill and reskill

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During a human resource leadership breakfast meeting on April 18 at Isbat University in Kampala, the Head, People and Culture at National Social Security Fund (NSSF), Milton Steven Owor, advised human resource managers in different organisations to upskill, reskill, and empower themselves to create bigger impact and remain relevant with the fast-paced business world and technological advancement.

Owor noted that much as the role of HR managers is to support their respective organisations take the right direction, it remains a fallacy if they do not understand the critical business technological challenges the organisation has to deal with.

"What was the best practice last year may not be applicable today. If you are an HR manager and last year's practices are still your best practice, it explains why some companies grow faster while others stagnate. We all know about digital transformation, artificial intelligence and automation".

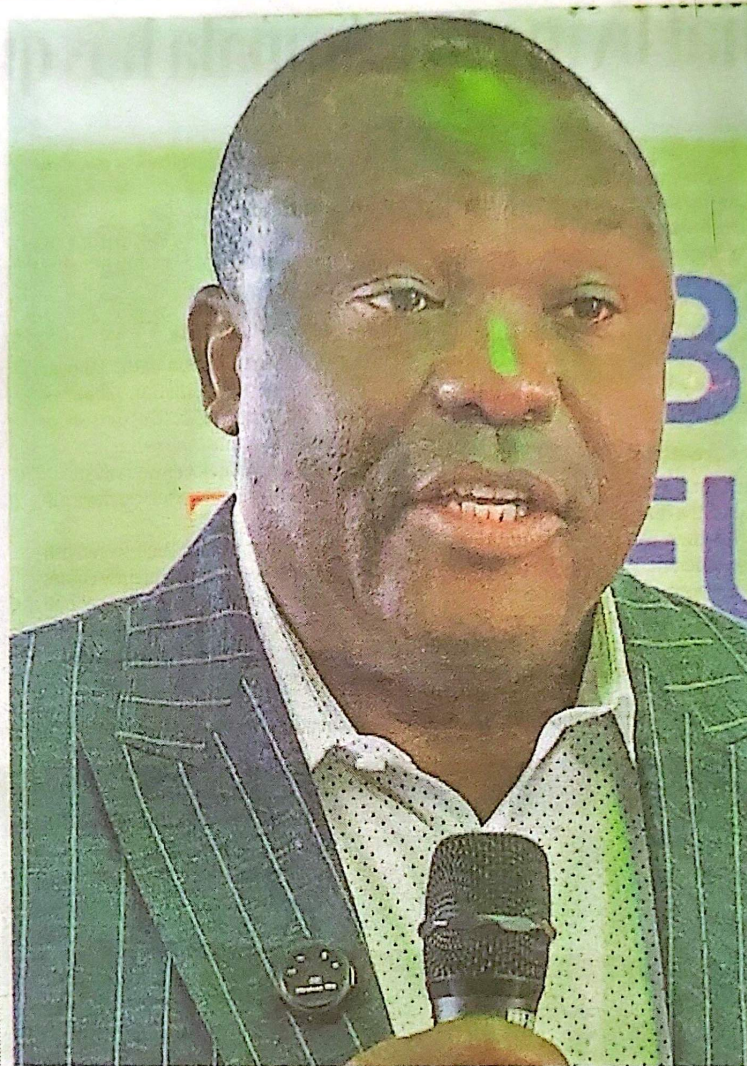
"As HR managers, our level of appreciation of the true impact of AI and au-

tomation in our business world is lower than what it should be. If we do not understand it well, it will be very hard for us to influence strategic decision-making in our organisations in terms of leveraging AI and automation in our environments," Owor says.

Solomon Muhirwa, a human resource consultant at Watu Limited, says much as artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies are making work simpler, it means some jobs may be affected in different ways. If you (human resource manager) are at the forefront of managing careers, jobs and responsibilities, it becomes pivotal for you to carry out effective compartmentalisation of jobs or roles.

"When technology comes into perspective, everything you (HR) have been doing is definitely affected. Sometimes you will lose people or hire more skilled people but you cannot be in a situation where you are managing many staff and wiping all of them out because of new technology," Muhirwa explains.

"You find yourself in a precarious situation because you are supposed to think for the business but also for savings. On the other side of things, you want people's careers to continue and



The head of Human Resources at NSSF, Milton Steven Owor, said HR practitioners ought to understand AI to be in a better place to influence strategic decision-making. PHOTO/ROLAND NASASIRA

for them to prosper."

Whichever way you look at it, you have to understand what artificial intelligence and automation is, how they work and how it is going to impact your organisation. You need to have a clue about what is going on and the technology and skills you will need gradually because automation has affected and is continuing to affect every industry," he added.

Pradeep Kumar, the director of academic affairs at ISBAT university advises that to cope with globalisation and technological advancements that have become a threat to employment globally, human resource managers need to shift to skills-based hiring instead of degree-based criteria or staff training, upskilling and reskilling for employees to remain relevant in their organisation.

"Invest in continuous learning and reskilling programmes, offer career pathing and internal mobility, recognise and reward employees consistently for upgrading skills, create clear hybrid work policies and train managers in technology-driven leadership skills," Kumar advises.

On her part, Ritah Atuhaire, 25, who works at one of the universities in Kampala argues that instead of HR manager asking for skills young employers acquired through the education system before offering them jobs.

In a world where most people did not study what they do at their current jobs, managers should instead introduce training and mentorship programmes for knowledge and skills development around emerging technology to increase productivity and meet organisational goals.