



— INDIA'S —

**MOST AGILE
HR LEADERS**

2023





Butter Paper





ANKIT BANSAL
Founder & CEO
Sapphire Human Capital

FOUNDER AND CEO'S DESK

Agile principles, born from the realm of software development, have transcended their origins to become a guiding philosophy for businesses across various industries.

In the age of rapid technological advancement, shifting market landscapes, and changing customer demands, building an agile company is no longer just a competitive advantage; it's a necessity. And at the heart of this transformation lies the expertise and dedication of our HR professionals.

Agile principles instill a culture of adaptability. The business environment is no longer linear and predictable; it's dynamic and unpredictable. Agile equips organizations to swiftly adjust to market shifts, customer preferences, and technological advancements. Instead of being caught off guard by change, Agile companies anticipate and welcome it as an opportunity to excel.

HR leaders are instrumental in nurturing a culture of agility. They guide the organization in transitioning from traditional hierarchical structures to flexible, cross-functional teams. By fostering an environment that encourages open communication, knowledge-sharing, and the free flow of ideas, these leaders enable employees to collaborate and respond rapidly to changes in the market.

Presently, HR has matured into a business partner for managers and leaders, assuming the role of a readily accessible go-to person for all. Their efforts revolve around promoting agility, assisting in the creation of new processes whenever necessary to expedite decision-making.

Over time, they've embraced the essentiality of experimentation and learning in an agile context. They've ventured, stumbled, adapted, and refined their approaches.

"India's Most Agile HR Leaders 2023" is a handbook featuring those HR leaders who've embraced a transformative shift in their work methods. They've progressed from practicing Agile merely "for" HR to embracing HR as a force that drives Agile. These leaders embody Agile DNA and culture, epitomized by traits such as trust, transparency, adaptability to change, collaboration, and the embrace of distributed authority. These trailblazers have been the propelling energy behind remarkable transformations, infusing their organizations with exemplary HR practices.



ABOUT SAPPHIRE CONNECT

Sapphire Human Capital is India's leading integrated human capital firm specializing in executive search, research based advisory, CXO peer group communities and B2B events. With over 15 years of deep experience in solving complex human capital problems across sectors and working with some of the largest Indian business houses and blue chip MNCs, Sapphire Human Capital has dominant market share across all businesses it operates in. With a fast-growing team of 150+ consultants across its offices in Mumbai, NCR and Bangalore, Sapphire offers an unparalleled value proposition to its C-suite stakeholders. Sapphire's leadership team brings in more than 150 years of collective experience and it is governed by a highly reputed and experienced Board of Directors. Sapphire Search, its executive search division is highly regarded by clients and has placed more than 1100 CXO with 250+ clients. The other division, Sapphire Connect, holds a distinguished position as India's leading innovative B2B event organization.

Sapphire Connect is dedicated to curating platforms that foster knowledge exchange and networking. Our arsenal includes conferences, business meetings, webinars, virtual symposiums, tailor-made events, a Coffee Table Book, and the establishment of thriving business communities.

The inception of **Sapphire Connect** stems from a decade-long commitment by its founders to deliver utmost excellence in quality and service. Our platforms revolve around current industry landscapes, addressing present challenges while charting pathways to conquer future obstacles. We empower stakeholders with comprehensive insights, offering invaluable takeaways and, above all, experiential learning. Serving as a hub for trailblazing industry titans, our platforms serve those striving to pioneer transformative directions in their respective domains. Our Custom Platforms are engineered to fashion personalized solutions aligning with client objectives. These platforms encompass diverse event formats featuring India's thought leaders, paired with an exclusive and intimate audience.

Our pledge extends to substantiating and enriching the content of all our endeavours through expert collaboration. The outcomes of these initiatives culminate in enlightening research papers, elevating the sphere of knowledge.



ABOUT INDIA'S MOST AGILE HR LEADERS 2023

Amidst the continuous interplay of economic, climate, and pandemic pressures, businesses today grapple with an unceasing stream of challenges. In response, many are recognizing organizational agility as the linchpin to bolster resilience and ensure swift recuperation from events, whether they be sudden disruptions like 'black swans' or more gradual, evolving challenges. However, instilling agility is no simple feat. The process demands not only adept leadership at the helm but also a pervasive commitment throughout the endeavor of cultivating agility within the organization.

At the heart of this pursuit lie agile leaders – those who inspire and navigate teams through the most formidable trials. In the realm of HR, the concept of an agile mindset transcends mere reliance on post-it notes and scrum boards. It encompasses a departure from conventional HR norms, embracing an experimental and adaptable approach to deliver tangible value. This value is authenticated by individuals and their firsthand encounter with work.

Within the realm of Sapphire Connect, we firmly believe that the pathway to triumph lies in a perpetual cycle of experimentation and learning. HR leaders hold the potential to revolutionize the landscape and collaborate in shaping the future of work. By metamorphosing and confronting the multifaceted challenges of an unpredictable and intricate business realm, they can usher in a new era.

In this context, we are elated to present the 3rd Edition of the "India's Most Agile HR Leaders 2023" *Coffee Table Book*. This edition showcases HR leaders who have ventured, experimented, absorbed lessons, and ultimately overhauled their people-centric operations to align more closely with human needs while delivering tangible business impact. Their achievements are agnostic to industry or organizational type, illustrating that adaptable strategy can thrive in any context.

Knowledge Partner



NOTE FROM EY

The 3rd edition of India's Most Agile HR Leaders Coffee Table Book celebrates excellence in HR leadership and is a testament to the pivotal role played by agile HR leaders in shaping the future of organizations in these dynamic times. This book aims to recognize compassionate, inspiring, transformational, and forward-thinking HR leaders. EY, in its role as the knowledge partner, meticulously designed the selection process and provided a robust framework for the evaluation of the entries.



This event underscores EY's commitment to promoting excellence in HR leadership and highlights the remarkable achievements of these HR leaders. We appreciate the dedicated jury members for their patience and discernment and extend our heartfelt congratulations to the winners!

NIDHI GUPTA

Partner

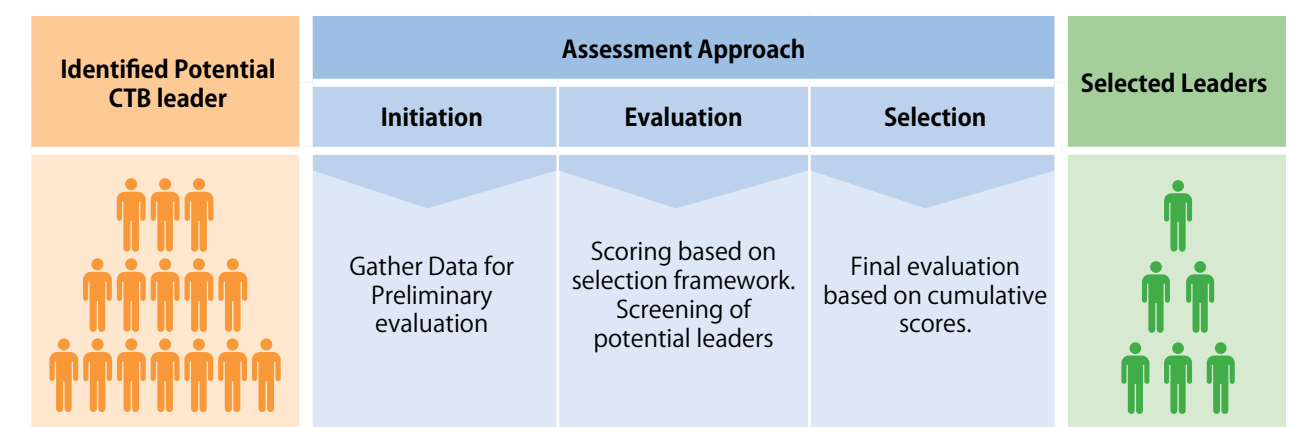
People Advisory Services, EY India



ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The commencement of a remarkable chapter for Sapphire Connect started 6 months prior to the event, as we garnered an impressive influx of over 150 nominations for evaluation. Our esteemed knowledge partner, EY, furnished a robust framework encompassing processes and criteria to meticulously assess these submissions.

Through a scrupulous culling process, we identified 57 profiles that underwent meticulous review by the jury. In the culmination of this comprehensive evaluation, a definitive verdict emerged: 22 HR leaders successfully secured their positions among the elite cohort of India's foremost HR leaders for the year 2023.



The GRAND JURY



ARJIT BASU
Chairman of the Board
HBD Financial Services

ANTHONY JOSEPH
Former CHRO
HGS



DR. C. JAYAKUMAR
Executive Vice President and
Head Corporate Human Resources
CHRO, Larsen & Toubro

GAUTAM CHAINANI
Former CHRO
JSW Group



**SRINIVASAN SHAKOTAI
CHAKRAPANI**
Former CFO
Unilever



ADITYA KOHLI

CHRO | Orient Electric



“If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but **whatever you do you have to keep moving forward**”

ABOUT THE LEADER

Aditya is a Senior HR Leader at Orient Electric Limited with a proven track record spanning a wide range of HR expertise in areas such as Talent Management, Performance, Rewards and Benefits, Business Relationship Management, HR Transformation, Change and Culture Management, Employee Engagement, HR Technology & Service Delivery Strategy, Shared Services, and Global Payroll Models. He has worked in Singapore, India, and London, managing global teams in a highly matrixed global organization. In all of his roles, he has created a unique proposition built on a significantly differentiated multidisciplinary approach that leverages people, culture, technology, and networks to drive performance.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

We aspire to scale Orient Electric into a well-respected \$1 billion Indian company. The primary focus area is to cultivate the right performance mindset, hire the appropriate talent, including the leadership team, and ensure that the team operates as one cohesive unit with the right culture. In the past year, we have brought onboard over 15 new leaders, including a CEO. We have institutionalized new organizational capabilities and accomplished significant work on products and consumer insights. As the CHRO, my role involves not only uniting the team but also managing the change in the most seamless manner possible.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

The environmental frame in which HR operates today has shifted dramatically especially as we have significant business uncertainty, disruptions of globally interconnected supply chains, rapid obsolescence of skills and all of this on the back of a more discerning and digitally savvy consumer. For me Strategic Agility in HR is about ruthlessly prioritizing resources, and helping the organization consume the enormity of change in a seamless manner and creating organizational capability to excel through this change by keeping employee at the heart.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

During my tenure at a traditional telecom company, which was losing both revenue and customers to smaller OTT (Over The Top) start-ups, a pivotal decision was made to establish a Digital 2.0 Telecom company. This endeavor demanded a comprehensive reimagining of organizational structure, capabilities, values, culture, and operational methods from the ground up.

We introduced distinct career paths and POD-based workflows for small, agile teams. Embracing a hierarchy-less culture, we reshaped benefits to align with this approach. We strategically acquired a company to infuse an agile mindset, conducted comprehensive training for teams in agile methodologies, and developed a forward-looking structure that encapsulated future capabilities. The establishment of a new brand (X-Labs) served to position us and attract top-tier talent. Our newly devised career paths mirrored the aspirations of emerging talent, culminating in the recruitment of leadership and operational teams embodying a wholly different ethos.

Presently, this team consists of over 800 individuals, driving online revenues from a mere 3-4% to an impressive >30%. A significant portion of our operations, servicing, and value-added services now originate through this channel, not to mention numerous industry-first innovative solutions.



DEVENDER KUMAR SHARMA



Vice President & Head - Human Resources | Parijat Industries India Pvt. Ltd.

ABOUT THE LEADER

With over two decades of experience in HR, Devender Kr. Sharma is a seasoned practitioner who holds a master's degree in HR and a commerce graduation. He has held pivotal roles in HR across diverse industries, including Industrial Chemicals, Design & Engineering, and Road & Telecom Infrastructure. Presently, he spearheads the HR division at Parijat Industries India Pvt. Ltd, a prominent Indian MNC in AgroPesticide. Devender is a certified Change Management Practitioner from the University of Pacific Wales USA and is dedicated to the ethos of care in HR. His commitment to individual and organizational growth has been acknowledged by the global agency GPTW, which certified Parijat as a Great Place to Work for the Year 17-18.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

Devinder played a pivotal role in initiating numerous groundbreaking developments aimed at cultivating organizational culture, establishing a robust compensation and benefits framework, implementing Reward and Recognition Practices, automating HR processes, and most importantly, nurturing employee growth. Among these initiatives, the most noteworthy is the "Employee Day – Kyunki Har Ek Employee Jaroori Hota hai..." This initiative provided employees with a well-deserved break and dedicated time solely for them, allowing the organization to nurture them. During this period, Heads of Departments (HODs) were encouraged to allocate time to connect with their team members, listen to their concerns, and engage meaningfully. As a testament to the success of these innovative endeavours, the company was recognized as one of India's Top 50 Companies to Work for in the Mid-Size Category in 2019.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

For me, strategic agility in HR means the HR function's capacity to adeptly and efficiently adapt to evolving business needs. This encompasses foreseeing future talent demands, displaying flexibility and adaptability, cultivating agile leadership competencies, streamlining HR processes, harnessing data and analytics, and nurturing a culture of agility. By embracing strategic agility, HR can harmonize its practices with the organization's objectives and provide enhanced support for its triumph. Agility contributes to an organization's achievement by enabling swift responses to change, stimulating innovation, amplifying customer focus, optimizing resource allocation, empowering decision-making, attracting and retaining top talent, and fortifying resilience for sustainable long-term growth.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

Focus on Learning and Development: We have prioritized the learning and development of our team members. We offer structured and unstructured opportunities for employees to enhance their capabilities at every level. For example, we introduced the Chairman's Club for our sales colleagues, where we identify top performers and provide them with targeted development support. Additionally, we have implemented a two-year program for frontline and manager-level employees, assigning them dedicated coaches to develop their technical and soft skills. This flagship program has resulted in internal promotions and growth opportunities for participants. Inspired by this success, we launched a HIPO (High Potential) program for high-performing colleagues at our head office and factories. As a result, almost 70% of participants in these programs are being considered for the next level of positions. The technological integration has streamlined our operations, improved efficiency, and empowered us to effectively support our global workforce.



“Empower each other and watch our collective potential soar”



DILEEP JOSHI

CHRO | EPL Ltd.



“In the ever-shifting business landscape, constant evolution and the **application of best practices** are the compass guiding HR leaders”

ABOUT THE LEADER

Dileep Joshi from EPL Ltd (formerly Essel Propack Ltd), boasts an impressive 35-year track record in HR Management and Development, marked by notable accomplishments in Capability Building, Productivity & Performance Enhancement, Culture Cultivation, and aligning individuals with overarching business objectives. He consistently delivers excellence, reflected in EPL & PGP's recognition as among the Best Employers & Best Places to Work, including prestigious accolades like the Gold Standard in People Sustainability from EcoVadis. He contributes as a member of the Profit Improvement Plan & pre-acquisition Due Diligence team at EPL and takes an active role in Branding Exercise & Manufacturing Excellence as a Company Champion at PGP.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

Commencing in 2015, I embarked on a journey to cultivate a culture harmonizing with our business strategy. Our fresh approach aimed to expedite growth in the Beauty and Personal Care Segment (tube supply), surpassing our existing oral care tubes business. Numerous initiatives were inaugurated to fortify operational methods and behaviours in alignment with these novel strategic priorities. Vital actions encompassed training and awareness programs, alongside the establishment of recognition systems to endorse and institutionalize these progressive behaviours. Transitioning into 2021, we embraced a new challenge: to propel EPL towards becoming the Most Sustainable Packaging Company globally. Thanks to our relentless dedication, we proudly attained the distinguished gold standard in the Ecovadis score, reflecting our ongoing commitment and remarkable accomplishments.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

Within the realm of Company Human Resource Management, the primary objective of the Human Resource Function is to oversee the human aspect of the business. This entails precise responsibilities such as Workforce Planning, Talent Acquisition and Development, Performance and Reward Management, Employee Engagement, Career and Succession Planning, and Cultivating Organisational Culture. All these HR Systems and Practices are orchestrated to align with and drive the Company's Business Strategy and Financial Triumph. On the HR front, we must proactively prepare to tackle challenges encompassing attrition, escalating employee costs, continuous skill enhancement, and fostering a culture that delivers exceptional customer service. Effective organizational communication and motivation to excel in daily operations are pivotal for success. Thus, HR agility entails initiating and managing initiatives and programs that engage people to effectively address business challenges, signifying a pivotal triumph in today's volatile and unpredictable era.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

Presently, our primary focus centres on nurturing a culture of sustainability within our company, recognizing sustainability as a pivotal strategic thrust for our enduring success. We are seamlessly weaving this ethos into every facet of our organization, encompassing our products, manufacturing processes, supplier relationships, and our interactions with the surrounding community near our production facilities. It is with great pleasure that we share our attainment of a Gold Certificate from EcoVadis, a distinguished French agency renowned for measuring and certifying an organization's sustainability trajectory. This esteemed certification positions EPL Ltd. (GROUP) among the top 3% of companies globally, as rated by EcoVadis within this industry segment.



GURMEET CHADHA

CHRO | National Commodities Management Services Limited



Leadership Mantra

“**Call to courage** comes to all of us. If we won't answer, who will?”

ABOUT THE LEADER

Gurmeet is a MBA specializing in Human Resource. She has accumulated a comprehensive perspective by working across various roles from the ground up throughout her career. This experience has empowered her with a well-rounded understanding of both employer and employee needs at NCML - National Commodities Management Limited (A Fairfax Group Company). Serving as an HR Leader within diverse cultural contexts, she has pioneered inclusive HR systems, policies, and processes, striving to foster a value-oriented organization that emphasizes business expansion and the betterment of individuals.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

Acting as a catalyst for change, I've assumed a crucial role in reshaping performance cultures within organizations. An exemplar of this was my introduction of the "Balanced Scorecard" at NCML, an encompassing performance management system extending from top-tier executives to field-level staff, effectively harmonizing business objectives with the human element. This implementation underscored my dedication to nurturing a culture of heightened performance while harmonizing individual goals with overarching organizational aims. I also initiated a 'scholarship' program in collaboration with 'MANAGE' for field-level employees. Upon successfully clearing the exam, these employees were then brought onto the company's official roster. A total of 50 employees out of a pool of 700 were selected for on-roll promotions based on their examination results.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

As we enter 2023, organizations confront a year of change and reinvention, with looming economic pressures. To effectively manage immediate challenges and secure long-term positioning, agility becomes indispensable. In terms of customer experience, organizations must swiftly adjust to evolving customer needs as the shift from traditional methods to online platforms persists. This entails harnessing transformative technologies like AI, blockchain, and analytics to construct more efficient, sophisticated systems in this realm. Ultimately, the success of an organization hinges on a robust, digitally-enabled workforce. Another pivotal focus of agile organizations is future-proofing the workforce through upskilling and reskilling initiatives. Many companies now operate under a hybrid model, leveraging cloud technology that facilitates remote work while upholding high-performance standards for clients.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

Given our expansive geographical presence (900 warehouses and 40 agri-testing labs), a noticeable misalignment of top objectives became evident. I spearheaded the consolidation of our management team to create NCML's Balanced Scorecard, enabling every employee to comprehend the company's overarching mission and grasp the intrinsic 'why' behind their respective roles. Numerous communication and training sessions, jointly led by HR and business teams, were required to synchronize the organization towards a shared objective. The endeavour proved immensely rewarding as we showcased agility in transforming our goal-setting metrics into a purpose-driven framework. We introduced "MILAP" – a platform fostering Interactive, Lateral, and Actionable Partnerships between HR and employees. On a monthly basis, we conducted sessions where prompt action steps were showcased to address employee concerns. This became an integral component of our monthly management information system (MIS), additionally serving as a conduit for employee input to management. This initiative exemplified our agility in facilitating rapid and effective communication channels.



KAVITA SIDDIQUI

Vice President HR | Magnon Group



Be passionate about your work, lead with integrity, inspire with passion, and empower with empathy.
Foster a culture of trust and collaboration, embracing diverse perspectives.

ABOUT THE LEADER

Kavita holds the position of Vice President HR & Talent Acquisition at Magnon Group, where she brings her extensive HR leadership expertise spanning over 16 years in acclaimed agencies, dedicated to talent acquisition, engagement, and retention. Collaborating closely with the leadership team, she spearheads customized HR initiatives for the Magnon Group, encompassing Magnon Designory, Magnon eg+, and Magnon Sancus.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

I take pride in my instrumental role in the successful establishment of ISO 27001 within the organization. I led the formulation of the Information Security Management System (ISMS), collaborating closely with a team of experts to thoroughly assess and address the organization's information security risks. Subsequently, I devised and executed policies and procedures aimed at mitigating these identified risks. Ensuring comprehensive awareness and adherence, I provided information security training to employees, encompassing the best practices.

To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the ISMS, I conducted routine audits, verifying its seamless implementation and maintenance. Through the implementation of ISO 27001, advertising agencies can showcase their unwavering dedication to information security, safeguarding their reputation and instilling confidence.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

Organizational agility provides businesses with the capacity to swiftly respond, innovate, prioritize customer/client needs, and enhance efficiency. It equips them to adeptly steer through change, stimulate growth, and cultivate a culture of ongoing enhancement. Embracing agility, organizations position themselves for enduring success within a fluid and evolving business milieu. Agility empowers organizations to promptly adjust to shifts in the business landscape, swiftly respond to market dynamics, emerging trends, and customer expectations. This agility enables businesses to grasp emerging prospects, manage risks effectively, and maintain a competitive edge.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

As an HR Leader, I championed an organizational initiative aimed at enhancing agility through the implementation of a versatile work arrangement program. The primary objective was to cultivate a more adaptive and responsive work environment that accommodates employees' preferences and needs, while simultaneously upholding organizational productivity and efficiency. The key components of this endeavour encompass: Flexible Work Hours: We introduced a range of flexible work hours, providing employees with greater autonomy over their schedules. This encompassed options such as compressed workweeks, flexitime, and staggered work hours. Remote Work Opportunities: We established a comprehensive remote work policy, allowing employees to operate from home or alternate off-site locations when appropriate. Results-Focused Approach: A shift was made from solely monitoring time and attendance to prioritizing outcomes and achievements. By embracing such flexibility, we nurtured a culture rooted in adaptability, employee empowerment, and ongoing improvement. Ultimately, this initiative has played a pivotal role in propelling organizational success within a dynamic and ever-evolving business landscape.



MAHENDRA INGE

Head Of Human Resources | Serum Institute of India Pvt. Ltd.



Leadership Mantra

My actions should be the constant efforts to **inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become better.** Fuel them with empowerment so that you have leaders who are hungry for challenges.

ABOUT THE LEADER

Mahendra brings a wealth of experience in Human Resource management, with significant contributions to esteemed organizations like Skoda, Wockhardt, and Lupin. Currently serving as the Head of HR at Serum Institute of India, he adeptly combines strategic planning, business acumen, and subject matter expertise to cultivate future-ready organizations. His background encompasses talent transformation, leadership development, employer branding, and policy formulation to elevate employee experiences. Demonstrating a commitment to conscientious oversight, Mahendra drives a robust compliance and governance framework throughout the organization.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

One of the most challenging situations I encountered was during the pandemic, a time when the entire world was at a standstill, and we were just getting started. While many organizations shifted to remote work, we were tasked with bringing over 5000 employees to work on-site and simultaneously hiring to ensure the delivery of Covisheild vaccines globally. Over a span of 2.5 months, we successfully onboarded 1000+ employees across various levels. This required us to innovate new techniques, ensuring compliance with global regulations as a healthcare company. Leading this initiative, particularly delegating the task to non-Talent Acquisition specialists in my team, posed a monumental challenge. However, my Industrial Relations and Admin colleagues, not originally built for TA roles, demonstrated remarkable efficiency and effectiveness. This achievement was made possible through unwavering support from stakeholders and the trust of our Chairman, Dr. Poonawalla, and CEO, Mr. Adar Poonawalla. The resounding success of this endeavour is evident by the fact that 97% of those hired during the pandemic period remain with Serum.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

I believe that strategic agility in HR requires a constant monitoring of both internal and external environments, swiftly gathering and utilizing information, and promptly responding to changes in the market. This, in turn, enhances the competitive capabilities of an organization and enables relevant adaptations to environmental shifts, ultimately leading to improved performance.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

Numerous initiatives have been undertaken across the organizations where I have worked, yet the most notable and unparalleled challenge I had to lead was in the year 2020. To provide you with a sense of scale, approximately 1500 employees were multi-skilled and retrained at various levels, constituting nearly 30% of our workforce as of March 2020. Additionally, over 1000 individuals were recruited at different tiers, accounting for around 20% of the workforce as of the same date. Remarkably, 97% of these newly recruited individuals remain a part of our team, affirming our success in swiftly managing the situation while ensuring the continuity of regular workforce assimilation and engagement activities. With the pandemic behind us, these freshly recruited members have been effectively integrated and redirected toward various upcoming projects. The level of agility, determination, and resilience demonstrated during those unparalleled times may not find a parallel for decades to come. None of this achievement would have been feasible without the unwavering support of all stakeholders and the trust vested in us by our Chairman, Dr. Cyrus Poonawalla, and CEO, Mr. Adar Poonawalla.



MLN PATNAIK

CHRO | Raymond Lifestyle



"Embrace Change, Empower People, Enable Growth" - Stay agile by embracing change as an opportunity, empowering employees to contribute to their maximum potential, enabling organizational growth through strategic alignment, and fostering a culture of innovation & collaboration.

ABOUT THE LEADER

Mr. Patnaik is a Human Resource Professional with a diverse industry background encompassing IT, Logistics, Paints & Chemicals, Automotive, large, diversified conglomerates and currently leading HR Function at Raymond Lifestyle. He possesses keen insights into business and demonstrates a strong business acumen, allowing him to connect strategic thinking with of specific business challenges. With an in-depth understanding of business dynamics, he possesses the ability to align HR processes with business objectives. His extensive experience includes strategic HR and transformational IR that enabled him to add value to the business & create an ecosystem to ensure best in class experience for employees.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

Over the course of my time at Raymond, several important milestones have been reached. First, I oversaw the transformation of the organizational architecture by converting it to a strategically planned SBU-based framework, putting in place a new job banding system and got in place a complete total rewards program for Lifestyle Business. Additionally, I put in place an AI power bot to enhance employee listening, which will aid us in further enhancing employee experiences. I played a key role in achieving the renowned GPTW certification for Raymond Lifestyle, which confirmed our dedication to establishing a top-notch working environment. Notably, Our efforts were recognized by Economic Times HR, In addition to winning the Success Award, winning WE Matter's Best CHRO and being named the Best Organization by WE Matter, we have received various additional honors that recognize our HR achievements and organizational success.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

Following the slump, Raymond's Lifestyle predicted a revival in consumer perception of traditional brick and mortar stores. This excitement was motivated by both practical reasons, like desiring new clothes for fresh starts and emotional reasons, like wanting to be free of restraints and embrace a sense of emancipation. As a result, we made a conscious effort to design an organizational structure that effectively connects with customers while simultaneously empowering employees. Our functional expertise enhanced the SBUs and led to several process redesigns the development of customer-friendly practices and a plethora of new products and business models..

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

As a HR leader my key focus was on nurturing human capital at Raymond as it directly impacts the organisation performance. My endeavour is to foster a culture of inclusiveness & collaboration. Our initiatives on Leadership Development, Continuous Learning & Upskilling, Talent Management, Employee Engagement, Employee Wellbeing are always focused on ensuring best in class employee experience, keeping organisation culture at the core of everything we do. Raymond leadership competencies, a crucial component of way of living at Raymond is part of all the initiatives to ensure the required competencies and skill levels for each role are established in the organisation.



NIKHIL VOHRA

Head HR | Adani Total Gas



“Leader’s action should inspire others to **Dream more, Do more, Deliver more...**”

ABOUT THE LEADER

Nikhil exhibits extensive expertise as an HR professional, amassing over 19 years of experience in collaborating with major conglomerates and currently leading in Adani Total Gas Limited. His proficiency spans various facets, including Talent Management, Talent Acquisition, Learning and Organizational Development, Employee Engagement, and Performance & Rewards Management. He exudes a fervent passion for engaging in projects that allow HR to collaboratively devise solutions enhancing business productivity. Adept at overseeing multiple intricate businesses throughout India, Nikhil's core strength lies in managing complex business challenges with finesse.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

A pivotal accomplishment during my tenure at a previous company involved crafting a comprehensive framework tailored for the associates who were instrumental in driving revenue and volume through their field work. I established a structured 10-month program encompassing three key pillars: performance, learning and development, and assessments. This initiative engaged 1100 field offices and fostered collaboration among leaders from diverse functions such as finance, marketing, commercial, training, HR, and branding, all united in pursuit of a common goal. As a result, healthy competition thrived among associates, leading to a substantial increase in sales volume. Recognition was bestowed upon top performers. We also granted sponsorships for further education, setting the stage for promising careers. Notably, this endeavour also induced behavioural shifts that directly contributed to achieving specific organizational outcomes.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

Strategic agility is derived from the dynamic nature of business operations, constantly evolving in response to rapid industry challenges and competition. To effectively navigate this environment, it is crucial to promptly and adeptly respond to or drive change, all the while maintaining both adaptability and focus. As an HR professional, I firmly believe that achieving this balance involves cultivating robust employee engagement and retention strategies aligned with overarching organizational objectives. Whether it pertains to top talent acquisition, capacity and capability development, performance management, or rewards and engagement, an agile mindset is indispensable.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

During my tenure at a prominent Telecom Giant, I navigated a significant industry shift from Voice to Data as customer preferences evolved. In alignment with the company's strategic realignment, I conceived and implemented a program aimed at elevating the competencies of our existing workforce. This initiative transformed them into adept Data Specialists through a process of reverse shadowing. This strategic move prepared our employees for the demands of the future, propelling the organization forward in the data-driven landscape.

I have been a driving force behind multiple assignments, playing a pivotal role in upskilling employees within the rapidly changing and technology-driven environment. In a prior manufacturing organization specializing in mechanical engines, a seismic shift toward Electric Vehicles (EV) necessitated a fundamental change in workforce skills. I led the conceptualization and execution of a comprehensive training program tailored to empower traditionally skilled employees with the new competencies required for EV technology. This initiative facilitated a seamless transition, fostering responsiveness and collaboration within the technical team.



PRADEEP CHAVDA

CHRO | Sodexo India Services Pvt. Ltd.



We need to Embrace challenges, drive change. Lead with empathy, inspire greatness. Enhance employee experience, shape culture. **HR, being the heart of an organization would guide, support, and create a thriving workforce for a brighter future.** Together, we shape a brighter future for our employees, organizations and community around so that we thrive together.

ABOUT THE LEADER

Transformation Head, and Board of Directors member. He boasts extensive experience in diverse domains such as MNCs, Government Bodies, and large global technology-driven enterprises. With over 23 years of expertise, he has overseen the management of a workforce exceeding 85,000 employees across both national and international landscapes. His influence spans across sectors like Telecom, Technology, Digital Banking, and the Food industry. His endeavours focus on fostering employee engagement, promoting holistic organizational efficiency, and steering the path of success.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

Notably, I earned the APAC Sodexo Best Business Innovation Award for introducing the Talent Stock Exchange. My contributions led to nominations for the Sodexo Global Award for the Micro Learning Initiative and recognition as one of India's Top 20 Most Impactful Microlearning Leaders, achieved by deploying AI-powered micro-learning tools for Sodexo India. My dedication to Diversity and Inclusion initiatives resulted in consecutive prestigious awards from Bureau Veritas, GEEIS, WILL, and JobsForHer. I introduced the innovative WinBack model, which significantly reduced frontline attrition from 69% to 30% in three years, alongside launching Sodexo's inaugural Second Career and Alumni Portal for rehire strategies.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

The integration of HR agility offers multiple advantages. Firstly, it ensures heightened responsiveness, empowering the organization to adeptly address both internal and external variables that influence human capital. Sodexo's Agile HR practices foster a positive culture that has achieved an impressive feat—zero attrition of key talent over the last five years. Our comprehensive engagement includes an international mobility program that fills 39% of positions internally. Lastly, Agile HR's efficiency enhancement is notable, as it identifies organizational inefficiencies in areas like recruitment and training. We've instituted agile hiring practices such as TAB hiring for swift onboarding and a robust partner ecosystem comprising over 108 collaborators, effectively catering to Sodexo's annual recruitment of 27,000 employees.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

As the Founding Member and CHRO of India's pioneering Payments Bank, I spearheaded the implementation of strategic Microsoft Power B.I. tools—integrating the RFP/Bidding Tool with the HR System and rolling out Microsoft Power BI STEP across India, subsequently on a global scale.

In my role as the HR director at Sodexo India, I've been making our company even better by using technology and changing the way we work. I've made it easier for employees to do their jobs and have a good experience at work. One big thing I did was create a special app called Access. This app makes it simple for our employees to do everything related to their work. We made this app ourselves, and it brings together all of our employees, leaders, and even past employees in a team. This app is being used in over 80 countries, starting from India.



RAJANI TEWARI

Chief People Officer | Greencell Mobility



Leadership Mantra

The ethos of good leadership is listening to all and yet have a mind of your own. Good leaders don't create followers **they create more leaders.**

ABOUT THE LEADER

Dr. Rajani (Ph.D.) from Greencell Mobility stands out as one of the rare individuals in India holding a Doctorate in HR Management. She is not only a dedicated mother to an inquisitive eight-year-old, but also the supportive wife of an exceptionally reliable and inspirational spouse. With over 19 years of experience, she has achieved remarkable success in the realm of HR Leadership, adeptly steering initiatives in Organizational Development, Talent Management, HR Planning and Strategy, as well as Learning & Development on a global scale.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

As a catalyst and leader of change management, I orchestrated the establishment of systems and personnel within the Global Shared Services sector, encompassing HR, Finance, IT, and Procurement. I independently spearheaded an employee value proposition campaign, resulting in substantial cost savings of 1.5 crore compared to consultant-proposed RFQs. I assumed the role of Project Lead for a pioneering global MS D365 rollout across 10 functions spanning 120 processes, with the first launch in Asia. I designed and implemented a leadership succession planning process, crafting action plans for Indian company leaders, and collaborated with the Chairman of Yashraj Bio Medical on a comprehensive project encompassing values, beliefs, vision, mission, and successful fundraising endeavours.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

Any agile organization is consistently successful. It's not just a theory; it's a proven fact. At least, that's been my experience, given my limited years of experience, especially in leadership roles. Why? Because when an organization is open to change, to adopting new things, and to absorbing innovations, it can attract better talent. It can hire people without bias, avoiding putting them in boxes, and instead, build a culture of support with highly productive and motivated individuals. To manage customer service effectively, you need engaged and motivated employees. This is only possible when the organization is agile enough to adapt to the environment, which includes the broader ecosystem outside of our control – like the economy.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

We took on a project focused on service excellence. In an industry where adapting or effectively managing mass mobility experiences in road mobility is challenging, we asked ourselves how we could create this. The answer lay in experience management and building a stronger brand. We're striving to create an approach that doesn't target only the top B schools or premier engineering institutions. Instead, we're embracing a broader perspective, including a focus on diploma holders. As a sustainable organization, we have a strong commitment to giving back to society in every way possible, and HR is at the forefront of championing this cause. Consequently, we're reaching out to individuals with diplomas from Tier 3 and Tier 2 institutions, as well as cities beyond that. We've undertaken efforts to tap into talent from these areas, providing them training through a course developed in collaboration with ITI. In breaking this stereotype, we've achieved double-digit figures, and our goal is to turn that into a four-digit count in the future.



RAVIBHUSHAN PANDAV



Head of Operations & HRD | Annex Cloud

Leadership Mantra

Lead with integrity, inspire with purpose, empower with trust, and promote collaboration. Embrace challenges as opportunities, adapt to change with flexibility, and never stop learning. Always remember that a **true leader serves others, fosters growth, and leaves a lasting impact on employees, teams, and organizations.**

ABOUT THE LEADER

Mr. Ravibhushan Pandav from Annex Cloud is a Senior Human Resources Professional with over 17 years of experience in Core Human Resources Operations, boasting a proven track record in developing HR strategies to enhance operational and organizational efficiency. He has a vast experience in mobilizing human resource from various industries by imbining the core values and uplifting to their true potential.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

With a passion for working closely with people and handling the crucial HR department, which serves as the backbone and nerve centre of an organization. Through my HR expertise, I've prioritized training and development for newly hired employees, fostering competence and dedication for future challenges. Additionally, I've established clear performance standards and accountability, promoting positive behaviors within the company's framework. This approach has led me to create effective work processes, policies, and practices, ultimately enhancing the organization's capabilities and contributing to reduced attrition in critical operational departments, thus fostering the company's growth and expansion.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

Strategic agility within HR holds a pivotal role in bolstering an organization's success, encompassing various dimensions as outlined below: Firstly, it enables seamless adaptation to shifting business requisites, allowing HR to swiftly realign strategies, practices, and processes with evolving market dynamics, customer needs, and industry trends. This ensures the organization remains competitive, equipped with the right talent and capabilities to achieve strategic goals. Secondly, strategic agility aids in talent acquisition and retention, actively identifying future workforce needs and fostering an engaged environment through competitive compensation, growth opportunities, and positive work culture, thus minimizing turnover and fostering stability. Thirdly, it amplifies the organization's overall agility by aligning HR practices with the strategic direction, facilitating quick decision-making, cross-functional collaboration, and responsiveness to market shifts. This agility cultivates adaptability, flexibility, and rapid response.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

As the Head of HRD and Operations, I initiated a powerful strategy known as the "Squadron" – a cross-functional task force designed to significantly enhance organizational agility in operations. With a focus on Product Management, Project Management, Customer Implementations, and Product Integrations & Sales, the Squadron unites individuals from diverse departments, pooling their expertise for collaborative and rapid decision-making on projects. This approach leverages varied perspectives, knowledge, and experiences to foster innovation, break down silos, and expedite the decision-making process, effectively responding to evolving organizational and customer needs. Notably, the Squadron's autonomy and empowerment stand as its key selling point, enabling swift action unimpeded by traditional hierarchies and ensuring agility in addressing changing demands and disruptions.



SAGAR VADAPURKAR

Vice President and Head - People Success and Culture | Exxat Systems Pvt. Ltd



Be a good Communicator and people's person. Be Agile, adopt changes faster and **keep an eye on newest trends in HR Tech**, that is going to be the future.

ABOUT THE LEADER

With an extensive background in Human Resources, encompassing the development of HR policies, talent recruitment and management, HR business partnering, change management, performance assessment, employee engagement, and stakeholder relationships, Sagar Vadapurkar currently serves as the Vice President and Head of People Success and Culture for India and the US at Exxat, a health science education management software company. Sagar has adeptly established organizations from the ground up across diverse sectors, including Stock Broking, NBFC, Healthcare, LED Lighting, Construction Equipment Leasing, and SaaS-based Product companies.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

Under My leadership, Exxat has achieved certifications as a 'Great Place to Work' and "ET Future Ready Organization." Other achievements includes the establishment of pivotal teams in Fin-Tech, Healthcare, Construction Equipment Leasing, and LED lighting, serving 6 million customers within the Dhani Group. A remarkable 95% of employee needs were met internally, eliminating significant consultancy expenses, thanks to innovative talent acquisition practices. Notably, initiatives like eNPS, OKRs, and the introduction of the comprehensive HRMS Suite, Darwinbox, were launched for the Dhani Group. I pioneered a culture of hands-on coaching throughout the organization, transforming it into smaller, high-performance teams that set independent targets and cultivated customer interactions. Digital transformation was prioritized in HR processes to enhance responsiveness and adaptability. Responsible for HR across 300+ locations and 20,000 employees in India and the UK, I also mentored with Harkey (formerly known as Jobs for Her), aiding women in finding suitable job opportunities post-career breaks.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

Being agile means being quick and flexible, which is really important for organizations. It's like having a strong base that keeps things steady while being able to change rapidly. Even though there are risks in being agile, it's super important for organizations to survive and do well in today's fast-changing industries. When we have a good foundation, we can let those who make changes come up with great ideas without limits. This makes sure we stay important and can adapt when things in our industry change a lot. Being ready for new technologies really depends on how agile we are.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

I laid a strong foundation in the initial phase of my career with esteemed companies like Proctor and Gamble and Kellogg's India. As part of a planned career transition, I ventured into Talent Acquisition and later took on a Business Partnership role, showcasing my abilities at ICICI Bank, Bajaj Allianz, and Future Generali. In a short time at Exxat, I've led efforts to enhance employee satisfaction, launch inclusive policies, establish clear growth paths, and position it as a "Great Place to Work" and a "Future-Ready Organization." Amid the pandemic, I transformed employee wellness initiatives by offering holistic solutions like Yoga and online doctor consultations, addressing their needs comprehensively.



SANJAY CHATURVEDI

Head HR | Valvoline Cummins Pvt Ltd



We need to commit ourselves to the organizational goals with **zero tolerance to violation of ethics, human values, compliance and safety of our workforce** while setting high standards of performance.

ABOUT THE LEADER

Sanjay is currently working with lubricant major 'Valvoline' (part of world's leading business group 'Aramco') as Head-HR for its joint venture in India with Cummins. He is part of Valvoline Cummins leadership team. A passionate HR Leader with exposure of large Multinational Companies in diverse industries like Consulting, IT, Oil & Gas and Pharma, he is dedicated to creating value via business and HR transformation. In the past, he has worked with Reliance Industries, Sun Pharma, Mahindra & Mahindra and Datamatics. He is member of various industry & academic forums. His areas of expertise are Mergers & Acquisitions, Business Transformation, DEI and Leadership Development.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

As a member of the leadership team, I have spearheaded various crucial initiatives across several domains. My role has encompassed leading efforts in change management, orchestrating organizational growth, cultivating a cohesive company culture, overseeing successful mergers and acquisitions, and nurturing the development of our talented workforce. In the realm of change management, I've guided teams through transitions, ensuring seamless adaptations and minimizing disruptions. As for organizational building, I've played a pivotal role in shaping the structure and composition of our company, aligning it with our strategic goals. Fostering a strong organizational culture has been central to my approach, where I've worked to cultivate shared values, beliefs, and practices that enhance collaboration and innovation. My involvement in mergers and acquisitions has entailed strategic planning, due diligence, and post-merger integration to realize synergies and maximize outcomes. Additionally, I've been dedicated to nurturing talent within our organization, devising comprehensive development programs and pathways for our employees to excel and contribute effectively.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

Strategic agility in HR embodies the capacity to promptly respond to evolving business requirements while ensuring impeccable execution. In a rapidly shifting business landscape, the ability to swiftly adapt and embrace change emerges as a critical determinant of triumph. The dynamic nature of modern business demands an HR function that can seamlessly align its strategies and practices with shifting organizational needs, seizing emerging opportunities, and effectively addressing challenges. This strategic agility enables HR to proactively shape its services, policies, and approaches, positioning the organization for competitive advantage and sustainable growth.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

I established and led a green field project team in Japan, achieving remarkable scalability within a remarkably short timeframe as part of an acquisition from a competitor. This undertaking involved orchestrating a new team, implementing processes, and fostering an environment conducive to rapid growth. In addition to this, I've been dedicated to instilling the virtues of the 'Ideal Team Player'—characterized by qualities of humility, hunger for growth, and astute collaboration—to cultivate an agile workforce. By emphasizing these attributes, we've fostered a culture that thrives on adaptability, quick learning, and effective collaboration, enabling us to stay responsive and innovative in the face of changing industry landscapes and business demands.



SAURABH GOVIL

CHRO | Wipro



A smooth sea never made a **skilled mariner.**

ABOUT THE LEADER

Saurabh is an astute, forward looking HR professional who is deeply curious about technology. With over 3 decades of experience in leadership positions, Saurabh has led several pioneering organization design and culture transformation programs. Saurabh is a strong advocate of inclusion and diversity. Saurabh's expertise lies in leading enterprise-wide changes and transformations. He has seen smooth transition of 3 Wipro CEOs and Founder Chairman with ease and speed.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

Amidst the challenges of Covid, we onboarded our current CEO virtually, followed by our largest-ever online acquisition in 2020. Under the CEO's guidance, we crafted a new strategy, adopted a fresh operating model, and navigated lockdowns in various countries. Simultaneously, we smoothly managed routine talent processes—performance reviews, promotions, Talent Review Planning, raises, bonuses—entirely online. Despite these changes, we achieved 40% growth since FY 2020, welcoming 280 leaders, expanding to 250,000 employees, and making various strategic shifts. Our accomplishments span improved diversity, awards for our practices, and certifications as Top Employers and Great Places to Work in different regions. Leading this transformative journey has been both an honour and a success.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

Organizations often become ensnared in long-term strategic plans and resist adapting to new realities, a stance that once worked but now holds the potential for catastrophe. Just reflecting on the past three years in our industry reveals the rapid succession of events—Covid, lockdowns, demand surges, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, global financial upheaval, geopolitical shifts—equivalent to what previous generations would have witnessed over decades. In this fast-paced landscape, unwavering adherence to a single strategic viewpoint without embracing change is a path to obsolescence. For instance, the pandemic shattered assumptions about traditional education and business operations, challenging norms like classroom-based teaching and fixed brick-and-mortar establishments. Taking Wipro as an example, March 2020 marked a turning point as we seamlessly transitioned from bustling offices to remote work in a matter of weeks. This transformation was far from simple; it redefined the very essence of how we operate.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

In 2019, led by our chairman's vision and with me as the CHRO, we introduced Wipro's 5-Habits, a cornerstone of our values in action, as a response to the need for a transformative shift in our work culture and relationships. These habits—Being Respectful, Being Responsive, Always Communicating, Demonstrating Stewardship, and Building Trust—were meticulously developed, each with clear, tangible behaviours. Guided by the belief that habits reveal true character, we established a Culture Office to create a change management plan for widespread habit adoption, with the conviction that embodying these habits privately leads to success at Wipro. Personally, conducting multiple workshops across various locations, our chairman and I emphasized that these habits were pivotal for optimal outcomes. To reinforce this, we launched communication campaigns, integrated habits into talent processes, altered office branding to spotlight the 5-Habits, and fostered feedback sessions, all while ensuring the habits were not used for performance evaluation but for employees' self-awareness and growth.



SHRUTI TANDON

Managing Director | Nagarro



Leadership Mantra

Become one with your team, demolish hierarchies, build bridges with everyone. Connect with empathy, lead with compassion. **Live not just your dreams but also those of your team**, raise the stakes collectively rather than individually. Leadership is not about wielding authority; it is about empowering and enabling others. Together, you win.

ABOUT THE LEADER

Shruti holds a Master's degree in Psychology with a specialization in Organizational and Industrial Psychology. Since 2006 she has been with Nagarro, a global digital engineering leader. She has effectively applied her expertise to comprehend human behaviour and guide individuals towards realizing their utmost potential. Her philosophy centres on making a meaningful impact on career paths, organizational culture, capabilities, and driving change through compassionate and human-centered leadership. Her passion lies in cultivating a work environment that embodies a distinct culture of camaraderie, competence, and happiness.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

Our priority is to ensure that each member of our team feels genuinely valued and cherished through a personalized digital experience. In line with our evolving work landscape, which combines remote and in-office settings, we've adopted a new performance evaluation tool, enabling us to provide real-time feedback. At Nagarro, we are deeply committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace, one where individuals are celebrated beyond stereotypes or labels. To bring this vision to life, we're actively strategizing to assemble diverse teams across the globe and encouraging each team to set their own diversity goals. Our aspiration is for Nagarro to transcend the boundaries of a typical workplace, becoming an integral part of people's lives. We're dedicated to cultivating a unique culture where camaraderie, excellence, and happiness thrive in harmony.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

Agility is deeply ingrained in Nagarro's DNA, reflected as one of our core values. As one of the fastest-growing software companies in the world, with now more than 19,000 Nagarrians in 35 countries, our journey has been, propelled by our ability to swiftly adapt, remain flexible, and adeptly navigate change. According to a Deloitte survey spanning 140 countries, 94% of organizational and HR leaders consider "agility and collaboration" as crucial to their success. This approach liberates us from unnecessary bureaucracy and fosters fresh ideas. In the HR context, I see strategic agility as the capacity to guide people and processes to adjust to disruptions, fostering individual, strategic, and organizational nimbleness. Strategic agility empowers organizations to swiftly implement strategies, embrace innovation, and reimagine business models when required. In HR, supporting strategic agility entails cultivating a work culture that fosters an agile mindset, thus contributing to organizational growth.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

In today's dynamic business landscape characterized by agility and real-time responsiveness, the COVID-19 pandemic brought significant disruptions, leading to the emergence of hybrid work models transcending geographical boundaries. Recognizing the need to adapt our performance management system to this new paradigm, we introduced "ACE," Nagarro's global Performance Management System, aimed at fostering a more employee-centric, continuous, and flexible culture. ACE, which stands for Anytime Feedback, CARING Conversations, and Excellence Review, is the linchpin of this transformation. This platform was thoughtfully designed to provide regular, structured feedback to all individuals, departing from traditional, questionnaire-heavy approaches in favor of an agile-inspired, streamlined process. Within the CARING Conversations framework, reviewers focus on identifying both strengths and areas for improvement, prioritizing empathy and support to empower every team member's growth and success.



SUDAKSHINA BHATTACHARYA



President & CHRO | HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company Ltd.



"That which can't be done but is desired!" - I imbibe this in my every day. The road to one's vision might be unclear at the start. By building on our desire to reach that vision, we realize we build the road ourselves.

ABOUT THE LEADER

Sudakshina Bhattacharya is the chief architect of the people and culture practices at HDFC ERGO. She is a Personal Certified Coach (PCC) trained from the International Coaching Federation. She has extensive experience across Hospitality, Communications and Insurance in building people centric ecosystems.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

In the present day, HDFC ERGO stands as one of the top 25 Best Workplaces in BFSI, as recognized by Great Place to Work(R) India, and has earned accolades including the distinction of being named the Economic Times Best Organisation for Women and a LeapVault Chief Learning Organization within the past year. Notably, our accomplishments over the previous year include achieving a gender diversity ratio of 24%, a 5% increase from FY21-22. Our workforce has become younger, with an average age of 30 among new joiners. Demonstrating our inclusivity, 31% of newcomers originated from non-insurance backgrounds. Our learning repository has expanded to include over 4 lakh unique course artifacts, facilitating tailored learning journeys across roles and functions for all employees. Via our Internal Talent Marketplace, more than 2% employees have transitioned internally to new roles and locations. Furthermore, we ensured 100% employee participation in mid-year Performance Excellence Program.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

For HDFC ERGO, several key elements have propelled its journey toward becoming a trust-based, digitally-oriented human capital-driven enterprise, solidifying its position as one of India's fastest-growing general insurance companies. This dynamism, encapsulated within our SEED Philosophy, highlights our belief that we can achieve anything. At its core, organizational agility entails understanding our responses to change, embracing disruptions, and deriving value from them. Strategic agility, an essential DNA component in today's turbulent, uncertain, novel, and ambiguous (TUNA) era, is crucial for success. Gazing forward, rather than back, positions us for future solutions. This approach establishes agile organizations like ours as market leaders and preferred employers, attracting customers with timely, quality products while nurturing a culture where talent thrives, fostering a cycle of positive experiences and exceptional craftsmanship.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

The leadership at HDFC ERGO is committed to creating an inclusive society and as an organisation goes beyond just setting a show of intellect. My cents in this committed movement is to create a conducive environment internally within the organisation as we impact the communities at large. This leadership imperative is actioned through the lens of our value philosophy of SEED (Sensitivity, Excellence, Ethics and Dynamism). As a part of the leadership collective, it's my responsibility to create compelling propositions for employees and people at large to experience HDFC ERGO in all its values.



SUMAN MITRA

Head-HR | Saint-Gobain India Pvt. Ltd.



In today's VUCA world of business, leadership requires a multi-faceted mantra that combines **vision, understanding, collaboration, agility, embrace adaptability, strategic thinking and resilience to navigate in the complexities** of the modern business landscape to turn challenges into opportunities toward success in an ever-changing world.

ABOUT THE LEADER

Suman is an adept strategic HR leader at Saint-Gobain India Pvt. Ltd., holding certifications as a Coach, with a focus on Human Rights and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) across India and Southeast Asia. He has successfully introduced agile and design thinking methodologies into HR practices. Suman is actively engaged with various professional organizations, contributing as a guest speaker and authoring articles on pertinent topics.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

Restructuring manpower by 2400, implementing change management among business leaders, driving talent strategy to retain talent within the system, implementing various strategic HR initiatives such as HR & ER Quick check tools, digital HR initiatives, Digital Reward & Recognition system for employees, introducing mental well-being tools like "Wysa," catalyzing the transformation of Bosch into a certified "Great Place to Work," and seamlessly relocating 4000 employees from one manufacturing location to another 50 kms away without disrupting customer delivery and avoiding any Industrial Relations issues. Notably, union participation in the "process lab" facilitated personal growth. The implementation of HR & ER Quick check tools in Bosch has enabled the measurement of HR standards across manufacturing plants, functions, and business entities.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

Strategic Agility in HR encompasses the HR function's capacity to swiftly and effectively anticipate and respond to strategic shifts both within the organization and the external environment. Essentially, strategic agility in HR can be summarized as "Navigating Change and Driving Success." Key facets of this concept involve foreseeing future business and workforce requirements, tailoring HR strategies, expediting decision-making, fostering collaboration and partnerships, demonstrating agility in talent management, excelling in Employee Relations, and perpetually assessing, evolving, and adjusting in accordance with organizational and people needs. In essence, strategic agility in HR is characterized by proactive adaptability, ensuring alignment with the organization's strategic trajectory, and contributing to overall success by optimizing talent.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

Addressing mid-level talent retention through innovative Compensation & Benefits (C&B) philosophy at Saint-Gobain was essential, as even though the internal survey scores were high, junior to mid-level attrition was apparent. Conducting an analysis of the C&B structure at these levels, studying market C&B philosophy, and holding one-on-one meetings with stakeholders to understand salary structure pain points were the initial steps. These challenges were surmounted through a campaign allowing mid-level employees to withdraw 50% of their prior year's bonus as an advance, adjusted against the final 2022 bonus. Remarkably, 76% of employees embraced this initiative. This data indicated a need to restructure C&B for this level, leading to a bonus restructure in January 2023, from 40% to 25%, enhancing monthly cash in hand. Transformational results ensued, with heightened employee satisfaction, attrition dropping from 16% in 2022 to 7% in the first half of 2023, and a satisfaction survey affirming this success.



SURAJ CHETTRI

Regional Director HR | Airbus India & South Asia



Leadership is not about the great things you have accomplished, but all the **little things which you have done with love and compassion** for others over a lifetime which brings joy and happiness into their lives.

ABOUT THE LEADER

Mr. Suraj holds a postgraduate degree in Personnel Management & Industrial Relations and is currently working with Airbus India. He has played a pivotal role in establishing comprehensive HR infrastructure across three prominent companies, propelling them to new heights through industry-recognized best practices. His leadership has facilitated these companies' growth to encompass thousands of employees while maintaining a standard of excellence.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

I've led the team that has set up the entire HR operations, helping the organization grow from 100 to 3500 employees. My team established all the processes and systems, maintaining a low attrition rate of 3.5% (from 2011 to 2020) and 6.3% (from 2021 to 2022). Our employee satisfaction surveys consistently score above 4 out of 5 in the last 8 engagement surveys. During the COVID-19 pandemic, We navigated the organization without losing morale or productivity, and we continued hiring 800 employees using completely digital HR processes. We've also internally developed over 200 managers through our leadership development program, placing more than 50 in the parent organization. We handle 95% of our recruitment internally through a dedicated team, and the average age of our workforce is 31 years old.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

Strategic agility in HR involves proactively aligning with the organization's strategic business needs across all aspects. It's about striking the right balance – not moving too quickly to avoid wasting time, effort, and resources, or too slowly to avoid similar consequences. The key is ensuring the right actions are taken at the right time and in the right context. For HR to succeed, it must be fully in sync with the business. Straying from this alignment has led to the downfall of many companies that boasted HR best practices. Essentially, "strategic agility for HR is about actively contributing to the business."

In today's ever-changing and unpredictable world, numerous opportunities lie within the organization itself, demanding the transformation of challenges into prospects. This pertains not only to business but encompasses everything interconnected – the workspace (be it virtual or physical), employees (in-person or remote), and the ever-shifting dynamics of business. When agility is applied to employees, the focus must shift to refining people processes and policies.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

The initiative "myPULSE – Transforming Hearts and Minds with Passion and Agility" is geared towards recruiting and preparing top global talent to be work-ready from the outset of specific projects. The mission is to ensure on-demand skill availability, reducing both recruitment and training lead times to zero days. The project plan was executed over three months, resulting in a consistent resource pipeline for ongoing projects across various areas of the organization. The implementation followed an Agile methodology, with a collaborative team including a Product Owner, Scrum Master, Agile Coach, and Project Manager. This initiative was incubated as a Start Up / Innovation Project within our Business Accelerator Program, which supports and funds external projects in our company, beginning with the specification of requirements from the business, budget considerations, and timing for the needed resources.



SURESH KUMAR TEDLAPU



Global Director of People and Operations | Xinthe Technologies

Leadership Mantra

“Encourage innovation and creativity - Unleash the power of innovation and creativity within your team. Encourage out-of-the-box thinking, embrace diverse perspectives, and create an environment where new ideas can flourish. Foster a culture of experimentation, learning from failures, and celebrating breakthroughs. Together, let's redefine what's possible.”

ABOUT THE LEADER

Suresh Kumar Tedlapu is an HR professional at Xinthe Technologies with over two decades of experience in multiple functions Inclusive of Human Resource Strategies specializing in Talent Acquisition & Talent Management, which include Diversity, Employee Engagement & Benefits. Ability to lead diverse teams, multi-task, and work under pressure to meet aggressive targets. Driven by challenges with a strong focus on process and result orientation. Hands-on leadership experience in market research, analysis, strategic planning, and associated tactical implementation. A result-oriented leader and empirical decision-maker that value the development of cooperative relationships and teams to compete in a complex business environment.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

Our drive for an enhanced workplace experience has led to the implementation of innovative initiatives that empower our workforce and elevate engagement. Through the automation of HR and recruitment processes, we've introduced HR KEKA and CIEPAL tools, effectively streamlining the entire journey from position request to candidate onboarding. This integration, coupled with our ATS Tool, ensures a seamless onboarding experience for new hires. To nurture a culture of recognition and job satisfaction, we've established a comprehensive Employee Engagement Program. This includes the introduction of Spot Awards, along with Quarterly, Half-yearly, and Yearly Awards, providing a tangible appreciation for exceptional contributions.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

Strategic agility in HR refers to the ability of an organization's human resources function to adapt its strategies, processes, and practices quickly and effectively in response to changing business needs and environmental dynamics. It involves being proactive, flexible, and responsive in aligning HR initiatives with the organization's overall strategic direction. HR needs foresight to spot trends and adapt to challenges, keeping an eye on industry shifts and tech advancements. A dynamic workforce, cultivated through skill diversity and continuous learning, equips HR to respond effectively to change. Therefore, agility is vital in today's business environment for quick adaptation to changes, fostering innovation, focusing on customers, optimizing resources, enhancing employee engagement, enabling effective decision-making, and mitigating risks. Embracing agility empowers organizations to thrive amid uncertainties and ever-changing dynamics.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

Through the Agile Workforce Transformation Initiative, adopted across my current and past organizations, our core aim is to cultivate an agile, adaptable workforce capable of swift responses to dynamic market demands. By creating agile teams, we can restructure into smaller, cross-functional teams with clear goals and autonomy, fostering decision-making and ownership. Fostering a culture of ongoing learning, upskilling, and adaptation to drive agile responses and innovation. This initiative accelerates an agile culture, empowering teams to adapt strategies, processes, and operations swiftly, fuelling innovation, efficiency, and overall performance toward organizational goals.



TANMOY BANERJEE

Sr. Director - HR | FIS



If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a true leader. Help others uncover their own vision and develop their signature strengths as leaders. In the success of those around you, you will find your fulfilment as a leader. One of my favorite leadership quotes is by Nelson Mandela... **“A leader is like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the nimblest go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind.”**

ABOUT THE LEADER

Tanmoy Banerjee is a seasoned and dynamic HR Leader at FIS, skilled at adapting to change and accelerating transformation... be it responding to the unanticipated challenges of the pandemic, scaling an organization 2X in 3 years, or navigating M&A and galvanizing teams towards a high-performance culture. He has always believed in cultivating trusted relationships across the board without losing focus on the big picture. As an HR coach and mentor, he has helped others uncover their own vision and develop their signature strengths as leaders. A lifelong learner, he truly believes that learning never ends.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

Designing and implementing a bespoke Global Job Levelling model, customizing the Korn Ferry 4 Dimensions Assessment Centre (KF4D) for unique roles in FIS and rolling out a self-service model, designing MDPs for Sr Leadership in partnership with top-tier B-Schools, revamping employee well-being policies, championing a taskforce focusing on diversity, equity & inclusion (InDiVisible - Visible Inclusion & Diversity) and mentoring/coaching emerging women leaders through the LeadHERship program.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

When we try to make an organization 'agile', usually the systems, processes, and structural dimensions tend to take the focus. But agility, at its core, has a people dimension that takes place on an individual and cultural level. So, it can be argued that an organization is as agile as its people are willing to (will) or capable of being (skill). Strategic Agility in HR is being able to drive a culture of embracing & adapting to change, building a workforce capable of learning/unlearning/relearning as per the changing market dynamics. This also means being able to pivot the People strategy (Benefits, Comp, Talent Dev/Retention/Engagement) of an organization quickly as per the changing business priorities.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

'Drive' is the innate urge to attain a goal or satisfy a need. Often our personal 'drive' as a leader carries greater weight than the contributions we make to achieve a goal – a leader's drive, as an individual, affects the team members and the organization's culture as a whole. My organization has a business strategy to grow its revenue and market share through organic as well as inorganic growth, resulting in multiple mergers and acquisitions over the years. I partnered with the Regional Comp Lead and the Business Head to design and implement a bespoke Global Job Levelling framework (based on the Radford model). This was a 6-month project and involved extensive discussions with the comp team and business leads to define the applicable job families/levels, align them to Global levels, define local titles, conduct employee-wise fitment, etc. The success of this initiative depended largely on the Change Management strategy adopted – Townhalls, Focus Group Discussions, Roadshows, Career Fairs all helped to drive acceptance for this critical initiative and the agile mindset coupled with collaboration across department boundaries made this intervention a resounding success.



VIJAY COLACO

Head of HR | Intel Technology India Pvt. Ltd.



“What truly differentiates outstanding organizations is the power of **‘WE’ that creates an environment that is psychologically safe**, where individuality is valued, and authenticity is respected. True leadership, agnostic of titles, is when each of us role model and truly play our part.”

ABOUT THE LEADER

Vijay Colaco is a dedicated HR professional in Intel Technology India Pvt. Ltd. with over 19 years of experience. His experience spans a diverse range of industry domains, like ITES, IT, and Semi-Conductor sectors. Notably, he was associated with some of the esteemed organizations such as Infosys and McAfee before becoming a part of the Intel team. He is also a passionate advocate for the LGBTQIA+ community, and actively champions the rights and opportunities for individuals with disabilities through his involvement in performing arts.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

Intel India is a microcosm of Mother Intel and as an HR leader, my priority is to make Intel win through our people and product focus. My team and I are committed to the vision of delivering outstanding “Products” with “People” at the centre. We raised leadership to 15 VPs & fellows in the last 4 years, achieving 25% C-suite diversity and 27% tech women representation, with 4x growth in Principal Engineers and 8x growth in women Tech Principal Engineers in 4 years. Amid semiconductor industry challenges, my team and I drove cost-efficient strategies while fostering Intel's vision. Despite a tough climate, we're maintaining attrition below industry norms.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

Agility contributes to the success of an organization when you can define the current and forecast the future. Hence, each year I contract with the business through a “Strategic Long-term Plan at three levels Product, People, and Profitability”. This is where agility becomes extremely important – (1) What’s the charter of the business (2) What skills drive the success of the charter and (3) What’s the revenue that makes the business profitable? The focus on these three levers is then fueled by HR’s Talent Intelligence which provides the business with Market Competition, Talent Threats, and Attraction and most importantly drivers of retention (Recognition, Rewards, Growth). In summary, I call Strategic Agility in HR as Strategic Workforce Planning and Influence to deliver results.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

Accessibility is now more important than actual “in-person” attendance, and it is evident from current employment trends that this is here to stay. More importantly for our working families with children, the affinity toward children and agility to balance between work and home priorities have further strengthened the employee stickiness index. As an HR leader, and in the context, I lead my organization, people are driven by the culture of the organization which not necessarily needs to be bounded by walls - its results that matter. As long as we are able to flex a few days at work and in the office, have a culture of accountability that we have adopted which we call Objective and Key Results (a process that allows employees, in conjunction with their managers, to self-declare their quarterly goals tied to business and corporate goals, on which they would like to be measured), Hybrid is here to stay. The future of work that equally delivers outstanding results.

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VIVEK MUKHERJEE

CHRO | Benetton India



"Leaders don't need to know it all, leadership is all about **listening actively and facilitating** from distinct perspectives".

ABOUT THE LEADER

Vivek Mukherjee has over 19 years of enriched HR experience with a noteworthy opportunity and a captivating blend of confronting challenges to establish new standards within the field. With an unwavering commitment to the spirit of learning and unlearning, he navigated life's path by gaining diverse experience across industries such as ITES, Engineering Services, Financial Services, Value Retail, and now Fashion Retail. He is also honoured as one of the Top 122 CHROs globally by peopleHum organization and is among the Top 101 HR HR Minds in India by the World HRD Congress. These accolades serve as a testament to his unwavering dedication and inspire him to continually pursue excellence while shaping the future landscape of HR.

MY BIT IN THE OCEAN

In the last 7 years as an HR head for the organization, I take immense pride in cocreating a great place-to-work culture which has not only helped us to be one of the sustainably growing MNC organizations in the country but has also helped us achieve to be one of the most important subsidiaries for the group outside Italy. Notably, we've been consistently recognized as a Great Place to Work for multiple years. During the pandemic we were one of the few brands that lived the philosophy of people before profit by rolling out various employee welfare initiatives focusing on their health and financial wellbeing. Additionally, we robustly worked and focused on upskilling employees through learning and taking care of their well-being and development. This empathetic approach helped us to bounce back much faster and stronger as we came out of the pandemic and as a result, we had great bounce-back years and continued to strongly march ahead.

FROM DOING AGILE TO BEING AGILE

Agility and improvisation help us to take faster and more effective decisions. Agile organizations are prompt in responding to emerging trends, are better able to use their resources, and are able to experiment by adapting to strategies that make them stay ahead of the competition. Agility leads to a greater competitive edge as the organization becomes ready to embrace change, seize better opportunities and apply innovative solutions. For instance – A retail organization should continuously strive to monitor customer feedback and adjust the offerings accordingly to deliver products and services that meet evolving customer expectations. This contributes to long-term success. An agile organization is better able to handle disruptions and is more resilient to change which results in better recovery even through setbacks.

LEADERSHIP DRIVE

The alignment between our EVP and HR policies plays a crucial role in bringing more agility to our HR processes. By integrating our EVP into our people practices, we ensure consistency, attract the culture-fit yet diverse talent, enhance employee engagement, foster talent development, and establish an efficient performance-driven culture. Our commitment to a people-centric culture further reinforces our EVP and builds a strong foundation for the success of our organization. We continue to create an exceptional employee experience through constant communication as we keep seeking feedback and realigning according to the needs of our people to shape a thriving workplace.

Glossary

Aditya Kohli, CHRO, Orient Electric

Devinder Kumar Sharma, Vice President & Head - Human Resources,
Parijat Industries India Pvt. Ltd.

Dileep Joshi, CHRO, EPL Ltd.

Gurmeet Chaddha, CHRO, National Commodities Management Services Limited

Kavita Siddiqui, Vice President HR, Magnon Group

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Exxat Systems Pvt. Ltd.

Sanjay Chaturvedi, Head HR, Valvoline Cummins Pvt. Ltd.

Saurabh Govil, CHRO, Wipro

Shruti Tandon, Managing Director, Nagarro

Sudakshina Bhattacharya, President & CHRO, HDFC ERGO General Insurance
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