

sapphire
HUMAN CAPITAL

Presents



INDIA'S
MOST AGILE
HR LEADERS

2025-26

Knowledge Partner



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HR LEADERS

2025-26



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Ankit Bansal

Founder & CEO
Sapphire Human Capital



FROM THE FOUNDER AND CEO'S DESK

In a world defined by volatility and accelerated change, agility is no longer optional. **It is foundational.**

Markets shift rapidly. Technology reshapes industries. Workforce expectations evolve in real time. In such an environment, strategy alone is insufficient. Organizations require leaders who can interpret change with clarity, respond with conviction and align people capability with business ambition.

The role of HR has undergone a profound transformation. Today's HR leaders are not custodians of process. They are **architects of culture**, capability and competitive advantage. They design **leadership pipelines**, **embed resilience** into systems, **champion inclusion** and ensure that organizations remain both performance driven and deeply human.

Through India's Most Agile HR Leaders 2025-26, we celebrate individuals who have embraced this expanded mandate with foresight and integrity. These leaders have navigated disruption with composure, aligned talent strategy with enterprise growth and built cultures rooted in trust and innovation.

What distinguishes them is not merely achievement, but a mindset that sees change as opportunity. That balances **data with empathy, speed with sustainability** and **ambition with accountability.**

Their journeys remind us that agility is not about haste, it is about responsiveness, learning, collaboration and the courage to evolve.

It is our privilege to present this edition as a tribute to their leadership and impact. **May these stories inspire you to lead with clarity, act with resilience and build organizations that do not simply withstand change, but grow stronger because of it.**

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About Sapphire Human Capital

Sapphire Human Capital is one of India's most agile and high impact retained executive search amongst talent advisory firms. Ranked amongst the Top 7 retained executive search firms in India, Sapphire has completed over 1500+ leadership facilitations across industries over the past seventeen years.

The firm partners with organisations on leadership hiring, executive search, board advisory and competition mapping solutions. Backed by an eminent advisory board and a leadership team with deep cross sector experience, Sapphire brings strategic rigour and market intelligence to every engagement.

Beyond search, Sapphire is a catalyst for thought leadership. Through research led initiatives, curated platforms and industry publications, it contributes meaningfully to shaping the national conversation on leadership, talent and organisational transformation.

With a sharp focus on long term partnerships rather than transactional mandates, Sapphire Human Capital works closely with promoters, boards and executive teams to identify leaders who can drive scale, resilience and competitive advantage. Its consultative approach combines sectoral expertise, deep research capability and a nuanced understanding of evolving workforce dynamics.

By integrating executive search with market intelligence and leadership insights, Sapphire continues to strengthen its position as a trusted advisor to organisations navigating growth, transformation and succession.

Sapphire's work is anchored in confidentiality, integrity and outcome orientation, ensuring that every mandate is executed with precision and accountability. Its ability to anticipate leadership trends and map competitive talent landscapes enables organisations to make informed, future focused decisions at the highest levels.

As industries evolve and leadership expectations expand, Sapphire Human Capital remains committed to building leadership capital that is not only capable of managing complexity but of defining it. Through sustained client partnerships and high credibility platforms, the firm continues to influence the leadership narrative across India's corporate ecosystem.



— · INDIA'S · —

MOST AGILE
HR LEADERS

2025-26





About India's Most Agile HR Leaders

India's Most Agile HR Leaders, 2025-26 is a premier national platform celebrating HR professionals who exemplify agility, strategic foresight and transformational leadership in an era of constant change.

Now in its 5th annual edition, this platform honours leaders who have embedded responsiveness, collaboration, innovation and human centricity into the core of their organisations and translated these principles into measurable business impact.

The platform culminates in the launch of this prestigious Coffee Table Book featuring the country's Most Agile HR Leaders. More than a commemorative volume, this curated publication captures insights, lived experiences and leadership philosophies that serve as enduring industry references.

Beyond recognition, the initiative fosters a knowledge sharing ecosystem where senior HR leaders, practitioners and experts converge to exchange perspectives, explore emerging trends and shape the future of work.

By spotlighting real stories of **resilience** and **reinvention**, the platform not only celebrates achievement but also sets new benchmarks for excellence reinforcing the critical role of HR in driving sustainable growth, organisational agility and a people first future.

The 2025-26 edition further strengthens the platform's credibility through a structured evaluation and validation process, ensuring that recognition is rooted in demonstrated impact, governance, innovation and measurable outcomes. Each featured leader represents not only professional excellence but also the ability to navigate complexity, scale change and influence enterprise strategy in dynamic business environments.

India's Most Agile HR Leaders, 2025-26 serves as a high trust leadership forum where CHROs and senior HR decision makers engage in meaningful dialogue on workforce transformation, digital acceleration, culture building and strategic talent architecture. The conversations extend beyond celebration to practical insight exchange, enabling organisations to benchmark, learn and co create forward looking people strategies.

As organisations confront rapid technological disruption, evolving workforce expectations and heightened accountability, the platform stands as a strategic movement rather than a one-time recognition initiative. It positions HR at the centre of enterprise transformation, amplifying leaders who are not only responding to change but actively architecting the future of work in India.

This Coffee Table Book documents actionable insights on building **resilient talent ecosystems**, **strengthening succession pipelines**, **embedding digital intelligence** into HR architecture and aligning people metrics with enterprise value creation. As a curated industry chronicle, it serves not only as a celebration of excellence but as a practical reference for organisations seeking to future proof their people strategy in an increasingly complex and competitive landscape.

Knowledge Partner





NOTE FROM PWC

The fifth edition of India's Most Agile HR Leader's Coffee Table Book is a powerful reminder that organisations are being reshaped not only by technology and capital, but also by people, culture, and leadership. At PwC India, we believe that sustained outcomes are created when business strategy and human potential evolve together and the leaders recognised in this edition embody that philosophy.

In a world defined by continuous reinvention, the role of HR has expanded from enabling performance to architecting the future of work. The individuals featured here are driving this shift, building trust-led cultures, unlocking workforce potential, and embedding agility into the DNA of their organisations. Their contributions demonstrate how human-led, tech-powered transformation can create long-term value for businesses and society.

As knowledge partner, PwC India developed a robust and insight-driven evaluation framework designed to provide a holistic view of impact across both the business and people dimensions. The framework combined clearly defined metrics with a structured, multi-layered methodology to ensure a comprehensive and transparent process. The evaluation of nominations and selection of the final honourees were carried out by an eminent and independent jury panel, bringing deep experience, objectivity and credibility to the outcomes.

We extend our warmest congratulations to the leaders featured in this edition. Their work is not only transforming their organisations but also redefining the possibilities for the HR profession in India's growth story.

Assessment Process

The journey to identifying India's Most Agile HR Leaders 2025-26 began six months before the official unveiling, with a nationwide call for nominations that received over 435 entries across industries. To uphold the highest standards of credibility and transparency, this year's Coffee Table Book was independently validated by PwC, which designed and oversaw a rigorous, multi-stage evaluation framework.

The process combined quantitative rigor with qualitative depth beginning with eligibility screening, followed by a framework-based assessment of strategic impact, innovation, measurable outcomes, agility and cultural contribution. Shortlisted leaders underwent detailed reviews and structured jury interactions, with final scores consolidated under PwC's oversight. Following this meticulous process, 25 HR leaders were selected distinguished not only by results, but by the resilience and foresight required to lead in a constantly evolving landscape.

JUDW THE GRAND JURY



NEERA SAGGI

Independent Board Member
GE T&D, Honeywell Automation India Ltd, KEC
International, Adani Green, Interise Investment Managers Pvt Ltd,
and The Global Board of The Hunger Project



ANTHONY JOSEPH

Former Global CHRO
HGS, Currently Mentors Entrepreneurs
and Business Professionals



DR. PRINCE AUGUSTIN

Founder & CEO
Behavioural insights & Transformation Partners LLP
Former EVP
Group Human Capital Mahindra Group



SATISH RAO

Managing Director & CEO
Anthea Aromatics Ltd



DR. SHALINI SARIN

Board Director
Advisor &
CXO Coach
Former CHRO





PRITI KATARIA

CHRO
Birlasoft





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

With 27 years of experience aligning talent strategy with business ambition, I have driven sustainable growth through large-scale people transformation. As a CHRO at Birlasoft, I have steered global change across organisation design, leadership architecture, structured succession planning and future-focused capability building.

Project Athena elevated talent to the boardroom agenda, embedding AI-led workforce readiness and enterprise-wide skill transparency. Earlier at Wipro, I led Project Anchor, a global retention charter that reduced voluntary attrition from 30%+ to 15% and early attrition to 11-12% through data-backed diagnostics and the Virtual Employee Cohort model. Across every chapter, my work has centred on architecting future-ready organisations.

Agility in **Action**

In the past year, execution intensity translated strategy into measurable outcomes: bench aging reduced from 40.1 to 29 days and 48% of leadership roles were filled internally in H1 FY2026, deepening succession strength. Governance metrics improved from 74% to 88%, while the first Global Employee Experience Survey achieved 70% participation and an 81% engagement score.

We assessed 100+ leaders in partnership with Korn Ferry and launched targeted capability academies and strengthened ESG credibility through UN Global Compact certification and a Sustainalytics Low Risk rating of 16.6-reinforcing enterprise resilience and long-term value creation.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

To me, an agile HR leader combines technical fluency with deep listening and disciplined data stewardship. True agility is not about speed alone-it is about foresight, clarity of intent and the ability to recalibrate before disruption strikes.

It demands a careful equilibrium between commercial imperatives and employee advocacy, while nurturing innovation, inclusive leadership and robust talent pipelines within a culture rooted in fairness, empathy and merit. In today's landscape, HR must transcend its traditional support role to become a strategic architect of resilience, adaptability and long-term enterprise value.

Leadership **Philosophy**

For me, leadership begins with listening - listening with intent and with the humility to unlearn and learn every day. It is about creating spaces where people feel safe, valued, respected and truly enabled.

When empathy meets a culture of continuous learning, both people and the organisation thrive.



RICHA CHATTERJEE

CHRO

ManipalCigna Health Insurance Company





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

My journey as a people leader is grounded in one belief - human connection drives performance. At ManipalCigna Health Insurance, I have led transformation across culture, capability and employee experience by introducing personalised learning pathways, enabling authentic leadership forums like Samvaad and accelerating digital capability building.

Every intervention has been crafted to make growth deeply personal and purpose-led. For me, HR leadership is about creating an environment where individuals feel valued, empowered and inspired to realise their potential.

Agility in **Action**

At ManipalCigna, engagement and culture are not programmes we run - they are the pulse of how we operate. Agility for us is a discipline of continuous listening and responsive action. Over time, this has shaped a workplace where people feel heard, valued and empowered to grow. This shared effort led to our Great Place to Work® certification in 2024, along with recognition among the Top 50 Best Workplaces in BFSI and the Top 5 in Health Insurance.

My journey has been about shaping a purpose-driven people ecosystem - one where empowerment fuels performance, adaptability builds resilience and belonging strengthens connection. We reimaged our people strategy as a living framework that evolves with our workforce and business needs.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

To me, agility is about balancing empathy with speed.

It requires staying curious, learning continuously and leading through change while keeping people and purpose at the centre of every decision. An agile HR leader must be comfortable navigating uncertainty yet grounded enough to ensure that every shift in strategy strengthens trust and belonging. Agility is not simply responsiveness, it is intentional adaptability anchored in values.

Leadership **Philosophy**

My philosophy can be summarised in a simple truth: leadership begins with challenging oneself. As leaders, we must work harder than anyone else - not just in effort, but in self-development. Growth starts within. When we continuously push ourselves to evolve, we create the credibility and courage needed to inspire others to do the same.



MANINDER KAPOOR PURI

CHRO
Biocon





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

With over 30 years in HR leadership, my journey mirrors the evolution of the function itself - from department excellence to architecting enterprise capability and transformation. Across industries and moments of disruption, I have consistently placed people strategy at the heart of business outcomes. My work spans Culture and Leadership, Talent, Strategic Communication, DEIB, Governance, CSR, Analytics, Learning & organization Development and Technology integration, grounded in a deep belief that organizations succeed when human potential is unlocked at scale. As a CHRO, I focus on aligning leadership, AI/Tech and workforce strategy to build resilient, futureready enterprises that are both highperforming and deeply human.

Agility in **Action**

For me, agility is not a reaction to crisis; it is a way of leading and designing organizations. Long before disruption made flexibility imperative, I anticipated shifts in how work would be done and embedded adaptability into structures, policies and decision frameworks. When volatility arrived, transitions were seamless because trust, tools and clarity of ownership were already in place.

I have always approached HR as an engine of growth, not a support function. My focus is on ensuring that mission, vision and business strategy are clearly translated into everyday employee experience. By integrating digital platforms, advanced analytics and AI-enabled insights, I enable sharper workforce planning, faster capability building and more informed decisionmaking. Equally, I invest in leadership and succession, inclusive talent pipelines and strong governance, supported by strategic communication and continuous listening. True agility, for me, sits at the intersection of organizational vision, disciplined execution and human connection, enabling organizations to scale, innovate and perform with trust firmly anchored in their human core.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

I believe an agile HR leader is a strategic integrator—bringing together business priorities, technology and human capability into a single, aligned operating system. The DNA includes deep awareness of workforce trends and emerging skills, learning agility, evidenced decisionmaking, and the courage to simplify, stop or redesign what no longer creates value. Equally vital is empathy—building trust, inclusion and psychological safety so people can navigate change with confidence. By adopting AI responsibly and anchoring decisions in purpose and values, HR becomes a catalyst for enterprise resilience, growth and longterm relevance

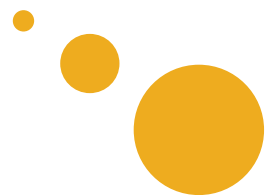
Leadership **Philosophy**

My leadership philosophy is rooted in empathy, integrity and purpose. I believe leaders must create systems that empower people to adapt and thrive through change. When clarity of intent is combined with compassion, consistency and accountability, organizations transform, endure and remain deeply human.



SATEJ MEHTA

Global Head HR
Wockhardt





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

For over a decade, I have led HR as a strategic business partner at Wockhardt, driving transformation across culture, capability and systems. My focus has been on shaping a long-term people strategy that aligns directly with business growth while strengthening engagement and organisational agility.

I have built robust leadership pipelines, accelerated digital HR adoption and embedded our “Life Wins” philosophy across the organisation ensuring that performance, purpose and people remain deeply interconnected. For me, HR is not just about enabling the business; it is about shaping a culture where growth is sustainable, measurable and human at its core.

Agility in **Action**

Agility is reflected in measurable outcomes. Over the past year, focused execution translated into measurable workforce outcomes: high-potential attrition declined, overall retention strengthened and engagement scores rose consistently particularly among new joiners. A fully paperless performance management system was rolled out for 6,000+ employees, accelerating cycles and improving transparency.

Leadership depth was strengthened through structured programs such as Emerge, RMDP and Champions, driving internal mobility and readiness. Continuous learning was embedded through a customised LMS, while virtual hiring platforms reduced turnaround time and improved assessment quality. Together, these interventions signalled not just process efficiency, but a cultural shift toward agility, recognition, sustainability and aligned leadership.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

A truly agile HR leader must be visionary yet grounded, empathetic yet decisive and adaptive yet consistent. Agility demands data-driven thinking, but also emotional intelligence. It requires fostering collaboration, nurturing continuous learning and building trust especially during periods of uncertainty. An agile HR leader empowers others, anticipates change and translates strategy into actionable people’s outcomes.

For me, agility is not reactive. It is intentional leadership that balances foresight with humanity.

Leadership **Philosophy**

I believe leadership begins with example. By remaining humble, empathetic and accountable, I aim to model the standards and behaviors I expect from others. When leaders take ownership and cultivate a culture of collaboration and continuous learning, they empower individuals and organizations to grow with clarity, confidence and purpose.



BALA AIYASWAMY

**Group Chief People Officer
PI Industries**





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

With 27 years in HR leadership, my career has centred on driving large-scale transformations that fuel business growth and innovation. I have led enterprise-wide change initiatives to strengthen operating models, build leadership capability and position culture as a strategic differentiator including restructuring a global R&D centre into a high-impact matrix model to accelerate collaboration and innovation.

I have embedded Vision, Purpose and Values into core people processes and led seamless global integrations of acquired entities, aligning talent, governance and culture. Across every transformation, my focus has remained clear: enhancing agility, deepening leadership strength and delivering sustainable performance.

Agility in **Action**

Agility delivers value when it drives measurable outcomes. Under my leadership, engagement rose to 91% (up 13%), successor readiness improved from 21% to 67% in 18 months and 97% of high performers were retained strengthening leadership continuity and productivity. Performance cycle completion improved by 20% and internal mobility increased, reflecting the strength of our leadership pipelines.

By embedding Vision, Purpose and Values into all people processes, from performance and promotions to hiring and career progression, we operationalised cultural alignment across the organisation. This ensured that agility became a systemic capability, not just a reactive response, enabling seamless integration of acquired entities and preparing leaders and talent for the future.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

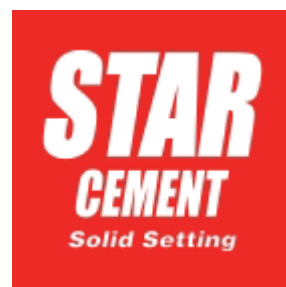
A truly agile HR leader is driven by passion and sustained by persistence.

Agility requires adaptability, speed in execution, and the ability to influence without formal authority. It demands technological fluency understanding and leveraging tech-enabled HR to create scalable, data-informed solutions. An agile leader anticipates change, aligns stakeholders and builds momentum ensuring that transformation is both timely and durable.

Leadership **Philosophy**

I focus on creating systems, culture and leadership capabilities that outlast individuals.

For me, leadership is about enabling ethical, sustainable performance at scale building institutions that continue to thrive long after any one leader has moved on. When systems are strong, culture is value-led and leaders are empowered, organizations achieve enduring impact.



SAMAR BANERJEE

CHRO
Star Cement





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

My HR leadership journey has offered me strong opportunities to architect and execute large-scale HR transformation projects, realigning human capital with core business strategy and building agile, future-ready organizations. I have designed and deployed top talent interventions across three large organizations, strengthening leadership capability and organizational effectiveness.

I completely overhauled HR service delivery at Star Cement transforming it from a layered, time-consuming process into a fast, digital, on-the-go model. I also designed and deployed collaborative platforms to cascade learning faster across the organization, building a culture of ownership and accountability through our STAR GURUKUL platform. In addition, I built an AI-enabled tool for dynamic employee mood analysis and developed proprietary AI-driven HR solutions to enhance workforce insights and responsiveness.

Agility in **Action**

Over the past eight years, across three large multi-location organisations, I have led end-to-end digital HR transformations that aligned people strategy with business priorities. Through designing and implementing a comprehensive performance management system, we achieved 100% adoption across the employee base, enabling timely compensation revisions and significantly improving employee satisfaction.

My most impactful contribution has been building organisations and HR processes from the ground up - driving top talent management, HR digitisation and CXO hiring creating agile, future-ready workplaces that consistently deliver business impact.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

The DNA of an agile HR leader lies in the ability to think both “outside-in” and “inside-out.” It requires understanding industry trends and external shifts while staying closely connected to internal realities.

An agile HR leader must have their ear to the ground, deeply understand the business and continuously reorient HR processes to stay relevant. The ability to advocate change with conviction, anticipate challenges and adapt systems proactively defines true agility.

Leadership **Philosophy**

I have always believed in hands-on leadership. I firmly trust that execution is the ultimate test of strategy and even the best strategies fail if they are not executed well.



Z MEDIA

PAVEL CHOPRA

CHRO
Zee Media





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

My journey as a CHRO has been defined by building objective, governance-led, and future-ready people systems in complex, high-pressure environments. Across media, logistics, insurance, and start-up ecosystems, I have partnered with Boards and CEOs to align HR strategy with evolving business models from legacy operations to digital-first transformation.

I am known for breaking recommendation-based cultures and institutionalising merit-driven, data-backed frameworks from role inventory and job family architectures to skill-based ecosystems and performance accountability. Whether optimizing workforce structures, integrating acquisitions, or enabling AI-led digital shifts, my focus has been on creating scalable systems that enhance capability, protect culture, and deliver measurable business impact.

Agility in **Action**

Agility, for me, has meant translating structural change into measurable business outcomes. At Gati Limited, I reduced regrettable attrition by 36%, improved Great Place To Work® engagement scores by 22%, lowered the C&B-to-revenue ratio by 80 basis points, and curtailed fraud by nearly 65% through stronger governance and leadership accountability. These outcomes were achieved while strategically optimizing the workforce without operational disruption.

At Zee Media, I architected the organisation's first enterprise-wide Role Inventory and KRA framework, covering 18 job families and 170+ roles transforming a fragmented, subjective performance culture into a unified, merit-based, succession-ready talent architecture that supports the shift from legacy broadcasting to a digital-first enterprise.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

A truly agile HR leader combines empathy with sharp business acumen anticipating change, challenging legacy mindsets, and enabling leaders to act decisively. They simplify complexity through objective, data-backed systems while balancing governance with agility and human needs with performance. HR Leaders build resilient, merit-driven, and future-ready organisations capable of evolving with shifting business models and industry volatility.

Leadership **Philosophy**

Wherever I work, I aim to leave behind stronger leaders, fairer systems and a culture that endures beyond individuals-where people feel respected, enabled and proud of the organization they help build.



GOPALJI MEHROTRA

CHRO
ACME Group





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

I am a strategic CHRO partnering with Boards and CEOs to lead global transformations at critical inflection points, translating strategy into measurable outcomes. I build cultures anchored in ownership, innovation, collaboration and speed, aligning people strategy with growth, operational excellence and ESG priorities across geographies.

With 30 years of experience across diverse industries and 21 countries, I have supported global expansion, M&A and 20 integrations leading people, digital and business transformation while advancing AI readiness, future leadership and inclusive, responsible growth initiatives.

Agility in **Action**

Agility, for me, is measurable transformation. I aligned Mission, Values and Purpose with HR strategy in a \$14B organisation, building a new competency framework to support its 2030 ambition of becoming a \$25B integrated enterprise. A systemic “Build” succession strategy strengthened leadership across top talent pools, while Employee First initiatives delivered an 86% Great Place to Work score—then the highest in Indian Manufacturing.

My CSR programmes impacted 150,000 villagers through girl child education, women-led enterprises and globalising Punjab’s phulkari heritage. I also led large-scale hiring, global HR digitalisation across 13 countries, cross-border integration and post-restructuring growth from \$650M to \$1B earning the Chairman’s Excellence Award and multiple industry recognitions.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

A truly agile HR leader sews the fabric where innovation, capability and purpose converge. Agility begins by aligning Mission, Value and HR strategy with organisational Purpose. It requires re-creating competency frameworks for a future-ready enterprise emphasising speed, flexibility and collaboration. It demands elevating the human capital experience while building systemic skilling initiatives that address the Future of Work.

An agile HR leader balances today’s performance with tomorrow’s possibilities nurturing ambidextrous organisations that can manage the present while building the future.

Leadership **Philosophy**

I am driven by personal motto of ENGAGE | ENABLE | EMPOWER to serve humanity and am a lifelong learner embodying a blend of corporate acumen, coaching mastery and humanistic leadership.



PURAVANKARA®

RAVI KUMAR P

**Group CHRO
Puravankara**





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

My HR leadership journey spans nearly three decades across multinational and Indian organisations, shaping people strategy during phases of growth, transformation and scale. As the Group CHRO of Puravankara Limited, I oversee enterprise-wide people strategy, culture and capability building during sustained business expansion. My focus has been on ensuring that growth is supported by strong leadership depth, scalable systems and a performance-driven culture.

Previously, as Chief People Officer at Page Industries and in senior HR leadership roles at Roche across India and the Middle East, I led transformative HR initiatives spanning talent management, organisational development and performance culture. Across sectors and geographies, I have consistently positioned HR as a strategic enabler of business outcomes integrating foresight with a deeply human-centric leadership approach. For me, HR's true impact lies in its ability to align ambition with capability and culture.

Agility in **Action**

In my current role, I have driven people and culture transformation across diverse sectors and geographies, building HR strategies that scale alongside business growth. By strengthening leadership development frameworks and implementing progressive engagement and retention initiatives, I've reinforced organisational resilience while enabling teams to perform at their best. Scalable HR systems and data-led decision-making have ensured that people strategies are aligned with business priorities, translating vision into measurable outcomes and sustainable impact.

Across my career spanning global healthcare, consumer apparel and now real estate agility has meant anticipating workforce needs, redesigning processes for speed and efficiency and embedding culture, leadership and wellbeing into the organisation's foundation. These efforts have consistently improved engagement, retention and leadership readiness, while fostering a culture that embraces change as a strategic advantage.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

A truly agile HR leader is strategic yet adaptable, empathetic yet business focused.

Agility requires the ability to balance employee wellbeing with performance expectations, informed by data and grounded in collaboration. It demands clarity in direction, openness to innovation and the courage to drive change while maintaining trust.

An agile leader understands that transformation is not episodic, it is continuous and it must be anchored in both culture and capability.

Leadership **Philosophy**

Lead with empathy, accountability and strategic clarity cultivating inclusive, performance driven cultures where people feel empowered to innovate, grow and contribute meaningfully to organizational success.



VISHAL SINGH

**CHRO
BPTP**





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

My journey as an HR leader spans diverse industries and cultures, reinforcing my belief that lasting impact comes from aligning business goals with a strong people agenda. I have led digitalisation and transformation initiatives rooted in empathetic leadership, structured change management and sustained stakeholder engagement.

My approach is disciplined yet simple: listen deeply, co-create solutions, drive adoption through clear communication and capability building and reinforce the right behaviours. Whether implementing CDEX at HCL Technologies, leading Talent Transformation at Hero MotoCorp, or supporting BPTP Limited's growth journey, my focus has remained consistent aligning people to purpose and equipping them to thrive in evolving environments.

Agility in **Action**

Agility, for me, is defined by measurable business impact. I reduced annual attrition from 20% to 12% and strengthened performance focus by implementing Balanced Scorecard and Pay-for-Performance frameworks aligned to Safety, Quality, Sustainability and Compliance.

I led HR digitalisation through an Integrated Talent Management (HXM) platform, enabling data-driven decisions and streamlined talent processes. In my current role, I have supported BPTP's transition from affordable housing to a premium and luxury real estate brand, alongside diversification into commercial real estate elevating HR maturity through the implementation of the SuccessFactors HXM Suite and embedding a stronger performance-driven mindset.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

A truly agile HR leader is visionary and strategic yet grounded in business realities.

Agility demands adaptability, inclusiveness, empathy and resilience. It requires innovation balanced with transparency, empowerment strengthened by accountability and the courage to act decisively in uncertain environments.

Leadership **Philosophy**

I believe that Trust, Transparency, Ethics and Empathy are the four pillars of transformational leadership.

These principles have guided my journey as an HR leader. When trust is nurtured, transparency practiced, ethics upheld and empathy demonstrated, organizations build cultures that are resilient, high-performing and future-ready.



MUSSARAT HUSSAIN

Head HR
Suzuki R&D Center India





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

Building an organisation from a blank canvas is a rare leadership moment and in 2022, when SRDI was incorporated as the youngest subsidiary of Suzuki Motor Corporation, I had the opportunity to do exactly that. What began as a greenfield setup was envisioned as a future-ready R&D technology centre and I was clear that HR would be designed as a strategic engine from day one. From inception, I shaped an employee-first, high-performance culture anchored in clear purpose and codified behaviours. We institutionalised structured listening forums, transparent governance rhythms and OKR-driven decision frameworks to enable speed and accountability. Data-led workforce planning, skill taxonomies and capability academies helped us build pipelines for emerging technologies while scaling operations with agility.

Wellbeing and inclusion were built into our foundation through family-inclusive benefits, flexible work, equitable hiring and transparent succession governance. Through Tracking representation and feedback, we translated culture into stronger engagement and leadership readiness, shaping a resilient, innovation-led organisation ready for sustainable growth.

Agility in **Action**

Building an organisation from inception required balancing speed with structure and growth with governance. For me, agility means translating foresight into tangible outcomes that strengthen both people and business. Since inception, we have maintained almost zero attrition, accelerated hiring for critical roles and improved engagement through EVP activation and recognition rituals.

The Wellbeing program adoption has grown; absence severity has reduced and DEI metrics from representation to pay equity have steadily improved. Career paths, competitive rewards and capability-building initiatives in India and overseas have strengthened talent pipelines.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

A truly agile HR leader combines strategic foresight with resilience and adaptability. It requires empathy balanced with data-driven decision-making; inclusive leadership strengthened by systems thinking; and ethical clarity reinforced by execution excellence. Agility is about experimentation without recklessness, speed without compromising sustainability and governance without rigidity.

Above all, it means balancing business growth with employee wellbeing ensuring that agility becomes embedded in everyday behaviors, not episodic reactions.

Leadership **Philosophy**

Put people and purpose at the centre; listen deeply, decide with data, act with empathy and build trust so agility and inclusion become everyday habits, not something you just say.



DR. MAINAK CHAKI

**Group Head HR
MSEL (Birla Sugar, K.K Birla Group of Sugar)**





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

With over 27 years of experience, my journey as an HR leader has been defined by shaping people's strategy, culture and transformation across FMCG, manufacturing, engineering, retail and agri-business organizations. Throughout my career, I have consistently aligned business goals with talent strategy, enabling growth through strong leadership capability building and digital HR transformation. I have partnered closely with Boards and CXO leadership teams as a trusted advisor, ensuring that people's strategy is not parallel to business strategy but integral to it.

I am deeply committed to building inclusive, high-performance and future-ready organizations where culture, governance and capability move in tandem. For me, HR leadership is about creating systems that strengthen resilience while unlocking human potential on scale.

Agility in **Action**

In my current role, I have led an enterprise-wide HR and culture transformation that integrated leadership capability, digital enablement and performance governance into a single, aligned framework. By implementing KPI-driven performance management linked directly to Board priorities, we strengthened accountability, improved productivity and enhanced governance outcomes across the organisation.

Simultaneously, I invested deeply in leadership pipelines and succession readiness, ensuring continuity and long-term resilience. These efforts contributed to stronger engagement, improved retention and a culture anchored in clarity and performance. Beyond the enterprise, I have also aligned CSR initiatives with farmer economy development, extending organisational impact to the communities we serve. The recognitions received including Global CHRO honours and multiple Great Place to Work acknowledgments reflect not individual milestones, but the measurable transformation of culture, capability and leadership effectiveness.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

A truly agile HR leader combines strategic foresight with adaptability.

It requires empathy, data-driven decision-making and the ability to influence diverse stakeholders. Agility is about translating complex business challenges into scalable, people-centric solutions that drive measurable value. An agile HR leader anticipates change, strengthens governance and builds cultures that are both performance-driven and inclusive ensuring that transformation is sustainable, not episodic.

Leadership **Philosophy**

I believe that people, purpose and performance must progress together.

Sustainable success is driven by empowered leaders, inclusive cultures, strong governance and a deep commitment to continuous learning. When these elements align, organisations do not merely grow they endure and thrive.



Fenesta 
Better by Design

PALLAVI PODDAR

CHRO

Fenesta Windows





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

My journey as a senior HR leader has been about translating people strategy into tangible business impact. Leading a multi-location workforce of 2,500 across 27 branch offices and 9 factories, I've navigated organisational restructuring, strengthened leadership pipelines and introduced creative, new-age development journeys and certifications. By positioning HR as a strategic partner to operations and business leaders, I've enabled faster decision-making, improved workforce productivity and fostered a culture of ownership, accountability and continuous improvement.

I have also driven agile HR practices that respond to evolving business needs, strengthened employee engagement through targeted initiatives and embedded a culture where learning, innovation and collaboration thrive. My focus remains on building future ready organisations that deliver sustained performance, growth and operational excellence while nurturing talent and enabling leaders to shape the business of tomorrow.

Agility in **Action**

Agility, in my role, translates into disciplined execution and measurable outcomes.

We achieved an Employee Engagement Index (EEI) score of 93%, reflecting strong workforce alignment and commitment. High-potential attrition was maintained below 7%, ensuring stability in critical talent segments. Succession readiness improved by 18%, strengthening leadership continuity across key roles. Operational responsiveness was sharpened through clearly defined turnaround times (TAT) of 24 hours with zero escalations reinforcing HR's credibility as a responsive, business-aligned function. These outcomes positioned HR not merely as a support function, but as a strategic enabler of manufacturing excellence and growth.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

An effective HR leader blends business acumen with empathy. Agility requires integrity, data-driven insight, strong change leadership, collaboration and responsible talent stewardship. It demands the ability to balance performance expectations with employee trust creating cultures that are both disciplined and inclusive.

A truly agile HR leader ensures that culture, capability and business outcomes move forward together.

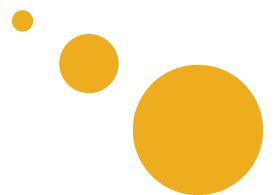
Leadership **Philosophy**

One leadership principle that guides me is that decisions must work equally for the shopfloor, frontline and the leadership team.



NITIN KHINDRIA

**Group CHRO
Omega Seiki**





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

My journey in HR has been defined by translating strategy into organizational outcomes and culture that sustains growth.

As CHRO at Omega Seiki Mobility, I've partnered with business leaders to build people strategies that support scale, transformation and operational excellence in a highgrowth EV and clean energy business. Over 24+ years, I've strengthened leadership capability, enabled agile HR practices and driven workforce transformation across industries from automotive and manufacturing to consulting and mobility. By aligning performance systems with purpose, fostering inclusive engagement and embedding digital HR solutions, I've helped create a culture of accountability, innovation and sustainable performance.

Agility in **Action**

At Omega Seiki Mobility (OSM), my leadership impact shows in measurable outcomes and cultural transformation. In a highgrowth EV and cleanenergy business, we've maintained zero attrition in midsenior and leadership roles creating stability during rapid expansion while people practices have strengthened engagement, productivity and capability aligned to strategic priorities. By embedding agile HR practices and digital solutions, we've institutionalised performance, inclusion and development systems that deliver sustained results.

Recognition such as being named #CHRO of the Year 2025 underscores this progress and reflects how cultureled transformation is recognised externally. My most impactful contribution has been building global business readiness through sustainable HR strategies driving technology adoption, fostering inclusion across levels and genders and creating meaningful growth opportunities for both experienced professionals and emerging talent.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

The DNA of an agile HR leader lies in authenticity and integrity. It requires a deep understanding of the business and the ability to build real, sustainable impact not just create a temporary "wow" factor.

An agile HR leader must balance empathy with accountability, move with speed while ensuring stability and remain grounded in practical execution. True agility comes from aligning people, processes and performance to business goals while maintaining trust and transparency across all levels of the organization.

Leadership **Philosophy**

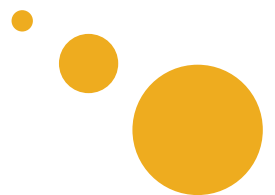
My guiding leadership philosophy is "business-first, people-always." At OSM, we believe HR must deeply understand the business context while consistently advocating for fairness, capability and long-term value. Decisions should balance speed with sustainability and empathy with accountability. When HR aligns talent, culture and performance to business outcomes, it becomes a true strategic enabler rather than a support function



GABRIEL

VINOD RAZDAN

CHRO
Gabriel India





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

My journey in HR has focused on shaping people-first, future-ready organisations. I have led strategic HR transformations by strengthening leadership capability, redesigning the talent ecosystem and embedding a culture of accountability, ownership and continuous learning. Over three decades across FMCG, IT, telecom and BFSI, I have aligned people strategy with organisational purpose, driven digital and talent transformation and enabled agility in decision-making.

By nurturing inclusive cultures and high-impact teams, I have enhanced engagement, scaled leadership pipelines and built HR systems that elevate employee experience while contributing measurably to sustainable business success. My initiatives have consistently translated into higher retention, improved productivity and external recognition, enabling businesses to adapt, innovate and grow sustainably.

Agility in **Action**

For me, agility means turning foresight into measurable outcomes that strengthen both people and business. I have delivered key people outcomes by strengthening the leadership pipeline through a Future Leaders Program, enhancing succession readiness, improving engagement via focused manager interventions and reducing attrition in critical roles. I have increased employer branding visibility across the organization. Harmonious industrial relations across all companies, leadership development and designing a talent management strategy aligned with business priorities.

I have driven change management and optimized organizational structures to ensure zero operational disruption while maintaining high employee morale. Strengthening MPC and demonstrating corporate governance across locations has directly contributed to improved business outcomes.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

An agile HR leader combines business acumen with strategic foresight, communicates effectively as a listener and influencer and leads with integrity, empathy and transparency. They navigate complexity and uncertainty while driving transformation and building capability to accelerate performance.

Leadership **Philosophy**

I lead by aligning people's decisions with business priorities, driving clarity, accountability and capability building. When HR strengthens performance and accelerates execution, the organisation achieves sustainable and measurable business impact.



ramco

RAJIV NAIR

CHRO

Ramco Systems





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

At Ramco Systems, my journey as CHRO has been all about transformation and impact. From hiring the right talent and redesigning structures to taking on extra business responsibilities, I focused on aligning people's strategy with growth. I drove reskilling and workforce optimisation, introduced digital HR dashboards that saved 50 executive hours quarterly, automated key employee touchpoints and strengthened our employer brand. Beyond processes, I championed culture change, agility and engagement, making HR a true business partner that drives innovation and efficiency.

Agility in **Action**

Over the past several years, I have driven measurable HR impact by redesigning performance-linked rewards across sales, delivery and leadership boosting productivity, accountability and high-performer retention. Strategic workforce redesign delivered USD 16M in payroll optimisation (FY23-25), while the 'Raise the Bar' hiring strategy strengthened talent quality and pipelines. Voluntary attrition was contained at 15-19%, engagement improved by 3 points in FY25 and Glassdoor ratings were sustained at 3.7-3.8, reinforcing our employer-of-choice brand.

By strengthening employer branding and supporting multiple global CEO and CXO transitions, I built HR credibility during transformation phases. These efforts earned recognitions including multiple Brandon Hall HCM Awards (2025), Economic Times' Impactful HR Leader (2025), BW People HR Excellence (2025), SHRM L&D Excellence (2024), ET NOW Best Organization for Women (2024), ETHR World Future Skills Awards (2024) and several employer brand and diversity honours across India, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

A true Agile HR Leader anticipates change, listens actively, continuously course-corrects, values progress over perfection, uses data with judgment, builds trust, enables speed and keeps people firmly at the center of every decision.

Leadership **Philosophy**

I lead with honesty, call out truths early, balance empathy with action, keep people and business goals front and center, fail fast, and focus on what really matters.



KAVITHA NAGARAJAN

Head HR
Epicor





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

With over two decades in human resources, my journey has been driven by building high-performing, future-ready organisations through strong alignment between people strategy and business goals. As Senior Director of Human Resources at Epicor, I lead a team supporting 1,300+ employees across 13 countries, balancing global consistency with regional nuance. Partnering closely with executive leadership, I have strengthened performance management, organisation design, workforce planning, and leadership capability to enable sustainable growth.

My approach is anchored in the belief that culture is a competitive advantage. By embedding accountability, inclusion, and employee-centric practices into everyday leadership, I focus on creating environments where engagement and performance move together. I continue to lead with clarity, empathy, and agility building systems and cultures that empower teams to thrive in an evolving global landscape.

Agility in **Action**

Agility, for me, is measured in sustained outcomes not short-term wins. Over the past four years, we have maintained talent retention with attrition consistently below 9%, while driving engagement scores to 81% quarter-on-quarter across the last year. Today, more than 850 employees in India and 200+ across 11 APAC countries actively live our values of Proud, Proactive, and Partner reflecting a deeply embedded culture rather than a stated aspiration.

In my current role at Epicor my most impactful contribution has been strengthening talent strategy while building scalable, future-ready people practices. From elevating leadership capability and refining workforce planning to embedding inclusion into everyday business decisions, I have focused on aligning culture with performance in measurable ways.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

An agile HR leader is adaptive, data-driven, collaborative, empathetic, tech-savvy, resilient, experimental, business-focused, and skilled at rapidly aligning people's strategies to evolving organizational needs and market realities.

For me, agility is not reactive it is the ability to anticipate, align, and act decisively while keeping people at the center of transformation.

Leadership **Philosophy**

I lead with empathy, clarity, and purpose balancing people and business needs to create cultures where leaders grow, teams thrive, and strategic transformation becomes a shared, sustainable reality.



SAKSHI PAL

Head HR, India
Techwave Consulting India





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

My journey in HR has been defined by navigating growth, transformation, and change with clarity and conviction. With over 15 years of experience including a decade with Techwave I have led through acquisitions, global expansion, and post-COVID workforce shifts, consistently anchoring my approach in trust, simplicity, and people-centric leadership. As the organisation scaled across geographies, I focused on building leadership capability, driving HR digital transformation, advancing DE&I, and strengthening our employer value proposition through initiatives like SPARK. Each initiative was designed to create global consistency while respecting regional nuances ensuring that culture evolved alongside business growth.

From automation and AI adoption to enterprise-wide change management, I have worked to embed innovation in ways that empower both performance and people. Throughout this journey, one belief has remained constant: sustainable growth is built on strong culture, transparent communication, and accessible leadership.

Agility in **Action**

My agility as a leader is rooted in building scalable people systems that grow with the business. At Techwave, I had the privilege of enabling the organisation's expansion from 100 to over 3,500 employees globally while maintaining attrition at 12-14%, consistently outperforming industry benchmarks.

Through strategic workforce planning and mobility frameworks, we achieved over 80% talent utilization and mapped \$1M in revenue through effective bench management. By designing and institutionalising our Employee Value Proposition, we strengthened our employer brand, improved the employee happiness index by 25%, and sustained an 8.6 NPS reflecting both engagement and advocacy. Equally important was building leadership depth to support scale, with 28% of roles filled through internal promotions supported by structured development programs.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

For me, agility is not reactive speed, it is the discipline of building resilient foundations that allow growth, innovation, and culture to scale together.

An agile HR leader actively listens, responds swiftly to change, balances empathy with organizational objectives, leverages data-driven insights, and remains resilient during transitions-always prioritizing people, trust, and measurable outcomes.

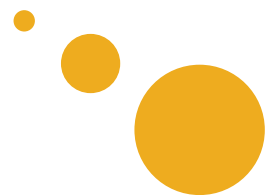
Leadership **Philosophy**

Leadership is about walking the talk earning trust through actions, staying accessible, empowering people to own outcomes, and creating an environment where growth is limitless, free from fear and hierarchy, so every individual can thrive, turning challenges into opportunities and aspirations into achievements while creating impact for clients, colleagues, and communities alike.



DR. SUBHASH MALI

**Chief People Officer
H.K Designs**





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

My journey as an HR leader has been guided by a simple yet powerful belief: lead with empathy and courage. I have consistently chosen to do what is right for people even when the path is difficult trusting that strong, values-driven cultures ultimately deliver sustainable business results. For me, leadership is about standing firm on principles, creating psychological safety and building organizations where integrity, trust, and performance go hand in hand.

Agility in **Action**

Agility, in my leadership journey, has meant transforming HR from a transactional function into a strategic force driving culture and performance. As Chief People Officer, I repositioned HR as a trusted business partner strengthening governance, elevating leadership accountability, and embedding a people-first philosophy across the organisation.

Through enterprise-wide engagement, retention, and leadership development interventions, we increased engagement scores from 80 to 94 and reduced attrition from 9% to 2% - building a resilient, high-commitment culture aligned to business priorities.

My most impactful contribution has been establishing scalable HR systems that balance structure with empathy enabling compliance, strengthening leadership capability, and sustaining performance even through periods of change. The cultural transformation has since been recognised through industry awards and featured as an academic case study, reinforcing the long-term impact of aligning human values with business outcomes.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

For me, agility is not speed alone it is the ability to create stability, trust, and performance simultaneously.

A truly agile HR leader leads with empathy and courage, listens deeply, adapts gracefully to change, nurtures trust, and puts people at the heart of every decision.

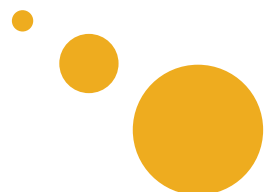
Leadership **Philosophy**

Lead with empathy and courage do what is right for people, even when it is difficult, and trust that strong cultures always deliver sustainable business results.



KIRAN KUMAR PADAMATA

Head HR
Ingenus Pharmaceuticals





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

My journey as Head HR has been defined by a clear shift in mindset: transforming HR from a cost center into a strategic enabler of business growth. Over the years, I have worked closely with leadership teams to align people's strategy with enterprise objectives ensuring that culture, capability, and performance evolve in tandem with business ambition.

During periods of restructuring, mergers, and digital transformation, I led initiatives that strengthened organisational design, enhanced employee experience, and safeguarded engagement. Rather than viewing change as disruption, I positioned it as an opportunity to build resilience improving retention, productivity, and leadership alignment through structured yet people-centric interventions.

At the core of my leadership philosophy is the belief that sustainable growth is powered by strong teams and empowered leaders. By embedding accountability, simplifying processes, and reinforcing a culture of trust, I have helped create an environment where people are not just managed through change, but actively enabled to drive it.

Agility in **Action**

Agility, in my leadership approach, has meant responding to workforce challenges with precision and measurable outcomes. I spearheaded a cross-functional cultural transformation initiative that reduced voluntary turnover by 40% through the introduction of tailored career pathing and internal mobility frameworks. This shift not only strengthened retention but also drove a 56% increase in team engagement scores reinforcing commitment and discretionary effort across the organisation.

By redesigning processes, leveraging data insights, and strengthening hiring manager accountability, we achieved a 56% reduction in time-to-hire and a 40% improvement in retention. These interventions directly supported rapid business scaling while ensuring cultural alignment and employee experience remained strong.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

For me, HR is not a support function it is a catalyst for transformation, ensuring that people remain at the heart of every strategic decision.

An agile HR leader prioritizes people and collaboration, empowers autonomy, encourages continuous improvement, and drives sustainable results by aligning HR strategies to business objectives.

Leadership **Philosophy**

"People-First Service Leadership" guides my decisions by prioritizing employee well-being, growth, and empowerment, I build trust, which drives engagement, productivity, and sustainable, high-performing business results.



LAVANYA VATTAPARAMBATH

**Global Head HR
Axiro Semiconductor**





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

I am a seasoned HR leader with over 19 years of experience across global technology, semiconductor and consulting organizations, including Micron Technology, Invenio Business Solutions, CDK Global, Oracle and Tech Mahindra. My career reflects deep expertise in strategic HR partnering, organization design, talent management, leadership development, rewards and employee engagement across workforces ranging from 1,000 to 5,000+ employees and multiple geographies.

I have built HRBP models, governance frameworks and people programs from the ground up; led large-scale workforce growth, HR transformations and global change initiatives and consistently linked culture, capability and people systems to measurable business outcomes. I am known for combining strong analytical rigor with a people-centric approach to drive sustainable performance and employee experience.

Agility in **Action**

My journey spans over 19 years of building, scaling and transforming people functions across global MNCs and high-growth environments. I have led HR for organizations of 1,000-5,000+ employees across geographies, delivering measurable impact, doubling engineering headcount in two years, building HRBP and governance models from scratch, driving engagement scores above 85-90%, improving retention and enabling leadership effectiveness through structured talent, rewards and development frameworks.

At Axiro, I lead HR, Administration and Communications with high autonomy, partnering closely with founders to translate business ambition into a scalable people strategy. I have built compliant global HR foundations from inception, anchored culture early, enabled leaders and designed systems that scale with growth balancing speed with governance and intuition with execution to create an agile, high-performance organization.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

An agile HR leader anticipates change, balances speed with governance, reads human dynamics deeply, enables leaders decisively and builds systems that evolve with business, culture and purpose.

They create clarity amid complexity, aligning people priorities with strategic business outcomes. Above all, they cultivate resilience and accountability, ensuring the organization can adapt, perform and thrive in an ever-evolving landscape.

Leadership **Philosophy**

Move fast while staying principled: build culture before complexity, empower leaders early and design people systems that scale in step with business ambition, innovation and long-term value.



ONGC Petro additions Limited
(A subsidiary of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited)

AMIT KAUL

Head HR, South Asia
ONGC PETRO ADDITIONS





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

I head HR at OPAL, an ONGC subsidiary operating under financial stress with 780 employees. Over the past 2.5 years, my focus has been on rebuilding trust, strengthening engagement and introducing progressive yet pragmatic people practices within a public sector framework. Early in my tenure, I secured Board approval for a five-day workweek and a 15% salary enhancement with a claw-back mechanism balancing employee value with financial discipline. I complemented this with structured one-on-one interactions with over 200 employees to foster transparency and confidence during a challenging phase.

Recognizing evolving workforce expectations and AI-driven shifts, I strengthened learning agility through flexible digital training platforms, reimbursement models and technology adoption in operational functions. My approach remains grounded in visible HR presence, proactive communication and a culture of safety, equity and resilience.

Agility in **Action**

At OPAL, attrition levels reduced to one-fourth in H1 2025-26 compared to H1 2023-24, while employee engagement scores increased by 30% over two years. These outcomes were achieved through structured one-on-one connect sessions, introduction of a five-day workweek, a 15% salary enhancement with a retention-linked claw-back feature and a strengthened learning ecosystem aligned to evolving workforce expectations and AI readiness.

Operating within a public sector framework, I combined policy discipline with proactive ground-level engagement reinforcing transparency, adaptability and cultural resilience. My guiding principle remains simple: continuously question existing systems and transform what no longer serves the organisation's future.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

An agile HR leader aligns vision with business purpose while nurturing adaptability and resilience across the organisation. It requires balancing commercial realities with human sensitivity, making timely decisions with limited resources, and sustaining momentum even in uncertain environments. Agility is not just responsiveness it is the ability to anticipate, recalibrate, and lead change with clarity and conviction.

Leadership **Philosophy**

I believe in continually questioning the status quo—evaluating existing systems, processes, and mindsets to determine whether they remain relevant and value-adding. If they do not, I act decisively to evolve or redesign them. For me, leadership is about thoughtful disruption challenging complacency while building trust and alignment for meaningful, sustainable change.



ahuja residences
The Accommodation Experts

SONAL PATHAK

CHRO

Ahuja Residencies





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

As a senior HR leader, my journey has been about helping a promoter-led legacy organization grow into a more scalable and future-ready business. I worked closely with promoters and senior leaders to move from group-level thinking to business-unit accountability, strengthening a culture of ownership and merit. I led digital HR and operational initiatives that improved efficiency and decision-making, built stronger talent pipelines, and introduced learning pathways to prepare existing teams for growth. By empowering managers through clear delegation frameworks and championing employee wellbeing, I focused on creating a balanced culture where performance, people, and long-term business sustainability could grow together.

As a CHRO at Residences, I am leading the transition from a centralized promoter-led structure to a decentralized, performance-driven model strengthening leadership capability, introducing variable performance pay, implementing HRIS systems and building empowered unit-level accountability.

Agility in **Action**

Over three years, I partnered with senior leadership to shift from group to business-unit P&Ls, drive accountability and a merit-based culture, digitize HR operations, decentralize authority, empower managers, and strengthen employee wellbeing initiatives. My most impactful contribution has been leading a people-first digital transformation building strong talent pipelines, empowering managers, and creating structured learning pathways that prepared existing talent to meet growth-led leadership demands, enabling sustainable scaling in a promoter-led organization.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

An agile HR leader drives digital adoption, rapidly builds talent pipelines, strengthens manager capability, leverages data for decisions, ensures cultural alignment, and executes with speed to scale sustainably amid talent challenges.

Leadership **Philosophy**

Policies are designed to serve and support people not the other way around. Systems should enable fairness, growth, and dignity, always keeping human impact at the center of decision-making.



ABHISHEK MEHROTRA

CHRO
Yubi





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

My leadership journey across Yubi, ByteDance and Huawei has been about aligning people strategy with business growth and building inclusive, performance-driven cultures that enable scale. I instituted industry-first benefits including 26 weeks paid maternity leave, 10 weeks paid paternity leave and up to 12 days paid period leave and launched a comprehensive wellness program with 24/7 family support.

I led the transformation of Huawei India's 1,200+ workforce from software maintenance to a Deep Tech R&D hub through intensive upskilling, piloted a zero-bias performance management system linked to pay parity and implemented anonymous feedback channels to reinforce accountability. Initiatives like "Back2Epic" reintegrated women on career breaks, ensuring talent evolution and sustainable organisational growth.

Agility in **Action**

At Yubi, we built strong leadership continuity by developing best-in-class talent depth across the Top 50 critical roles driving long-term growth, with identified successors for over 75% of these positions. Our culture outcomes reflected this strength maintaining an NPS of 35+, a top talent exit rate below 5% and DEI and engagement scores consistently above 85.

These foundations enabled me to lead Yubi's scale-up from inception to growth stage, expanding the organization from 400 to over 1,500 employees, growing from two to five lines of business and increasing our presence from four to 15 locations across two geographies within four years all while sustaining 30-40% year-on-year revenue growth.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

An agile HR leader is a data-driven strategic partner who drives business outcomes through deep business understanding and contextual awareness. Agility requires an adaptive mindset, the ability to champion GenAI and emerging technologies and a strong commitment to continuous building across the organization.

True agility lies in balancing innovation with discipline, people empathy with performance rigor and long-term sustainability with speed.

Leadership **Philosophy**

I believe in leading with transparency and empathy, communicating honestly even when the message is difficult, while anchoring every decision in performance and impact. Trust is built through openness, but credibility is sustained when empathy is balanced with accountability and business outcomes.



BHAVYA MISRA

CHRO
Godrej Capital





Leadership Journey: **Story in the Making**

As a CHRO at Godrej Capital, I bring over 17 years of HR leadership experience across global and Indian organisations, including PepsiCo, Bharti Retail and Lenovo India. My journey has been anchored in a clear conviction: building workplaces where inclusion is not an initiative, but an embedded way of working. At Godrej Capital, I have led the integration of equity into policy, leadership behaviour and everyday culture. We launched employee resource groups such as SheRises, Enable and Qnity to create meaningful spaces for dialogue, peer support and community building strengthening belonging while enabling employees to actively shape our culture.

These efforts have translated into measurable outcomes: perceived inclusion improved by 20% in internal surveys, women's attrition reduced by 15% through focused mentorship and engagement interventions and ERG participation doubled, reflecting growing trust and ownership across the organisation. For me, HR leadership is about turning intent into sustained action ensuring inclusion is systemic, measurable and deeply integrated into business success.

Agility in **Action**

Agility, in my role, means aligning purpose with measurable impact. At Godrej Capital, overall attrition stands at 23%, with voluntary female attrition at 17%, reflecting the strength of our equity-led engagement efforts.

We strengthened leadership capability through the Feedforward Programme, training 21 functional leaders as facilitators and pairing 15 L3 leaders with 30 high-potential coaches, with 60% of L2 hi-pots engaged in structured coaching. Our inclusion and accessibility practices have been recognised through the SHRM D&I Excellence Award, DEI Index (Marksmen Network & EY), Bombay Chamber Award, DI-verse Certification by AIF and gender equity recognitions including Avtar-Seramount, WiNs Awards and the Innovative Inclusive Best Practices Award.

The DNA of an **Agile HR Leader**

A truly agile CHRO combines empathy with strategic foresight.

It requires adaptability in a rapidly changing world, grounded in data-led insights that inform equitable decision-making. Agility is about championing policies that transform culture, elevating employee experience and building resilient, future-ready organizations. An agile leader ensures that equity is not reactive but intentional and embedded in systems, governance, and leadership behaviors.

Leadership **Philosophy**

I believe in leading with purpose, empathy, and accountability.

My role is to foster environments where people feel valued, empowered, and trusted while aligning their individual growth with organizational performance and sustainable, long-term impact. When inclusion and performance move together, organizations do not just grow they evolve responsibly.

GLOSSARY



Priti Kataria, CHRO, Birlasoft

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Maninder Kapoor Puri, CHRO, Biocon

Satej Mehta, Global Head HR, Wockhardt

Bala Aiyaswamy, Group Chief People Officer, PI Industries

Samar Banerjee, CHRO, Star Cement

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Gopalji Mehrotra, CHRO, ACME Group

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Nitin Khindria, CHRO, Omega Seiki

Vinod Razdan, CHRO, Gabriel India

Rajiv Nair, CHRO, Ramco Systems

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— INDIA'S —

MOST AGILE
HR LEADERS

2025-26



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