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**Gear up to Meet Our Fantastic 40** 

# Emerging Leaders League 2021 Coffee Table Book

People with exemplary professional accomplishments and a zeal to drive the transition across all the horizons of business can induce sustainable growth and develop an all-embracing industry for an upcoming passionate workforce.

This pandemic has highlighted the strategic impact of a leader, an impact that could last beyond the scope of age and time, and ETHRWorld takes immense pleasure in recognition of such ever-lasting impacts with the Emerging Leaders League!

Emerging Leaders League, a unique initiative by ETHRWorld is a recognition and celebration of young and emerging leaders under the age of 40 who have demonstrated exceptional leadership to create a personal and professional impact in the face of a pandemic.

We are elated to bring to you the changemakers who have exhibited quintessential leadership in an agile adaptation to a global challenge and deployed the right strategies for an unavoidable transformation during uncertain times. We salute the project and individual achievements of young leaders who emerge above their competition in curating clear and compelling values and accomplishing an extensive return on investments.

Team ETHRWorld hereby encourages an emerging young leadership that showcases that excellence is not a bondsman of time!



AARTI CHANDRA

HRBP, Foods Category & Commercial Functions, PepsiCo India

After a fantastic two years of completing her MBA from XLRI, Aarti Chandra joined PepsiCo in 2011 as a Management Trainee. She landed in her first role leading a newly formed team, heading the HR vertical for a PepsiCo start-up called Lehar Foods. As life unfolded for Aarti, she moved from PepsiCo to Dubai and then Geneva, working in the Total Rewards Function in different roles with multiple countries across LATAM, Europe, Asia & Middle East. In 2019, she joined back the PepsiCo India business as the TR Lead and has recently moved into the role of HRBP for Foods Category & Commercial Functions.

# My stubborn optimism, is a way of leading a happier life for me

Being passionate about my work helps me drive results with a very strong sense of ownership. Any decisions made with the lens of 'what would I do if this was my company' have always guided me in the right direction and luckily, I have been in an organization these last 11 years that fosters a culture of such ownership & empowerment to deliver.

I'm a true optimist at heart – I believe that every problem can be solved. My secret to success has been in knowing the business well enough to ascertain which problems (read 'opportunities') are most critical to address on priority and 'taking others along' when embarking on that journey. I have grown to greatly value feedback to adapt my approach and this has gone a long way to help me foster collaborative working relationships, which helps get it all done with a smile.

Lastly, in addition to all I do, my mentors, managers, teams, and most of all my family; all have played a very large role in shaping me – it's been their input and unwavering support which has greatly contributed to all the reasons I'm on this list.

#### Your core value

My stubborn optimism, is a way of leading a happier life for me. Another

element is trust. I was brought up believing in the goodness of people and so always assume positive intent and tend to have a high trust quotient until proven wrong. Lastly, I would call out the importance of gratitude as I can vividly trace it back to school, something my family reinforced daily and now organizations do so too. To this day, remembering all the good to be grateful for has helped me get through the toughest times.

### **Advice for youngsters**

- Be an optimist don't just look for the silver lining, draw it. Respect all those who support you and learn from those who don't.
- Live life with no regrets make choices for the right reasons while balancing your short & long-term goals, but make sure you live in the present to make the most of each moment.
- Enjoy life to the fullest a happy state of mind doesn't just happen; you've got to make it happen. Make it happen. And since practice makes perfect, do it daily.



**AMIT KEJRIWAL** Lead, Rewards, HDFC Bank Ltd

Amit Kejriwal is an HR professional with an experience of more than 15 years. Currently, he is leading total rewards for consumer banking segments (retail businesses) of HDFC Bank. Amit joined HDFC Bank in Jul '13 and has had the great opportunity of getting exposure to diverse roles, including HR business partnering, talent acquisition, and rewards. As a part of the aforementioned roles, Amit got tremendous insights into key segments covering wholesale, retail, credit, and corporate functions.

# Being a good team player and being emotionally intelligent has helped me in achieving success

Amit literally means 'unlimited' and it is my constant pursuit in life to be a true reflection of my name. Unlimited for me means unlimited accomplishments which will come through unlimited achievements which will come through hard and smart work; unlimited learning which will come through unlimited interactions with beautiful minds through books, interviews, and personal meetings.

These quotes, which come from several books, have been my success mantra:

- If you want something from the core of your heart, the whole universe conspires you to achieve it.
- Not to leave any stone unturned if one wants something for real. Be patient, yet persistent.
- Life is a daring adventure or nothing. Always give 100%, be full in.
- Beinterdependent, than be dependent or independent. Collaboration plays a critical role in life, whether professional or personal.
- Delaying gratification pays for sweeter fruits.

#### Your core value

Positive attitude towards life, learning attitude, hard accompanied with smart work, being humble, patient yet persistent, good analytical

abilities, managing assignments having stringent timelines and complex problems with ease and smile, taking ownership and leading projects, credibility with stakeholders, being a good team player and being emotionally intelligent has helped me in achieving success.

#### **Advice for youngsters**

- Even if one achieves the sky, one should always remain humble (down to earth), as that will lead to more and more learning.
- Give 100%, full in once you have determined to do something. That leads to a dream, so dream and then go totally in. The whole universe will conspire to help you achieve it. This has happened to me and I am a firm believer in this.
- No job is a small job. It is we who can make even a simpler job a great one by adding value to it.
- Follow excellence and success will follow.
- Be honest with yourself. Once a person is honest with oneself in all his/her doings, everything else will just come in.



**ASTHA CHATURVEDI** 

Associate Director/ Program Manager, Capgemini

Currently, Astha Chaturvedi is the Global Talent & Learning Leader for Global Group Functions in Capgemini. Astha is responsible for shaping and driving the talent, transformation, and learning strategy for her scope across multiple countries and SBUs. Over her career, she had held numerous roles as a Talent COE Lead India; Premier & Technology Campus Leader, Performance and OD Specialist, Digital Transformation Lead, and HRBP. Astha has led & collaborated both with India and global teams over the years which has made her more sensitive and open to ideas, people, and cultural contexts. She is a strong advocate of diversity & inclusion as a way of life in business.

# I believe in building expertise, wisdom, and trusting while keeping the end outcome in mind

I believe in building expertise, wisdom, and trusting while keeping the end outcome in mind. Also, I am an advocate of always remembering, "WHY" we started? And not forgeting "HOW" - the experience for your clients, your team, and colleagues has been on the journey.

#### Your core value

- · Value-driven engagements that foster innovation, and impact.
- Building trust and amplifying the synergy between a diverse group of people, thoughts, and actions.

### **Advice for youngsters**

Open yourself to the adventures of HR:

- 1. Grit: Always, keep the long-term impact in mind. Be purposeful in your intent each day.
- 2. Be limitless: Take up more challenges, new roles, learnings, and significant responsibilities early-on
- 3. Fail fast. Be bold, think, and develop new solutions, ideas
- 4. Build your career army Mentors, friends, colleagues, and sponsors
- 5. Most importantly, have fun on your journey!



**CHITRA D RAM**Director - Capability & Culture, Pizza Hut

Chitra D Ram has over one and a half decades of experience in human resource management, spanning HR Strategy, Learning & Organization Development, Talent Management & Development, and Employee Experience. She is a part of the Pizza Hut India Leadership Team as Director of Capability and Culture. Together with franchise leaders, she conceptualizes and drives the people growth strategy for the Pizza Hut brand. In her view, building people capability is the key to business growth & profitability.

# The last 24 months have seen unprecedented change and every HR leader has emerged as a changemaker

- Keep people at the front and center of the strategy and achieve business goals. In making a business case and setting a business goal, it's important to ask what skills and capabilities are needed to reach that goal.
- Collaboration and bringing others together will help us achieve results that we couldn't imagine on our own. The pandemic taught us a new definition of collaboration and working together.
- When making decisions, leverage your 'SMART' (Functional knowhow) + HEART and be Courageous.

#### Your core values

- My core values include the 4C: care, capability building, connection, and collaboration. These help me be my best self and create a culture where others thrive.
- Another concept that I lean on is the growth mindset, based on Carol Dweck's book on Mindset. With a Growth Mindset, I've been

- able to stay positive, recognize areas where I need to step outside of my comfort zone, stay resilient when things don't go my way, and explore possibilities to become a better me.
- Stay humble, grounded, and express gratitude.

# **Advice for youngsters**

The last 24 months have seen unprecedented change and every HR leader has emerged as a changemaker who is stronger, resilient, and more impactful than ever before. We need to continue with this kind of business partnering. I would also encourage all emerging leaders to take a moment, to appreciate themselves on the far we've traveled with driving impact and dealing with change.



### **DIVKIRAN KATHURIA**

Director - Talent Marketplace, Technology and Transformation, Seagate Technology

Divkiran Kathuria is a seasoned HR professional experienced in leading change and driving large-scale HR transformations in talent management, talent acquisition, employer branding, DEI, and HR analytics. Her focus is on leveraging emerging disruptive technologies to serve future work programs. She is a global thought leader for Talent Marketplaces and their application in talent management, talent acquisition, learning and development, and DEI. She is passionate about partnering with business leaders to establish a long-term HCM

strategy and tech roadmap that creates team synergies and realizes talent potential.

# The only way to grow in the face of a VUCA world is to build resilience, learning agility, and empathy

My professional mantra is simple "If you don't change, you don't grow – you perish". Change is the only constant and hence the only way to grow in the face of a VUCA world is to build resilience, learning agility, and empathy. Also, be passionate about what you do. My passion for people is a value that I cherish, and I have been able to leverage this in both my professional and personal space. It's very gratifying since my work, especially in the Talent Marketplace, is positively impacting the lives and careers of over 200k people across the globe today.

On the other hand, finding ways to create meaning in people's lives is what pushed me to co-found an NGO named Pragyan, aimed at preserving and popularizing fading Indian art forms, in turn providing the original artisans a means to livelihood.

All of this was possible only because I empathize with the issues that my stakeholders faced. I pivoted quickly and learned new technologies to bring them the best-suited solutions and stayed resilient in the face of change in both my personal and professional life.

#### Your core values

My core values in life are ethics and integrity. Most often than not,

we hold these values high in personal space, but I feel that they are equally important in professional life. Together they foster trust and transparency which in turn promotes a culture where people feel comfortable to own up to their mistakes and then course correct towards success instead of continuing towards failure— after all culture doesn't eat strategy just for breakfast but for breakfast, lunch, and dinner!

### **Advice for youngsters**

Gen Z and Gen Alpha are digital natives with unlimited potential, and they can go as far as their mind lets them. I would advise them to find opportunities that nurture them and nudge them towards meaningful work, work that leaves a mark and builds their legacy. Be passionate; find something that motivates you to endure and not just be euphoriant at the moment. Accept and own your failures. That's where innovation and improvement stem from. And in the end, continue to learn every day, from everyone, through every experience - like Steve Jobs said, "Stay Hungry, Stay Foolish"!



**DIVYA SRIVASTAVA** CHRO, GE Healthcare South Asia

Divya Srivastava is a customer-focused, business-driven, and employee-centric global HR professional with extensive experience across business partnering, Sales HR, Total Rewards, Sales Force Effectiveness, M&A/Divestiture and Change management. She has consistently demonstrated high impact, passion, HR expertise, a global mindset, and an ability to inspire and lead teams through transformation, thriving on change, creativity & challenge.

# There are no limitations unless you create them yourself

I am a believer in "Every next level of your life demands a different version of you." What drives me is personal growth and an impact to make a difference to the people around me. I enjoy working in an environment that thrives on change, creativity & challenge. I love taking on challenges to test my limits and push the boundaries for myself. I am intentional about learning new skills, gaining exposure across business functions, and raising my hand for experiences that can help in elevating my impact, learning, and contribution to the business.

#### Your core values

My background, upbringing, and early experiences have shaped my core values of excellence, courage, humility, and integrity, and my family was central to all of them. My father was a police officer and my mother a lawyer, and throughout my formative years, there was an emphasis on academic accomplishment, learning, growth, and gratitude. I have two siblings, so lessons of sharing, accepting differences, and learning-in arrived early.

And given our middle-class financial circumstances, our parents ingrained in us a savings mindset, teaching us to make the best use of

available resources. My personal experiences have shaped the way I think and respond to challenges in my professional life. I have learned the importance of being courageous, having a strong will, and having an internal locus of control.

### **Advice for youngsters**

Take risks in your career by constantly testing and pushing your boundaries, make time for self-reflection to "sharpen your saw" and be intentional about your learning and development. There are no limitations unless you create them yourself.



**GANESH IYER** Senior Director, ADP

Ganesh Iyer is a thorough Human Resource Management professional with over 14 years of track record in delivering commendable organizational growth in dynamic environments, establishing structure, building employee value proposition, driving vision and achieving critical strategic goals, and creating impact. His areas of expertise include - HR transformation, future HRTech, HR strategy, change management, HR business partnering & advisory, talent acquisition analysis, performance management, employee engagement, employee relations, process excellence, and change champion.

# Success will follow those who are committed to their passion for long enough

What started as a passion soon became the purpose of life. When I chose to do my MBA, to follow my passion in human resources, I knew that I had it in me to feel compassionate and committed towards people, the biggest driver for me.

As I grew over the years, I came across multiple instances to learn, grow, and excel by understanding four important things in life:

- Be strong on your learning path
- Talk less and do more
- Commit less and make an impact
- Think from a clients' perspective

Success will follow those who are committed to their passion for long enough, and in the process have put their head down to go about delivering on their commitments to the people through constant innovation, creativity, people skills, and a heart, head, and body that are unison.

#### Your core values

I believe that three things define the growth acceleration, projection, and direction of every HR professional in this era - results-driven,

innovation, and service excellence.

Fortunately, I've been a part of an organization that has these values at the core, and constantly resonating with the core of the organization for 10 years has helped me build on my values to drive my purpose and passion. These have propelled me to be a better HR professional, but most importantly be a better human

### **Advice for youngsters**

I have a success mantra that has helped me grow with a purpose-driven mindset. I would like to recommend the youngsters to constantly learn, innovate, explore their strengths by seeking work, and most importantly be committed to learning and talk less – let actions speak for you! Everyone ultimately finds the passion, path, and zeal at some point in life - just be practical to find big challenges which will shape you in the process.



**ITI RAWAT**Director, Thinkhall Training and Consultancy

Iti Rawat is an entrepreneur, motivational speaker, e-learning evangelist, and a firm advocate of enabling women to gain financial independence. She is the founder of two trail-blazing organizations Thinkhall Training and Consultancy through which she strives to digitally skill India by providing the right opportunity to them, and WEFT Women Entrepreneurs Foundation, a not-for-profit body that supports women entrepreneurship in India.

# Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment

I am a strong advocate of the belief - satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment.

#### Your core values

Accountability, growth, hard work, preparedness, practicality, and faith have driven me throughout my journey. I am a self-driven person who believes that if your core values are in place nothing is stoppable for you. Consistency at work, contentment at work, and helping society are what I thrive for and my values have always driven me towards making the right choices, if not the most lucrative ones but the right ones.

### **Advice for youngsters**

Work hard, don't fall for shortcuts. Be consistent, have faith in yourself, and believe in yourself. Your belief in yourself, your hard work, and your consistency will take you a long way in life.



JUVERI MUKHERJEE
Director, Aurionpro Solutions Limited

Juveri Mukherjee is an HR Leader and a certified NLP Coach. She is a hands-on, performance-driven change agent with the capability to operationalize HR strategies for start-ups, established organizations, and companies that are going through the integration phase post-M&A. Her key focus has been HR Business Partnering, Talent Management, Organisation Development, and Talent Acquisition. She is currently heading HR for Aurionpro Solutions Limited. Prior to that, she has worked with Ingram Micro, JSW, IRIS Business Services, and Siemens.

# Every level of your life will need a new you – develop skills and evolve

My definition of success has evolved as I grew personally and professionally. Some of the things that have worked for me are - having my own definition of success, being curious, self-belief, and gratitude.

#### Your core values

My top 5 core values are:

- Trust: Being reliable, consistent, and committed.
- Teamwork and respect, accepting and respecting diverse ideas, points of view, and individuals and including them in my journey.
- Adaptability: Being open to new perspectives and ways of doing things.
- Courage: To stand for self and others.
- Humor: Humor helps to let go, diffuse tension, give life to conversations, and build relationships.

### **Advice for youngsters**

I don't know whether advice works for youngsters. Rather I will share the top 10 life lessons to young 25 years old Juveri.

- Be high on life Enjoy the journey as you focus on the destination.
- People in life will teach you "how to be" and some, "how not to be". Learn both.

- Start Young Take care of your health and personal finance.
- Network and invest in relationships.
- Every level of your life will need a new you develop skills and evolve.
- Let go make peace with all the things/thoughts that hold you back.
- Practice diversity and inclusion as a way of life.
- Create your core friend circle who can lift you up in your darkest days.
- It's ok to live for yourself and say "no" sometimes.
- Always find time for reunions with family, and friends life happens there!



**KAVNEET KAUR** 

Vice President & National Head - HRBP, Talent and Rewards, Indus Towers



Kavneet Kaur possesses over 16 years of holistic experience across business partnering, talent acquisition, talent retention, performance and rewards, and employee connection with the ability to manage diverse large teams pan India. Her expertise lies in organization design & effectiveness, change management, policy formulation and implementation along with compensation and benefits.

# There are no shortcuts to success and persistence is the key

There are no shortcuts to success and persistence is the key. I strongly believe that to succeed as an HR professional, it's imperative to have a deep understanding of the business one operates in and be cognitive about the environment around to ensure tailor-made solutions for employee engagement and retention. As an individual, I am high on action orientation and multi-tasking, continue to remain inquisitive to learn and adapt to new policies, and processes and keep abreast of digital advancements within the HR domain. Another important aspect is to remain connected with the field workforce and ensure attention to detail in everything you get involved in.

One must be empathetic towards fellow colleagues and employees and actively work towards building a respectful and trustworthy environment. Not to forget, at times, it requires you to take charge of the situation, deal with the associated risks and wade your way through tough circumstances without making any compromises.

#### Your core values

Some of the core values I embody include a strong work ethic coupled with a high degree of adaptability to an ever-changing environment and self-motivation. I have a unique balance of compassion and business acumen and I am willing to take risks.

My colleagues know me as a collaborative, trustworthy individual who maintains a razor-sharp focus on exceeding internal and external customers' expectations on every occasion. As an HR professional, I believe in leading by example and advancing my organization's espoused values to all employees.

### **Advice for youngsters**

- You need to start early by discovering your passion, and interests and clearly defining your goals, and then commit yourself to create a brand for yourself.
- Hunger for learning new things combined with an ambitious streak will help you grow leaps and bounds.
- Investing time in building relationships and being respectful and empathetic towards employees will help you build an emotional connection over a period of time.



**KEJAL THAKKAR**Chief Manager - Human Resource, Piramal Pharma Limited

Kajal Thakkar is an emerging HR professional with 13 years of experience in HR for Sales and Corporate functions. She has been associated with companies such as GlaxoSmithKline, Abbott Pharma, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, and now Piramal Pharma limited. She is a Post Graduate in HR with Masters's in Labour Law and Labour Welfare. She is also certified in Assessment Centre, Behavioural Event Interviewing technique, and HR Analytics and inclined towards academics and associated with various management institutes to impart learning and learn from budding professionals.

# A hallmark of a professional is in having self-awareness

A hallmark of a professional is in having self-awareness. That means knowing and working with your strengths and learning each day something new to implement in your work. Make a difference each day to strive towards the goal of organization and self. Have an entrepreneurial approach and empower your team. Give yourself a break. Relax and rejuvenate. A healthy body and mind will always reap superior results. Family is equally important.

#### Your core values

I work with the utmost integrity. As HR professionals we deal with people hence it's imperative to display humility. I respect each leader/stakeholder I work with and mutually learn a lot from them. Having passion and commitment to my work is very fundamental to me.

### **Advice for youngsters**

Digital literacy is a must. They must do critical thinking and have a problem-solving approach.

While they explore new processes and are ready to stretch, work-life balance is important. Invest in holistic learning of any domain they work.





### **KOMALADEVI VELUMANI**

Head HR - India Consumer & HR Ops Lead, Lenovo India Private Limited

Komaladevi Velumani hails from Erode in Tamil Nadu and she has always believed in breaking biases. She has a total of 15 years of work experience while working in challenging matrixed business environments with global brands like Lenovo, Deloitte Consulting, Honeywell Technologies & IBM. Komala's career trajectory displays proven experience in enabling business success by creating a shared vision around the people strategy and building high-performing teams. Further, she possesses hands-on expertise in conceptualization and rollout of talent strategy, employee engagement, leadership development, labor relations, recruitment, change management, case management, performance management, HR Operations, and policy/process governance.

# HR professionals are the conscience keepers of any organization & create impact by building culture

I am an HR Leader, who is shaped by her roots and values. I take pride in the value created for organizations by enabling them to dream big, build people-first culture & innovate. I am a continuous learner and with my consultative HRBP skills, customer centricity, agility, problem-solving approach, influencing skills & humility, I am further bettering myself as an HR professional who can make a positive impact on many lives. I believe that Humility is my core value and that pushes me to always learn more and listen more.

According to me, HR professionals have a vantage point in measuring the health of the organization, and with this, they need to nurture the art of 'zooming in' to leverage their expertise in building networks and systems and 'zooming out' to influence and negotiate with key stakeholders in order to impact strategy, culture, and leadership. When the right strategy, culture, and leadership are in place, it positively impacts all aspects of the business and ultimately financial outcomes as well.

#### Your core values

To me, HR professionals are the conscience keepers of any organization & create impact by building culture. I feel responsible for creating and

driving a people strategy that continually accelerates business while being recognized as a truly exceptional place to work, where employees can do their best. This resonates with my personal and professional journey across the various organizations as I model a living only based on a values-based culture

### **Advice for youngsters**

In my view, some core tenets that shape leaders include honing a strong culture of continuous learning and listening. Further, all emerging leaders are to focus their energies on building an ecosystem for themselves that enables them to grow further. In this ecosystem that accelerates one's leadership journey, mentors play a critical role – so, do seek out proactively for mentorships. Further, as an individual, practice resilience – for this is the one trait that lets you stay strong and come back stronger!



**KUMAR DEVANSHU** Senior Manager- HR, Heromoto Crop Ltd.

Kumar Devanshu pursued MBA from XISS, Ranchi, and has around 12 years of HR experience. He started his professional journey as a Management Trainee and worked in the TA, ER/IR, Compliance, HR Ops, and HRBP. Kumar's career started with rich experience in manufacturing plants as an employee of industrial relation then he worked in the Head Office for Corporate HR roles. He is presently working in the R&D function and leading various roles and responsibilities in HR.

# Always give your best and stay positive, even if not yielding good results

- I am a firm believer in respecting everyone's honesty, hard work, commitment, and compassion. I believe that there are no shortcuts to success.
- I believe that practically, great learning takes place from seniors, mentors, parents, friends & people around us and by learning through how they deal with situations and take on challenges.
- As we say "Great Things Never Come out from Comfort Zones", I always give my best and dive deep into the assignments. Going superficially is not my way of doing things. There could be difficult situations and times which may not yield results but it too shall pass and I keep persisting effort.
- I believe we should love what we do and do what we love. That keeps me inspired, motivated, and energized in the work I do.
- I'm a people person. I like meeting new people and learning from them and their experiences. I enjoy playing sports, it provides me benefits in two ways - physical fitness and staying calm, patient and strong when required.

#### Your core values

Humility, empathy, honesty, and determination are core values I am always inclined to. This gives an added perspective and empathizes with everyone, be it family members, friends, superiors, colleagues & or subordinates. I am a people person and always put people first. I consider values to be the pillars and they must be held very strongly. Whatever and wherever I am today, the values have always helped me to remain exactly the way I am. I respect everyone and connect and empathize with them honestly and that was the differentiating factor that others describe. Therefore, I always request everyone to always remain with their values!

### **Advice for youngsters**

There are a few suggestions to all the emerging leaders (not, particularly as advice):

- Always stay true to yourself.
- Have a great aim, continuously acquire knowledge, do hard work and persevere and succeed.
- Don't wish for it, work for it.
- Respect everyone! Not only by the virtue of position, power, success, and wealth.





**M VAMSI KRISHNA**Executive Manager - Total Rewards, PepsiCo

M Vamsi Krishna currently leads the Total Rewards Operations for North America, AMESA, and APAC regions at PepsiCo. The main capability areas led are Job Evaluation, External Benchmarking Process, Benefits Administration, Salary Exceptions, Leadership LTI & Global & Diversity Pay Equity.

# It is easy to achieve success and follow your plan when things are smooth

My success mantra is to be positive in all situations at work. I strongly believe it is easy to achieve success and follow your plan when things are smooth. It is easy to have the motivation and stay happy and positive when things are happening as you expected. The real challenge in life comes when things are not smooth. When your plan is not working out, when what you do fail, and when you are broke and you need to put food on the table, it is difficult to keep yourself positive and maintain your motivation.

#### Your core values

My core values are being ethical and maintaining 100% integrity. No matter what it takes these two core values really helped me to grow in my career. In the recent past, I am also focusing more on voicing opinions fearlessly as one of the strong core values in this present situation of the virtual work environment. I always respect people/team members who have this as a core value in their life.

### **Advice for youngsters**

I strongly advise all the youngsters/future emerging leaders to believe in themselves, ignite their passion, and be positive with a never give up mindset. Before anyone believes you, you should start believing in yourself. Learn from the mistakes and don't try to repeat it for maintaining the credibility with your management / team members.



**MEENA KUMARI** Global HR Head, Airmeet Networks Pvt Ltd

Meena Kumari is an HR professional with over 15 years of experience mostly working in technology companies, product, and Saas start-ups. Her areas of expertise include building, developing, and sustaining a fully remote / globally distributed workforce. Meena is instrumental in creating cultures of collaboration and implementing change to achieve workforce excellence. She has a proven track record of coaching in the areas of transformational leadership, team building, and managing change, with proven success in intercultural communication. She is currently heading the Global Human Resources function at Airmeet.

# Keep setting yourself small goals to create a sense of constant momentum

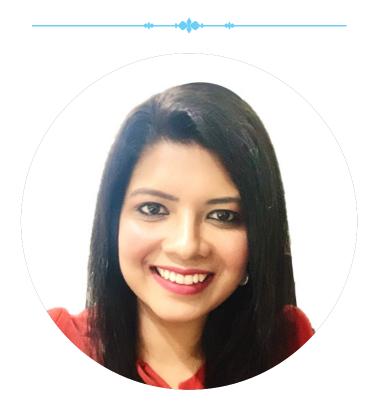
Practice doesn't make perfect, Practice makes improvements and hence I believe every challenge I face is an opportunity to grow and improve. Success to me is being able to stay consistent and the feeling of knowing that I am on the right track and doing what I am meant to be doing and ensuring to lead with compassion. I'm always on a mission is to empower organizations and communities in achieving effective collective progress

#### Your core values

Razor-sharp focus on employee experience and motivation. Creating trust & transparency is our guiding light as HR professionals. Striving to build an agile collaborative and merit-driven high-performance culture. Also, always be open to continuous improvement.

### Advice for youngsters

Make sure you have a vision of what you want your life to look like in five, 10, or 15 years' time? Keep setting yourself small goals to create a sense of constant momentum.



**NILA JOHNSON** 

Vice President & Lead, D&I in Technology & Innovation, Standard Chartered

Nila Johnson leads D&I for Standard Chartered Technology & Innovation, curating and executing inclusive strategies that maximize the diversity of thought and experience enabling the right culture and true transformation of the bank's values and purpose, across its global footprint. With an experience of over 15 years in the banking industry, Nila is a firm believer in 'doing the right thing'. Outside of work, she carries an inherent need to integrate and create an empowering, comprehensive way of life demonstrating passion for societal change, supporting women survivors and children of sexual exploitation, substance abuse, and human trafficking.

# Whatever the road, keep walking!

Bloom where you're planted. I personally do not believe that one achieves success during one's lifetime. It's kept for a time after our race on Earth is done and when we have left a legacy that others consider adopting while navigating life's various levels and hurdles. While success is a great place to be in, I'd like to think that when one thinks they have succeeded, they stop learning, stop exploring and stop questioning.

A systematic approach of being curious, courageous, understanding one's playing field, hard work and perseverance can take one along paths they've never imagined possible and maybe even to places that seem magical, but at the end of the day, in the words of Arthur Rubinstein, it is purely "an unconditional acceptance of life, and what it brings". Whatever the road, keep walking!

### Your core values

A simple approach to work and life that says, "Do unto others, as you would have them do to you".

I had been shown kindness and offered opportunities to face the future with the best I had to offer, during some of life's challenging situations.

It is my responsibility to reflect humility, kindness, and empathy to every person and every situation. Having a mind and conscience that seeks the best in others, realizing that diversity and inclusion go beyond equity, into justice and belonging are key to ensuring a world that allows each one to be respected and to thrive.

### **Advice for youngsters**

Along the lines of Hillary Clinton's famous quote, I'd like to say, never doubt that you're valuable, powerful, and deserving of every chance and opportunity in the world, to pursue and achieve your own dreams.

Be courageous and curious about everything. If your dreams don't matter to you, they will not matter to anybody else. And when you're at it, I'd like to encourage you to imagine a world that looks beyond the bias of every kind, giving each one a chance at the best possible version of their lives.



PALLAVI KAR

Manager - Learning & Development, Reliance Retail - Fashion & Lifestyle

Pallavi Kar has been working as a Transformation and Change Agent in the field of L&D and OD for the last 15 years. A Certified Master Trainer for training L&D professionals and Leaders am also an ACC-ICF certified - NLP Coach, Pallavi is passionate about helping individuals and teams identify what they want or aspire for in their lives and careers and supporting them by facilitating/empowering them to reach their goals.

# The more you ask, the more you will grow and be visible to the right people

"There is no shortcut to success. There never was and there never will be." It takes vision, grit, planning, and sheer determination to reach one's goals. As an HR professional which is a support function, I became adept at understanding, identifying unstated business/team needs, managing expectations, and stakeholder management. What really made the difference was the "consistency" and "value" that I brought to the table each time.

The bigger challenge was instilling that value and ownership amongst my team members even while understanding their goals and challenges, and supporting them in their own individual growth journeys. But as a leader in today's world, it is important to enable and empower your team to continuously grow and develop as individuals, because I truly believe a leader is as good as her team.

As an L&D and OD leader, it is also critical for me to understand the industry and business changes and keep the offerings aligned to the identified requirements. This can happen only with a focus on continuous upskilling and the development of self and team's credentials.

### Your core values

I believe in kindness and compassion and giving back to the community that we live in. By demonstrating a little kindness and compassion, we can empower people and communities to be more stable or enable them to be the best version of themselves.

### **Advice for youngsters**

- Stay hungry The day you feel that you have reached, remember there is still a whole lot out there that you are ignorant of.
- Stay curious Don't be afraid to ask questions just because you are afraid to show your ignorance. The more you ask, the more you will grow and be visible to the right people.
- Love yourself Make time for people and things you are passionate about or love, that may not be a part of your professional career. If you are not happy and well balanced as an individual, you cannot be successful as a professional.



POORNA PUSHKALA C

Head - People, Branding & Communications, Samunnati Financial Intermediation and Services Pvt Ltd

Poorna is responsible for Samunnati's People Function and Performance by participating as a strategic partner from the perspective of the impact on people and a resultant effect on business performance. Poorna is also leading the Branding and Communications Function at Samunnati to ensure the "Why of Samunnati with its values" is communicated effectively. A senior certified HR professional, a professional certified coach, Poorna has over 17 years of proven expertise in setting up the entire human resources function/ people practices for start-up organizations and taking them to scale.

# I believe in the power of questioning to enhance learning and bring in newer perspectives

Ever since I started my professional journey, the one thing I have always ensured is to have significant action points from self-reflection and learning every day. Having been a self-learner during my undergraduate and postgraduate studies, it was a trait that was easy to develop. Looking at every challenge as an opportunity to do something new and learn something from them has been an integral part of my professional journey. Gathering newer experiences, and going outside the comfort zone to pursue opportunities outside the core functional domain has been another added advantage. I continue to explore operations, quality, branding & communications, and other aspects of general management due to this trait.

As the saying goes - "The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled." Being one to always ask questions — I believe in the power of questioning to enhance learning and bring in newer perspectives. Questioning also helps in fueling innovation and I have experienced this throughout my work experience. Since becoming a coach, being a coach and nurturing coaching conversations has brought in a new perspective and has helped unlock greater value for self and others.

- Be dependable, supporting others to progress towards their goals and aspirations.
- Being open-minded and compassionate towards others.
- Commitment to action (execution bias).
- Respect for self and others and their core values, beliefs, and action.
- As a leader empathy, passion, and the innate desire to make a difference to others.

### **Advice for youngsters**

- Be as inquisitive as you can.
- Look for learning opportunities at every turn.
- Learn to appreciate simple yet finer things in life.
- Curiosity to uncover/ learn will always be the key to growth.
- Believe in the power of questioning.

Staying grounded as an attitude towards life will bring in the much-needed resilience to navigate as well as overcome any/ all situations.





PRAGYA SINGH

Associate Director - HR, PepsiCo Global Business Services, India LLP



Pragya Singh joined Deloitte in the year 2007 and has since worked with some of the world's leading audit, consulting, and banking organizations like KPMG, Bank of America, and Wells Fargo. After an exciting stint in the financial and audit domains, she shifted gears and joined PepsiCo in 2020, a complete shift in the industry and domain for her. She leads the Diversity Equity and Inclusion agenda for PepsiCo Hyderabad and is an HR Business Partner to large business functions.

# Clarity of purpose and collaboration are two strong pillars for creating a win

Leading large projects with multiple stakeholders spread geographically across the world is a challenging task. Driving a project of this nature has always fueled my motivation. Bringing diverse perspectives to the table, finding common ground and driving alignment, and then passionately working towards the goal is my foolproof success mantra. I would emphasize clarity of purpose and collaboration as two strong pillars for creating a win. Throughout the journey keep a laser-sharp focus on the goal and make conscious and deliberate efforts toward meeting these objectives. Realign and re-focus if you think you are digressing. As HR leaders, it is vital that we create vibrant and engaged employee resource groups that drive integral agendas of the organization. To ensure that any program is successful, one would need to get the requisite sponsorship from the leaders in the organization early on.

### Your core values

I am passionate and resilient, I have the grit and determination to carry on in rough terrain. Having studied in multiple schools and lived in many cities because of the transferable nature of my father's job, I am agile, open to change, and can adapt to various circumstances easily. Born in Rewa, a small town in MP, I am second of the three

girls born to my parents. I lost my father at the age of 13 and witnessed the struggle that my mother had to go through to get a job. I not only wanted to be financially independent myself but grew up with a strong personal desire to empower women and make them earning members of their families.

### **Advice for youngsters**

I would advise the young emerging leaders to bring clarity of purpose within their teams and the extended groups that they influence and align them all towards a common goal. This may sound easy, but this would be the most challenging part of the job. Stay energized and motivated and approach your work with an intent to win and a desire to create a significant difference, your energy and passion would soon rub off on others. Create an atmosphere for collaboration and collective win. Know that you will not be able to drive the massive change alone so seek support – create allies, advocates, and sponsors along this journey you would need them all.



**PRASHANT NAIDU**Associate Director, Arcesium

Prashant Naidu has over 15 years of experience in HR & People Operations spanning a wide array of HR areas. He led high-impact & high-value-oriented programs helping organizations drive change at an enterprise level. In his experience, he has developed and implemented HR transformation & automation projects, led change management programs, built learning & development strategies, and helped organizations create a highly productive & engaged workforce.

# There is more merit in embracing yourself and not labeling yourself

I personally believe in challenging myself and exploring my potential. I feel that one is shaped by their own efforts and experiences. And, hence my constant endeavor has been to push myself to explore my boundaries.

### Your core value

Following are the values, and the reasons why I believe in them so strongly.

- 'Belief in self' as it is important to back yourself
- 'Strength of character' as it is critical to stay true to yourself
- Having a 'growth mindset' to constantly push yourself
- 'Collaboration' to learn from one another

### **Advice for youngsters**

We are constantly evolving as human beings, and 'change' therefore is inevitable. There is more merit in embracing yourself and not labeling yourself, as that helps us to constantly explore possibilities. Hence my advice to youngsters is not to limit themselves to the current status quo but to push and explore themselves fully.



### PRIYANKA KAPUR

Executive Coach, Leadership and Talent Development, ZS Associates

Priyanka Kapur is an influential Executive Coach and HR Leader, passionate about People Strategy, Coaching, Learning, Talent, and Organizational Development. Over the past 15+ years, she has been associated with major industry leaders like ZS Associates, Bajaj Allianz Group, and ICICI Lombard. In her current role with ZS Associates, Priyanka is collaborating to shape & strengthen the coaching culture while navigating the complexities of increasing scale and growth.

# Have the courage to step out of your comfort zone and invite change in your life periodically

Have the courage to step out of your comfort zone and invite change in your life periodically. Lasting happiness and fulfillment are two companions you will always find outside of your comfort zone. Keep family & loved ones close, they keep you inspired, are sound thought partners, are your true cheerleaders, honest critics and they keep you grounded.

Always take a moment to pause and reflect on 'where you started' and 'where you have reached.' Be mindful of how many people contributed to your success and how you are contributing to the success and happiness of others. Get comfortable with silence and experience deep listening. Tag along with many individuals on their respective journeys. Make their journeys magical by empowering them to locate their own purpose and experience true intrinsic growth in the process.

### Your core value

Some of my core values are continual learning, fun, creative & critical thinking, collaboration, fairness, and inclusion. I believe that inclusion is not a choice, but a right that every individual is entitled to. It is also my opinion that every organization should be an incubation machine where every employee can be their most vulnerable and authentic

self. Only when every employee can be themselves, can they be their creative best, bring their voices to work, and impact organizations & the ecosystem positively and immensely!

I am an artist at heart and collaboration and fun come to me rather organically. Collaborating with people from diverse backgrounds, skills, and perspectives is like throwing colors on a blank canvas. Once everyone has contributed by painting with colors of their own choice, the final outcome is usually magnificent."

### **Advice for youngsters**

Dare to ask yourselves – What is my true purpose? What have I been put on Earth for? Finding your purpose sooner and aligning it with your work will give you a head start in life towards a joyous, fulfilling, and more enriching journey. Have the courage and enthusiasm to design your own journey!



**PURBA DAS**Manager - HR, Piramal Pharma Ltd - Consumer Products Division

An emerging HR professional with 4 years of experience across domains ranging from Sales HRBP, HR Analytics, Campus Program, Rewards & Recognition, PMS, Compensation & Benefits. Purba has led key benchmark projects for Piramal Consumer Products like Predictive Attrition, Enhancing Performance Culture through Goal Audit, Goal Synergy, Analytics based Performance Evaluation engine, revamping R&R process for CPD and other critical strategic projects for HR and business. Throughout her tenure at CPD, she has worked on bringing in analytics in processes, innovation in HR domains and being a strategic partner for business to create solutions and exemplary experience for employees.

# Get your hands dirty and deep dive into initiatives, processes, and projects

- Question the status quo, always try to add value and bring something new to the table for even the smallest task at hand
- Data backed approach for decision making
- Develop myself continuously by taking up new challenges and courses, certifications
- Be agile and adaptive to situation at hand
- Experiment, innovate and not restrict myself for fear of failure
- Create an environment where every team member is free to share opinions, thoughts, feedback and brainstorm and create solutions together
- Create long term solutions instead of short term fixes

### Your core value

- Be authentic, honest and self-aware
- Intellectual humility
- Building an environment of trust and empowerment

### **Advice for youngsters**

Be proactive in taking up challenges and opportunities early on in your career. Get your hands dirty and deep dive into initiatives, processes, and projects, as basics are built through execution.



### RAMAKRISHNAN RAJAGOPALAN

General Manager - HR & Admin, Head HRBP, Modenik Lifestyle Pvt. Ltd.

Ramakrishnan Rajagopalan has 16+ years of experience and tracks a record of building HR functions and teams from the ground up. He is a strategic thinker and thought leader who influences, and advises leaders as a business partner, fueling positive organizational development and a high-performance culture. He has worked in the auto components, auto manufacturing, chemical, agriculture, and textile industry. Each industry comes with its challenges, and he has been an intricate source in providing effective interventions with all the companies he has associated himself with. With a background in labor laws, Ramakrishnan brings with him experience in core IR. He also has core talent management experience like designing an assessment center, performing job evaluation, and white-collar productivity.

# If you take care of the people around you, you will be taken care of

My success mantra is "If you take care of the people around you, you will be taken care of". Everyone will be busy in their business, and I believe they need someone to handle their softer issues. The best way to enable the business to happen is not just putting the right people in the right job, it is also important to meaningfully engage with them. As an HR person, people mostly come to you with some complaints, it can be on their job, or misunderstanding with a colleague or reporting manager or even to make complaints about HR. If you are to advice or coach, first you must earn the trust and thereby you enter the space of others. The first thing that you should keep out is what is there for you? You must be independent and unbiased, and easily approachable soul for your employees. After all, they need someone to share their feelings

### Your core value

- Respect all lives All lives on earth have a purpose. Knowingly or unknowingly, they are helping you on a daily basis. Hence, we have no authority to demean or rank anyone based on our benefits/perceptions.
- Inclusiveness I strongly believe in inclusiveness. Inclusiveness may delay your decision-making process but gives unimaginable

results and sustenance.

- Trust The base of any relationship whether it is personal or professional.
- Integrity For me integrity is doing the right things even when no one is watching you.
- Continuous learning Learning is the only one that is constant and can be done by anyone, anytime and it happens all the time.

### **Advice for youngsters**

Not an advice but a request to the young HRs to keep their eyes and ears sharp always. Acquire knowledge as much as you can! Improve your perception! Don't judge anyone quickly and don't take any side. Always remember that you have more responsibility than anyone as you are the culture builder. Strike that balance between people and business.



### **REETI DUBEY**

Director-HR, Natwest Group, India (Erstwhile RBS)

As a seasoned HR professional with 15+ years of experience majoring in the Banking and Financial Services sector, Reeti Dubey has done a variety of roles in the HR function and is currently a part of the HR Leadership Team at Natwest Group (NWG) India. As a Director of HR, Reeti currently leads HR Consulting Practice for NWG, India. In her previous role, Reeti led the Inclusion agenda for NWG India where she was instrumental in implementing many path-breaking, industry-first initiatives in the inclusion space. Reeti is a full-time mother to two girls, an avid reader, and an inclusion enthusiast who strongly believes in the power of networks.

# Success often requires living in a radical state of possibility even before the evidence shows up

Showing up for opportunities, taking the risks, not being afraid, and being comfortable with being uncomfortable has helped me progress further in my career. I have always believed in learning through experience and all the moves I have taken in my career have provided me a steep learning curve. Obviously, success doesn't show up immediately; however, the long-term benefits have always outweighed the risks I took by picking up these jobs in the first place. I also strongly invest and rely on my network – both within the organization and externally. Networking with a purpose pays off!

### Your core value

Being authentic, purposeful, and fair in everything you do and making sure you pay it forward by supporting others are key to my value system.

### **Advice for youngsters**

My elder sister who also happens to be my life coach once said to me "Success often requires living in a radical state of possibility even

before the evidence shows up." I always think of this when I need my dose of motivation. It's simply like dressing up for your next job a lot before you've got it. So be ready and show up, who knows, this might be your day.



**RUPAM SINGH** Vice President & Group Head - Performance & Rewards, JSW

Rupam Singh is a seasoned HR professional with more than a decade of global experience in leading compensation programs, international rewards, HR technology, global mobility, performance, and rewards for C-suite executives in IT, Pharma & Manufacturing sectors. He has assisted businesses in organizational design and restructuring, integration of compensation practices in acquisitions, driving enterprise-level HR agenda in Group Businesses, defining and executing an effective Talent Strategy, strengthening Employer Brand, and designing progressive HR policies.

# Success comes to those who move forward in spite of adversities and do so with all their might

My success mantra is centered on three leadership pillars - humility, adaptability, and credibility. The actions of a successful leader inspire their team and this, in turn, sets examples of great teamwork. I take full responsibility for every output of my team members. Humility allows me to be mindful of others and never hesitate while serving others. It also empowers me to accept mistakes and be open to learning from my team.

### Your core value

The four values that I live by are - integrity, honesty, and compassion, and these three values are something that defines me. Integrity is the foundation of good leadership, and one must stand for their beliefs. No matter how hard a situation is, delivering the said promises as ethically and morally grounded will necessarily pay the dividend in the long run. The next most treasured value that I possess is honesty. It is expected of leaders to garner trust and respect from people for reliability. Moreover, we look up to people who are loyal to their words and are accountable. Compassion for me as a personal value means helping others along the journey of awareness, courage, confidence, and joy.

### **Advice for youngsters**

"Be ambitious and do not be afraid to take risks." If you happen to fail, you will recognize your strengths and limitations and be better able to adapt in the future. Only by knowing your limit can you fully maximize your potential. Success comes to those who move forward in spite of adversities and do so with all their might.

Be able to establish your goals and commit to your plan. Sometimes structure, deadlines, and plans aren't the best way to lead. At times, it is more effective to go with the flow, take it as it comes and explore each new opportunity. But, despite this, you always need to keep in mind your end game, your objective. Lastly, believe in yourself and you will be unstoppable. It is not your aptitude but the attitude which gives you altitude in your career.



**SAIKRISHNA RAO** Head - L&D, Vedantu Innovations Pvt. Ltd

Saikrishna Rao is an accomplished L&D professional with over 18 years of work across large organizations and startups. He has donned various hats including in Software Delivery, Knowledge Management, Consulting, Learning & Development, and HR. He calls himself a learning sherpa who is passionate about helping people learn and leverage their potential. He has founded and mentored pan-India corporate "Toastmaster" clubs to help individuals and organizations improve their public speaking and leadership skills. He is also a key member of CII India core team on Knowledge Management.

# Start with yourself by being the change you want to see

I have a compelling dream to inspire everyone I come in contact with to become the best versions of themselves. Now with a dream like that, where do I start? With myself, of course! After all, an extension of an individual is a team and an extension of the team is an organization we work for and the society we live in.

As it is said, we become what we think about most of the time, and I think of how I can #bebettereveryday. This is what will help me lift others up too. On a more direct note, my success mantra is to be humble, learn and apply my learning consistently so that I can help myself and others succeed.

The ability to use our learning comes with deliberate practice and sharing it with others. While we are humble enough to learn continuously and apply those learnings, a wrapper of consistency will make us unstoppable.

### Your core value

The purpose of my core values is to help me live the life I want, which is to help people to create the lives they desire while contributing to the world through their calling. When the why is clear, the how becomes easier.

- My first value is that of curiosity and being curious to learn.
- My second value is that of acceptance.
- My third value is that of a 'high agency' which is all about taking action over inaction.

### **Advice for youngsters**

My thoughts on other emerging leaders have been intentionally crafted based on my pivotal learning moments.

I have understood that the success of our society rests on the shoulders of every individual and it is by influencing at the individual level at scale, we can influence the society itself. Start with yourself by being the change you want to see. Last but not the least, you will have to invest in yourself in all ways. All of us are on our learning journey at different speeds and it is for us to face our self-limiting beliefs and move on one step at a time. Indeed, one action is worth more than a thousand thoughts.



**SAKSHI KASHYAP** 

Vice President - Talent Management & Learning, Natwest India

An ICF Certified Transformational coach, Diversity & Talent Champion, Sakshi Kashyap has a corporate experience of around 14 years. She is someone who believes in purpose-led goals and championing the potential of individuals and teams. Sakshi derives her own sense of purpose by bringing together individuals and teams and empowering them with resources to achieve their best selves. Throughout her career, she has been engaged with and led teams to deliver the very best for the stakeholders.

# Try out new things, it's only then you would know what you're best at and what you like to do

There's been no one magic formula for me. I have been privileged to have a good education, inspiring mentors, and a great support network to propel me forward. In addition, some of the things that I have consciously done are:

- Being my authentic self
- Grabbing opportunities and not waiting for them to come by
- Always finding the courage to speak my mind
- Never compromising on being prepared
- Creating my own brand. Being my own advocate
- Reaching out to people, making connections
- Freely passing on the credit to people who have worked for and with me
- Paying forward my skills, experience, and knowledge through mentoring and coaching work

### Your core value

Some of the core values I strictly adhere to are - honesty, courage, fun, relationships, and communication.

### **Advice for youngsters**

• Take risks with your career. Try out new things, it's only then you

- would know what you're best at and what you like to do.
- Have a trusted network of friends and advisors who can help navigate and support you through your personal and professional life
- It may be easy to completely lose yourself in work and the economic upside of your achievements. However, take a balanced approach to life- Focus on your friends, family, health, and things that matter.
- In the end, take a long view of life. Let small things not put you down.



### **SAMIK ROY CHOWDHURY**

Lead - Learning & Development, Reliance Jio Infocom Limited

Samik Roy Chowdhury is a dynamic, result-oriented visionary with over 15 years of progressive experience in Learning Management and Operations. Samik possesses a deep understanding of how to streamline business operations and engage employees in order to reach company objectives and increase profits. He is adept at analyzing team strengths and leveraging individual assets to reach business goals efficiently. Samik possesses exceptional verbal, written, and interpersonal communication along with active listening skills.

# Believe in yourself for your intuition is almost always right

There are 4 success mantras that I follow:

- I strive to set the highest standard of quality in everything I do. I always want to drive towards "the next" great thing, by constantly challenging myself to improve and break new ground.
- Decisions are creative opportunities for expansiveness. I am greedy for the best long-term outcome, even if it causes short-term sacrifice. I act with purpose and invent the future.
- By being maniacally focused, my goals are to help in building the best long-term solutions for my stakeholders.
- With passion at the heart of everything I do, I help nurture ideas, inspire excellence, and find creative ways to eliminate obstacles to cultivating growth.

### Your core value

- Uncompromising integrity in all my actions.
- The customer is at the center of all my efforts at the workplace.
- Respect for employees, their talents, and initiatives.
- Teamwork and collaboration are key ingredients to success.

### **Advice for youngsters**

Believe in yourself for your intuition is almost always right.

Listen to your inner voice and do not ignore 'warnings'. You may have discovered so many times that your initial thoughts on certain matters, which you ignored, were right! With experience, you will come to the realization that 'your gut is your most trusted advisor'.

Also, always put your thoughts into action. Thoughts have no value until they are actioned. You will always learn from your mistakes.



**SARMA CHILLARA**CHRO, ŠKODA AUTO Volkswagen India Private Limited

Sarma Chillara has an experience spanning almost two decades in Human Resource Practices across geographies, industries, and verticals, He has honed a global, forward-thinking perspective for HR business partnering (HRBP) and Center of Excellence (CoE) in addition to steering organizational culture and change. Sarma has successfully led HR transformational projects and complex mergers with cost and workforce synergies. He has also efficiently driven business projects for ramping up operations, setting up retail stores for businesses in India, and business process outsourcing outside India working with leading organizations such as Future Group, Citi Group, and BCG, prior to joining ŠKODA AUTO Volkswagen India Private Limited (SAVWIPL).

# One must remember that everyone you will ever meet knows something you don't

I believe in consistency. A set of habits that are focused on personal and professional excellence when followed with dedication can lead to the success one strives for. Success itself is subjective so the very basic mantra is to understand what constitutes success and then strive for it by putting in uncompromising efforts.

At a personal level, I am very focused on staying healthy, keeping abreast of the dynamic changes happening in the world, and upskilling myself as trends evolve.

At a professional level, I deeply believe that passionate and engaged employees are at the heart of business success and therefore that's the environment I aim to create with my teams.

### Your core value

I am driven by three words - people, passion, and purpose. My motive is to inspire, collaborate and nurture my colleagues and in turn get inspired by them. The core values that I identify myself with are optimism, perseverance, and pragmatism, at the same time I also believe in efficiency, ethicality, and excellence.

### **Advice for youngsters**

Dream big. Have a vision and take action to realize it. Be focused and challenge yourself constantly. Be a part of and build great teams. One must remember that everyone you will ever meet knows something you don't. So, try to learn from them.



### **SASIDHAR AMBATIPUDI**

Senior Manager, Talent Advisory Partner, Pega Systems Inc

Truly Indian in spirit, Sasidhar Ambatipudi have been raised and educated in several states across the country and developed a love for the diversity of languages, cuisines, and personalities.

By education, he holds a Master's degree in HR from Sri Balaji University, Pune, and currently serving as Senior Manager at Pegasystems Inc. Human Resources has been a career of choice and he considers himself ad a lifelong learner from the several mentors he looks up to.

# Aligning to my inner drive to be a polymath has been my biggest success mantra

Aligning to my inner drive to be a polymath has been my biggest success mantra.

As a personality trait, I have always looked for new exposure from people and opportunities from multiple walks of life. This resulted in trying my hands at diverse fields – from a certification in paragliding to weekend teaching for college students to learning the Sanskrit language from my mother among many others. In this quest, I used to look for knowledge across borders, ages, and personalities. One of the stark realizations I have had early in my career was how holistic the mind develops when stretched to possibilities across a range of passions and few deep pursuits.

Over the years, I have seen others and personally experienced the power of being a 'generalist' in various aspects of life and how it fuels creativity and impact in the chosen 'specialist' areas.

My career trajectory reveals similar patterns. I was a Finance professional for several years before I found my calling in Human Resources. I served in several roles within Human Resources including Chief of Staff at one point.

### Your core value

Personal mastery has been a core value since childhood and inspired by accomplished individuals around me. Continuous investment in the development of self is the best gift one can give to oneself. This forms the base for other values I cherish – curiosity, candor, and diversity. Curiosity because of the enormity of how much is unknown in everything, candor because there is also a sense of honesty attached, and diversity because it's just a reflection of who I am as a person and the possibilities I can explore in life. A deep sense of accountability and ownership is also part of my value system.

### **Advice for youngsters**

It's important for everyone to delve deep into oneself and discover one's true calling in order to pursue mastery. Along this journey, it's critical to seek guidance from mentors from different walks of life. To improve the mental metabolism, the mind needs to be kept constantly nourished with occasional detox breaks, constructive peer criticism, and intense periods of activity.





### SHILPI UPINDER CHUGH

Head of HR, India, Dyson

Shilpi Upinder Chugh is a postgraduate in HR from TISS, Mumbai. A global career spanning large multinationals like American Express, Boston Scientific, and Wipro Technology. Shilpi currently is Head of HR, India for Dyson. Shilpi is an entrepreneurial leader, passionate about growing businesses and people. She's a Certified Leadership & Life Coach, Certified Situational Leadership II trainer by Ken Blanchard, Certified by ISB Hyderabad on Women in Leadership and Leading in Turbulent Times. She's also a member of the India Diversity Forum, an autonomous body creating awareness and bringing issues on diversity & inclusion forward for all Indian companies.

# Go after understanding yourself, uncover your strengths, find your unique leverage

**Clarity:** I believe beyond a point in one's career, it's crucial to figure out why you're doing what you're doing. I invest(ed) a lot of time reflecting on this, it's key to have a bigger purpose in life, understand yourself better to be able to identify and play on your unique leverage.

**Focus:** Focus on your intention, focus on possibility. The reason I highlight these is because every action taken is measured not by results alone but also by intention. Is my intention bigger than just my interest? Is my intention rooted in positivity? This helps me ground.

**Self learn:** Have one ritual every day that you commit yourself to, 100% discipline, no excuses. One has to find a way to learn every single day.

**Family:** Good days, and bad days can be managed by a supportive family. I invest time in this and this is at the heart of my success.

### Your core value

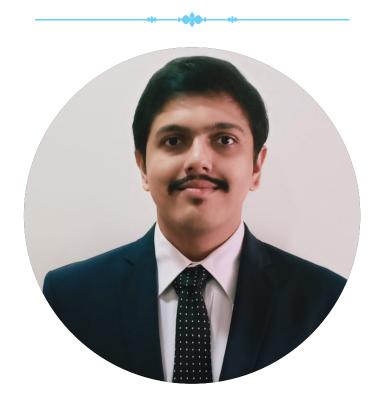
- Always focus on growing yourself, and learning every day. The question I ask myself is am I wiser today than yesterday?
- Authenticity: There is no other way to lead self and others today.

- Fearless expression: It's important for me to express myself fearlessly. Courage to speak and listen.
- Relevance of the work I do, the relevance of my opinions and views.

### **Advice for youngsters**

I would advise all leaders if there is one thing you have to go after - go after understanding yourself, uncover your strengths, and find your unique leverage.

Your unique leverage puts you in a position of strength and you can drive your career from there, joyfully.



### SIDHESH ACHYUT KAMATH

Manager, Human Resources, Ocwen Financial Solutions Pvt. Ltd.

Sidhesh Kamath currently leads the HR Analytics and Reporting Function at Ocwen Financial Solutions Pvt. Ltd. He joined as an HR Business Partner and moved to the role after a stint of 6 years. Over his tenure, he has had the opportunities to successfully lead organization-wide activities of performance management, employee engagement, and policy creation in addition to his regular responsibilities.

# When in doubt, introspect and seek inspiration from experiences & leaders

I feel the corporate journey is a trek with multiple valleys and peaks. In a journey that has multiple destinations, it's about soaking in the key moments – high or low – and learning from the people we meet along the way. For traveling steadily, I prefer consistency and my personal recipe for coffee:

- "Blend content, context, and credibility,
- Brew on the heat of experience,
- Bring in some zest, a dash of creativity,
- Savor the flavor,
- Share the excess,

A simple recipe, for the coffee of success!"

### Your core value

I work and live by the motto "Patience, Perseverance, Passion". Patience – during interactions and while dealing with challenges, Perseverance – not giving up in the face of hurdles, Passion – ensuring complete commitment and zeal towards work and life. I believe these 3 qualities are imperative to achieving personal and organizational goals. My decision to pursue specialization and work in Human Resources was shaped by very personal experiences. Hence, my career so far has been built with an intrinsic desire to contribute to the success of my

organization, its people, and its team members.

### **Advice for youngsters**

It's the most simple, sincere, and honest efforts that make a difference. This is especially true for us HR professionals where key stakeholders are employees from the ground up. If your intentions and efforts are genuine, keep striving and they will bear fruit. When in doubt, introspect and seek inspiration from experiences & leaders. No style is perfect but look closely and there's always something to help you tackle a difficult situation.



**SMRITI SUDHA** 

Vice President Human Resource - India and Philippines, Wells Fargo



Smriti Sudha is a millennial HR professional with a global outlook exhibiting proven expertise in driving people strategy towards conceptualization, design, and implementation of talent attraction, management, engagement, and development interventions. She is adept in managing the employee life cycle with a focus on talent identification, development, management, retention, etc. towards an effective employee value proposition.

# If there is one secret sauce to success of an HR professional it would be staying aligned with your team

If there is one secret sauce to the success of an HR professional it would be staying aligned with your team. It is imperative to understand one's team including personal and professional happenings as well as leveraging from their wisdom. As an HR professional, I harness the power of positive psychology, taking incremental steps to acknowledge and recognize. The last key facet for success is owning a decision with cautious optimism backed by data and solid facts. I believe in taking charge and ensuring end-to-end closure.

### Your core value

My core values are focused on empathy, professionalism, teamwork, and most importantly empowerment. I strongly believe the professionals need to adopt these core values to make a meaningful impact and contribution not only to their organizations but to society at large.

### Advice for youngsters

My advice for young professionals is focused on two key aspects -

Follow your profession with passion & be a lifelong learner. Following your passion will make your contributions meaningful and genuine. Having the hunger to learn will continue to evolve you both from professional and personal perspectives.



**SUSHMITA ROY** Senior Vice President, Human Resources, Sony Pictures Networks

Sushmita Roy is an HR professional with 15 years of rich work experience across Digital, Media, Telecom, and Consulting organizations. She comes with a proven track record of outstanding work performance and a solid academic record. Passionate about building winning teams in organizations, Sushmita believes that 'right' talent strategies backed by robust execution are the key to success and growth for any business. Sushmita loves interacting with young minds, is a keen learner, and believes in the power of technology to change the world for the better, and hence while at work she actively explores and deploys new technologies to fuel growth and sustainability.

# Be driven by purpose, do some meaningful work, and create positive impact

I believe in envisioning and institutionalizing cultures that enable individuals in an organization to succeed and grow. Another important mantra is to ensure that the organization's structure, policies, and processes are all conducive for teams and individuals to operate and deliver on their goals. I believe in a best-fit approach rather than a world-class approach when it comes to talent. I have worked closely with business teams to understand the pulse of business, and design/realign structures, policies, and processes whenever there is a need. This enables teams to stay focused on their goals and not let structural/procedural roadblocks affect them. Proactive solutions to minimize noise factors in a business is the key to building highly engaged and productive teams. The other factor that's critical is recognition. While individuals work hard to achieve their targets, there is a clear need for recognition. And the trick here is to ensure that there is fairness and differentiation in recognition.

#### Your core value

Agility, resilience, and empathy are the three values that define me. I believe in the power of being authentic. My passion for bringing in positive change in the ecosystem is what drives me to continuously innovate, stay focused, learn more and create value.

#### **Advice for youngsters**

Be driven by purpose, do some meaningful work and create a positive impact. And while doing this, continuously find opportunities to learn and know more. Also, be curious and insightful.



**SWATHI PASUMATI** 

Dy Director, Total Rewards, PepsiCo Global Business Services, India LLP

An engineer by heart, Swathi Pasumati found interest in making a career in Human Resources Management. She started her career as a young and confident management trainee with Mercer, a leading HR consulting organization. In the years that went by, she has worked with different organizations as a part of their Rewards Centers of Excellence to enhance and deliver the right rewards value proposition to their employees. In the last two years, she has been privileged to be leading rewards for PepsiCo HBS, the global in-house capability hub of PepsiCo.

# The more you give to the ring of people around you, the more your pot of success fills!

My success mantra lies in being agnostic to success and finding more powerful and purposeful anchors to my career! I realize that all the effort that I continuously put to pick the most meaningful organizational problems, working with the most impactful stakeholders, and creating a value for the ecosystem that I am a part of has come along with a lot of happiness, sense of purpose and success too! It is important for us to find that right internal balance of purpose, happiness, and sense of fulfillment, as we meet organizational priorities. I spend a lot of time introspecting my choices, refining my approaches, and making bold choices to nurture myself and stay in a zone where the right balance is struck! I strongly believe that it is in that zone that we grow, become successful, and more importantly, we create paths for others!

#### Your core value

Authenticity, ownership, and passion have been the three core values that have consistently knitted through my professional career! I vehemently believe that we leave a strong mark of identity on every role we pick up in our professional careers, and I strive to make that legacy an impeccable one! I also strongly believe that to rise as an individual, you must selflessly strive to raise the organizational ecosystem of which you are an integral part. Experience has taught me

that the more you give to the ring of people around you, the more your pot of success fills!

#### **Advice for youngsters**

I would strongly advise emerging leaders to be the uncompromising forces in their organizations that propel continuously towards improvement and excellence. As human resources leaders, we hold the forte of the most important engine of the future of our organizations — talent! I can say with utmost confidence, that we as organizations will only be as strong as the people who hold us together. Now is the time for us to envision! How do we stop making incremental advancements and be the rush of transformation that pushes us to the next level! It is time for us to be the unstoppable visionaries and immaculate executors of the future!



TARISHI KWATRA

Associate Director HR - Lead Talent Management OD PepsiCo India

Tarishi Kwatra is a Human Resource professional with 17 years of professional experience across Talent Management, Culture, Diversity and Engagement, Talent Acquisition, Total Rewards, HRBP verticals. Tarishi has worked across esteemed global organizations including PepsiCo (11 years), AON Hewitt (four years), and Tata Consultancy Services (two years). She has proven multi-tasking organizational abilities and exceptional stakeholder management skills, driving key projects through her tenures.

# These help you influence your stakeholders and eventually, propel your business

My success mantra is a combination of three elements. They are hard work, resilience, and the spirit to take on challenges. I strongly believe that these elements can help you make initiatives that are relevant to your business needs. In turn, these help you influence your stakeholders and eventually, propel your business.

#### Your core value

When it comes to my core values, I have four principles in life that I adhere to. The first is ownership - taking accountability for your goals and actions. Next is authenticity - being genuine about your ambitions and thoughts. Third is respect - showing the same level of respect for every person you come across. And finally, integrity - being absolutely sincere about your beliefs and objectives.

#### **Advice for youngsters**

It is very important to speak your mind, because you must make your opinion count. It's the way the saying goes - use your seat on the table. Furthermore, make your own life choices and own them up - whether it's about career moves, marriage, or even kids.



THENDRAL MARAN

Director – HR Business Partner, NatWest Group India Pvt. Ltd.

Thendral Maran's experience as an HR Leader is drawn from her 17+ years of cumulative experience across multiple domains in HR such as business partnering, diversity & inclusion, performance, reward & benefits, employee relations, talent management, transformation, change management & HR operations. In her current role as the HR Business Partner with NatWest Group, she is responsible for driving strategic people's priorities that influence business outcomes. She also holds cross geographical experience having worked internationally (UK & China) and with senior stakeholders and teams in India, the UK, Europe & Asia largely for leading corporates in Financial Service sectors.

## In the VUCA world, as a leader, you often take the burnt of big changes or even initiate them

Be self-aware — Believe in yourself and playing to your strengths can sound common but that's really worked for me. It is a key differentiating factor to being an authentic leader, building credible lasting relationships, and being a trusted advisor. Asking for feedback, reflecting to better understand your sweet spot/weakness, and taking charge of your own development plan are some of the suggested actions I would recommend.

Be a curious learner — I strive to be a better version of myself every single day and I do that by constantly upskilling, taking some risks, and exploring the unexplored territory. Moving out of my comfort zone is key and you can find me putting up my hand for stretch assignments & gigs. I think these are great opportunities to build & acquire critical experience without changing your job/ role.

Make a difference – I wake up every day with a zeal to make a positive impact on people. Quite often in our roles, we get into the framework, compliance, policies, etc. however it is equally important to find pragmatic solutions for business challenges and I would go that extra mile to find workable solutions to help colleagues & businesses thrive.

#### Your core value

Respect – As a leader, it is important to demonstrate the right behaviors and treat everyone the same irrespective of who they are and what they do. If you want your views & time to be respected, it is fair to respect others' views and time the same as you would expect.

Resilience - In the current context of the VUCA world, as a leader, you often take the brunt of big changes or even initiate them. Being agile, going with the flow, and bouncing back when things go wrong have really worked for me and more importantly, you set a great example for your team during times of hardships.

#### **Advice for youngsters**

One wish I would have for emerging leaders is to constantly raise the standards and try out new practices which could set the stage for many first and strive to leave a legacy for the industry.



**TOSHI KAUSHIK**National Talent Leader - Risk Advisory, Deloitte India

Toshi Kaushik is a practicing HR professional with experience in working with high-performance teams and C-Suite leaders. The depth & breadth of her experience in HR includes - talent business advisory, total rewards, talent attraction, talent analytics, performance & change management, employee relations & governance, and alumni relations covering the entire talent value chain. In her current role, she leads and deploys talent strategy for business leaders & their teams by upping their game across all facets of talent business advisory. She designs and drives people's agenda around talent experience for Deloitte's fastest growing and youngest advisory practice in India.

# Be proud of what you do, even your mistakes, for they indicate that you are trying

I strongly believe in partnering with businesses — to learn and know the business — thereby designing and implementing people's strategies around it. HR plays a pivotal role in shaping the face of the organization and hence, I keep learning new things to implement in new roles that I get to carry every 18 months or so the beauty is that in every role, I have been able to blend the newly acquired skill/learning with the new set of challenges that came with the role, only to realize that there is so much more waiting for you to take on.

#### Your core value

Integrity and acting responsibly are the cornerstone for me when it comes to my core values. It helps you stay humble and navigate through a situation of dilemma. It promotes an environment where people can learn and develop and take responsibilities that, in general, are kept identified few.

Appreciate, understand, and be willing to appreciate what your people might go through. Empathy should not be mistaken for sympathy. It doesn't mean that you agree or can relate to the other person. What it really means is that you can understand others and that you're aware of how their feelings impact them.

#### **Advice for youngsters**

HR is a craft not to be mixed up with Science or Arts and you can master it only by practicing it. And this learning must be applied across all facets of human resources not limiting only to a few. For you to be an SME in a particular domain, you must experience what it takes to deliver in the rest of the domains of talent attraction, talent management, or talent development.

Be proud of what you do, even your mistakes, for they indicate that you are trying. Celebrate small milestones while working towards the larger goal. When you do things that make you feel proud, you will be energized to better your art.

Innovate and invest in yourself for this is something that you have complete power within you, be it in small ways or otherwise. In the overall journey, the delta will be huge. Don't forget to give back and strengthen our HR fraternity.



**VISHAL SINGH**Head of Talent Management & Acquisition, Bata India Limited

Vishal Singh is a Senior HR Leader with close to 13 years of business-facing experience with diversified global industries & market leaders - TCS (IT), Hero MotoCorp (Automotive), and Bata (Retail) in the area of talent management, development, HR strategies & HR business partnering for multiple CXO's. In the current stint at BATA, he is reporting to the CHRO as part of the HR leadership team, heading talent management/acquisition and HR strategies and playing an HR advisory role to the CEO on talent management strategies.

# Life and career are not a sprint but a marathon

My success mantra is very simple. I always tell myself to think long-term. Life and career are not a sprint but a marathon. Run the race with full vigor and energy but don't forget to enjoy the moments too. I keep telling myself that whatever work I am doing I need to leave a legacy behind that. Do work that affects organizations and employees' lives in a positive manner and for the greater good. Bring an intent and attitude that galvanizes others to join you. Set a vision and drive your actions so flawlessly that you don't have to explain it to others. Be a brand that can nonchalantly wear both hats of strategizing and executing and can bring varied solutions to the table in the quickest of the time. I keep reminding myself time and again on these lines and it helps push me to present my best version professionally and personally every day.

#### Your core value

I value honesty, courage & perseverance. Every person who knows me personally and professionally knows I am a stickler for these. These words define the crux around which my personality has been built and day in and day out you will see me walking this rope. A large part of this has been due to the series of experiences I had and by shadowing leaders who knew the real meaning of these. Once I am done and

dusted with my career, I want people to remember what work ethics I brought to the table and what did I deliver, and these values will help sail my glorious ship.

#### **Advice for youngsters**

- Think differently. Try and explore new ideas without bringing your old ideas along for the ride
- Learn how to learn. Note, likely, most of us have not mastered this one yet.
- Be curious about everything. You will be able to connect the dots once you look back.
- Don't fear failures as these are nothing but stepping stones.
- Be a never-ending reader. Nothing brings success home more than the knowledge you have.

Take care of your family, build meaningful deep relationships, work for a legacy and not for money, and laugh a lot as there is no better medicine than being happy.



**ZEESHAN RAMLAN**Director & Head of HR, CoinSwitch Kuber

Zeeshan Ramlan is a dynamic HR leader with over 14 years of experience. He is currently the Director and Head of HR for CoinSwitch. Prior to CoinSwitch, Zeeshan was a Global HR leader at Intuit and played a pivotal role in its journey to becoming India's No.1 company to work. As a former Senior Lead – HRBP & Employee Relations at Infosys, Zeeshan managed two large verticals and helped businesses create fun & engaged workforce. In 2018, the World HRD Congress honored him with the Global Top 100 Diversity Leaders award.

# Empathy & integrity without compromise is two core values that I hold close to my heart

As I look back on my professional journey here are a few things that have worked for me:

- Ask questions without any fear It's always better to have clarity than half knowledge.
- Never stay in your comfort zone at times being in a company for a long time, may deprive you of exploring what the world has to offer.
- Learning is easy, unlearning isn't Moving from services to a product & now in a fast-growing start-up, each domain teaches you new things. It's important to Unlearn certain things and be open to learning.
- Leading inclusively diversity is not just about gender, it's also about diverse perspectives. If you are a leader, and reading this never forget to take collective opinion from your team before deciding on an approach. Leadership is all about bringing diverse thoughts together into planning what's best for your employees.
- Lastly, stay humble & take care of your people, the rest will follow.

#### Your core value

Empathy & integrity without compromise is two core values that I hold close to my heart.

Empathy is one of the most important skills for any HR professional. Integrity without compromise is doing the right things even when no one is watching. Never compromise your values for short-term success. You will never be at peace.

#### **Advice for youngsters**

Firstly, never be afraid of making the right choices. I come from a family of doctors, and all my older siblings entered the medical field. Being the youngest, it was hard for me to pursue something outside of a doctor/engineer. At work, you will come across many such difficult & conflicting situations. If things don't excite you, decide at the right time instead of regretting later.

Secondly, stay away from negativity. At times, most of the coffee table conversations are around unfriendly managers or team members. Be thankful for the bad managers/colleagues, for they have shown you exactly who you don't want to be.

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