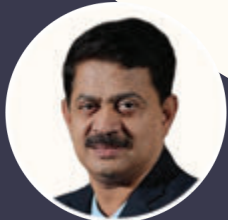


ALL THINGS TALENT

OCT 2023

GCC'S TALENT QUEST

The **INDIA** Advantage



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Mino Thomas

Sr Director Talent, Adobe

From the

CBO'S Desk

Pawan Goyal

Chief Business Officer - naukri.com



Dear Readers,

The story of Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in India is nothing short of transformative. Their meteoric rise from basic captives to pivotal transformation hubs underscores India's growing stature in the global panorama of talent and innovation. In just a decade, India has gone from 700 basic captives focused on cost saving to over 1,580 Global Capability Centres (GCCs) overseeing 1.66 million talented individuals and generating over USD 46 billion in revenue. This growth highlights India's increasing prominence in the global talent and innovation landscape.

It's not just about the numbers. The story they tell is profound. We witness a journey from leveraging mere cost advantages to catalysing end-to-end innovation, driving accelerated global functions, and aligning with overarching ESG objectives. The emphasis on fostering inclusivity, celebrating diversity, and championing equity are testaments to their holistic evolution.

In this edition, a curated list of distinguished authors and domain experts weigh in to provide texture to this narrative. Mino Thomas (Head of Talent Acquisition, Adobe) deciphers the intertwining of AI in recruitment, accentuating the harmony between tech capabilities and human intuition. Sreekanth K Arimanithaya (Global Talent and Enablement Leader, EY Global Delivery Services) lays out a pragmatic roadmap to combat India's talent crunch, which will resonate universally. Sriram Gopalswamy (VP -Site Reliability Engineering and MD, Sabre, Bengaluru) demystifies the economic dynamics sculpting talent strategies, whereas insights from Jayanthi Gopal (Head HR, Mashreq Global Network) and Sanjay Dora (COO, TBS and Site Lead – Tesco Bengaluru) underscore the dissolution of talent's geographical confines.

This edition also promises deeper dives. Mitun Chakraborty (Director – Human Resources (L&D and DEI) at Carelon Global Solutions), Swati Agrawal (Director For Talent Acquisition, Lowe' s India) and Smitha Yadav (Head HRBP, CDK Global India) shed light on varied facets ranging from savvy tech integrations to the Metaverse's disruptive role in HR, and the quintessence of adaptability in this landscape. Do read nuggets of wisdom from Seema Unni, Head Of Human Resources at Fidelity Investments (FMR India), Perez Katpitia (Director-HR, Falabella India) and Lokendra Sethi (VP HR - India HR Lead, DXC Technology).

India's GCCs have brilliantly redefined the offshoring playbook. They symbolise strategic evolution, pioneering leadership, and boundless innovation. This edition has, therefore, been conceptualised to serve as a compass. We hope it will illuminate your journey as we collectively explore the multifaceted realms of talent strategy in an ever-evolving global context.

Happy Reading

Write to us



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GCC Spotlight

India: Shift from

Outsourcing

to **PROFIT**
GENERATION



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ALL THINGS TALENT
by **Naukri Hiring Suite**



This issue contains 63 pages including cover

HIGHLIGHT

India's Global Capability Centres (GCCs):

Harnessing the power of a tech-ready talent pool



Over the past few years, the subcontinent has quietly but undeniably become a digital powerhouse. As the global economy grapples with tightening monetary policies, fluctuating growth rates, and rising inflation, India stands firm, buoyed by political stability, a consumption-driven economy, and a robust regulatory system in the financial sector. This foundation, bolstered by a vast and knowledgeable talent pool, positions the nation as a prime destination for Global Capability Centres (GCCs).

The numbers speak for themselves. According to EY's 'Future of GCCs in India - Vision 2030' report, it's anticipated that by the close of the decade, the domestic GCC market

will be valued at a staggering US\$110 billion. With software exports as a major driving force, it's projected that the nation could boast anywhere between 2400 to 2550 GCCs, further cementing its reputation as a global tech and services hub. This isn't a trivial estimate. To put it in context, this valuation isn't just about the number of centres that will be set up; it encapsulates the cumulative economic value these centres bring to the table. This includes their

contribution to GDP, their role in employment generation, the technological advancements they foster, and the ripple effects on ancillary industries, from real estate to local economies in cities hosting these centres.

For the longest time, India's chief appeal to global organisations, particularly in the tech sector, lay in the cost benefits it offered—a skilled

workforce available at competitive prices. This 'labour arbitrage' model, although fruitful, had its limitations and was often viewed through a narrow lens. Now, there's a shift, redefining the country's global GCC significance.

The new age of innovation

When we talk about digital transformation, the word "transformation" is pivotal: it's not just about technology adoption but about changing the very way businesses operate and deliver value. India, with its massive talent pool skilled in next-gen technologies, offers



organisations the capability to rethink, redesign, and reinvent their operations. It provides a platform to experiment, iterate, and innovate, thereby making GCCs in India not just operational hubs but strategic assets.

Moreover, India's appeal isn't limited to its metropolitan giants. As the tech wave sweeps the nation, there's a decentralisation in progress. Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Mumbai, while continuing to be powerhouses, are now joined by cities that were earlier not the primary choice for multinationals. Cities like Chandigarh, Coimbatore and Visakhapatnam are stepping into the spotlight. These aren't just alternatives; they represent the next chapter of India's tech story. They offer a blend of quality talent, infrastructural development, and favourable government policies—all at a cost that makes financial sense.

HIGHLIGHT

Therefore, the 'labour arbitrage' model is not being discarded but is being elevated. It's being complemented with layers of innovation, strategic alignment, and value creation.

GCCs and startups

Another significant feather in India's cap is its standing as the world's third-largest startup ecosystem. This presents a golden opportunity for symbiotic collaborations between these startups and GCCs. While the former can benefit from broader market access, enterprise networking, mentorship, funding, and invaluable data, GCCs can gain access to cutting-edge technologies, a swifter go-to-market strategy, ramped-up innovation, and a pool of tech-driven talent. It's a win-win.

This thriving start-up environment further highlights the underlying theme of India's digital narrative—people. The start-ups are not just about disruptive technologies or innovative business models; they are a testament to the nation's reservoir of driven, tech-savvy, and entrepreneurial individuals.

Skillset demand and supply

In this environment, the demand for certain skillsets has seen a pronounced spike. Advanced competencies in areas such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, data science, cloud architecture, and IoT are in high demand. Simultaneously, soft skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and cross-cultural

communication have become indispensable.

India, with its extensive educational institutions and tech-focused curricula, is producing a steady stream of professionals who are adept in these domains. Yet, the surging demand means there's a thin line between adequate supply and potential shortages. Ongoing industry-academia collaborations, upskilling programs, and training initiatives are critical to ensuring a consistent, high-quality talent pool.

Navigating the talent maze

Going ahead, as the country solidifies its position on the global map, the nation's GCC talent pool is anticipated to burgeon. By 2030, the



Source: analyticsindiamag.com

industry is expected to consist of over 4.5 million individuals, a significant leap from today's 1.9 million.

In this increasingly competitive landscape, organisations need to recalibrate their approach. The emphasis should be on the quality of talent rather than sheer numbers. Establishing Centres of Excellence in pivotal areas like artificial intelligence, cloud computing, data analytics, and cybersecurity isn't a distant goal; it's an immediate imperative.

As GCCs emphasise innovation and knowledge-driven capabilities, costs will, likely, rise. But remember, modern GCCs have evolved from being 'cost centres' to 'value

centres', prioritising value delivery in dynamic economic conditions.

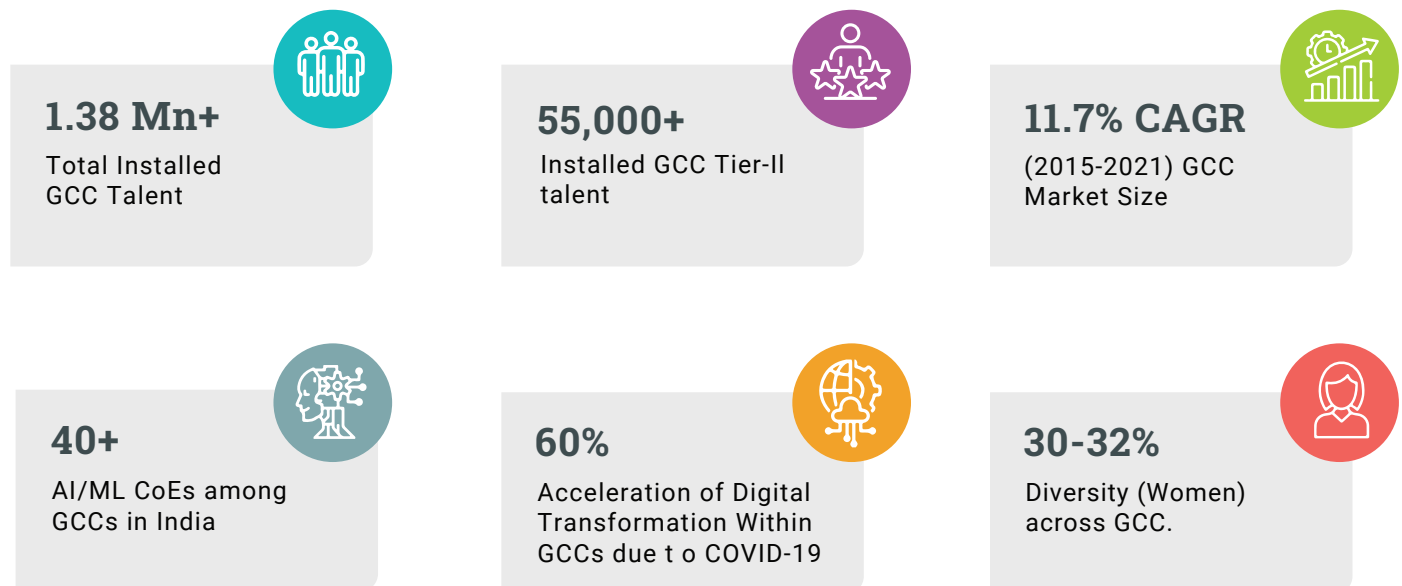
EVP: The cornerstone of future GCCs

What will truly differentiate successful GCCs in the coming decade is their approach to the Employee Value Proposition (EVP). With the industry projecting an increase in the overall cost per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE), organisations need to ensure they are offering more than just competitive salaries. The modern professional, particularly in the tech domain, is seeking more than just monetary compensation. They are looking at organisational culture, the nature of work, opportunities for growth, and other tangible and intangible

rewards. India, with its rich heritage and diverse cultural tapestry, offers a unique proposition for these professionals. But it's up to the individual GCCs to leverage this and build a compelling, holistic EVP.

India's ascent in the GCC landscape is not just about economic strategies, infrastructural advancements, or policy shifts. At its heart, it's about people—their skills, aspirations, innovations, and entrepreneurial spirit. As the GCC market continues to grow and evolve, one thing remains abundantly clear: talent and recruitment will be the linchpins holding the entire edifice together. It's time for organisations to recognise, respect, and harness this power.

A QUICK SNAPSHOT OF GCCS IN INDIA IN 2021



Source: NAASSCOM



Mino Thomas

Senior Director Talent and Global Head Talent Operations at Adobe

INTERVIEW

“Application of Generative AI Shouldn’t be to Predetermine Hiring Decisions”

Mino Thomas, a seasoned Talent Acquisition expert, has shaped global recruitment processes and was honoured as one of the 101 Top HR Tech Minds in 2019. Currently, he serves as Senior Director Talent and Global Head Talent Operations at Adobe



Mino Thomas, Senior Director of Talent and Global Head of Talent Operations at Adobe on how technology, especially Artificial Intelligence, is reshaping the recruitment process within GCCs.

Traditionally, the world of recruitment revolved around the human touch—where decisions were anchored in personal connections, deep understanding, and mutual rapport. Yet, as we usher in the era of technological advancement, particularly with the advent of artificial intelligence (AI), a seismic shift is discernible in the recruitment realm. This change is most prominent within Global Capability Centres (GCCs), hubs known for their extensive reach and diverse talent reservoirs. They stand as vanguards of this recruitment renaissance. **Mino Thomas, Senior Director of Talent and Global Head of Talent Operations at Adobe,** shines a spotlight on this transformative journey, offering us a peek at how AI and contemporary technologies are revolutionising the very fabric of talent acquisition.

Navigating a Segmented Market with Hyper Personalisation

Thomas observes, “The hiring landscape we navigate today is immensely segmented. As we stand at this crossroads, **the pressing challenge is to introduce hyper-personalisation at scale.**” The nuances of today’s market demand strategies and tools proficient in sculpting content not only captivate prospects but ensure their transition to becoming integral parts of an organisation. As Thomas explains,

“To effectively draw interest and commitment, the narrative needs to be woven with precision. The magic lies not just in the story’s telling, but in its crafting—ensuring that every facet of our content strategy resonates, **leading to a higher click-through rate and, ultimately, a successful hire.**”

Adobe’s proprietary tools are instrumental in defining the company’s ‘Customer Zero’ paradigm. This unique approach synergises cutting-edge technological solutions with a deep, insightful understanding of audience engagement. Expounding on this, Thomas says, “Within our candidate engagement framework, the ‘Customer Zero’ methodology empowers us to leverage a plethora of Adobe solutions, dissecting and mapping out each candidate’s unique journey.” It’s a philosophy that champions active, forward-thinking engagement, a fervent drive to remain on the cusp of technological evolution, ensuring that both products and methodologies evolve based on tangible user feedback. Thomas adds: **“It revolves around harnessing data insights, discerning which campaign strikes a chord with different audience segments,** and ensuring the content they engage with not just captivates but also drives them to take meaningful action.”

He adds, “At Adobe, we’re not merely content curators; we’re content

creators. Coding, with the advancements in technological tools, can be automated. What remains irreplaceable is the role of the architect. They’re the visionaries who tailor and construct these digital frameworks to resonate with a specific customer’s needs. When curating content, we amalgamate diverse pieces from various sources, refining them to resonate with our audience. **Our outreach strategy is anchored in a dual approach: ensuring it feels personalised and human,** while simultaneously possessing the capacity to scale.”

Ultimately, the aim is to tap into a diverse and expansive pool of talent.

Broadbasing Outreach: Bridging the Divide

“Our tools facilitate precise filtering, thorough evaluation, and efficient delivery of coding tests, enabling us to assess potential candidates effectively,” Thomas says, pointing out that leveraging technology in this manner allows Adobe to successfully tap into talent from varied backgrounds.

“In our university outreach philosophy, we don’t confine ourselves to a handful of IITs. We’re eager to comb the entirety of India, evaluating potentially 100,000 candidates to select a mere 400. This ensures that a deserving individual, from a tier 2 or 3 city perhaps, equipped with the skills to

thrive in a dynamic organisation like Adobe, isn't overlooked. The tools at our disposal enhance our capability in this selection process. It's been incredibly rewarding; witnessing numerous talents emerge from these regions who have seamlessly integrated and excelled within our structure. India's diverse landscape demands that we look beyond just a few premier institutions. It's not representative of the vast talent pool the nation possesses, and technology plays a pivotal role in helping us connect with top talents as opposed to just top schools."

Building Talent Communities

Thomas talks about another strategy that Adobe is weaving into the fabric of its recruitment process: the cultivation of talent communities. These aren't your run-of-the-mill talent databases. Imagine a dynamic ecosystem, a nexus where professionals with congruent skills and passions assemble, engage in meaningful dialogues, collaborate, and map their trajectory in the expansive professional universe.

Such vibrant communities aren't restricted to any one domain. They may, for example, encompass individuals from globally recognised consulting powerhouses like McKinsey, Boston Consulting Group, Deloitte, and others. The compelling force drawing these experts into a

collective is a blend of self-reflection and aspiration. Their shared objective? To benchmark their capabilities against peers, discerning opportunities for both personal and professional growth.

In sculpting these communities, Adobe doesn't just rely on conventional means; they harness cutting-edge technology. **Phenom, a talent experience management platform, aids in architecting these specialised hubs.** Whether it's the coders scripting the digital future, financial maestros crafting fiscal strategies, HR mavens shaping workforce policies, or customer service aces enhancing user experiences, Phenom can categorise them with finesse. Platforms powered by artificial intelligence, such as Phenom, not only streamline talent management for HR teams through automation and effective screening but can also forecast an individual's future performance trajectory. Yet, amidst this tech-driven renaissance, it's crucial to keep an eye on the ethical compass. Adobe stands vigilant.

"The application of generative AI shouldn't be to predetermine hiring decisions," stresses Thomas, underscoring the essence of prudence and responsibility. Nevertheless, the horizon might see generative AI sculpting job descriptions, he says.

Elaborating on the manifold benefits of the talent communities, Thomas

says, "The talent communities approach offers a multi-faceted advantage. Companies can get a sense of potential candidates even before the formal interview process begins. This not only leads to greater transparency on both sides but also results in quicker hiring, fewer declined offers, and smoother onboarding processes as recruits are already somewhat familiar with the company culture and ethos."



"In our university outreach philosophy, we don't confine ourselves to a handful of IITs. We're eager to comb the entirety of India, evaluating potentially 100,000 candidates to select a mere 400. This ensures that a deserving individual, from a tier 2 or 3 city perhaps, equipped with the skills to thrive in a dynamic organisation like Adobe, isn't overlooked. Technology plays a pivotal role in helping us connect with top talents as opposed to just top schools."

This strategy deviates from traditional recruitment practices where organisations might look to direct competitors as their primary sources of talent. Adobe's approach allows them to explore talent from more diverse sources. By not restricting themselves to the typical channels, they widen their talent funnel, accessing individuals who

might have been overlooked in more conventional recruitment practices.

Striking the Balance: Technology and the Human Touch

In a post Generative AI age, it's essential to preserve the human element, especially in processes as intimate and significant as recruitment. As Thomas states, "Studies show the greatest stress a person experiences is when there's a death in the family, and the second is when you're choosing a job, so you cannot leave it completely to technology."

Recruitment strategies should find a harmonious blend between automation and human engagement.

For instance, while the sheer scale of talent pool evaluation might lean towards automation, the ensuing stages demand the nuance and warmth unique to human interaction. Delving deeper, Thomas says, "The way we look at the whole process is to examine the workflow and engagement points – or nodes – especially where multiple parties are involved. While certain nodes can benefit from automation, others need the human touch."

He continues, "It's imperative to inject human intervention at those pivotal junctures. Think about any professional making a transition: tools can facilitate a smoother

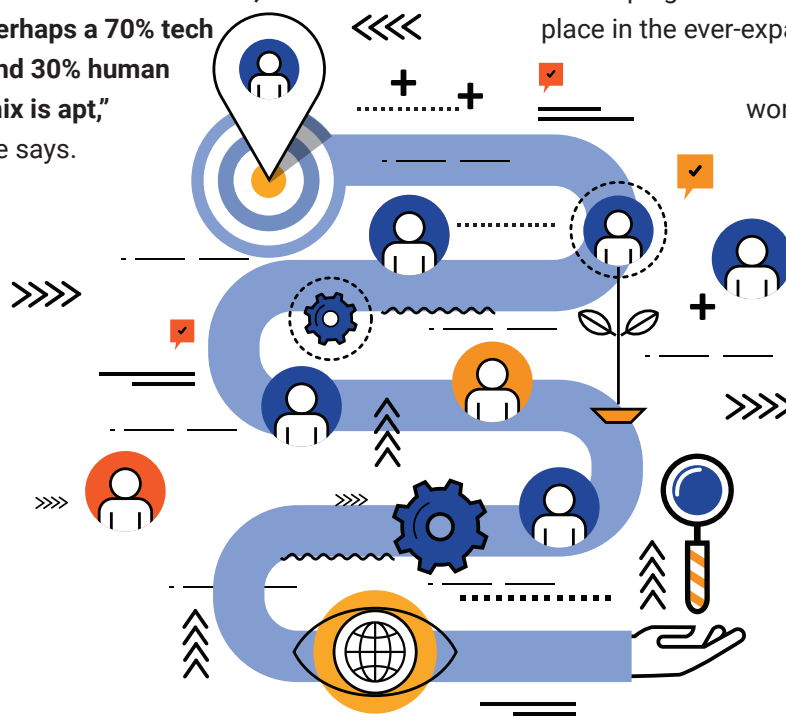
exchange, saving time. But while evaluating, say, 100,000 applicants might not need a human's discernment, the subsequent phase absolutely does. There's an inherent warmth that only a human can bring."

Thomas also emphasises the need for a tailored approach depending on the candidate's experience level: "Analyse the experience at each interaction point. Determine where automation can enhance the experience and identify where the human touch delivers unmatched value. It's a balancing act. Address critical nodes individually, discerning what can be automated versus where the human element is indispensable. At certain levels, such as with senior executives, it might be more human-centric throughout.

But for fresher recruits, perhaps a 70% tech and 30% human mix is apt," he says.

Highlighting the iterative nature of implementing these strategies, he shares, "We're in an era where autonomy is preferred. However, every node, every interaction point, needs careful scrutiny. And as we implement these strategies, it's an agile process. We integrate learnings, run pilots, and then roll out globally based on these insights. Perfection can never be achieved immediately. It's through this trial and error that challenges are met head-on and rectified."

Thomas's insights serve as a testament to the ongoing evolution and the endless possibilities that lie ahead. While technology offers efficiency and scalability, the human touch remains invaluable, reminding us that at its core, recruitment is about connecting with individuals and helping them find their place in the ever-expanding global workspace.



EY GDS' Sreekanth Arimanithaya Details How GCCs Are Solving The Talent Shortage Crisis In India

Here, Sreekanth K Arimanithaya, Global Talent and Enablement Services Leader, EY Global Delivery Services explores the evolution of India's Global Capability Centres (GCCs) and the pivotal role of talent and technology in their transformation.



**Sreekanth
Arimanithaya**

**Global Talent and
Enablement Leader, EY GDS**

Sreekanth K Arimanithaya boasts 30 years of extensive experience spanning HR, business transformation, and technology leadership across various sectors. Passionate about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, he plays a significant role in EY's Global Diversity and Inclusiveness Steering Committee.

The genesis of GCC stems from the days when organisations started increasing their global footprint and creating a truly international workforce. It brought in many benefits, including cost arbitrage centers that later assumed the form of a global value organization. Over the years, the leap in business – and scope – of GCCs has been tremendous. And India has been at the front and center of this trend, where we continue to see several industries setting up GCCs in the country.

What has triggered this trend? And importantly, where does the question of talent fit into all this?

A couple of decades ago, GCCs primarily focused on IT helpdesk and customer support. Today, they are centered on emerging technologies and innovation, with shifts in talent demographics and skills, reflecting these changes.

The adoption of advanced technologies by GCCs, including cloud computing and artificial intelligence, is fueling a symbiotic relationship with their home offices for innovative product development and platform upgrades. Consequently, **there's a surge in demand for adept talent in cutting-edge tech, analytics, and digital domains.** Let's delve into the driving factors behind GCCs' success and the future of talent in this ecosystem.

Nurturing talent through skilling

According to a report published by McKinsey, profit per employee equals total revenue divided by the cost per employee. This is a very valid measure of how we utilise our most valuable resources. In today's volatile market, effective utilisation of resources is key. **According to**

the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), there is an upward trend in employment in India due to our country's employable population.

Last year alone, millions of people entered the workforce, a trend largely enabled by the opportunities available. Today, organisations fully understand the value of upskilling, reskilling, and cross-skilling and how it can translate to better people supply chain management. Organisations gain from a skilled workforce, while individuals, through upskilling, secure their career longevity, creating a symbiotic benefit.

Technological proliferation, access to education and skilling has played a pivotal role in connecting India. People now have access to intelligent systems, and the mass adoption of new technology is giving rise to research and development capabilities – and consequently talent. India is home to 50-70% global technology and operations headcount and **India-based GCCs are investing heavily in cloud, IoT, and AI.** The rise of Generative AI promises increased innovation and disruption, offering significant opportunities for talent in various organisations.

Tech-enabled skills transformation

As per a NASSCOM estimate, India



As GCCs pivot towards enhancing enterprise capabilities, the scarcity of niche tech skills in these cities is evident. To counteract, many organisations are now establishing R&D centers and innovation labs in India, leveraging the vast and varied talent pool across both Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities. Government and private entities, as well as NGOs, have collaborated to equip young talent with industry-relevant skills. Corporates are notably assisting students from Tier-2 and Tier-3 colleges. Significant examples include the collaboration between EY GDS, TASK, and Edunet Foundation in Telangana, and the Vyanashala program in Kerala, which educates rural communities about opportunities in the digital economy.

has around 1,580 GCC tech centres – and the number is rising. **While technology has evolved GCCs into strategic partners beyond just back-office roles, it's led to talent shortages in Tier-1 cities.** As GCCs pivot towards enhancing enterprise capabilities, the scarcity of niche tech skills in these cities is evident. To counteract, many organisations are now establishing R&D centers and innovation labs in India, leveraging the vast and varied talent pool across both Tier-1 and Tier-2

cities. Government and private entities, as well as NGOs, have collaborated to equip young talent with industry-relevant skills. Corporates are notably assisting students from Tier-2 and Tier-3 colleges. Significant examples include the collaboration between EY GDS, TASK, and Edunet Foundation in Telangana, and the Vyanashala program in Kerala, which educates rural communities about opportunities in the digital economy.

Democratisation of talent

While, historically, talent sourcing focused on major cities, the evolving digital landscape in India has decentralised tech hubs, widening talent opportunities. The shift to hybrid work models and the empowerment of the gig workforce have reshaped how employees view their careers. India's tech-driven talent evolution makes it appealing to global companies. To maintain this position, enhanced public-private collaboration is crucial to harness untapped talent, addressing issues like underemployment.

As GCCs expand, continued investment in learning and partnerships with educational entities are vital, and the way I see it, this is a win-win for all parties.



Snapshot

REGISTERED NAME

EY Global Delivery Services, India



Year of Incorporation:
2002



KEY EXECUTIVES

- **Srinivas Rao** (Global Vice-Chair)
- **Arun Batra** (Client Services Leader)
- **Sreekanth Arimanithaya** (Global Talent & Enablement Services Leader)
- **Mukul Pachisia** (Global Operations Leader)

BUSINESS LINE

Professional Shared Services

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

Over 65k

KEY HR FACTORS

- The EY Tech MBA, offered in association with Hult International Business School, is the first-ever fully accredited corporate MBA that is available regardless of role or position and entirely for free to all of our nearly 300,000 employees in over 150 countries.
- EY Global Delivery Services has 8 Tech MBA grads and around 20 in the pipeline
- EY has introduced three Masters Programs – Tech MBA, MBAN and Masters in Sustainability.
- EY Gig Knowledge Credentials is dedicated to our direct gig workforce in GDS India, much like EY Badges for our full-time employees
- EY Badges, offers an opportunity for EY people to earn digital badges for future-focused skills such as data visualization, data science and artificial intelligence (AI) and for skills like

transformational leadership or inclusive intelligence. Currently, EY GDS has over 1,10,000 EY Badges.

- EY Wellbeing Program offers our people a holistic range of tools, information and resources to help them look after their mental, physical, social and financial health. Our 'Employee Assistance Program' (EAP) aims to enhance the emotional, mental and general psychological well-being of EY people.
- EY in India has set up the Neurodiversity Center of Excellence in India
- EY Purple Champions network helps drive the disability confidence agenda. The allies are coached to raise awareness about the experiences of persons with disabilities, including non-visible disabilities.



**Swati
Agrawal**

Director TA, Lowe's India

INTERVIEW

“Metaverse in HR Depends on Practicality, Cost and Technological Infrastructures”

Moumita Bhattacharjee, Senior Content Manager, Naukri

Swati Agrawal boasts nearly 20 years of expertise in executive search and optimising hiring processes. She has worked with global search firm Egon Zehnder and Indian e-commerce giant Myntra, part of the Flipkart Group



Swati Agrawal, Director for Talent Acquisition at Lowe's India, provides valuable insights into Lowe's India's growth trajectory, its innovative approaches to talent management, and impactful initiatives that bridge the gap between education and employability in underserved communities

Lowe's India, the Global Capability Centre (GCC) for Lowe's Inc., a renowned home improvement retailer, has played a massive role in bolstering its operations since its establishment in 2014. Lowe's India has experienced rapid talent growth, diversifying its expertise across domains such as technology, analytics, business and shared services. With significant contributions like the development of Self-Checkout counters, space planning in merchandising, and the Lowe's One Roof Media Network, Lowe's India epitomises how GCCs in India have become great assets to global companies.

In this exclusive interview, we spoke to **Swati Agrawal, Director for Talent Acquisition at Lowe's India** about the transformation of the GCC landscape in India, the increasing demand for niche skills, and the value of GCCs in a digitised business environment.

Can you outline Lowe's India operations and the talent evolution in the country?

Since its establishment in 2014 as the Global Capability Centre (GCC) of the US-based Fortune 50 retailer, Lowe's Inc., Lowe's India has notably expanded its presence and talent base in the country. Marking its rapid growth, **it inaugurated a second office in Bengaluru in 2022**

and currently boasts over 4,000 associates across various domains.

This centre has been instrumental in introducing key innovations, like the Self-Checkout counters and the Lowe's One Roof Media Network, underscoring its pivotal role in enhancing Lowe's global retail operations.

How has the evolution of GCCs in India been influenced over the years?

India's important role in global business transformation has driven significant growth in the GCC landscape. By 2025, NASSCOM predicts the presence of over 1900 GCCs, with a market value of \$60 billion, highlighting the continuous trust in India's potential. This surge is attributed to a robust connection between industry and academia, abundant engineering talent, specialised digital expertise, and global leadership grooming. With their expanding roles in decentralising, diversifying, and digitally transforming organisations, GCCs are now pivotal for strategic business expansion.

What specific skill sets, and expertise are in high demand within GCCs in India?

India has always been a significant destination for tech talent however,

a recent Qess Skills Report 2023 indicates a consistent rise in demand for specific technology skills even across non-tech industries that are going digital. **At Lowe's India, we have seen an increase in the demand for skill sets like ERP, Java full stack, data analytics, cloud, and infrastructure management. We hire niche tech skills related to artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data, cyber security, DevOps, robotics process automation (RPA) and so on.** In addition, we have been expanding our business services teams in 2023 and have hired significantly for non-technology skills such as merchandising, inventory and space planning, marketing and so on.

Why is India, particularly Bengaluru, a preferred location for GCCs like Lowe's?

India's allure for GCCs stems from its vast, quality talent pool, characterised by adaptability and a unique problem-solving approach. As tech giants initially led the GCC wave in India, other sectors are now exploring its benefits, driven by advancements in AI and machine learning. **Recognising Bengaluru's potential, Lowe's GCC has successfully tapped into its rich talent and conducive innovation ecosystem, driving meaningful collaborations and fostering sustained innovation.**

As projected by an EY report, the total number of new GCC setups is going to jump to 115 every year from the current 70. Do you feel this will escalate talent competition?

The anticipated surge in GCCs will undeniably amplify the quest for top talent. An organisation's success in talent acquisition hinges on its culture, remuneration, growth prospects, and overall employee value proposition. A holistic approach, rather than isolated efforts, is vital.



Imagining a future where candidates can experience virtual onboarding, learning modules, and real-time project simulations within the metaverse is quite feasible. The efficacy of these innovations will depend on their practicality, cost implications, and the readiness of technological infrastructures.

Lowe's strategy focuses on a holistic and inclusive environment where employees engage in groundbreaking projects and foster their careers. With comprehensive plans ranging from career development,

wellness, and rewards, to inclusivity programs like Bring-Her-Back and Do-It-Herself, we aim to ensure our talent not only stays but thrives, while also integrating women returning from breaks seamlessly into the workforce.

Given the recent statement that Lowe's India is investing heavily in AI/ML and AR/VR for products, how is this technology wave influencing HR?

Lowe's India is embracing AI and related technologies even in its HR domain. We've integrated both human intuition and data-centric methods for crucial tasks such as talent management, custom learning modules, recruitment, and performance evaluations. RPA (Robotic Process Automation) has been implemented in several HR operations, showing tangible benefits. Our recent innovation, Amara, a virtual HR assistant, serves as a continuous feedback mechanism for our team members. It can anonymously gather feedback, ensure personalised interactions, provide instant engagement metrics, and conduct sentiment assessments. **Currently, Amara is operational in India.**

Considering Lowe's ventures into the metaverse, can you see

its application in hiring processes?

Certainly, the metaverse and immersive technologies could revolutionise aspects of HR, notably in recruitment. Imagining a future where candidates can experience virtual onboarding, learning modules, and real-time project simulations within the metaverse is quite feasible. The efficacy of these innovations will depend on their practicality, cost implications, and the readiness of technological infrastructures.

How do you foresee the evolution of GCCs in India, and how is Lowe's India positioning itself to meet these upcoming shifts?

GCCs in India are likely to emphasise innovation, capability expansion, and revenue contribution in the coming years. This will translate into a heightened need for top-tier talent acquisition, retention, and workforce upskilling.

At Lowe's India, our strategy hinges on fostering a profound understanding among our associates about our business dynamics, the challenges our US customers face, and the solutions we're aiming to provide. We've launched structured learning

initiatives like Retail 360 to inculcate a holistic understanding of the industry, market dynamics, and cultural nuances. Our diverse learning platforms, including Associate Learning Programs (ALP), People Leader Orientation (PLO), and specific leadership experiences for managers and directors, are designed to cater to various organisational levels. Moreover, our unique programme, The Lowe's Compass (TLC), encourages associates to scout opportunities across the company.

Central to our ethos is cultivating an inclusive, diverse, and respectful organisational culture. Through our four main Business Resource Groups (BRGs) – PRIDE, Women, ABLE, and Generations – we aim to champion diversity and inclusivity. We've also redefined our insurance benefits to resonate with an evolved definition of "family," making it more adaptable to individual needs.

How does Lowe's India's GCC drive talent development and promote skill enhancement in the region?

Lowe's India is committed towards skilling underserved communities in India, and we are investing \$1 million over the next three years in mobilising upskilling programmes for the youth. As part of our CSR

program, our initiatives are aimed at bridging the gap between education and training and helping the youth become employable. Our initiatives provide training in technical, vocational and core employability skills, promotion of work-based learning, counselling, and career guidance and identifying programs that lead to job placements. Some of our initiatives along with our NGO partners include:

- Coding classes for 800 students from government schools in Bengaluru
- Employability skill training for 2,250 underserved youth along with LGBTQ community members
- Environment, health and safety training for 500 construction workers across Bengaluru

- Higher educational support for 600 girl children across Karnataka
- Coding for girls, digital empowerment and quality education in government schools of Rajasthan
- Digital upskilling of rural agri-based women entrepreneurs and artisans in Karnataka
- Skilling programme for LGBTQ+ community members
- Setting up of solar unit plants for 13 government schools in Bengaluru
- Setting up of mini Science centres/STEM labs in 10 government schools in Bengaluru





REGISTERED NAME OF THE COMPANY & LOCATION

Lowe's Services India Pvt. Ltd.



Year of Incorporation:
2014 in India



Number of employees:
4000+ associates



Name of the founders:
Carl Buchan & James Lowe
were the founders of the company



Business line:
Our global capability centre in Bengaluru, with 4,000+ best-in-class associates, delivers value-driven services across technology, business services, shared services and analytics.



CAGR of workforce growth in 3/5 year period:
We grew almost 100% in the last three years



NAME OF THE KEY EXECS

Ankur Mittal – SVP, Technology, Managing Director of India

Mohith Mohan – Vice President – Head of HR & Corporate Operations

Mayur Purandar – Vice President, Enterprise Architecture

Amit Kapur – Vice President, Data & ML Platforms and Data Governance

Manasvi Sharma – Vice President, Technology

Reena Sofiya – Vice President, Merchandising

WORKFORCE PIE ACROSS DEPARTMENTS (IN %)

70% in engineering, 30% in business services and shared services.

KEY HR DIFFERENTIATING FACTORS

- The current gender diversity ratio at Lowe's stands at 33%
- Lowe's Business Resource Groups (BRGs) serve as company-sponsored, and associate-led resource groups focused on creating an inclusive culture.
 1. **Women Empowered BRG:** The focus of this BRG is to help Lowe's India become the employer of choice for women by creating a culture that attracts, develops, and retains the best women talent at all levels.
 2. **ABLE BRG:** The focus of the ABLE BRG is to position Lowe's as a workplace of choice for the PWD community and gain a competitive advantage to increase workplace diversity and productivity.
 3. **Pride BRG:** We strive to develop an LGBTQ-inclusive workspace that provides a supportive, nurturing platform for professionals of all genders to feel safe and thrive professionally.
 4. **Generations BRG:** The focus of this BRG is to embrace generational experiences and perspectives to help associates work together and better support inclusion across the organization.
 - We have an Employee Stock Purchase Program to enable associates to participate in the company's financial success
 - **Flex-Ben:** a flexible benefits insurance program that provides associates an opportunity to design their own Insurance Plan based on their unique needs.



**Lokendra
Sethi**

VP HR – India,
DXC Technology

INTERVIEW

Why India Dominates as the Top Choice for GCCs?

With over 25 years in HR strategy and service delivery, **Lokendra Sethi**, has held leadership roles across regional and global markets, especially within the IT and ITES sectors. His experience spans companies like Accenture, HCL, AECOM, and Covansys. Currently, he serves as the VP HR – India HR Lead at DXC Technology.

Moumita Bhattacharjee, Senior Manager - Content, Naukri
Bruhadeeswaran R, Senior Manager - Editorial & Content, Naukri



Lokendra Sethi, VP HR, DXC Technology, underscores the significance of nurturing internal talent and discusses India’s appeal in the GCC space because of its vast pool of engineers and skilled professionals. While promoting a virtual-first approach, he anticipates a balanced hiring trend in the IT sector.

Amidst the evolving landscape of the global tech industry, India has carved out a unique position as a hub for Global Capability Centres (GCC). With the country producing a staggering number of engineers annually and holding its own in the competitive tech talent market, the recruitment scenario has seen both challenges and opportunities.

Lokendra Sethi, VP HR – India, DXC Technology, provides a pragmatic view of this environment, touching upon subjects ranging from the country's talent pool to the nuances of building versus buying talent. This Q&A is a window into the considerations and strategies of HR leadership in the IT sector.

Could you elucidate on DXC's trajectory in India, particularly regarding business growth and the evolution of talent management?

Formed in 2017 from the merger of CSC and HPE, DXC entered the market as a formidable entity boasting revenues north of \$14 billion and a global workforce of 135,000, of which 42,000 are based in India. Upon my induction in 2019, I spearheaded a transformative initiative for DXC. Given India's significance in the global map, our strategic priority was to optimally harness and position talent. In the

subsequent four years, two primary objectives shaped our course: firstly, shifting from solely acquiring talent to nurturing and building it from the ground up, and secondly, championing diversity and inclusivity. These pillars, complemented by our dedication to training and technological advancement, have been instrumental in sculpting DXC's current and future vision.

In 2020, we set a clear goal: increase our female workforce representation from 28% to 40%. By this year, we proudly reached that target. While our initial plans were laid out during 2019-2020, the emergence of COVID-19 posed potential setbacks. However, we adapted, enhancing our operational practices. Today, our training framework stands unmatched. Since the beginning of the lockdown, we've wholly adopted a virtual-first mindset. Our comprehensive ecosystem, spanning talent development, leadership programmes, and nurturing employee connections, provides an insight into our corporate structure.

Given DXC's shift towards internal talent cultivation, was it challenging to align leadership with this focus rather than external hiring?

When our business leadership transitioned in 2019, there was a mutual understanding of aligning strategies with our needs. A people-centric strategy should match the business direction. We aimed to not just hire the best but to be distinctive in the talent landscape.

In our first year, we engaged with 70 academic institutions and secured premier positions in 25. This isn't a one-off; it's a continuous commitment. Past experiences emphasise the need for a consistent approach.

Consider our goal of increasing female representation from 28% to 40%. Such a goal demands persistent dedication. Long-term success is the benchmark, relying on alignment among business leaders, HR, and the entire organisation. While it wasn't easy to gather diverse perspectives under one vision initially, with leadership consistently communicating this vision, alignment was inevitable. A lot of our effort centred on this clear communication.

How has the talent-building approach influenced your business outcomes?

Business seeks three primary attributes in talent: quality,

predictability, and adaptability. Our approach is designed to deliver on these precise expectations. When you cultivate talent, you aren't beholden to competitors' moves – you control your own destiny. Venturing onto campuses allows us to mould our future workforce, especially evident during last year's challenging "resignation war" phase.

While we weren't immune to the industry turmoil, our focus on nurturing talent, as opposed to purely poaching, stabilised our position. We maintained timely talent fulfilment, optimised our cost structure, and ensured talent predictability – all pivotal for our stakeholders. The broader business community has recognised the merit of our approach. One business leader's remark resonates with our journey: "Had we persisted with our old ways, we would've been caught off guard." This encapsulates the essence of our strategy's impact.

How is DXC currently progressing with its talent development and diversity inclusion initiatives?

This year offers a return to some semblance of normalcy, allowing us to concentrate even more on talent development. We've achieved 40% female representation, but our ambition doesn't stop here. **We aspire to a gender-neutral**

workforce. Our strategy emphasises nurturing talent right from the academic stage, with a strong focus on training. Leveraging a virtual-first approach and technology, we've



The nation's dedication to education and skill development is evident. **Annually, India produces approximately 1.3 million engineering graduates from its vast network of 1,300 to 1,400 engineering institutions.** This doesn't even account for the multitude of graduates from other disciplines.

honed our process to effectively engage university talent from the initial selection stage.

Last year, we concentrated on cultivating leaders, especially female leaders. Past objectives revolved around achieving specific numbers and defining our purpose. Now, it's about scaling that talent and elevating them to appropriate roles. Programmes like SheLEADS@DXC exemplify our commitment. Initially developed in-house and launched during the height of the pandemic, this women's leadership initiative has expanded globally, with APAC being its most recent addition.

Leadership development isn't a

quick fix—it requires consistent effort over several years. Recognising this, our commitment remains unwavering. Expect us to emphasise this continuity in our approach even in the future.

You've placed significant focus on cultivating female leaders at DXC. Do you have a precise aim concerning the number of women in leadership roles?

Setting a specific numerical aim might seem like a straightforward approach, but we've intentionally avoided such defined targets. Pursuing strict numbers can sometimes lead to decisions that aren't in the best interest of the organisation or its employees. **Our dedication to gender inclusion and promoting women doesn't mean we favour one gender over another. We believe in a balanced approach, ensuring both men and women advance side by side.** We're devoted to fostering an environment ripe with opportunity. I regularly stress in our town halls that every single woman in our mid-tier positions, with leadership aspirations, will receive our full support. We're here to offer the tools and chances they need. The subsequent steps on their leadership path will be for them to take, equipped with what we've provided.

Given your emphasis on training in recent years, how are HR resources and budgets allocated across various functions?

Over the past few years, we've maintained an average of 40 training hours per employee annually. Beyond the training hours, we've placed a significant emphasis on industry certifications. In fact, in just the last year, we've achieved around 70,000 sets of certifications for our employees. While nurturing and cultivating future leaders—both women and men—is crucial, it's equally vital to fortify the skills of our current workforce. For us, it's not just about providing training; it's about ensuring that the skills we impart meet industry benchmarks and can be effectively assessed.

In terms of the GCC boom in India, why do you think India is such a lucrative space for GCC?

Companies prioritise talent that is skilled, adaptable, and cost-effective. When these three elements converge, it creates an ideal scenario for any firm. Over the past two decades, India has showcased its unique strength in providing such talent. The nation's dedication to education and skill development is evident. **Annually,**

India produces approximately 1.3 million engineering graduates from its vast network of 1,300 to 1,400 engineering institutions. This doesn't even account for the multitude of graduates from other disciplines.

Currently, around 5.1 million professionals work in India's IT sector. To provide perspective, this number stood at around 3.7 to 3.8 million in 2021, indicating a substantial growth of 40-50% in just a span of 18 months.

Economically, India's competitive pricing sets it apart. On average, Indian talent comes at a more affordable rate than their counterparts in Eastern and Western Europe. The cost is also comparable to several Asian nations. Furthermore, the proficiency in English prevalent among Indian professionals adds to the country's appeal as a global talent hub.

What's fueling the recent momentum in this domain?

There are multiple factors that make India an ideal hub for GCCs:

Skilled Workforce at Scale:

Corporations aim to have a workforce that possesses not just skills but also the adaptability to constantly learn and evolve. India, over the last two decades, has

demonstrated its ability to offer talent at an unprecedented scale. Annually, India produces approximately 1.3 million engineers, stemming from around 1300 to 1400 engineering institutions. This doesn't even account for the multitude of other graduates from diverse disciplines.

Cost Efficiency: Despite the vast talent pool and the quality of work, India's cost structure remains competitive. On average, our rates are still more affordable compared to regions like Eastern Europe and Europe. We are competitively priced, even when juxtaposed with some Asian peers.

Rapid Growth in the IT Sector: The sheer pace of growth in the Indian IT workforce is a testament to the boom.

Language Proficiency: An often-underestimated advantage is the widespread proficiency in English among Indian professionals. This not only aids in smoother communication but also ensures effective collaboration with global counterparts.

The renewed momentum is a result of the amalgamation of these factors, combined with global digital transformation trends and an increasing reliance on IT infrastructures. With businesses recognising the potential and advantages India brings to the table,

the country continues to be a hotspot for GCC establishments.

How do you communicate the importance of internal talent development in boardroom discussions, and how do you justify the ROI to top-level management?

Building talent internally, contrary to some perceptions, is economically more viable than frequently sourcing from the market. The transitional costs associated with external hiring surpass those of nurturing in-house talent. By developing talent from within, we ensure a seamless integration of company values and culture, something that's challenging to achieve with external hires. Our past experiences, like the challenge of having only 2 out of 10 externally sourced candidates actually join, further emphasise the need for



internal talent cultivation. The tangible outcomes from our strategy, visible in reduced average delivery costs and a more cohesive organisational culture, make a compelling case in boardroom discussions.

Besides the 40% women representation, are there metrics showing benefits from investing in talent, like reduced attrition or quicker conversions?

Absolutely. From my experience, nurturing talent in-house results in better quality and engagement. The early career years are pivotal. Training them with our tools and processes from the start leads to deeper organisational commitment. It's not just about hiring but offering career growth, ensuring longer retention.

In terms of "virtual first," how does the company approach this concept, its benefits, and future plans?

Our "virtual first" approach doesn't mean we're exclusively virtual. It means our default is remote work, but we'll collaborate in person when necessary. This flexibility means we don't lose talent due to life events. For instance, while previously women might not have been placed

on night shifts, now, with a virtual approach, such limitations have been addressed, creating more inclusivity.

How do you maintain company culture and ensure team interaction?

Primarily, we harness technology to its maximum potential. For instance, our event, DXC Utsav, was conducted online for the past two years and demonstrated remarkable team cohesion. Though we prioritise virtual, it doesn't exclude face-to-face interactions. Our clarity on this stance prevents confusion and our employees value and appreciate this approach.

Given the conservatism observed in hiring within the IT and GCC sectors, do you foresee a change in hiring sentiment in the near future?

Recruitment is inherently tied to demand. Currently, I anticipate stability rather than the hiring frenzy we observed last year. Companies will likely focus on cultivating their existing talent, ensuring retention, and further nurturing them. This period will bring more consistency to our hiring processes.



Snapshot

REGISTERED NAME OF THE COMPANY & LOCATION

DXC Technology India Pvt. Ltd, Bangalore



Year of Incorporation:
2017



CAGR of workforce growth in a 3/5
year period:
5.4% for 3 years.



BUSINESS LINE

We deliver the mission-critical IT services that move the world.

NAME OF THE KEY EXECS

Mike Salvino – Chairman, President & Chief Executive Officer, DXC Technology

Nachiket Sukhtankar – Managing Director – India at DXC Technology

Lokendra Sethi – VP HR – India HR Lead, DXC Technology

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

~41K

KEY HR DIFFERENTIATING FACTORS LIKE DIVERSITY, HR TECH, ESOPS

- We recently achieved 40% women in our workforce, a year ahead of the planned date.
- DXC Technology has a virtual assistant tool called Violet that has been designed to help with different kinds of questions related to HR matters, like payroll, leave of absence, and one-time payments.
- The company has fully transitioned its hiring process into a digital format. This involves finding potential candidates through different channels, particularly employee referrals, using an Applicant Tracking System (ATS).



Perez Katpitia

Director – HR at Falabella

INTERVIEW

“Merely Banking on Cost Savings Isn’t a Sustainable Strategy for GCCs”

With an extensive HR career that spans more than 18 years across diverse sectors including consulting, banking, and retail, **Perez Katpitia** has consistently exhibited strategic leadership and visionary thinking.



From the inception of its technological collaboration with Latin America to hosting a unique e-commerce marketplace, Falabella India showcases an expansive retail spectrum. **Perez Katpitia, Director – HR at Falabella**, sheds light on the company’s talent evolution, cultural challenges, and strategic HR investments, offering invaluable perspectives on the contemporary talent landscape in India.

How have Falabella's unique business model and tech collaborations contributed to its growth and diversity in the Indian market?

Falabella presents a diverse array of retail formats encompassing home improvement, supermarkets, real estate, malls, banking, and cutting-edge digital payment solutions. Although our Technology Innovation Center in India was established in 2018, our primary focus has been the development of specialized tech solutions in close collaboration with our Latin American counterparts. Our dedicated specialists in India engage in advancing digital commerce, optimizing logistics, innovating store technologies, and harnessing data analytics, all contributing to an elevated customer and retail experience. Furthermore, we actively manage an e-commerce marketplace for third-party sellers, akin to industry giants such as Amazon and Flipkart, thereby reinforcing our multifaceted presence within the retail sector.

How has the talent landscape evolved in India, especially for GCCs transitioning from IT support roles to R&D, engineering, and tech innovation? And, how

does Falabella's journey in the last five-and-a-half years fit into this narrative?

Our journey at Falabella is quite distinctive. Right from the beginning, we didn't adhere to the traditional services mindset; instead, our core focus has always been on engineering and transformation. Establishing GCCs in India is relatively uncommon for Latin American companies, making our initiation somewhat experimental. **We started humbly, to replace a team of 20 to 30 members from China, initially concentrating on e-commerce and digital retail.** Over time, we broadened our scope to encompass logistics, store technologies, and data analytics. Our strategy evolved based on our achievements.

Throughout these five-and-a-half years, we deliberately maintained our emphasis on engineering teams, refraining from delving into the typical back-office or support functions commonly found in other GCCs. This distinct approach has allowed us to keep our team lean, with a headcount of approximately 450, which is relatively modest considering the duration of our presence in India.

What primary challenges did Falabella encounter?

Falabella encountered its primary

challenges predominantly revolving around cultural and language barriers. Although the technological integration proceeded relatively smoothly, many of our recruits possessed prior experience in retail tech transformations from their roles in other GCCs in Bangalore. That gave rise to a few initial concerns. **During the early stages, employees raised questions about the potential impact on jobs, and**



Falabella as a case in point, the conventional cost-advantage narrative doesn't hold water. Comparing the Indian rupee against the Chilean peso doesn't offer the same cost benefits as it does against the dollar. This raises a pertinent question: Given the linguistic barriers and the absence of direct cost advantages, why would a firm like Falabella establish a GCC in India? The answer is talent.

there was apprehension regarding communication difficulties stemming from cultural differences, especially considering that Falabella's Latin American origins introduced a novel dynamic for many. However, effective leadership support played a pivotal role in successfully navigating these challenges. Notably, Ashish Grover, who spearheaded Falabella India as

the Head of e-commerce, was later promoted to the position of global CIO, underscoring our unwavering commitment to our Indian operations.

How do the talent attributes in Chile compare to those in India, given Falabella's operations in both regions?

At Falabella, we take a different approach when it comes to recognizing talent, and we don't categorize individuals based on their geographical origins. Our organizational structure is truly global, and we don't label teams as "Indian" or "Chilean." Instead, we refer to them as platform teams that operate across various locations.

However, one significant difference arises in terms of talent accessibility and scalability. Given India's extensive talent pool and expertise in retail technology, we often find that sourcing talent and expanding our operations can be more streamlined in India compared to Chile.

Given the recent layoffs in the tech sector, it's been reported that GCCs have been able to onboard high-quality

talent. What's your perspective on this?

I agree with that assessment. Despite the broader market slowdown, the GCC sector appears to be resilient and flourishing. The sustained attraction of new GCCs to India underscores the exceptional quality of talent available here. This rich talent pool, though finite, has intensified competition among companies. **Undoubtedly, recent layoffs, particularly from larger service-based firms, have presented us with an opportunity to welcome on board some truly exceptional professionals.**

How do GCCs view the integration of AI in their talent management approaches?

In talent management, AI often appears intriguing, blending fascination with uncertainty regarding its practicality. While AI holds future promise, its current adoption in this field is in its early stages. As with any emerging technology, there are pioneers and cautious observers.

While AI can automate many HR operations, it's crucial to remember that talent management centres around human interactions. Data and AI provide valuable insights, but human elements like emotions, instincts, and intangibles remain irreplaceable. In leadership

development, data can guide, but a human touch is necessary for true impact.

Concerns about AI job displacement exist, but my perspective is that AI-savvy individuals gain a competitive edge. It's not solely about AI but how effectively one leverages its capabilities.

What drives Falabella's hiring strategy in India, especially when there are claims that GCCs are currently recession-resistant and hiring in significant numbers?

The allure for organisations to establish GCCs in India hinges on two main factors. First, the undeniable depth of talent India offers. Second, the ongoing cost advantage India provides, especially with the US dollar's strength. In the backdrop of a recessionary environment, this cost-benefit becomes a compelling factor for companies to contemplate initiating a GCC in India. However, a nuanced understanding reveals that merely banking on cost savings isn't a sustainable strategy. **It's imperative to offer meaningful work and learning opportunities to the workforce. The ready availability of skilled talent, especially in the digital domain, often compensates for any ancillary costs.** Using

Falabella as a case in point, the conventional cost-advantage narrative doesn't hold water. Comparing the Indian rupee against the Chilean peso doesn't offer the same cost benefits as it does against the dollar. This raises a pertinent question: Given the linguistic barriers and the absence of direct cost advantages, why would a firm like Falabella establish a GCC in India? The answer is talent. While some roles may indeed offer more significant cost benefits, in many areas, the value of talent eclipses cost considerations. The potential impact that this talent can generate becomes the defining factor.

Could you break down how the 450 employees in India are allocated across various roles?

Of course. Around 200 are dedicated to digital retail, encompassing e-commerce and marketplace. About 80 focus on our home delivery logistics. The remainder, approximately 70-80, are divided between store technology and data analytics.

In the realm of GCCs, what's the next promising talent domain poised to rise like AI is today?

That's an excellent question, and I would emphasize the importance of

data analytics. **While AI is a component of this field, the broader realm of analytics, especially within our retail context, holds tremendous significance.** As a retailer, we possess extensive consumer data, ranging from shopping behaviours to preferences. The potential to craft highly personalized experiences using this data is vast. Given the strong proficiency in data skills found in India, I foresee this becoming a central focus for GCCs in the region.

Having joined Falabella during the COVID period two years ago, what was the primary directive given to you?

When I joined Falabella, even before the pandemic's full impact, the company already had a degree of adaptability to hybrid and remote working. The pandemic just amplified this necessity. Our rapid adaptation was one facet. More crucially, we prioritised the well-being and care of our employees and their families during these testing times. This wasn't just in tangible resources like care packages or setting up a crisis management team to assist with urgent medical needs, but also in the intangible aspects, like maintaining consistent communication and support. We empowered our managers – who are closest to the employees – to provide guidance, display empathy,

and ensure mental well-being. Initiatives like introducing a COVID Care leave, where employees could take a week's paid leave if a family member was affected, showcased our proactive approach. Presently, with a workforce that's largely remote-first (with nearly half of our employees not even residing in Bangalore), we've transitioned seamlessly into this new norm. For those in Bangalore, while we encourage in-office work a couple of days a week, it's not mandated, emphasising our trust in our employees and valuing their comfort and safety.

Can you elaborate on the HR-related technological investments Falabella has made since you joined or any you're aware of from the last five years?

One of the significant investments we've embarked upon recently is the transition to a unified HRMS (Human Resource Management System) platform across all our global locations. This change was imperative, as having consistent tools is essential for streamlined operations. Up until this point, our various global offices operated on separate HRMS platforms, which posed challenges in data consistency and accessibility.

With the new system, set to go live in India this September, we'll have a

single HRMS platform accommodating all technology teams across the globe. This will not only enhance the user experience for our managers and employees but also facilitate more efficient people analytics. Given that we have a global people analytics team based in LatAm, this unified platform will empower them with homogenised data from all regions, aiding in better decision-making and insights.



We started humbly, with the goal of replacing a team of 20-30 members from China, initially concentrating on e-commerce and digital retail. Over time, we broadened our scope to encompass logistics, store technologies, and data analytics. Our strategy evolved based on our achievements.

What are your hiring plans for this year?

In 2023, our hiring momentum slowed in the first half, reflecting the global economic downturn. While in 2022 we expanded rapidly, adding around 200 employees, representing nearly half of our total strength, we don't anticipate replicating those figures this year or the next. Instead, our focus will shift to fortifying specific sectors, especially data

analytics. Having reached the five-year mark for our GCC, its role and significance are now well-established within the organisation.

With the surge in hiring in sectors and the apparent talent war, how has the compensation structure at Falabella adapted, especially given that you hired almost 50% of your current strength in 2022?

Indeed, until about the end of 2022, the talent landscape experienced unprecedented competition. **While India offers a vast talent pool, truly exceptional talents are finite,** resulting in companies competing fiercely for them, which in turn drives up compensation packages. This trend has, however, shown signs of stabilising more recently. For instance, **our offer-to-joining ratio, which was around 60% in early 2022, has improved to approximately 90-95% now.**

To address the variances in pay and to ensure fairness in our compensation approach, we initiated the 'Fair Pay' system. Traditionally, companies would offer a certain percentage increment on a candidate's last drawn salary. However, this method seemed incoherent to us given the diverse

backgrounds of our potential hires. Thus, we decided to benchmark our compensation based on the role and its respective market value, irrespective of a candidate's previous earnings. This approach allowed us to offer what we believed was just compensation for the role in question, and it served as a unique proposition for potential employees, emphasising that we value their skill sets and not their past compensation. To stay updated and competitive, we also engage in market benchmarking every six months, ensuring our compensation remains both fair and attractive.



Harnessing the GCC Boom: India's Tech Transformation Unveiled

GCCs (Global Capability Centers) have transitioned significantly, evolving from cost centers into thriving profit-driven enterprises. Niraj Seth, Executive Vice President at Naukri, illuminates the pivotal role played by top-tier talent and the swift integration of cutting-edge digital technologies in propelling this remarkable transformation.



Niraj Seth

**Executive Vice President
Naukri**

Niraj Seth is a business leader with three decades of experience, including 14 years in CXO roles. He brings a wealth of experience working with companies like Naukri, Intuit, Cleartrip, Monster and Bharat Petroleum.

GCCs have undergone a remarkable transformation, evolving into dynamic technological powerhouses that now employ a staggering 1.9 million individuals in India. It proudly hosts nearly half of the world's GCC units, making this growth story profoundly impactful.

In the 1990s, these centres primarily catered to back-office operations, call centres, software solutions, and related services. Fast forward to today, and they stand as some of the most rapidly expanding business units, with an increasing number of organizations seeking to establish their presence in India.

Even in the face of global economic challenges prompting budget constraints for many organizations, India stands on solid ground. This stability has presented GCCs with a unique opportunity to transform into

centres of excellence, driving digital growth within the nation.

According to the collaborative report by NASSCOM and Deloitte titled "GCC Value Proposition for India," India dominates half of the global GCC market. The acceleration of digital transformation due to the pandemic has resulted in a surge of GCCs within India.

The report projects an expansion potential of 1.5 to 3 times, which could potentially boost the market size by US\$ 20-30 billion within the forthcoming 5 to 6 years, subject to appropriate ecosystem support and incentivization from the government.

GCC Market Potential and Key Players

The GCC industry in India exhibits a remarkable growth trajectory, with

the Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) expected to ascend from 11% (2019-2023) to 14% (2023-2030). This growth is fuelled by software exports, a pool of skilled workforce, extension into Tier-2 cities, favourable government policies, and infrastructural improvements. It's projected that by 2030, the country will house around 2400-2500 GCCs, indicative of India's strategic importance as the preferred destination for multinational corporations seeking to establish or expand their operations.

Key players spearheading the GCC wave include tech giants such as Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Accenture, and IBM, who have established significant GCCs in India. However, the footprint of GCCs isn't limited to the tech sector alone. Traditional corporations across varied industries such as Ford in the automotive sector and GSK in pharmaceuticals have set up robust GCCs in India, contributing to the sector's diverse landscape.

Four critical trends can be observed in this transformative journey:

- **Centers of Excellence (CoE):** The creation of CoEs to fast-track product development and innovation in niche areas such as AI, cloud, engineering, data analytics, and cybersecurity is gaining momentum.

- **Expansion of Function:** GCCs are venturing beyond traditional IT and back-office services into functions like legal, marketing, and procurement, thereby widening their service offerings.
- **Revision of Employee Value Proposition (EVP):** GCCs are putting a heightened focus on enhancing their EVP to attract and retain talent. This includes focusing on building a conducive organizational culture, providing growth-oriented roles, and offering competitive rewards and compensation.
- **Start-up Collaboration:** GCCs are increasingly collaborating with start-ups to expedite innovation. These partnerships offer mutual benefits - start-ups gain market access and mentoring, while GCCs get access to innovative technologies and solutions.

While Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, Mumbai, Pune, and Delhi NCR continue to be the preferred locations for GCC setups in India, there's a notable shift in the industry. Tier-II cities like Visakhapatnam, Jaipur, Vadodara, Kochi, and Chandigarh are gaining prominence due to improved infrastructure, favourable state policies, and lower operational costs. Additionally, cities like Coimbatore are emerging as potential future GCC hubs with recent infrastructural developments.

This shift in location preferences reflects the evolving landscape of the GCC (Global Capability Centers) industry in India. However, amidst this transformation, the industry is also witnessing changes in salary and hiring trends, driven by global economic uncertainty.

- In light of the economic scenario, a growing number of employees are prioritizing **job security** over aggressive salary increments. This emphasis on job stability is contributing to the overall steady growth of GCCs.
- While companies rolled out **frenzied salary hikes** to combat the great resignation in H1-2022, there are signs of normalization as businesses focus on controlling wage bills, reducing retention costs, and improving resource utilization in the face of global economic uncertainty.
- In response to uncertain economic conditions, there's a heightened focus on **upskilling, cross-skilling, and reskilling** to optimize existing resources and reduce costs.
- GCCs are increasingly seeking talent with expertise in **digital technologies** like AI, Cybersecurity, Web and mobile Development, and emerging technologies such as Web3.

COVER STORY

This requires a focus on developing domain expertise.

- Teams with **niche skill requirements** will continue to hire aggressively in 2023, as there is a rising demand for specialized skills across industries.
- A significant portion of new GCCs entering India in 2022 encompass ER&D, IT, and BPM functional areas.

Expansion & Demand

The Indian GCC (Global Capability Centers) industry is on track to employ **more than 4.5 million professionals by 2030**. This substantial workforce growth underscores the industry's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, aligning with the surging demand for digital expertise.

In this narrative of transformation, India stands at the forefront, primed to shape the future of global business operations. The country's talent landscape is swiftly adapting to cater to the evolving demands of the GCC industry.

For the upcoming fiscal year, GCCs are actively scouting for top-tier talent in critical domains:

- GCCs are expected to create **3.64 lakh jobs** in India this year. An expected 20-25% surge in recruitment will be witnessed in the Financial Services and Manufacturing.
- **Data Analytics** is another hotspot, with a projected 15-20% uptick in openings, especially within Healthcare and Financial Services.
- **Cybersecurity** anticipates a

15% -20% increase in demand, notably in the Telecom and Financial Services sectors.

- **Cloud Computing** is experiencing a similar growth trajectory in job opportunities, predominantly within IT/ITES and Retail sectors.

In conclusion, witnessing the evolution of India's GCC industry has been nothing short of remarkable. The pandemic served as a catalyst, propelling this sector to new heights. The adoption of flexible work models made GCCs a beacon for jobseekers pursuing stability and growth. Their adeptness in managing distributed workforces allowed them to stay ahead of the curve, making them a preferred choice. It's an exciting journey ahead as we continue to witness the rise of GCCs in India's dynamic business landscape.





Seema Unni

Head HR and a
Regional Leader, Fidelity
Investments India

INTERVIEW

“Drop ‘Captive’ Mindset to Choose Capability”

Before her current role as Head of Human Resources and Regional Leader at Fidelity Investments India, Seema Unni honed her skills at esteemed organisations like Arthur Andersen and Ernst & Young. She has over 25 years of rich experience spanning leadership roles in HR business partnerships, mergers and acquisitions, and organisational development.

Moumita Bhattacharjee, Senior Manager - Content, Naukri
Bruhadeeswaran R, Senior Manager - Editorial & Content, Naukri



Highlighting the paramount shift from a captive mindset to one of capability, **Seema Unni, Head of Human Resources and a Regional Leader at Fidelity Investments India**, underscores the vital importance of talent retention and training amidst an increasingly competitive talent acquisition landscape.

In the 2020s, digital transformation demands, driven by emerging technologies, became paramount. The pandemic-induced shift to remote work and the surge of AI and automation presented both opportunities and challenges, requiring skilled workforces. **Seema Unni, Head of HR and Regional Leader at Fidelity Investments India** emphasises the essential role of Global Capability Centres in leading talent acquisition and retention amidst these changes.

How has Fidelity's GCC in India evolved in terms of business growth and talent development?

Fidelity's journey in India, as we mark our 20th year, has been transformative. We've strategically integrated technology, operations, and analytics, enhancing our customer value proposition, especially for our US clients and our parent organisation. This seamless integration across these domains underscores our maturity and growth. Moreover, Fidelity India embodies the entirety of Fidelity, housing all its business units. This structure provides our associates with a holistic view of our business, enabling us not just to churn out technology or operational solutions, but to deliver comprehensive solutions with deep domain expertise. This approach sets us

apart from other GCCs and industry competitors. From a talent perspective, our team of approximately 7,000 across Bangalore and Chennai showcases a diverse skill set. We possess everything from high-demand niche skills to broader programme management capabilities. Additionally, our unique prowess in analytics and domain expertise in areas like asset management, retail investing, and workplace solutions epitomises our comprehensive and multifaceted talent pool in India.

Given Fidelity's 20 years in the GCC space, can you elucidate the major changes and evolutions you've observed, especially in recent years, as conversations around GCCs have amplified?

Certainly. Historically, GCCs operated at an arm's length from their parent companies, primarily focusing on staff augmentation with generic skills. The essence was more about cost savings rather than innovative contributions. Fast forward to today, the landscape has changed dramatically. GCCs are no longer distant entities but are now seamlessly integrated extensions of parent organisations. They've evolved from merely providing cost arbitrage to delivering genuine value and talent arbitrage. This shift

means that GCCs now actively engage in co-designing products and strategies in tandem with their parent entities.

There's a marked shift in the industry, where the emphasis is not just on cost but on capability, innovation, and customer-centricity. We've been proactive, collaborating with industry partners to redefine our strategies for the future. The transformation is evident in how we perceive talent. India's workforce has one of the highest learnability quotients globally. The democratisation of learning, via platforms like Coursera and Udemy, has only bolstered this. Our employees actively pursue skill development, aligning with the changing demands of work.

This evolution in the GCC space has amplified our global recognition. For instance, our recent accolade at the ZINNOV awards for innovation testifies to this. The enhanced visibility on platforms like LinkedIn and the growing word-of-mouth referrals within Fidelity further validate our trajectory. It's essential to note that this growth didn't happen by chance: Our strategy pivots around a blend of external hiring and in-house development, which has been a cornerstone of our GCC approach.

As we ponder the road ahead, our focus isn't just on being a traditional GCC but evolving as capability and

innovation centres. Our vision encapsulates three tenets: run, grow, and transform, with a diversified portfolio of work distributed across these segments.



For new GCC entrants, it's advised to adopt the capability model from the start, eliminating the "captive" mindset. This approach involves fostering an innovative culture, diversifying work into execution, growth, and transformation, and aligning strategies with similar capability-focused entities. Transitioning from captive to capability requires changes in hiring, and compensation structures, a shift from cost-focus to talent-focus, and a comprehensive change management strategy.

You emphasised the significance of the learnability quotient in the rising interest for GCCs. Has the pandemic further fueled this?

Absolutely. While the COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to humanity, it also ushered in certain positive shifts. I'd categorise these shifts into three primary segments:

Globalisation of Mindsets: The pandemic, with its push for virtual

communication, flattened the world in a sense. Distances shrank, and the global mindset grew exponentially. We were no longer bound by geographical limitations, which fostered a stronger intercontinental connection.

Acceleration of Digital Learning:

The transition to a virtual space meant that traditional classroom training was no longer viable. This change was a boon in disguise. It paved the way for educational institutions worldwide to offer their courses online. For instance, at Fidelity, our management development programmes, previously limited to India, expanded. We began collaborating with global universities, giving our leaders access to a diverse range of experts and professors. The move to a digital landscape also prompted a surge in self-learning. Employees, enjoying the flexibility of their schedules, gravitated towards self-paced courses, leading to a significant rise in enrollments on learning platforms. This acceleration in digital education and self-learning might not have been so rapid if not for the pandemic.

Equitable Skill Development: We conducted a global skills assessment during this period and found an encouraging trend. The opportunities to learn and apply skills have become more accessible, making skill development more even across the

globe. The convenience of the virtual environment, coupled with hybrid work models, empowered individuals to enhance their capabilities. Recognising their progress, we instituted rewards through our digital recognition platforms. Frankly, if not for the pandemic-induced shift to a digital mindset, achieving this level of progress might have taken another half-decade.

With two decades of experience, Fidelity is paving the way for many GCCs. As newer GCCs are emerging each year, what lies ahead for those that are already well-established?

That's a wonderful question. Currently, we're conducting a study focused on global workforce planning to address just that. Given our present maturity, our primary goal is to envision our trajectory for the upcoming three years.

We've introduced the concept of "centres of gravity." This concept aims to define, for all our global regions, what Fidelity's India region specifically represents in terms of capability. We're delving into the questions of which skills we possess, the nature of work we're best at, and our understanding of the customer. Moreover, we're also

considering how we plan to retain talent in this region.

For instance, we embraced the agile model around five years ago. Now, we're looking to deepen our engagement with this model. Questions arise, such as whether we should have more product leaders in India or if we should be focusing on having more co-located teams that own specific segments of the customer experience. Our work in India mustn't be fragmented, as this would not be sustainable in the long run.

Three core elements form the foundation of our "centre of gravity" discussion: scale, skill, and co-located impactful work related to customer experience. As a mature GCC, this framework will guide our future direction.

Central to all of this is our employees. Ensuring they have a fulfilling career path is paramount. Interestingly, our performance year kicks off in October, and we're also collaborating with external academic institutions. Currently, we're researching with seven top-tier academic institutions in India to pinpoint areas like financial independence, cryptocurrency, AI, and emerging analytics, which will shape our focus.

Another crucial factor for a GCC, especially from a leadership standpoint, is advocacy. Our leaders

should be strong advocates for their regions. Such advocacy ensures that every country brings unique thought leadership to discussions. This perspective is supplemented by insights from bodies like NASSCOM and equivalent entities in other countries.

Lastly, the importance of corporate governance cannot be overstated. With operations in different countries, understanding and adhering to the fiduciary responsibilities in the GCC becomes paramount. This includes aspects like risk, compliance, auditing, and understanding the laws and regulations specific to each region.

Can you provide an overview of Fidelity's hiring trends over the past two years, projections for the next few years, and your perspective on the "buy versus build" approach?

Reflecting on the last two years, it was a unique period, particularly post-pandemic. The technology sector experienced significant attrition, with talent movement reaching levels that seemed to condense what might have been seen over three years, had the pandemic not occurred. During this period, Fidelity, like many others in the industry, faced challenges with retention.

Historically, our approach has leaned towards a 70-30 or 80-20 mix. This means **we've primarily focused on grooming internal talent, especially fresh graduates from universities. This has allowed us to mould talent according to our organisational needs. We're proud of our retention rate, particularly among those with five or more years of tenure at Fidelity. Around 70% of such employees have stayed with us**, which is commendable.

When it comes to external hiring, our strategy is always intentional. We assess gaps in our skill set and hire accordingly. Recently, due to emerging tech trends, we've been hiring experts in areas like architecture, AI/ML, cryptocurrency, and cybersecurity. Our approach towards recruitment has involved seeking talent from top-tier and second-tier educational institutions, offering a balance between experienced professionals and fresh graduates.

Our "buy versus build" strategy evolves based on our organisational goals for any given period. In the past couple of years, given the surge in high-demand skills, our strategy tilted slightly towards buying or hiring externally. However, the commitment we offer when hiring is our brand promise, which is why our retention rates remain competitive, even with industry challenges.

Looking ahead, the next two to three years will likely focus on skill enhancement. We will aim to further develop the skills of those we've recently hired, especially in high-demand areas. Additionally, we'll concentrate on employees handling significant volumes and crucial customer-centric processes and solutions. The goal is to ensure that we not only attract but also retain top talent and continue delivering value.

Given the current landscape, would it be accurate to suggest that mature GCCs are pivoting towards retaining and training existing staff, while the newer GCCs are in a rapid hiring phase? Additionally, are mature GCCs becoming the prime talent pool for emerging GCCs?

Absolutely. In the past, third-party service providers might have been our main competitors. But now, with the maturity and strength of our GCCs, we've become a prime target for new entrants looking to tap into established talent pools.

For mature GCCs like ours, the focus has shifted to retention, skill enhancement, and maximising the value derived from existing talent.

This is a natural evolution after having spent years developing expertise and establishing a strong presence. With a foundation already set, it's vital to consolidate and ensure the talent we've nurtured remains with us, particularly in this competitive market.

On the other hand, emerging GCCs are in a race against time. They don't have the luxury of building over two decades like some of us did. They need to rapidly establish their presence, create value, and carve a niche for themselves in an already crowded marketplace. This inevitably means they'll be on a hiring spree, and given the reputation and talent pool of mature GCCs, it's no surprise they see us as prime recruitment grounds.

In the immediate future, I foresee the talent competition intensifying among GCCs. For the next couple of years, as mature GCCs focus on strategic retention and skill development, we might primarily be looking at replacement hires and backfilling roles due to the competitive nature of the market. The war for talent is in full swing, and it's going to shape the GCC landscape in profound ways.

Given the emergence of cost arbitrage from other countries, is there a potential risk to Indian talent in the global landscape?

It's essential to remain vigilant about the evolving global landscape, but based on our research and observations, India continues to be a stronghold in the talent ecosystem. Several factors contribute to this:

Robust Ecosystem: India's talent ecosystem has significantly evolved, with modern cities attracting foreign institutional investments and showcasing urban development.

Positive Indicators: Metrics such as the innovation index and living index for India have been on the rise, indicating an upward trajectory in terms of country development and appeal.

Strong Corporate Governance and Compliance: India demonstrates a robust corporate governance framework and compliance mechanism, reducing geopolitical and operational risks.

Beyond Cost Arbitrage: India's value proposition has transitioned from merely being a "low-cost" hub to a "talent arbitrage." The skills, expertise, and adaptability of the Indian workforce play a pivotal role in this transition.

Demographic Dividend: India's youthful population and vast talent pool, coupled with the marketability of its workforce, place the country in a competitive position on the global stage.

Multiple Determinants: When global companies consider a region for talent and operations, they evaluate various factors – geopolitical stability, geographical advantages, regional dynamics, and the country’s inherent diversity. India scores well on many of these fronts.

Diversity of Talent Pool: With initiatives like the apprenticeship programme, we’re tapping into varied talent sources within India, thereby diversifying and enriching our talent reservoir.

Adaptability and Innovation: India’s ability to adapt, innovate, and align with global requirements has made its talent pool more attractive.

In summary, while it’s crucial to keep an eye on emerging regions and their offerings, India’s multifaceted advantages make it a formidable contender in the global talent landscape. Nevertheless, continuous improvement and adaptation remain key to maintaining this competitive edge.

Can you explain the different models that exist within GCCs and their evolution?

GCCs have evolved from the traditional “captive” model, where centres acted as extensions of the parent organisation, primarily executing orders and functioning at arm’s length. This model often

limited innovation and led to fragmented operations. On the other hand, the “capability” model represents an advanced GCC, emphasising value addition, innovation, and equal partnership with the parent entity. They fully integrate with the parent, fostering innovation and thought leadership. Key features of a capability-focused GCC include internal innovation initiatives, academic research engagements, an internal gig platform for diverse projects, and a high rate of innovative idea submissions.

For new GCC entrants, it’s advised to adopt the capability model from the start, eliminating the “captive” mindset. This approach involves fostering an innovative culture, diversifying work into execution, growth, and transformation, and aligning strategies with similar capability-focused entities. Transitioning from captive to capability requires changes in hiring, and compensation structures, a shift from cost-focus to talent-focus, and a comprehensive change management strategy. Overall, choosing between captive and capability determines a GCC’s strategic direction, efficiency, and value proposition, with the latter being more relevant in today’s dynamic global scenario.

For the financial services sector in

India’s GCC, what emerging skills should job seekers prioritise?

Jobseekers should focus on full-stack development skills, given the rapid technological advancements. This encompasses the entire development lifecycle, especially as roles like quality assurance are becoming integrated into broader team structures. Utilising learning platforms can guide current industry skills. It’s crucial not to chase trends but to gain depth in areas like AI, analytics, and even mainframe engineering, which remains relevant in many financial systems. Recognising one’s proficiency level—beginner, intermediary, or expert—is also essential.

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In the context of the intense competition for talent within GCCs, which areas are experiencing the most demand?

For GCCs, the most competitive talent domains are AI/ML, architecture, and analytics, provided the GCC incorporates analytics.

And is Fidelity currently recruiting from these domains?

As of now, Fidelity isn't aggressively hiring from these domains. While the attrition rate is currently low and the market is muted, our focus has shifted from hiring to consolidation and retention. Earlier in the year, we were actively recruiting, but our current emphasis is on our robust total rewards strategy and retaining our talent.

Finally, how has Fidelity's hiring comparator set evolved as the company shifted from a captive to a capability mindset?

Initially, our comparator set for hiring was primarily third-party service providers. This was because GCCs and these service providers shared similar talent pools. Over time, as we shifted towards a capability mindset, our comparator set expanded. Today, it includes product companies, analytics firms, and various GCC segments like retail, aeronautics, financial services, and banking. Instead of focusing solely on third-party service providers, we now benchmark ourselves against a diverse set of industries and companies within the GCC realm.





**Sriram
Gopalswamy**

**VP - Site Reliability
Engineering and MD,
Sabre, Bengaluru**

INTERVIEW

**“Resurgence in Hiring
Activities Among GCCs
Expected if Inflation
Mitigates”**

Moumita Bhattacharjee, Senior Content Manager, Naukri

With prior roles at Syniverse and Oracle, **Sriram Gopalswamy** is adept in cloud migrations and innovative engineering. Additionally, he's the author of a patented technique for automating data centre software maintenance.



In this interview, **Sriram Gopalswamy, VP-Site Reliability Engineering and MD, Sabre, Bengaluru**, shines the spotlight on Sabre's innovative blueprint, highlighting the organisation's commitment to knowledge transfer and talent retention in the face of industry shifts. He also talks about the company's proactive approach to adapting to the evolving nuances of GCCs in India.

The recent Nasscom-Zinnov report, which throws light on India's transition into GCC 4.0, paints a picture of a nation harnessing its abundant engineering and digital prowess, pivoting from mere cost centres to beacons of transformative initiatives. In this context, Sabre, under the adept leadership of Sriram Gopalswamy, stands as a testament to strategic foresight and innovative talent management. As India stakes its claim on the global stage, Gopalswamy's insights offer a comprehensive look into how Sabre capitalises on and contributes to the nation's evolving GCC narrative.

Sabre signed a multi-year distribution service partnership deal with Air India recently. How does this influence your talent acquisition and retention strategies?

Our new alliance with Air India profoundly shapes our talent strategies. The partnership amplifies our reach across hotels, travel agencies, and partners, enhancing service accessibility. The collaboration achieves two main objectives. First, it fosters pride within our teams, underscoring our dedication to the Indian travel community, which bolsters employee morale and retention.

Second, the increasing demand for our services signals team growth, especially in sectors catering to Air India, OTAs, and traditional agencies. This growth naturally **propels targeted hiring, ensuring we meet partner and customer needs adeptly.** Moreover, our union with Air India paves the way for technological integration, necessitating tech-savvy talent and solidifying our position as industry innovators.

How will the impending global economic slowdown influence talent intake in GCCs?

The looming global economic slowdown is poised to recalibrate talent acquisition in GCCs. A significant contraction in hiring activities is observed across sectors, especially amongst prominent Indian I.T. entities, reflecting a hiring restraint. This restraint in GCCs arises from apprehensions of dwindling contracts and project loads. Jerome Powell, Federal Reserve Chairman, has flagged potential elevations in interest rates, resonating with data suggesting robust economic signals. Consequently, market pricing, per CME Group data, now leans towards a 5.5%–5.75% window. Influences include the Federal Reserve's actions and global inflation dynamics.

While economic recovery might

exhibit a lagging pace, a forthcoming correction in interest rates remains on the horizon, potentially reinvigorating the hiring scenario. Currently, the fiscal scenario isn't conducive to aggressive talent drives, affecting both industry stalwarts and fresh entrants. Leading academic institutions are witnessing a tapering of placements.

Yet, at Sabre, our commitment remains unwavering, selectively hiring for essential skills despite the downturn. **As the scenario evolves, a potential resurgence in hiring activities might surface if inflation mitigates and the economy rebounds.**

The pandemic severely impacted the travel sector, but recovery is underway. How does Sabre view future talent trends in this domain?

Following the pandemic, Sabre anticipates a surge in talent growth within the travel sector. India's GCCs have seen a vibrant shift in the travel landscape, marked by tech advancements and rising competition. The move from traditional protocols to the NDC framework has spurred tech innovations. As a result, new entrants are reshaping travel technology, promoting a competitive atmosphere beneficial

for all stakeholders. With a focus on personalised experiences and AI integration, **the next decade promises transformative changes in travel.** Reflecting this, many Indian travel agencies and OTAs are evolving from mere booking platforms to tech-driven entities, underlining technology's pivotal role in enhancing travel experiences.

How has the GCC landscape evolved in India over the years, and what factors have contributed to its growth?

India's GCCs have undergone a transformative shift over the years. A key driver behind this evolution is **industry convergence**: airlines and hotels are diversifying into ancillary services, such as insurance, propelled by substantial investments in groundbreaking technology.

Post-pandemic, domestic leisure travel in India has notably risen, even exceeding 2019 figures, bolstering the travel industry's growth. While the corporate travel segment, especially events and expos, is trading cautiously due to prevailing uncertainties, leisure travel boasts an impressive 15-20% increase compared to pre-COVID times. This growth underlines the sector's resilience and potential, even when some areas lag in

recovery. This dynamic shift in GCCs signifies the industry's adaptability, technological progression, and a reinvigorated emphasis on enhancing customer experiences and pioneering services in the travel arena.



While other regions offer competitive salaries, India's rigorous academic competition cultivates an adaptable, elite talent pool. This workforce, youthful and eager to embrace new technologies, combined with India's strategic time zone, positions the country favourably for global collaboration. Government initiatives like Skill India boost talent and broaden opportunities beyond IT.

What specific skill sets, and expertise are in high demand within GCCs in India?

There's a pronounced demand for specialised skills and expertise in India's GCCs. At Sabre, our trajectory is delineated by growth and transformation. The growth dimension emphasises tech evolution, transitioning from traditional systems to contemporary microservices and cloud-native structures. This demands expertise in full-stack development,

microservices, cloud platforms, CI/CD, and SRE practices.

Concurrently, transformation is steered by advancements in AI and ML. **We're actively seeking individuals adept in AI and data science**, emphasising generative AI, conversational AI, and data-centric decision-making. The goal is to enhance traveller experiences with tailored choices, strategic bundling, and improved network planning to boost airline revenues.

The market's momentum vividly highlights AI's prominence. For instance, the US stock market's vigour is attributed to AI-centric behemoths like Tesla, Meta, Apple, Microsoft, and Google, emphasising the intense competition and value tied to AI expertise. In sync with these dynamics, our recruitment strategy emphasises tech revitalisation and AI-centric innovations, steering through this transformative phase.

How have GCCs in India shaped the employment landscape and introduced new avenues for Indian professionals?

The rise of GCCs in India has revolutionised employment, offering myriad opportunities, especially for post-2018 graduates. These professionals, adept in software

services and AI, are not just leveraging existing tech but also pioneering new solutions. They're navigating advanced algorithms, driving innovations, and shaping their career trajectories. In this dynamic tech landscape, adaptability is key. With their strong computer science background, they're positioned to thrive, continually embracing and leading tech advancements.

What are the key advantages of setting up a GCC in India compared to other global locations?

Google India's recent announcement highlights that India's appeal as a GCC hub isn't solely about cost. While other regions offer competitive salaries, India's rigorous academic competition cultivates an adaptable, elite talent pool. This workforce, youthful and eager to embrace new technologies, combined with India's strategic time zone, position the country favourably for global collaboration. Government initiatives like Skill India boost talent and broaden opportunities beyond IT. The collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and industry shapes a conducive environment for GCCs, ensuring talent development aligned with global market demands.

How does Sabre attract and retain top talent in a competitive market?

At Sabre, our retention strategy emphasizes internal growth opportunities. We champion internal mobility, letting employees diversify roles and enhance skills. This holistic approach to career advancement enhances our retention rate.

Throughout the year, we host diverse events, from social mixers to celebrating LGBTQ rights and women in tech, promoting an inclusive culture. With global hackathons and academic partnerships, we foster continuous learning and camaraderie.

In recruitment, we seek individuals aligned with our vision of transforming travel. This commitment not only attracts new talent but also strengthens ties with our current team, fueling our retention efforts.

What initiatives are taken to foster a collaborative and inclusive work culture within your GCC?

At Sabre, our ethos is underpinned by a profound commitment to make a difference through our corporate social responsibility initiatives. Our collaboration with "Each One, Educate One" stands testament to

this. Through this partnership, we ventured to equip women in technology by introducing them to Python programming, bridging the gender tech divide.

We allied with the United Way of Bengaluru to inaugurate STEM labs in six government schools situated in Chikkaballapura District, Karnataka. These labs, benefitting around 1,600 children annually, cater specifically to remote and marginalised areas. The primary vision behind this initiative is multifaceted: to elevate the standard of education, demystify STEM subjects, ignite a passion for Science and Technology, and counteract school dropouts prevalent in these underprivileged communities.

Our dedication to giving back is also reflected in our global CSR program, "Give Together." Through this endeavour, Sabre has contributed over \$20 million and dedicated more than 300,000 hours of volunteer service. This concerted effort showcases our unwavering commitment to social upliftment and bettering the world we inhabit.

What future trends do you anticipate for GCCs in India, and how is Sabre preparing to adapt to these?

As previously mentioned, India's GCCs are evolving to offer more

INTERVIEW

than just conventional services. They are steadily transitioning towards research and development, highlighting a shift from solely service-based functions to more innovative roles. This trend is underscored by the increase in product-centric initiatives originating from these centres. Moreover, the

breadth of roles within GCCs is expanding, covering not only technical aspects but also pivotal functions such as product management, client engagement, and crafting the product trajectory. The emerging narrative centres around full-fledged product ownership being vested in Indian

GCCs. In alignment with these trends, Sabre's strategy prioritises recruiting and nurturing talent equipped to navigate and thrive amidst these broader responsibilities, marking a transformative phase for the role of GCCs in India.



Snapshot

REGISTERED NAME OF THE COMPANY & LOCATION

Sabre Travel Technologies Pvt. Ltd.



Year of Incorporation:
2005



Number of employees:
1200-1500

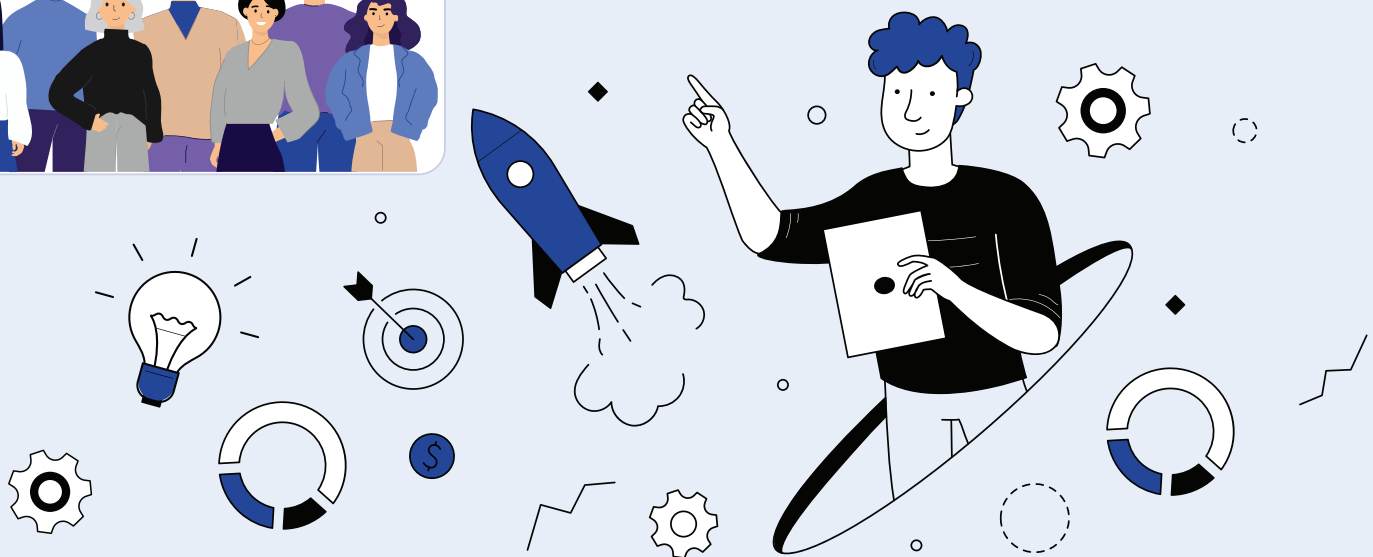


BUSINESS LINE

Travel Technology

KEY HR DIFFERENTIATING FACTORS

Our Collaboration with Google On Tech Transformation





**Mitun
Chakraborty**

Director of HR (Talent Management, L&D and DEI), Carelon Global Solutions

INTERVIEW

“Future of GCCs Hinges on Optimising Human-Machine Collaborations”

Mitun Chakraborty, Director of Human Resources specialising in L&D and DEI at Carelon Global Solutions, boasts over two decades of expertise in talent management, organisational development, learning and development, and DEI.

Moumita Bhattacharjee, Senior Manager - Content, Naukri



Prioritising employee well-being and leveraging digital adaptability, **Mitun Chakraborty, Director of HR (Talent Management, L&D and DEI) at Carelon Global Solutions** discusses new approaches to workforce dynamics, positioning themselves at the forefront of the evolving GCC landscape in this interview.

In the dynamic realm of health tech, Carelon Global Solutions emerges as a beacon of transformative change. With its roots tracing back to the US, the India-based centre of Carelon has grown exponentially, reflecting the nation's potential in global healthcare transformations. Guiding this vision is **Mitun Chakraborty, Director of HR (Talent Management, L&D and DEI), Carelon Global Solutions.**

In conversation with All Things Talent, she touches on Carelon Global Solution's unique HR ethos, its adaptability during the pandemic, and its foresight in the evolving landscape of GCCs. Read on to understand the synergy between global aspirations and local talents.

Could you share insights on Carelon Global Solutions' journey and presence in India? How does the India team size compare with the global workforce?

As one of India's rapidly expanding health tech global capability centres, Carelon Global Solutions has played a pivotal role in revolutionising insurance operations and tech services. Originating from the U.S.-based Carelon organisation, our India-based centre was

established in 2017, to leverage the specialised talent from the region and drive global healthcare transformations. **Within five years, our presence has amplified across cities like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Gurugram, and we now boast a robust team of over 18,000 associates. On the global front, we mark our presence in four other nations, bringing the total talent pool to 25,000 – of which a staggering 72% are based in India.**

Could you highlight the primary facets of your HR policy in India?

People are central to our strategy at Carelon Global Solutions. We've fostered a culture that promotes inclusivity, engagement, and creativity. Our HR policies prioritise individual moments that make a difference throughout an employee's journey at Carelon.

Advanced tech-enabled platforms guide their career paths, and our DEI programme, 'Belong', places emphasis on diversity, inclusiveness and equity. We have specific groups championing the rights and representation of PWD and LGBTQ+ individuals. Dedicated teams within our HR domain focus on diversity recruitment, collaborating with entities adept in this arena.

Our HR instruments are inclusive, allowing associates to indicate their gender, disability, sexual orientation,

and more. Numerous engagement groups exist to showcase talents beyond professional capacities. Given our hybrid working model, we've introduced a virtual platform, actively engaged by over 10,000 associates, to foster camaraderie among peers. This space hosts various virtual activities, ensuring continuous interaction despite the hybrid work approach.

We firmly believe that diversity fosters innovation. Our commitment to equal opportunity hiring nurtures this diverse talent pool. All our workspaces are designed with inclusivity in mind, and our universally accessible resources echo this ethos.

The well-being of our associates is paramount. Our inclusive insurance policies address both the physical and mental needs of all, including the PWD and LGBTQAI+ groups.

In essence, our policies are designed to offer our associates a sense of purpose, growth, well-being, and belonging.

How do you attract and retain top talent in a competitive market?

A pivotal strategy is our investment in employee experiences, which has enhanced trust among our associates, directly benefiting areas like attrition and talent retention. We've cultivated a learning-focused

environment at Carelon Global Solutions, empowering associates to leverage growth opportunities. Our Learning Academy offers tailored content for diverse learners and tech specialists. Collaborations with top academic institutions enable innovation and leadership growth, with internships spanning various departments. Our “Campus to Carelon” initiative equips graduates with a seamless transition into their roles. This commitment to development has led to improved survey scores and halved our attrition rates.



The influx of global investments has spurred unprecedented growth and development for local talent. This growth trajectory is fueled by attracting industry-leading talent, upskilling, leadership development, and fostering innovation. Collaborations with global entities offer fresh graduates invaluable exposure to strategic projects, accelerating their career paths.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic reshaped the operations and workforce dynamics at your company in India?

The pandemic-induced challenges

ushered in a surge of digital transformations in the health insurance sector. This demanded an expansion in our hiring and skilling endeavours, readying for a post-pandemic age. By the end of 2021, our associate count reached 10,000, as we poured efforts into digital learning and skilling. Our workplace strategy also underwent evolution, leaning towards a holistic hybrid working model.

How does Carelon Global Solutions contribute to enhancing local talent and skills in India?

Tailoring our people initiatives to our Indian associates’ needs is crucial. We provide platforms like discussions tailored for Indian women and learning programmes for university graduates. We also place emphasis on soft skills and on fostering collaboration with global teams. Strategic councils, excellence centres, and practice communities further facilitate specialised talent development. Our CSR initiatives also align with NGOs to impart soft skills to young women.

Could you discuss the evolution of the GCC landscape in India and its driving factors?

The current GCC scenario in India is undergoing a significant transformation. **Over recent years,**

Indian GCCs have transitioned from mere outposts to transformative hubs. India’s demographics, vast tech knowledge, and collaborative nature present an ideal environment for this evolution. Our burgeoning startup ecosystem aptly showcases the Indian mindset’s prowess, offering more than just cost advantages to global entities.

What are the sought-after skill sets and expertise within India’s GCCs?

India, rich in specialised talent across engineering, IT, and business process management, is also witnessing a burgeoning demand for cutting-edge technologies such as AI, RPA, and Blockchain, driving R&D initiatives from within its boundaries.

Given GCCs’ presence in India, how has the local employment landscape transformed?

The influx of global investments has spurred unprecedented growth and development for local talent. This growth trajectory is fueled by attracting industry-leading talent, upskilling, leadership development, and fostering innovation. Collaborations with global entities offer fresh graduates invaluable exposure to strategic projects, accelerating their career paths.

What future trends do you foresee for GCCs in India, and what strategies are Carelon Global Solutions employing to align with these?

The future of GCCs hinges on optimising human-machine collaborations. Moving up the value chain, GCCs will amplify their expertise in innovation, product development, and process optimisation. Carelon Global Solutions is fostering innovation

and nurturing a culture of infinite possibilities, making it a hub for innovators, thinkers, and researchers.



Snapshot

REGISTERED NAME OF THE COMPANY & LOCATION

Carelon Global Solutions – Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Gurugram



Year of Incorporation:
2017 in Bengaluru, India



Number of employees:
18K+



Business line:
Carelon Global Solutions is a global services organization providing technology, processes, and operational solutions for healthcare's most complex challenges.



NAME OF THE KEY EXECS

Rajat Puri – Chief Operating Officer, Carelon and President, Carelon Global Solutions

Mosur Saisekar – Chief Country Head, Carelon Global Solutions India

CAGR OF WORKFORCE GROWTH

We have achieved a workforce growth CAGR of **319.7%** in the last 5 years.

KEY HR DIFFERENTIATING FACTOR

- 40% of our associates are women. We have a holistic diversity program called 'Belong' to oversee our diversity practices and improve the representation of diverse talent: Talent with disabilities, talent from LGBTQAI+ community, Veterans, economically weaker segments and others.
- We personalize learning for associates through AI-enabled platforms.
- Our office in Bengaluru is 90% run by renewable resources and we are working on implementing this across all our offices in India.

Mashreq India Head HR Jayanthi Gopal's Guide To Adapting New-Age Recruitment for Banking GCCs

Emphasising the pivotal role of global capability centres, Jayanthi Gopal, the HR Head at Mashreq Global Network India, explores the limitations of traditional hiring approaches and underscores the need for skills fit for the future



**Jayanthi
Gopal**

Head HR, Mashreq Global Network India

Jayanthi Gopal serves as the Head of Human Resources at Mashreq Global Network India. She brings a rich experience of over 20 years in Human Resources functions ranging from formulating business strategies and developing HR programs and initiatives to supporting businesses for various global organizations.

India's banking industry is undergoing a significant transformation driven by fintech innovation and widespread digital penetration. This evolution has reshaped customer expectations, propelling the BFSI sector to adapt rapidly.

Amidst such transformation, India's global capability centres have played a significant role by driving innovation and spearheading digital transformation for parent organizations. As a result, India has emerged as a prominent destination for banking GCCs due to its skilled workforce and favourable business environment. As per a recent NASSCOM- KPMG report, 21% of all GCC employees in India operate in the BFSI sector.

The GCC landscape in India is

evolving, driven by technological advancements and shifting consumer demands, necessitating a corresponding evolution in the hiring strategies employed by banking GCCs. **Traditional talent acquisition methods are no longer sufficient to attract and retain the right talent with future-oriented skills.** To stay competitive and adapt to changing dynamics, Indian banking GCCs need to rethink and reimagine their hiring strategies. future of talent in this ecosystem.

The Quest for Future-Ready Skills

The upswing in digital banking and data-driven decision-making has paved the way for more technology-related roles in the BFSI industry. A July 2022 study shows that the IT, banking, and finance sectors accounted for 93% of the 3.82 lakh net increase in jobs in

India during 2021-22. In pursuit of a suitable talent advantage, banking GCCs are in fierce competition against their counterparts and fintech startups.

Beyond seeking traditional financial expertise, these capability centres must broaden their scope of talent acquisition to **hire individuals who possess skills like critical thinking, agility, and a relentless passion for innovation.** Take, for instance, a digital innovation strategist who possesses the ability to navigate the complex overlap of digital innovation and banking dynamics. Such a hire can bridge the divide between traditional banking practices and emerging technologies, ultimately leading to improved customer experiences. **Additionally, in the current high-demand landscape for data scientists, it is crucial to recognize that their value extends beyond technical skills.** Skills like creative thinking and communication skills can help them provide actionable recommendations and foster a deeper understanding of the value that data-driven insights.

A new era of agile and innovative hiring

While the BFSI industry undergoes a seismic digital transformation shift, it is becoming increasingly clear that **banking GCCs must adopt a more tech-driven, nimble, and adaptable approach towards hiring.**



By banking on talent and reimagining their hiring strategies, banking GCCs can position their parent organisations as leaders in the digital revolution of the industry.

This futuristic and sophisticated approach includes leveraging technology, and innovative methods to streamline the processes and appeal to a wider pool of candidates.

Forward-looking GCCs can further future-proof their talent by first identifying roles that can be harmonized with future-ready skills. They also need to recognize that diversity is not only a moral imperative but also a business imperative and consider implementing blind hiring practices to eliminate biases in the selection process.

More importantly, they must leverage technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the hiring process. For instance, automating screening of job applications through applicant tracking systems.

With the rise of talent analytics, employee skill mapping presents an innovative approach to identifying and documenting the skills and

competencies of employees. This can be used to identify potential skills gaps, develop training programs, and make better hiring decisions.

Additionally, **new-age hiring tactics like gamification, candidate relationship management, and personality assessments have also proven to be successful in enhancing the overall quality of hires.** Just as importantly, focusing on creating a positive candidate experience will help banks differentiate themselves and attract top talent.

That being said, **one of the most important strategies critical to attracting top talent today is personal branding which goes beyond employer branding.** Today, leaders, managers, and recruiters need to digitally brand themselves to appeal to the best candidates. By establishing a strong online presence, showcasing thought leadership, and engaging with potential hires through social media, leaders and organizations can enhance their reputation and attractiveness to their potential hires.

At Mashreq Global Network, we have a team of highly talented professionals committed to delivering exceptional customer experiences through innovative products and services. Our distributed workforce allows us to tap into a diverse talent pool from

COVER STORY

India, enabling us to onboard employees with digital-specific expertise wherever they are available. We also strive to equip our employees with the necessary knowledge, expertise, and tools through robust digitization of systems and processes, to meet the evolving demands of business and provide the best experience to customers.

How banking GCCs are deriving benefits and anticipating the future?

The banking industry is at the forefront of innovation and change, and the next few years will surely witness it. By banking on talent and reimagining their hiring strategies, banking GCCs can position their parent organisations as leaders in

the digital revolution of the industry. The focus should be on acquiring professionals with a diverse skill sets, promoting a culture of innovation, and embracing the principles of diversity, inclusion, and continuous learning. It will be intriguing to witness how the influx of digital talent disrupts the traditional banking industry with its vision for change.





Sanjay Dora

COO, Tesco Business Solutions & Site Lead – Tesco Bengaluru

INTERVIEW

“Tier 2 and Tier 3 Cities Have Emerged as Talent Magnets for GCCs in India”

With over 25 years of expertise, **Sanjay Dora** has excelled in spearheading Global Business Services and BPOs in India and the Philippines, while driving large-scale digital transformations. He’s renowned for adeptly managing P&Ls and leading high-calibre teams across varied environments.

Moumita Bhattacharjee, Senior Manager - Content, Naukri
Bruhadeeswaran R, Senior Manager - Editorial & Content, Naukri



Sanjay Dora, COO, Tesco Business Solutions and Site Lead – Tesco Bengaluru provides an in-depth perspective on the strategic decision behind the organisation’s establishment in Bengaluru, highlights the growing significance of Tier II and III cities for GCCs, and talks about the company’s proactive measures towards talent attraction, innovation, and fostering a diverse, inclusive work culture

Global Capability Centres (GCCs) have increasingly recognised the value of consolidating operations in areas with a rich talent pool, robust technological infrastructure, and cost advantages. Bengaluru, often referred to as India's Silicon Valley, has been at the forefront of this movement. Tesco, the UK-based retail giant, is among the companies that acknowledged this trend early on, establishing its operations in Bengaluru in 2004. Dora, with his vast experience in global business services, engages in a detailed discussion with All Things Talent to shed light on this journey. Excerpts of the interview are below.

What factors influenced Tesco's decision to inaugurate its capability centre in Bengaluru in 2004, and how have the centre's skill demands transformed over time?

When Tesco chose Bengaluru in 2004 for its capability centre, the city's vast talent reservoir, cost efficiency, and burgeoning status as a tech powerhouse stood out. Benefits like an **English-proficient populace, a strategically advantageous time zone, progressive government policies, and an atmosphere ripe for innovation made it a compelling**

choice. Initially, our centre was rooted in technology, emphasizing core technical proficiencies such as Java, C++, and Database Management. However, over time, we branched out, incorporating web development, mobile apps, cloud, and data analytics. This broadening horizon also meant diversifying into customer service, finance, HR, and domain-specific functions like Property Management and Legal. As the digital frontier kept advancing, so did our demands: AI, ML, robotic automation, big data, cybersecurity, and domain mastery became paramount. Equally essential was our ability to perennially recalibrate our talent strategies, ensuring we stay abreast in a ceaselessly advancing tech and business world.

As the momentum for GCCs intensifies this year, there's a noticeable shift towards Tier-II and Tier-III cities. What attributes of these cities make them pivotal destinations for GCCs in the talent landscape?

Their competitive edge comes from economical living and affordable real estate, complemented by a burgeoning reservoir of skilled professionals groomed by upgraded educational platforms. With diminished talent competition, a

superior equilibrium between work and personal life, and formidable regional employee loyalty, these cities are becoming magnets for GCCs.

Moreover, organisations are tapping into the unique local language proficiencies and eclectic viewpoints these cities offer, paving the way for enriched customer interactions and groundbreaking innovation. The combination of governmental incentives, tax concessions, and escalating digital infrastructure is making remote collaborations seamless. Augmented by infrastructural advancements and economic progression, these cities not only stand out as quintessential business venues but also serve as catalysts for societal transformation by amplifying employment opportunities and community involvement. A forward-thinking approach sees companies partnering with local academies, crafting talent pipelines primed for the challenges of tomorrow.

Is Tesco considering establishing additional centres in these cities?

Currently, we have a presence in four international locations, forming a cohesive network of Global Hubs. Our transition to a hybrid work environment supports a dispersed team, reinforcing business stability and aiding in the recruitment and

retention of talent, thus promoting nimble growth.

How has the GCC landscape in India transitioned over the years, and which specific skill sets have emerged as indispensable within these centres?

Over the years, the GCC landscape in India has metamorphosed, influenced by a blend of India's cost-effective, adept workforce, strong technological foundations, government incentives, and its role as a preferred offshoring epicentre. As this ecosystem evolved, there's been a surge in demand for specialised skills, ranging from software development, data analytics, and cloud computing to more niche areas like UX design, artificial intelligence, and domain-specific expertise in sectors such as finance and retail. Simultaneously, the benefits of establishing a GCC in India compared to other global locales are multifaceted. Beyond just the talent pool, **India provides a unique mix of digital prowess, cost advantages, geopolitical stability, and a vibrant start-up** atmosphere, distinguishing it from counterparts like the Philippines, China, Poland, and Ireland.

How are emerging technologies shaping

Tesco's hiring strategies, and what measures does your organisation employ to attract and retain talent in this dynamic market?

At Tesco Business Solutions (TBS), new-age technologies are at the forefront of our hiring strategy. They not only streamline talent acquisition but also infuse data-driven insights, enable AI-powered evaluations, and facilitate virtual interview platforms. In the evolving marketplace, harnessing these technological advancements is paramount to attracting and retaining top-tier talent.

Our Employee Value Proposition (EVP) stands as a testament to this, offering a blend of competitive compensation, industry-leading benefits, and clear career development avenues. Beyond these tangible assets, TBS's defining attribute is its culture, where colleagues are celebrated and placed at the very core. Our emphasis on diversity and an empowering environment ensures everyone thrives both professionally and personally.

This commitment has led TBS to be acknowledged by the Shared Services and Outsourcing Network (SSON) as the World's Best GBS in 2023, underscoring our dedication

to both performance and people. Moreover, our award-winning 15-acre green campus in Bengaluru not only champions sustainability but also offers a rejuvenating space for our colleagues, further highlighting our holistic approach to employee well-being and growth.



GCCs in India are poised for another evolutionary leap. A robust value proposition, increased AI integration, and an amplified role of data science and analytics will be paramount. These centres will transition into global entities, acting as seamless extensions of their parent organisations.

What initiatives are taken to foster a collaborative and inclusive work culture?

Our investments in this vision are manifold – from diversity and inclusion training to revamped hiring practices, and from dedicated mentorship programs to nuanced recognition systems. We actively urge colleagues to broaden their horizons by participating in cross-functional projects, a step that further cements their professional advancement.

But our commitment goes beyond

mere words. Our policies have been meticulously crafted to reflect and promote this inclusive approach. This includes provisions such as insurance coverage for same-gender partners and those in live-in relationships, comprehensive adoption policies, support for gender reassignment surgeries, a creche policy for working parents, and enhanced insurance coverage for our specially-abled colleagues. Through these initiatives, we're not just crafting policies – we're reshaping our organisational culture to be truly inclusive.

Can you provide examples of successful innovation and knowledge transfer initiatives between your unit and global teams?

At Tesco Business Solutions, our unyielding pursuit of value generation permeates every aspect of our operations. It's not just a goal; it's our very essence, our DNA. This passion has culminated in the development of groundbreaking solutions over the years. From pioneering a top-tier Contracts and Commercial Management capability to introducing an avant-garde Cash Monitoring application, we have consistently stayed at the forefront of innovation. Further, our suite of Enterprise Analytics solutions empowers our business leaders,

providing them with the insights they need to make intelligent decisions that spur revenue growth, enhance margins, and bolster cash generation.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the workings and employee dynamics of GCCs in India, and what future trends do you foresee for these centres, given the evolving scenario?

The ripples of the COVID-19 pandemic have been deeply felt in the operations and employee dynamics of GCCs in India. This unprecedented challenge nudged us into a **comprehensive reevaluation of our operating models, and business resilience strategies, and hastened our transition to a more formalised hybrid working environment and digital transformation.** But it wasn't just about operational shifts; it also brought to the fore the pressing need for addressing the well-being of our colleagues, the significance of reskilling in a volatile environment, and smarter workforce planning in the face of uncertainties. At Tesco Bengaluru, we recognise the indispensable role our colleagues' families play, and we've taken steps to celebrate and integrate them into the larger Tesco family fabric.

Peering into the future, GCCs in India are poised for another evolutionary leap. A robust value proposition, increased AI integration, and an amplified role of data science and analytics will be paramount. These centres will transition into global entities, acting as seamless extensions of their parent organisations. At Tesco Business Solutions, we're not just adapting; we're leading. Our primary aim is to transform into an end-to-end experience-centric and decision-driven organisation. Accelerated AI adoption and a commitment to continually upskill our team in emerging technologies are just a few ways we're future-proofing our operations.

How does your GCC integrate with and elevate local talent development and upskilling initiatives in India?

Aligning with Tesco Group's refreshed purpose in 2021, "Serving our customers, communities, and planet a little better every day," we've honed our community engagement, directing efforts towards critical issues paramount to our stakeholders. A cornerstone of our approach is championing a brighter future for children, ensuring they're equipped with the skills and resources for tomorrow's challenges.

INTERVIEW

Underpinning this vision, we've pioneered initiatives to uplift the local community, emphasising the empowerment of young individuals. A standout example is our collaboration with the Magic Bus India Foundation. This endeavour, tailored for the youth aged 18 to 25, focuses on inculcating

customer-centric skills among the underprivileged. **By facilitating placements across sectors like Retail, BFSI, ITES, Hospitality, and Healthcare, we're not merely offering them employment opportunities** but arming them with the competence to make a substantial difference in their lives and

those of their families. The success of this partnership is evident, **having mentored over thousand young individuals and successfully placed over 800 in customer-oriented roles**, subsequently enhancing their family's economic stability.



Snapshot

REGISTERED NAME OF THE COMPANY & LOCATION

Tesco Bengaluru



Year of Incorporation:
2004



Number of employees:
4500 colleagues (India)



BUSINESS LINE

Tesco in Bengaluru is a multi-disciplinary team serving our customers, communities, and planet a little better every day across markets. Our goal is to create a sustainable competitive advantage for Tesco by standardising processes, delivering cost savings, enabling agility through technology solutions, and empowering our colleagues to do even more for our customers.

Building Resilient Workforces: Insights from Smitha Yadav, Head HRBP at CDK Global India

Drawing from her rich experience, Smitha Yadav, underscores the importance of agile talent management and the critical influence of HR in guiding organisational adaptability



Smitha Yadav

**Head HRBP, CDK
Global India**

Smitha Yadav, with 15 years in HR, has created award-winning DEI programmes. Her data-driven approach positions organisations for the digital age, placing emphasis on strong cultural values.

In today's fluid business environment, organisations must evolve to thrive. Central to this is a resilient workforce, anchored by an agile HR that not only ensures adaptability but also steers through the tide of change. A Deloitte study reveals that 85% of regularly recognised employees feel valued, boosting retention and potentially saving a firm with 10,000 employees approximately \$16.1 million each year. Globally, organisations have recognised HR's pivotal role in fostering resilience. The emphasis now lies on promoting continuous learning and mobility, equipping leaders to uplift team morale, and facilitating employees to embrace change and uncover fresh opportunities internally.

Upskilling and reskilling

With daily advancements in technology, the demand for highly skilled employees keeps intensifying. CDK Global offers platforms designed to foster talent, addressing both personal and professional growth needs. Specific tech-related skills are keenly addressed. We collect learning needs from employee surveys to meet business demands, aligning them with individual goals and tracking regular progress. Our diverse learning calendars encompass technological, behavioural, and leadership skills. The results of our training efforts, both internal and external, are periodically assessed, reflecting improved function-level performance. Notable programmes include our Business Acumen Building Program, Tech Product Roadshows, and Dealership e-learning series.

Through its Tech Drive Technology Community Learning Platform, CDK provides a plethora of programmes on Product Management, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Data, and Analytics, complemented by tech initiatives such as Hackathons, Dev Days, and Industry Meetups. These offerings keep tech employees updated with the latest industry trends. **In the previous year, 72% of employees participated in domain and product training, 81% attended product roadshows, 41% engaged in Business Acumen sessions, and 74% used e-learning.** These programmes equip employees with the necessary understanding to meet customer expectations while developing technology products.

To support employees in their quest for excellence, it's vital that organisations cultivate an environment conducive to adaptation in this constantly evolving landscape.

Agile talent management: Flexible talent planning, Embracing continuous feedback

Organisations increasingly depend on their Human Resources functions to direct talent strategies that enhance business outcomes. While Agile methodologies have been predominantly associated with tech, their application in the

business realm has showcased their value. Recognising this, there's a growing trend of extending these practices to talent management. As a result, HR departments are evolving, adopting agile methods in sync with broader organisational practices.

The days of traditional yearly appraisals are dwindling; this is being replaced by regular check-ins. Given that employees often work on diverse products and under different leaders, both globally and locally, timely feedback has become essential. **This shift ensures that feedback is not just immediate but also a constructive tool for performance improvement.**

Embracing change as an HR imperative

In today's ever-evolving business landscape, equipping employees for change is non-negotiable. Modern HR leadership has expanded its realm to instil resilience and flexibility in employees. More than their conventional roles, HR teams are now central to change management, partnering with leaders to craft clear communication paths. By maintaining open dialogue, they mitigate concerns and establish trust. With a focus on fostering inclusion and innovation, HR shifts the perspective on change—from a looming threat to a growth opportunity.



Through its Tech Drive Technology Community Learning Platform, CDK provides a plethora of programmes on Product Management, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Data, and Analytics, complemented by tech initiatives such as Hackathons, Dev Days, and Industry Meetups. These offerings keep tech employees updated with the latest industry trends. In the previous year, 72% of employees participated in domain and product training, 81% attended product roadshows, 41% engaged in Business Acumen sessions, and 74% used e-learning. These programmes equip employees with the necessary understanding to meet customer expectations while developing technology products.

HR resilience in action at CDK Global

CDK Global takes pride in its advanced workforce management practices, earning us four consecutive Great Place to Work™ certifications in India. We've implemented tailored learning plans and engineering enhancement programmes for comprehensive upskilling. Departing from the conventional 9-box succession

method, we've launched the **Talent Action Planning (TAP) programme**. This approach zeroes in on **pivotal roles, addressing strategic workforce planning, individualised development, and fostering growth**.

Promoting a culture of open communication

Effective communication is the cornerstone of resilience. It is imperative for the Human Resources function in an organisation to champion transparency, open dialogue, and psychological safety. By doing so, a workplace culture of trust blossoms, where employees voice their concerns, ideas, and suggestions without apprehensions. Such an environment where employees feel valued and acknowledged makes them more receptive to change, aligning their efforts towards the organisation's objectives.



CDK India's 'Spectrum – All In' initiative showcases our dedication to cultivating an inclusive and diverse atmosphere. With programmes like 'SuperMom – Balance for Success,' we extend our arms to support and care for expectant and working mothers. Moreover, in our pursuit of inclusive growth spanning our multi-generational workforce, we prioritise employee feedback. This strategy aligns with the insights from our leadership to ensure fair opportunities and individualised mentoring schemes.

Supporting employee well-being

HR departments are at the forefront of creating a nurturing and healthy work environment, launching numerous programmes centred on employee well-being and wellness. They take charge of initiatives that underscore the importance of work-life harmony and mental health, further driving professional growth and instituting recognition schemes. Through these endeavours, HR underscores its commitment to fostering a robust and committed team.

Such HR-led initiatives elevate the sense of well-being and foster a feeling of belonging among employees. At CDK Global, our approach is comprehensive, encompassing facets of well-being that include social, community,

financial, and psychological wellness. **A detailed wellness calendar is rolled out for our workforce, and we pride ourselves in offering a robust benefits suite** that stands as a testament to our commitment to holistic employee wellness. Our compensation structures are crafted meticulously, featuring aspects such as differentiated pay scales, flexible benefits, performance-based incentives, routine health assessments, and extensive insurance provisions. Virtual sessions helmed by licensed medical experts address health and fitness, showcasing our dedication to the holistic growth of our employees.

Forging ahead

The evolving role of HR function in building a resilient workforce is picking up speed. In times of change, HR professionals serve as architects of organisational adaptability. They create an environment where employees embrace challenges. Here, change is viewed as an opportunity for personal and professional growth. HR Function plays a vital role in creating a thriving workforce amidst change. They invest in development, promote open communication, prioritise well-being, and nurture resilience. By shaping a resilient workforce, HR leaders drive long-term success in dynamic environments.



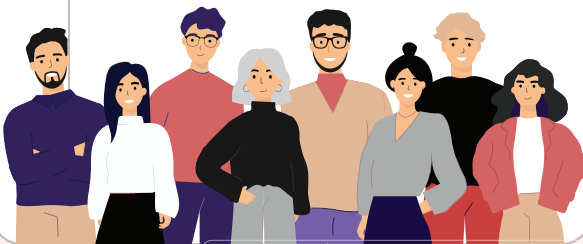
Snapshot

REGISTERED NAME OF THE COMPANY & LOCATION

CDK Global India Pvt. Ltd, Hyderabad and Pune



Year of Incorporation:
2014



NAME OF THE KEY EXECES

- **Arvind Chaturvedi** (Managing Director, India)
- **Joy George** (Head – HR, Communications and Real Estate, India)
- **Rashim Arora** (VP, Engineering Excellence and Quality)

BUSINESS LINE

For 50 years, CDK Global has been empowering dealers with the tools and technology they need to build deeper relationships with customers



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Stay connected as we delve deeper into the wisdom shared by industry experts, offering a glimpse into the intriguing evolution and transformation of the talent ecosystem

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Or Write to us at team@allthingstalent.org