

2026

# SNAPSHOTS

CELEBRATING  
15 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

Think<sup>TM</sup>  
↑ Talent  
SERVICES



## TALENT MANAGEMENT EVOLVING PARADIGMS

IDEAS SHAPING TALENT  
MANAGEMENT

FUNCTIONAL MEETS  
BEHAVIOURAL

COMPETENCE IN  
THE AGE OF AI

**IN  
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ISSUE...**



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## ABOUT THINK TALENT



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# Foreword

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## Bimal Rath

Co-Founder & Chairman

Dear Reader,

As we present this edition of Snapshots, we do so at a moment defined by technological acceleration, economic uncertainty, and profound shifts in how organizations discover, nurture, and retain human potential. The intersection of artificial intelligence, innovation in talent management, and a prolonged phase of low economic growth presents both formidable challenges and unprecedented opportunities.

The three themes we have picked have, as every year, been the result of conversations across the spectrum of clients and stakeholders. We have tried to capture voices directly, raw and unfiltered, from leading practitioners and leaders in each of the three sections. As a company, we have been around for 15 years. The first theme looks at what has

changed in these years and what we see emerging in the future.

The second theme speaks to how we “look” at our people. The traditional lens of multiple perspectives, especially using filters of functional and behavioural competencies, may no longer be relevant. In a world that moves with speed, a more integrated view of capacity, capability, and competence is perhaps a better way to leverage talent.

Artificial intelligence is no longer a distant promise; it is now embedded in everyday talent processes. From predictive hiring analytics and AI-driven learning pathways to real-time performance insights and workforce planning models, intelligent systems are redefining decision-making.

Yet, while automation enhances efficiency, it also elevates the importance of distinctly human

capabilities - creativity, empathy, adaptability, and ethical judgment. The organizations that will thrive are those that integrate AI not as a replacement for human talent, but as an amplifier of it. This is the focus of our third theme this year.

Innovation in talent management is moving beyond traditional frameworks. Budget constraints and cautious capital allocation demand sharper prioritization. Talent strategies must therefore deliver measurable impact - driving productivity, fostering innovation, and building resilience. In such an environment, organizations must view talent development as a growth engine.

Finally, one of my favourite quotes is by Marcel Proust: “The real voyage of discovery lies not in seeking new lands, but in seeing with new eyes.”

- Bimal

Organizations that will thrive are those that integrate AI not as a replacement for human talent, **but as an amplifier of it.**

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# Guest Contributors

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**Amit Singh**

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Shuttl



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Head Sales Academy &  
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Solutions, OD &  
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HR Advisor & Former  
Chief Group HR  
Tata Sons



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**V. Ramnath**

Ex-Managing Director  
Racold Thermo

Disclaimer: The views expressed in the videos are exclusively those of the speakers.

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# IDEAS SHAPING TALENT MANAGEMENT





In 2025, as we complete 15 years, this section looks back at how ideas, talent management processes, and HR practices have evolved. What emerges is a shift beyond incremental improvements towards deeper rethinking of how talent is identified, developed, and deployed, with greater focus on learnability and real-world capability.

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# Ideas We Have Championed

## 2010-14

### The Beginning | Leadership. Talent. Culture



These were the three words we carried from the very beginning. Markets changed, we experimented, we evolved - but our focus, our core remained the same.



While the context has changed in several ways over the years, the real essence of what we do at Think Talent; helping leverage potential in people, remains essentially the same



*Started in a small office, anchored by a strong belief in what we were building.*



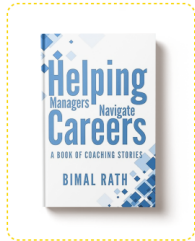
Championed the shift from manager-as-supervisor to manager-as-coach, focusing on everyday capability building.



Supported culture related conversations. Large scale culture & values cascade initiatives.



*Published our first book*



## 2014-18

### From 'Stars' to 'Talent Clusters'



*Moved into our first full-scale office and built our initial Tech & Operations backbone.*



Advocated a fresh approach to Talent Management - more democratized, employee-led. Shift in focus to develop large pool of talent than a few stars.



Took our first steps into SaaS-enabled talent solutions, launching early platform modules and the first version of what became Think Talent Next.





### Co-founders Reflect on 15 years of TT

**Bimal Rath**  
Chairman

**Anjul Pratyush**  
CEO



Moved beyond behavioral towards industry-, role-, and function-specific talent solutions.



Launched Elemetrik - a suite of validated, field-tested, and cost-effective assessment products.



Deepened our tech expertise to address emerging priorities like info sec & privacy, AI, analytics & languages.

Scan to watch now!



**10 Years of TT**  
A decade in - listen to the founders' journey.



## 2022-26

### Reimagining Practice, Products, Tech

*Inaugurated our Bhubaneswar Center- home to our growing Tech & Ops teams.*

*Expanded our consulting presence, with on-site teams across 5 major cities.*



## 2018-22

### Designing for Scale



Introduced Think Talent Next version 3, a proprietary in-house platform designed to power large-scale programs by seamlessly integrating assessments, IDPs, and learning journeys.



**100k+**

ADC Participants Covered



**20k+**

360° Surveys Administered



**150k+**

Learning hours Delivered

# The Quiet Reinvention of Talent Management

The Snapshots team asked Mr. Satish Pradhan, Former Group HR Head, Tata Sons and a thought leader in HR, for his views on Talent Management. The questions were focussed on where the practice of Talent Management is headed.



**Satish Pradhan**

HR Advisor & Former  
Chief Group HR  
**Tata Sons**



The central question for leadership is no longer ‘Who are our best people?’ but ‘How effectively do people move, grow, and take on increasing complexity?’



## Beyond Competencies: The Rise of Situational Capability

The exhaustive competency frameworks of the past— which described behaviours in reassuring detail—often failed to predict actual performance under pressure. Today, we view capabilities as composite, situational, and perishable. It is no longer enough to display a behaviour in isolation; what matters is the real-time integration of judgment, learning velocity, and systems thinking. As AI and people analytics expose the weak correlation between traditional models and actual effectiveness, the language of competencies is losing its former authority.



## From Inventory to Flow: The End of Talent Stockpiling

For decades, talent management was treated as a matter of industrial stockpiling: identify “high potentials” early and insulate them within carefully designed programs.

However, this model has proven fragile. Static labels age poorly in a world defined by rapid role change and rising complexity. We are finally recognizing that talent is not inventory—it is a flow system. The central question for leadership has shifted from “Who are our best people?” to “How effectively do people move, grow, and take on increasing complexity over time?”.



## The Real Crucible: Development Through Consequence

Leadership development is moving away from episodic, event-based interventions. While residential programs and inspirational speakers haven’t disappeared, we now better understand their limits. True development is a function of role design, decision rights, and exposure to real consequences. Assignment planning, stretch assignments, crisis roles, and enterprise-wide projects have regained legitimacy as the primary drivers of growth. Ultimately, development is constrained less by an individual’s motivation than by the structure of the work they are actually asked to do.



### Recalibrating Potential and the Necessity of Unlearning

The idea of “potential” needs a sober recalibration; lately, it has become more of a compliment than a commitment. Properly understood, potential is an obligation to take on future accountability at higher levels of ambiguity. Labelling people as “HiPo” without offering them the authority to make consequential decisions only breeds entitlement and disengagement. Furthermore, we must reward “unlearning”. The inability to let go of once-successful practices is now a material risk; leaders must be judged on their ability to retire old skills and question legacy wisdom.



### Talent as Enterprise Risk

Talent management has moved out of the “safe custody” of HR and into contested organisational space.

Driven by succession failures and technological disruption, CEOs and Boards now view talent as a form of enterprise risk, alongside financial and cyber threats. There is a new, healthy pressure to demonstrate how talent architecture genuinely supports strategic direction rather than merely reflecting current hierarchies.



**Talent management has moved out of the “safe custody” of HR and into contested organizational space.**



### The Future: Fractured Careers and Cultural Infrastructure

Looking ahead, talent systems must accommodate “zig-zag” trajectories—trajectories that include pauses, re-entries, and multiple reinventions over longer working lives. Success will be evaluated through the health of talent portfolios rather than individual “bets”.

Finally, culture will be redefined. It will be assessed not through lyrical value statements, but through concrete signals: decision latency, error recovery, and the psychological cost of speaking up. Increasingly, the true measure of a leader will be how safe it is to think in their presence.

# The New Thinking Behind Talent Management

A few shifts are beginning to redefine how organisations think about talent, not as incremental improvements, but as changes in the underlying logic of how work and capability are understood.

**Experience, long seen as a primary marker of value, is being reinterpreted.**

Tenure still carries weight, but it no longer guarantees credibility or continued relevance. What is gaining ground instead is learnability, the ability to absorb change, adapt to new contexts, and respond effectively to evolving demands. In an environment where knowledge cycles are shrinking and transformation is continuous, staying current is becoming more valuable than accumulated experience.

**Alongside this, the structure of work itself is being reconsidered. Instead of being anchored in fixed roles, work is increasingly viewed as a combination of tasks and capabilities that can be reorganised based on need.**

This creates a different organisational logic, where teams are assembled around the skills required for specific missions.

In such a setup, leadership does not always follow hierarchy. It can shift to the individual who holds the most critical capability in a given situation, regardless of level or title.

This rethinking of work also brings into focus how tasks are distributed. As automation and artificial intelligence take over parts of jobs, the question is not simply what disappears, but what remains.

What remains is likely to be a smaller but far more critical subset of human work, work that requires judgment, interpretation, contextual understanding, and the ability to connect seemingly disparate elements. These are the areas where human contribution becomes the differentiator.

Running through these shifts is a deeper structural tension. Organisations are designed to create stability and predictability in an uncertain world. At the same time, if they do not evolve, they risk becoming rigid, bureaucratic, or even irrelevant.

Talent management is increasingly about navigating this tension, holding both stability and change together rather than trying to resolve one at the expense of the other.

The relationship between individuals and organisations is also evolving. Talent is becoming more self-directed, not in a selfish sense, but through a form of informed agency. Individuals are clearer about their aspirations, values, and choices, and more willing to act on them.

**This is reshaping traditional notions of loyalty and engagement, turning the employment relationship into an ongoing dialogue rather than a fixed expectation.**

Development, too, is being reimaged. Coaching is no longer seen as a specialised intervention delivered by a few, but as a core capability expected of leaders and managers. At the same time, coaching itself is evolving alongside technology.

With the rise of AI-enabled tools, the future is likely to see more augmented forms of coaching, where technology enhances observation, pattern recognition, and insight, while human leaders bring context, empathy, and connection.

Taken together, these shifts suggest that talent management is not just evolving in practice but is being reconsidered at a more fundamental level, with new assumptions about work, capability, and the role of human potential in organisations.





## Sabih Kidwai

Director Learning Solutions,  
OD & Partner Enablement  
**Schneider Electric India**

Coaching cannot remain a specialized skill held by a few certified coaches.

Every manager and leader will have to develop coaching as a core capability.

It has to be embedded in the way we manage and lead people every day.

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Conversation



Organizations are built to create stability in an unstable world. They are systems that assure a certain level of predictability.

But at the same time, if organizations don't change, they risk becoming bureaucracies or even dead businesses.

The real challenge for HR professionals is how to balance this tension or paradox.



## Sameer Nagarajan

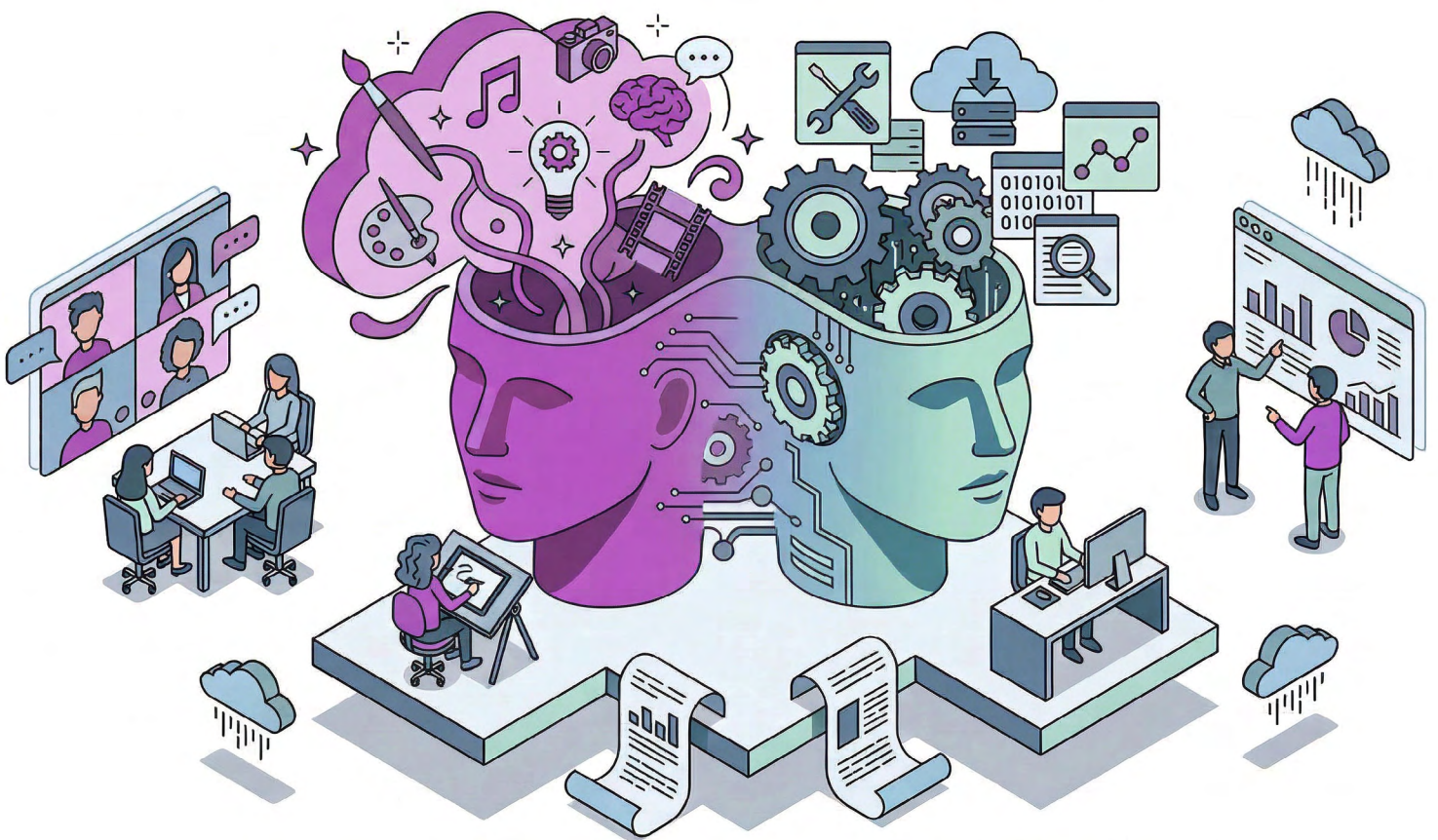
Chief Executive Officer  
**Essence Middle East  
Consulting FZ LLC**

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Conversation



# FUNCTIONAL MEETS

# BEHAVIOURAL



**The Brief**

We need a behavioural program.

Sure. What's happening?

Our managers are technically strong. But performance is inconsistent.

**The Diagnosis Begins**

What exactly is breaking down?

**Problem?**

- Skills gap?
- Motivation issue?
- Role clarity?

They avoid tough conversations. Decisions get delayed. Teams feel disengaged.

**The Label**

See? Soft skills.

**Problem?**

- Skills gap?
- Motivation issue?
- Role clarity?
- Behavioural?

When do these issues show up?

**Reality Check**

**Problem?**

- Skills gap?
- Motivation issue?
- Role clarity?

During client escalations... operational reviews... high-pressure deadlines.

So not during 'soft skill' moments.

**The Turning Point**

When your manager chooses not to escalate a risk... Is that technical or behavioural?

**Functional** | **Behavioural**

...Both?

**Blurring Lines**

They don't lack skills. They struggle applying them under pressure.

**ROLE PERFORMANCE**

So the issue isn't behaviour or function...

**The Insight**

It's how both show up together in the role.

Knowledge

Decisions

**Real Work**

Influence

Accountability

Exactly.

**The Conclusion**

So don't give me a behavioural program.

**Role-Based Capability Design**

Let's design for the role.

**People don't perform skills. They perform roles.**

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# Designing for Roles, Not Skill Buckets

## From Skill Silos to Role-Based Capability Design

For years, talent development has been organised around distinct skill buckets—communication, analysis, leadership—each developed and assessed separately.

While this approach created structure, it fragmented the way work truly happens. Now, organizations are questioning whether skill-based design can fully capture the complexities of real-world roles. Modern roles, especially in leadership and client-facing positions, require a constant mix of technical knowledge, behavioural maturity, and judgment. People often face high-pressure decisions, competing priorities, and cross-boundary influence in the same day. Yet many learning journeys treat skills as standalone, ignoring their integration in real-life roles.

The truth is, people perform roles, **not isolated skills.**



### Why Skill Buckets Fall Short

Skill-based models assume that once someone learns a skill, they can apply it across situations.

However, transfer is not automatic. A manager may know feedback models but hesitate in a high-pressure, politically sensitive situation. The gap isn't knowledge; it's applying the skill within the complexity of the role. Clients are noticing that gaps aren't due to missing skills, but unclear expectations of what "good" looks like in a specific role.

Without this context, skills remain theoretical, and learning investments don't translate into consistent performance.

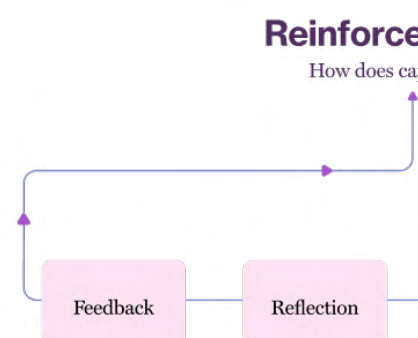
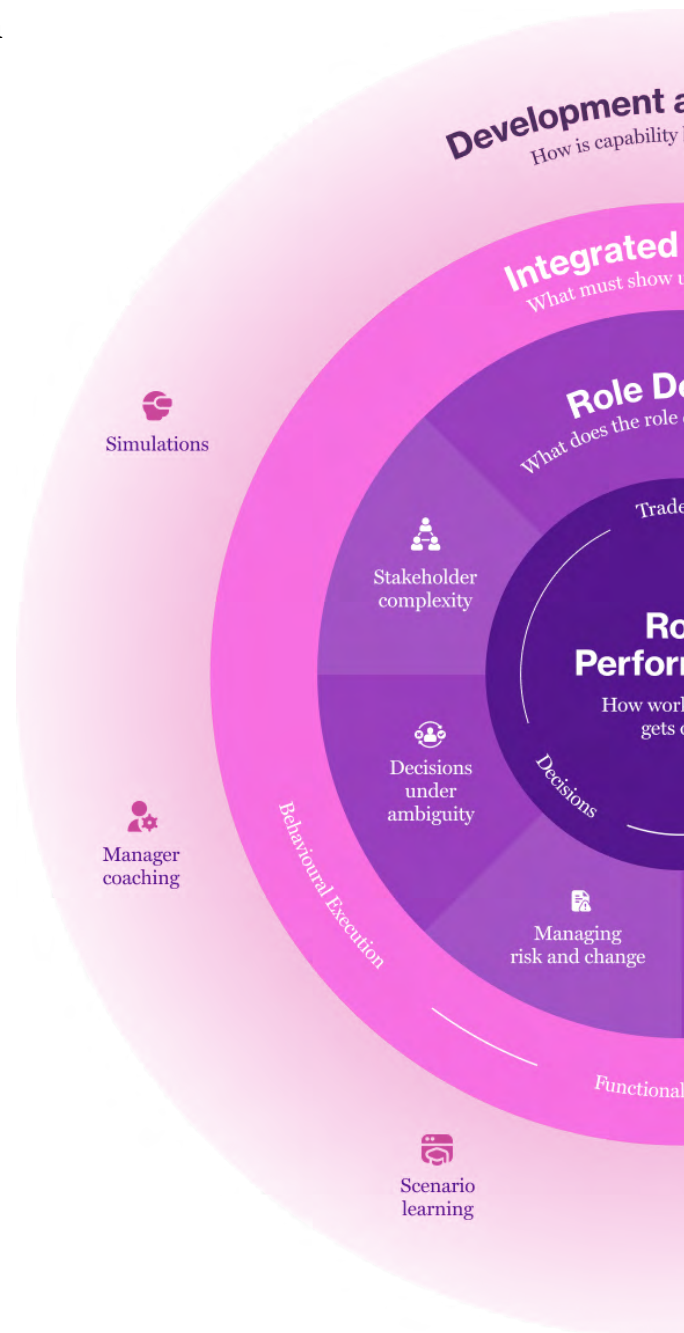


### The Shift to Role-Based Capability Design

Role-based design shifts the focus from asking, "What skills do people need?" to "What challenges does this role face, and how should performance look in those moments?"

This approach focuses on real, role-specific challenges that matter to the business, bridging learning design with performance expectations. It integrates functional expertise, behavior, and judgment, creating a clearer performance narrative.

For L&D leaders, this narrative becomes a key tool for designing learning journeys for critical roles.





### What Role-Based Design Looks Like

Role-based learning and assessment are anchored in real work moments—performance discussions, client negotiations, and operational crises. Participants engage with situations that mirror their own challenges. Functional and behavioural capabilities are developed together, reflecting the role’s demands.

Assessment focuses on how individuals respond to role scenarios, navigate ambiguity, and make trade-offs.

This alignment helps managers understand expectations clearly, as learning mirrors daily work.

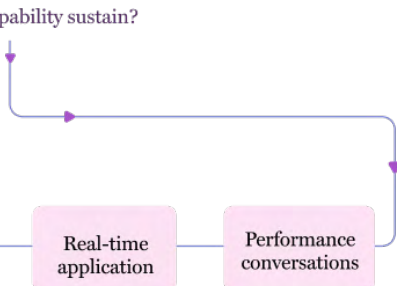


### Why Clients Are Leaning into Role-Based Design

Role-based design addresses common business pain points. It accelerates transitions into new roles by clearly defining success criteria. It drives performance consistency by aligning people with shared expectations of their role, not just a list of skills. It also improves the link between learning investments and business outcomes. By focusing on role-specific needs, it reduces cognitive load, offering participants a coherent view of how their role demands different capabilities.

For L&D leaders, the challenge is moving from skill-based frameworks to role-centric learning experiences that mirror real work.

### Performance Loop



### Why this Matters

Role-based capability design shifts development from skills to performance readiness.

It helps organizations:

- Accelerate role readiness
- Align learning with real work
- Reduce fragmented development



# From Framework to Field:

## Stories from the Ground

Across organizations, the real test is not in frameworks, but in how work gets done on the ground. This piece brings together a set of client stories that reflect how we are working with clients to redesign talent interventions to stay close to business realities.

From large-scale sales assessments to plant-level potential mapping, the focus is consistent: making talent processes more industry-, function-, and role-specific, more integrated, and more practical for leaders and teams. These examples show how organizations are moving beyond generic models to solutions that reflect their operating context and drive execution outcomes.

### Designing Competency Framework for a FMCG firm

Mid-size FMCG firm looking to build a structured competency framework for the sales function across channels (GT, MT, Ecom, etc.) and customer marketing, to enable talent development and career management.

#### Design Evolution

##### ● Integrated Functional Framework

- Single framework with 14 functional competencies across all roles.
- Behavioural competencies expected to be covered separately.

#### Client Feedback:

Very comprehensive but competency indicators still feel generic & not sharp enough. How do we bring out the unique context of each channel & role more clearly?

##### ● Channel-wise Functional Frameworks

- 8 separate frameworks with differentiated competency sets for each channel/group (GT, MT, B2B, Ecom, CSD, Customer Marketing, Commercial Excellence).
- Focused solely on Functional competencies; indicators contextualized for each channel.

#### Client Feedback:

Much sharper, but feels incomplete need to integrate behavioural elements.

##### ● Channel-wise Integrated Frameworks

- 8 channel-specific frameworks combining functional and behavioural competencies.
- Streamlined to 6 competencies per group.

#### Client Feedback:

Rolled out to sales leadership teams for further fine-tuning of language. Final framework rolled-out across the entire sales function.



## Competency Profiling & Gap Analysis using ADCs

ADCs have been long considered one of the most scientific methodologies for competency profiling. The following cases show how scale, agility, and integrated frameworks are shaping how ADCs are designed and delivered.



### Competency Profiling for the entire on-ground Sales team

- Differentiated frameworks designed for Sales & Service teams and for each Business Unit, in consultation with the business stakeholders.
- Combination of traditional behavioural (eg: Influencing) & more functional (eg: Sales planning) competencies.
- Assessment deployed for 1500+ participants in IC & First-level Manager roles in sales across all verticals.



### Skill Profiling for India Sales Team

- Skill profiling process for 450+ participants in IC & ASM roles.
- Skills identified from global skills library & contextualized to India & division-wise operating context through market visits & other interactions.
- 8 differentiated exercise sets across divisions & levels.
- Assessment conducted for all participants virtually & completed within a 3-week window.



### Plant-Level Potential Mapping for Manufacturing & Supply Chain

- An org-level competency framework already existed, and senior manufacturing leaders expected it to be translated to the plant-level operating context.
- Framework, exercises, and delivery aligned to plant operating rhythm.
- In-person DCs covered 200+ participants, across multiple plants; workshops & 1-1 sessions conducted to create IDPs & group data leveraged to identify hi-potential employees.

## Designing and Delivery of Sales Excellence Learning Program

Leading DTH provider building a customized program for 400+ Sales and Service ASMs across India to drive future readiness in a market shaped by OTT growth & changing customer segments.

### Program Design



#### Grounded, Context-led Content

- Diagnoses – Ground realities faced by sales & service ASMs captured through FGDs & market visits across urban & semi-urban markets.
- Content built around industry-specific challenges, linking daily operational issues to broader business outcomes.
- Simulations and reflection-based activities focused on consultative selling, customer-first decisions, balancing acquisition targets with service quality, & identifying opportunities for differentiated client activations at the market level.



#### Facilitator Panel with a Sales Background

- Panel of senior facilitators with direct experience in channel-driven sales environments.
- Practical experience across partner management, activations, and frontline challenges.
- Outside-in perspective combining operational depth with industry benchmarks; examples closely aligned to participants' daily realities.



#### Experiential Workshop Delivery

- Simulation-based workshops anchored in real scenarios.
- Case-based learning linked to actual workplace challenges.
- Hands-on skill practice with guided self-reflection.
- Structured action planning to drive on-the-job execution.





## Ishwar Dutt Sharma

Head Sales Academy &  
Distribution Initiatives  
**Niva Bupa Health Insurance**



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Conversation

Capacity building has to be about what moves the needle... What is the impact? For a business to grow 40% y-o-y, what we require is not just relevance, it is radical relevance...

Empathy is critical for relevance. Treating sales teams as peers and seeking to understand their pressure points, the barriers holding them back... This partnership is critical to achieve “relevance” in learning program design.

Market leadership... will not be won by distribution scale alone...

It will be won by capability density... We are now insisting on three non-negotiables in our talent assessment strategy...

One, a short list of business critical capabilities per role family... Second, clear proficiency standards with behaviors clearly observable by supervisors in daily work... and third, data and multi-sourced evidence for decision.



## Priyanka Mitra

EVP & Head HR - Distribution,  
Diversity & Inclusion  
**Axis Max Life Insurance**



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## Shikha Gupta

Chief Human Resources  
Officer  
**Luminous Power  
Technologies**

I strongly believe that the clear divide between hard and soft skills never made sense. Even earlier, we expected leaders to have domain expertise and at the same time bring in leadership qualities.

What has really changed is the pace - what used to take five years earlier now takes five weeks.

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Conversation



Sales excellence has gone through a paradigm shift. Sales is both a science and an art.

While the art part remains important, the science or the functional aspects - data-driven planning, managing the new consumer & channel dynamics, as well as value-based selling - need a lot more focus.



## V. Ramnath

Ex-Managing Director  
**Racold Thermo**

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Conversation



# COMPETENCE IN THE AGE OF AI





The idea of competence is being fundamentally redefined in the age of AI. As machines take over analysis and execution, human contribution is shifting towards judgment, interpretation, and decision-making, prompting organisations to reassess what drives performance and how leadership capability is understood and developed.



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# Leadership in the Age of AI

## Insights from conversations with 50+ CXOs



Artificial Intelligence is no longer a distant possibility or a specialist topic—it is rapidly reshaping how organizations think, decide, and compete. Algorithms now outperform humans at pattern recognition, predictive analysis, and optimization at scale. Yet when we spoke to over 50 CXOs across industries, one message came through clearly: the most critical leadership capabilities in the age of AI are deeply human.

While the conversations ranged widely—from data maturity to organization and talent transformation—four broad themes consistently stood out.

Together, they form a blueprint for leadership in an AI-enabled world: **Judgment, Balance, Resilience, and Trust.**

### 01 Judgment:

#### Making Sense When the Signal Is Loud

In an age of AI, leaders are surrounded by more data, more dashboards, and more recommendations than ever before. Paradoxically, this has made judgment—not certainty—more valuable.

CXOs spoke about the need to sense patterns rather than chase precision. AI can surface correlations and probabilities, but it cannot fully grasp context, ethics, or long-term consequence. Leaders are increasingly required to decide under conditions where answers are incomplete, timelines are compressed, and outcomes matter deeply.

Judgment in this environment is not about having all the facts; it is about asking the right questions:

- ❓ What is the decision we are really making?
- ❓ Where should we trust the model—and where should we challenge it?
- ❓ What are the second- and third-order implications?
- ❓ How do we create moats for our businesses beyond technology and AI?

Several leaders emphasized that thoughtful decision-making under pressure—**especially when AI outputs conflict with intuition and real-world meaning—is becoming a defining leadership skill.**

### 02 Balance:

#### Managing Opposing Forces

Almost every CXO described leadership today as a constant act of balance.

On one side is speed—AI enables rapid experimentation, automation, and execution. On the other is deliberation—ensuring that decisions are ethical, inclusive, and sustainable. Leaders must balance technology adoption with human impact, efficiency with empathy, short-term performance with long-term capability building and sustainability.

**This balance is not static. It shifts across moments:**

- ⚡ Centralization vs. empowerment
- ⚡ Automation vs. augmentation
- ⚡ Innovation vs. operational stability
- ⚡ Core value creation engines vs. new ones

The leaders who seem most effective are those who are comfortable holding opposing pulls at once—without rushing to oversimplify. They see balance not as compromise, but as conscious calibration.

### 03 Resilience:

#### Bouncing Back, Again and Again

**If AI is accelerating change, it is also increasing volatility.**

Strategies evolve faster. Skills become obsolete sooner. Mistakes are more visible—and sometimes more costly.

In this context, resilience emerged as a critical mindset rather than a one-time response to crisis. CXOs spoke about the ability to recover



## Resilience is a mindset, not a one-time response to crisis.

quickly from setbacks, unlearn outdated assumptions, and keep moving without becoming defensive or cynical.

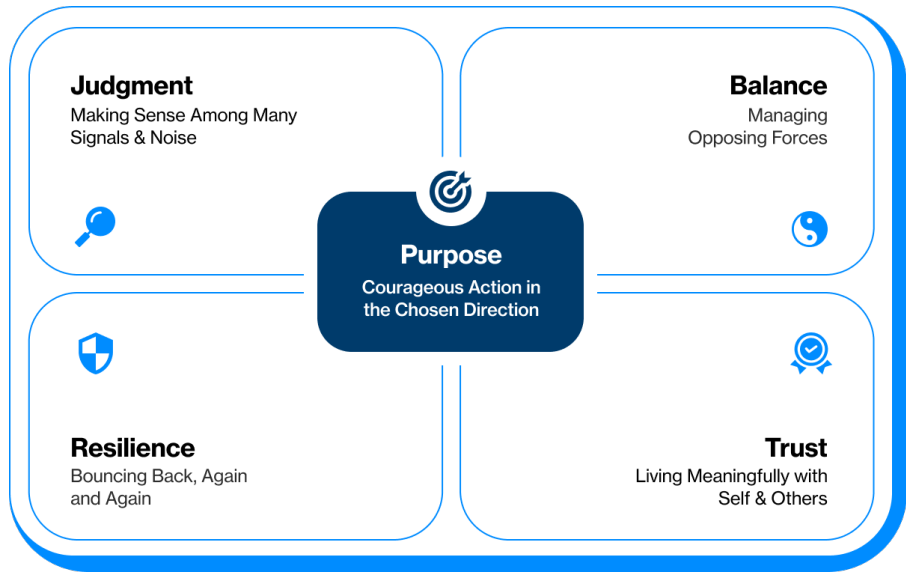
Importantly, resilience was not framed as individual grit alone. Leaders highlighted the need to model vulnerability-acknowledging uncertainty, admitting when something has not worked, and signaling that it is safe for others to do the same.

The leader’s personal ability to experiment and fail, and learn and be public about the failures, can be a key strength. In organizations learning to work alongside AI, failure is inevitable. Resilient leaders normalize learning loops rather than blame cycles.

### 04 Trust: The Leadership Currency of the AI Era

Perhaps the most repeated theme was trust.

As AI systems influence hiring, performance evaluation, and strategic decisions, trust becomes both more fragile and more essential. Leaders must navigate multiple layers of vulnerability: their own dependence on technology,



employees’ fears of replacement, and stakeholders’ concerns around fairness and transparency. Trust, the CXOs noted, is built through:

- ✓ Clear communication about how and why AI is being used
- ✓ Honest conversations about limitations and risks
- ✓ Willingness to share decision logic rather than hide behind systems

Leaders who communicate openly, listen deeply, and treat uncertainty with respect are better positioned to carry their organizations through transition.

In the age of AI, trust is not a “soft” skill-it is a strategic one.



## The Human Advantage

Across all four themes, a common insight emerged:

AI will continue to evolve rapidly, but leadership success will hinge on human strengths that technology cannot replicate.

- 1 Judgment over reaction.
- 1 Balance over extremism.
- 1 Resilience over rigidity.
- 1 Trust over control.

The age of AI does not diminish the role of leaders-it raises the bar. The leaders who will succeed are those who combine technological fluency with emotional intelligence, clarity of thought with humility, and speed with wisdom.

In the end, the future may be powered by machines but it will still be shaped by people.

# The Shifting Ideal: Workplace Personality Traits in the Age of AI

For decades, organizations have relied on psychometric inventories to define, measure, and select for an “ideal” workplace personality. Traits like conscientiousness, extraversion, and emotional stability have been repeatedly linked to job

performance, leadership emergence, and career success. But the rise of artificial intelligence (AI)—especially systems that automate analytical, repetitive, and even creative tasks—is beginning to reshape not just what work gets

done, but how humans add value at work. This raises a critical question for employers and talent leaders: as AI changes the nature of work, will the personality traits we value most also change?

## What AI Changes: From Execution to Judgment

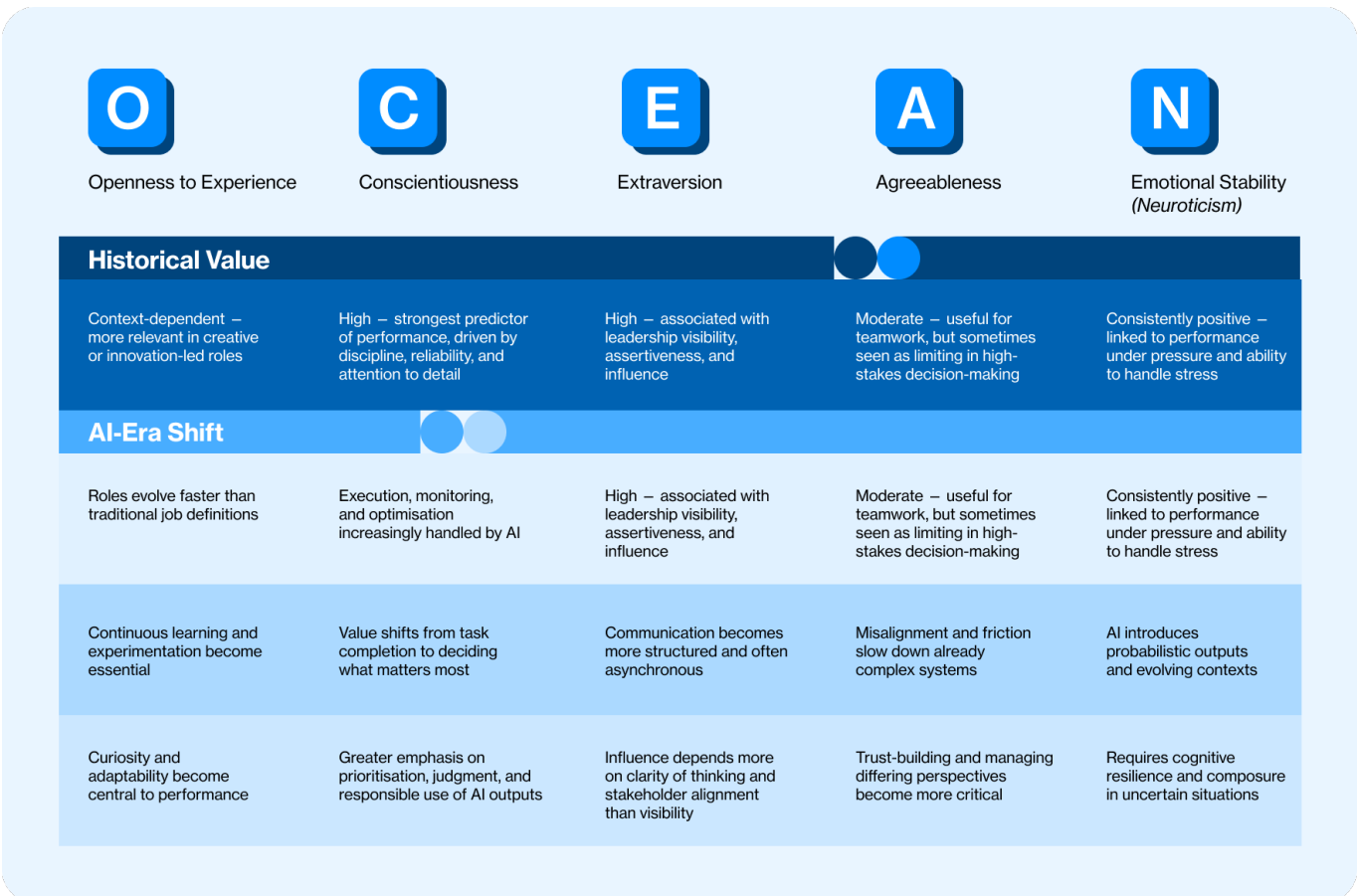
AI adoption does not eliminate entire roles overnight. Instead, it reconfigures task bundles within roles. Tasks that are repetitive, rule-based, data-heavy, and optimisation-focused are increasingly automated or augmented by AI systems.

As a result, human effort shifts toward areas where judgment, interpretation, and coordination matter more than execution alone.

This redistribution of work has important implications

for personality-performance relationships. Traits that were valuable because they supported execution and consistency may decline in relative importance, while traits linked to adaptability, learning, and collaboration may rise.

## How Personality Value Is Shifting



## Beyond the Big Five: Expanding the Lens

Traditional personality frameworks may underweight traits that are becoming more relevant in AI-mediated work. These include learning orientation, metacognitive

awareness, ethical sensitivity, and systems thinking.

In other words, understanding personality at work may need to

move beyond static trait definitions toward a more dynamic view of how individuals learn, adapt, and make decisions in evolving environments.

## Decoding Behavioural Readiness for AI

We reviewed personality data of managers from 15 BSE100 organisations to review broader readiness for driving the AI agenda.

Trait	STEN				
	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
<b>Drive for Results</b>					
Achievement Orientation	2%	15%	38%	23%	23%
Dynamic	2%	12%	37%	37%	12%
Time Conscious	7%	13%	38%	25%	17%
<b>Emotional Awareness</b>					
Empathy	9%	35%	24%	26%	5%
Temperamental	10%	13%	36%	30%	11%
Transparent	5%	34%	41%	18%	2%
<b>Influencing Orientation</b>					
Co-operative	4%	22%	41%	27%	5%
Modest	4%	25%	42%	25%	5%
Outgoing	9%	15%	41%	27%	7%
Persuasive	4%	23%	46%	22%	5%
<b>Innovation Orientation</b>					
Creative	13%	33%	23%	25%	6%
Inquisitive	11%	19%	44%	17%	8%
Risk Taking	10%	32%	37%	18%	3%
<b>Process Orientation</b>					
Dependable	2%	17%	38%	21%	22%
Focused	4%	16%	43%	32%	4%
Meticulous	4%	28%	42%	16%	10%
<b>Resilience</b>					
Adaptable	3%	17%	41%	21%	19%
Optimism	19%	37%	31%	12%	1%
Self-Conscious	6%	31%	22%	33%	7%
Stress Management	5%	23%	24%	37%	11%

Many managers are driven to act on “clearly set goals”; managers who can make meaning of unclear AI goals can lead the AI agenda

Some managers are overly expressive and some take time to understand others’ concerns and fears; managers with emotional prudence can lead teams and cross-functions through changing times

Many managers are averse to tackle novel and complex problems - waiting for someone else to solve them; few leaders who are creative, inquisitive and risk-taking could drive the org to the frontier of AI innovations

Managers display inner resilience - remaining calm during changing scenarios and adapting to the norms of new era; few leaders are also oriented to build a positive narrative around AI agenda can act as the AI champions

## Interpretation

Today, managers are well-equipped to drive outcomes when it is well-defined. But only few are inclined to push beyond norms and fully leverage a new technology to lead transformation. Identifying

and developing these leaders as AI champions becomes a critical priority for organizations. As the AI agenda trickles downward, organizations also need to equip managers with skills to lead their

teams navigate through the change cycle. With targeted behavioural interventions to bridge these gaps, India inc. can move towards a more sustained and scalable AI-led transformation.

## Closing Note

AI ambition in Indian organisations is supported by capable and driven managers, but as the nature of work evolves, so must

the behavioural profile required to lead it. Instruments like the Think Talent Personality Inventory (TTPI) help organisations decode these

behavioural patterns, enabling them to build leadership capability aligned to the demands of an AI Age.



**Sunil Goyal**

Dy. Chief Executive Officer  
**Sopra Steria India**

“Curiosity is going to be the most important quality.

When the world is changing this fast, the ability to ask questions and understand what is changing becomes critical.

Without that curiosity, learning will simply not happen.



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Conversation

The agility to continuously learn is becoming one of the primary qualities of a leader.

Things are changing so fast that the ability to quickly learn and adapt has become critical.

This was required earlier as well, but the scale and intensity today are very different.



**Anupam Sirbhaiya**

Group Chief Human  
Resources Officer  
**Bajaj Finserv**



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**Shalini Misra**

Group Digital Offerings  
Leader & Senior Director  
**Sopra Steria**

“There is a very big difference between skill and capability. Earlier we focused heavily on specific technical skills.

But in today’s environment, the real focus has to shift to capability - the ability to think, adapt, and create solutions in a rapidly changing world.

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Conversation



“Knowledge went out of the picture a while back with the advent of Internet, everything was accessible.

It was more about application because you don’t need to know things, you will find out. But how do you apply it to the problem statement at hand is what the core job became.



**Amit Singh**

Founder  
**Shuttl**

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Conversation



# About Think Talent

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Established in 2010, we at Think Talent Services have partnered with hundreds of organizations across several industries through our digitally-enabled key offerings, that are completely focused on people development across levels. Our partnerships with organizations extend over several years, are deep and have been built on trust and value delivery.

Today, we are a team of 60+ employees and 125+ partners, to help us seamlessly deliver services to our clients.

Our offerings allow extremely personalized experiences for participants while enabling the scaling of interventions for rapid and consistent deployment.

Deep customization and content expertise allow us to deliver highly contextual offerings.

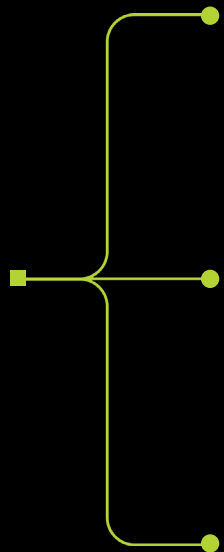
We partner with several global players, bringing their IP and methodologies to our work and developing our intellectual property through research focused on talent.

Some of the fundamental themes around which our work has evolved over a period of time include:

- Developing futuristic leadership capabilities
- Providing modern integrated solutions to manage talent at scale
- Democratizing learning in the modern workplace
- Empowering organizations to build resilient talent pipelines

We have tried to better understand the world of talent and leadership through our experiences and insights, often garnered from interactions with various individuals from different walks of life.

## What We Do



### Talent Assessments

Solutions to help organizations add rigor and scale to selection, promotion and development processes

### 360° Feedback & Development Planning

Scale up feedback and development planning for employees using digital platforms

### Learning Journeys

Scalable learning programs to build leadership and develop talent clusters at all levels





## Helping Organizations **Build** **Stronger Talent Pipelines**

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