BUSINESS FRONTIER

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WHY GLOBAL CAPITAL IS TURNING STRATEGIC IN DUBAI

CONVICTION OVER VELOCITY THE YOSHIAKI HAGIWARA WAY

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From the
EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Just a few months into the year, the contours of what will define the months ahead are already coming into focus. In this edition of Business Frontier, we set out to examine precisely that: the forces, ideas, and leadership philosophies that are likely to shape the trajectory of business in the year ahead. Across industries, the narrative is shifting. Speed alone is no longer the differentiator; structure, intent, and long-term thinking are taking precedence. From the rise of AI-driven procurement systems to the increasing emphasis on governance in healthcare and infrastructure, what emerges is a clear recalibration, one that favours resilience over rapidity, and substance over spectacle.

Our cover story captures this shift with particular clarity. In "**Conviction Over Velocity: The Yoshiaki Hagiwara Way,**" we explore a leadership philosophy that challenges the prevailing obsession with scale and speed. Hagiwara's approach is deliberate and deeply rooted—prioritising authenticity, environmental responsibility, and long-term value over short-term gains. His belief that purpose and profit must operate in alignment is not positioned as idealism, but as a practical framework for endurance. In an industry often driven by trends and optics, his perspective offers a more grounded and, ultimately, more sustainable path forward.

Elsewhere, this issue brings together voices navigating similarly complex transitions. From cross-border real estate and women's wellness to facilities management and emerging healthcare systems, each story reflects a broader movement towards thoughtful, accountable leadership. If there is a single thread that binds them, it is this: the year ahead will not be defined by how quickly organisations move, but by how deliberately they choose their direction.

Until then,
Happy Reading!

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Inside Myanmar's US$500M Wellness Shift: Dr. Nay Lin on Rethinking Health

With Myanmar's wellness and skincare market nearing US$500 million by 2027, obesity and lifestyle disease are driving new demand. **Dr. Nay Lin, Founder and Clinical Nutritionist Director of Skin Symphony**, outlines why nutrition-led, medically supervised weight loss is emerging as both a healthcare priority and a viable business model.

Dr. Nay Lin is the founder and clinical lead of Skin Symphony Medical Aesthetic & Nutrition Center in Yangon, a clinic built on the belief that sustainable beauty and wellness must be rooted in medical science rather than cosmetic shortcuts. Trained in the UK with a Master's degree in Clinical Nutrition, Dr. Lin has positioned himself at the intersection of healthcare, preventive nutrition, and medical aesthetics—an area that remains underdeveloped in Myanmar.

As rising urbanisation, lifestyle diseases, and obesity create both public health concerns and new market demand, he sees an opportunity to redefine how the wellness sector operates, by shifting away from quick fixes toward clinically supervised, nutrition-led weight management that protects metabolism, muscle mass, and skin health.

In this interview with **Business Frontier**, Dr. Lin explains why integrating nutrition with aesthetics is no longer optional, how data-driven weight loss programs can build both patient trust and business sustainability, and what gaps Myanmar must address to compete with more mature regional wellness markets.

What drew you toward clinical nutrition and aesthetic medicine, and what personal or professional experiences led you to establish Skin Symphony in Myanmar?

My journey into clinical nutrition and aesthetic medicine began during my studies at the University of Bedfordshire in the UK, where I completed my Master's degree in Clinical Nutrition. I observed how nutrient deficiencies showed up as skin issues such as acne, dullness, and premature aging among friends and family, which sparked my interest in connecting internal health with external appearance.

In Myanmar, I also saw rising obesity and metabolic issues driving demand for weight loss, yet very few evidence-based and medically guided programs. Professional experience in wellness clinics highlighted a gap in integrated care, that of combining nutrition-led weight management with aesthetic support. This led me to establish Skin Symphony Medical Aesthetic & Nutrition Center in North Dagon Township, Yangon, in 2024. Our programs focus on calorie-controlled, nutrient-dense diets that support sustainable fat loss, preserve muscle mass, boost metabolism, and protect skin health, while deliberately avoiding crash dieting or unsafe shortcuts.

In many markets, beauty and nutrition are treated as separate disciplines. How do you see the relationship between internal health and external appearance evolving?

Internal health fundamentally determines external appearance. Poor nutrition leads to inflammation, weight gain, and loss of skin elasticity. Safe weight loss, when managed correctly, preserves collagen structure through balanced macronutrients, adequate protein, and key vitamins.

In Myanmar, this integrated approach is becoming increasingly important. The skincare market alone is projected to exceed US$500 million by 2027, while urban dietary habits have contributed to around 30% of the population being overweight. Our nutrition-led programs target a safe and sustainable weight loss of 0.5 to 1 kilogram per week, which helps prevent muscle loss and the yo-yo effect. At Skin Symphony, nutrition audits are paired with aesthetic treatments to support toned physiques rather than short-term visual changes. This shift reflects a broader global move toward healthspan and evidence-based wellness rather than aesthetics in isolation.

> *"When weight loss is rushed, skin and metabolism pay the price. Sustainable results only come from medically guided nutrition*

As both a founder and clinical leader, how do you balance medical responsibility, patient trust, and business sustainability?

Medical responsibility is non-negotiable. Every patient follows a personalized plan based on BMR calculations, body composition measurements, and doctor-supervised monitoring to prevent risks such as nutrient deficiencies or metabolic slowdown.

Trust is built through transparency and education. We prioritise long-term habit change over pills, injections, or extreme methods. From a business standpoint, sustainability comes from high-retention programs rather than one-time procedures. Many of our clients achieve safe weight reductions of 10–20 kilograms, which builds credibility and long-term loyalty. By combining nutrition counseling with body contouring and aesthetic support, and by delegating care to certified nutritionists under clinical oversight, we maintain both ethical standards and commercial viability.

How do you see Myanmar's medical aesthetics and wellness sector evolving, and where are the biggest gaps?

Myanmar's medical aesthetics sector has been developing for approximately 15 years, but it has largely focused on beauty treatments rather than nutrition-based wellness. Compared to regional markets such as Thailand, a key gap is regulation. Thailand's FDA actively regulates and supports aesthetic and wellness services, while Myanmar lacks a formal regulatory framework and even restricts the use of the term "aesthetic," which creates uncertainty for providers.

Despite this, opportunities are significant. Wellness awareness is rising, and adult obesity has increased by an estimated 25%, driving demand for medically supervised weight-loss clinics. Evidence-based nutrition programs, post-weight-loss body contouring, and skin-tightening services represent clear growth areas. With future policy support, certified clinics and digital wellness tracking could help the sector mature responsibly.

From your experience, what are the most common misconceptions about nutrition and skin health?

A common misconception is that detox juices lead to safe weight loss, when they often cause dehydration and protein loss. Another is that low-fat diets automatically result in healthy slimming, ignoring satiety and muscle preservation. Many people also assume that weight loss will naturally firm the skin, when in reality it often leads to sagging.

We work to shift mindsets through structured consultations and education. Our programs focus on high-protein, fiber-rich diets that support approximately 1% body fat reduction per week, combined with collagen supplementation and metabolic health education. Through workshops and digital content, we aim to convert short-term dieters into long-term adherents to sustainable wellness.

Looking ahead, what is your long-term vision for Skin Symphony?

The long-term vision is to build a nationwide network of clinics specialising in safe, nutrition-led weight loss and medical aesthetics, supported by digital tools and mobile applications for virtual coaching. From a public health perspective, encouraging a 5-10% body weight reduction per year through supervised programs can significantly reduce the risk of diabetes and metabolic disease. Ultimately, I want to help shift Myanmar's mindset toward preventive nutrition and long-term health, rather than reactive or cosmetic-driven care.

Conviction Over Velocity: The Yoshiaki Hagiwara Way

In an industry driven by speed, scale, and surface-level sustainability, **Yoshiaki Hagiwara, President and Owner of Nature's Way**, explains why choosing the opposite direction — slower, deeper, and rooted in nature — is the only way beauty can truly endure.

As **President and Owner of Nature's Way**, one of Japan's earliest plant-based cosmetics companies, **Yoshiaki Hagiwara** has resisted the pressure to grow quickly or simplify sustainability into a marketing message. Instead, he has focused on building a business grounded in conviction, one that integrates environmental responsibility, innovation, and long-term value into its core operations.

His leadership philosophy has been shaped not by trends, but by lived experience, observing how businesses endure through uncertainty, how nature resists standardization, and how leadership often requires restraint rather than acceleration. For Hagiwara, purpose is not a positioning statement and innovation is not a race; both are responsibilities.

In this conversation with **Business Frontier,** he reflects on legacy and leadership, sustainability as structure rather than storytelling, and why he believes conviction, and not velocity, is what ultimately defines businesses that last.

You've successfully carried forward a family legacy while steering the company into a new direction. What have been the most defining challenges and lessons in that transition?

After the war, when Japan was still politically and economically unstable, my grandfather started his business by bringing food from the countryside to Tokyo. Initially, he simply delivered food to hungry people amid shortages. Over time, his keen eye for quality led him to carefully select vegetables and fruits, and the business evolved into a fruit shop and eventually one of Japan's earliest supermarkets.

> *“The purpose of running a company and its profits should be one and the same. If they are not aligned, sustainable motivation becomes difficult*

From childhood, I grew up listening to his stories about surviving the harsh postwar market. They were always compelling and exciting, and from him I learned the joy of turning zero into one.

My father later ran Japan's first organic cosmetics company. At that time, the concept of plant-based cosmetics did not exist, so as a child I didn't fully understand his work until I visited a factory and saw production firsthand. Watching containers flow down the production line left a strong impression on me and made me aware, for the first time, of how products are created through systems and teamwork.

Working together was often challenging, but what he consistently taught me was to value stakeholders. He emphasized gratitude for everyone involved in bringing a product to market and told me to create cosmetics that truly delight customers. He never gave me specific instructions on product development, but he was clear that selling products and generating profit were not the ultimate goal.

From my father, I learned that the foundation of business is putting smiles on the faces of customers and stakeholders. The experiences and words I gained from my grandfather and father continue to support me as I move forward as an entrepreneur.

Nature's Way has been advocating natural and organic cosmetics for decades. How do you continue to stay ahead in a market now filled with "green" and "eco-friendly" brands?

Globally, there are fewer than ten companies that can honestly recognize each other as genuine plant-based cosmetics companies. That is how difficult it is to continue making botanical cosmetics authentically.

As one of these rare companies, we feel gratitude toward plants and deep respect for the grandeur of nature. Sustainability is not something we do for advertising purposes; it is something we genuinely and passionately strive for as part of living within nature. We approach nature with emotions that are both awe-inspiring and, at times, frightening, because nature is not something we control.

Some companies emphasize a single eco-friendly activity to present themselves favorably to customers. We are different. Our reason for existing is to make both skin and the Earth better. Each company has its own purpose, and that purpose naturally determines the actions it takes.

How do you ensure that the company's commitment to sustainability remains authentic and measurable, rather than just part of its branding narrative?

Our defining features include owning forests to absorb carbon dioxide and nitrogen, maintaining farms that cultivate organically grown herbs, and operating our own factories. We measure the emissions generated by our business activities each year and evaluate how much can be offset by our forests and farms.

> *Tradition is not something consciously created; it is simply a word used when looking back at outcomes. The future must never be constrained by the past*

We have also obtained B-CORP and SBT certifications. Through initiatives such as container recycling and clean energy utilization, we aim to make both skin and the planet healthier through our very existence. By measuring our impact annually, we ensure sustainability remains operational rather than symbolic.

Consumer preferences are constantly evolving. What shifts in beauty and wellness have surprised or inspired you the most in recent years?

COVID-19 significantly transformed Japan's cosmetics industry. Previously, direct contact between manufacturers and customers was not particularly welcomed. Retailers and department stores interacted with customers, while manufacturers focused on negotiations with wholesalers.

During the pandemic, wholesalers struggled to attract customers and began requesting manufacturers to promote products through SNS. As a result, manufacturers strengthened their SNS departments and began communicating product value directly to customers. At the same time, there was a rapid shift toward enhancing manufacturers' own e-commerce sites. This change fundamentally altered how manufacturers thought about communication and responsibility toward consumers.

Innovation and tradition often pull in different directions. How do you balance scientific advancement with the integrity of natural ingredients?

I do not believe tradition and innovation are mutually exclusive. Tradition is not something consciously created; it is simply a word used when looking back at outcomes. The future must never be constrained by the past.

In business, I firmly believe innovation should always take precedence. From an ingredient perspective, natural ingredients are a constant stream of new discoveries. Even within the same plant species, herbs harvested in different regions exhibit different properties due to climate and environment.

Therefore, I never think of natural ingredients as old or stable. They are challenging subjects filled with new, difficult, and unknown aspects. That challenge is what keeps innovation alive.

People are at the heart of any successful organization. How are you nurturing a culture of creativity, collaboration, and purpose among your teams at Nature's Way?

As owner and president, I hold responsibility toward all employees and stakeholders, but I cannot communicate with over 200 staff members daily. We operate through departments, and daily instructions are handled by department heads.

To avoid misunderstandings, I hold 20-minute one-on-one meetings with every staff member twice a year. We also conduct annual 360-degree evaluations to prevent authority from becoming excessive and to identify outstanding talent.

I avoid informal interactions that could undermine organizational fairness. I believe accepting solitude is part of the role of top management.

As the global beauty industry becomes increasingly digital, what role do you see e-commerce and technology playing in Nature's Way's next phase of growth?

We believe e-commerce should be our next growth engine. We aim to enhance content on social media and other platforms to help customers understand the appeal of plant-based cosmetics.

A business model based solely on price appeal is unsustainable for a small company like ours. We do not need to appeal to everyone. Instead, we want to deeply resonate with a smaller group of customers and use that connection to strengthen our e-commerce presence. Depth of understanding matters more than volume of reach.

You've often emphasized that profit must align with purpose. Can you share an example of how this philosophy has guided a key business decision?

I believe the purpose of running a company and its profits should be one and the same. If they are not aligned, sustainable motivation becomes difficult.

Many companies use profits to engage in eco-friendly activities, which is positive. However, I believe eco-activities must be integrated into business operations. If sustainability depends on profitability alone, it contradicts the idea of being a positive force for the Earth, soil, and people. That is why sustainability must exist even when conditions are difficult.

What global markets or partnerships excite you most as you expand Nature's Way's international footprint?

There are not many companies globally that can mutually recognize each other as authentic plant-based cosmetics companies. I do not wish to make this company larger than necessary, but I do want it to remain special and educational.

The Middle East and Southeast Asia are particularly important markets due to economic and population growth. I would welcome collaboration with companies that are strong in sales and share our values in those regions.

After decades in leadership, what continues to motivate you personally and what legacy do you hope to leave for the next generation of leaders?

Cosmetics represent hope and the future. People choose them with excitement and anticipation. Through cosmetics, I want to deliver not only benefits for the skin, but also hope.

In an age of abundant information and AI, people often seek answers externally, but the most important answers must be decided by oneself. My motivation is the hope that authentic plant-based cosmetics can help people find happiness.

As for legacy, I hope to pass on a way of thinking: staying grounded during good times, improving during difficult times, focusing on what can be changed, and approaching others with humility and gratitude. Business must be sustainable to truly benefit many people. If there is one message I wish to leave, it is that long-term value is built through patience, responsibility, and respect.

DR. KARIS MUNROE BUILDING EMPIRES ACROSS BORDERS

The 'Caribbean Queen of Real Estate' speaks about ambition, access, and reshaping the future of global property markets

Dr. Karis Munroe, known across the region as the 'Caribbean Queen of Real Estate', has built a formidable cross-border empire spanning the U.S., the Caribbean, and Latin America. A high-performing broker turned developer, entrepreneur, and humanitarian, she has sold more than 3,000 properties in the past 15 years and continues to expand her portfolio through luxury ventures, sustainable development, and large-scale community initiatives such as #Project5000. Her work blends ambition with impact, driven by the belief that homeownership should be accessible to all. In this interview with **Business Frontier**, she reflects on her journey, leadership philosophy, and the trends shaping the next chapter of global real estate.

You are often referred to as the Caribbean Queen of Real Estate. How did your journey in real estate begin, and what inspired you to build such a diverse portfolio?

My journey in real estate began almost by accident. One day, while waiting in the lobby of an uptown residence in Atlanta, I picked up a magazine showcasing luxurious homes across the U.S. and the industry's top-performing agents. I couldn't unsee success after that moment. I told myself I would one day be one of those agents featured in a prestigious magazine—and in under 18 months, I achieved that goal as the first African American agent to be featured.

I spent many years practising high-end real estate in Atlanta, but eventually felt confined. I wanted to shine a light on the Caribbean luxury market—sun, sea, sand, and a lifestyle portfolio that was more expansive than the U.S. could offer. I wanted buyers to have diverse destinations and easier access to luxury. That vision gave birth to three additional ventures across the Caribbean and Latin America, and the rest is history.

With so many hats, as an entrepreneur, broker, developer, and philanthropist, how do you balance vision with execution?

In the beginning, I operated like a one-

woman army. But I learned quickly that this path led straight to burnout. To balance vision with execution, I rely on strategic planning, disciplined action, and clear communication.

Big dreams only become real when they are broken down into clear, manageable steps—measurable goals that keep momentum alive. I prioritise ruthlessly, focusing only on what truly serves the core objective, and I map out detailed road plans so every team member knows exactly where they fit and what the timeline requires.

Communication sits at the heart of it all. I make sure my team understands not just the tasks, but the larger purpose behind them. At the same time, I've learned to balance thoughtful planning with decisive action; avoiding analysis paralysis is crucial. Delegation has also been transformative—trusting the right people allows me to stay focused on strategy while execution moves forward smoothly.

Every day, I track our KPIs, adjust based on real-world results, and remain flexible when the situation demands it. And through it all, I keep returning to our "why," the purpose that fuels everything we do. These habits, practised consistently over the years, have helped me turn vision into tangible, repeated success.

You've earned numerous awards and even honorary doctorates for leadership and humanitarian work. Which recognition means the most to you, and why?

While I'm proud of all my accomplishments, my humanitarian work is closest to my heart. Through philanthropy, I discovered the true purpose behind my success.

This is how #Project5000 began in Guyana, a mission to help thousands transition from homelessness to homeownership through alternative financing solutions. Simplifying the once-complicated homeownership process and making it accessible to the everyday man and woman gives me immeasurable joy. Helping people own a home they once believed was impossible, that is the accolade that matters most.

Over the last 15 years, you and your team have sold more than 3,000 properties across the U.S., Caribbean, and South America. What trends are shaping the future of real estate in these regions?

Synthetic AI is transforming every aspect of real estate and may soon replace certain agent functions across global markets.

Since I'm currently based in Guyana working on my largest project, The City of Avalon, here are the most significant trends I see:

Guyana

- Oil-driven economic boom attracting global investors
- Surging residential and commercial demand, especially luxury
- Massive infrastructure expansion opening new development corridors
- Tourism growth creating demand for hotels and serviced apartments
- Sustainability and eco-friendly practices gaining traction

United States

- Residential moderation with balanced inventory and persistent affordability issues
- Growth in niche sectors:
    - Data centers (AI-driven demand)
    - Senior and student housing
    - Industrial and logistics real estate
- Rising demand for smart, energy-efficient homes
- Shift toward suburban and secondary cities due to lifestyle and remote work

Caribbean

- Boom in luxury and branded residences
- Rise of lifestyle-driven investors seeking rental-ready properties
- Demand for hurricane-resistant and sustainable construction
- Influx of digital nomads, boosting rental demand
- Tourism continues to fuel short-term rental investments

South America

- Rapid urbanization driving residential growth
- Increased foreign direct investment in countries like Brazil, Mexico, Colombia
- Rising adoption of PropTech
- Demand for gated communities and vertical housing
- Strong performance in industrial and essential retail sectors

If you were to give one piece of advice to young entrepreneurs and aspiring women leaders, what would it be?

Believe in the power of your dreams. Be courageous, be resilient, hold yourself accountable, and operate from a place of integrity. You already have everything you need to achieve your greatest ambitions. Go for it!

Scaling Women's Wellness with Purpose and Integrity

Amy Suzanne Upchurch, Founder and CEO of Pink Stork, reflects on resilience, leadership, and building a women's wellness brand with intention.

Amy Suzanne Upchurch's journey into entrepreneurship was not planned. It was shaped by lived experience, resilience, and an instinctive drive to help other women navigate what she once faced alone. Guided by medical insight and a deep sense of responsibility, she founded Pink Stork in 2015. What began as a small, family-run venture has since grown into a global women's wellness platform spanning fertility, pregnancy, postpartum, and hormonal health, all the while remaining grounded in clinical integrity and community-led listening.

In this conversation, she shares her perspective on scaling with purpose, leading through growth as both a CEO and a mother of six, and why long-term impact, not speed, continues to guide every decision she makes.

Pink Stork has grown from a small startup into a global wellness brand. What were the most strategic decisions that enabled this scale?

The most strategic decisions centered on purpose, quality, and trust. From day one, we chose to serve women holistically, not just sell supplements. We invested early in clinical-grade ingredients, transparent labeling, and rigorous testing, even when it slowed growth. Another key decision was building direct relationships with our community by listening to real women and letting their needs guide product development. We also prioritized vertical integration and strong supply chain partnerships to maintain quality as we scaled. Finally, we stayed disciplined about saying no to opportunities that didn't align with our mission. Growth followed because women trusted us to put their health first.

As both a CEO and a mother of six, what leadership practices help you navigate high-growth business demands while staying grounded at home?

Clarity and boundaries are essential. I'm intentional about where my energy goes and align my calendar with my values. I lead with structure at work so I can be fully present at home and vice versa. I've also learned to delegate and empower strong leaders rather than trying to do everything myself. At home, we prioritize faith, routines, and open communication, which keeps us grounded during busy seasons. I don't believe in perfection, only alignment. When my family and mission are in sync, I lead with more peace, confidence, and perspective.

With a portfolio of 100+ products, how do you prioritize innovation and ensure each product solves a real need for women?

Innovation starts with listening. Every product is born from real conversations with women, practitioners, and our customer support team. We prioritize needs that are underserved or misunderstood, especially across fertility, pregnancy, postpartum, and hormonal health. Before launching anything, we ask: Does this solve a real problem? Is it clean, effective, and differentiated? We also rely on science-backed formulations and iterate based on customer feedback and outcomes. Growth never comes at the expense of integrity. If a product doesn't truly help women feel better, it doesn't belong at Pink Stork.

What strengths do you believe women founders bring to the consumer wellness space that reshape how brands are built today?

Women founders bring empathy, intuition, and lived experience, especially in wellness. We build brands that listen first and sell second. Because many of us are solving problems we've personally faced, there's a deeper commitment to education, transparency, and long-term trust. Women also tend to lead with collaboration and community, creating brands that feel relational rather than transactional. This approach reshapes how success is defined from quick wins to meaningful impact. In wellness, especially, women founders are raising the bar by insisting that products honor the whole person, not just a trend.

"Growth never comes at the expense of integrity. If a product doesn't truly help women feel better, it doesn't belong at Pink Stork

How do you build and sustain a strong organizational culture during rapid growth and market expansion?

Culture must be intentional and modeled from the top. We anchor everything in our mission, values, and faith-based principles, and we hire for alignment, not just skill. Clear communication, leadership development, and accountability are critical as we grow. We also celebrate wins, encourage ownership, and create space for feedback. Growth can stretch teams, so we invest in training and mentorship to help people grow with the company. When people feel valued, supported, and connected to the mission, culture becomes self-sustaining even during rapid expansion.

When evaluating Pink Stork's long-term performance, which business metrics or signals matter most to you as a CEO?

Beyond revenue, I focus on customer trust and impact. Repeat purchase rates, customer feedback, retention, and community engagement tell me whether we're truly serving women well. Operational excellence and supply chain stability, product quality, and team health also matter deeply. Long-term success isn't just about growth; it's about sustainability. If we're improving women's lives, supporting our team, and operating with integrity, the numbers will follow. Those signals tell me we're building something that will last.

Looking ahead, what is your strategic vision for Pink Stork's next chapter – in product innovation, market expansion, and brand impact?

Our next chapter is about deeper impact. Product-wise, we'll continue innovating across women's hormonal health and life stages with even more science-backed, practitioner-informed solutions. Market expansion will be thoughtful and values-driven, ensuring we maintain quality and trust globally. Most importantly, we're expanding our brand impact and educating women, supporting families, and giving back through initiatives like the Fight Back Award. Pink Stork will always be more than products; it's a movement to restore hope, health, and confidence in women everywhere.

The New Era of Facilities Management: Strategy, Scale & Sustainability

Karl-Heinz Otto Mair, CEO of Berkeley Services and CEO (International) for Klüh Multiservices, on transforming facilities management into a force for long-term value.

Facilities management has spent decades in the background, but the industry is undergoing a quiet revolution. Few are better positioned to articulate it than **Karl-Heinz Otto Mair, CEO of Berkeley Services and CEO (International) for Klüh Multiservices.** Drawing on 40 years of UAE expertise and the depth of a 114-year-old multinational, Mair is reframing FM as a strategic partnership built on trust, technology, and people.


Karl-Heinz Otto Mair, CEO, Berkeley Services and CEO (International) for Klüh Multiservices

Facilities management is increasingly viewed as a strategic enabler of asset performance rather than a support function. How do you see the role of integrated facilities management evolving globally?

Globally, facilities management has already been undergoing a structural transformation for years. It is no longer simply about maintaining buildings; it is about enabling the long-term performance of assets and the environments in which people live and work. Integrated Facilities Management (IFM) is becoming central to this shift. Clients today expect partners who can combine engineering expertise, operational efficiency, digital intelligence, and sustainability into a unified service model. Data and technology continues to redefine the sector. Platforms that integrate AI, analytics, and operational insights allow service providers to anticipate issues, optimize energy usage, and extend asset life cycles. In the coming years, the most successful organizations will be those that move beyond transactional service delivery and position themselves as strategic partners in managing complex, high-value built environments.

“Technology plays an important role, but meaningful transformation ultimately comes from people”

In a sector shaped by technology, sustainability mandates, and rising client expectations, how do you ensure your organization stays ahead of structural shifts rather than reacting to them?

Staying ahead of structural change requires a mindset of continuous evolution. Organizations that anticipate change and prepare for it early are able to create stronger and more sustainable long-term value. For Berkeley, this approach is strengthened through close alignment with global best practices from our parent organization, Klüh Multiservices. Headquartered in Düsseldorf, Germany, the group brings more than 114 years of international experience and operates across six countries with a multinational workforce of over 46,000 professionals. This global ecosystem enables the transfer of knowledge, innovation, and operational expertise across markets. At the same time, Berkeley brings more than 40 years of regional expertise in the UAE, allowing global standards to be adapted effectively to local market realities. Equally important is investing in internal capability. Technology plays an important role, but meaningful transformation ultimately comes from people who understand both operational realities and the digital tools shaping the future of facilities management.

With a diverse, multicultural workforce at the heart of your operations, how do you build a culture that drives accountability, performance, and pride at every level of the organization?

It begins with respect. Every role in an organization contributes to the reliability of support being delivered. Recognizing that contribution, whether in engineering, operations, or support functions, creates a sense of ownership. A service organization is ultimately defined by its people. In markets like the UAE, where teams come from many cultures and backgrounds, building a unified culture requires clarity and fairness above all else. Accountability begins with leadership by setting clear expectations and demonstrating them consistently. When employees see that standards are applied equally across the organization, trust develops naturally. Equally important is a strong focus on training and development, ensuring that employees can see a clear pathway for growth within the organization. When individuals feel valued and supported, performance improves, and with it, a genuine sense of pride in the organization. Culture is not created through statements; it is built through everyday actions.

Having worked across markets, what distinguishes the UAE as a business environment, and what lessons can global executives learn from its pace and ambition?

The UAE has its own business environment defined by ambition, speed, and clarity of vision. What distinguishes the UAE is not only the pace of development but also the openness to global expertise and partnerships. At the same time, UAE needs also maturity processes to effectively adopt complex service solutions. As a vital part of any ambitious investment process, FM must play a strategic partner role. From that perspective, and across the full life cycle of an investment, we need deeper and more committed engagement from all stakeholders. For global executives, the key lesson is agility.The UAE rewards organizations that move decisively, embrace innovation, and maintain a forward-looking mindset. At the same time, the market places strong emphasis on reliability and trust. Long-term relationships are built through consistent performance and the ability to adapt alongside the country’s dynamic growth trajectory.

Looking ahead, what kind of impact do you hope your leadership will have, both within your organization and on the broader industry?

Looking ahead, I want my leadership to create an environment in which people can truly be effective with clear responsibilities, the freedom to make decisions, and a strong focus on meaningful results. I see leadership as the responsibility to design systems that work. Within the organization, this means developing strong, self-reliant teams and fostering a culture of clarity, trust, and accountability. Beyond that, it is important to me to contribute to more sustainable and responsible business practices, where long-term value, clarity, and effectiveness matter more than short-term gains.

Berkeley 24/7 Control Center (Smart Ops Hub)

Governance Before Growth
An Institutional Approach to Healthcare

In fast-growing economies, healthcare expansion is often framed as an infrastructure challenge. But for **Sakif Shamim, Managing Director of Labaid Cancer Hospital & Super Speciality Centre and Deputy Managing Director of Labaid Group**, the real test is leadership architecture. His approach is not about building bigger hospitals, but about building systems that endure.

In emerging markets, healthcare demand expands faster than governance frameworks. Capital becomes available before oversight matures, technology advances faster than workforce readiness, and growth often outpaces institutional discipline. This is where leadership determines whether expansion becomes transformation or instability.

Sakif Shamim, Managing Director of Labaid Cancer Hospital & Super Speciality Centre and Deputy Managing Director of Labaid Group, operates at that inflection point. Leading one of Bangladesh's foremost healthcare institutions while holding a strategic role across a diversified group spanning pharmaceuticals, education, and healthcare services, his mandate extends beyond operations. It centers on system design. "Emerging markets don't suffer from a lack of ambition, they suffer from fragmentation. Leadership must close the gap between vision and execution," Shamim says.

At the core of his approach are two convictions: healthcare transformation is fundamentally a systems challenge, and scale without discipline erodes trust rather than creating it. Together, they form a leadership model built not for visibility but durability, one that prioritizes institutional strength over short-term optics and embeds accountability at every level of growth.

Systems Leadership, Not Hospital Management

Many healthcare executives measure success in bed counts or geographic expansion. Shamim rejects that metric. "Adding infrastructure without strengthening systems is cosmetic growth. If governance, talent development, and financial controls do not evolve alongside expansion, institutions become fragile," he says. His model thus rests on three pillars:

- **Governance Before Growth:** Expansion aligns with compliance frameworks, accreditation standards, and operational capability. In volatile regulatory environments, discipline becomes a competitive advantage. Structured oversight, risk controls, board-level transparency, and measurable performance indicators are embedded early rather than retrofitted after expansion.
- **Ecosystem Integration:** Healthcare is interconnected with pharmaceuticals, diagnostics, education, digital tools, and logistics. "Healthcare is infrastructure. If you manage it in silos, you create inefficiencies. Managed as an ecosystem, it creates resilience," he explains. This integrated view reduces dependency, strengthens domestic capacity, and positions healthcare as a multiplier for broader economic activity.
- **Institutional Longevity Over Personal Visibility:** Shamim believes that if a system depends on one individual, it is already weak. "Leadership is not about being indispensable. It is about making the institution self-sustaining," he says. For global investors and strategic partners, durability of governance matters more than executive charisma. Institutions built on process and culture command stronger confidence than those built on personality.

Healthcare in emerging economies also faces dual pressure: high demand and constrained affordability. Expansion without financial prudence risks reputational damage; aggressive cost-cutting risks clinical compromise. "Healthcare is one of the few industries where financial missteps translate directly into human consequences. We cannot afford reckless scaling," Shamim says.

Under his leadership, financial oversight, capital allocation, compliance, and long-term planning are treated as strategic functions integrated into executive decision-making. Scenario planning, reinvestment discipline, and infrastructure phasing are calibrated to protect both service quality and financial sustainability. "Trust is not inherited, it is earned through consistency. Patients, regulators, and investors are watching how you grow, not just how fast you grow," he says.

This disciplined posture positions healthcare not merely as a service sector, but as a credibility-driven industry where operational maturity directly influences market confidence.

Scaling With Discipline in Volatile Environments

Rapid expansion is often celebrated in growth markets. Healthcare, however, is not fintech or e-commerce. It is a high-stakes service industry with layered ethical and regulatory obligations.

"Growth should feel deliberate. If it feels chaotic internally, the organization is expanding faster than its culture can absorb," Shamim says. This discipline appears in three areas:

- **Talent Before Territory:** Workforce readiness determines service consistency. "You cannot import institutional culture. You have to build it. That means investing in leadership pipelines, not just headcount," he adds. Structured mentorship, succession planning, and cross-functional collaboration create continuity beyond individual tenures.

- **Innovation With Guardrails:** Technology must solve operational problems. Innovation must integrate into workflow, otherwise it becomes an expensive decoration. Digital investments are evaluated for clinical precision, training effectiveness, patient engagement, and administrative transparency, and ensuring modernization enhances capability rather than distracting from the mission.

- **Stability in Crisis:** Healthcare leaders are judged during disruption. In moments of uncertainty, the institution looks to leadership for composure. Clear communication, contingency planning, liquidity management, and stakeholder coordination protect institutional trust when external conditions fluctuate.

Healthcare as Strategic Industry

Healthcare in developing economies is often framed as a social obligation. Shamim views it also as an economic lever. "When a country reduces outbound medical travel, strengthens pharmaceutical exports, and develops healthcare talent locally, it improves economic resilience. Healthcare should be viewed as a strategic industry," he asserts. This perspective shifts leadership from operational management to national competitiveness strategy. Strong healthcare ecosystems retain capital domestically, stimulate high-skilled employment, and create export potential in pharmaceuticals and medical services. His approach blends international benchmarking with domestic adaptation. "Global standards are reference points. But importing systems without adaptation rarely works. Context matters," he believes.

> *In emerging markets, the real innovation is not technology, it is execution. Discipline is what turns ambition into durability*

By calibrating global frameworks to local realities, institutions gain credibility without losing relevance.

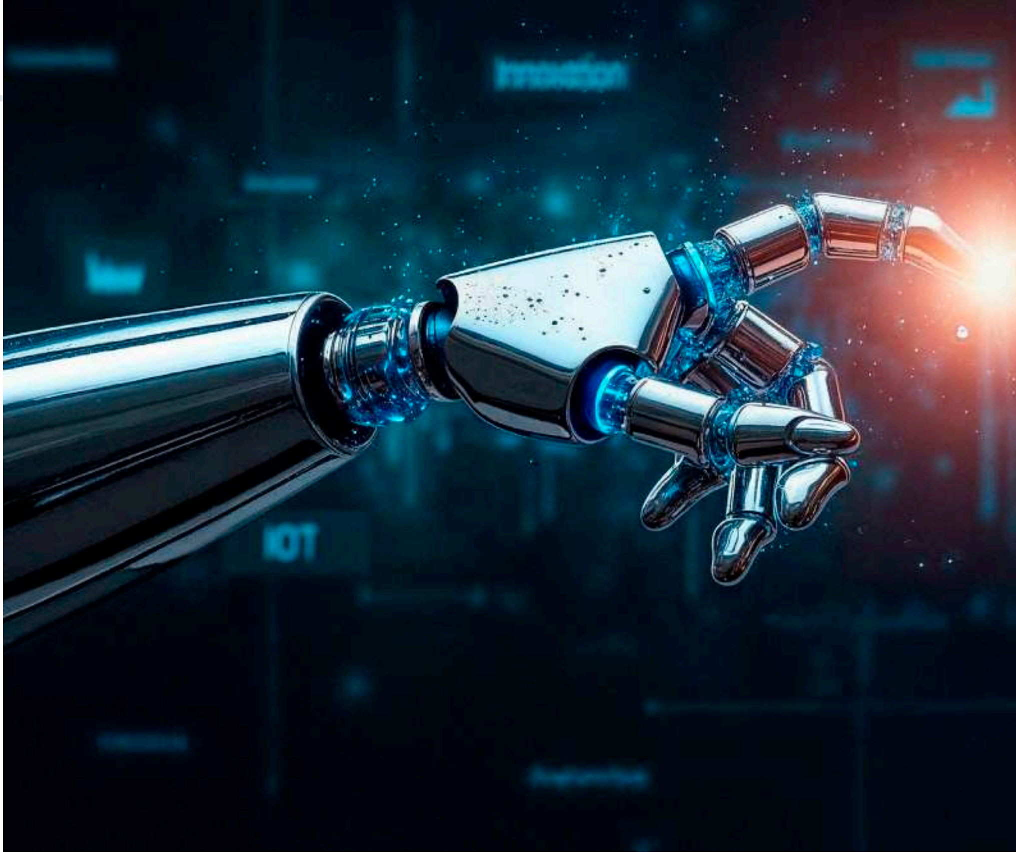
Beyond Growth Metrics

In performance-driven markets, leaders are often judged quarterly. Shamim takes a longer view. "We should measure ourselves not only by growth, but by institutional durability. If systems are strong, growth follows. If systems are weak, growth becomes dangerous," he adds. The principles emerging from this model extend beyond healthcare:

- Design governance before expansion.
- Integrate ecosystems rather than accumulate assets.
- Treat financial discipline as a strategic differentiator.
- Build leadership pipelines that outlive individuals.
- Adopt innovation with operational clarity.

"Leadership in emerging markets requires optimism. But optimism without structure becomes unstable. Our responsibility is to convert ambition into systems," Shamim reflects. As emerging economies move from acceleration to consolidation, institutional architecture, not infrastructure, will define their next chapter. In industries where trust carries existential weight, that architecture may prove to be the most valuable asset of all.

BUSINESS FRONTIER



YOUR NEXT CUSTOMER MIGHT NOT BE HUMAN

AI agents are entering B2B procurement not as tools for buyers, but as buyers themselves, and suppliers without machine-readable data may be ignored.

There is a shift underway in B2B commerce that most leaders have not fully absorbed. It is not about making human buyers more efficient with AI tools. It is about the buyer being replaced, in part, by an autonomous system that researches, evaluates, negotiates, and purchases on behalf of the organisation, often without a human ever entering the conversation.

This is agentic commerce: the rise of AI agents as active participants in the procurement cycle. And it is arriving faster than most go-to-market strategies have accounted for.

The Evidence from Research

Gartner's Top Strategic Predictions for 2026 and Beyond put the trajectory in stark terms: by 2028, 90% of all B2B buying will be AI-agent intermediated, channeling more than $15 trillion in spend through AI-driven exchanges.

These are not future-looking projections built on optimism; they are extrapolations from adoption already underway. Gartner's own research notes that new commercial models will emerge featuring high-frequency, frictionless sales powered by AI agents that can radically compress the sales cycle across a wide range of business and technology purchases.

Forrester's data reinforces the near-term reality. In its B2B Marketing, Sales and Product Predictions 2026, Forrester found that 61% of purchase influencers say their organisation has or will deploy a private generative AI engine to support purchasing. The immediate implication: by 2026, at least one in five B2B sellers will be compelled to respond to AI-powered buyer agents issuing dynamically generated counteroffers; not human procurement managers deliberating over terms, but automated systems negotiating on behalf of organisations in real time.

The buying group itself is simultaneously growing and changing shape. Forrester's State of Business Buying 2026 found that the typical enterprise purchasing decision now involves 13 internal stakeholders and nine external influencers. Procurement professionals are decision-makers in 53% of buying cycles, engaging from the very start of the process. These stakeholders scrutinise features and functions to assess efficiency and productivity, interacting more frequently with sales representatives than any other buyer persona.

This matters for agentic commerce for a specific reason: the more complex and multi-stakeholder the purchase, the more attractive it becomes to deploy an AI agent to manage the coordination burden that includes gathering information, benchmarking options, and preparing recommendations before any human gets involved.

What this Means in Practice

The practical consequence for B2B sellers is architectural. If an AI procurement agent is your buyer, it is not browsing your website the way a human does. It is querying your product data, pricing logic, and contract terms programmatically. It is evaluating structured metadata, not narrative copy. A hallucination in a generated sales memo is an inconvenience; an error made by an autonomous agent operating inside a live procurement system is a commercial and potentially legal event.

Forrester's research also found that 19% of buyers using AI applications in their purchasing process already feel less confident in their decisions due to inaccurate or unreliable AI-generated information. The implication is not that AI agents will fail, it is that suppliers whose data, pricing structures, and product information are not machine-readable, structured, and verifiable will simply not be considered. The AI agent will route demand elsewhere.

There is a further dimension. Forrester predicts that trials have become a critical risk-reduction strategy in enterprise purchasing, with more than 60% of business buyers now using a trial to evaluate potential solutions, rising to 78% for purchases of $10 million or more. An AI procurement agent evaluating your offering will be looking for exactly this kind of structured, verifiable proof of value. Narrative claims will not clear the threshold.

The Readiness Gap

Gartner has separately predicted that the ungoverned use of generative AI in go-to-market applications will result in the loss of more than $10 billion in enterprise value in 2026 alone, from declining stock prices, legal settlements, and fines. Much of this exposure sits with sellers, not buyers, as AI is integrated into commercial applications without adequate governance.

The businesses that will navigate agentic commerce successfully are those that treat it as a structural question, not a technology one. How is your product information structured? Can your pricing logic be queried programmatically? Does your organisation have governance in place for the AI tools your own go-to-market teams are already using?

The buyer is changing. The sales process built around the human buyer, the relationship, the pitch, the negotiation, is not disappearing. But a growing share of the decision will be made before that conversation ever begins, by systems that do not read whitepapers or attend webinars. Preparing for that reality is no longer a future agenda item.

6 Numbers B2B Leaders Need to Know

- **90%** of B2B buying will be AI-agent intermediated by 2028
- **$15T** in B2B spend will flow through AI agent exchanges by 2028
- **61%** of purchase influencers already use or plan to use a private AI engine for buying
- **1 in 5** sellers will face AI buyer agents negotiating deals autonomously in 2026
- **22** stakeholders in a typical enterprise purchase — 13 internal, 9 external
- **$10B+** in enterprise value at risk in 2026 from ungoverned AI in go-to-market

Source: Gartner, Top Strategic Predictions for 2026 and Beyond; Forrester, The State of Business Buying 2026; Forrester, B2B Marketing, Sales and Product Predictions 2026

5 M&A Trends to Watch in 2026

Global mergers and acquisitions are regaining momentum after several years of caution. But the next wave of dealmaking is unfolding under different conditions. From AI-driven acquisitions to the return of megadeals, five emerging trends are set to shape how companies pursue strategic transactions in 2026.

After a period of hesitation driven by geopolitical tensions, rising interest rates and regulatory scrutiny, global mergers and acquisitions are beginning to move again. For much of the past two years, executives delayed transactions while waiting for greater economic clarity. Strategic opportunities existed, but many companies struggled to build the conviction needed to move forward in an uncertain environment.

By late 2025, however, the situation began to change. Companies increasingly accepted that uncertainty was unlikely to disappear and instead began adapting their strategies to operate within it.

According to 2026 M&A Trends: Navigating a Rapidly Rebounding Market, a report by McKinsey & Company, global deal value rose sharply to $4.7 trillion in 2025, representing a 43% increase from the previous year. The rebound signals the start of a new deal cycle, but unlike earlier periods of consolidation, the current wave of M&A is being driven by a different set of strategic priorities. Five trends are likely to shape how companies approach transactions in the year ahead.

TREND 1

M&A as a Tool for Strategic Transformation

One of the most important shifts in the current market is how companies view acquisitions. Rather than using deals purely for expansion, many organisations are turning to M&A as a tool for strategic transformation. Rapid technological change, supply chain realignment and competitive disruption are forcing companies to rethink how they operate. Acquisitions are increasingly used to secure new capabilities, strengthen resilience and accelerate innovation. For many executives, the question is no longer simply whether a deal increases scale, but whether it helps the organisation adapt to rapidly evolving markets.

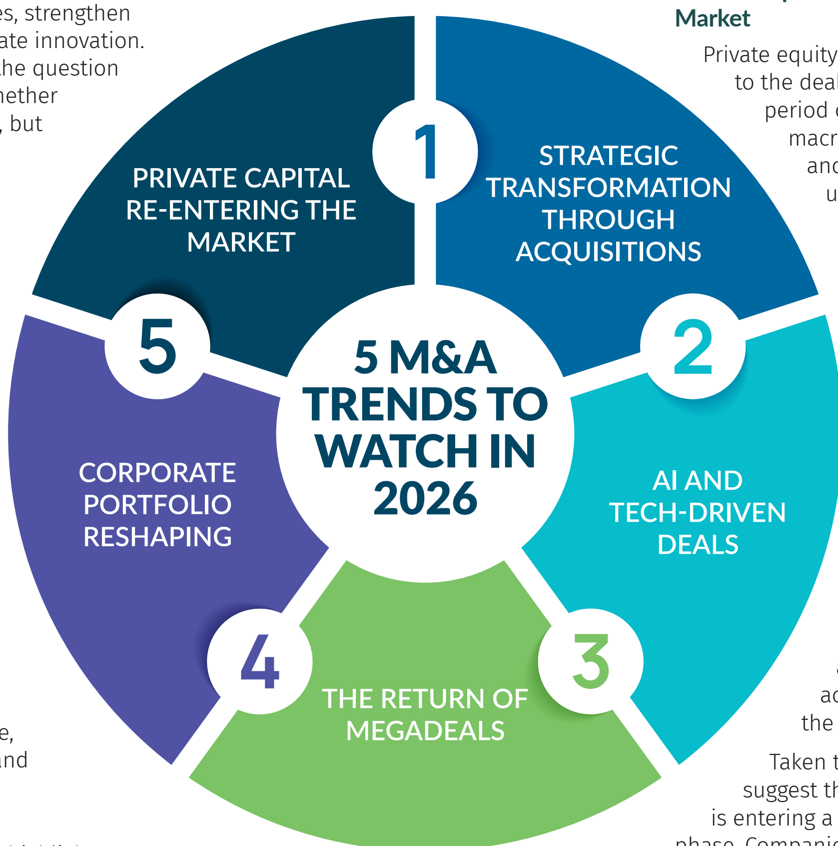
TREND 2

Technology and AI Are Driving Deal Activity

Technology has emerged as one of the most powerful drivers of global M&A. Companies across industries, from financial services to industrial manufacturing, are seeking acquisitions that provide access to artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure and advanced data capabilities.

The McKinsey analysis highlights a group of fast-growing "arena industries," including software, semiconductors, e-commerce and digital services, which now account for a growing share of deal value. For traditional businesses, acquiring these capabilities through M&A is often the fastest route to digital transformation. Top sectors driving global M&A are:

- **Technology, Media & Telecommunications**
- **Energy & Materials**
- **Financial Services**



TREND 3

Megadeals Are Returning

Large transactions are once again becoming a defining feature of the global deal landscape. In 2025, the number of deals valued above $10 billion rose significantly, with megadeals accounting for 28% of total deal value. These transactions are often driven by consolidation strategies in industries facing slower organic growth. Combining operations allows companies to achieve scale efficiencies, strengthen market positions and expand geographic reach. Many companies are also using large acquisitions to enter new markets or build platforms for long-term growth.

TREND 4

Portfolio Reshaping is Accelerating

Another defining feature of the new M&A cycle is the rise of corporate divestitures. Companies are increasingly selling or spinning off non-core businesses in order to focus on higher-growth segments.

Portfolio reshaping allows organisations to simplify operations, unlock capital and sharpen strategic focus. These divestitures often occur alongside acquisitions, enabling companies to redeploy resources into areas with stronger long-term potential. Activist investors have also played a role in accelerating these strategic reviews by pushing companies to improve capital allocation and streamline operations.

TREND 5

Private Capital is Re-Entering the Market

Private equity firms are also returning to the dealmaking arena after a period of caution. Improving macroeconomic conditions and significant reserves of undeployed capital are encouraging sponsors to pursue new transactions. With more than $2 trillion in available "dry powder," private capital remains one of the most powerful forces shaping global M&A activity. At the same time, longer holding periods for portfolio companies and pressure from investors for liquidity are likely to drive both acquisitions and exits in the coming years.

Taken together, these trends suggest that global dealmaking is entering a more strategic phase. Companies are increasingly using acquisitions, partnerships and divestitures to reposition themselves in response to technological disruption, shifting supply chains and evolving competitive dynamics. For business leaders, the rebound in M&A activity is more than a market statistic. It is a signal that companies across industries are moving again, seeking new capabilities, scale and strategic advantage in a rapidly evolving global economy.

The question many executives now face is not whether dealmaking will return, but whether they are positioned to move as the next cycle gathers momentum.

REAL ESTATE HAS NO BORDERS ANYMORE

Real estate is no longer a purely domestic industry. As global capital, technology, and development networks reshape the sector, **Rusmin Lawin, President of FIABCI Asia Pacific and Global Ambassador of Real Estate Indonesia**, discusses how property has evolved into a truly international business.

For **Rusmin Lawin, President of FIABCI Asia Pacific and Global Ambassador of Real Estate Indonesia**, real estate is far more than the construction of buildings or the movement of property markets. It is a platform for economic mobility, international collaboration, and long-term urban transformation.

Over the past two decades, Lawin has built a global presence across real estate, connecting developers, investors, and policymakers through international platforms such as FIABCI, Fundacion Metropoli and The Cities and Local Governments Institute (CLGI) Asia-Pacific. His work spans industry leadership, investment diplomacy, and advisory roles on major development initiatives, positioning him at the intersection of global capital and emerging opportunities.

In addition to leading FIABCI's Asia Pacific region, Lawin has helped advance property technology initiatives, fostering global partnerships, and advocating for sustainable urban development through international institutions.

In this conversation with **Business Frontier**, Lawin reflects on how real estate leadership is evolving, the growing role of global investment networks, and why the industry must think beyond property toward broader economic ecosystems.

You've often spoken about the importance of real estate in driving economic growth. How do you see the industry evolving globally in the next decade?

Real estate will continue to be one of the most influential sectors in the global economy because

it connects so many industries. Property development alone supports around 175 downstream industries, from construction materials and engineering to finance and infrastructure services.

What is changing today is the scale of international collaboration. Developers, investors, and governments are increasingly working together across borders to shape long-term urban development. Real estate is no longer only a domestic industry; it has become part of a global economic network.

In the coming decade, we will see stronger connections between real estate, technology, and sustainability. Property markets will increasingly rely on data, digital platforms, and environmental standards to guide development decisions.

Your work helps connect international investors with development opportunities. What role does investment diplomacy play in real estate?

Investment diplomacy is about creating trust and long-term relationships between countries, institutions, and investors. In real estate, major development projects require significant capital and long planning horizons. Governments need reliable partners, and investors need confidence in the stability and governance of the projects they support. My role often involves helping bridge that gap by connecting international investors with credible opportunities and ensuring that development strategies align with broader economic and sustainability goals. When these relationships are built successfully, real estate becomes more than a commercial activity; it becomes a driver of international cooperation and economic development.

> *"In today's world, real estate isn't just about land. It's about global networks, global capital, and global opportunity*

Property technology has become an important theme in the industry. How do you see PropTech shaping the future of real estate?

Property technology is transforming the way the industry operates. Traditionally, real estate has been considered a very conservative sector, but digital innovation is changing that. Through initiatives such as the Indonesia Proptech Association, we are encouraging developers and property professionals to adopt technologies that improve efficiency, transparency, and market accessibility.

PropTech is not only about digital platforms or smart buildings. It also includes better data analysis, improved property management systems, and new ways of connecting buyers, investors, and developers globally. Over time, these technologies will make the real estate market more transparent and more accessible to a wider range of participants.

With such a broad international role, how do you maintain influence across multiple organizations and networks?

For me, the key is consistency and commitment. Building a global network takes many years, and relationships must be nurtured continuously. I have always believed in having clear short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals. This approach allows me to stay focused while also adapting to changing circumstances in the market.

Another important factor is communication. Whether through international forums, professional associations, or advisory roles, maintaining open dialogue with partners around the world helps create stronger collaboration and trust.

What lessons from your career would you share with the next generation of real estate leaders?

The most important lesson is to stay committed to your chosen field. You cannot move from one industry to another constantly and expect to build deep expertise. In my case, I have been dedicated to the property sector since 1999. Over time, that consistency helped me build a reputation and establish a global network of partners.

Young professionals should also understand that real estate today requires more than technical knowledge. It involves economics, international relations, sustainability, and technology. Those who can navigate these different areas while maintaining strong professional relationships will be the ones who shape the future of the industry.

ASEAN's Urban Success is in Building Better, Not More

Southeast Asia is building cities at an unprecedented pace. **Muhammad Rafi Haikal, Director of ASEAN Business Development at Urbahn Architects,** discusses how architecture, planning, and cross-border collaboration could determine whether ASEAN's urban boom becomes a lasting economic success.

As cities face rapid urbanisation, architecture increasingly plays a role in shaping economic development as well as physical space. **Muhammad Rafi Haikal serves as Director of ASEAN Business Development at Urbahn Architects PLLC** in New York and as Partner and President Commissioner at PT. Urbahn International PMA in Jakarta, where he works on projects spanning the United States and Southeast Asia. In this conversation with **Business Frontier**, Haikal reflects on leadership across different design systems and the opportunities emerging from ASEAN's urban expansion.

How has your international experience shaped your leadership approach in architecture and development?

Working between New York and Southeast Asia fundamentally reshaped the way I think about leadership in architecture. In New York, while working with Urbahn Architects PLLC, I was exposed to a structured design environment where interdisciplinary collaboration, regulatory rigor, and sustainability standards drive the process. Projects operate almost like complex ecosystems, with engineers, planners, consultants, and community stakeholders contributing to a shared framework. However, when working in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, the reality is different. Systems are often less standardized, regulatory enforcement can be inconsistent, and cultural context plays a greater role in shaping the built environment.

My leadership approach is a balance of being structured and adaptive, shaped by navigating these contrasting environments. I have realized that international architectural work is not about applying a one-size-fits-all model but about translating global standards into locally relevant solutions.

In what ways can architecture serve as a driver of economic growth and national competitiveness?

While architecture is often viewed as an aesthetic discipline, it is closely connected to economic systems and national development. The design of cities can influence tourism, productivity, investment flows, and quality of life. For example, hospitality developments such as the SO/ Sanur Resort project demonstrate how architecture can stimulate economic growth. Well-designed hospitality infrastructure attracts international visitors and generates employment. More broadly, architecture also shapes how a country competes globally. Cities that invest in sustainable infrastructure, urban planning, and distinctive architecture tend to attract investment and talent.

"Leading international architectural work is about translating global standards into locally relevant solutions"

What leadership challenges have you faced in cross-border ventures, and how did you overcome them?

One of the most significant leadership challenges I faced occurred while working on a large civic infrastructure project in New York during the COVID-19 pandemic. At one point, the project involved more than 30 consulting firms, each operating with different technical languages, expectations, and workflows. The biggest challenge was not technical; it was communication. I had to translate across disciplines, shifting between engineering language, lighting design terminology, and planning frameworks depending on the audience. Over time, I realised that successful leadership in cross-border ventures depends on the ability to build trust, structure collaboration, and translate across professional cultures.

How do you balance commercial objectives with social impact in large-scale projects?

Balancing commercial objectives with social impact begins with recognising that the two goals do not necessarily conflict. Projects that generate strong social value often produce more resilient economic outcomes. For example, while working on civic infrastructure projects, we explored ways to integrate public and community-oriented spaces within the architectural program. My approach is to treat architecture as a system where economic viability supports the project's longevity while design benefits users and communities.

What major opportunities and risks do you see in ASEAN's urban expansion?

ASEAN is experiencing one of the fastest urban expansions in the world, creating both opportunities and risks. Rapid urbanisation provides a chance to rethink how cities are designed. Countries across Southeast Asia are investing heavily in infrastructure and tourism development. Initiatives such as Nusantara reflect attempts to redefine national urban identity. However, rapid growth can also lead to uncontrolled sprawl, environmental degradation, and infrastructure gaps. The challenge for architects and planners is therefore not simply to build more cities, but to build better systems for how cities evolve.

What advice would you give to young professionals aiming to become global design leaders?

The first piece of advice I would give is to remain attentive to how people experience space. Architecture shapes environments that influence behaviour and social interaction. Second, young professionals should not be afraid of intellectual friction. Some of the most transformative moments in my education occurred when my ideas were challenged. Third, architecture today operates beyond the boundaries of design. Global design leaders must navigate policy, economics, sustainability, and cultural context. Finally, young designers should think not only about individual buildings but also about the systems that shape how cities are built.

BUILDING A HOSPITALITY BRAND IN THE AGE OF SCROLL CULTURE

In an era of fleeting online attention, **Karreena Bulchandani, the Founder of Mokai**, a Mumbai-based experiential café, reflects on why lasting café brands are shaped not just by visibility, but by consistency, community, and experiences that translate seamlessly from screen to space.

Building a hospitality brand today feels very different from what it did even a few years ago. We are no longer just competing on food, service, or ambience, we are competing for attention. And attention, especially in the age of scroll culture, is fleeting.

Every day, consumers are exposed to an endless stream of content. Reels, stories, trending audios, it's all designed to be consumed quickly and forgotten just as fast. In such an environment, the real challenge isn't just being seen, but being remembered. For me, that's where the idea of building a brand, not just a presence, becomes important.

Social media today is often mistaken for a promotional tool. But I've come to realise that it works far better as a storytelling platform. Instead of constantly pushing offers or announcing what's new, it helps to focus on creating a narrative of what the brand stands for, the emotion it evokes, and the experience it promises. People don't connect with discounts; they connect with stories.

At the same time, consistency plays a huge role. It's not about going viral once. It's about showing up regularly, in a way that feels authentic and aligned with the brand. Whether it's the tone of voice, the visual identity, or the kind of content being shared, everything should feel cohesive. Over time, this builds familiarity, and familiarity builds trust.

However, digital attention alone doesn't translate into footfall. That's a gap many brands struggle with. Someone may like, share, or even save your content, but that doesn't always mean they will walk into your space. Bridging this gap requires thinking beyond just content.

The on-ground experience has to match, or even exceed, what is seen online. If the digital narrative promises warmth, the service should reflect it. If the visuals highlight a certain aesthetic, the physical space should deliver on it. There needs to be a seamless connection between what people see on their screens and what they experience in person.

Another important aspect is community. In the scroll culture, audiences are not just passive viewers anymore they engage, react, and participate. Building a sense of community around a brand can make a significant difference. It could be through collaborations, events, or even small interactive moments online. When people feel like they are a part of something, they are far more likely to show up for it.

Influencers and creators also play a role here, but the approach needs to be thoughtful. It's not just about reach; it's about relevance. The right collaboration can amplify the brand story in an authentic way, while the wrong one can feel forced and transactional.

Ultimately, I believe that building a hospitality brand in today's digital-first world is about balance. It's about understanding the power of scroll-driven visibility, while not losing sight of the core experience. It's about being present online, but meaningful offline.

Because at the end of the day, no matter how strong the digital presence is, what truly sustains a hospitality brand is the experience people carry back with them, something that no algorithm can replace.

> *"Building a sense of community around a brand can make a significant difference. When people feel like they are a part of something, they are far more likely to show up for it*

WORLD REALTY CONGRESS

A GLOBAL FORUM FOR REAL ESTATE LEADERSHIP

As the global real estate ecosystem prepares for the next edition of **World Realty Congress in December 2026**, the conversations and momentum generated during last year's event in Dubai continue to shape expectations for what lies ahead.

In an industry defined by rapid change, from digital transformation to evolving models of community living, platforms that bring leaders together for meaningful dialogue have become increasingly important.

Later this year, World Realty Congress will return to Dubai for its next edition, in December 2026, once again convening developers, community management leaders, facilities management professionals, PropTech innovators and policymakers from across the UAE and international markets.

Over five days, the programme is expected to bring together global perspectives on how cities are evolving and how the real estate sector must adapt to shifting expectations around sustainability, governance and technology.

While details of the upcoming edition will continue to unfold in the months ahead, the Congress has steadily positioned itself as a platform where industry leaders can exchange ideas, explore emerging trends and build collaborations that extend beyond the event itself.

Building on the Momentum of 2025

The growing anticipation surrounding the 2026 edition is rooted in the momentum created during World Realty Congress 2025, which brought the global real estate ecosystem to Dubai last December.

Held at the Mövenpick Grand Al Bustan, the five-day programme welcomed more than 1,000 delegates from over 15 countries, representing a wide cross-section of the industry, from developers and property managers to technology companies and policymakers.

Across the week, more than 75 speakers and over 20 sessions explored themes that

increasingly define the future of the sector, including sustainable urban development, digital transformation, community governance and the expanding role of PropTech.

One of the highlights of the programme was a keynote address by Emmy Award-winning producer and technology entrepreneur Neil Mandt, founder of Digital Rights Management, who spoke about the role of innovation and storytelling in industries navigating technological change.

Beyond the conference sessions, the week included the IRECMS Dubai Masterclasses, the CAM G10 Summit Dubai, curated community tours and the World Realty Congress Awards gala, which brought together more than 400 industry leaders to celebrate excellence across the real estate ecosystem.

With over 260 finalists and 73 winners recognised across more than 30 award categories, the programme highlighted the organisations and individuals pushing the industry forward.

A Platform for Industry Dialogue

Reflecting on the Congress, **Jatin Deepchandani, CEO of Real Estate Market Times and Eventyst Global** (organiser of World Realty Congress), emphasised the importance of creating platforms where global industry leaders can come together to exchange insights and learn from one another. "World Realty Congress exists because the real estate industry needs more than conferences; it needs conversations that actually move the needle. Our goal is to bring global leaders into the same room and create the kind of dialogue that shapes where this sector goes next," he says.

As cities grow more complex and the real estate sector navigates rapid technological and regulatory change, the importance of these conversations continues to increase. In many ways, the discussions that unfolded in Dubai last December served as a reminder that the industry is entering a period defined not only by development, but by the long-term stewardship of communities and urban ecosystems.

The Conversation Continues

As preparations for World Realty Congress 2026 gather pace, the next edition promises to build on the momentum of the past year.

For an industry that is increasingly interconnected across markets and disciplines, the Congress has become a meeting point where conversations extend beyond the conference hall, shaping ideas, partnerships and strategies that influence the future of cities.

If the energy of last December's gathering is any indication, the real estate community will again arrive in Dubai to continue that conversation.

5 DAYS OF POWER PACKED PROGRAMS

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21+ SESSIONS

15+ VISITING COUNTRIES

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5 EVENT FORMATS

- Masterclasses
- Conference
- Awards
- Community Tour
- Specialised Parallel Tracks

5 DIVERSIFIED SECTORS

- Property Development
- Real Estate Brokerage
- Real Estate Management
- PropTech
- Consultants

Follow us and stay tuned as we gear up for an even bigger World Realty Congress in 2026.

Scan the QR code or visit *www.worldrealtycongress.com* for updates.

THE MARKETPLACE MODEL FOR REAL ESTATE

The Middle East's real estate sector is expanding rapidly, but growth is bringing new complexity to sales, contracting and delivery processes. **Shivdayal Charan, Director – Middle East at Torry Harris**, explains why ecosystem-based digital marketplaces could play a critical role in helping the industry manage scale and improve transaction efficiency.

Real estate growth in the Middle East is entering a new phase – one where the economics of execution matter as much as the strength of demand. Population growth, sustained investor interest, and large-scale development programmes across residential and commercial segments are creating a steady pipeline of opportunity. As markets expand and sale volumes increase, the focus is shifting from demand creation to efficiently converting this demand into completed transactions across sales, contracting, and handover at scale.

As deal volumes rise, this conversion efficiency becomes a strategic concern. Margins tighten, sales cycles stretch, and the cost of managing transactions increases unless operating models evolve alongside growth. This challenge is particularly evident in Middle East markets, where off-plan sales, multi-phase developments, and cross-border buyers add significant complexity to already demanding transaction lifecycles. In this context, digital marketplace ecosystems emerge not as disruptive replacements, but as commercial multipliers bringing greater consistency, speed, and leverage to how real estate is bought, sold, and serviced across the region.

A digital real estate marketplace platform is best understood as a software operating layer that automates and orchestrates buyer engagement, transaction workflows, and partner services - all powered by AI. Beyond efficiency, this operating layer creates unprecedented visibility across demand, deal progression, and partner performance, allowing developers and stakeholders to take informed commercial decisions in nearly real time.

Often driven by large developers, real estate groups, or ecosystem orchestrators, these platforms unify live inventory, buyer demand, transaction workflows, and a growing network

“Digital marketplace ecosystems bring consistency, speed and visibility to how real estate is bought, sold and serviced”

of service providers within a single commercial environment. The value lies in what this operating layer changes in practice – fewer hand-offs across the sales journey, clearer progression from intent to closure, data-driven visibility at every stage of the transaction, and the ability to scale activity without increasing cost or complexity.

Commercial Advantages of a Marketplace Platform Model

By consolidating active inventory across projects, asset classes, and locations, real estate marketplaces offer a single access point that channels buyer interest into structured discovery and engagement. This is particularly relevant in GCC markets, where demand is often fragmented across broker networks, roadshows, and relationship-led outreach. For GCC-based family offices and international investors evaluating opportunities across UAE free zones and KSA’s growth corridors, marketplaces unify fragmented engagement into a single, always-on demand environment. Buyer intent that would otherwise be dispersed across episodic campaigns is captured earlier and routed into qualified deal flows, giving developers and brokers clearer visibility into real demand and enabling steadier sales pipelines without escalating acquisition costs.

When engagement, contracting, and documentation are managed through a single portal, deals progress faster with fewer pauses and hand-offs. This early alignment can reduce slippage between reservation and completion, especially vital for off-plan and multi-phase developments across the region. For sovereign-backed and master developers managing large, long-horizon programmes, clearer visibility into deal progression significantly improves revenue predictability. Commercial, construction, and financing teams operate from a shared view of demand realization, thereby strengthening timelines, cash-flow planning, and delivery commitments.

Standardized lead handling, documentation, and client coordination within a marketplace framework can also remove much of the operational drag that slows deal velocity. In regulated GCC environments, including UAE free zones, broker networks often work across projects with varying processes and compliance requirements. Marketplaces can introduce a shared operating framework that standardizes execution while preserving governance and transparency. As a result, brokers spend less time coordinating process and more time advising clients and closing transactions, improving productivity, strengthening conversion rates, and accelerating commission cycles without expanding sales teams.

With standardized onboarding flows, shared operating rules, and consistent service catalogues, marketplaces let developers, brokers, and service providers onboard quickly without bespoke integrations or project-by-project setup. This model is particularly effective in GCC markets characterized by large-scale, multi-project development. For fit-out contractors, facility managers, and professional service providers aligned to major developments, marketplaces present a structured route to participate across multiple projects once onboarded.

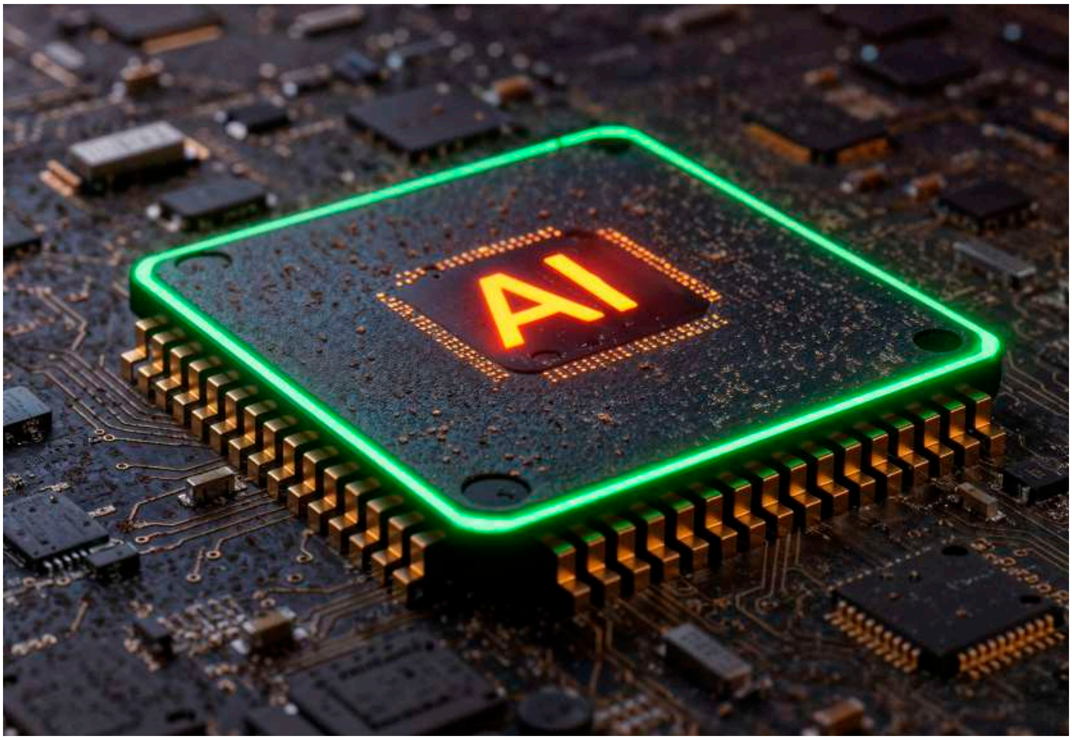
Moreover, marketplace flexibility enables rapid onboarding of complementary residential and commercial service providers, such as interior designers, smart home solutions providers, and property management companies.
In commercial real estate, the same model naturally extends to onboarding architects, MEP and fit-out contractors, facility management providers, asset managers, and leasing partners. Given these partners operate within a shared marketplace framework, services can be rolled out consistently across projects and locations.

Marketplace ecosystems promote a more scalable, platform-driven approach to real estate growth. Transactions progress with greater predictability, operating efforts are better contained, and expansion is driven by partner ecosystem reach rather than linear increases in people or cost. As competition intensifies, marketplace-led operating models will increasingly distinguish developers who can convert demand at scale from those who cannot.

We designed our smart marketplace platform to address these realities - structuring how inventory is presented, how demand is engaged and how transactions move from interest to closure – delivering scale through ecosystem orchestration, inclusive participation and repeatability.

How Companies Are Turning AI Investment Into Results

Companies around the world are investing billions in artificial intelligence. Yet many CEOs admit the financial payoff remains unclear. PwC's 29th Global CEO Survey highlights a growing gap between AI ambition and measurable impact, and what leading companies are doing differently.



Artificial intelligence has quickly moved from experimentation to expectation in corporate boardrooms. From generative AI tools to predictive analytics and automation systems, companies across industries are investing heavily in technologies they believe will shape the next wave of productivity and growth. Yet many executives admit the financial impact remains difficult to measure.

If your organisation is investing significantly in AI but struggling to translate those investments into revenue growth or cost savings, you are not alone. According to PwC's 29th Global CEO Survey, which gathered insights from thousands of business leaders globally, many companies have yet to see clear financial benefits from their AI initiatives. While executives broadly recognise the technology's potential, measurable results often remain elusive.

For leadership teams, the challenge is becoming increasingly clear: the gap between AI experimentation and enterprise-level value.

The Three Gaps Holding Back AI Returns

PwC's research highlights several structural gaps limiting AI's business impact:

· **Strategic Clarity:** Only 51% of CEOs say their company has a clear AI roadmap.

· **Investment Discipline:** Just 40% believe their organisation is investing enough in AI.

· **Data Readiness:** Only 29% say AI tools have access to all relevant company data.

Together, these gaps help explain why many organisations remain stuck in early-stage AI experimentation.

Where AI is Already Creating Value

Despite these challenges, some organisations are beginning to generate measurable returns from their AI investments.

PwC's data shows that AI adoption is currently concentrated in areas such as demand generation (22%) and support services (20%), where implementation is relatively contained. Usage drops in more complex and value-critical functions, including strategic direction-setting (16%) and demand fulfilment (13%).

This pattern suggests that many companies are applying AI tactically rather than embedding it into core operating models.

Where AI has delivered measurable gains, the technology is often integrated directly into operational processes. Financial institutions are using machine learning to strengthen fraud detection and risk modelling. Manufacturers deploy predictive analytics to optimize production and reduce equipment downtime. Retailers increasingly rely on AI-powered demand forecasting to manage inventory and supply chains more efficiently. In these cases, AI is embedded into business operations rather than used as a standalone tool.

How AI is Translating Into Business Value

PwC's findings suggest that when AI does produce measurable returns, the impact tends to appear in a few key areas:

· Productivity and efficiency by automating tasks and optimising workflows

· Better decision-making through faster insights for planning, forecasting and risk management

· New revenue streams via AI-enabled products, services and customer experiences

PwC's analysis suggests these gains typically emerge only when AI is embedded into core business processes, rather than used in isolated pilots or experimental projects.

Insights from PwC's Global CEO Survey suggest that companies beginning to see measurable returns from AI tend to follow a similar path. They scale AI across multiple business functions so it can influence operations, decision-making and customer experience.

These organisations also invest in strong data infrastructure and governance to ensure AI systems have access to reliable information. Many redesign workflows around automation and analytics rather than layering AI onto existing processes, and invest in internal talent capable of translating AI capabilities into practical business outcomes.

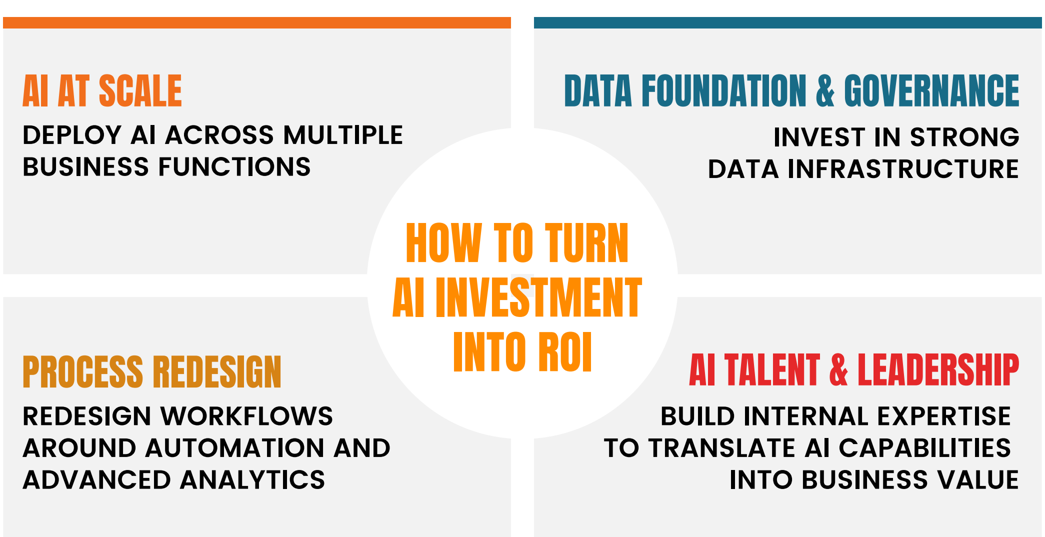
The Strategic Question for CEOs

The financial implications of closing these gaps are significant. According to PwC's findings, 15% of organisations that have addressed issues in strategy, investment and data integration report achieving both revenue growth and cost reduction from AI. Among companies that have not addressed these foundations, only 5% report similar outcomes.

In effect, the returns from artificial intelligence are beginning to concentrate among organisations that treat AI as enterprise infrastructure rather than a collection of tools or pilot projects.

For leadership teams, the survey reframes the AI challenge. The question is no longer whether to invest in artificial intelligence, but what still needs to change in strategy, investment and data integration to allow AI to move from experimentation to measurable business impact.

As adoption accelerates across industries, companies that successfully embed AI into the core of their operations will be better positioned to capture the next wave of productivity and growth.



NORTHERN EMIRATES
A Growing Industrial Ecosystem

Driven by government-backed zones and cost-efficiency, the Northern Emirates are transforming from secondary markets into a primary pillar of the UAE's logistics ecosystem.

The Northern Emirates are emerging as an increasingly important component of the UAE's industrial landscape, supported by expanding inventory, infrastructure investment and free zone-led development. They are no longer viewed as secondary or spillover markets, but as a growing and competitive industrial base offering greater choice and flexibility for occupiers. According to Knight Frank's UAE Industrial and Logistics Market Review 2025/26, these markets are evolving into a complementary industrial base, offering occupiers greater flexibility, scalability and cost efficiency.


Sharjah

Sharjah

Sharjah represents the largest concentration of industrial supply in the Northern Emirates, anchored by established zones such as Al Sajaa, the Sharjah Industrial Area and Hamriyah Port and Free Zone. The emirate continues to attract a broad mix of logistics, manufacturing and trading occupiers, supported by strong infrastructure and a mature supply base.

Key Highlights

- Largest concentration of industrial supply in the Northern Emirates
- Al Sajaa remains the primary warehouse and logistics hub
- More industrial listings than the whole of Dubai
- Supported by Hamriyah Port and Free Zone and Sharjah Airport International Free Zone

Ras Al Khaimah

Ras Al Khaimah is emerging as a fast-growing industrial market, supported by increasing project activity and investment. The emirate is attracting manufacturers and logistics operators through integrated zones and competitive operating conditions. This momentum is reinforced by its export-oriented industries and improved connectivity to ports.

Key Highlights

- 204% year-on-year increase in industrial project value
- 10 industrial contracts awarded in 2025
- Supported by RAKEZ industrial zones
- Growing demand from manufacturing and logistics sectors


Ras Al Khaimah

Ajman

Ajman plays a key role in providing accessible and flexible industrial space, particularly for SMEs and light industrial users. Its market is characterised by smaller unit sizes and a high volume of available stock. They position Ajman as a practical alternative for occupiers seeking operational efficiency without the cost pressures of larger emirates.

Key Highlights

- Strong supply of small to mid-sized industrial units
- High volume of active listings
- SME-driven demand base
- Supported by Ajman Free Zone


Ajman


Umm Al Quwain

Umm Al Quwain

Umm Al Quwain has become an increasingly viable option for a wider range of occupiers, particularly those prioritising space availability and cost efficiency. The emirate is strengthening its industrial profile. Infrastructure improvements and land availability are expected to support future growth, making it an attractive option for cost-sensitive occupiers.

Key Highlights

- Rental levels typically range from the high AED 30s to around AED 40 per sqft
- Among the most affordable industrial locations in the Northern Emirates
- Increasing availability in key clusters such as Umm Al Thuoob
- Supported by UAQ Free Trade Zone

Source: Knight Frank's UAE Industrial and Logistics Market Review 2025/26, relevant free zone authorities across the Northern Emirates

WHY GLOBAL CAPITAL IS TURNING STRATEGIC IN DUBAI

Since the post-pandemic rebound in 2021, Dubai's real estate sector has been moving into a more mature investment cycle, supported by population growth, economic diversification and the emirate's expanding role as a global business and tourism hub, drawing sustained attention from global investors seeking long-term stability.

Dubai's real estate market is entering a more mature investment cycle, supported by population growth, economic diversification and the emirate's expanding role as a global business and tourism hub.

Investor confidence in the market remains strong. In 2025 alone, Dubai recorded more than AED 687 billion in real estate sales transactions, reflecting sustained demand across residential, commercial and hospitality sectors.

International investors continue to play a central role. Foreign nationals are estimated to hold around 43% of the total value of residential real estate in Dubai, highlighting the city's position as one of the world's most globally connected property markets. Much of this capital originates from a diverse mix of global investor markets. Buyers from India and the United Kingdom remain among the most active international participants in Dubai's property sector, followed by investors from China, Saudi Arabia and Russia. Together, these groups represent some of the largest pools of cross-border investment targeting the emirate's residential market.

Yet while capital inflows remain strong, how investors deploy that capital is evolving. Industry leaders say the focus is shifting away from speculative trading toward long-term asset resilience, income stability and developments capable of sustaining demand across economic cycles.

Capital Deployment is Becoming More Strategic

Across Dubai's real estate market, private and international investors are entering with a noticeably longer-term outlook. According to **Zacky Sajjad**, **Director Business Development and Client Relations** at **Cavendish Maxwell**, global capital flows into the emirate are increasingly shaped by structural drivers such as wealth migration and confidence in Dubai's regulatory environment.

Zacky Sajjad

> Capital is increasingly selective rather than speculative, favouring income resilience and capital preservation


Elie Namaan

> Investors are looking beyond short-term returns and focusing on fundamentals that support long-term value

"Private and international capital is being deployed into Dubai real estate with a noticeably longer-term mindset, driven by wealth migration, currency hedging and confidence in the emirate's regulatory framework," he says.

"Capital is increasingly selective rather than speculative, favouring income resilience and capital preservation over short-term trading in Dubai," he adds.

Prime and ultra-luxury residential assets remain one of the strongest magnets for global capital, with demand from international high-net-worth buyers continuing to support pricing and liquidity. "The strongest long-term confidence is evident in prime and ultra-luxury residential, where demand from global high net worth individuals continues to outpace supply, supporting pricing and liquidity," shares Sajjad.

Beyond residential, logistics and industrial assets linked to trade, e-commerce and regional supply chains are also attracting sustained institutional interest. "Purpose-built retail, residential and hospitality assets aligned with lifestyle and tourism growth remain key targets, reflecting confidence in Dubai's population growth, economic diversification and long-term urban strategy," he adds.

Dubai's relatively strong rental yields also help explain investor interest. According to Cavendish Maxwell's full-year 2025 residential market report, gross rental yields in Dubai stood at 7% for apartments and 4.8% for villas, significantly higher than many mature global cities where yields typically fall between 2% and 4%.

Investor Expectations Are Evolving

As global capital continues to enter Dubai's real estate market, investor expectations are also becoming more sophisticated. Developers say buyers are increasingly focusing on the fundamentals that support long-term value rather than short-term financial gains. For **Elie Namaan, CEO and Co-Founder** of **Ellington Properties**, this shift reflects the growing maturity of the market. "Investor expectations in Dubai real estate have evolved as the market has matured. Today, investors are looking beyond short-term returns and focusing more on fundamentals that support long-term value, including design quality, livability and relevance over time," he says.

"At Ellington, this shift is clear in conversations that increasingly centre on spatial planning, functionality, natural light and the overall experience of the home, rather than headline features alone," he adds.

These expectations are influencing how developers plan and deliver projects, with greater emphasis on maintaining quality and consistency throughout the development lifecycle. “For us, phasing is about preserving the integrity of the original design and maintaining the same level of detail and craftsmanship from first release to final handover, which builds confidence among investors and end users alike,” shares Namaan.

“Positioning has also become more purposeful. Investors want clarity on who a project is for and how it fits within the wider urban context. Sustainable capital growth comes from well-designed, livable homes that stand the test of time,” he adds.

Destination-Led Developments Gain Attention

Alongside residential assets, investors are increasingly targeting developments that integrate hospitality, retail and lifestyle experiences. These destination-led developments are becoming a growing part of Dubai’s investment landscape, supported by tourism growth and the city’s expanding population. According to **Ghanim Bin Sulayem**, **Director of Operations** at **Seven Tides**, Dubai’s ability to combine tourism, lifestyle and real estate development continues to attract long-term capital. “Dubai continues to attract long-term capital because it has matured into a structurally resilient,

Ghanim Bin Sulayem

> Developments that integrate hospitality, experiential retail and leisure are delivering diversified income streams, stronger brand equity

experience-driven market underpinned by strong governance, world-class infrastructure and a clear economic vision,” he says.

“What sets Dubai apart is its ability to translate global travel, population growth and premium consumption into long-term asset performance,” he adds.

“Destination-led developments that integrate hospitality, experiential retail and leisure are delivering diversified income streams, longer stay times and stronger brand equity, enhancing both occupancy stability and pricing power,” Bin Sulayem shares.

As consumer behaviour evolves, projects capable of adapting to changing demand attract increasing interest from global capital.

A Market Entering Its Next Phase

Together, these trends point to a real estate market that is becoming increasingly strategic and globally connected. Prime residential assets continue to attract international wealth, logistics real estate is benefiting from Dubai’s role in regional trade and supply chains, and destination-led developments are drawing investors seeking diversified income streams.

As capital flows into the emirate, Dubai’s real estate market is entering a new phase, defined less by speculative cycles and more by long-term investment strategies aligned with the city’s economic growth and urban development.

The perspectives shared here were gathered before the conflict reshaped regional sentiment. The months that followed tested the confidence these industry leaders described, and the data suggests that confidence was not misplaced. Transaction volumes moderated before recovering. Long-term capital remained deployed. The repositioning these contributors identified did not reverse. It held.

Dubai Real Estate Snapshot

Market Activity
- AED 687.1 bn property sales transactions in 2025
- 94,700+ investors entered the market in H1 2025
- AED 326bn invested in property in H1 2025

Global Buyers
- 43% of residential property value held by foreign buyers
- Top investor markets: India, United Kingdom, China, Saudi Arabia, Russia

Source: Dubai Land Department; DXB Interact