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From the EDITOR

Dear Readers, _____

What does leadership truly look like in 2025?

It's not always about bottom lines or boardrooms. Sometimes, it begins in a humble studio where an architect sketches inclusive spaces. Sometimes, in a late-night lab where a mathematician reimagines learning for children who've never heard of an Olympiad.

This special **Leadership Hall** edition of **Business Frontier** is dedicated to those extraordinary individuals who have chosen to lead with purpose, empathy, and imagination. Many of them were not only featured in our stories—but were also honoured at the **Leadership Conclave & Awards 2025**. It was more than a ceremony; it was a celebration of character, of contribution, and of the quiet courage it takes to build something that lasts.

From Saudi Arabia to Singapore, Mumbai to Mexico City, we've featured individuals who are not only transforming their fields but also challenging the very definition of leadership. Whether it's ethical innovation in AI, sustainable development in food systems, or expanding access to architecture and education, these are changemakers who lead with clarity, conscience, and courage.

As we launch this issue, we do so with gratitude—for the trust these leaders placed in us to share their stories, and for you, our readers, who keep the spirit of inquiry alive. May this collection spark something in you—a fresh idea, a quiet reflection, or simply a renewed belief in the power of people to make change.

Until then,
Happy Reading!



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'Architecture is About Shaping Experiences'



Ar. Smita Das shares her philosophy, purpose-driven leadership and the transformative power of inclusive, culturally-rooted architecture



In the ever-evolving world of design, where trends change rapidly and concrete jungles rise overnight, **Ar. Smita Das** stands out for a radically different reason—her architecture speaks. As the **Founder and Principal Architect of Speaking Designs**, she believes that every space, regardless of scale or budget, must tell a story and serve a purpose. Over the past three decades, she has quietly shaped India's built environment through over 7,000 residential projects and several landmark universities,

blending tradition with modernity, and sustainability with sensitivity.

What makes her journey extraordinary is its rootedness. Inspired during a childhood visit to Berlin, trained at the iconic JJ School of Architecture, and now leading one of India's most mindful design practices, Ar. Das's leadership is built on empathy, respect, and a tireless commitment to democratizing design.

In an interview, she opens up about her creative process, her leadership philosophy, and why architecture must be as much about heart as it is about structure.

Let's start with your professional journey. What were the pivotal moments that defined your path in architecture?

The spark was lit early—at 14—during a visit to Berlin. The architectural wonder and modernity of the city were overwhelming yet magnetic. That encounter seeded a lifelong fascination with built spaces. Back in India, despite family expectations of a technical career, I followed that pull toward architecture.



“

My creativity is also nurtured through art and literature. I paint with charcoal, write plays, short films and immerse myself in Indian storytelling. These other forms of expression sharpen the lens through which I view architecture.

”

My education at the JJ School of Architecture in Mumbai allowed me to explore the depth of the craft. My thesis project—designing a Hoverport Terminal in CBD Belapur—was my first significant milestone. Designing a prototype metro station for Mumbai in 2008 was another exhilarating milestone in my journey.

Over the course of my 30-year journey, I’ve had the opportunity to design everything from a single toilet to entire townships, from small residential row houses to high-rise towers, and from schools to colleges and universities. Every project has been deeply special to me and remains close to my heart.

Since founding Speaking Designs in 2016, I’ve worked on a range of projects, institutional campuses hold a special place in my heart. The Maulana Mazharul Arbi Farsi University in Bihar along with Ranchi Design and Consultancy Services Pvt. Ltd. was particularly meaningful—not only for its scale and innovation but also for the recognition it received from the Bihar State Educational Infrastructure Development Corporation.

Beyond built work, I’ve found purpose in advocacy—especially in educating the public about the value of good design. The collaboration with UTEC by UltraTech on the “Ghar Ghar Mei Architecture” initiative has been one of the most impactful steps in that direction.





“

Technology is no longer optional—it's integral. From visualizing ideas in real-time to simulating environmental performance, it enhances decision-making and efficiency.

”

What would you consider your most meaningful contribution to the field?

Making architecture more accessible and culturally relevant has been my greatest contribution. I strongly believe that good design isn't a luxury—it's a right. Whether a client is building a 100 sq. ft. home or a 100-acre campus, the principles of functionality, harmony, and beauty must apply equally.

The 'Ghar Ghar Mei Architecture' campaign has allowed us to reach people who otherwise wouldn't consult an architect. We've demystified the process and inspired families to dream beyond basic shelter. Additionally, the universities I've designed—including those still underway—aren't just buildings; they are nurturing environments meant to shape the next generation. That sense of legacy keeps me grounded and driven.

Could you share some of the recognitions that validate your journey?

While my work has never been

recognition-driven, it's always affirming when it resonates with others. A few highlights include:

- Being named among **India's Top 25 Emerging Architects** in the Coffee Table Book series
- Receiving the Mark of excellence award in Architecture and Interior design at the Business Frontier Leadership Conclave & Awards 2025
- Being spotlighted in The CEO Magazine as **Businesswoman of the Year 2024** in the Architecture and Design category
- My design being selected by Bihar's State Educational Infrastructure Development Corporation for the Maulana Mazharul Arbi Farsi University
- Designing **7,000+ bungalows** across India, each one tailored to individual dreams
- Leading awareness through the **UTEC collaboration**, helping shift public perception on the importance of thoughtful, culturally attuned design.

Each recognition is a reminder that design can—and should—be inclusive and impactful.

What leadership values or principles guide your practice at Speaking Designs?

Leadership, to me, is about service and clarity. I don't see myself as just a principal or director—I see myself as a facilitator. I work closely with my team, whether it's brainstorming a design, navigating project challenges, or mentoring young architects.

Respect is the cornerstone—respect for time, craft, clients, and cultural nuances. I'm also deeply committed to maintaining a structured yet fluid process. Architecture demands systems and creativity in equal measure. My approach combines disciplined project management with a design ethos that invites exploration.

And finally, authenticity. It's easy to be swept up by trends, but I firmly believe in designing from a place of honesty. That's what sustains both trust and innovation.

How do you navigate disruptions or industry challenges, particularly with rapid urbanization and shifting expectations?

Challenges are part of the creative terrain. Urbanization, changing client mindsets, budget constraints, or even climate change—all demand adaptability. My approach has always been solution-oriented.

The key is to stay curious and collaborative. I've embraced digital tools—3D modeling, sustainable tech—but never as replacements for intuition. I also rely on interdisciplinary collaboration. Engaging with engineers, sustainability experts, and even sociologists enriches the design output.

At the heart of it, challenges are just another layer of design—they help refine the solution.

How do you see technology shaping the future of architecture and leadership in the design industry?

Technology is no longer optional—it's integral. From visualizing ideas in

real-time to simulating environmental performance, it enhances decision-making and efficiency. Tools like modular construction and 3D printing are already transforming how we think about timelines and budgets.

But with that speed comes a responsibility. We must ensure the human story doesn't get lost. While AI might assist with drafting or data analysis, it can't replace empathy, intuition, or the nuanced understanding of context that an architect brings.

Leadership in the digital era will require balancing innovation with conscience. Technology should serve creativity, not define it.

What current projects are you excited about?

I'm currently working on the designs for Patliputra University and Purnea University. Universities are fascinating because they aren't just physical spaces—they're cultural ecosystems. The goal is to create campuses that inspire curiosity, foster interaction, and reflect regional identity.

Another exciting direction is hospitality. We're working on a café chain called

Vintage Coffee, where every outlet tells a different story. We've also taken on a few commercial office spaces and some high-end interior projects. It's refreshing to design intimate, lifestyle-driven spaces.

And of course, I remain committed to public engagement. Design awareness is an ongoing mission.

What inspires you as a leader, and how do you keep your creativity alive?

Stories inspire me—real stories of transformation, resilience, and belonging. Whether it's a student who loves the sunlight in their classroom or a homeowner who feels more at peace in their Vastu-aligned living room, those stories keep me going.

My creativity is also nurtured through art and literature. I paint with charcoal, write plays, short films, and immerse myself in Indian storytelling. These other forms of expression sharpen the lens through which I view architecture.

At the end of the day, architecture is about shaping experiences. That belief is what fuels both my leadership and my craft.



Leading with Purpose: CA Hariprasad Nair on Financial Vision and People-Centric Strategy



Finance expert CA Hariprasad Nair shares insights from his journey across continents, industries, and transformative leadership roles

CA Hariprasad Nair, Chief Financial Officer of Bateel International, stands at the helm of one of the most respected gourmet brands in the world. With over two decades of multifaceted experience across global markets and diverse sectors, Nair has built a career rooted in strategic thinking, financial discipline, and operational insight.

A Fellow Chartered Accountant and a graduate of the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, Nair has guided organizations through rapid growth, transformation, and digital innovation. At Bateel, he has played a pivotal role in shaping financial systems, building high-performance teams, and supporting international expansion.

In this interview, Nair reflects on his professional evolution, the critical skills leaders must nurture today, and the mindset needed to succeed in the fast-changing world of business and finance.

What initially drew you to the world of finance, and how did your early career choices prepare you for global leadership?

Growing up, I was naturally inclined toward numerical analysis, but it wasn't until my college years that I began to understand the broader context of finance. The turning point came when I was selected to assist with a major



economics conference. Listening to influential policymakers, economists, and financial experts speak about real-world challenges like GDP growth, labor markets, and industrial policy gave me a powerful sense of direction.

Later, as I started exploring the work done by chartered accountants—auditing, compliance, valuations, investigations—it became clear that this was more than just a technical field. It was a gateway to understanding how businesses function and thrive. That realization sparked a deep interest, and I committed myself to

mastering the profession with long-term leadership in mind.

I began my career in India with a mid-sized firm, where I was exposed to a wide array of sectors early on. That diversity was a great training ground. I had to learn fast, adapt quickly, and communicate effectively with people across functions. That early responsibility gave me a strong foundation and confidence to take on increasingly complex roles as my career progressed.

How have your international assignments influenced your approach to managing complexity and leading transformation?

Each global assignment has offered a new lens through which to view leadership. My first major international role was with an Australian pharmaceutical firm, where I not only managed financial operations but also helped oversee business functions in Southeast Asia. That experience taught me the importance of agility, cultural sensitivity, and building systems from the ground up.

When I moved to the UAE in 2006, it was an exciting period of rapid economic expansion. Joining Al Hokair Group gave me hands-on exposure to retail finance, franchise management, and the regional

expected to wear multiple hats. Of course, a strong command of numbers and regulations is essential—but what really sets leaders apart is their ability to link financial insight with strategic execution.

For me, it's important to be approachable and team-driven. I keep my door open—literally and

metaphorically. I believe finance shouldn't operate in a silo. We collaborate cross-functionally, evaluate investment scenarios rigorously, and build 12- to 24-month forecasts not just as a planning tool, but as a strategic compass.

Most importantly, I view the CFO's role as that of an enabler—someone who facilitates growth, ensures accountability, and provides clear financial narratives that empower decision-makers at every level. It's also important to mentor future leaders, to create a culture of ownership, and to ensure that every person in your team understands the broader business goals.

“
A leader's success is measured by the value he or she creates—for the people, company, and broader ecosystem. It's about building trust, enabling progress, and leaving things better than you found them.””

regulatory environment. It was intense, and I had to grow quickly—learning five years' worth of skills in just one.

But the most defining chapter has been with Bateel International. Over the past 17 years, I've been part of its evolution from a regional brand to a globally recognized name. From establishing core departments to raising capital, managing international expansions, and helping shape strategic direction, the scale and depth of transformation here have truly shaped me as a leader. You learn to manage complexity not just through systems and frameworks, but through clarity of vision and consistent communication.

In your view, what makes a finance leader truly effective in today's business landscape?

More than ever, finance leaders are





Technology is transforming finance at an unprecedented pace. How are you preparing your teams for this shift?

We're not just adapting to change—we're actively driving it. One of the more unconventional decisions we took at Bateel was to align the IT department with the finance function. While this isn't the norm, our CEO recognized that my practical understanding of systems made me a good fit to lead that integration.

We immediately brought in strong IT leadership and set a clear mandate: make technology a growth engine, not just a support function. We've since focused on digitizing workflows, automating finance operations, and enabling real-time data analytics. This includes everything from supplier payments and collections to salary processing and business intelligence dashboards.

On the production side, we're introducing AI-driven automation to improve efficiency, reduce manual input, and enhance quality. It's a bold

path, but it's necessary if we want to stay ahead of industry disruptions and deliver excellence at scale. We also ensure our team is consistently upskilled—be it through professional development programs or cross-functional projects.

How do you define success as a leader, and what qualities do you believe emerging finance professionals must develop?

For me, a leader's success is measured by the value he or she creates—for



“Develop a deep understanding of your industry, stay current with global trends, and continuously invest in both technical and soft skills.”

decisions—it's about influencing outcomes, communicating clearly, and adapting under pressure. Those who combine financial intelligence with empathy, curiosity, and resilience will find themselves well-equipped to lead in any environment. Be open to change, and always prioritize integrity.

How has your family influenced your journey as a leader, especially during times of uncertainty or pressure?

Family has been the quiet force behind every milestone I've reached. From the values instilled in me by my parents to the unwavering support of my wife and children, their presence has been my foundation.

There have been demanding phases, especially during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, where the pressure on leadership was immense. But my

family's understanding allowed me to stay focused and fully committed to my responsibilities. Their encouragement gave me the clarity and emotional strength to navigate through intense professional demands while staying grounded.

In many ways, they are my compass—and their belief in me continues to inspire how I lead and how I show up every day. Having that emotional support has been as vital as any professional credential.

What keeps you motivated today, and what legacy would you like to leave behind?

What keeps me going is the opportunity to contribute meaningfully. Every challenge is a chance to grow, and every decision has an impact—on people, performance, and purpose. I am particularly driven by the prospect of building something sustainable, where people feel empowered and proud of what they do.

As for legacy, I'd like to be remembered as someone who built with integrity, led with empathy, and never stopped learning. I hope to leave behind teams that are stronger, systems that are scalable, and a culture that values people as much as performance.

the people, company, and broader ecosystem. It's about building trust, enabling progress, and leaving things better than you found them.

To the next generation of finance professionals, I would say: Never stop learning. Your degree or designation is only the beginning. Develop a deep understanding of your industry, stay current with global trends, and continuously invest in both technical and soft skills.

Leadership is not just about making



‘Leaders Must Develop Digital Literacy’

Cristian Salazar, Senior Business Advisor at Inno-Centre, talks about his journey, leadership values, and the future of responsible business in the era of AI



A visionary strategic advisor with over two decades of expertise in sustainable development and food quality, **Cristian Salazar** is renowned for his ability to bridge innovation with impact. Having worked alongside national and international clients to design and implement transformative solutions that tackle critical environmental and quality challenges, he seamlessly merges sustainability and innovation to drive business success and industry growth.

Currently the **Senior Business Advisor at Inno-Centre**, Cristian goes beyond his advisory role and is a dedicated educator, shaping the next generation of leaders through courses on sustainable development at HEC Montréal and food processing at Collège Maisonneuve. His academic contributions highlight his deep commitment to knowledge-sharing and professional growth.

With mastery in business development, strategic planning, circular economy, and quality management systems, Cristian excels at leading multidisciplinary teams toward impactful outcomes. His work is rooted in a profound dedication to social and environmental progress, ensuring that every project he undertakes delivers meaningful, lasting change. Recognized for his leadership, strategic foresight, and passion for continuous learning, Cristian thrives on collaboration that drives both business success and a more sustainable future.

In an interview with Cristian talks about





sustainable practices and his bold vision for the future of food quality and sustainable development.

Can you walk us through your professional journey and share the milestones that have defined your career?

I am a strategic advisor, coach, and lecturer with over 20 years of experience in sustainable development and food quality. Over the years, I have worked with both national and international clients, helping them design and implement innovative solutions. Currently, I hold the position of Senior Business Advisor at Inno-Centre, and I also lecture at HEC Montréal and Collège Maisonneuve.

Additionally, I am a co-owner of Soot Marketing, a marketing company based in Guatemala, specializing in the hotel industry.

My professional journey began with a strong academic foundation. I hold a master's degree in food safety and another in environmental management, reflecting my commitment to both food science and sustainability. My career in the food industry started with roles such as Production Manager at Grupo Bimbo and R&D

Project Manager at INCAP. When I moved to Canada, I progressed from a Thermal Process Technician at A. Lassonde Inc. to Quality Coordinator and Auditor. Eventually, I advanced into leadership positions, serving as Quality Director at Vegpro International Inc. and Operations & Quality Assurance Manager at Cedarome Canada Inc.

“I tackle challenges with a strategic mindset, focusing on innovative solutions tailored to each situation. My approach involves analysing the problem, leveraging data, and implementing practices that ensure long-term resilience.”

How did your entrepreneurial journey start?

I founded CSM Groupe Conseil in December 2018 to provide strategic advice on sustainability strategies, strategic planning, and food industry practices. Then, in 2020, I became a co-owner of Soot Marketing, a marketing company focused on the hotel industry in Guatemala.

I have always been passionate about sharing knowledge, so I started lecturing at Collège Maisonneuve in 2018, focusing on food processing. In

2021, I joined HEC Montréal to teach sustainable development. Since 2024, I have also been an assistant professor at the Chemical Engineering School of École Polytechnique Montréal.

Since February 2024, I have been a Senior Business Advisor at Inno-Centre, where I guide companies across Canada to achieve their business objectives through sustainable practices and strategic growth.

What are the major contributions you have made to your industry?

One of the most impactful initiatives I undertook was during the pandemic when I designed a system from my home in Montreal to promote and internationalize the products and services of Guatemalan SMEs. These businesses had to close or cut staff due to the impact of COVID-19, and my goal was to help them stay afloat by leveraging my expertise and network.

My other contributions can be categorized into a few key areas -

Quality Assurance & Control: I have played a vital role in implementing and maintaining quality control and assurance programs, including obtaining important certifications and accreditations such as CFIA, MAPAQ, USDA, FDA, PRIMUS GFS, and CANADA GAP. These efforts have ensured high standards in food safety and quality.



their products and services during the pandemic. It was a proud moment for me, as it acknowledged the positive impact of my work in supporting small and medium-sized businesses during challenging times.

What leadership values or principles do you strongly believe in and implement?

My leadership philosophy is grounded in several key values and principles that guide my professional journey:

Collaboration: I believe that collaboration with diverse stakeholders is essential for achieving sustainable success. Whether working with clients, students, or team members, I foster an inclusive environment that values different perspectives and collective problem-solving.

Continuous Learning: I am a strong advocate for lifelong learning. Staying curious and open to new knowledge not only enriches my own expertise but also enables me to provide more insightful

advice and coaching. I encourage those around me to embrace learning as a path to both personal and professional growth.

Social and Environmental Well-being: I strive to integrate sustainable practices into business strategies, ensuring that economic growth goes hand in hand with social responsibility and environmental stewardship.

Personalized Strategic Approach: I believe in offering tailored advice and coaching that aligns with the unique goals and challenges of each client. My approach is centred on creating personalized strategies that support both professional expansion and personal development, helping clients achieve success on multiple levels.

How do you approach challenges and disruptions in your industry?

I tackle challenges with a strategic mindset, focusing on innovative solutions tailored to each situation.

Sustainability Strategies: I have developed and implemented sustainable development strategies for various organizations, helping them reduce their environmental impact while maintaining operational efficiency.

Food Processing Expertise: As both a consultant and a lecturer, I have shared my knowledge of food processing, food safety, quality assurance, and food preservation with industry professionals and students alike. This knowledge transfer helps elevate industry standards and practices.

Internationalization of Guatemalan SMEs: My work in promoting and internationalizing Guatemalan small and medium-sized enterprises has empowered these businesses to reach new markets and increase their visibility, especially during difficult times like the pandemic.

Please elaborate on the recognitions, awards, or honours you have received throughout your career.

One of the most meaningful recognitions I have received is being named 'Hero of the Week' by the digital magazine Chapin en USA. This honour was given in recognition of my efforts to help Guatemalan SMEs internationalize





My approach involves analysing the problem, leveraging data, and implementing practices that ensure long-term resilience.

One key aspect is change management—I've applied this effectively during my time at Cedarome Canada Inc., guiding the organization through transformations while maintaining quality and efficiency. I also stay informed about industry trends, helping clients proactively adapt to changes rather than just reacting to them.

What are your core responsibilities, and how do you ensure your role aligns with the company's strategic objectives and vision?

My core responsibilities include providing high-level consulting services to companies, focusing on developing strategies for growth, profitability, and productivity. I make sure to incorporate a sustainable development perspective into these strategies, aligning them with the company's vision of responsible business practices.

Additionally, as a professor at HEC Montréal, Collège Maisonneuve, and

École Polytechnique Montréal, I train the next generation of Operations Managers in sustainability and Food Quality Managers. By blending academic teaching with industry insights, I ensure that my work contributes to both education and practical, strategic outcomes.

What are your thoughts on the future of leadership in the era of AI and digital transformation?

I believe that leadership in the era of AI and digital transformation will require a balance between technological adoption and human-centric decision-making. Leaders must develop digital literacy while also fostering ethical considerations and social responsibility. The ability to adapt, learn continuously, and integrate innovative technologies without losing sight of human values will be key. Embracing collaboration between technology and people will define successful leadership in the future.

What inspires you as a leader, and how do you inspire others?

I am inspired by the opportunity to make a positive impact on the world, whether it's through sustainable business practices, community support, or mentoring future leaders. Knowledge exchange and collaboration also motivate me, as they foster innovation and drive progress.

I aim to inspire others through my commitment to sustainability, my deep expertise in the food industry, and my dedication to helping businesses grow responsibly. By sharing my vision and demonstrating a purpose-driven approach, I encourage others to pursue meaningful and impactful work.

What do you do in your free time? How do you ensure a work-life balance?

In my free time, I enjoy trekking, exploring new cultures, and traveling. These activities not only help me disconnect from work but also give me a broader perspective on different ways of life. I make it a priority to maintain a healthy work-life balance by dedicating time to hobbies and personal growth. This balance helps me stay focused and motivated in my professional endeavours.

Driving Tomorrow: Abeer S. Al-Humaimedy on Leading Ethical Innovation in AI and Blockchain

Abeer S. Al-Humaimedy, Founder and CEO of AdvancedEra.Tech, shares her pioneering journey in artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies

As the Middle East accelerates its digital evolution, few leaders embody the spirit of ethical innovation and visionary leadership quite like **Dr. Abeer S. Al-Humaimedy**. With over twenty years of experience spanning AI, blockchain, and cloud computing, Abeer has become a pivotal figure driving technological progress across industries. Her academic credentials — including a Ph.D. in Cloud Computing from King's College London and an Executive Certificate in Digital Business from MIT Sloan — complement her hands-on leadership in building solutions that are not only advanced but also inclusive and responsible. In this in-depth interview, **the Founder and CEO of AdvancedEra.Tech** reflects on her professional milestones, leadership values, and the emerging role of technology in shaping a better tomorrow.

Can you walk us through your professional journey and share the milestones that have defined your career?

My professional journey began with a deep fascination for artificial intelligence during my undergraduate studies. That initial curiosity evolved into a dedicated pursuit of expertise, which led me to earn a Master's



degree in AI from King Saud University and subsequently a Ph.D. in Cloud Computing from King's College London. Recognizing that technology alone is not enough to drive change, I pursued an Executive Certificate in Digital Business from MIT Sloan to better understand how to integrate innovation within strategic business frameworks.

One of the defining moments of my career was founding the Blockchain and Web3 Lab at King Saud University. This initiative bridged the gap between academia and industry by fostering research and practical applications of blockchain technology in areas such as digital identity and supply chain management. The lab became a hub for students and researchers to experiment with real-world solutions, which was incredibly rewarding.

What are the major contributions you have made to your industry?

My contributions are multi-faceted but fundamentally aimed at creating ecosystems where emerging technologies can be adopted

responsibly and effectively. The Blockchain and Web3 Lab at King Saud University is a prime example, as it created a structured environment for advancing blockchain research and education in the region.

Through AdvancedEra.Tech, I have spearheaded AI and blockchain deployments that address practical challenges such as process automation, data security, and transparency. We focus on developing tailored solutions that not only leverage technology but also align with organizational goals and cultural contexts.

Beyond technical contributions, I actively engage in thought leadership by participating in forums and advisory boards, including IEEE Blockchain and the Web3 Alliance for Saudi Arabia. These platforms allow me to influence policy discussions and advocate for frameworks that balance innovation with ethical responsibility.

“
I aim to inspire by leading with transparency, trust, and clear purpose. Giving others autonomy, nurturing talent, and creating safe spaces for innovation are key ways I empower people to excel.
”

Could you share some of the recognitions and awards you have received throughout your career?

Certainly. I am honored to have received several awards that recognize both my technical and leadership contributions, including:

- **Top 15 Women Leaders in the Middle East (2025):** This recognition celebrates women making significant impacts across industries in the region.
- **Business Leadership Excellence Award (2024):** Awarded for my role in advancing digital transformation and fostering innovation leadership.
- **Woman of the Year in AI & Blockchain (2024):** Presented at Future Banks KSA, acknowledging my contributions to integrating AI and blockchain in financial services.
- **Appreciation Plaque from the Ministry of Education, Saudi Arabia (2020):** Recognizing my efforts in advancing technology education.
- **Administrative Distinction Award, King Saud University (2019):** For outstanding academic leadership and research initiatives.





- **Scientific Excellence Award (2017):**
An international accolade honoring my research contributions in cloud computing.

These honors serve as affirmations of the path I've chosen and motivate me to continue leading with purpose and integrity.

environment where every individual feels valued and encouraged to contribute their unique perspectives. Inclusivity fuels creativity and innovation by ensuring diverse voices are heard and respected.

A core part of my leadership philosophy is fostering a culture

Additionally, I emphasize alignment between individual talents and organizational goals. When people feel their work is meaningful and connected to a larger purpose, they bring their best energy and ideas.

How do you approach challenges and disruptions in your industry?

AI and blockchain are fields marked by rapid change and frequent disruption, so agility is essential. I adopt a mindset that sees challenges not as setbacks, but as opportunities to learn and adapt. We invest heavily in continuous learning, both personally and organizationally, to stay ahead of emerging trends.

At AdvancedEra.Tech, we use iterative development cycles, pilot projects, and cross-disciplinary collaboration to quickly test ideas, refine them, and scale what works. This approach helps us remain responsive and resilient in an ever-evolving landscape.

Moreover, we maintain close communication with clients and stakeholders to understand their changing needs and tailor solutions accordingly.

" Leadership in the AI era will be less about control and more about curating environments that foster creativity, collaboration, and ethical innovation. "

What leadership values or principles do you strongly believe in and implement?

I firmly believe that leadership is about **empowerment, inclusivity and vision**. Empowering teams means creating an

of open dialogue and strategic risk-taking. I don't expect to have all the answers, but I strive to ask the right questions and support experimentation—even when the outcomes are uncertain. This mindset allows innovation to thrive.

What are your core responsibilities as CEO, and how do you ensure your role aligns with your company's vision?

As CEO, my primary responsibility is to define and steer the strategic vision of AdvancedEra.Tech. I oversee innovation pipelines, engage with clients and partners, and guide the leadership team to execute transformative projects.

Ensuring alignment requires constant reflection and dialogue. I maintain regular feedback loops with internal teams and external stakeholders, which helps us course-correct and prioritize initiatives that deliver real value.

Every project and partnership is evaluated against our mission to deliver ethical, inclusive, and future-ready digital solutions. This clarity of purpose helps keep the company focused and impactful.

What are your thoughts on the future of leadership in the era of AI and digital transformation?

Leadership in the AI era will be less about control and more about curating environments that foster creativity, collaboration, and ethical innovation. As machines take on more analytical tasks, human skills like emotional intelligence, ethical judgment, and strategic foresight will become indispensable.

Leaders will need to cultivate digital fluency while safeguarding human values, ensuring that technology augments human potential rather than replaces it. This means empowering teams to explore, question, and co-create new solutions.

Continuous learning, responsible AI governance, and a human-centric approach will define the leaders who succeed in this new landscape.

What inspires you as a leader, and how do you inspire others?

I'm inspired by the transformative power of technology—seeing ideas evolve into solutions that positively impact communities and industries. Equally inspiring are the people I work with—students, colleagues, and partners—who bring fresh energy and perspectives.

I aim to inspire by leading with transparency, trust, and clear purpose. Giving others autonomy, nurturing talent, and creating safe spaces for innovation are key ways I empower people to excel.

Leadership is not about walking the path alone but lighting the way and enabling others to follow and flourish.

How do you maintain a healthy work-life balance amid such a demanding role?

Work-life balance is essential for sustainable leadership. I prioritize time with family and personal renewal activities such as travel, reading, and digital detoxes. Delegation and effective time management help me focus on high-impact tasks.

By modeling balance and encouraging my team to do the same, I believe we create a healthier, more productive work culture. Innovation flourishes when minds are rested and focused, not constantly driven by hustle.



‘Leadership in the Digital Age Demands Adaptability’



Adriana Marcela Vadillo Paniagua,
Founder and CEO of GLOBAL
COMPUTING S.A. DE C.V.,
shares her inspiring journey
building one of Latin America's
notable success stories in IT

An accomplished tech entrepreneur and visionary business leader, **Adriana Marcela Vadillo Paniagua is the Founder and Director General of GLOBAL COMPUTING S.A. DE C.V.,** a leading software distribution company headquartered in Mexico City. With decades of experience in the IT industry, Adriana has redefined success through a mix of innovation, resilience, and purpose-driven leadership. Under her direction, the company has grown from a single distributorship to a hub for over 65 global software manufacturers.

Adriana's journey is rooted in a passion for bridging technological gaps in education, promoting ethical software use, and empowering academic institutions with accessible, high-quality solutions. Her company has been recognized across Latin America for making advanced mathematical software available to thousands of students and educators, while upholding values of integrity and excellence.

In an exclusive conversation with Adriana shares her milestones, the impact of her work in the tech space, and her vision for leadership in the digital age.





"I strongly believe in visionary leadership—the ability to stay ahead of trends and imagine a better future."

UNAM, Mexico's largest public university, ensuring sustainable access to mathematical software through social-impact strategies. This commitment was recognized with a Social Impact Grant during my MBA studies at Hult International Business School.

Our work at Global Computing has proven that business success and social responsibility can go hand-in-hand.

List any recognitions, awards, or honors you have received throughout your career.

Over the years, I've been honoured with several recognitions that underscore my dedication to leadership, innovation, and social impact in the tech space:

- Premio Mujer Tec 2025 – Emprendimiento category
- Recognition by Forbes México (Jan 2025) – For outstanding impact in business
- Doctor of Excellence Honoris Causa in Business Administration – University of Entrepreneurship and Technology (April 2024)
- Passion Vista Magazine 2024 – Women Leaders to Look Up to & Circle of Excellence 2024
- Featured in The Enterprise World – The Most Successful Business Leaders to Watch in 2023
- Featured in The Victory Magazine – The Most Influential Women Leaders of the Year 2022
- These recognitions reflect my commitment to excellence, innovation, and inclusive leadership in the tech and education sectors.

What leadership values or principles do you strongly believe in and implement?

I strongly believe in visionary leadership—the ability to stay ahead of

Can you walk us through your professional journey and share the milestones that have defined your career?

My professional journey began with a Bachelor of Business Administration, graduating with honours from ITESM CEM, and completing a minor in International Business. I began my career at Microsoft and later joined Sybase, where I managed training and consulting services. After Sybase closed its Mexico operations, I faced a career-defining moment—unemployed at 26, I was offered the chance to open a subsidiary office for Visual Numerics Inc. in Mexico, a challenge I embraced wholeheartedly.

When that company was later sold, I took a leap of faith and founded Global Computing S.A. de C.V. My first distributorship agreement was with Wolfram Research Inc., and I focused on

delivering mathematical computation solutions to top universities across Mexico. That success led to a ripple effect, attracting software vendors from around the globe. Today, we proudly represent over 65 software manufacturers worldwide—a milestone built on vision, values, and relentless dedication.

What are the major contributions you have made to your industry?

Beyond IT services and software distribution, my most meaningful contribution has been to the academic sector in Mexico. I have worked to democratize access to technology through volume-based software agreements that reduce piracy and extend access to thousands of students and professors.

One of my proudest initiatives involved over a decade of collaboration with



trends and imagine a better future. To me, visionary leaders are innovative, passionate, and flexible, and they drive impact by fostering collaboration and thinking beyond the status quo. They bring people together under a shared purpose and inspire them to create solutions that matter.

How do you approach challenges and disruptions in your industry? Share any strategic solutions you have applied.

Challenges are part of growth. Global Computing faced early struggles, including financial setbacks and market unpredictability. But by holding firm to our core values—integrity, personalized service, and long-term relationships—we set ourselves apart.

During the pandemic, we had to pivot quickly, moving beyond our academic focus into new market segments like pharmaceuticals and manufacturing. We also added communication and identity verification tools to meet emerging needs. This diversification helped us meet sales goals and broaden our impact, especially during a time when budget restrictions and remote work demanded new solutions.

What are your core responsibilities, and how do you ensure your role aligns with the company's strategic objectives and vision?

As the Director General, I oversee operations, sales, and business development. I work directly in the field to identify needs and translate

them into tangible opportunities. My leadership is grounded in collaboration, ethical practices, and alignment with our mission to empower education and technology access.

I believe in the power of teams—everyone brings a unique talent to the table, and through collaboration, we multiply our impact. I stay actively engaged with academic institutions and work alongside professors and students on real-world projects that drive innovation.

What are your thoughts on the future of leadership in the era of AI and digital transformation?

Leadership in the digital age demands adaptability, innovation, and emotional intelligence. AI will transform



What inspires you as a leader, and how do you inspire others?

I'm inspired by human stories of resilience—when people persevere despite their circumstances. I lead by example, demonstrating that persistence, consistency, and vision can overcome any obstacle. My hope is to empower others to believe the same.

When people see that challenges can be stepping stones rather than setbacks, it creates a ripple effect of courage. I believe authenticity and transparency are vital to inspiring others. By celebrating small wins and cultivating a growth mindset within teams, I encourage people to tap into their potential and continuously evolve both personally and professionally.

What do you do in your free time? How do you ensure a work-life balance?

In my free time, I enjoy watching movies, travelling, dancing, and spending time with my dogs in nature. I also take dance classes to stay fit. I maintain work-life balance through structured schedules and boundaries, ensuring that I give equal importance to both professional and personal life.

I believe that downtime fuels creativity and strengthens clarity. Nature walks help me reset, while movies offer a refreshing escape. Whether it's journaling or pursuing hobbies, I make space for activities that recharge me. This harmony between work and rest ultimately enhances productivity and well-being.

industries, but human-centred leadership will be essential. I believe in Adaptive Leadership, a model that combines resilience, agility, and strategic foresight to navigate constant change.

This leadership style enables organizations to embrace emerging technologies while fostering continuous learning and maintaining a strong ethical foundation. It's about being ready—not just for what's next, but for what hasn't even been imagined yet. In a world where technology evolves at breakneck speed, leaders must stay grounded in empathy while embracing data-driven decisions. The ability to communicate vision and build trust remains irreplaceable.



Revolutionizing the Restaurant Industry Landscape in Saudi Arabia



Dr. Kamran Khan, CEO of Arabian Entertainment Co. Ltd. (Tarfeeh) speaks about his professional journey so far and his vision for the hospitality industry in KSA



In the fast-paced world of hospitality and leadership, standing out requires more than just business acumen — it demands vision, resilience, and a passion for creating meaningful experiences. **Dr. Kamran Khan, CEO of Arabian Entertainment Co. Ltd. (Tarfeeh)**, is one such trailblazer who embodies these qualities. With a remarkable career spanning international hotel management and restaurant leadership, Dr. Khan has consistently set benchmarks in innovation, business strategy, and organizational excellence. His journey is a testament to the power of adaptability, strategic foresight, and a deep commitment to nurturing both businesses and people. In a special interview, Dr. Khan shares insights into his professional journey, leadership philosophy, and vision for the future of the hospitality industry.

Can you walk us through your professional journey and share the milestones that have defined your career?

My career began with the prestigious ACCOR Hotel Management Group, where I laid the foundation for my passion in hospitality. The experience I gained there was invaluable, offering a broad understanding of operations, service excellence, and global standards. Eventually, my interests steered me toward the restaurant

industry, a sector that matched my dynamic energy and vision.

Over the years, I climbed the professional ladder, holding several leadership roles that allowed me to refine my strategic and operational skills. Today, I serve as the CEO of one of Saudi Arabia's leading restaurant companies, a role that brings both immense responsibility and immense satisfaction. Each stage of my career has been defined by a willingness to embrace change, innovate, and foster talent within the teams I have led.

What are the major contributions you have made to your industry?

Some of my proudest contributions are the successful introduction of several international restaurant brands to the Saudi Arabian market.

Bringing global dining concepts to the region not only diversified the local food scene but also raised service standards and created new market benchmarks. I have focused on blending international best practices with local tastes and preferences, ensuring that each brand resonates deeply with the Saudi community. This approach has helped establish a dynamic,

“At the heart of my leadership style are ethics, a clear and inspiring vision, and an unwavering commitment to building a culture of honesty and teamwork. I firmly believe that leadership is not about directing from above but working alongside your team – demonstrating by actions what you expect from others.”

globally connected, yet culturally rooted hospitality industry in the region.

List any recognitions, awards, or honors you have received throughout your career.

Over the course of my journey, I have been honored with several prestigious awards, including the Top Hospitality Global Leadership Awards in 2022 and 2024, and the Leadership Excellence in Hospitality Award from Malaysia. I was also proud to be conferred with Honorary Doctorate in Business Management by European International University, Paris. Beyond awards, I have contributed thought leadership articles to esteemed publications and regularly participate as a keynote speaker at international leadership and hospitality summits. Each of these recognitions reflects the commitment and passion that drives my work.

What leadership values or principles do you strongly believe in and implement?

At the heart of my leadership style are ethics, a clear and inspiring vision, and an unwavering commitment to building a culture of honesty and teamwork. I firmly believe that leadership is not about directing from above but working alongside your team — demonstrating by actions what you expect from others. Cultivating trust, promoting transparency, and encouraging open communication are vital to creating an environment where individuals feel valued and motivated to excel. I strive to lead with empathy and resilience, setting a standard that inspires others to bring their best selves to the workplace.



How do you approach challenges and disruptions in your industry? Share any strategic solutions you have applied.

The restaurant industry is dynamic by nature, and disruptions — whether technological, economic, or health-related — are inevitable. My approach has always been to view challenges not as obstacles, but as opportunities for growth and innovation. We have embraced technology to enhance customer experience through online ordering systems, digital menus, and contactless payments. Keeping a close eye on market trends allows us to adapt quickly, such as by expanding delivery and takeout services to meet changing consumer behaviors.

Health and safety have become non-negotiable priorities, especially in the post-pandemic era, and we have instituted rigorous hygiene standards. On the business side, streamlining our menu to focus on providing value to

our customers has also helped improve margins while improving operational efficiency. Furthermore, investing in outdoor dining spaces and committing to sustainability initiatives like reducing single-use plastics and sourcing local produce have helped us stay relevant and responsible. By staying agile, proactive, and customer-centric, we are able to turn disruptions into lasting improvements.

What are your core responsibilities, and how do you ensure your role aligns with the company's strategic objectives and vision?

As CEO, my role is multi-faceted, encompassing strategic leadership, financial stewardship, operational oversight, team development, innovation, and risk management. Setting a clear, inspiring direction for the company is my primary focus, but equally important is ensuring that our daily operations align with our long-term goals. I prioritize open communication with my leadership

team, set measurable and transparent objectives, and continuously monitor industry trends to inform our strategies. Regular reviews and an openness to recalibration help keep us aligned with our vision. Leading by example, I ensure that every action we take supports the broader mission of delivering exceptional dining experiences while fostering sustainable growth.

What are your thoughts on the future of leadership in the era of AI and digital transformation?

Leadership in the era of AI and digital transformation will require a new blend of competencies. Technology will certainly reshape how we operate, but the human element will become even more critical. Leaders must skillfully manage hybrid ecosystems where human teams and AI-driven systems coexist. Continuous learning and adaptability will be non-negotiable traits, as strategies will need to evolve rapidly with technological advancements.

Ethical considerations around AI use must remain a priority, ensuring transparency and fairness in decision-making. Investment in human capital, particularly in skills that AI cannot replicate — such as creativity, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking — will be key. Above all, maintaining a clear strategic vision while embracing innovation will separate successful leaders from the rest. Those who blend technological savvy with empathy, resilience, and ethical stewardship will define the next generation of leadership.

What inspires you as a leader, and how do you inspire others?

My inspiration as a leader stems from the opportunity to create positive, lasting impacts — on my teams, my customers, and the broader community. Seeing individuals grow, businesses thrive, and customers delighted brings immense satisfaction and fuels my passion for continuous improvement.

To inspire others, I believe in leading by example, demonstrating integrity, hard work, and empathy every day. Creating a culture of trust, encouraging innovation, celebrating small and big wins alike, and nurturing open dialogue are all ways I empower my team. By setting high standards yet providing the support needed to achieve them, I help my colleagues see not only their potential but also their essential role in achieving our shared vision.

" My approach has always been to view challenges not as obstacles, but as opportunities for growth and innovation. "

What do you do in your free time? How do you ensure a work-life balance?

Outside of work, I enjoy activities that help me recharge and maintain a healthy perspective. Reading, spending quality time with family and friends, exploring new cuisines, and staying active through regular exercise are important parts of my life.

To maintain a work-life balance, I practice disciplined time management — setting clear boundaries between professional and personal time. I make it a point to disconnect from work during evenings and weekends whenever possible, allowing myself to truly be present in my personal life. This balance is essential not only for my well-being but also for maintaining the energy, clarity, and creativity needed to lead effectively.



Power of Precision: Dr. Matthew Yip's Vision for a Global Math Renaissance

Dr. Matthew Yip shares his journey, vision and mission to reimagine math education

Dr. Matthew Yip—affectionately known as “Prof. Mathewmatician”—is a name synonymous with excellence in mathematics education.

Holding dual Ph.D.s in Mathematics and Education from MIT, he is not only an academic powerhouse but also a visionary leader. As **President of the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute at the International (Macau) Institute of Academic Research and Director of the Mathematics and Statistics Program at the Chartered Institute of Training and Development**, Dr. Yip has dedicated his life to transforming how mathematics is taught, understood, and appreciated.

What makes his story even more compelling is its humble beginning. Raised in a small apartment in Hong Kong where he didn't even have his own room, Dr. Yip found motivation in adversity. That drive, combined with an early love for problem-solving and helping others, evolved into a lifelong commitment to educational innovation and inclusion.

In this insightful exchange with The Dr. Yip speaks candidly about his values, vision, and the systems he's building to make math education more accessible and impactful around the world.

Dr. Yip, you've achieved a lot in your career. What inspired your journey into mathematics and education?

I grew up in a humble home. We didn't have much, and I didn't even have my own bedroom. But I was curious—



“
I launched the Global Mathematics and Mathematics Olympiad Graded Assessment Test with Competition. It offers free preparatory materials, open access for all ages, and a step-by-step grading structure. I want it to level the playing field and make math both challenging and fair.
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materials, open access for all ages, and a step-by-step grading structure. I want it to level the playing field and make math both challenging and fair.

Tell us more about your mission to revolutionize math education.

We’re building a complete system—textbooks, exercises, lectures, and automated assessments—that allows students to learn at their own pace, anytime and anywhere. Our system adjusts to each learner’s needs, ensuring mastery before moving on. The ultimate goal is to reduce reliance on traditional academic structures and make math education universally accessible.

You’ve also introduced something called the “Mathematician’s Dictionary.” What’s that about?

It’s an automated learning tool that integrates everything—notes, exercises, tests—into one platform. Students can search any concept, learn it, and test themselves right away. It’s about independence. Learning shouldn’t rely solely on teachers or tutors. With the right tools, students can guide themselves.

How are you using technology to drive this educational transformation?

We’re harnessing AI to analyze teaching effectiveness, personalize learning paths, and generate customized practice questions. Online learning, especially with recorded lessons, has been a game-changer. Students can revisit tough topics, and teachers can focus on refining methods instead of repeating content. It’s all about efficiency and depth.

Your marketing strategy seems both innovative and personal. How do you approach it?

We blend digital reach—through platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube—with the trust of word-of-mouth referrals. Our users span 45+ countries, and our advisors come from diverse backgrounds. We’re always listening. Feedback comes in through forms, QR codes, and instant messages. We treat it seriously and act quickly. Every improvement is a step toward better service.

As a leader, what traits do you believe are most essential?

Two things: personal achievements and solid systems. Achievements build trust—people follow leaders who’ve proven themselves. But without systems, even talented teams fall apart. Systems ensure quality, efficiency, and consistency. That’s how you scale sustainably.

I set clear goals—starting with the big vision, then breaking it into manageable steps. I believe in being effective first, then efficient. I focus on building strengths through education and experience, and I use personal credibility to drive our projects forward. When people see that their leader walks the talk, they stay inspired.

Any personal philosophies you live by?

Yes—four things. First, be honest with yourself and find your life’s true purpose. Second, value time over money; you can’t get time back. Third, don’t let others control your path—authenticity matters. And finally, appreciate the small, special moments. Success is great, but it’s those fleeting moments of joy and peace that make life meaningful.

curious about the world, about patterns, and about solving problems. Math was the one subject that felt like a puzzle I could keep solving. As I began tutoring classmates in secondary school, I realized I had a gift not just for understanding math, but for explaining it in a way others could grasp. That’s when I knew I wanted to dedicate my life to teaching.

You speak often about purpose. How did your definition of success change over time?

At first, like many people, I thought success was about earning money and buying a bigger house. But after achieving academic and professional milestones, something shifted. I realized my mission wasn’t about material things—it was about impact. I want to help people understand themselves better through math, to unlock their potential. That’s a different kind of success, and it’s far more fulfilling.

You’ve trained top-tier math teams and Olympiad coaches. What do you see as the biggest challenges in competitive math education today?

Two big ones: lack of accessibility and lack of structure. Traditional math competitions often favor students who can afford expensive prep courses, and many of the problems are so advanced that they discourage rather than inspire. That’s why I launched the Global Mathematics and Mathematics Olympiad Graded Assessment Test with Competition. It offers free preparatory

Where Law Meets Innovation: The Journey of Dr. Mina Iskander

Dr. Mina Iskander, Managing Partner at Mina Iskander & Partners Law Firm, shares his multifaceted legal journey, leadership values, and vision for a resilient legal industry shaped by technology, trust, and ethical responsibility



In the ever-evolving world of law, few leaders exemplify both tradition and transformation as gracefully as **Dr. Mina Iskander.**

As Managing Partner of Mina Iskander & Partners, his leadership is deeply grounded in a rich family legacy that dates back to 1952, while being equally forward-looking, embracing digital legal tools and championing a client-first ethos. His journey—spanning international education, public sector experience, and leadership roles across private practice and multinational corporations—demonstrates the dynamic resilience and insight needed to thrive in today's legal landscape. In this interview, Dr. Iskander opens up about his milestones, legal philosophy, and why leadership is ultimately about service, respect, and impact.

Can you walk us through your professional journey and share the milestones that have defined your career?

I descend from a family where most members are either lawyers, judges, or prosecutors. From an early age, I was immersed in legal discussions and inspired by the stories of justice and discipline shared by my

grandfather—who founded our family's legal heritage in 1952—as well as by my father and uncles. It was natural for me to aspire to a legal career.

I began my professional path as an Associate at our family's Egypt branch law firm, where I learned the fundamentals and the values that shaped our legal identity. Yearning for deeper specialization, I pursued an LLM in Arbitration and International Law from Indiana University in the U.S., which I obtained in 2009.

Eager to understand public law, I successfully competed for a role at the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Central Unit under the Minister of Finance—becoming the youngest candidate selected out of 340 applicants. This experience was transformative, offering me rare insight into governmental legal structures. However, due to the 2011 revolution, the unit was dissolved, leading me to shift direction.

Despite the political turbulence, I continued to explore under-researched areas in law, notably e-commerce

“AI is both a tool and a threat—much like the atomic bomb in its early conception. Its power lies in how it's used. While the legal sector is still catching up, I believe we must integrate technology responsibly. Our firm embraces digitization where possible, but many legal systems still require tangible documentation.”

legal frameworks, which led me to pursue my Ph.D. I also took on a part-time academic post at the British University in Egypt, teaching International and Business Law, while simultaneously progressing in our law firm. Eventually, I was promoted from Senior Associate to Partner.

At age 27, I was awarded my Ph.D., marking a personal and professional milestone. Later, as I became a father, I transitioned into in-house legal roles to create a more balanced lifestyle. I led legal departments in top real estate and fintech firms, including a major U.S.-based company, and a leading transportation manufacturer.

Eventually, I returned to my roots, founding Mina Iskander & Partners as an extension of my family's firm, honoring our legacy while expanding our global footprint.

What are the major contributions you have made to your industry?

My most impactful contribution is the creation of the **“e-legal portal”**—a free, public channel that demystifies legal knowledge for all. I believe legal awareness can be a shield for individuals and businesses, helping them avoid costly and avoidable mistakes. Through this initiative, we bridge the gap between complex legal frameworks and everyday people. It's my way of giving back to the community and promoting access to justice.





List any recognitions, awards, or honors you've received.

Throughout my career, I have been honored with several recognitions that reflect my dedication to the legal profession and my commitment to continuous learning and excellence:

- **Licensed Arbitrator (2007):** Achieved certification as a licensed arbitrator, enabling me to mediate and resolve disputes effectively.
- **LL.M. from Indiana University (2009):** Completed a Master of Laws degree, specializing in Arbitration and International Law, which broadened my understanding of cross-border legal frameworks.
- **Ph.D. in Law (2015):** Earned a Doctorate in Law, focusing on legal transactions related to e-commerce, marking a significant academic milestone in my career.
- **FinTech Diploma (2024):** Obtained a diploma in Financial Technology, reflecting my commitment to staying abreast of technological advancements in the legal field.
- **Letter of Honor from the Ministry of Finance (2010):** Received formal recognition for my contributions while serving in the PPP Central Unit at the Minister of Finance's office.
- **Ambassador for the Minister of Planning & Economic Development (2023):** Appointed to represent and promote initiatives aimed at national economic development.
- **Top 100 Lawyers in Africa and Asia – Lex-Falcon Awards (2021):** Recognized for impactful contributions and innovative approaches within the legal industry.
- **Law Firm of the Year – Global Legal Summit (2023):** My firm was honored for excellence in legal services and its significant impact on the global legal landscape.

These accolades serve as milestones in my ongoing journey to contribute meaningfully to the legal profession and to uphold the highest standards of practice.

What leadership values or principles do you strongly believe in and implement?

As Managing Partner, I oversee strategic planning, team performance, client relationships, and operational systems. But I don't see myself as "the boss"—I'm



a mentor, team member, and sometimes a brother. I work hard to build a sustainable leadership pipeline so the firm thrives even beyond my tenure.

That being said, leadership, to me, is about leading by example. I strive to be the first to show commitment, integrity, and professionalism. My leadership values revolve around respect—for clients, colleagues, ethics, laws, and shared goals. Respect forms the base of all other principles.

I also believe in systematic excellence. We impose clear frameworks and maintain consistent approaches, even amid fast-paced legal and societal changes. If you love what you do, your passion becomes your driving force—and excellence follows naturally.

How do you approach challenges and disruptions in your industry?

The legal industry is traditionally conservative, but the digital age has disrupted many of its long-held

processes. My approach is to **never stop learning and to build agile teams**. We engage top-tier consultants in specialized fields to ensure well-rounded, proactive problem-solving. Collaboration, preparation, and adaptability are our greatest defenses.

What are your thoughts on the future of leadership in the age of AI and digital transformation?

AI is both a tool and a threat—much like the atomic bomb in its early conception. Its power lies in how it's used. While the legal sector is still catching up, I believe we must integrate technology responsibly. Our firm embraces digitization where possible, but many legal systems still require tangible documentation.

That said, human connection remains the soul of law. Legal practice will always need empathy, dialogue, and the ability to navigate complex human circumstances—things that no AI can fully replicate.

What inspires you as a leader, and how do you inspire others?

Success stories inspire me—especially those born out of resilience. I also draw deep inspiration from my faith, which guides my values and ethics. I remind my team that no effort is too small when done with sincerity. We must treat every client's case as if it were our own. Respect, consistency, and commitment are non-negotiable values I live and lead by.

What do you do in your free time? How do you maintain work-life balance?

Work-life balance is elusive in the legal world—especially as a Managing Partner. But I cherish moments with my family and make an effort to work out and stay healthy. When I worked as an in-house counsel, I had fixed hours, but now, I strive to create memories with my kids whenever possible. Time flies, and I don't want to miss the precious moments that truly matter.

Leadership in a Globalised World: Integrity, Impact, and Innovation

Dr. Monica Romelina Sijabat, International Taxation Expert, Chartered Accountant, and Legal Scholar, shares her inspiring journey from Indonesia to the global stage, blending professional excellence with humanitarian vision



Dr. Monica Romelina Sijabat is a rare example of a leader who has seamlessly woven together diverse roles: a top-notch attorney, a skilled chartered accountant, a passionate lecturer, and an innovative researcher. Based in Jakarta, Indonesia, yet working globally from her consulting firm's office in Washington DC, Monica exemplifies how integrity and dedication can transform local expertise into international impact.

Over more than two decades, Monica has built a distinguished career in international taxation law, serving multinational corporations, governments, and educational institutions across continents. Her unique combination of economic insight and legal acumen has positioned her as a trusted advisor and an inspiring educator.

In an exclusive interview with Monica opens up about her journey, the

challenges of balancing global demands, her vision for ethical leadership, and how she fosters the next generation of leaders with integrity.

Could you share your professional journey and the key milestones that have shaped your career?

My journey started with a deep curiosity about economics and law in my home city of Jakarta. I graduated with a Bachelor's and then a Master's in Economics-Accounting from the University of Indonesia, where I developed a foundation in understanding complex financial systems. Early on, I pursued qualifications as a Chartered Accountant and later as a Tax Attorney, which opened doors to practice at the intersection of law and finance.

One of the defining moments came in 2011 when I started teaching tax law at the Indonesian Institute of Accountants. Being able to share my knowledge and shape young minds gave me immense satisfaction and fueled my passion for education. In 2015, I founded MRS Business Professional Consulting, which started as a small tax and business advisory firm in Jakarta but has grown steadily with a presence in Washington

DC and clients spanning Asia, America, and Europe.

2017 marked another milestone as I became a lecturer and researcher at the University of Indonesia, where I continue to influence the academic and professional discourse on international taxation. Along the way, I pursued executive education at Harvard Kennedy School in 2020 and earned two doctorates in International Law and Economics in 2024 — milestones that challenged me but reaffirmed my commitment to excellence and lifelong learning.

“
I am deeply inspired by the belief that integrity and expertise are powerful tools to connect nations and create positive global impact.
”

What drives your work at both the professional and community levels?

I am deeply inspired by the belief that integrity and expertise are powerful tools to connect nations and create positive global impact. My work is not just about numbers or legal codes — it's about building bridges between countries, businesses, and individuals to foster sustainable development.

At a community level, educating youth has always been a priority. For nearly a decade, I have been actively teaching economics and taxation to empower students with the knowledge and ethical framework to become responsible leaders. I see my role as nurturing integrity and professionalism alongside technical skills.

Empowering the younger generation to lead with honesty, resilience, and a service mindset is the core of my purpose. I want to create environments where they can thrive

mentally and morally — because I believe strong character is as important as academic success.

Your consulting firm has expanded internationally. What challenges have you faced managing a global practice, and how do you overcome them?

One of the biggest challenges is navigating extreme time zone differences and cultural nuances while maintaining seamless client communication and service quality. When your work spans continents, managing schedules and expectations requires discipline and empathy.

I approach this challenge with flexibility and strategic planning, making sure to respect each client's context while also maintaining my own well-being. I have learned to delegate

effectively, empower my team, and build trust so that the firm operates smoothly even when I'm not physically present.

Technology helps bridge distances, but it's the human connection that matters most — understanding clients' unique situations, anticipating needs, and always delivering with integrity. This balance between tech and humanity is what keeps us strong globally.

You have been recognized with numerous awards and honors. Which of these mean the most to you, and why?

Every award is a humbling affirmation of the hard work and dedication that my team and I put in. However, some recognitions stand out because they reflect not just individual success but also impact on a larger scale.

Winning the Economic Research Award in



Washington DC and being inducted into the Advisory Board of Legal Professionals with the highest score among thousands globally were milestones that validated my work's international relevance.

Closer to home, the Research Indonesia Economics Program award from the National Research & Innovation Agency and the Business Excellence Leadership Award for Women Leader of the Year in Professional Services in Bangkok have special significance because they highlight my contributions to Indonesia and the broader Asian community.

These honors inspire me to continue striving for excellence while serving as a role model for young women professionals aspiring to make their mark.

What leadership values and principles guide your approach to professional and personal life?

Integrity is the cornerstone of all my decisions and actions. I believe leadership must be rooted in honesty, transparency, and a commitment to ethical standards — this builds lasting trust with clients, colleagues, and communities.

Another principle I hold dear is empathy. Understanding people's perspectives and challenges enables me to lead with compassion and create harmonious relationships at work and beyond.

I also believe in adaptability. The world is constantly changing, especially in international law and economics, so being open to new ideas and willing to learn keeps leadership fresh and relevant.

Finally, I am deeply committed to nurturing future leaders — mentoring youth to develop not just skills but also strong character, positive mental health, and a vision to serve society.

How do you balance your intense professional responsibilities with personal life and self-care?

Balancing a demanding global career with personal well-being is an ongoing journey. I prioritize structured routines and clear boundaries between work and rest. Despite busy days, I carve out



time for activities that recharge me, like sports, enjoying comedy films, and prayer — spiritual practices help me stay grounded and resilient.

I've found that maintaining harmony in life improves my empathy as a leader and decision-maker. When you care for yourself, you can better care for others. This balance allows me to respond wisely and harmoniously to obstacles rather than react hastily.

Leadership is not just about results but also about how you take care of your team, family, and yourself. A holistic approach is essential to sustain long-term impact.

What's your vision for leadership in the era of digital transformation and globalization?

Leadership today must be adaptable, forward-looking, and deeply human.

While technology is transforming industries and creating new opportunities, it cannot replace the emotional intelligence, ethical grounding, and collaborative spirit that effective leaders must embody.

I believe in adaptive leadership — a style that embraces change, fosters innovation, and values people. Leaders must be able to anticipate trends, pivot strategies, and inspire trust in uncertain times.

At the same time, leaders need to nurture environments where diverse talents can flourish, and where integrity guides decisions. This is especially important in fields like international taxation and law, where transparency and fairness have far-reaching consequences.

Ultimately, leadership in the digital age is about blending data-driven insights with empathy and purpose to create



" One of the biggest challenges is navigating extreme time zone differences and cultural nuances while maintaining seamless client communication and service quality. "

How do you envision the next generation of leaders, and what advice do you have for young professionals?

I envision future leaders as empathetic, ethical, and agile individuals who value collaboration over competition. They will need to balance technical expertise with emotional intelligence and a strong sense of social responsibility.

To young professionals, I say: invest in yourself continuously, seek mentors, and always uphold your integrity. Success is not only measured by titles or wealth but by the positive impact you make and the relationships you build.

Stay curious, be adaptable, and don't fear failures — they are valuable lessons. Most importantly, lead with heart and purpose, and you will inspire others to follow your example.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work? How do you maintain your wellbeing?

Outside of work, I enjoy sports, particularly activities that keep me active and mentally refreshed. I also love watching comedy movies — laughter is a wonderful stress reliever. Prayer and spiritual reflection provide me with peace and strength.

I spend quality time with family and friends, which is essential for maintaining emotional balance. Nature walks and quiet moments allow me to reset and come back to work with renewed energy.

Maintaining wellbeing is a deliberate choice — I believe it enhances creativity, clarity, and leadership presence.

sustainable value for organizations and society.

What inspires you as a leader, and how do you inspire others?

I am inspired by the resilience and potential of people — witnessing how individuals overcome challenges to grow stronger motivates me every day. I lead by example, showing that with persistence, integrity, and vision, obstacles can become stepping stones.

Inspiring others means creating a culture of trust, celebrating progress, and encouraging continuous learning. I emphasize authenticity and openness — when leaders are genuine, it empowers teams to bring their best selves.

My goal is to help others see their own leadership potential and to remind them that success is not just personal achievement but also about uplifting others with kindness and respect.



Empowering Micro and Small Businesses to Achieve Sustainable Success



Dr. Priscilla Kucer, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Priscilla Kucer Consulting Solutions LLC, shares her journey as a transformative leader, the impact of her work in the consulting space, and her vision for the future of entrepreneurship



An accomplished global business coach, management consultant, and speaker with a passion for helping business owners achieve sustainable success, **Dr. Priscilla Kucer is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Priscilla Kucer Consulting Solutions LLC.** With her extensive expertise in strategic planning, transformative change, leadership development, and

learning and development, Dr. Kucer is recognized for her commitment to guiding clients through leadership transformation and organisational improvement, and has dedicated her career to empowering micro and small business owners by enhancing their goals, processes, and operations.

Building on her vision of fostering growth and resilience, Dr. Kucer established Priscilla Kucer Consulting

Solutions LLC, an Austin-based Black female-owned and Certified Women's Business Enterprise, which takes pride in delivering innovative, results-driven strategies tailored to the unique needs of entrepreneurs. Through structured and strategic business practices, the consultancy supports clients in scaling their ventures effectively while developing strong leadership capabilities.



In a conversation, Dr Kucer shares her journey as a transformative leader, the impact of her work in the consulting space, and her vision for the future of entrepreneurship. Her insights offer valuable perspectives on leadership, growth, and the evolving landscape of business consulting.

Can you walk us through your professional journey and share the milestones that have defined your career?

My career began as a school psychologist, eventually advancing to the role of Special Education Director, where I dedicated myself to supporting students, educators, and families in achieving success. During my time working across school districts of varying sizes in different states and countries, I often encountered educators who dreamed of starting their own businesses after retirement. I also engaged with numerous high school students who aspired to become their own bosses one day. These inspiring conversations, combined with my passion for enhancing organizational systems, motivated me to pursue a doctoral degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

Earning my Ph.D. marked a turning point in my journey as that's when I realised that I wanted to apply my expertise beyond the school system,

which led to the founding of Priscilla Kucer Consulting Solutions (PKCS) LLC®, a global management consulting firm. Establishing PKCS was a transformative milestone, enabling me to empower micro and small organizations to build sustainable systems that enhance both productivity and performance. Through this venture, I've been able to channel my knowledge and passion into creating meaningful change for organizations around the world.

What are the major contributions you have made to your industry?

My contributions include the development of the OPLE System, a comprehensive framework designed to enhance organizational performance and boosts sustainability, as well as the creation of the SoAR! With Coaching program, which provides custom-tailored guidance for growth and success.

I also spearheaded the SoAR! Consultations, offering tailored solutions to address specific challenges that business owners are facing in their businesses, and designed the SoAR! MasterClasses to deliver in-depth knowledge on key topics. Additionally, I established the SoAR! Training Institute, a dedicated platform for cultivating skills

and fostering professional development among micro and small business owners.

List any recognitions, awards, or honours you have received throughout your career.

My journey as a business leader has been driven by a passion for helping others succeed and making a meaningful impact. As the Founder and CEO of Priscilla Kucer Consulting Solutions LLC (PKCS LLC), I have dedicated myself to empowering micro and small business owners through strategic leadership and innovative coaching.

Over the years, I have been honoured to receive several recognitions that inspire me to continue striving for excellence. From 2021 to 2024, I was voted Local Business Person of the Year by Alignable for four



“I view challenges as opportunities for growth. I approach them by analysing the root causes, engaging stakeholders, and implementing actionable, strategic solutions.”

consecutive years. In 2022, PKCS LLC earned the prestigious Certified Women's Business Enterprise designation from the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC).

The year 2023 was particularly significant, with highlights including being named Promising Start-up of the Year in Consultancy Services, one of Passion Vista's Women Leaders to Watch, and one of CIO Today's Top 5 Futuristic & Iconic Business Women Making a Difference. I was also featured in Hoinser Media Group's Top 50 Global Leaders list.

This year, I was proud to be named one of the U.S. Journal's Top 10 Business Coaches Transforming the Industry, and I received the Woman Entrepreneur of the Year in Consultancy Services award from the Asian African Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Additionally, I was honored with the LEAP Excellence Award in Human-Centered Leadership at the ICTA Global Conference.

These recognitions motivate me to continue leading with purpose and creating a positive impact in the business consulting and coaching space.

What leadership values or principles do you strongly believe in and implement?

I strongly believe in transformational leadership, which inspires and motivates teams to achieve their full potential and drive meaningful change. I value collaboration as a key to fostering innovation and building strong, cohesive teams. Additionally, I am passionate about continuous learning, always seeking opportunities to grow, adapt, and stay ahead in an ever-evolving world.

How do you approach challenges and disruptions in your industry? Share any strategic solutions you have applied.

I view challenges as opportunities for growth. I approach them by analysing the root causes, engaging stakeholders, and implementing actionable, strategic solutions. For example, I've successfully guided micro and small businesses through changes by creating clear, tailor-made, step-by-step implementation plans and providing ongoing support to ensure long-term success.



What are your core responsibilities, and how do you ensure your role aligns with the company's strategic objectives and vision?

As the Founder and CEO of PKCS LLC, I am dedicated to driving our vision of empowering organizations toward sustainable success. My role encompasses strategic planning and implementation, client engagement, and the continuous enhancement of our services to ensure they align with our vision and mission. I specialise in identifying organizational needs, developing tailored solutions, and implementing actionable strategies to deliver measurable results. At the heart of my leadership approach is the philosophy: Solutions + Actions = Results! (SoAR!).

What are your thoughts on the future of leadership in the era of AI and digital transformation?

The future of leadership in the age of AI and digital transformation hinges on adaptability and fostering human connection. While technology will remain a prominent driving force, effective leadership will demand emotional intelligence, active listening, clear communication, decisive action, and the ability to inspire. Impactful leaders will skilfully balance leveraging advanced tools for efficiency with empowering their teams to achieve high performance.

What inspires you as a leader, and how do you inspire others?

I find immense inspiration in witnessing the moment when micro and small business owners unlock the doors to their growth and success. These milestones fuel my motivation and drive. My goal is to inspire others by fostering a positive mindset, practicing clear communication, leading by example, and remaining genuine in all that I do.

What do you do in your free time? How do you ensure a work-life balance?

In my free time, I love listening to Soca music, dancing, staying active through exercise, and cherishing moments with my family and my dog. Prioritising tasks and upholding boundaries are essential for a healthy work-life balance.

" I strongly believe in transformational leadership, which inspires and motivates teams to achieve their full potential and drive meaningful change. "



‘A Good Leader Understands and Supports the Team’s Well-being’

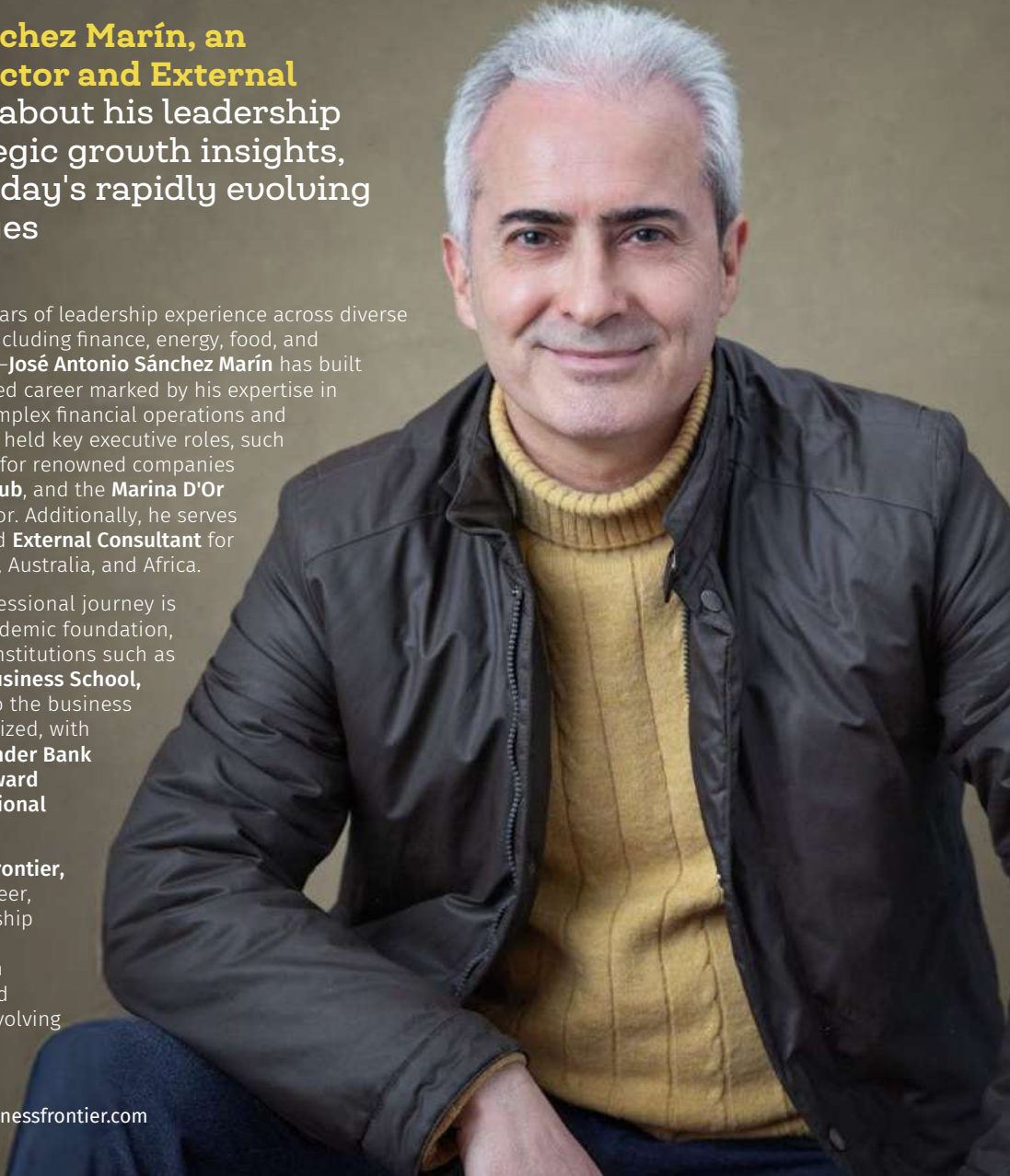


José Antonio Sánchez Marín, an Independent Director and External Consultant, talks about his leadership philosophy, strategic growth insights, and navigating today's rapidly evolving business challenges

With over 25 years of leadership experience across diverse industries—including finance, energy, food, and construction—**José Antonio Sánchez Marín** has built a distinguished career marked by his expertise in managing complex financial operations and driving strategic growth. He has held key executive roles, such as **Chief Financial Officer (CFO)** for renowned companies like **Solanellas Nuts, The Nut Club**, and the **Marina D'Or Group** in the Spanish food sector. Additionally, he serves as an **Independent Director** and **External Consultant** for energy companies across Brazil, Australia, and Africa.

José Antonio's impressive professional journey is complemented by a strong academic foundation, having studied at prestigious institutions such as **Harvard Business School, IE Business School, and Esade**. His contributions to the business world have been widely recognized, with accolades including the **Santander Bank Award (2021), Foreign Trade Award (2023), and the Global Inspirational Leaders Award (2024)**.

In an interview with **Business Frontier**, **José Antonio** reflects on his career, sharing insights into his leadership philosophy, significant industry contributions, and his approach to navigating the challenges and disruptions of today's rapidly evolving business landscape.





Can you walk us through your professional journey and share the milestones that have defined your career?

Over the course of more than 25 years, I have had the opportunity to take on significant leadership roles in a variety of sectors. I started my journey as a financial director in diverse industries including energy, food, construction, and real estate. Most notably, I served as Chief Financial Officer (CFO) for the Marina D'Or Group, overseeing financial operations across Spain, South America, and Asia.

More recently, I took on the role of Financial Director at Solanellas Nuts and The Nut Club, both key players in the Spanish food industry, while also acting as an Independent Director and External Consultant for companies in Brazil, Australia, and Africa. My experience spans various sectors, such as energy and oil, and I have worked extensively as a financial advisor to organisations in emerging markets, including Brazil, Nigeria, and Hong Kong. Alongside my professional career, I have always maintained an active academic presence, delivering lectures and seminars at leading business schools.

My academic background includes a degree in Economics and Business from the University of Valencia and several postgraduate studies at institutions like Harvard Business School, IE Business School, and Esade.

“
My efforts led to the successful restructuring of the company, including the divestment of assets and land in Europe, South America, and Asia. I also led various mergers and acquisitions, ensuring that the company emerged from this crisis in a strong position.
 ”

What are the major contributions you have made to your industry?

One of my most significant contributions was managing one of the largest bankruptcy proceedings in Spain, involving a construction company within the Marina D'Or Group. I played a key role in ensuring the group's continuity by negotiating agreements with financial institutions, suppliers, creditors, and

public organisations. My efforts led to the successful restructuring of the company, including the divestment of assets and land in Europe, South America, and Asia. I also led various mergers and acquisitions, ensuring that the company emerged from this crisis in a strong position.

Another notable contribution was my involvement in the creation of the SM Global Service Holding for Repsol, aimed at providing tax and organisational advantages. I led studies to assess the impact of the restructuring process and ensured the successful execution of the entire operation, which allowed the company to streamline operations and improve profitability.

List any recognitions, awards, or honors you have received throughout your career.

I have been fortunate to receive several recognitions over the years, including Santander Bank Award 2021, Foreign Trade Award 2023, Global Inspirational Leaders Award 2024, United Nations Global Excellence Award 2024, Top CFO of the Year 2024, The Most Impactful Leader of the Year 2024, CFO of the Year 2025 and Finance Marvel of the Year 2025.

These awards are a testament to the hard work and dedication that I have put into my career, and I'm proud of the impact I've made within my industries.

What leadership values or principles do you strongly believe in and implement?

As a leader, I believe in guiding my team not just through strategy, but through core principles that shape both the work environment and the outcomes we achieve. Over the years, I've come to understand that leadership is about more than just directing; it's about empowering others, creating a sense of purpose, and fostering a culture where integrity and growth are at the forefront. These are some of the principles which are the foundation of my leadership approach –

- **Integrity:** This is paramount. It's about consistently following through on commitments, being transparent, and owning up to mistakes when they happen.
- **Empathy:** I place a high value on empathy. A good leader understands and supports the team's well-being, listens to their concerns, and fosters an environment where people feel valued and understood.
- **Vision:** Another key principle for me is vision. I make it a priority to clearly communicate long-term goals so that the entire team understands how their daily work fits into the bigger picture.
- **Accountability:** As a leader, I believe you must take responsibility for your actions and decisions while encouraging others to own theirs. This creates a culture of responsibility.
- **Empowerment:** I aim to delegate tasks meaningfully, trust my team to execute their responsibilities, and celebrate their achievements.
- **Continuous Learning:** I emphasize the importance of continuous learning by encouraging feedback, fostering personal and professional development, and remaining open to new ideas.
- **Servant Leadership:** This means leading by supporting the growth of others and removing obstacles that may hinder their progress.

How do you approach challenges and disruptions in your industry? Share any strategic solutions you have applied.

Throughout my career, I've faced several challenges, especially during the financial crises and the restructuring processes I've managed. One of the most challenging moments came when I oversaw the bankruptcy proceedings for the construction company within the Marina D'Or Group. During that time, we were dealing with a massive crisis due to the global financial downturn and the bursting of the real estate bubble in Spain. My approach was to secure agreements with financial institutions, suppliers, and creditors, and I also had to navigate complex legal and organisational issues to protect the company's interests.

I also managed the restructuring of the SM Global Service Holding for Repsol, where I had to assess the long-term business impact and make decisions about divesting certain operations to ensure greater efficiency and profitability.

The key to handling these challenges was maintaining a clear strategy and communication at every stage. Whether it was negotiating with banks, managing stakeholder expectations, or aligning my team with the new direction, ensuring that everyone was on the same page was critical.





What are your core responsibilities, and how do you ensure your role aligns with the company's strategic objectives and vision?

In my role as a CFO, I am deeply involved in financial management and operational decision-making. However, I also take on strategic advisory roles as an Independent Director and External Consultant for several international companies. Balancing these roles requires careful time management and strategic thinking.

To ensure alignment with the company's objectives, I work closely with senior leadership to understand long-term goals and align financial strategies accordingly. Additionally, I emphasize building strong teams in each organisation to manage day-to-day operations effectively, which allows me to focus on broader strategic initiatives.

I also leverage the skills developed in my role as a CFO—such as risk management, strategic planning, and financial oversight—to guide my contributions as a director and consultant. This way, I can apply my

expertise across different sectors and geographies, ensuring that all roles I hold are synergistic and aligned with the overall company vision.

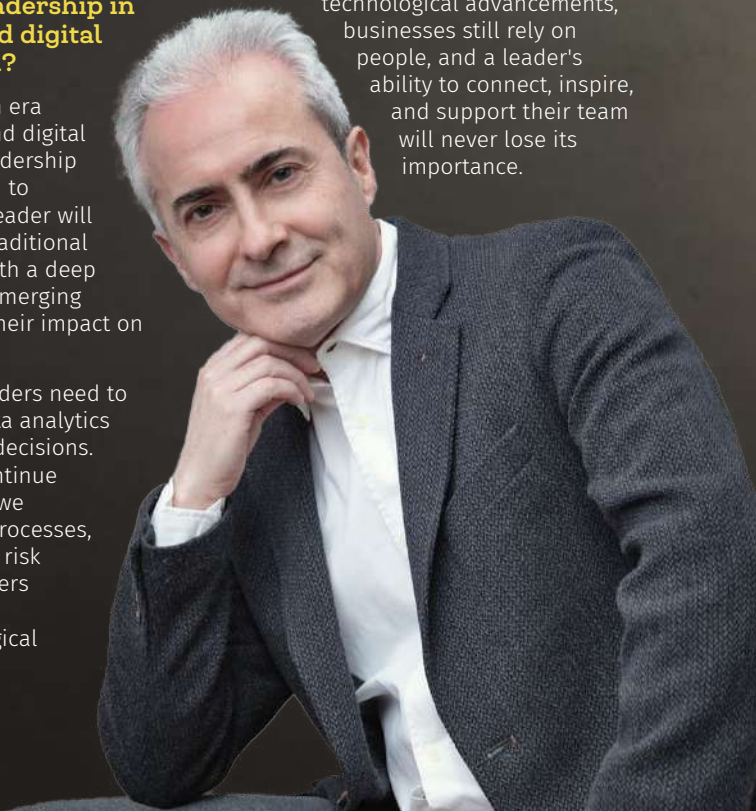
What are your thoughts on the future of leadership in the era of AI and digital transformation?

As we move into an era dominated by AI and digital transformation, leadership will inevitably need to adapt. The future leader will have to combine traditional leadership skills with a deep understanding of emerging technologies and their impact on business.

CFOs and other leaders need to leverage AI and data analytics to make informed decisions. Technology will continue to change the way we manage financial processes, from accounting to risk management. Leaders will need to stay ahead of technological advancements to

ensure that their organisations remain competitive and resilient.

At the same time, human qualities like empathy, vision, and integrity will continue to be essential. Even with technological advancements, businesses still rely on people, and a leader's ability to connect, inspire, and support their team will never lose its importance.



Healing at the Highest Level: Martina Maya on Redefining Emotional Mastery and Leadership

Martina Maya, Founder of HypnoBond, speaks about her journey from the royal court to the private wellness sector

A private advisor to some of the world's most influential individuals, **Martina Maya** is the Founder of HypnoBond, a pioneering wellness movement for high-performing individuals. With deep expertise in hypnotherapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, and emotional regulation, her work empowers Ultra-High-Net-Worth Individuals (UHNWIs) to master their inner world and lead with clarity. Her journey spans roles as a Royal Warden to Her Majesty the Queen to becoming a transformational guide for elite performers, where she witnessed firsthand the immense emotional toll leadership at the highest levels can take.

Today, through **HypnoBond** and her proprietary method—Rapid Emotional Reset Therapy (R.E.R.T.)—Martina is redefining mental wellness for the 1%, bringing high-impact, in-house healing directly to those who influence nations, industries, and communities. In an interview with the Visionary Leader Award 2025 recipient, speaks about



her journey from the royal court to the private wellness sector, the birth of Rapid Emotional Reset Therapy (R.E.R.T.), and her vision for emotionally intelligent leadership in an evolving world.

Can you walk us through your professional journey and share the milestones that have defined your career?

HypnoBond emerged from a place of deep purpose and observation. My formal training in Clinical Behavioural Hypnotherapy laid the foundation, but the transformative insights came from my work with UHNWIs and my time serving as a Royal Warden to Her Majesty the Queen. In that role, I saw the emotional pressures faced by individuals in leadership who, despite their power, often felt isolated and emotionally unsupported.

What struck me most was how one person's emotional state affected their entire ecosystem—from families to business networks. That observation became the seed for HypnoBond. I envisioned a therapeutic experience that was immersive, bespoke, and designed for those whose decisions ripple across communities. Through years of refinement, R.E.R.T. was born, offering a powerful method to achieve emotional breakthroughs in real-time. It has since become the core of what we do.

How did your entrepreneurial journey start?

The idea for HypnoBond came not from a desire to build a business, but from a deep urge to offer a better solution to a very specific problem. Traditional therapy often doesn't work for those with high stakes and limited time. These

method for those operating in high-stakes environments. It provides fast, effective emotional clarity in moments when it matters most.

Additionally, by delivering therapy in the comfort of the client's environment, we've removed logistical and emotional barriers. This has allowed us to create intimate, deeply effective programs tailored to each individual's rhythm, environment, and needs.

Please elaborate on the recognitions, awards, or honours you have received throughout your career.

Receiving the Visionary Leader Award in 2025 was an honour, as it recognized the broader mission behind HypnoBond. But what means the most to me is the trust and transformation I see in the lives of my clients. When a leader tells me they've regained their clarity or rebuilt a relationship after years of disconnection, that is the recognition I value most.

" Emotional intelligence is at the centre of everything I do. Leadership is not just about decision-making; it's about alignment. "

individuals need results, privacy, and immediate clarity.

So I created a format that brings transformation directly to them. Whether it's in a private villa, a boardroom, or a retreat, we deliver an experience that respects their world while gently guiding them back into alignment. From there, the vision grew organically. It was never just about healing; it was about redefining what mental wellness could look like at the top.

What are the major contributions you have made to your industry?

We have reframed mental wellness as an elite performance tool rather than a reactive solution to crisis. HypnoBond offers a new language and method for emotional recalibration. R.E.R.T. in particular has become a vital



What leadership values or principles do you strongly believe in and implement?

Emotional intelligence is at the centre of everything I do. Leadership is not just about decision-making; it's about alignment. At HypnoBond, we build environments where everyone feels safe, valued, and empowered.

Respect is non-negotiable. A simple "thank you" carries power when delivered with sincerity. I also deeply believe in the value of rest—particularly professional sleep. It's often seen as indulgent, but it's foundational for good judgment and emotional resilience. We teach this, and we live it.

How do you approach challenges and disruptions in your industry?

We expect them, and we prepare emotionally for them. One of the core teachings at HypnoBond is to pause before reacting. Disruptions reveal the areas that are misaligned, and when approached with presence and clarity, they become opportunities for growth.

Rather than scrambling for quick fixes, we encourage conscious decision-making. When stress is high, clarity is the anchor. That mindset has helped us, and our clients, navigate uncertainty with confidence.

What are your core responsibilities, and how do you ensure your role aligns with the company's strategic objectives and vision?

I lead by example. My work is both strategic and hands-on. I guide private clients, develop new therapeutic methods, and ensure that every element of our growth stays true to our mission. I'm constantly evaluating whether our actions reflect our values.

The ultimate responsibility is to preserve the integrity of what we do—to ensure that HypnoBond remains a sanctuary for real, meaningful transformation.

"HypnoBond offers a new language and method for emotional recalibration. R.E.R.T. in particular has become a vital method for those operating in high-stakes environments."



What are your thoughts on the future of leadership in the era of AI and digital transformation?

AI is changing how we work, but emotional intelligence remains irreplaceable. In fact, as machines become more capable, our human traits—intuition, empathy, clarity—become more essential.

Future leaders will need both digital agility and emotional depth. Those who master their internal world will be the ones who lead with authenticity and impact.

What inspires you as a leader, and how do you inspire others?

I'm inspired by people who choose courage over comfort. Watching someone peel back layers, face their truth, and then rise—that inspires me

endlessly. I try to inspire others by doing the same. I stay transparent, committed, and grounded in my purpose.

Transformation isn't always easy, but it is always worth it. That's the message I share with every person I work with.

What do you do in your free time? How do you ensure a work-life balance?

Balance, for me, isn't about separation—it's about integration. I find peace in nature, in walking my dog, in quiet moments where I can hear myself think. I also treat business challenges as opportunities to reconnect with presence.

My work is my mission, but I never let it override my sense of self. That's the real balance: honouring who you are, even while building what you love.



Charting New Courses in the Cruise Industry



Nedim Alicic, Fleet Traveling Finance Director at Princess Cruises, speaks about the industry and his vision for the future of finance in hospitality



Nedim Alicic, a distinguished expert in finance and quality management, comes with an impressive career spanning over a decade in the cruise industry. Currently serving as the **Fleet Traveling Finance Director at Princess Cruises**, Alicic has played a pivotal role in managing financial operations across the entire fleet, optimising processes, and ensuring seamless coordination between ships and shoreside teams. His expertise extends beyond finance, encompassing key areas such as crew payroll, financial reconciliation, and revenue management.

Before his role at Princess Cruises, Nedim held influential positions at Virgin Voyages and Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd., where he honed his skills in both finance and quality management. His diverse career also includes significant contributions in the fields of quality assurance, having worked with internationally recognised standards such as ISO 9001 and ISO 14001.

With a passion for both his professional endeavours and his community, Nedim's journey has been shaped by his commitment to helping orphaned children and his dedication to learning and growth. In an interview with

Business Frontier – Nedim speaks about his career, the cruise industry, and his vision for the future of finance in hospitality.

Can you walk us through your professional journey and share the milestones that have defined your career?

My career began at QualityCert Ltd. as a Quality and Regulatory Affairs Associate, followed by roles at RENTEX-COM Ltd. as a Financial Administrator and Internal Auditor for ISO 9001:2008. I then gained expertise in quality management systems at Neodent Ltd. as a Financial

Administrator and Quality Management System Associate, earning certifications in ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 standards.

I later worked at Quality Cert Consulting Ltd., where I built a strong foundation in quality and financial management, before launching my own Quality Financial Consulting Agency, focusing on quality management across Europe.

In 2016, I joined Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd., where I held various roles within the Finance Department. I then became the Chief Financial Accountant and Corporate Project Associate at Virgin Voyages, before joining Princess Cruises in 2024 as the Fleet Traveling Finance Director. In this role, I oversee financial reconciliation for the entire fleet, provide training and support to onboard finance teams, and manage financial systems, crew payroll, policy implementation, process optimization, and revenue management. I also ensure seamless coordination between ships and shoreside operations through detailed data analysis.

What are the major contributions you have made to your industry?

One of my most impactful contributions to the industry was the creation of a dedicated finance department aboard Princess Cruises ships, part of Carnival Corporation. Before this initiative, the fleet lacked a team onboard the ships solely focused on financial

oversight followed by structured organization and a cohesive finance-oriented approach.

I played a key role in creating and structuring this department, allowing for more efficient financial reconciliation across the ships. This initiative streamlined operations, improved financial oversight, enhanced revenue management, and fostered better coordination between the ships and shoreside operations. It was a transformative step that greatly improved the financial processes and laid the groundwork for long-term growth and efficiency.

List any recognitions, awards, or honours you have received throughout your career.

I'm truly honored to have received several prestigious recognitions throughout my career. One of the most significant milestones was being included in Marquis Who's Who as a leading figure in finance and accounting in the cruise industry. This recognition acknowledges my contributions and expertise in a field that I'm deeply passionate about.

Additionally, I was humbled to be named

“I played a key role in creating and structuring this department, allowing for more efficient financial reconciliation across the ships. This initiative streamlined operations, improved financial oversight, enhanced revenue management, and fostered better coordination between the ships and shoreside operations.”

Young Business Leader of the Year 2025 by Business Frontier, a recognition that motivates me to continue striving for excellence in all aspects of my professional journey.

Lastly, I was honoured to receive the Exceptional Emerging Talent award from Telex Tuzla, the community teen centre in my hometown. This award holds a special place in my heart, as it recognises the early potential and commitment I've shown to my community and career from a young age.

What leadership values or principles do you strongly believe in and implement?

I believe strong leadership is built on trust and reliability. A true leader is someone their team can depend on, no matter the circumstances. A key element of this is involving the team in decision-making. When team members feel valued and their perspectives are considered, it fosters a sense of inclusion and shared responsibility.

Success is driven by teamwork, and when everyone works toward common goals, the results are much stronger. Leadership is not just about guiding from the front; it's about empowering and supporting your team, ensuring their voices are heard and respected.

How do you approach challenges and disruptions in your industry? Share any strategic solutions you have applied.

When faced with challenges and disruptions in the industry, I believe the most important factor is having a clear vision that can be communicated effectively. A key challenge I





vital training and support to onboard finance teams to maintain efficiency and consistency in operations.

To align my role with the company's strategic objectives and vision, I work closely with key stakeholders to ensure financial operations directly support Princess Cruises' overarching goals. By continually assessing financial data and improving processes, I help drive efficiency, enhance financial oversight, and optimise revenue management, which are all essential to achieving the company's long-term vision. I also ensure my team is well-equipped with the necessary guidance, training, and resources, ensuring we meet both the challenges and expectations set by the company.

What are your thoughts on the future of leadership in the era of AI and digital transformation?

In the era of AI and digital transformation, I believe leadership will continue to evolve, with a stronger emphasis on adaptability and strategic

encountered was streamlining the new finance department fleetwide at Princess Cruises within a tight timeframe. To overcome this, strong leadership and providing the right guidance and support were essential. I made sure to communicate the vision clearly to my team, gathered insights from key stakeholders, and implemented efficient processes to ensure alignment across operations. By fostering collaboration and remaining adaptable, I was able to navigate the challenge successfully and achieve positive results across the fleet.

What are your core responsibilities, and how do you ensure your role aligns with the company's strategic objectives and vision?

As Fleet Traveling Finance Director at Princess Cruises, my primary responsibilities include overseeing financial reconciliation across the entire fleet, managing Shipboard Property Management System modules, financial processing, crew payroll, and policy implementation. I also focus on optimising processes and revenue management, while ensuring smooth coordination between ships and shoreside operations through in-depth data analysis. Additionally, I provide



thinking. While AI and technology can automate tasks and improve efficiency, strong leadership will remain essential for guiding teams through change and ensuring that human insight, creativity, and collaboration are integrated into decision-making processes. Leaders will need to embrace technology, leveraging it to drive innovation and optimise operations, while also fostering an environment where employees feel valued and empowered.

For me, leadership in this new era means striking the right balance between technological advancement and human interaction. As AI takes on more data-driven tasks, leaders must focus on cultivating relationships, providing support, and guiding teams through transformation. Leaders will also need to continuously develop their own skills to stay ahead of technological trends and use AI to make smarter, more informed decisions. Ultimately, the future of leadership will be defined by those who can combine technological expertise with a strong sense of purpose, communication, and emotional



intelligence, ensuring that both people and technology work together to drive success.

What inspires you as a leader, and how do you inspire others?

What inspires me as a leader is seeing people succeed, grow, and thrive in their roles. I'm inspired by their drive, intelligence, and the progress they make, both professionally and personally. It's incredibly rewarding to watch team members develop their skills and achieve their goals. What motivates me most is knowing that they're happy with their work and feel comfortable in their environment, truly engaged in what they're doing.

As a leader, I strive to inspire others by fostering an environment where they feel supported, valued, and encouraged to grow. I focus on providing the right resources, guidance, and trust to help them reach their potential. When people feel empowered and appreciated, they bring their best selves to work, and that's when real success happens—both for them and for the team as a whole.

What do you do in your free time? How do you ensure a work-life balance?

In my free time, I prioritise spending quality moments with my family, as it's something I deeply value. I find joy in cooking and experimenting with new recipes, which is a great way for me to unwind and connect with loved ones. Travelling also plays a significant role in my life, offering opportunities to explore new destinations and create lasting memories with my family and close friends. I make a conscious effort to savour every moment with them, as their support and inspiration are essential to me.

To maintain a healthy work-life balance, I ensure that I fully disconnect from work when spending time with family and friends. This allows me to recharge, stay grounded, and keep a positive outlook. By doing so, I can return to work with renewed focus and energy, ultimately improving both my personal well-being and professional performance.



Foundations of Future: Designing Resilient and Intelligent Systems

Pravin Sankhwar, Licensed Professional Engineer and Researcher, speaks about his journey in power engineering, contributions to global infrastructure and vision for a resilient, tech-driven future.

In an era where clean energy, smart infrastructure, and resilient systems are at the forefront of global transformation, professionals like **Pravin Sankhwar, Licensed Professional Engineer and Researcher,** are leading the charge. With a career spanning over a decade across India and the United States, Sankhwar has built a reputation as both an innovator and a thought leader in electrical engineering. His expertise spans power distribution, renewable energy, and the development of design standards shaping tomorrow's infrastructure. Early career and critical roles handled by Pravin Sankhwar when working for Government of India Undertaking company has shaped him to progressively improve the performances of the firms he has worked for. His patent in the DC power distribution system for power resiliency has influenced modern electrical power systems engineers and industry experts. Also, such original contributions have been implemented in India. The recent mesmerising presentation by Pravin Sankhwar at Hubbell Utility Connect in Nashville, TN had brought attention to the utility company experts in learning from Pravin how to predict electricity demand and use his original contributions of demand calculation, and design of a resilient power system across the global scale. Him working for one of the largest design engineering companies is critical to the engineering industry given Pravin Sankhwar has proven record of success working on large capital infrastructure projects aimed at installation of energy efficient lighting systems, low to medium voltage power



design, electric vehicle charging stations design, electrical engineering code assessment, and many more.

In this interview, Sankhwar speaks about his journey—from early academic ambitions to international recognition—and shares his perspective on leadership, innovation, and the future of engineering in a rapidly digitizing world.

What initially inspired you to pursue a career in engineering?

It goes back to my school days in India. I was always drawn to science and technology, and I remember presenting STEM models at major regional science exhibitions. That early exposure sparked a long-term passion for understanding how systems work and how to improve them.

Eventually, that led me to Malaviya National Institute of Technology Jaipur, where I earned my degree in electrical engineering. I was among the top students in my class, and the academic environment helped sharpen both my technical skills and problem-solving abilities. Working as a teaching assistant during that time also gave me a taste of mentorship—something that remains important to me today.

How did your career evolve following graduation?

After graduating in 2011, I began working with a Government of India enterprise involved in power distribution and energy management. That early experience was both hands-on and diverse—I worked on everything from renewable energy systems to field-level implementation of power infrastructure. It gave me a solid understanding of how engineering directly impacts daily life.

Later, I moved to the United States to pursue graduate studies at Michigan Technological University. After completing my Master's in Electrical Engineering, I entered the design engineering industry, where I focused on power distribution systems for residential, commercial, and industrial facilities. I've also contributed to electric vehicle charging infrastructure (EVCI) projects for major transportation agencies.

You've earned several prestigious certifications and accolades. Which milestones have been most meaningful to you?

Becoming a licensed Professional Engineer (PE) was a major milestone. It's a designation that reflects both technical expertise and ethical responsibility—something only a small proportion of professionals in the field attain. I'm also a LEED Accredited Professional (BD+C) and hold ICC certifications, all of which underscore my commitment to sustainable and code-compliant engineering practices.

In terms of recognition, I've been honored with several awards including the 2024 Global Recognition Award, the Titan Award, and the 2025 Mark of Excellence Award. Each of these represents not just personal achievement but also validation of my broader mission: advancing engineering in ways that promote safety, sustainability, and resilience.

You're also involved in shaping industry standards. Could you elaborate on that aspect of your work?

Certainly. I serve as a Principal Member with the IEEE Standards Association, where I contribute to the development of electrical codes and guidelines that engineers rely on globally. I've also authored academic books and research articles, and I serve as an editor for peer-reviewed journals.

The subjects I've explored include power system protection, power resiliency, vehicle-to-grid integration and floating solar photovoltaics. These are not merely technical topics—they are central to how nations are planning their energy futures.

“
I believe in leadership through mentorship and knowledge-sharing. Effective leaders don't just manage projects—they invest in people.
”

What leadership principles guide your approach in professional settings?

I believe in leadership through mentorship and knowledge-sharing. Effective leaders don't just manage projects—they invest in people. That means recognizing contributions, providing constructive feedback, and encouraging growth.

Retention and team-building are also key. In technical disciplines, we often focus heavily on execution, but fostering a motivated, collaborative team is often what drives long-term success. I aim to lead by example—combining structure with adaptability.

The power sector faces constant disruption. How do you approach challenges in your field?

The industry is constantly evolving, from aging infrastructure to emerging technologies. Safety remains a top priority. My approach is grounded in compliance and data-driven analysis, using standards from organizations like NFPA, IEEE, and local authorities.

When designing or reviewing systems, I closely examine existing equipment for age-related degradation, code violations,

and potential faults. I use field data to recommend proactive upgrades. Interpreting ground-level realities and aligning them with standards is a core part of my role.

With AI and digital transformation reshaping industries, what is your outlook on the future of engineering?

Digital tools have revolutionized engineering practice. AI can automate repetitive tasks, analyze large datasets, and even verify compliance across documents—saving countless hours. That said, human oversight remains critical, especially in critical infrastructure projects.

Digital transformation has also enhanced global collaboration. Sharing research, exchanging insights, and working with international teams is now more seamless than ever. This level of connectivity is a tremendous asset in solving complex global challenges.

What inspires you as a leader, and how do you aim to inspire others?

My inspiration stems from the early mentorship I received—particularly from my grandparents—and from the example set by senior professionals and educators throughout my academic and professional life. Today, I draw energy from engaging with emerging talent and the next generation of engineers.

I try to inspire others through mentorship, feedback, and knowledge sharing. Whether through judging student symposiums or guiding project teams, I believe in uplifting others through support and trust.

How do you maintain balance and stay energized outside of work?

I remain actively involved in research—reading and writing papers keeps me intellectually engaged. I also prioritize time with family and friends. A structured routine helps me maintain a healthy work-life balance. It's essential for sustained productivity and well-being.

I hope to be remembered not just as a technically proficient engineer, but as someone who contributed to others' growth and development. Whether through my research, design work, or mentoring, my goal is to leave both systems—and people—better than I found them. Engineering is about more than solving today's problems—it's about designing a smarter, safer, and more sustainable tomorrow.

Pioneering Excellence in Education, Compliance, and Leadership



Sukh Sandhu, Director of Compliance and Quality Assurance (CAQA) and Career Calling International (CCI), speaks about his leadership philosophy, and strategies for navigating challenges in an evolving educational landscape

In the ever-evolving world of education, compliance, and leadership, few individuals have made as profound an impact as **Sukh Sandhu, Director of Compliance and Quality Assurance (CAQA) and Career Calling International (CCI)**. With over three decades of experience in shaping the vocational education and training (VET) and higher education sectors, Sukh has become a beacon of innovation, excellence, and ethical leadership. His journey is marked by entrepreneurial success, industry-aligned initiatives, and a relentless commitment to quality, making significant contributions to the global education landscape.

In an interview with **Sukh Sandhu, Director of Compliance and Quality Assurance (CAQA) and Career Calling International (CCI)**, shares his journey, leadership philosophy, and strategies for navigating challenges in an evolving educational landscape

Can you walk us through your professional journey and share the milestones that have defined your career?

My journey began at 14 when I was selected for a prestigious U.S.-based training program, launching my career in web design and development. Within months, I advanced to a managerial role, igniting my passion for technology and education. I pursued degrees in Information Technology and an MBA, which fueled my entrepreneurial ventures. In my early twenties, I founded my first start-up, later becoming Managing Director of a global media organization. Over three decades, I have led transformative initiatives in VET, founding Career Calling International, CAQA, The VET Sector, and RTO Training and Consulting Group, all dedicated to raising industry standards, ensuring compliance, and driving innovation worldwide.



“Balancing work with personal passions keeps me motivated and grounded. My creative expression through writing and poetry serves as a powerful outlet, allowing me to inspire others while nurturing my own well-being.”

Each of these organizations reflects my unwavering commitment to raising industry standards, supporting educational institutions in achieving compliance, and fostering quality-driven learning environments. Through these initiatives, I continue to drive innovation, mentor emerging leaders, and contribute to the transformation of education and training systems globally.

What are the major contributions you have made to your industry?

A key contribution is the CEO Training Series, an award-winning initiative by CAQA, delivered through Edu Learning and CAQA Skills. This program helps organizations navigate complex regulations, maintain compliance, and uphold quality standards. My expertise spans ASQA, VRQA, TEQSA, and CRICOS,

equipping institutions with essential compliance tools.

I also founded Sukh Radio, Australia's first online Hindi and Punjabi radio station, fostering cultural exchange and inclusivity. As an educator, auditor, and compliance expert, I advocate for transparency, accountability, and efficiency in auditing. A major milestone is the development of 75,000+ training products through CAQA Resources, supporting RTOs, universities, and training organizations in delivering industry-compliant education across Australia and beyond.

List any recognitions, awards, or honours you have received throughout your career.

I am honored to have received numerous accolades recognizing my contributions to education, compliance, and quality assurance.

Notable Awards:

- Most Outstanding Personality in Education Compliance and Global Standards, 2025 – CToday Awards
- Entrepreneur of the Year, 2022 – CEO Review
- CEO of the Year, 2022 – CEO Insights
- Global Leader of the Year, 2021-22 – Asia One

- Global Indian of the Year, 2021-22 – Asia One
- Asia Pacific CEO of the Year, 2024 – Burj International Awards
- Business Leader of the Year, Australia, 2024 – Forttuna Global Excellence Awards

These honors inspire me to drive innovation, elevate industry standards, and shape the future of education and compliance globally.

What leadership values or principles do you strongly believe in and implement?

Throughout my career, I have been guided by a set of core leadership principles that I believe are fundamental to fostering a productive, forward-thinking, and innovative environment. These values shape my approach to leadership and define the culture I strive to cultivate within my teams and organizations.

- **Commitment to Excellence** – Upholding the highest standards in education, compliance, and business.
- **Continuous Learning** – Encouraging adaptability and staying ahead of industry changes.
- **Empowerment and Trust** – Fostering a culture where individuals take initiative and lead with confidence.

- **Adaptability and Innovation** – Pioneering new solutions for a rapidly evolving landscape.
- **Community Engagement** – Supporting education, social welfare, and mentorship for a more equitable society.

How do you approach challenges and disruptions in your industry?

Navigating challenges in VET and Higher Education requires strategic foresight, adaptability, and proactive leadership.

- **Proactive Problem-Solving** – Anticipating challenges ensures readiness for regulatory changes, technological advancements, and evolving learner needs.
- **Collaborative Innovation** – Engaging stakeholders, educators, and policymakers fosters shared learning and practical solutions.
- **Leveraging Technology** – AI and digital transformation enhance compliance, training delivery, and accessibility.
- **Advocacy and Thought Leadership** – Active participation in industry discussions drives meaningful reforms.

By transforming disruptions into opportunities, I ensure education services remain impactful, innovative, and future-focused.

What are your core responsibilities, and how do you align them with your company's strategic objectives?

As CEO of CAQA, I drive strategic leadership, oversee operations, and ensure high-quality compliance and education services in VET and Higher Education.

- **Strategic Planning & Execution** – Developing forward-thinking strategies for growth, innovation, and sustainability.
- **Quality Assurance & Compliance** – Ensuring adherence to ASQA, TEQSA, VRQA, and CRICOS regulations.
- **Team Leadership & Development** – Fostering a high-performance culture through mentorship and professional growth.
- **Stakeholder Engagement** – Building partnerships with educational



institutions, regulators, and industry leaders.

- **Innovation & Adaptation** – Leveraging AI, automation, and digital platforms to enhance compliance and future-proof CAQA.

What are your thoughts on the future of leadership in the era of AI and digital transformation?

The rise of AI and digital transformation is reshaping leadership, requiring adaptability, data-driven decision-making, and a human-centric approach.

- **Adaptability and Continuous Learning** – Leaders must embrace digital transformation and AI-driven business models.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making** – AI enables informed decisions and predictive analytics.
- **Emotional Intelligence and Human-Centric Focus** – AI cannot replace empathy, ethical judgment, and interpersonal communication.
- **Ethical AI Implementation** – Ensuring responsible AI deployment while addressing privacy, security, and bias concerns.
- **Fostering Innovation and Agility** – Encouraging teams to embrace new technologies and adapt swiftly.



What inspires you as a leader, and how do you inspire others?

I am inspired by the transformative power of education and its ability to empower individuals and organizations. I believe in leading by example, upholding integrity, dedication, and a commitment to continuous learning. By fostering an environment that empowers team members, I encourage growth, build trust, and spark innovation. Sharing knowledge is equally important, as mentorship and open communication help cultivate a collaborative and supportive culture. Through purposeful leadership and a passion for education, I strive to create an environment where excellence and positive impact thrive. By championing these values, I aim to inspire others to reach their fullest potential.

How do you maintain a work-life balance?

Balancing work with personal passions keeps me motivated and grounded.

My creative expression through writing and poetry serves as a powerful outlet, allowing me to inspire others while nurturing my own well-being. Over the years, I have composed more than 18,500 poems and 300 stories, reflecting my dedication to storytelling and the transformative power of words. Alongside writing, my passion for learning languages enhances my cultural appreciation and communication skills, enabling me to connect more deeply with diverse perspectives. Equally important is spending time with family and friends, as these relationships are essential for happiness and emotional well-being. By integrating these passions into my life and practicing mindfulness, I maintain a fulfilling, purpose-driven approach to both personal and professional pursuits. This holistic balance allows me to stay focused, resilient, and inspired, ensuring that I continue to grow both as an individual and as a professional.



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Power, Poetry and Purpose: Sara Ting's Journey to Illuminate Equality



Poet, Speaker, and Founder of World Unity, Inc. Sara Ting speaks to about the life-changing impact of the Sun Poem, her mission to advance equality through self-awareness, and the enduring power of words in a polarized world.

In a time when equity and inclusion remain pressing global challenges, **Sara Ting's** journey proves that a few words can spark profound transformation. A former TV reporter turned national voice for unity, Ting is the founder and president of **World Unity, Inc.**, an organization born from a single poem that continues to inspire across generations and geographies.

Penned in 1978, the 21-word Sun Poem reads:

"Are you greater than the sun / that shines on everyone: / Black, brown, yellow, red and white? / The sun does not discriminate."

From Boston billboards to United Nations dialogues, this deceptively simple message has launched campaigns, informed curriculums, and sparked conversations on unconscious bias nationwide.

spoke with Sara to explore her lifelong mission, the poem's global impact, and her perspective on leadership, equality, and resilience in today's complex world.

The Sun Poem has clearly been a catalyst for much of your work. What inspired you to write it?

The poem came from reflecting on a universal truth: the sun shines on everyone equally, no matter their race or background. In 1978, I captured that idea in a short, 21-word poem. It was simple but deeply meaningful to me.



“
I find balance in simple pleasures—walking by a local pond, connecting with people from different cultures, and listening to NPR. These moments remind me of our shared humanity.”

A friend of mine felt moved enough to display it on billboards in Boston, which unexpectedly sparked a citywide dialogue on racial unity.

That initial response revealed how powerful words can be to start conversations that matter.

The poem faced many hurdles before gaining widespread recognition. How did you overcome the challenges?

Indeed, when I tried to expand the campaign to New York, I faced 52 rejections while seeking sponsors. It was a test of perseverance. But I believed deeply in the message's importance. Then Arthur Barnes from the New York Urban League helped rally support, turning the tide.

This experience taught me that resilience and faith are essential in advancing equality. Sometimes, persistence in the face of rejection is the only path forward.

How did this lead to founding World Unity, Inc.?

By 1993, it became clear the Sun Poem could do more than inspire—it could foster real change. I established World Unity, Inc. to bring the poem's message to a global platform. We sent framed posters to leaders worldwide, including UK Prime Minister John Major, who praised it as a hopeful contribution to peace and understanding.

Over time, World Unity expanded its work—partnering with schools, police departments, corporations, and community organizations to promote awareness about unconscious bias and self-reflection.

Can you share some impactful responses you've received from individuals influenced by the poem?

There have been many moving stories. One Asian American woman told me the poem helped her overcome discrimination by reminding her of her inherent worth. A retired teacher shared that her students proudly sang a song inspired by the poem called We All See the Stars, which made them feel included and empowered.

Using the poem with 300 police officers during diversity training was particularly impactful—it opened space for honest, heartfelt dialogue in a profession often skeptical of such conversations.

You've had a varied career—from journalism to nonprofit leadership and diversity training. How do these roles complement each other?

Each role has taught me the power of communication and empathy. Journalism gave me skills in storytelling and raising awareness. Running a nonprofit has taught me about organizational leadership, perseverance, and the importance of purpose-driven work.

As a trainer, I focus on helping people develop self-awareness because true change starts within. Whether speaking on camera or in a workshop, my goal is to create connection and understanding.

You've received several honors for your work. Which recognition stands out most to you?

The Boston Mountaintop Civic Service Award in 2021 was a significant moment—it recognized decades of work that began with a simple poem. Also, the Boston City Council's resolution honoring the Sun Poem affirmed the message's lasting impact.

Speaking at TEDx in 2021 gave me a powerful platform to amplify this message further, connecting with a new generation seeking unity in divisive times.

What leadership values guide your work?

I believe leadership is rooted in self-awareness and integrity. You



cannot lead others effectively if you are unaware of your own biases and limitations. I also emphasize leading by example—with humility, courage, and consistency.

Challenges will always come, but faith in your mission and authenticity in your actions will inspire others to join you.

How do you see the role of technology and AI in fostering equity?

Technology holds great promise but also risks. Algorithms can perpetuate biases if not carefully designed. That's why combining technological advances with human ethical growth is essential.

AI can help analyze data and automate tasks, but it cannot replace empathy and self-awareness—those uniquely human qualities must remain at the core of our work toward equity.

How do you maintain balance and stay inspired?

I find balance in simple pleasures—walking by a local pond, connecting with people from different cultures, and listening to NPR. These moments remind me of our shared humanity.

But most importantly, hearing how the poem has impacted others fuels my passion. Whether it's a student, a police officer, or a civic leader, their stories give me energy and hope.

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