SPOTLIGHT

LEADING IN A DATA-DRIVEN, TRANSPARENT ERA | RETHINKING TALENT IN A FLUID WORK ERA

TRADEFLOCK

PRADNYA GHORPADE
Co-Founder & CEO,
Eatro Inc

Most Visionary GLOBAL CEOs in 2025

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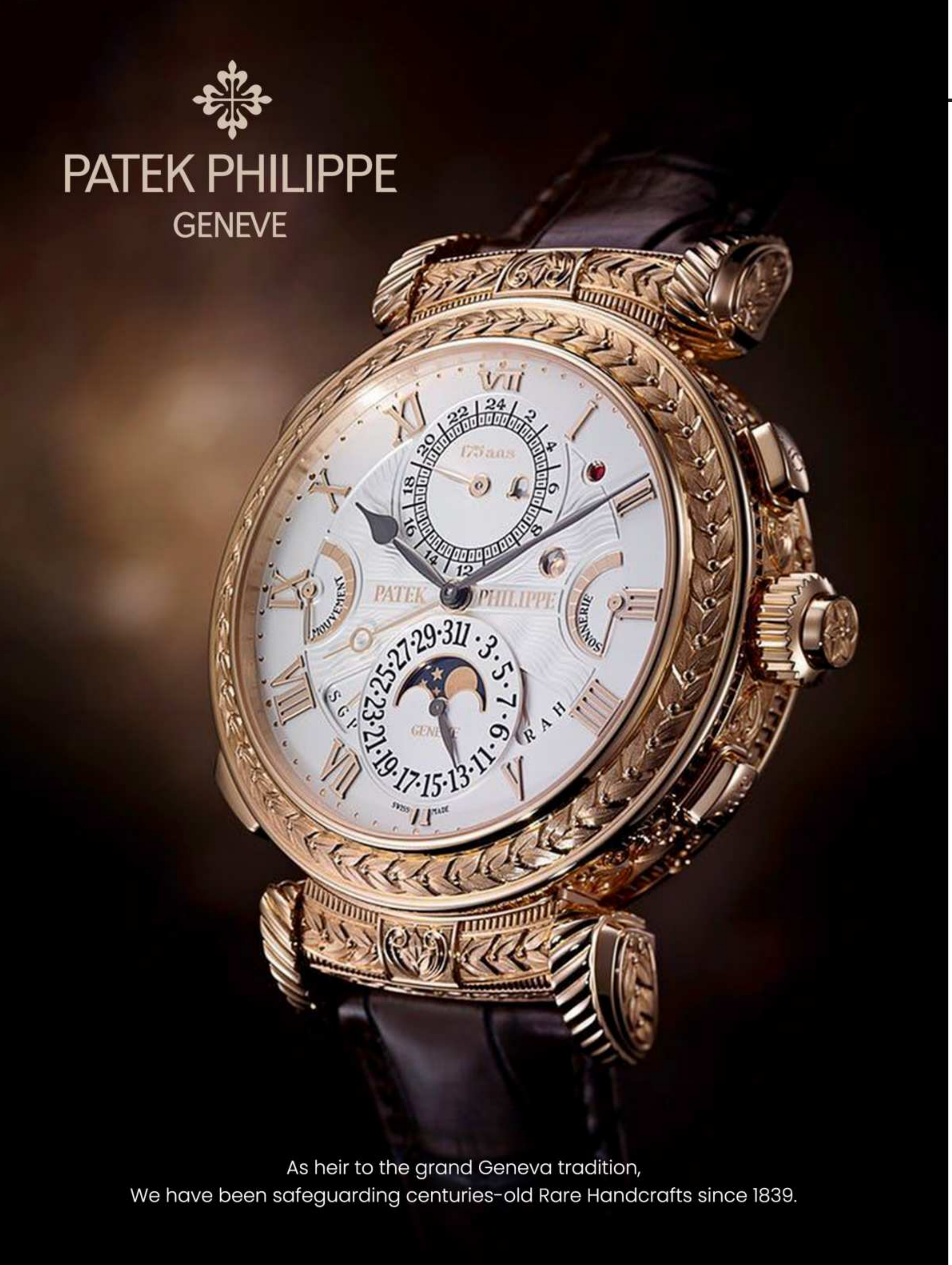

THIS MOMENT BELONGS TO VISIONARIES

This moment in history belongs to leaders who can see beyond the horizon and bring that vision to life. Across industries and borders, global CEOs are turning bold ideas into concrete impact—redefining how businesses grow, serve, and lead in a rapidly changing world.

With every decision they make, these leaders are shaping more than profits—they're shaping mindsets, markets, and the future of work itself. They're building companies that innovate at speed, adapt with agility, and operate with purpose. Whether it's harnessing the power of AI, driving climate-forward strategies, or expanding equitable access to opportunity, visionary CEOs are setting the pace for a world in flux.

Leadership at this scale demands more than foresight—it requires the courage to disrupt, the wisdom to collaborate, and the clarity to inspire action at every level. These are not just stewards of business—they are architects of impact, champions of transformation, and custodians of long-term value.

In this special edition, we spotlight global CEOs who embody this spirit of expansive thinking and decisive doing. Their journeys are as diverse as the industries they lead, yet they share a common thread: the ability to align vision with velocity and ambition with accountability.

As economies evolve, consumer expectations shift, and technology rewrites the rules, these leaders continue to rise to the challenge—not simply adapting to change but shaping it.

This is leadership in motion—vision made real.

Anamika Sahu
Consulting Editor-in-Chief
anamika@tradeflock.com

TRADEFLOCK'S

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Asia's Best Business Leaders 2025

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JOURNEY OF LEADERS

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Editorial Queries	editors@tradeflock.com
Advertising Queries	advertising@tradeflock.com

MOST VISIONARY GLOBAL CEOs IN 2025

NAME	DESIGNATION	COMPANY
Andrew Wang	Managing Partner, Owner	Runnymede Capital Management
Dean Forbes	CEO	Forterro
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Pradnya Ghorpade	Co-Founder & CEO	Eatro Inc
Shelly Henry	CEO	Moores Lab AI

MOST VISIONARY
GLOBAL CEOs in 2025
Redefining Leadership for a New Era

PRADNYA GHORPADE

Co-Founder & CEO, **Eatro Inc**

What distinguishes a truly visionary CEO in 2025 isn't just the ability to launch a company, but the insight to identify an unmet human need and the ambition to turn it into a scalable, global impact. Pradnya Ghorpade, Co-Founder & CEO of Eatro Inc., is redefining food delivery with a high-retention, tech-powered platform that turns cultural home cooking into a scalable market category—meeting a growing $447B unmet need in the post-Doordash era.

By the time most people dream of changing the world, Pradnya Ghorpade has already fed it.

Not with grand speeches or splashy headlines, but with meals that carry memory. With technology that connects, not replaces. And with a relentless belief that even the most ordinary kitchen can become a place of power.

Where others chase disruption, ***she builds restoration.***
Where others automate, ***she humanizes.***
Where others scale, ***she listens.***

In a world obsessed with what's fast, Pradnya is bringing back what's real: the slow-simmered comfort of dal made by a grandmother in Queens, the spicy tang of chutney bottled in a Texas kitchen, the quiet thrill of recognition in a taste you haven't felt in years. This is not just innovation. It is intimacy at scale.

She's not asking the world to move faster. She's asking it to feel more. And in doing so, she is leaving a mark that no IPO or unicorn status ever could—a mark on culture, on care, and on the way we gather around food again.

Her legacy won't be the number of downloads or deliveries. It'll be the thousands of people who no longer feel alone at dinner. Because in Pradnya's world, food is never just food. It's proof that someone, somewhere, thought of you. And built a whole company to make sure you never forget that.

In the pages ahead, discover how Pradnya's jump-rope grit, engineering precision and radical customer insight converge to build a category leader—and why the smartest capital is following her lead.

Q What was the "aha" moment turned your craving for home-cooked food into a business?

In my fourth year of college, my lab sessions kept running late and I kept missing meals from the local chefs I relied on. With my food disorder, skipping meals started affecting both my health and my day. One night, tired and hungry, it struck me—this wasn't just my problem.

Over 20 million consumers across U.S. university towns and healthcare hubs face '***food fatigue***' from generic delivery meals. Eatro converts this underserved segment into recurring revenue by matching them with vetted home chefs who deliver authentic, culturally rooted meals. That was my turning point. Eatro was born from that moment—a simple craving growing into something much bigger.

Q What unique gap did you notice in the US food delivery scene?

While most food delivery giants focused on speed and scale, I noticed something deeper was missing: soul. Everyone was chasing convenience, but no one was thinking about

food that actually feels like home—meals made with care, tradition, and real meaning. Most platforms treated food as just another transaction, forgetting the cultural and emotional connection behind every dish. I wanted to build more than an app. My goal was to create a movement that brings people closer to chefs who cook with heart, honoring stories, heritage, and the comfort we all crave. Food isn't just fuel. It's a memory and care you can truly taste.

How do you see "home-style dining" evolving in our digital age?

In today's digital world, authenticity is a real value. With Eatro, I want every meal to feel like it was made just for you, by a chef whose story and care you can taste. My vision is simple: use smart tech to bring real, home-cooked food and human warmth right to your door, no matter where you are.

What was your toughest "almost gave up" moment, and what got you through?

Honestly, my breaking point came late one night, alone with my laptop, feeling like the dream was falling apart. Investors kept saying, "**Where's the app?**" and our key tech partner walked away when things got tough. I was exhausted, defeated, and honestly, ready to give up. But in that dark moment, I got a message from a medical resident who wrote, "*I finally had food that reminded me of home. I cried while eating it. Thank you for building this.*"

That stopped me in my tracks. It made me realize that we're not just building an app—we're building a lifeline for people who need comfort, care, and a taste of home. That's what pulled me out of the spiral and reminded me that we're just getting started.

What's one tough lesson entrepreneurship taught you that no one else could?

Entrepreneurship stripped me down to my core and taught me what no book ever could—passion alone isn't enough. I used to think drive and vision were everything, but I quickly learned that if you don't adapt, trust others, and step back when things get hard, your own fire can burn you out. The truth is, not every good idea will work, and sometimes you'll fail spectacularly. But those failures are the best teachers. "Building a business is really about building yourself," and no mentor or class can prepare you for that growth.

How do you handle the chaos of startup life while keeping your team motivated?

Startup life can feel like sunshine one day and a

storm the next. I've learned that you don't lead with perfection, you lead with presence. I show up honestly—if we're struggling, I say it. We check in as people, not just coworkers, and I ensure every quiet effort is seen. Sometimes it's a handwritten note, sometimes a voice message—so my team knows they matter. The biggest thing is making sure no one feels alone. We stay grounded not by avoiding chaos, but by walking through it with care and belief in what we're building.

What legacy are you building with Eatro for the industry, for women in tech, and for future founders?

I'm not just building a company—I'm building a movement to bring warmth and meaning back to food, leadership, and purpose. For the food industry, I want Eatro to remind people that real meals are meant to nourish the soul, not just fill an order. I want anyone—students, nurses, parents—to open a box and feel cared for. For women in tech, my message is simple:

> You don't need to become them to belong here. You just need to become fully, fearlessly you.

I've been the only woman in the room and the youngest voice at the table, and I'm proud to show others that empathy and resilience matter. And for every future entrepreneur, I hope my journey proves that you don't need privilege to build something meaningful—just heart, grit, and a vision you can't ignore. That's the kind of legacy I want to leave behind.

How would people still feel your impact if your company's name vanished?

If Eatro disappeared tomorrow, I'd want our impact to be still felt in changed lives—a medical resident finally tasting home, a student finding comfort far from family, a home chef discovering her worth. I never built this for recognition. I built it because something in the system felt broken, and I couldn't look away. To me, real success is a quiet revolution—one that proves business can still have soul. I hope that, even without our name, people would say, "*Whoever built this truly meant it.*"

With AI and automation taking over, what human trait will set leaders apart in the future?

As AI and automation speed up the world, I believe the leaders who'll stand out are those with true emotional courage. The courage to slow down, listen deeply, and put empathy above ego, even when the pressure is high. Technology can handle the "how," but great leaders still ask "why" and "for whom." In the end, leadership isn't about being the loudest voice. It's about earning trust—again and again—because, no matter how advanced AI gets, nothing can replace the warmth in a leader's voice when they say, "*I see you. I've got you. Let's build something that matters.*"

What would you do differently with your company if you could start over?

If I had to start again, I wouldn't try to do it all myself. Initially, I wore every hat and thought carrying everything alone proved my worth, but I nearly lost myself to burnout and doubt. What I know now is this: *Building something meaningful doesn't mean doing it alone—it means building with people who share your why.* If I could go back, I'd ask for help sooner, let go of control, and focus on building the right team. True strength is not about doing more, but doing what matters, together.

How did winning in Paris reshape your view of leadership?

Standing on that podium in Paris, with gold medals around my neck, everything went quiet inside. In that stillness, I remembered every early practice, every failure, and everyone who lifted me when I wanted to quit. That medal didn't just crown a win—it whispered, "*You didn't break. You became.*" Leadership, I realized, isn't about the spotlight. It's about the fire you build in the dark and lifting others to shine, too. Now, as a founder, I lead with that same heart and grit every day.

What daily habit keeps you grounded when life gets hectic?

When things get overwhelming, I find a quiet moment with coffee and my favorite music, just to slow down and breathe. Then I play a quick chess game—it sharpens my mind, calms my nerves, and reminds me to think ahead, no matter how chaotic things get. Those simple rituals help me reset so that I can face anything with a clear head and steady heart.

THE BACKBONE OF FLEXIBLE WORK

The Foundation of Productivity in the Modern Workplace

Flexibility without structure is just chaos in disguise. In hybrid and asynchronous work, giving people control over their time is powerful but it's not enough. For autonomy to deliver results, it must be supported by frameworks that bring clarity, cohesion, and purpose.

The Illusion of Freedom

As hybrid work becomes the norm, organizations highlight flexibility as a core advantage, enabling employees to work remotely, set their own schedules, and structure tasks around personal rhythms. This approach is meant to foster trust, empower teams, and enhance creativity and engagement.

Flexibility without design quickly unravels. True flexibility comes from smart boundaries. The best hybrid teams build structures that adapt to changing work styles.

Clarity Over Convenience

In traditional offices, casual interactions and nonverbal signals helped keep teams coordinated. In hybrid or remote environments, these disappear, leading to uncertainty: Who's handling which tasks? Are we progressing as planned? Has that decision been? Without structures to fill the void, miscommunication increases.

Successful distributed teams swap casual conversations for deliberate routines such as asynchronous check-ins, collaborative progress trackers, and clear documentation. Platforms like Notion or Loom foster transparency but only through consistent use. It's the team that builds structure, not the technology.

Autonomy With Transparency

It's often assumed that total autonomy leads to peak performance. In truth, most professionals thrive with clear objectives, regular feedback, and a defined context without these, even driven individuals can stumble.

Structure guides what needs to be done and why, without prescribing how. Managers should act as clarity facilitators, creating systems that enable outcomes instead of controlling hours.

The Hybrid Paradox: When Flexibility blurs work-life balance

Ironically, the least structured workplaces are often the most exhausting. Without defined limits, flexibility becomes an implicit expectation of nonstop availability, making it hard for employees to truly unplug. Hybrid work increases output by as much as 27 percent, with 90 percent of leaders observing the same or improved performance.

A 2022 Gallup study found that 54 percent of hybrid workers experience lower productivity without clear guidelines for flexible work. These measures aren't mere rules, they safeguard concentration and downtime.

Building Fairness with Frameworks

Structured flexibility promotes equity by creating equal opportunities for neurodivergent employees, and distributed teams. Transparent expectations and adaptable systems accommodate different work styles, ensuring fair participation for all.

The future of work isn't about choosing flexibility or structure, it's about how structure supports flexibility. Without direction, flexibility leads to chaos; with effective frameworks, it promotes self-governance, trust, and improved results.

SPOTLIGHT

RISE OF THE MULTI-CAREER PRO

Rethinking Talent in a Fluid Work Era

Just a few decades ago, a typical resume showcased a straightforward career progression, moving from an entry-level role to a senior position within the same company or industry. But this model is becoming outdated. We are now in the age of the multi-career professional: individuals who embrace career fluidity, take on multiple roles across various industries, and switch between full-time jobs, freelancing, and entrepreneurship.

As technology, changing employee expectations, and a vibrant global economy shape today's workforce landscape, companies must rethink their traditional talent pipelines. The rise of multi-career professionals offers both opportunities and challenges, marking a fundamental shift in how companies attract, develop, and retain talent.

The Forces of Career Fluidity

Career pluralism drivers are multidimensional. Digital transformation democratized knowledge and opportunities, with platforms like Coursera, Udemy, and LinkedIn Learning enabling easy career or industry switches. The pandemic accelerated work reevaluation, with remote work or furlough prompting side projects, passions, or gig work. McKinsey estimates over 30% of U.S. and U.K. workers are independent or freelance, a figure expected to rise. Gen Z and Millennials prefer diverse, independent, and purposeful careers over long tenure, redefining success.

Gig Leadership and the Portfolio Careers

Gig work has a long history of lower-wage, task-based work, but that is no longer true. Even the leadership positions are taking the freelance route today. On-demand CTOs, interim CFOs, and fractional CMOs are finding more work on a project basis or as a temporary replacement.

The model, commonly referred to as gig-leadership, enables businesses to access profound expertise without a permanent commitment. It is particularly common with startups and small-and medium-sized enterprises which might not be able to afford full-time executive appointments. In addition, it introduces new ideas, speeds up innovation, and provides flexibility in both directions.

Another trend on the increase is the so-called portfolio career. Such professionals can play several roles at the same time: consultant, teacher, advisor, and entrepreneur in various segments. The advantages are multiple sources of income, wider connections, and exchange of ideas. To the organization, such talent may bring a sense of agility and external ideas to the operation.

Corporate Talent Strategy Implications

The multi-career movement urges organizations to move beyond strict job descriptions and traditional career paths. HR models should focus more on longevity, internal promotions, and vertical growth.

Recruitment should become more flexible and skills-based. Instead of hiring solely based on pedigree or tenure, firms should assess adaptability, problem-solving, and learnability, with AI-driven talent platforms aiding in this effort.

> Over 30% of U.S. and U.K. workers are independent or freelance, a figure expected to rise. Gen Z and Millennials prefer diverse, independent, and purposeful careers over long tenure
> —McKinsey

Employee engagement must be redefined since multi-career professionals value autonomy and purpose over stability and hierarchy. Companies should offer meaning, mobility, and learning through internal gig marketplaces, mentorships, and rotations.

Retention strategies should accept shorter tenures, viewing alumni as brand ambassadors or future hires. Connecting with alumni via networks and open policies keeps talent engaged beyond traditional employment.

The Culture and Leadership Mindset in an Organization

Transforming to this talent evolution needs cultural transformation. Managers should leave ownership attitudes (my team, my hire) and adopt ecosystem thinking. There is a greater sharing of talent, mobility and fluidity of talent. Unleashing hidden potential can be facilitated by promoting cross-functional teamwork, project staffing, and open pools of talent.

The change in leadership development should also be reflected. To be a leader today, one has to be a master of hybrid teams, freelancers, and psychologically safe working conditions with diverse contributors. Soft skills are no longer soft, but hard skills, such as emotional intelligence, inclusion, and digital fluency, are core leadership skills.

The Technology and Platforms Role

Technology will be central in facilitating multi-career talent strategies. Marketplaces, such as Toptal, Catalant, and Upwork, are already providing the services of specialized professionals. Companies are also deploying AI in enterprise platforms to align the requirements of the internal projects with the abilities of the employees in real-time.

In the meantime, blockchain credentials and decentralized identity systems could, in the near future, enable employees to transport verifiable portfolios between employers and across national boundaries. The tools will allow companies to tap into a wider pool of talent in a more transparent and faster way.

Development of Talent Ecosystems

The emergence of the multi-career professional does not mean the end of traditional employment; it is the beginning of a more dynamic, integrated, and experience-driven talent ecosystem. To the businesses, it implies that they should be more platform-like than pyramid-like. It implies working so that it is flexible, not fixed; collaborative, not confined.

Companies that adopt this change will enjoy a high level of innovation, talent diversity, and operational agility. With career boundaries eroding, the future is in the companies that create talent pipelines based on the potential of people, and not their history.

MOST VISIONARY GLOBAL CEOs in 2025

Making Money Simple For All

ANDREW WANG

Managing Partner, Owner, **Runnymede Capital Management**

Money can build dreams, but for most people, it feels more confusing than empowering. Andy Wang knows that feeling well. Early in his career, he worked as an analyst at Thomson Financial and later spent long nights as a senior trader at NECX, closing deals with tech giants across Asia. The work was exciting, but he noticed that even seasoned professionals struggled with their own finances.

In 1998, Andy joined Runnymede Capital Management, the firm his father founded, and today he serves as Managing Partner, helping families and business owners make sense of their money. Beyond Runnymede, he hosts the award-winning Inspired Money podcast and is a founding member of the Financial Influencer Network, a collaborative platform advancing financial confidence. In an exclusive conversation with TradeFlock, Andy shares how he's turning finance into a tool for empowerment.

What inspired you to make finance more approachable?

Even on Wall Street, I saw brilliant people who were completely lost when it came to managing their own money. At the New York Stock Exchange and later at Thomson Financial, our 401(k) meetings left us just as confused as everyone else. If we struggled, what chance did teachers, doctors, or small business owners have? The industry doesn't help — jargon, hidden fees, and complexity keep people stressed and sleepless. I was fortunate to grow up in a home where money was openly discussed. My father was a portfolio manager, and my mother was a stockbroker; that gave me confidence that many never get.

After 25 years at Runnymede Capital Management, I've seen ordinary families quietly build more wealth than people who inherited millions, simply by saving automatically, living within their means, and investing consistently. That's why I launched the Inspired Money podcast and joined the Financial Influencer Network as a founding member — to share the lessons that matter most but are rarely taught.

What was your biggest challenge in making finance simple for clients?

The hardest part was unlearning my own training. On the NYSE floor, credibility meant speaking in eighths and option chains. At Thomson, complexity was treated as a sign of sophistication. Even at home, portfolio theory was dinner conversation. What felt natural to me was a foreign language to most.

The turning point came when a surgeon — someone who literally saved lives — stopped me mid-presentation and said, *"Andy, I don't need a dissertation. I need to know if I'll be okay."* That stung, but it changed everything.

Simplifying wasn't about dumbing down. It was about building trust. I started showing compound interest through my daughter's summer job paycheck instead of Monte Carlo simulations. My father always said, "Real sophistication is making the complex simple." Today, when a client tells me, "I finally understand," I know I've done my job.

"THE INDUSTRY VALUES TRANSACTIONS OVER TRANSFORMATION. TECHNOLOGY MAKES TRADING FASTER, BUT MOST PEOPLE STILL CAN'T ANSWER THE SIMPLE QUESTION, "WILL I BE OKAY?" TOOLS ALONE DON'T CREATE CONFIDENCE"

Which current initiative excites you most and why?

Two initiatives energize me even more than my first day on the trading floor.

- First, the Financial Influencer Network (FIN), which launched on August 20. As a founding member among 28 vetted experts reaching over 10 million people, I'm excited about the collaborations ahead — working together to bring financial literacy to everyone and offering a credible alternative to unqualified **'finfluencers'**.
- Second, Inspired Money is evolving beyond a podcast into a movement. Conversations with Harvard professors on happiness, or Bill Courtney on grit, remind us that wealth is not the goal, but a means to live with meaning and impact. The best part is hearing messages like, *"I finally opened my Roth IRA"* or *"Your show gave me the courage to invest."* Those aren't just financial wins — they're life transformations.

How can you bridge the gap for people who feel "finance isn't for them"?

It starts by meeting people where they are. When someone says, *"Finance isn't for me,"* what they really mean is, *"I didn't grow up with this language."*

I was lucky — money was part of my family's dinner table conversations. For most, it's taboo. So, I use everyday examples, like showing my daughter how $50 a month from her summer job could grow into more than half a million by retirement, or explaining investing as simply owning a slice of a company like Netflix.

The key is telling stories that people remember, taking small steps that build confidence, and fostering a community that breaks down barriers. I've seen people with modest salaries quietly outpace those with inheritances by sticking to good habits. That's why I use LinkedIn, the Financial Influencer Network, and Inspired Money to share the lessons most people never learned at home or in school.

What gaps do you see in financial services, and how would you rebuild trust and transparency?

After decades as an advisor, I still see the same problem: the industry values transactions over transformation. Technology makes trading faster, but most people still can't answer the simple question, *"Will I be okay?"* Tools alone don't create confidence. I'd reimagine finance around four principles: **Transparency**, with every fee and conflict explained in plain English; **Education**, where experts share knowledge without hidden agendas; **Human-amplified Technology**, where AI crunches numbers but advisors guide real-life choices; and **Accountability**, measured by confidence and peace of mind, not just assets gathered. The future isn't high-tech versus high-touch — it's blending both to scale human wisdom. That's how finance becomes less intimidating and more of a force for good.

LEADERSHIP & LEGACY

JERRY SANDERS

Former CEO , Advanced Micro Devices, AMD

Within the cutthroat environment of Silicon Valley, where creativity and ego often clash, Jerry Sanders, the colorful and confrontational co-founder and longtime CEO of Advanced Micro Devices (AMD), left a legacy that not only marked his company but also the semiconductor industry as a whole.

Between the founding of AMD in 1969 and his retirement in 2002, Sanders created a challenger brand that had the nerve to take on the industry giants such as Intel. As well known for his exuberance as for his fierce dedication to his company, Sanders was an unusual leader, characterized by a strong will, an aggressive vision, loyalty, and an unstoppable drive toward technological excellence.

This paper examines the outstanding leadership lessons of Jerry Sanders, an industry rebel who once uttered the words, 'Real men have fabs,' which underlines the significance of owning manufacturing capabilities when others were shedding them.

Be a Fighter: Fight On, Whatever the Odds

Jerry Sanders was a competitive personality. Initially, he made AMD a viable competitor to Intel, which could not be satisfied with the second position in the industry, frequently dominated by monopolies. Sanders did not give up even when faced with legal battles, licensing disputes, and financial pressure.His insistence on market parity, especially in the microprocessor sector, was an indication that he believed market leadership was achieved through resilience, not compliance.

LESSON TO LEARN

GREAT LEADERS DO NOT FEAR THE GOLIATHS. COMPETITION IS NOT A THREAT; IT IS AN AMBITION.

Protect Your People: Loyalty is a Strategic Asset

Sanders had a reputation for being loyal to his staff. He was of the opinion that people are the most important thing, and he usually invested in them, even during times of recession. He stood by the idea that when you looked after your team, they would walk through fire to the company.

The fact that he had personal relationships with AMD's employees made him respected and retained in an industry full of poaching and burnout.

LESSON TO LEARN

LOYALTY BRINGS LOYALTY. A VALUED TEAM WILL GO TO THE LIMITS.

Own what you build: Control Your Destiny

Among the most well-known slogans of Sanders is the one about real men having fabs, which refers to his faith in having the entire value chain. When other companies started to outsource their semiconductor production, Sanders required that AMD own its own fabs. This philosophy enabled AMD to maintain the quality of its products and innovate at a higher rate, although it was controversial and expensive. It provided the firm with the design, production, and time-to-market leverage.

LESSON TO LEARN

STRATEGIC AUTONOMY ENABLES LONG-TERM INNOVATION. MANAGE YOUR CHAIN OF SUPPLY- MANAGE YOUR DESTINY.

Speak Boldly: Vision Needs Voice

Jerry Sanders was not the man to keep silent. His image in the street was flamboyant, daring, and attractive. He spoke with confidence and conviction in front of the stage or the boardroom. He did not sell ideas using facts alone, but rather combined them with emotion and charisma. He employed narrative and powerful messaging to motivate employees, attract investors, and inspire a sense of pride in the purpose of AMD.

LESSON TO LEARN

GOOD LEADERS DO NOT MUMBLE THEIR VISION; THEY ARTICULATE IT CLEARLY. CULTURE AND STRATEGY ARE MULTIPLIED THROUGH COMMUNICATION.

Innovate or Die: Be Technologically Hungry

During Sanders' leadership, AMD introduced several significant technological breakthroughs, including the Am2900 family of bit-slice processors and the Athlon processor, which challenged Intel's dominance in performance computing.

When AMD was not financially successful, it was still at the edge of what was possible in chip design and architecture.

LESSON TO LEARN

IT IS NOT AN OPTION TO BE INNOVATIVE; IT IS OXYGEN. LEADERS SHOULD BE CURIOUS AND INVEST IN R&D ON A REGULAR BASIS.

Bow out with a Bang

Although Sanders resigned in 2002, his legacyin AMD and the technology industry remains strong. His legacy helped AMD come back later under new management. Even the DNA of daring, autonomy, and engineering prowess that he instilled in it helped the company rise again as a chip and graphics powerhouse decades later.

LESSON TO LEARN

AN EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP LEGACY IS NOT THAT WHICH THE LEADER HIMSELF LIVES BUT ONE THAT OUTLIVES HIM. CONSTRUCT LASTING SYSTEMS AND CULTURE.

The Legacy of a Semiconductor Rebel

Jerry Sanders demonstrated that leadership is not about being safe, but it is about winning. His days at AMD were marked by ups and downs, legal battles, and technological innovations, which left a lasting impact on the technology sphere.

At a time when spreadsheets and shareholder value often characterize technology company leaders, Sanders serves as a reminder of the importance of personality, enthusiasm, and endurance. His legacy lives not only in the chips that AMD manufactured, but also in the attitude he created: never retreat, never surrender, and never accept being a second.

TRADEFLOCK
Journey of Leaders

MOST VISIONARY

GLOBAL CEOs in 2025

The Architect of Agile ERP for the Midmarket

DEAN FORBES

CEO, **Forterro**

Mid-sized firms often face a unique challenge in the world of manufacturing. They need the robust capabilities of large-scale enterprise systems, but without the complexity, rigidity, and cost that often come with them. For years, legacy ERP platforms have struggled to keep pace with rapidly shifting market demands, leaving many businesses stuck between outdated tools and impractical upgrades. Recognising this gap, Dean Forbes stepped in with a vision to bridge it.

As CEO of Forterro, he has led a transformation that has turned a collection of local, independent software providers into a globally recognised force in the ERP space. His focus has been on modernising legacy systems, making them cloud-ready and adaptable, while ensuring they remain practical and powerful for the evolving needs of mid-market manufacturers.

Addressing Industry Issues

The ERP sector has been plagued with problems like outdated on-premise applications and limited adoption in midmarket fabricators. Digital transformation has been a challenge for many companies since existing ERP systems are either overly complicated or inflexible.

> The core gap we bridge is the disconnect between technical and business teams. The core gap we bridge is the disconnect between

Forbes highlighted the gap and pressured Forterro to provide modular, easy-to-use industry-specific ERP solutions. In his investments in customer-centric innovation, he has offered a way for manufacturing businesses to modernize without necessarily disrupting continuity of operations.

Childhood and Youth

It is not in the executive suite that Dean Forbes first started her professional life. Having been raised in a tough environment in South London, he proved that in his early years, he was a survivor with ambitions. He entered the technology industry as a young professional and advanced through sales and management. His professional experience includes significant tenures at some of the largest technology firms globally, exposing him to leadership, strategy, and business development.

Length of service, Former Organisations

Before joining Forterro, Forbes was CEO of CoreHR, where he successfully transformed the company into a leading cloud-based human capital management software provider and then revitalized the business through its acquisition by the Access Group. Throughout his career, he served as President and CEO of KDS, a provider of travel and expense management solutions that was later acquired by American Express Global Business Travel. His experiences in these organizations have established him as a transformative leader known for helping companies grow and achieve high-value exits.

Forterro Impact

Since assuming leadership of Forterro as its CEO, Forbes has played a key role in unifying all its regional ERP brands under a single vision. He initiated a modernization program focused on cloud migration, new technologies, and customer-oriented principles. These strategic efforts not only boost operational efficiency but also enhance Forterro's international competitiveness. Under his leadership, Forterro has significantly expanded across Europe and beyond, serving thousands of midmarket manufacturing companies.

> The core gap we bridge is the disconnect between technical and business teams.

Challenges Addressed

Some of the challenges Forbes has addressed in his career include integrating legacy ERP systems into the techno-modern era without disrupting client operations, consolidating multiple acquisitions into a lean, unified organization, and adapting to rapid technological changes while maintaining product reliability.

Additionally, he has focused on managing talent gaps through fostering innovation and a culture of professional growth. His pragmatic yet visionary approach has also enabled Forterro to stay ahead of industry trends and remain responsive to customer needs.

Recognition and Rewards

Dean Forbes has received numerous awards for his managerial skills and entrepreneurship. He is often recognized as one of the top tech leaders in the UK, and his commitment to diversity and inclusion at work is also celebrated. His accomplishments in his career and his charitable activities contribute to his respect not only within the tech industry but also beyond.

Infrastructure Coast to Community

The management of Dean Forbes at Forterro exemplifies how strategic vision combined with excellent operations can transform an entire industry. By addressing key issues in the ERP market, developing new technologies, and expanding internationally, he has made the company a leader in providing innovative, flexible, and user-friendly ERP tools. His journey from a poor upbringing to a successful CEO highlights how resilience, adaptability, and goal-driven leadership can inspire meaningful change.

LEAP OF FAITH

-By **Sambasivan G** (CFO at Tata Play Ltd)

Having been in corporate life for over 35 years, there is one thing that I have learnt. In order to survive you need to continuously reinvent yourself.

From manual accounting and auditing (when I started my articleship days in 1984) where tallying the trial balance was a great milestone for the company, to now, wherein you are deciding between Agentic AI and Intelligent automation, the world of finance has changed forever.

I have travelled this journey with the help of my curiosity and continuous learning appetite. That is for another day.

Today I like to talk about how you as a finance leader can decide on the projects/ tasks wherein you can start using AI in a meaningful way.

There are certain preconditions through this process. Firstly, To ensure operational efficiency, start by simplifying and streamlining your processes. Establish automated controls and monitor internal audit findings to confirm there are no significant deviations. Centralize your data to create a single source of truth and embed this as part of your organizational culture. Finally, ensure your team is skilled and up to date with the latest technologies and their applications.

Having done all these (it could take anywhere between three to five years – it took me ten) to reach this stage when you can start working on implementing AI based solutions.

Identify the problem you are trying to solve; today there are 'n' number of AI toolkits that are available; You may need to reimagine your entire process keeping in mind these toolkits; At every stage of the process, you can think of the solution that can be implemented. For example, if you want to use Agentic AI, identify the set of segmented purchases (could be tail end values) that you would like to experiment on.

Then you can approach an expert (typically an outsourced agency) to develop a customised solution. It may take a few months as things are being done the first time. Before going live, please make sure that the UAT (user acceptance test) is as foolproof as possible.

Then you implement the solution in a limited way and look for glitches; once you are confident, you can expand the same to the larger population.

I can tell you that many a time, you may not be able to accurately calculate the ROI of such solutions; in such cases I use a mental concept called "LOF", which is leap of faith; in general, many innovative solutions require some bit of leap of faith before you actually start reaping the results; So far, the results have not disappointed and the solutions that I have been able to implement always delivered ROI beyond my expectations.

SPOTLIGHT

LEGACY GIANTS, REBUILT

How Disney, Nike & Others Are Pivoting to Platform Models

Established businesses have traditionally been the source of stability, size, and tradition. However, in the digital age, legacy is no longer the guaranty of future appeal. Many legacy giants are dropping the old hierarchies and product-centric strategies to survive and thrive by shifting to platform models where agility, scale, and ecosystem-based growth are possible. The case studies of companies like Disney, Nike, Siemens, and Reliance offer valuable insights into how major players can transform themselves beyond just acquiring new technologies, to redesign their business DNA as a whole.

Disney: The Content Creator to Digital Ecosystem

Disney's major reinvention transformed it from a traditional media conglomerate into a data-driven content

platform. Originally reliant on theatrical releases, theme parks, and cable, Disney shifted gears as content consumption evolved, especially among youth.

The launch of Disney+ was a strategic move, creating a direct-to-consumer streaming ecosystem with content from Pixar, Marvel, Star Wars, and National Geographic, built on user data and engagement. Unlike others, Disney considers the entire ecosystem, integrating Disney+ with merchandising, theme parks, and experiences. This not only delivers content but also boosts cross-brand loyalty, evolving Disney into a media-tech platform company.

Nike: Community Builder that is Digitally Empowered

The basis of Nike's platform pivot lies in the direct interaction with the consumer and the application of digital

tools. Traditionally, Nike has been using wholesale distribution and retailer relationships. Still, it has since moved to D2C channels and digital communities via applications such as Nike Training Club and Nike Run Club.

The investment in mobile apps, membership programs, and its own digital ecosystems allows Nike to gather useful consumer data and tailor the experience, and create sustainable brand relationships. Nike is in a sweet spot between fitness, data, and lifestyle, through the acquisition of tech startups and investment in wearable technology.

In addition, the SNKRS app by Nike is an excellent example of the platform model where drop culture, gamification, and limited supply are used to create a community-based market. In this arrangement, Nike does not merely sell shoes anymore; it is staging experiences.

Siemens: The Industrial Platform, Engineering

Siemens, a leader in automation and electrification, recognised early the importance of data, connectivity, and interoperability for manufacturing and infrastructure. It now focuses on Siemens Xcelerator, a

digital platform combining hardware, software, and services across industries.

This platform enables digital twins, AI analytics, and cloud operations for energy, mobility, and manufacturing clients. Siemens aims to become a digital orchestrator of smart infrastructure by collaborating with startups and partners.

MindSphere, an IoT operating system that gathers industrial data for real-time decisions, is a key part of this strategy. It allows clients to not just use Siemens products but also co-create solutions in a flexible ecosystem.

Reliance: Creating the Digital Super-App Infrastructure of India

The Reliance Industries, which was synonymous with petrochemicals and refining, has undergone radical change under the guidance of Mukesh Ambani. The entry of the company into the digital services and retail business, led by Jio Platforms, is a clear step towards the transformation of the company into an all-purpose and multi-faceted platform business.

Jio Platforms integrates telecom, broadband, entertainment, fintech, and e-commerce into one platform. It is a super-app dream to unify these services, providing smooth experiences to the rapidly growing digital population in India. Jio also has strategic partnerships with Meta, Google, and Microsoft, which also consolidate its platform play.

Combined with JioMart and supported by well-established supply networks, Reliance Retail allows consumers, Kirana stores, and digital payment platforms to be connected to each other. By doing so, Reliance is creating a commerce-tech platform like Amazon or Alibaba, but adjusted to the Indian socio-economic environment.

Obstacles along the Path to Platform Transformation

Although there are success stories, the transition is not one without challenges. Change is complex due to legacy systems, internal resistance, and sheer scale. In addition, data privacy, cybersecurity, and partner interoperability should be governed with strong governance.

Siemens aims to become a digital orchestrator of smart infrastructure by collaborating with startups and partners.

Then there is the cultural change, the shift from control to collaboration that companies must navigate. Leadership in platforms demands a humble, open, and willingness to abandon the old command-and-control operating mode and move towards decentralized innovation.

Redoing the Legacy Playbook

The transformation of a legacy giant to a platform player is not just a digital facelift but a transformation of the business itself. Disney, Nike, Siemens, and Reliance demonstrate that with visionary thinking, intelligent investment, and ecosystem thinking, even the most established businesses can stay at the leading edge of relevance and growth.

With the convergence of industries, changes in customer expectations, and the development of technologies, the platform model provides a flexible, scalable, and future-proof blueprint. The companies that can negotiate this transition will not only survive, but they will spearhead the next revolution of business.

MOST VISIONARY GLOBAL CEOs in 2025

Turning AI into a Sales Superpower

DENISE MURTHA BACHMANN

Founder & CEO, **Sellovatorz**

AI is changing sales at lightning speed, but one thing hasn't changed: people still buy from people. That belief drives Denise Murtha Bachmann, a sales leader who's spent three decades proving that technology works best when paired with genuine human connection.

At BMC Software, she led complex deals with clients such as Bank of America and AT&T, closing over $75 million by building trust and truly understanding customer problems. Later, at companies like xMatters, Clarifai, and Conversica, she leveraged AI and machine learning, demonstrating to businesses how to enhance efficiency without compromising their humanity.

Today, as the founder of Sellovatorz, Denise is on a mission to make sales a noble profession again. She coaches teams to harness AI while keeping conversations real, human, and buyer-focused. Passionate and relentless, she believes the future of sales belongs to leaders who strike a balance between innovation and empathy. During an exclusive conversation with TradeFlock, she shares more.

Q What inspired your shift from corporate AI/ML sales to founding Sellovatorz, and what's your mission now?

The inspiration came straight from my time in sales. We were eager to adopt AI, but instead of making things smoother, it often created more problems. Reps were stuck between people and technology, juggling too many tools, and no one was sure what really worked. Leaders demanded more, customers felt less connected, and the brand suffered as a result. That's when I realized something. With my experience in sales and my passion for AI, I could actually help change this. As I often remind myself:

"Money was not my main driver. It was helping others. Helping others to be the hero, the best versions of themselves... That's what drives me."

And that's why I created Sellovatorz. My mission is to elevate sales again so it is seen as a noble profession. I want to help teams embrace AI and new technologies, while keeping the human element at the center. Because at the end of the day, buyers don't just want efficiency. They want to feel seen, heard, and understood.

> When people play a role in shaping the solution, they take ownership, and that's when real adoption happens.

Q What's the biggest obstacle you encounter when helping sales teams adopt AI, and how do you address it?

The biggest obstacle is fear of change. Most sales teams recognize the need to adopt new approaches, but taking a step outside traditional methods feels risky. I address this by moving at the right pace, educating them, asking questions, and involving them in solving the challenges themselves. When people play a role in shaping the solution, they take ownership, and that's when real adoption

Q Sellovatorz program or AI-enabled tool excites you most, and why? How will this impact the industry?

Believe it or not, even with my passion for AI and my love of automation, the program that excites me most is the one focused on coaching sales teams to ask better questions and truly listen. The aim is to be less scripted, more conversational, and ultimately to sell less.

I always tell teams that "The real differentiator is not the tool, it's the human." That's why this program matters. In an industry overflowing with new technologies, what will set sales professionals apart is their ability to connect authentically. This shift will redefine how sales is done, creating experiences that feel genuine and human, even in an AI-driven world.

> "In an industry overflowing with new technologies, what will set sales professionals apart is their ability to connect authentically."

Q How do you coach and mentor leaders to combine human-centered selling with AI-driven automation?

I start by coaching leaders to be honest with themselves and understand what truly drives them as sales leaders. Self-awareness enables them to lead with greater purpose and thoughtfulness, and it influences how they present themselves to their teams and customers.

I also have them set a clear intent for each day, call, or meeting. By noting 1–3 questions or key points they want to raise, leaders can guide conversations more effectively and focus on storytelling rather than scripts. The goal is to create space for real dialogue.

To do that well, leaders need to be confident, centered, and prepared—yet flexible enough to maintain a natural approach. Prepared and less structured at the same time is exactly what allows authentic conversations to happen.

Q What practical change should sales leaders make this year to future-proof revenue, and what one resource would you recommend?

Focus less on yourself and more on your teams and your buyers. When leaders do that, choices feel clearer, conversations flow with meaning, and every interaction carries purpose. That simple shift builds stronger teams, creates deeper trust, and opens the door to bigger, lasting results.

Startup OF THE MONTH

qodo

Safeguarding the Future of AI-Powered Code

The AI-powered software world has pushed programmers to write more, faster, and smarter, often with generative AI tools. But rushing can be risky. Enterprises use AI-generated code in product development, raising security concerns about guardrails and reliability. Qodo, an Israeli startup, redefines writing production-ready code in the AI era, emphasizing code integrity over just generation. It's becoming the platform of choice for development teams that want speed and confidence.

Code Creation to Code Confidence

Qodo (formerly CodiumAI), founded in 2022 by entrepreneurs Itamar Friedman and Dedy Kredo, was created based on the idea that as AI code production increases, ensuring its correctness, testability, and maintainability becomes increasingly crucial. Unlike GitHub Copilot, which only suggests code, Qodo emphasizes quality assurance with tools like TestGPT for automatic unit tests.

Over the course of a year, it expanded into a comprehensive platform for managing AI code throughout its lifecycle, including Qodo Merge for pull request reviews, CoverAgent for test coverage analysis, Qodo Gen as a generative coding assistant, and QodoEmbed-1, an advanced code model for search and retrieval. These tools not only generate and review code but also establish proof-based development pipelines for software teams.

Speed and Scale Adoption

Qodo has achieved rapid success in the developer tools space, reaching product-market fit much faster than most startups. By mid-2025, over one million users had installed Qodo's developer tools across JetBrains and VS Code. Its enterprise platform, launched in 2024, attracted prominent customers such as Intel, HiBob, and MercadoLibre.

Just three months after its enterprise launch, Qodo surpassed an annual recurring revenue of $1 million. Users report an average of five bugs per developer per month and benefit from up to 25% savings in development time during testing and review processes.

A Quality Mission that is Capital-Backed

The gradual yet rapid growth of Qodo in an industry typically focused on blitz-scaling has attracted the interest of top investors.

Following a seed round, Qodo raised a $ 40 million Series A in 2024, with Susa Ventures and Square Peg Capital as the major investors. It also has investors such as OpenAI, Snyk, and Firestreak Ventures in its cap table, demonstrating considerable confidence in its code-first, quality-first ideology.

In July 2024, the company rebranded to Qodo, which was intended to communicate its value proposition: trustworthy code by default.

What is the Rationale Behind Code Integrity?

With LLMs producing code, many engineering teams question quality when no human writes the initial draft. Qodo suggests integrating quality checks into all AI-assisted actions, including unit testing, checking for logic and policy violations, mapping test coverage before merging, and ensuring traceability and audit readiness in regulated sectors.

According to co-founder and CEO Itamar Friedman:

It is not only suggestions that developers need, but also confidence. Qodo introduces certainty to the loop, and AI coding becomes reliable and responsible."

Strategic Partnerships & Artificial Intelligence Leadership

In 2025, Qodo entered a prominent partnership with Google Cloud to incorporate Gemini models into Qodo Merge. Qodo also introduced free PR reviews of open-source contributors as a part of the deal, which expanded its scope and social influence.

One of its most important successes was in the research of AI models. In early 2025, Qodo published QodoEmbed-1-1.5B, a small code embedding model that performed better than its OpenAI and Hugging Face counterparts on the CoIR benchmark, demonstrating Qodo's internal AI expertise and R&D orientation.

The Competitive Landscape

Although the market is already saturated with platforms such as GitHub Copilot and Amazon CodeWhisperer, which are the leading solutions in the mainstream AI-based code generation industry, Qodo is positioning itself in a different niche: the needs of enterprise-scale engineering teams that require more than a simple autocomplete.

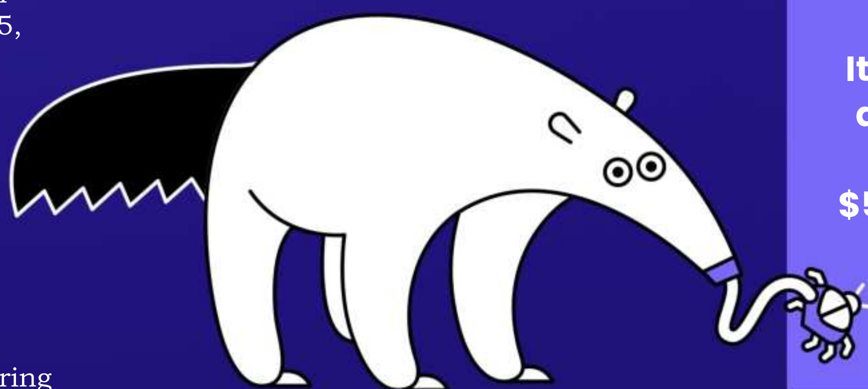
It has no direct peer on the market in the "AI dev quality" space, except perhaps the Anthropic Claude integrations or internal tools at companies such as Google, DeepMind, and Meta. However, none of them provide the same level of out-of-the-box functionality that Qodo offers, including testing, review, and policy enforcement.

Qodo's Next Steps

Qodo aims to strengthen its presence in Fortune 1000 firms, especially in regulated sectors that prioritize code quality, audit trails, and compliance. By late 2025, product updates include mutation testing, test scenario simulations, front-end QA review agents, and team-wide code customization. It also plans to expand in North America and Europe with new enterprise GTM hires and on-premise deployments.

As AI transforms software development, companies should rethink how they measure, monitor, and control their pipelines. Qodo accelerates development while ensuring it remains sustainable, emphasizing quality over lines of code, a rare approach in the AI tooling market.

For engineering leaders balancing innovation and risk, Qodo could be the key to making AI coding scalable without sacrificing essential values.



By mid-2025, over one million users had installed Qodo's developer tools across JetBrains and VS Code. Its enterprise platform, launched in 2024, attracted prominent customers such as Intel, HiBob, and MercadoLibre.

At a Glance
Founded: **2022**
Founders:
Itamar Friedman and Dedy Kredo
Funding:
$50M (estimated, post-Series A)
Headquarters:
Tel Aviv, Israel

MOST VISIONARY

GLOBAL CEOs in 2025

Building visibility with integrity

EMILY DUNLOP

Founder, **The Authority Academy**

The spotlight in business rarely falls where it should. Too often, the loudest voices drown out the most brilliant minds, leaving extraordinary founders overlooked and undervalued. Emily Dunlop saw this happen time and again while helping brands scale past $45M. What stood out wasn't just how companies grew — it was how many leaders didn't. They hid their expertise while the marketplace rewarded noise over depth. That spark pushed her to build something different. After more than a decade shaping brands through PR, marketing and communications, Emily founded The Authority Academy to put substance back at the centre of influence. In an exclusive conversation with TradeFlock, she reflects on her journey, her vision and the bold philosophy driving her.

Starting as a junior PR officer to founding a company that shapes new-age leaders, how has your journey evolved, and how has your leadership style transformed over the past decade?

From the beginning, I've been ambitious and solutions-driven. Even in my first PR role, I wasn't just ticking boxes - I was spotting gaps, asking bigger questions and pushing for impact. That mindset carried me through marketing, where I learned how to drive growth at scale, and ultimately into entrepreneurship, where I realised the only ceiling was the one I allowed.

Entrepreneurship demanded more than skill; it demanded conviction. I had to back my instincts, make bold calls and build something rooted in my values.

That's where my leadership style transformed. I no longer equate success with overworking. Today, I lead with clarity, vision and energy - and my aim is simple: I want more leaders to live up to their highest potential. To finally take the leap they've been holding back on. My role is to provide them with a roadmap, offer full support, and help them reach their full potential. That, to me, is the greatest privilege of leadership.

What were the key driving factors that inspired you to start The Authority Academy, and what gaps are you aiming to address through this initiative?

Too many brilliant founders were staying invisible. I saw it first-hand: people with world-class expertise, underpriced and overlooked, while louder voices claimed the spotlight. That was the gap I couldn't ignore. The Authority Academy is the accelerator I wish had existed when I left corporate. It's not just about content - it's about authority. I help leaders sharpen their positioning, structure high-value offers, and build ecosystems that bring both fulfilment and financial freedom. The goal? To ensure the right people are seen, trusted, and paid what they're worth.

> **People with world-class expertise, underpriced and overlooked, while louder voices claimed the spotlight. That was the gap I couldn't ignore.**

Leaders today face new pressures of visibility, voice and velocity. What challenges do you see most often, and how does The Authority Academy help them rise above the noise?

Leaders today face three traps:

- They hesitate to show up consistently
- They dilute their message to fit in
- They burn out chasing every platform

The Academy flips that. I help founders build positioning rooted in authority, content systems that scale, and offers that reward depth, not endless hustle. It's not about being everywhere. It's about being unforgettable where it matters most.

Looking ahead, what are the personal dreams and professional milestones you want to achieve in the next five years, and how are you preparing to make them real?

In the next five years, I see my life growing in two directions that matter most. Personally, I'm building a home in Italy with my partner and preparing for a family. Freedom and fulfilment aren't just goals for me, they are the foundation of everything I do. Professionally, my vision is for The Authority Academy to be the go-to global accelerator for founders who want to scale through personal branding. That means expanding internationally, partnering with world-class brands, and helping leaders not only monetise their expertise but also uncover deeper purpose.

My preparation is simple: keep learning, keep building and keep surrounding myself with people who stretch what I believe is possible. I remind myself often that the bigger the vision, the braver the steps must be.

How would you like your leadership to be remembered, and what advice would you give future leaders?

I want to be remembered as someone who helped people believe in themselves and showed them how to turn that belief into something real. My advice to emerging leaders is this: don't wait for credibility to come your way. Create it. Share your story, own your expertise and put your ideas into the world. Authority isn't given. It's built.

29 AUGUST 1953

On the morning of August 29, 1953, the quiet skies over the wide Kazakh steppe were suddenly torn apart by a blinding flash and a deafening blast. In that instant, the Soviet Union carried out its first hydrogen bomb test, paving the way for the world into a new and terrifying era of thermonuclear power.

This was more than a scientific breakthrough or strategic innovation; it was a geopolitical game-changer.The successful RDS-6s test declared the USSR a thermonuclear force, breaking America's short-lived dominance and sharply escalating the tensions of the Cold War.

Behind the explosion lay a volatile blend of political will, scientific brilliance, and profound human cost. Driven by relentless ambition and deep secrecy, it was more than a race to catch America, it was a bid to rewrite the rules of global power.

"Narratives of Power: WWII's Legacy in the Cold War Struggle"

The Soviet Union's inaugural hydrogen bomb test on August 29, 1953, stemmed from years of international conflict, technological advancement, and Cold War competition shaped by the aftermath of World War II.

World War II: The Evolution of Warfare During World War II

World War II represented a harsh turning point in conflict, marked by huge battles and the first use of nuclear weapons. The U.S. bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 ended the war in the Pacific but opened a dangerous new chapter that forever changed military strategy and global relations.

The classified Manhattan Project created the world's first atomic bombs, setting the stage for the postwar nuclear arms race.This breakthrough proved that science could unleash weapons capable of wiping out entire cities instantly, initiating an era where global security hinged on technological dominance.

THE AUGUST BLAST THAT CHANGED HISTORY

The Genesis of the Cold War

In the wake of World War II, tensions between the U.S. and Soviet Union quickly escalated, turning former allies into fierce rivals. The Cold War, a decades-long battle of politics, power, and military might from 1947 to 1991 became the defining struggle of the 20th century.

The United States sought to prevent the expansion of communism, while the Soviet Union aimed to increase its influence and safeguard itself from Western powers.Instead of fighting each other directly, they battled through other countries' wars, spying, propaganda, and a risky arms race.

The Thermonuclear Standoff

The Soviet Union's successful atomic test in 1949 broke America's exclusive monopoly, significantly heightening global security tensions.

Both superpowers raced to boost their weapons, shifting from atomic bombs to far more powerful hydrogen bombs, using fusion to unleash massive destructive force.

In November 1952, the U.S. tested its first hydrogen bomb, Ivy Mike, unleashing a blast hundreds of times more powerful than the bombs used in World War II. The display of force put heavy pressure on the Soviet Union to build its own hydrogen bomb both as a shield for defence and global status.

Strategic and Political Factors Fueling the Soviet Hydrogen Bomb

For Soviet leaders, the hydrogen bomb was vital for both survival and prestige. Stalin fast-tracked nuclear development to defend Soviet interests and strengthen global standing, despite the heavy economic and human costs.

The hydrogen bomb was more than just military power, it showed scientific skill, ideological strength, and national pride. Its successful test on August 29, 1953, at Semipalatinsk made the USSR a thermonuclear superpower ready to challenge the United States.

Key Contributors and Bodies Involved

At the forefront was Igor Kurchatov, known as the "father of the Soviet atomic bomb," whose strong leadership helped turn the atomic bomb into the far more powerful hydrogen bomb.

Andrei Sakharov, a brilliant physicist whose bold ideas shaped the intricate design of the hydrogen bomb, securing his place as the architect of the Soviet Union's thermonuclear strength.

Lavrentiy Beria, head of the secret police, whose iron grip kept the project tightly controlled and sharply focused, even as political storms raged around him.

These figures operated within the closely managed Soviet Atomic Program, which mobilized resources across institutions like the Kurchatov Institute. Their work reached its peak on August 29, 1953, at the isolated Semipalatinsk Test Site, where the USSR's thermonuclear success declared its arrival among the world's nuclear superpowers.

"Socio-Economic Repercussions

The Soviet Union's 1953 hydrogen bomb test was a moment of fierce national pride and scientific triumph, announcing its arrival as a true global superpower. But behind the glory lay a steep price. Immense resources were pulled from everyday needs, putting further strain on an economy still recovering from war. The human cost was devastating radiation from tests at Semipalatinsk left lasting scars on local communities. On the world stage, the blast intensified the Cold War arms race, driving up military budgets and global tensions. At home, fear and government control tightened their grip on society. This event didn't just shift the balance of power it reshaped Soviet life itself, revealing the heavy toll behind nuclear dominance.

MOST VISIONARY
GLOBAL CEOs in 2025

Architecting Order in a Fractured World

FABIO CAIRONI

Founder & CEO, **ByteNite**

It is in moments of chaos that vision reveals itself. When conflict redraws borders, economies teeter, and technologies evolve faster than laws can catch them, most leaders scramble to adapt. A rare few, however, find clarity in the noise, spotting opportunity where others see only risk. Fabio Caironi is one such leader, a CEO whose vision cuts through uncertainty and whose resolve is reshaping the digital world.

Raised amid Italy's historic streets, Fabio's journey began not in the corridors of commerce but in the quiet rigor of mathematics and data science. Early roles at the Università degli Studi di Milano and Borsa Italiana placed him at the heart of global crises, from building pandemic forecasting models to engineering the data pipelines that kept markets moving. Each experience tempered his intellect and honed his drive.

In 2021, Fabio charted a bold new course with ByteNite, launching in San Francisco with the ambition to democratize computing power on a global scale. Under his leadership, ByteNite has become a trailblazer in distributed, serverless technology, empowering enterprises to accelerate AI, big data, and media workflows while advancing sustainability.

In an exclusive conversation with TradeFlock, Fabio reflects on his toughest entrepreneurial tests, his philosophy on team-building, and the bold path ahead for ByteNite.

What inspired you to leap from mathematics to launching a global tech company?

I've always loved the beauty of pure math, but I started to wonder how it matters in everyday life. In fields like cloud computing and AI, the "proof" isn't just on paper—it's in software that actually works at scale. Algorithms I once studied now help run big systems and move data around. Seeing those abstract ideas make a real difference pulled me out of academia. Starting ByteNite was my way of turning math into something people can use and experience daily.

What's been your toughest moment as a founder, and how did you get through it?

The founder journey is a rollercoaster, where one day can change everything. My toughest moment was when our first real production cluster failed during an important demo. It was rough. What helped was being totally open with the customer—we explained what happened, worked closely with them, and fixed it in two days. That taught me that setbacks are normal, but how you handle them builds trust and keeps you going.

How do you stay grounded as an entrepreneur amid uncertainty and change?

I stay grounded by focusing on three things: the team, the product, and the vision. The team keeps me honest—they're the first to speak up when something doesn't add up. The product shows us, in black and white, what's working and what's not. And the vision gives us purpose, even when the path isn't clear. These three can shift and evolve, but the intersection is our true north. Change isn't something to fear but a critical part of the process.

What's a common misconception about launching a tech startup in cloud computing, and how did you overcome it?

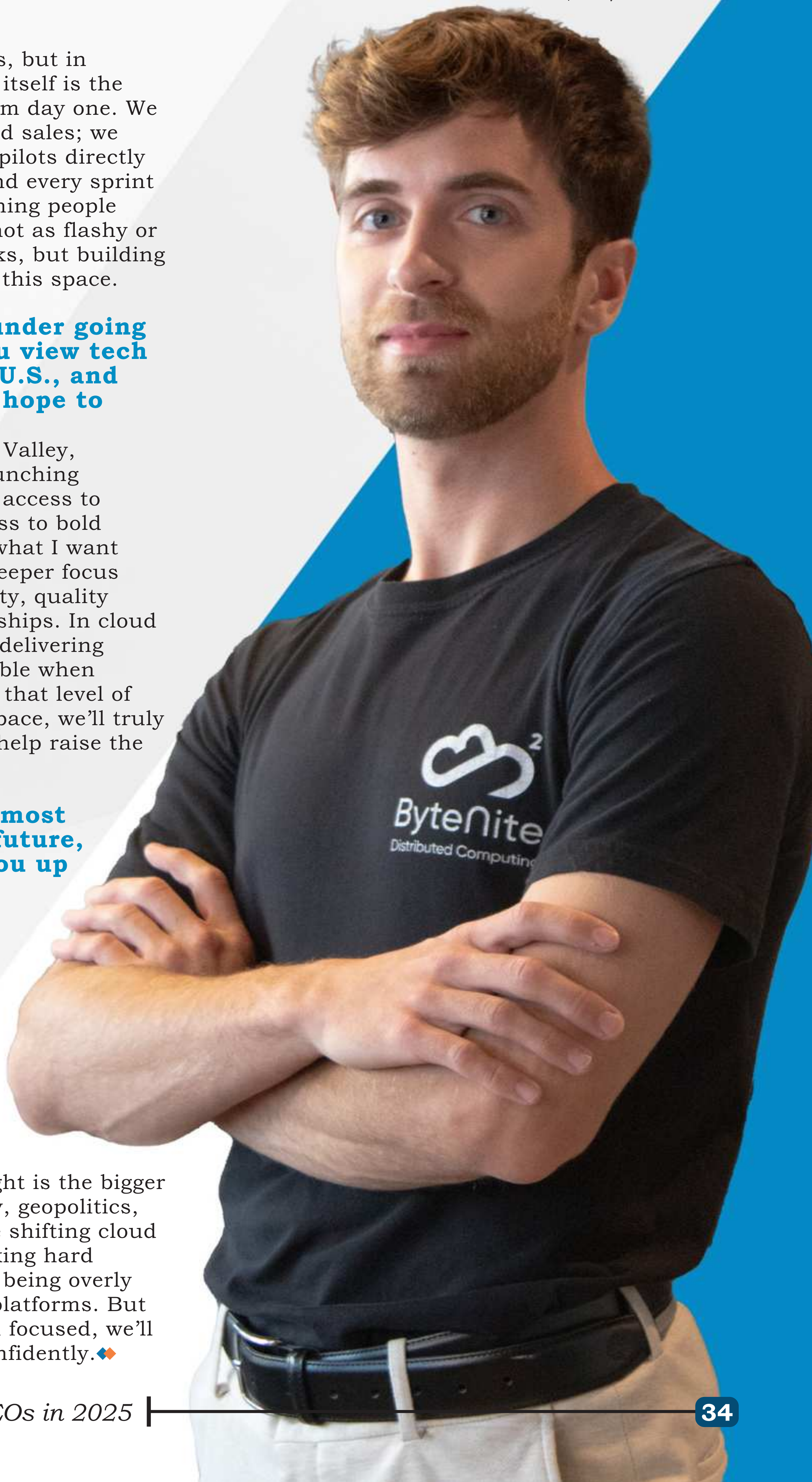
A big misconception is that you can sell first and figure out the product later. That might fly in some industries, but in infrastructure, the product itself is the pitch and it has to work from day one. We never separated product and sales; we ran them in tandem. Early pilots directly shaped our architecture, and every sprint brought us closer to something people could genuinely trust. It's not as flashy or fast as chasing growth hacks, but building real trust sets you apart in this space.

As a European founder going global, how do you view tech leadership in the U.S., and what gaps do you hope to address?

The U.S., especially Silicon Valley, remains the top spot for launching something new. The speed, access to early adopters, and openness to bold ideas are unmatched. But what I want to bring from Europe is a deeper focus on long-term trust: reliability, quality service, and strong partnerships. In cloud infrastructure, that means delivering real SLAs and being reachable when they count. If we can blend that level of commitment with the U.S. pace, we'll truly stand outa nd maybe even help raise the bar for the whole industry.

What excites you most about ByteNite's future, and what keeps you up at night?

What excites me most is working directly with our customers. We now see creative use cases like large-scale web scraping, AI inference for LLMs, and generative audio for creative teams. These people are pushing the boundaries, and it's energizing to help them do it. What keeps me up at night is the bigger picture: market uncertainty, geopolitics, investor sentiment, and the shifting cloud ecosystem. We're also thinking hard about how to scale without being overly dependent on hyperscaler platforms. But I believe if we stay lean and focused, we'll be able to navigate it all confidently.



SPOTLIGHT

Reskill Reinvent Rise

Workforce Agility Lessons from the Frontlines of Asia

As automation, climate change, and shifting job markets redraw the global economy, adaptive workforce strategy has emerged as a critical pillar of national resilience. Through focused efforts on training, innovation, and entrepreneurship, India, Vietnam, and Indonesia are proving that rising economies can take the lead in crafting a workforce fit for the future.

Why Workforce Agility is Crucial Today?

Workforce flexibility is increasingly vital in a world where rapid technological innovation, economic fluctuations, and changing work dynamics are the new norm. As industries undergo transformation due to automation, AI, and global disruptions such as health crises or geopolitical unrest, the ability of workers and businesses to respond and adapt quickly is critical for maintaining stability and achieving growth.

Adaptable workforces are capable of rapidly acquiring new skills, shifting into different roles, embracing hybrid work arrangements, and responding effectively to evolving market conditions. This versatility not only enhances their ability to withstand disruptions but also promotes innovation, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability.

At its core, flexibility is now indispensable and underpins a workforce capable of succeeding in the future.

Endurance Through Upheaval

Resilience is not just a catchphrase in India, Vietnam, and Indonesia but it's a critical necessity. From pandemic-related disruptions to economic upheavals caused by geopolitical tensions, workers have shown remarkable adaptability. A standout example is the quick digital transformation among MSMEs in India; small retailers and street vendors rapidly embraced digital payments

as cash transactions declined during lockdowns.

Vietnam's swift management of COVID-19 enabled factories to remain active longer, protecting jobs and boosting its reputation as a manufacturing hub. Meanwhile, Indonesia's gig economy especially in ride-hailing and delivery services expanded quickly, generating informal employment for millions as traditional jobs diminished.

These cases illustrate a wider pattern: adaptability, including in informal and marginalized sectors, is essential for economic strength. Governments worldwide need to emphasize agility and responsiveness in workforce strategies, alongside technology development.

Empowering Local Talent through Training

While many advanced countries struggle with sluggish reskilling programs, India, Vietnam, and Indonesia have implemented decentralized and inclusive approaches. In India, initiatives like Skill India and collaborations with educational technology companies offer vocational training to rural and semi-urban communities, emphasizing not just IT skills but also high-demand fields such as logistics, hospitality, and healthcare.

Vietnam, with one of the region's highest rates of female labor participation, emphasizes enhancing women's skills in rapidly expanding industries such as electronics manufacturing and business process outsourcing. Collaborations between the public and private sectors in technical education have significantly increased graduates' job readiness, developing a skilled workforce aligned with industry demands.

Vietnam, boasting one of Asia's top female workforce participation rates, emphasizes training women in rapidly expanding sectors such as electronics and business process outsourcing. Collaborative efforts between government and industry in vocational education have improved graduate job readiness and developed a skilled talent pool that meets market demands.

These nations prove that successful upskilling doesn't require extensive infrastructure, only accessibility, alignment with industry needs, and a user-centered strategy. Countries facing aging labor forces and digital divides can learn valuable lessons from these scalable and inclusive frameworks.

Entrepreneurship as a Buffer and Economic Driver

Entrepreneurship is key to workforce agility in India, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Creating, innovating, and adapting through new ventures has generated jobs and driven economic diversification.

India's startup scene has swiftly expanded, with Bangalore and other hubs emerging as global innovation hotspots. Programs like Startup India provide capital, guidance, and resources, fueling a rise in tech founders and social ventures across industries from agriculture to fintech enabling millions to transform their skills into enterprises.

Vietnam's startup ecosystem has expanded rapidly, fueled by foreign capital and domestic innovation. State-supported incubators and innovation hubs nurture startups, while entrepreneurship programs in universities promote creativity and boldness among young talent.

Indonesia's growing consumer market and middle class provide fertile ground for entrepreneurship. E-commerce, digital payments, and microfinance reduce entry barriers, while initiatives like the "1000 Startups Movement" and global partnerships cultivate new entrepreneurs, especially women and marginalized groups.

Global Learnings

As advanced economies contend with aging demographics and slow-moving labor reforms, they can draw inspiration from India, Vietnam, and Indonesia's grassroots adaptability. Real workforce agility isn't just about retraining, it's about empowering individuals to shift swiftly, tap into new opportunities, and create value independently.

International development strategies need to revise traditional definitions of labor market "formality" and "achievement." The path forward embraces adaptable, distributed work supported by robust digital networks and equitable policy frameworks.

Takeaway

India, Vietnam, and Indonesia confront issues such as employment quality and inequality, yet their experience demonstrates that adaptability often surpasses flawlessness. As nations pursue economic recovery and strength, they stand to gain valuable insights from the subtle shifts happening across Asia's varied and vibrant labor forces.

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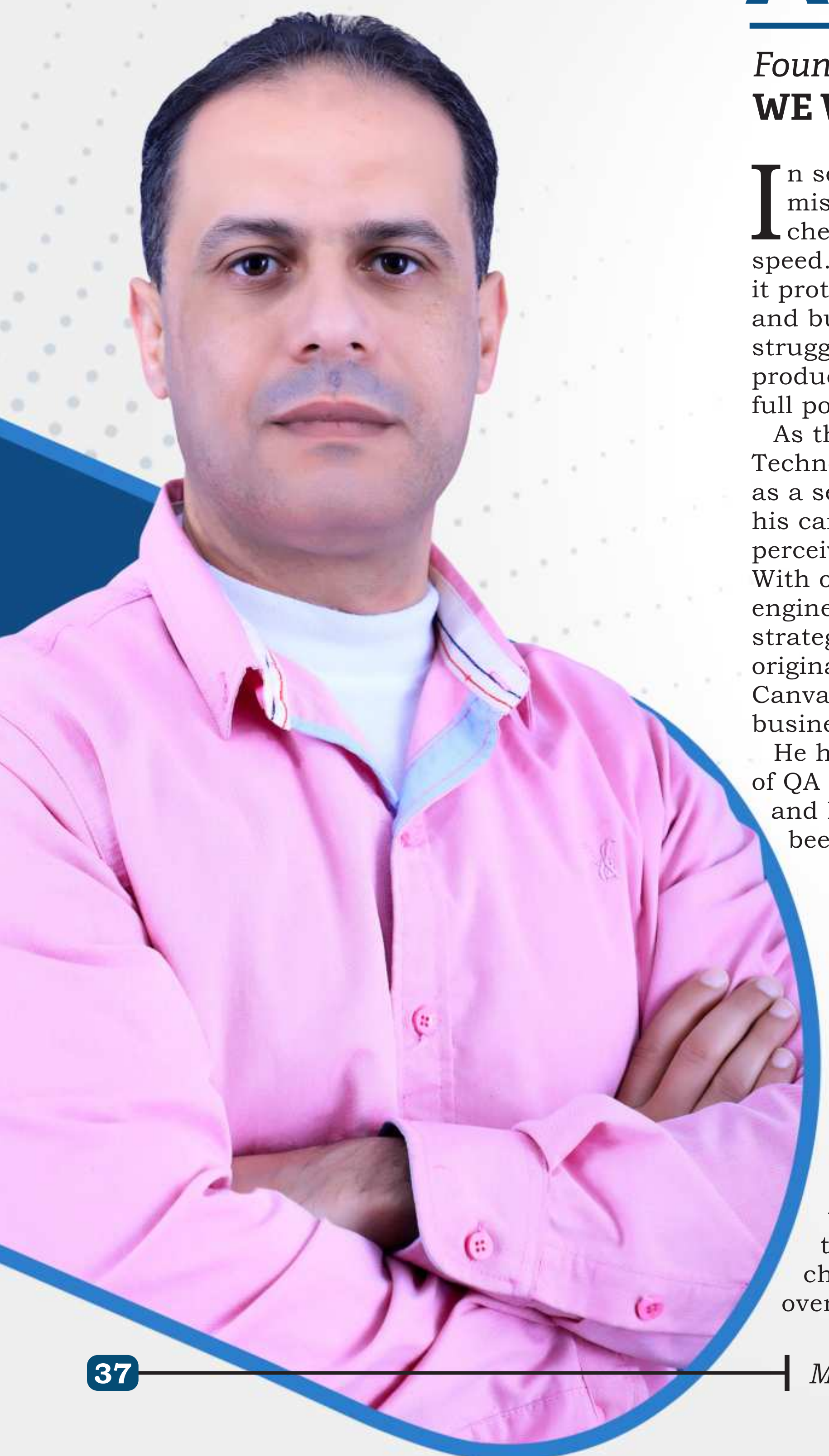


Helping Startups Scale With Intention

IBRAHIM ALSHARIF

Founder & CEO,
WE WILL Technology

In software, quality is often misunderstood — reduced to a phase, a checklist, or even viewed as a blocker to speed. But in truth, it's a strategic lever: it protects value, uncovers risk early, and builds lasting trust. Yet many teams struggle to demonstrate their impact, and product leaders often fail to harness their full potential.

As the Founder & CEO of WE WILL Technology, a company pioneering quality as a service, Ibrahim Alsharif has dedicated his career to reshaping how quality is perceived, practiced, and integrated. With over 15 years of experience across engineering, product leadership, and strategic QA consulting, he has introduced original frameworks — like the Quality Canvas — that help align quality efforts with business success from day one.

He has also mentored the next generation of QA talent through Gaza Sky Geeks, ITC, and PITA. His path, at every turn, has been guided by a single belief:

QUALITY IS NOT A PHASE — IT IS THE FOUNDATION.

TradeFlock spoke with Ibrahim to uncover the pivotal moments that have shaped his journey, the challenges he faces, and how he is overcoming them.

What was the shift like from employee to employer, and what key milestones shaped that journey?

Transitioning from employee to founder was a significant mindset shift, from executing tasks to shaping a vision. As a quality engineer, my focus was on fixing gaps; as a business leader, it became about anticipating market needs and making quality a strategic advantage. However, the key turning point was realizing that most teams treat quality as a reactive, rather than a foundational, approach. That insight inspired me to start WE WILL—a company that embeds quality as a growth enabler from MVP to scale. Milestones, such as developing our Quality Canvas, Value-based Plan, and Product Risk Map, helped us drive real transformation, especially in complex technical environments.

What inspired you to start WE WILL Technology, and what gaps are you addressing?

It all began with a simple question: ***Why do good products fail?*** The answer often wasn't the idea or the code — it was the absence of a structured approach to readiness.

That insight led me to start WE WILL Technology. We don't just test software — we test whether a product is truly ready for success. Our mission is to reposition quality from a checklist to a strategic tool that guides product direction.

The core gap we bridge is the disconnect between technical and business teams. By creating a shared language, we align user experience, business goals, and technical realities through practical, testable methods.

What are some of the biggest challenges you face as a Founder & CEO?

One of the biggest challenges is striking a balance between ambition and execution, while staying focused on navigating big ideas and making tough decisions.

Building a culture of trust and continuous learning is also crucial, particularly in uncertain environments with distributed teams. Leadership, I've learned, is less about giving direction and more about creating systems that empower autonomy and clarity. Scaling across diverse markets adds another layer, requiring adaptability without compromising the company's core identity.

"The core gap we bridge is the disconnect between technical and business teams.

What qualities do you seek when building your core team?

I look for people who think in systems, not just tasks, and most importantly, those who ask the right questions before jumping to solutions. At WE WILL, we're not a traditional task-driven team. We need analytical thinkers with intellectual honesty, curiosity, and the humility to say *"I don't know"* when it counts. Joining us means being more than a tester — it means becoming a strategic partner in shaping how quality drives both product and business outcomes.

What are your greatest strengths as a CEO, and how have your past experiences prepared you?

One of my core strengths is transforming complexity into clarity, connecting details to broader goals, and translating ambiguity into actionable steps.

My background as a trainer and framework designer taught me to build scalable, practical tools and communicate effectively across diverse teams. Leading remote, agile teams in unconventional settings also shaped my approach, which is grounded in realism, empathy, and flexibility — all essential for navigating fast-changing tech environments.

What are your personal and professional goals for the next five years?

Professionally, I'm focused on making WE WILL the go-to partner for startups that want sustainable growth through intentional quality, not just speed. We're building digital tools and refining our advisory models to help teams design for quality from the outset.

On the personal front, I'm launching a strategic quality leadership program tailored for Arabic-speaking QA professionals, with a focus on systems thinking and long-term product health. I also plan to write a book that captures our journey and frameworks — a practical guide for anyone building with a quality-first mindset.

THE PRODIGY WHO TURNS NORMS INTO FOOTNOTES

Why a 16-Year-Old Left Elon Musk's SpaceX for Wall Street

At just 16, most teenagers are deciding which subject to pick from their final years at school. Kairan Quazi, meanwhile, is preparing for one of the boldest career transitions in recent memory, leaving Elon Musk's SpaceX, where he helped build software for Starlink satellites, to join Citadel Securities, one of the world's most powerful trading firms. His move from space technology to high-finance engineering is far more than a headline-grabbing leap. Instead, it's the latest chapter in a journey that has consistently defied expectations and rewritten the timeline of what's possible at his age.

His exit even sparked a brief social-media sideshow when Musk replied to a post about Quazi with, "First time I've ever heard of him." Whatever the intent, the comment did little to dim the spotlight on a precocious engineer whose résumé already includes shipping production-critical software for a satellite network used by millions.

A Compressed Childhood, A Fast Track to Engineering

Quazi's story begins in Pleasanton, California, where his parents and teachers quickly realised that the usual classroom pace would not do. By nine, he was taking college-level courses at Las Positas College while still of primary-school age, later earning an associate degree in mathematics. At 11, he transferred to Santa Clara University (SCU) to study computer science and engineering. In June 2023, at 14, he graduated from SCU, the youngest graduate in the university's history, and took up a full-time software role at SpaceX's Starlink unit.

The Starlink team places a premium on robust, latency-sensitive software that can route internet coverage across thousands of fast-moving satellites. Quazi's work involved production systems that help guide and optimise satellite beams, the sort of algorithmic problem that rewards clean engineering, data-driven design, and relentless iteration.

A Teenager in an Adult's World

Becoming a full-time engineer at 14 forced Quazi to navigate the frictions of being underage in a professional environment. In a widely publicised episode, LinkedIn removed his account for violating its minimum-age policy, only to restore it when he turned 16. The incident became a shorthand for the mismatch between rigid rules and edge-case talent. It also highlighted a theme that would recur in Quazi's path: he tends to encounter norms first, and then prompt them to bend.

Why Leave Rockets for Markets?

At first glance, moving from SpaceX to a trading-technology firm reads like a left turn. But the underlying work has striking overlaps. Both environments are unforgiving of error and dominated by real-time constraints; both reward engineers who can blend maths, systems thinking, and rigorous testing; both demand humility in the face of noisy, fast-changing data.

Quazi has framed the move as the search for a fresh frontier, an arena where the feedback loop is immediate, the intellectual bar is high, and the systems demand millisecond-level performance. Coverage of his decision notes that Citadel Securities' culture of high performance and problem-solving appealed to him, offering a new kind of technical challenge after Starlink. In essence, he isn't "leaving engineering"; he's changing the domain where his engineering gets tested.

Finance also allows him to work at the intersection of software, statistics, and game-theory-like market dynamics. The quantitative developer's toolkit from probabilistic modelling to optimisation and distributed systems, is adjacent to the tools he used in satellite beam planning. In both settings, minute decisions cascade into large-scale outcomes: shifting a beam here affects connectivity for thousands; shaving a millisecond there changes an order's place in a queue that sets global prices. That parallel makes his jump feel less like a leap and more like a translation.

The Making of a Mindset

Quazi's early development offers clues to that instinct. Psychologists described him as "an outlier among outliers," and his parents sought environments that would challenge rather than constrain him. Internships during his pre-teen years and public-facing roles at university (including student government) meant that communication and context-

> In a widely publicised episode, LinkedIn removed his account for violating its minimum-age policy, only to restore it when he turned 16.

switching grew alongside technical depth. As a result, he is unusually comfortable acting as both builder and explainer, a valuable trait in any high-leverage team.

His undergraduate thesis at SCU, which tackled predictive speech generation using transformer architectures, hints at a longer-term interest in applied AI. That background will be useful in finance, where machine-learning methods increasingly touch everything from signal discovery to risk controls. It also provides a bridge back to future AI work if he chooses; careers are long, and his is barely begun.

The Bigger Picture

Quazi's trajectory also mirrors a broader shift among young engineers. The old map of schooling, internship, graduating, and pursuing a single-industry career, is giving way to a sequence of intensive sprints across very different domains. The through-line is not a job title but a habit: go where the problems are hardest, where the data bite back, and where your code is tested by reality.

Whether he spends a handful of years in finance or a decade, the common denominator seems likely to remain: learning rate first. That is the quiet argument his career makes already and it is why his next chapter is worth watching beyond the curiosity of a teen on Wall Street.

THE HUMAN COMPASS

Balancing Ethics and Innovation in an AI World

By **Srikanth Victory**, CTO, AgilityInsights, Award-Winning Technology Executive

We stand at a crossroads where innovation is accelerating faster than society can adapt. AI is writing code, diagnosing diseases, processing insurance claims through Agentic AI, and even shaping decisions once thought to be uniquely human. It's exhilarating, but also unsettling. The question isn't whether AI will transform our world—it already is. The question is: How do we steer it in the right direction?

That's where the **human compass** comes in. Innovation without ethics is like a ship without navigation—powerful, but directionless. Every breakthrough must be weighed against values like trust, fairness, and transparency. Because ultimately, technology reflects us. The choices we make about how to design, deploy, and govern AI are human choices.

In my book AI-Driven Digital Transformation, I introduce a simple but profound equation:

Responsible (AI + Human) = H (∞).

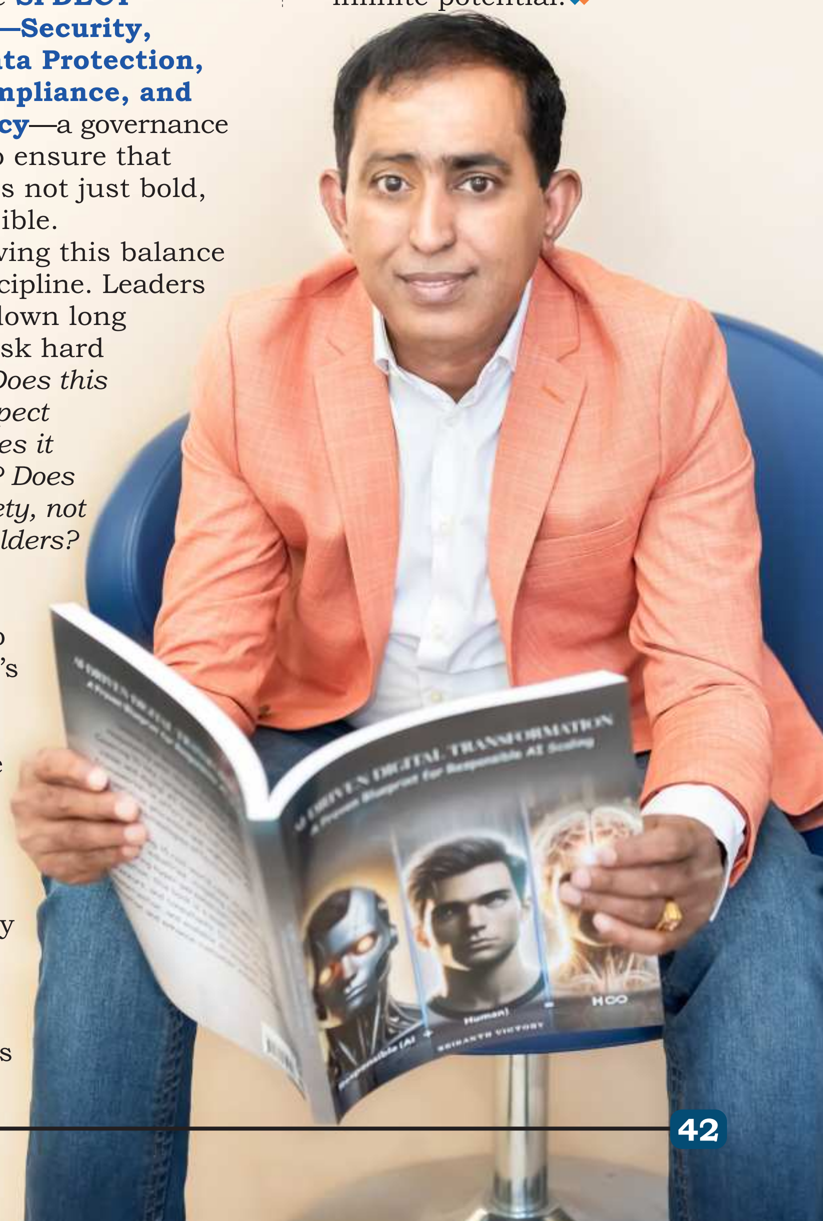
When Responsible AI and Responsible Humans collaborate, we unlock limitless possibilities. This fusion envisions a future of boundless innovation, wisdom, and progress.

As I often say: ***"Mindset, Skillset, and Toolset is the key for any individual's success in any field. This book plays the toolset of a blueprint navigator for any organization's AI digital transformation success."*** That blueprint includes the **SPDECT framework—Security, Privacy, Data Protection, Ethics, Compliance, and Transparency**—a governance backbone to ensure that innovation is not just bold, but responsible.

But achieving this balance requires discipline. Leaders must slow down long enough to ask hard questions: *Does this solution respect privacy? Does it reduce bias? Does it serve society, not just shareholders?* Pausing to reflect isn't resistance to progress—it's responsible progress.

The future of AI will not be decided by algorithms alone, but by the values we embed in them. Innovation is inevitable. Wisdom is optional. And it's our responsibility to choose both.

The compass is in our hands. Just as a telescope aligns with its red-dot finder to reveal the wonders of the night sky, technology must align with humanity. Then the equation is clear: AI + human responsibility = infinite potential.



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Transformative Insurance & AI Leader – Reshaping the Future of Finance & Insurance

MOHAMMAD DANISH EQBAL

CEO, **Liberty Life (& Health) Assurance Uganda**

The insurance sector is undergoing a digital & AI revolution, demanding leaders who blend strategy with innovation and empathy to drive inclusive growth. One such leader is Mohammad Danish Eqbal — a visionary CEO and Data & AI strategist with 16+ years of cross-continental experience. In his role as CEO of Liberty Life Assurance Uganda, he delivered a 600% surge in retail revenue, a 12X expansion in distribution, and launched five disruptive products. These efforts earned multiple Innovation Awards and produced best-in-class customer & employee NPS scores. During that same period, as Chair of the Data, AI & Analytics Committee at Standard Bank's IAM - Africa Regions, Danish helped shape the continent's data-led, digital-first financial future. He shares more during an exclusive interaction with TradeFlock.

Could you walk us through your professional journey and some of the milestones that shaped your leadership path?

I have spent over 16 years in financial services, largely insurance, across India and Africa. My career traversed through reputed organizations like Dai-ichi, Aviva, and Tata AIG/AIA, where I worked across strategy, transformation, finance, and distribution. At Tata AIA, I also led Data, AI, and Innovation, building a CoE that delivered over USD 115 Mn annually. It feels humble and fulfilling that the organisation won JRD QV Award for business excellence and DATOM Award for data & AI excellence.

Three years ago, I took on my first international assignment as CEO in Uganda, possibly as one of the industry's youngest at 36. Concurrently, I chaired the Data, AI & Analytics Committee – IAM Africa Regions for the continent's largest bank. These milestones reflect my philosophy that careers aren't built on titles alone but through continuous learning, adaptability, and the courage to transform businesses for lasting, people-centric impact.

The future of insurance isn't about efficiency alone — it is about becoming invisible, integrated, and indispensable in people's lives. That is the real transformation AI will deliver.

Moving from India's mature insurance market to Uganda's emerging landscape must have been challenging. What was the biggest mindset shift?

The most important shift was moving from a market of optimization to one of creation. In India, the challenge was often about refining established processes. In Uganda, the real challenge was to build trust in insurance from the ground up, with penetration at just 0.87%.

This also required a cultural shift in leadership. As an outsider, I needed to integrate, build trust, and create a high-performance culture. Within a year, our eNPS became one of the highest across Africa regions. *The mindset change was about moving from being a player in the game to a force that grows the entire playing field, focusing on growth and inclusion.*

You transformed a stagnant business into a growth engine. What was the boldest move, and what did it teach you?

When I joined, the company was a market leader in group insurance but had a marginal retail presence. My boldest move was launching a hyper-growth, inclusive retail strategy. This meant rethinking everything from the ground up.

We launched five disruptive, customer-centric products in record time. Our award-winning product was a market first, allowing one policy to cover up to 22 family members on a fully cloud-based digital stack. We also launched a unique savings-and-protection product that removed punitive surrender charges, empowering customers with flexibility. We built entirely new ecosystem partnerships, launching an award-winning app with a major Church community (14M members) and a USSD product with a leading telecom (15.6M subscribers). This product innovation, coupled with a 12X agent force expansion, led to a 600% growth in retail revenue.

The lesson was clear: bold decisions aren't about blind risk. They're about listening deeply to what customers need and having the courage to dismantle old systems to deliver it.

As a CEO, how did you ensure that strategy, leadership, and execution stayed aligned?

Alignment came from shared ownership. I made our strategy a collective exercise, not a top-down mandate. Senior leaders and, crucially, middle managers were deeply involved in shaping the roadmap and owning strategic pillars. This created an unbreakable link between the vision and the people responsible for executing it.

To reinforce this, we implemented structured reviews, transparent performance tracking, and recognition programs to celebrate execution excellence. I often emphasize that "*God lies in the design, execution, and excellence.*" A brilliant vision is powerless until people are aligned, engaged, and empowered to deliver together with discipline and a profound sense of ownership.

Looking ahead, what do you see as the next frontier for AI in insurance?

AI in insurance is entering a new phase, moving beyond predicting risks to actively preventing them and personalizing solutions. Soon, intelligent assistants won't just answer queries but will manage policies proactively, recommend coverage changes after life milestones, and process claims in real-time.

AI will also enable the design of dynamic, modular products that evolve with customers' changing risk profiles. By integrating data from health devices and IoT, insurers will shift from simply paying claims to genuinely safeguarding well-being and financial security.

THE BUSINESS BEHIND THE BALL

The Business Models Behind the **IPL, NBA,** and **Saudi Pro League**

In 2023, the business of sports roared louder than the action on the field. The Indian Premier League (IPL) smashed benchmarks with a $6.2 billion broadcast deal, positioning it as the second most lucrative league globally on a per-game basis, just behind the NFL. That same year, the Phoenix Suns were acquired for a record-breaking $4 billion, the most expensive franchise transaction in NBA history, a clear signal of how dramatically the financial stakes, and valuations, have escalated.

At the same time, Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) invested over $1 billion to attract football superstars such as Ronaldo, Neymar, and Benzema,a bold move aimed at elevating the Saudi Pro League into a major force in global sports and entertainment.

What was once a clash of skill and will has now transformed into a struggle for capital.Once content to watch from afar, global investors, sovereign funds, and private equity firms are now shaping the playbook.

From the IPL's meteoric rise to the NBA's multi-billion-dollar empires and the Saudi Pro League's oil-backed surge, professional sports have entered a new era: where passion is capitalized, teams are high-value assets, and leagues operate like financial institutions in jerseys.

Cricket's Emerging Global Powerhouse: IPL

The IPL is a standout instance of how sports leagues can shift into highly lucrative investment ventures. Since its debut in 2008, the IPL has rapidly evolved into one of the wealthiest and most-viewed cricket leagues globally, driven by its combination of high-quality cricket, entertainment, and celebrity appeal. Its profitable broadcasting agreements and sponsorships have established it as a financial behemoth.

The IPL has continually broken viewership records, drawing millions of fans every season. In 2023, media rights alone earned roughly $500 million, boosting the league's total worth beyond $10 billion. This impressive revenue comes not just from cricket, but also from TV contracts, sponsorships, and fantasy sports, evolving the IPL into a dynamic business ecosystem.

The IPL's allure to global brands such as Coca-Cola, Dream11, and Vivo has boosted its financial worth. The inclusion of high-profile international stars and emerging Indian talent maintains the league's appeal to sponsors and investors. This combination of compelling gameplay and commercial success provides investors with tangible returns, cementing the IPL as a profitable investment opportunity.

A Global Powerhouse with Unmatched Financial Potential: NBA

The NBA's global reach spans Asia, Europe, and Africa, attracting high-

profile investors seeking both the sport and its branding potential. By tapping into markets like China, India, and Africa, the league diversifies revenue through broadcast rights, sponsorships, and merchandising, boosting its financial strength.

In 2014, Michael Jordan purchased a minority stake in the Charlotte Hornets for $275 million. By 2023, the team was worth $1.8 billion, underscoring the increasing financial worth of NBA franchises.

The NBA's financial landscape now draws a wide range of investors, including celebrities like LeBron James and Drake, as well as tech giants like Alibaba and Microsoft. Its international popularity makes owning an NBA team a gateway to the rapidly growing global media and digital content market.

The NBA presents lucrative investment opportunities through assets like NBA League Pass for global subscriptions and partnerships with ESPN and TNT for broadcasting revenue. Its diverse income streams and strong brand make it a top investment vehicle.

The Emerging Hub of Sports Investment: SPL

Fueled by Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia is leveraging sports to diversify its economy and decrease oil reliance. The Public Investment Fund (PIF) has invested in leading clubs like Al Nassr and Al Hilal, while luring international icons such as Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar, and Karim Benzema.

The SPL's financial growth is striking, with the Saudi government investing billions to boost its profile, draw foreign investment, and secure global sponsorships. The league is set to land multi-billion-dollar media rights and lucrative endorsement deals targeting the expanding Middle Eastern market.

The SPL's investment potential stems not only from its financial support but also from its geopolitical and cultural influence. Saudi Arabia's ambition to establish itself as a global sports center, capitalizing on its strategic location, has drawn international investors, promising significant returns through athletic success and media visibility.

The Changing Landscape of Sports Leagues as Financial Ventures

The emergence of leagues like the IPL, NBA, and Saudi Pro League reflects a transformation in global sports from a niche domain to a powerful financial force. Fueled by sponsorships, broadcast deals, merchandising, and digital media, sports have become a profitable arena drawing investors from diverse sectors.

For investors, sports leagues present a compelling blend of sustained growth and immediate profits. More than just competition, they operate as intricate financial systems fueled by ownership stakes, brand value, and media deals.

Building Communities That Scale

NIKKI ESTES

Founder & CEO,
Market Me More

MOST VISIONARY

GLOBAL CEOs in 2025

Innovation has always thrived where courage meets connection. From payments to technology, the most transformative shifts are often sparked by leaders who see possibilities long before others do.

Nikki Estes, Founder & CEO of Market Me More, is one of those visionaries. After nearly 16 years supporting her husband, Jason Estes, shaping the future of fintech with iCG Pay, formally known as iCheckGateway.com, she launched Top Voices Unite, creating a global community of LinkedIn thought leaders dedicated to impact through education, collaboration, and service. She co-founded Market Me More, a fractional marketing partner that helps technology brands scale with credibility and creativity, and later Emerging Voices Unite, giving rising leaders the same platform to grow influence and opportunity.

Today, Nikki focuses on amplifying leaders worldwide, building ecosystems where strategy and community fuel measurable growth. During an exclusive conversation with Tradeflock, she reflects on her journey, her milestones, and the movement she is determined to scale.

What was the boldest risk you took early in your entrepreneurial journey that ended up paying off?

After selling our fintech company, iCheckGateway.com, I founded Market Me More and established a LinkedIn Top Voices Unite community. That's where I met Nick Larson, whose vision for health and wellness inspired me to sponsor the Ageless Evolution Summit After Party.

It was a real gamble. The event was nationwide, and I was unfamiliar with California. While I had executed numerous philanthropic events, I had never supported a live event or livestream for business

professionals at such a scale. From shipping games and ordering food blindly to flying in my partners from India and building swag bags in a hotel room, everything felt uncertain. I wasn't sure if it would attract clients or simply showcase my team's capabilities beyond LinkedIn.

In the end, it did both. The risk built credibility for Market Me More and opened the door for Top Voices Unite and Emerging Voices Unite, two communities that now connect thought leaders and rising experts with organizations, providing consulting, speaking, and training that have reached thousands of founders and executives.

What gap did you see that inspired Market Me More?

Many businesses began leaning on AI tools for quick messaging, but the results often felt robotic. I saw a gap for more credibility and authentic visibility. At Market Me More, we amplify leaders' voices through livestreams and in-person events, creating real human-to-human connections. Of course, we support them through blogs, posts, and newsletters, but everything ultimately ties back to the stage they take, the panels they lead, and the industries they educate. As I like to say, "while content is king, connection is queen." That focus helps clients stop guessing what to say next and instead grow intentionally by building networks before, during, and after every event we support.

What challenge almost made you rethink your path, and how did you push through?

Moving from one acquisition straight into building Market Me More was tougher than I expected. I was the only team member with corporate-level experience in the US, so I handled every sales call and major decision. My team sought the same significant outcome my husband and I had achieved in our last venture. Still, the burden of their salaries and the operational demands of running the business often felt overwhelming. "There was so much I didn't know that I didn't know." To push through, I leaned heavily on my network of coaches, mentors, and industry leaders. Asking the uncomfortable questions, staying curious, and constantly learning helped me grow as a leader while balancing the needs of my startup and my family.

What strategies have helped Market Me More stand out?

We introduced livestreams as a way to build brands, foster collaboration, and create real visibility. At first, many leaders were uneasy about going live on platforms like YouTube or LinkedIn, so we held practice sessions, offered encouragement, and built their confidence step by step. The goal was community over competition, progress over perfection, helping each leader share their unique vision and why their expertise mattered. This approach not only eased their anxiety but also strengthened their influence, generated new collaborations, and even brought clients to the point where they could no longer take on additional business. That proved the strategy truly worked.

What project excites you most right now, and why is community so central to your leadership?

In 2024, I set a goal to help 50 Voices amplify their impact by the end of 2025. Since then, I've built deep relationships with more than 170 thought leaders, supporting events in cities from Fort Myers and New York to Amsterdam and Palermo. We've helped leaders publish books, produce documentaries, and connect with platforms like Buzzable and VideoFX, sharing stories that might otherwise go unheard.

What excites me most is seeing others now take the stage, asking the questions, and leading with intention, proving this movement belongs to many, not just me. These communities remind me daily that we can dream big, face challenges, and still persevere with joy. We are creating intentional change, a movement that draws from the best of each to lift one another.

SPOTLIGHT

THE NEW CEO PLAYBOOK

Leading in a Data-Driven, Transparent Era

This stereotype of a traditional CEO, who is charismatic, assertive, and eternally self-confident, has had a significant influence on business culture. Whether it is the command-and-control leadership philosophy of Jack Welch at General Electric or the messianic view of products and culture at Apple by Steve Jobs, the myth of the CEO as an omniscient leader or mentor has formed corporate governance over the last decades. However, in an era where the world is becoming increasingly informed by data, transparency, stakeholder capitalism, and the decentralization of decision-making, one must ask whether the world still needs this sort of leader.

The Archetype of Legacy: Charismatic, Confident, Dominant.

In the past, CEOs were supposed to represent power and confidence. They were at the pyramid's peak, controlling the strategy, giving direct instructions to teams, and were often the faces of the brand among the masses. Values such as charisma, decisiveness, and confidence were some of the qualities that could not be compromised in leadership. This model worked effectively during the industrial age, when size, productivity, and written structures of authority inspired success.

Even in the early digital era, leaders such as Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk leveraged their vision and assertive leadership to propel their businesses to the forefront. Their daredevil was envied, even in the face of controversy. However, the style is increasingly being questioned in a world that demands more subtlety, responsibility, and shared intellect.

The Transparency Age of Data-Driven Data

In the new environment, the decision-making process is no longer an art of gut feeling, but rather relies on conclusions drawn from huge volumes of data. Increased transparency, driven by things like social media, whistleblower protections, and ESG standards, has ensured that CEOs can no longer work behind closed doors so easily. Workers, customers, and shareholders are no longer concerned with the transparency of a company's performance, but also with the transparency of company values and ethical standards.

A report by Deloitte showed that 70 percent of millennial and Gen Z employees favor collaborative, humble, and open-to-feedback leaders, as opposed to the charismatic leaders who ooze omnipresent confidence. Activation of employee activism, the demand for inclusive leadership, and the anticipation of social and environmental responsibility are replacing the lines of leadership by redefining its role.

Charisma instead of being rejected

It does not mean that charisma is outdated. On the contrary, its definition is getting transformed. Rather than the single-minded visioneer who carries the top and dictates to the staff, the new charismatic CEO is the person who electrifies networks, summons trust among various stakeholders, and motivates not with spectacles but honesty.

A report by Deloitte showed that 70 percent of millennial and Gen Z employees favor collaborative, humble, and open-to-feedback leaders, as opposed to the charismatic leaders who ooze omnipresent confidence.

There is the model of the Patagonia company, whose leadership does not follow the classic chain of command, but instead emphasizes the care of the environment and communication with various company stakeholders. The admiration associated with the executives of this company is not that they took center stage, but rather that they are able to put the company's goals in harmony with the values it shares.

The new archetype also does not eliminate the necessity of confidence; it only shifts the emphasis to it, as confidence in people, data, and process, rather than in one's instincts.

The Hybrid CEO: Command and Collaboration

The future does not necessarily belong to the complete abandonment of the archetype of the CEO; the future may be a hybrid approach where leaders can alternate between being assertive and inclusive leaders, vision-oriented and helpful listeners, bosses, and those who empower. This, McKinsey refers to as the ambidextrous leader, who can negotiate both performance and purpose.

During a crisis period, a CEO may need to revert to conventional leadership qualities to steer the ship. However, attributes such as empathy, curiosity, and adaptability are necessary in developing a long-term culture and strategy.

Reimagining Leadership Pipes

Such a movement will influence future CEO selection and development. Traditionally, assertiveness, competitiveness,

During a crisis period, a CEO may need to revert to conventional leadership qualities to steer the ship.

and charisma marked potential candidates. Now, boards see value in emotional intelligence, cross-functional experience, and diversity.

Organizations like the World Economic Forum and Harvard Business Review advocate expanding leadership criteria to include mental strength, moral conviction, and stakeholder agility. Some favor co-CEO or rotating leadership to navigate today's complex business environment.

It is the Evolution that Cannot Be Prevented

The traditional CEO style, marked by charisma and confidence, is evolving as rapid change and stakeholder demands grow. While these qualities remain useful, they must now be supported by transparency, empathy, and systems thinking.

Tomorrow's CEO is not a superhero but a conductor, orchestrating people, technology, and purpose. Transitioning can be challenging, especially for old companies and traditional cultures, but it is essential. The world now requires not only new products and services but also a new leadership mindset.

Effective CEOs in a complex, volatile, and interconnected world must recognize that power shifts from command to connection.

MOST VISIONARY
GLOBAL CEOs in 2025

AI's Hardware Revolution

SHELLY HENRY

CEO, **Moores Lab AI**

The semiconductor world is entering a once-in-a-generation transformation. Just as the computer revolution reshaped industries in the 80s and 90s, artificial intelligence is now redefining how silicon itself is conceived, built, and scaled. Few leaders understand this shift as deeply as Shelly Henry, CEO of Moores Lab AI.

Over the past 25 years, he has worked on some of the most ambitious technologies of our time—from creating Microsoft's first Holographic Processing Unit for HoloLens, to advancing quantum computing, to leading large-scale server and AI chip programs that fueled Azure's growth. Each role added a new layer to his perspective on what's possible. Today, as CEO of MooresLabAI, he is driving a bold vision to democratize chip design and accelerate silicon development worldwide.

In an exclusive conversation with TradeFlock, he reflects on his journey, leadership, and the mission shaping his company's future.

What inspired you to start MooresLabAI, and what milestones defined your journey?

I have spent more than 25 years in the semiconductor world, building 18 chips for products like Xbox, HoloLens, quantum computers, servers, and AI systems. Each one took about 14 months, 200 engineers, and an enormous cost. That rhythm hadn't really changed in two decades. At some point, I thought, this has to be different.

When AI began to mature, I saw the chance. Our goal was to reduce the 14-month cycle to four months, making chip development far cheaper and more accessible. That matters most for startups. They may not have infrastructure, but they have bold ideas. And when you lower the barriers, innovation takes off.

Co-founding MooresLabAI after years at Microsoft marks a turning point for me. Chip design had always been painfully manual, and I knew AI could change that. When we launched VerifAgent, it cut verification time by 85 percent and sped up silicon schedules sevenfold. That was the moment we knew it worked. Since then, pilots with Fortune 500s and scrappy startups alike have reinforced our mission: faster, cheaper, more accessible silicon.

How did your Microsoft experience shape your vision, and what mindset shift was required for a startup?

At Microsoft, I was lucky to work on technologies like HoloLens and quantum computing. Those experiences taught me two things. First, bold ideas demand fearless execution. Second, breakthroughs happen when disciplines collide. *"That mindset inspired MooresLabAI," and I often say, "because just as HoloLens reimagined how we interact with computers, we wanted to reimagine how silicon itself is built."*

But moving from big tech to a startup required unlearning. At Microsoft, I had a vast ecosystem around me. Even small moves had enormous backing. At MooresLabAI, every decision could decide survival. The shift was treating risk not as fear, but as fuel. Instead of optimizing mature systems, I had to build brand new ones where agility and customer obsession mattered more than process.

What skepticism did you face, and how did you overcome it?

When we first pitched AI-driven chip automation, the pushback was instant. People said, LLMs hallucinate, verification's too complex, quality will suffer. And honestly, I get that. Chip design is brutal. One mistake can cost millions.

So we didn't argue, we proved. Pilots showed 90-plus percent productivity gains, saved hundreds of engineering hours, and caught bugs long before tape-out. By keeping EDA tools in the loop, we stripped away hallucinations and produced compile-ready, human-grade engineering. That mix of trust and results turned skeptics into believers.

What excites you most at MooresLabAI, and what global impact do you foresee?

Right now I'm most excited about how we're expanding beyond VerifAgent into a full suite of AI-driven platforms for silicon. VerifAgent began with IP-level verification and is scaling to full SoC verification. But that's just the start. The roadmap includes modules that can take a chip from its very first architecture specification all the way to silicon validation.

The ripple effects are huge. Faster AI accelerators, more affordable electronics, and rapid progress in industries from automotive to space all become possible. For me, the bigger picture is democratization. I want small, ambitious teams anywhere in the world to have the same ability to design silicon as tech giants. That is how the next wave of innovation begins.

> I want small, ambitious teams anywhere in the world to have the same ability to design silicon as tech giants. That is how the next wave of innovation begins.

How do you see your role evolving, and what lessons guide you?

I started my career as an engineer at Arm, working on tiny parts of large chips. Over time, I became a project lead and then a manager, which gave me a broader view of the whole process. At Microsoft, I worked on products like Xbox and HoloLens and saw how an idea could evolve into a finished product in the hands of millions. *"That gave me the confidence to start MooresLabAI, because building a company is the same journey: you take an idea and turn it into something real."*

The difference now is that nothing is already in place. As an entrepreneur, I'm building both the product and the processes from scratch. It's harder, but it's also more exciting. My role is to guide that journey with conviction, agility, and a relentless focus on customers.

Along the way, I've also seen technologies rise and fall. The biggest lesson is that no force has reshaped this industry like AI. It reminds me of the computer revolution of the 80s and 90s. Back then, no one imagined computers would touch every job. AI is following that same path. Soon, it will be inseparable from chip design. That belief drives me every day.

30 YEARS BACK, 30 FORWARD

How Past CEO's Leadership Trends Shape Tomorrow's Business

Over the last three decades, the CEO role has transformed from operational overseer to strategic leader. Each era's leadership style has reflected its cultural, technological, and economic forces – and the next 30 years promise yet another dramatic shift.

1990s: Operational CEOs

With globalization, deregulation, and efficiency at the forefront, leaders like Lou Gerstner at IBM focused on shareholder value, process management, and cost control. Wall Street prized quarterly precision, top-down leadership prevailed, and charisma outweighed emotional intelligence.

2000s: Visionary Technocrats

The dot-com boom birthed the visionary technocrat, Steve Jobs and Jeff Bezos, who prioritised technology, products, and disruption over predictability. Founder-CEOs became icons. Agility and "fail fast" cultures thrived, but unchecked ambition led to scandals, toxic workplaces, and ethical lapses.

2010s: Data-Literate, Empathetic Leaders

Post-2008, CEOs like Satya Nadella, Mary Barra, and Arvind Krishna blended data-driven strategy with inclusivity, humility, and transparency. Stakeholder capitalism emerged, demanding attention to climate change, equity, and purpose alongside performance.

The Next 30 Years: The Meta-Leader Era

Ecosystem Orchestrators – Future CEOs will evolve from central authorities to network conductors, navigating decentralized teams, cross-sector collaborations, and platform-driven models. Success will hinge on alliance-building, cultural fluency, and regulatory diplomacy.

Hyper-Human, Hyper-Digital – They'll pair emotional intelligence with digital literacy, understanding emerging tech like AI, quantum computing, and immersive platforms. Empathy, communication, and mental health advocacy will become as vital as tech strategy.

Permanent Beta Mindset – CEOs will operate in constant change, using iterative strategies and live data. Experimentation will replace rigid five-year plans, demanding resilience, humility, and rapid learning.

Ethical Navigation – Leaders will be judged on how they achieve results. With AI and synthetic media posing dilemmas, CEOs will act as moral guides, embedding justice, sustainability, and governance at the core—possibly supported by Chief Ethics Officers.

From Hero to Ensemble – The "hero CEO" will give way to leadership ensembles, executive pods, regional leads, or rotating chairs, distributing decision-making across the organisation.

The Meta-CEO

The future CEO will merge tech literacy with emotional intelligence, strategic daring with operational humility, and personal vision with collective empowerment. They won't just steer companies, they'll navigate the transformation of civilisation itself.


MERCEDES BENZ
G 63 AMG
430 KW/585 PS
POWER(KW)/ POWER(PS)
4.2 S
ACCELERATION 0-100KM/H
240 KM/H
TOP SPEED