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## COVER STORY

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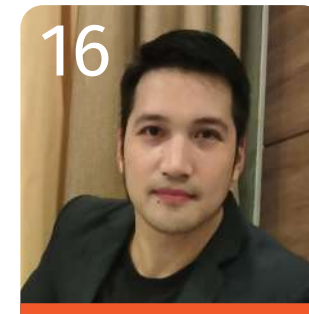
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# From the EDITOR

## Happy Reading!

Dear Readers,

Over the past few months, we as a team have had the incredible privilege of meeting leaders from various backgrounds. Each interaction has been a powerful reminder of the diverse ways people contribute to their industries and communities. Their stories of innovation, passion, resilience, and impact have not only inspired us but also shown us how much we can learn and grow from one another. It is from this wellspring of inspiration that the **Business Frontier Leadership Conclave & Awards** was born. A premier conference & awards ceremony that brings together leaders from various sectors to learn from each other & to celebrate them.

These exceptional individuals deserve to be celebrated, and I am thrilled to invite all of you to explore our website and send in your nominations (<https://thebusinessfrontier.com/leadership/>) to join us for the Dubai Edition in February 2025. Your participation will not only honour these leaders but will also contribute to a community dedicated to growth and excellence.

Coming to this issue, we are proud to feature Tanya Goodwin, Founder & CEO of Botanical Chemist Palm Cove, on our cover. Tanya's journey of blending technology with pharmaceutical science, fueled by her passion for natural remedies, is truly captivating. Her entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to innovation make her story a must-read.

We also shine a spotlight on other influential leaders such as Julian Galeano Chica, Rusmin Lawin, Zulfiqar Kamal, Jorge Allen, and Ju Young Shin, among others. Their stories of leadership and innovation are both inspiring and motivating.

Thank you for being a part of our community. I look forward to celebrating with you at the **Business Frontier Leadership Conclave & Awards**.

Until Next Time. Happy Reading!



**Megha S Anthony**  
Senior Editor,  
Business Frontier

# BUSINESS FRONTIER

## EXECUTIVE TEAM

Crestus Publishing  
Publisher

Jatin Deepchandani  
CEO

## EDITORIAL TEAM

Megha S Anthony  
Senior Editor

Deepa Natarajan Lobo  
Assistant Editor

## DESIGN TEAM

Alex Mitchell  
Art & Design Director

Casey Taylor  
Co-Designer

## SALES & MARKETING TEAM

Adam Chin  
Business Development Manager

Jason Hughes  
Sales Executive

Samantha Walker  
Digital Media Consultant

Sales Office:  
E: [accounts@thebusinessfrontier.com](mailto:accounts@thebusinessfrontier.com)  
T: +44 7411549641

Head Office:  
Crestus, Suite 803, 8th Floor,  
Hennessy Tower, Pope Hennessy  
Street, Port Louis, Mauritius

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# The Face of Change in Digital Advertising

Julian Galeano Chica, CEO, La Mediatica, looks back at his professional journey and gives an insight into the digital landscape of Latin America



**J**ulian Galeano Chica, CEO, La Mediatica, can be considered as the pioneer of digital advertising in Latin America. In 2010, La Mediatica emerged as a revolutionary force in the LATAM region, at a crucial time when the digital landscape lacked specialised media buying expertise.

Looking ahead with innovative foresight and determination, the company embarked on a journey to recreate the standards of brand storytelling in the digital sphere. As traditional agencies remained busy with conventional advertising approaches, La Mediatica embraced the digital frontier, carving out a niche that prioritised performance-driven strategies. The company has a long list of accolades that helps it stand out in the innovative landscape in which it operates.

In 2023, La Mediatica launched partnerships with esteemed brands such as Marathon Sport, Nike, Cinopolis, and Subway, among others. In an interview with **Business Frontier**, Julian Galeano Chica opens up about the avant-garde approach of the digital media agency in the Latin American region.

## Please walk us through your professional journey.

I am a marketing professional from the University of Manizales, with an MBA in Digital Business from the University of Barcelona. An entrepreneur, investor, and manager in multiple digital advertising companies across Latin America, I have been working in the media sector since 1998. I served at McCann Erickson Colombia and UM for 12 years in various roles including Consumer Research Director, Growth Officer, and Managing Director for Peru.

I am also the Founder and CEO for Latin America of Mediatica, a digital media agency that has garnered multiple awards throughout the region, including: Google Premier Partner for three consecutive years and Facebook Preferred Member among many others. I am also the founding member of the SAB Marketing Connections agency network, which has been recognised in the last two years as one of LATAM's Agency Networks of the Year by Campaign Magazine. I am also the founder of Blaster, an Omnichannel programmatic advertising platform.

## Did you always want to enter the field of media?

Since childhood, I have been passionate about business creation, undertaking small ventures from selling newspapers and running school lotteries to selling groceries. My passion for business led me to study marketing. This broadened my perspective and provided me with the tools to eventually start Mediatica several years later.

## What drove you to launch Mediatica? Tell us a bit about your core operations.

When global digital media began to gain traction, large advertising agencies were still focused on traditional media and didn't develop a product that could take advantage of the new opportunities digital media presented. That's where Mediatica came in. We saw the potential of digital media and began developing a product that could take full advantage of the new media ecosystem. We focused on performance campaigns that could directly influence the sales of clients.

Mediatica is dedicated to delivering strategies that drive tangible results

for clients, focusing on maximising Return on Ad Spend (ROAS) in marketing efforts. The agency prides itself on its innovative approach. Furthermore, Mediatica specialises in its ability to quickly learn, unlearn, and relearn, allowing the team to adapt to the constantly shifting environment of digital platforms and remaining ahead of industry trends.

## How do you ensure that you have an edge over your competitors?

Our pioneering mindset contributes significantly to staying ahead of the competition. First, being in Latin America means that digital developments arrive months later. Therefore, we have a policy of attending several important fairs that bring together the main industry suppliers, as well as young companies showcasing their innovations.

Second, once digital platforms introduce beta products to the region, we are the first agency to request participation. By testing the product, assisting in its development, and refining it, we gain experience curves of six months to a year before others begin using the same development. Third, when platforms introduce new features, we are the first to adopt them.

## How has the business of media changed over the years?

The media industry is in a constant flux. I entered the business in the early 2000s amid two significant changes. Media departments were transforming into independent companies, striving to build their value proposition independently from creative agencies. To achieve this, they began to invest heavily in research to understand how users from different media categories were utilising media, and made decisions based on this information.

Over time, the industry became more sophisticated in the use of probabilistic data, projecting population usage based on small consumer samples. Finally, the emergence of digital media has led to further sophisticated real-time data collection, and decisions are made not only based on media usage but also on user interests, purchase intentions, and actual transactional behaviour. This shift has been facilitated by retail media.

“  
With the emergence of commerce media, the industry is on the brink of another significant shift.”

## What leadership principles do you apply to make sure that your team performs to the best of its capabilities?

Being in Latin American markets, it's important to instill in the team the belief that they can achieve international recognition. Therefore, conveying and sharing this vision is crucial in gaining their trust and commitment.

Another key point is ensuring that the team takes pride in its achievements. So, we strive to ensure that their results resonate within the industry, not only to increase the agency's visibility but also to highlight their individual contributions. In addition, we encourage them to continuously improve their skills, pursue further education, obtain certifications, and strive to become elite professionals in their respective markets.

## With the rapidly changing face of technology and media, what do you think the future holds for the industry?

With the emergence of commerce media, the industry is on the brink of another significant shift. This introduces the opportunity to utilise user transactional data as a segmentation criterion, providing insights into who is truly ready to make a purchase, thus making a significant difference compared to the best tools we have been using until now, which were based on people's interests and intentions.

# A Symbiotic Relationship with Infrastructure Development



Rusmin Lawin, Global Ambassador of Real Estate Indonesia, speaks to Business Frontier on the emerging realty sector of Asia Pacific



**R**usmin Lawin, Global Ambassador of Real Estate Indonesia since 2008, straddles the property market like a colossus.

With stellar achievements, he acts as the conduit linking the investment ecosystems of Asia-Pacific and the Middle East. Rusmin has not only led from the front, catalysing the development of the country and the region with his initiatives, he also serves as a role model to the younger generation of leaders.

He is the recipient of Asia Pacific Real Estate Leader at CEO BURJ AWARD 2022 in Dubai and serves as Chairman of the Regional Developments Committee at Indonesia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN), Vice President of Real Estate Indonesia Developers Association, and a Board Member of Indonesia Hong Kong Business Association.

Of the many hats he wears, Rusmin occupies major positions in FIABCI, including President of FIABCI Asia Pacific and FIABCI Representative to the United Nations Geneva. In an interview with Business Frontier, Rusmin digs into the realty sector of Asia Pacific, providing a fresh perspective of its role in economic growth and its symbiotic relationship with infrastructure development.

## What are the initiatives you have taken as the president of FIABCI?

As the president of FIABCI, I oversee the Asia-Pacific region, which includes a set of 18 countries with diverse social, economic and cultural settings. Working to provide an enabling environment for innovation and research, we are focused on seeing the development of real estate with an emphasis on Asia where we have witnessed remarkable growth. In an attempt to foster global outreach, I have criss-crossed the globe to promote projects such as Nusantara New Capital City, one of the biggest infrastructure projects (\$33billion).

The project will act as a new economic hub in the ASEAN region and lead the eastern region of ASEAN under BIMP EAGA (Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area, a sub-cooperation programme of the southeast Asian bloc. The subregion is spread over a land area of 1.6 million square kilometres,

with about 73 million inhabitants. In addition, the liberalisation of foreign investment in the property sector, according to which one can make a purchase under one's name using a passport, will go a long way in making Indonesia a global property hub. These are the initiatives that have contributed to the consolidation of the property investment market in the region.

## Which leadership principles provide you with a leverage to function efficiently in the real estate sector?

My leadership principles are enshrined in the belief that real estate acts as a significant asset, especially for those looking to scale the socioeconomic curve. I am a strong supporter of the idea that being a property owner is the key to economic success even when digital innovations are hogging the limelight. My objective, as a leader in the real estate sector, is to send the message— especially to those in the developing world—that ownership of property yields immense economic clout.

## The property market is on a sharp growth trajectory in Indonesia. What are the reasons behind this expansion? Do you think the nation's infrastructure development has fuelled real estate growth?

Several reasons are behind the growth of the property market in Indonesia, making it an investor's paradise. First, population data of the nation project a fast-expanding demand for housing. Second, Indonesia —one of the most populous countries in the world — has stepped up investment in infrastructure such as toll roads and the recently developed Bullet Train. The development in infrastructure has a multiplier effect on the property market, boosting growth and driving prices.

In addition, Indonesia has a huge housing backlog of around 11.6 million units, with the shortage amounting to about 400,000 units per annum. The yawning gap makes the property market ripe for investors eyeing significant gains.



## What are the long-term goals in conjunction with which you are leading the organisation?

A primary goal of our organisation is to reduce the housing backlog by developing affordable but quality housing, especially for workers. For promoting industries, we aim to use the advantages provided by Indonesia such as a huge market, abundant natural resources, and developed infrastructure to draw investment — both domestic and international. Being the leader, my commitment lies in keeping growth by providing an enabling environment that is conducive to promoting investment and sustainable economic growth.

## You have a wealth of industry experience. Drawing on the quality and length of this experience, how will you advise the leaders of tomorrow?

In today's world given to nanosecond attention spans, focus and determination seem to come at a premium. These days, it is common for young professionals to change jobs frequently for immediate financial reward. I will advise them to find their niche in the business and acquire domain expertise with the help of continuous learning and development.

# Using Nature's Healing Power to Work Wonders



**Tanya Goodwin, Founder & CEO, Botanical Chemist Palm Cove, throws light on her passion for natural remedies**

**T**he name — **Botanical Chemist Palm Cove** — has a natural ring about it. Inspired by the Daintree Rainforest and the Great Barrier Reef, where nature harbours a potential to throw up remedies, the organisation works diligently and leverages research and development to develop innovative treatments. With an emphasis on effective cure and sustainability, Botanical Chemist Palm Cove sources high-quality natural ingredients to develop unique formulations. From sports energy medications to preparations promoting bone health, the company is committed to making a difference in the lives of customers. The compounding services of the company offer feasible health solutions to patients by combining the power of nature with modern science, including Artificial Intelligence, to come out with effective remedies. In an interview with **Business Frontier, Tanya Goodwin, Founder & CEO**, talks about her passion of creating natural remedies.

“**By harnessing AI-powered predictive analytics, we can identify potential drug interactions, predict patient responses, and personalise treatment regimens.**”

**Give us a brief introduction of yourself and your early days in the industry.**

I am a Chartered Accountant with over 30 years of experience in finance and treasury management, mainly within corporate finance. At ZIM Laboratories Limited since 1991, initially as a Director on the Board, I have been focused on ensuring the organisation's growth and stability.

**What lies behind your motivation to become a pharmacist?**

My motivation to become a pharmacist is rooted in a deep-seated desire to improve people's health and well-being. Growing up near the Daintree Rainforest and Great Barrier Reef, I was inspired by nature's healing potential and developed a passion for natural remedies. This fascination with how natural compounds can be harnessed for medicinal purposes, coupled with a commitment to making a positive impact on patients' lives, drove me towards a career in pharmacy. I am motivated by the opportunity to blend traditional knowledge with modern science, developing innovative treatments that are both effective and sustainable. Moreover, the chance to engage directly with patients, helping them manage their health and improve their quality of life, fuels my passion. The dynamic and evolving nature of the pharmaceutical field helps me learn constantly and strive for excellence, ensuring that I can

contribute meaningfully to advancing healthcare and making a difference in the community.

**Please walk us through the founding of Botanical Chemist Palm Cove?**

My upbringing near the Daintree Rainforest and the Great Barrier Reef ignited within me a passion for natural remedies and holistic health and inspired the founding of Botanical Chemist Palm Cove. Recognising the potential to blend traditional botanical knowledge with modern pharmaceutical science, I envisioned a pharmacy that prioritised sustainability, innovation, and patient-centred care. With a dedicated team, I embarked on this journey, focusing on sourcing high-quality natural ingredients and developing unique formulations. We established robust partnerships with local suppliers and invested in state-of-the-art compounding facilities to create personalised medications. Overcoming initial challenges such as navigating regulatory requirements and building community trust, we remained committed to our vision. Today, Botanical Chemist Palm Cove is known for its exceptional compounding services, focus on natural and sustainable health solutions, and commitment to improving patient outcomes. Our success is a testament to the power of combining passion, expertise, and a deep respect for nature.

**As an entrepreneur and pharmacist, what is your approach to challenges and how do you take them on?**

I approach challenges with adaptability, creativity, and determination. Challenges are opportunities for growth and innovation and are an integral part of the entrepreneurial journey. I analyse each obstacle carefully, seeking creative solutions and leveraging my expertise to overcome them. Collaboration with my team and seeking guidance from mentors are also essential components of my approach. By staying resilient, maintaining a positive mindset, and remaining focused on our long-term goals, I navigate challenges with confidence and determination, ensuring that we emerge stronger and more resilient.

**Your company claims to use cutting edge technology including artificial intelligence. How do you marry pharmaceutical science with the latest innovations in IT?**

At Botanical Chemist Palm Cove, we seamlessly integrate pharmaceutical science with cutting-edge technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), to drive innovation and enhance patient care. Our aim is to leverage AI algorithms to analyse vast datasets, accelerating drug discovery, and optimise formulation processes. By harnessing AI-powered predictive analytics, we can identify potential drug interactions, predict patient responses, and personalise treatment regimens. Our commitment to marrying pharmaceutical science with the latest innovations in IT enables us to develop novel treatments, streamline operations, and deliver tailored healthcare solutions that meet the evolving needs of our patients. Through this synergy, we strive to push the boundaries of pharmaceutical innovation and improve patient outcomes while maintaining the highest standards of safety and efficacy.

**As an entrepreneur and CEO, which style of leadership do you like to follow? Have you ever tried switching among forms of leadership?**

A transformational leadership style, prioritising inspiration, innovation,

“**My motivation to become a pharmacist is rooted in a deep-seated desire to improve people's health and well-being. Growing up near the Daintree Rainforest and Great Barrier Reef, I was inspired by nature's healing potential and developed a passion for natural remedies.**”



and empowerment within my team is what I follow. Fostering a collaborative environment where individuals are encouraged to contribute their unique perspectives and talents towards shared goals is my objective. However, I have occasionally adjusted my leadership approach based on situational needs. In times of crisis or rapid change, I may adopt a more directive or participative style to provide clarity and direction. Similarly, when fostering creativity or driving long-term strategic initiatives, I emphasise a more empowering and visionary leadership approach. By remaining flexible and responsive to evolving circumstances, I strive to cultivate a dynamic and resilient organisational culture that thrives on innovation and excellence.

**Amid the global proliferation in the business of health and beauty remedies, several unethical players seem to have entered the market. Do you think there is space for so many players or do you see an imminent shakeout?**

Amid the global expansion of the health and beauty remedies market, the influx of unethical players is concerning. While there is significant demand, the market can only sustain so many players, especially as consumers become more discerning. I foresee an imminent shakeout where only those committed to quality, transparency, and ethical practices will thrive. This consolidation will benefit consumers, ensuring they have access to safe and effective products. In this environment, companies that prioritise integrity and innovation will ultimately lead the market.

**Which regions and countries in the world does Botanical Chemist Palm Cove sell its products in? Do you have an expansion of the global footprint in mind?**

Botanical Chemist Palm Cove currently sells its products across Australia and parts of Asia. We have a strong presence in Australian cities and are expanding our reach globally through e-commerce platforms. Looking ahead, we plan to further expand our global footprint via strategic expansion, which aims to make our natural, sustainable health solutions accessible to a broader customer base, while continuing to uphold our



commitment to quality and ethical practices.

**How do you envision the future of Botanical Chemist Palm Cove? Do you plan to introduce a new line of products?**

I envision a bright future for Botanical Chemist Palm Cove, marked by innovation and growth. We plan to introduce a new line of products focused on advanced sustainable health solutions, including herbal supplements, skin care, and wellness items tailored to specific health needs. Additionally, we aim to expand our eco-friendly offerings, further aligning with global sustainability trends. Our ongoing commitment to research and development will drive these innovations, ensuring we continue to meet the evolving needs of our customers while maintaining our dedication to quality, sustainability, and ethical practices.

**Research and development has a major role to play for any pharmaceutical company? How does Botanical Chemist Palm Cove leverage R&D to provide effective health and beauty solutions?**

Research and development (R&D) is crucial for Botanical Chemist Palm Cove, enabling us to create innovative and effective health and beauty solutions. We invest significantly in R&D to

explore new natural and sustainable ingredients before including them in advanced formulations. Our team collaborates with leading scientists and institutions to ensure our products are backed by the latest scientific research. This commitment to R&D allows us to develop high-quality, sustainable products that meet the evolving needs of our customers. By staying at the forefront of scientific advancements, we strive to continue to offer safe, effective, and eco-friendly health and beauty solutions.

**You promote good health for a healthier tomorrow. What do you yourself do to keep in the pink of health?**

Learning from my executive coach through her "Key 8" programme and as a proponent of good health, I prioritise maintaining a balanced lifestyle to ensure my own well-being. This includes regular exercise routines, such as running and going to the gym, to stay physically active and reduce stress. I place a strong emphasis on nutrition, opting for a diverse and wholesome diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins. Adequate sleep and mindfulness practices are also integral parts of my routine, supporting mental clarity and overall resilience. Moreover, I stay informed about the latest health trends and medical advancements, empowering myself to make informed choices about my health.

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# Providing the Elixir for Organisational Excellence



**Zulfiqar Kamal, Director of Finance, ZIM Laboratories Limited, speaks to Business Frontier about the strategies he follows to mould a financially robust organisation**

**Z**ulfiqar Kamal believes in fostering a culture of positivity, integrity, and excellence at ZIM Laboratories Limited, where he is the Director of Finance. A research-driven pharmaceutical company focused on providing innovative drug delivery solutions, ZIM Laboratories aims at improving patient convenience and treatment adherence. The organisation acts as a research-centric end-to-end product development partner for its customers across key developed, pharmerging and Rest of the World (RoW) markets by providing a constant pipeline of therapy-agnostic finished and semi-finished pharmaceutical and nutraceutical products.

In an interview with **Business Frontier**, Zulfiqar Kamal delves deeper into the strategies he follows to mould a financially robust organisation and describes how he leads his team towards excellence.

**Give us a brief overview of your early days in the industry.**

I am a Chartered Accountant with over 30 years of experience in finance and treasury management, mainly within corporate finance. At ZIM Laboratories Limited since 1991, initially as a Director on the Board, I have been focused on ensuring the organisation's growth and stability.

I oversee commercial operations and my vision is to establish ZIM Labs as a financially robust entity known for its operational efficiencies, technological advancements, and ethical business practices.

**As a business leader, what critical elements shape your growth strategies?**

As a business and finance



enthusiast, my growth strategies are anchored in several key principles: Firstly, I prioritise market analysis, conducting comprehensive assessments to uncover growth opportunities and anticipate challenges. Financial acumen is central to my approach, as I firmly believe in the importance of sound financial management for ensuring sustainable growth and profitability. By fostering a culture of Innovation within my team, I encourage creativity and experimentation to address evolving market demands.

Secondly, strategic partnerships play a vital role in my strategy. Talent development is another cornerstone, as I invest in training and development initiatives. Thirdly, I emphasise on patient focus, consistently striving to enhance patient satisfaction by delivering quality products/services and providing exceptional support. In addition, keeping in mind adaptability, I remain flexible and responsive.

**How do you maintain a healthy work-life balance, and how important do you think it is for your team to do the same?**

I understand the pivotal importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance, not only for personal well-being but also for professional effectiveness. I prioritise this balance by setting clear boundaries and efficiently managing tasks during work hours to optimise productivity. This approach allows me to disconnect and recharge during non-work hours.

Additionally, I recognise the significance of promoting work-life balance within my team. Encouraging a healthy equilibrium not only prevents burnout but also enhances job satisfaction and overall well-being among team members. By fostering open communication, I create a supportive environment where team members feel comfortable discussing work, deadlines, and challenges related to work-life balance.

**How do you keep abreast of the latest trends in the industry?**

Recognising the critical importance of staying abreast of industry trends to uphold our competitive edge, I go through reputable financial news sources and publications, ensuring I am

well-versed with emerging trends and regulatory shifts. Active participation in professional networks, forums, and conferences further enriches my knowledge.

Moreover, I prioritise continuous learning and development for both myself and my team, investing in training programmes and workshops to deepen understanding of evolving trends and acquire new skills.

**What are the leadership principles through which you make sure that your team performs to the best of its ability?**

I am committed to ensuring optimal team performance by implementing several key strategies.

Clear communication is paramount. By providing clear direction and setting expectations, I foster alignment within the team. Empowerment and trust are also essential, and I believe in delegating responsibility to promote accountability among team members. Continuous learning is another cornerstone of my approach through which I prioritise professional growth opportunities to enhance individual and team capabilities.

Recognition too plays a crucial role in motivation and acts as a morale booster. I make it a point to acknowledge achievements and celebrate successes within the team. Collaboration is something fundamental to our success. By fostering an inclusive environment that leverages diverse strengths, we can collectively achieve better performance.

**How do you stay adaptable and responsive to new challenges in today's rapidly-changing environment?**

There are several key strategies through which I emphasise adaptability and responsiveness to new challenges:

Continuous learning is essential. By staying informed about trends and technologies, we can anticipate challenges and proactively prepare for them.

Flexibility in strategy is crucial. Adapting our plans to unforeseen challenges allows us to pivot

*“Financial acumen is central to my approach, as I firmly believe in the importance of sound financial management for ensuring sustainable growth and profitability.”*

quickly and capitalise on emerging opportunities.

Agile decision-making is another cornerstone of our approach. By empowering the team to respond swiftly to changing circumstances, we foster a culture of adaptability.

Collaboration and networking play a vital role. Engaging with peers and stakeholders provides us with diverse perspectives and valuable resources to navigate challenges effectively. B

By fostering a mindset of resilience and equipping our team with problem-solving capabilities, we can confidently adapt to new challenges as they arise. Technology adoption is key. Leveraging technology not only streamlines processes but also enhances our decision-making capabilities.

**What legacy do you hope to leave in your current role, and how do you plan to achieve it?**

My commitment lies in establishing a legacy of financial stewardship, innovation, and growth. I believe in financial excellence through the implementation of robust practices that ensure transparency and efficiency.

Embracing innovation and emerging technologies is key to driving organisational growth, fostering creativity and adaptability within our team. Leadership development is fundamental; so I invest in mentorship and training to nurture future finance leaders. Moreover, upholding ethical governance is most important. Additionally, I emphasise stakeholder engagement to build strong relationships that drive value creation and sustainable growth.



# Capturing the Essence of Technology

**Jorge Allen Adajar, Chief Technology Officer of KA1ROS Data Processing Services, combines mission with vision to come out as a domain leader**

**H**eading the technological team of a data processing company is no mean feat. But it comes easily to **Jorge Allen Adajar, Chief Technology Officer of KA1ROS Data Processing Services**, a company that helps its clients adopt digital innovation in a very short span of time and even became the number one IT service provider in the Philippines to give quick and effective solutions against COVID-19.

In an incisive interview with **Business Frontier**, Jorge reveals how he combines technological punditry with expert leadership to emerge on the top of his trade.



## Can you share your insights on the scope and potential of the data processing industry in transforming various business sectors?

In addition to the normal services related to data processing, we also undertake consultation jobs for business technologies helping companies with innovations and digital transformations. In addition, we provide manpower up to a certain level and our company helps IT businesses complete their projects in an efficient manner by using different methodologies and best practices. As far as challenges for the company go, it is the white hot competition in the sector. To rise above the competition we make sure that our products are unique and stand out. For example, we have an application on tourism that includes a module on healthcare, which makes it different. It's a combination of different solutions, but on a single platform.

## How have you seen data help different business sectors evolve?

We believe data is very important for any business organisation. Once a company has the data, which can be transformed into information, the top management including C-suite officers or CTOs can take important decisions at the right time. Without proper data, there is no reference point for effective decision making.

## Can you throw some light on the latest trends that you are seeing in the industry?

Automation is very common in these times as there are many IT companies which provide common solutions for automation. However, the number one trend now is data analytics and science, which is useful for companies to reach their business goals. Another top trending technology is, of course, artificial intelligence which can be used to provide mathematical models for decision making. These are the broad trends in the industry today.

## Everyone is talking about AI and the way it has changed the way we function. But there is a dark side to AI as people are getting heavily reliant on it. How do you think we should adapt to AI so that it can help us become better?

As the CTO of our company, I can see the advantages of AI which can provide us with different approaches to the solutions or systems to automation. But it is not imparting the best practices followed globally by the industry. Yes, it addresses the requirements of the business in terms of the specific solution. Using AI, we have different available frameworks with the help of which you can provide solutions. For example, if you have a certain solution but you forgot to fortify it with the necessary security, it will lead to different holes in the project. However, using AI you come across different recommendations that let you plug the holes in the project.

## How do you define your leadership style and how do you feel being a successful leader in the industry?

In the world of technology, you have problems and challenges that can be resolved with different technological solutions. But when it comes to the management of people, the leader's skill is tested when there is a crisis. One of the things that I observed when I was not a leader is that my former boss was autocratic in his approach, which did not make him open to new ideas. Such leaders have an employee-employer relationship with the staff in the company where the rank and file consciousness is highly pronounced. So, when I became a leader, I adopted a transformational leadership style. It's a tough leadership approach where you need to bring together people from various attitudes and cultural backgrounds in your team. As a transformational leader, you need to have a vision which can lead members of your team towards the vision of the organisation. Another leadership approach that I largely lean on is the democratic leadership style in which you can involve teams with different

tracking levels. This style of leadership lets me listen to recommendations from teams and allows me to gauge the real potential and aptitude of people rendering the advice. Last but not the least, I am very strict about rules and regulations pertaining to the mission and vision of the company. So, I go strictly by the rulebook —following the bureaucratic leadership style.

## Is there anyone who inspires you and you look up to to become a better leader?

Of course, many people have inspired me in my leadership journey. One of them is John Maxwell, the famous leadership coach and mentor. He has written so much about leadership which has been topped up by his great experience in the industry. In fact, I would want to be like him. He says that you have to understand where a problem is coming from in order to resolve it — which is a good take away from his teachings.

## What are your plans and goals keeping in mind the industry you are in?

As data processing is now covered under the Department of Information Technology of the Philippines, we are helping the local government units embrace digital transformation. There are challenges in terms of government services in the Philippines. As a means to address these, we are providing our expertise to help different sectors like tourism, health care, and transportation embrace digital innovation. So, our goal is to recognise the beauty of data together with technology and automation in the Philippines.

## Personally, how do you envision your future as a leader?

For me, it is rather simple. Here in the Philippines, the role of technology down the rungs in the government is not recognised. I aim to bridge this gap and see that all strata of government embrace technology and benefit from it.

# Weaving Dreams into Reality



Ju Young Shin goes beyond her role as a finance professional to emerge as a diligent business leader and a loving family person.

A passionate professional and leader in the real estate industry, **Ju Young Shin** not only deals with high finance, but also treats her team with motherly care and love. Keeping team members motivated is her preference and she likes to see them advance to increasingly elevated roles. Having received an award from former USA President Barack Obama for her volunteering services, she likes to stay grounded and humble.

In an interview with **Business Frontier's Deepa Natarajan Lobo**, the **Finance Director of Weave Living**, Asia Pacific's living sector specialist which owns, develops and manages properties to world-class standards, talks about leadership, cultural differences and staying on top of the changes in the industry.



## From a Senior Auditor to the Finance Director of Weave Living, how has your corporate journey unfolded?

My professional journey has been eventful, if there is one word to describe it. Being brought up in three countries—Japan, Korea and USA — with distinct societies, adjusting was a challenge. This made me more of a figure-cruncher as numbers everywhere speak the same language. Being naturally inclined to numbers made me decide on pursuing a career in finance and accounting. However, finance is an extensive field and eventually I was exposed to all facets of the discipline— auditing, accounting, corporate finance, joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions and so on.

## What is the leadership style you follow to motivate your team?

If I want to describe the leadership style I use in my role — it is like that of a mother. It might sound clichéd, but mothers are very reliable individuals who come to help when needed and teach long-term skills to their children.

A truly caring mum likes to teach her kids how to fish rather than give them fish. Mothers also rejoice in their children's success and teach them how to strike a balance in relationships with siblings, friends and the like. A mother understands that every child is unique and needs a different kind of help and support. In fact, I bring the 'motherly' attitude encompassing whatever I have said to work. I am happy to see my team grow and there is no element of competition with them. In fact, it excites me to see them advance so much more

than I have. Because of this mindset, my relationship with my team is like a long-term friendship. I have always been using different leadership styles in keeping with the demands of the situation as I am very flexible.

## You have won honours and awards in your life including one from then USA President Barack Obama. How do you feel about it?

I really believe in giving back to the community. Personal success and financial growth can sometimes blind us, especially to the needs of those around us. Volunteering to help old people or the homeless is one way of giving back to the community. Though I don't expect anything in return for volunteering, I am fortunate that my commitment to help others has been recognised by some honours, which includes the President's Volunteer Service Award. I was conferred the honour by the then USA President Barack Obama in 2010. The honour, unexpected as it was, acted as a very powerful reminder to continue on the path of volunteering and helping others.

## You have studied in the US and are now working in Japan. Do the cultural differences have an influence in your professional life?

Well, the cultural differences between the West and the East are something that everyone notices. The funny thing, however, is that there are significant cultural differences among the Asian countries themselves— whether it be Japan or Korea or Japan and Hong Kong. Being specific, working in New York is characterised by specific communication

that leads to faster decision making and ultimately the focus is on efficiency.

However, in some Asian cultures — not all — the focus is more on the process than the outcome itself. For example, in an Asian nation, they will consider the process that would be least offensive to people or considered culturally more polite even though the outcome will be the same as in the West. Both ways have their advantages and disadvantages but with the advent of globalisation, the cultural divide is likely to bridge faster. Many Japanese businesses are already becoming more direct and efficiency-driven, resulting in effectiveness being the essential parameter.

## How do you stay abreast of the latest changes in the industry?

The obvious and simplest way of keeping up with the changes is listening to the news and reading articles. However, for me it's all about people as they are the customers and users as well. So, understanding how people feel and think gives me a clear picture of what's changing around the world. I, therefore, spend time with students to understand the latest trends, their dreams and goals, including the use of technology. We live in an era where data and information is very abundant. Hence, instead of relying on information through what I read, I need to form my experience around what I myself see. To get a first-hand feel of the real estate market I like to check out every single hotel out there. Today, for instance, I have an appointment with one of our competitors where I will have a look at their processes, technology, rooms, furniture and so on. This will give me a fresh perspective on the industry.

## What do you do to unwind after the grind of your busy work schedule?

When I am not working, I like to spend time with my family. It could be taking long walks around the park or watching a movie or just sitting around and talking. Such moments actually allow me to cherish what I have. I am blessed to have a husband who helps me reorganise my thoughts and understand different perspectives. So after work, we go for long walks where we discuss the issues I am facing at the workplace and the solutions available. We also



“ Understanding how people feel and think gives me a clear picture of what's changing around the world. I, therefore, spend time with students to understand the latest trends, their dreams and goals, including the use of technology. ”

discuss business ideas. This allows me to unwind and relax after a tiring day at work, helping me recharge and get a fresh perspective from the other side of the table.

## Is it challenging to be a woman in the real estate industry?

I don't think I have a challenge per se, being a woman in the real estate industry. But I have experienced more than a man would. At times, it is both the gender and the age. In many old school companies, they prefer slightly older men. So at times, I take an older male employee with me to lead the conversation. However, once I start speaking, they begin to open up.

# THE MAGNETIC APPEAL OF WATERFRONT PROPERTIES

Business Frontier takes a look at the evolving waterfront property market of Dubai and speaks to experts on what makes it so alluring

Deepa Natarajan Lobo



**K**nown for its strategic location across the Gulf, contemporary skyline and opulent living standards, Dubai is home to some of the most remarkable waterfront properties crafted by world-class developers. Offering breathtaking vistas and top-notch amenities, these properties not only attract homebuyers looking for opulence and convenience but also elite investors eyeing high-yield investment.

Business Frontier takes a look at the factors shaping the waterfront property market of Dubai and finds out why it is emerging as a masterstroke investment in the real estate landscape of the emirate.

## AN ELUSIVE AURA

The slightly elusive aura of a waterfront property makes it highly desirable among buyers and investors, feels **Hamed Ghelichkhan, CEO & Founder, Homeland Realty Real Estate**, a prominent UAE-based developer. “Their scarcity creates an aura of exclusivity and desirability. Furthermore, prime locations, stunning views, and luxurious living make them a sound investment with good potential for appreciation. The ability to generate income through high rental yields, either from long-term tenants or lucrative short-term tourist rentals, adds to their appeal,” he notes. Whether it’s exclusive beachfront



Hamed Ghelichkhan

villas, high-rise penthouses with a bird’s eye view of the bay or seaside apartments with luxurious amenities, the market is fertile with plenty of options catering to a variety of budgets. “Some investors are even choosing to buy units at waterfront hotels, resorts, and serviced apartments that cater to global tourists and business travellers. Iconic attractions like Palm Jumeirah and Dubai Marina are the top destinations for investors, while Palm Jebel Ali is seeing growing interest,” points out **Céline Haidamous, Digital Sales Manager** of real estate platform **PropertyGuru.ae**.



Céline Haidamous

“A trend that is noteworthy is that most in-land villa communities nowadays offer lagoons, and there is a growing trend among developers for every apartment in a project to have a private pool,” adds **Peter Smithson, Sales Director** of boutique real estate agency **Bellevue**.



Peter Smithson

## A RISKY AFFAIR?

Assets and liabilities are key components of any investment and a waterside paradise too comes with its fair share of risks. “Waterfront locations are more susceptible to hurricanes, floods, and coastal erosion. Investors must therefore inquire with developers on steps being taken to mitigate any



Karina Meirmanova

such risks. Developers must do their part and adopt sustainable construction practices, incorporating features like elevated foundations and using materials that can withstand harsh conditions. Dubai’s regulatory bodies play a crucial role here, ensuring that developers adhere to strict building codes and utilise resilient materials,” says **Karina Meirmanova, Head of Real Estate Platform – Huspy**.

“The legal landscape surrounding waterfront development can also be complex. Zoning laws and regulations specific to waterfront areas exist, and navigating them can be tricky.

Developers must work closely with experienced professionals well-versed in these regulations to ensure projects comply with environmental and construction codes. And finally, partnering with a knowledgeable insurance broker to secure adequate insurance is paramount,” she adds.

Smithson advises investors to be wary of purchasing in a location lacking tangible value. “As always the location will ultimately derive the value so, while I would advise investors to be wary of purchasing in a location lacking tangible value, the truth remains that most truly waterfront properties occupy prime residential spaces offering tremendous residual value,” he suggests.

*“The combination of luxury, exclusivity, investment potential, rental income, and proximity to vibrant tourist hubs makes Dubai’s waterfront properties a prized possession in the city’s dynamic real estate market.”*

**Hamed Ghelichkhan,**  
CEO & Founder, Homeland Realty  
Real Estate

## THE WINNING STREAK

However, despite the many risks surrounding it, the waterfront property market of Dubai offers abundant growth opportunities fuelled by innovation, luxury, and sustainability, according to industry experts. Investors and home buyers can work with experienced real estate agents, legal advisors, and environmental consultants to address regulatory complexities and environmental risks effectively and navigate the market with confidence and success.

Moreover, the high occupancy rates and the steady capital appreciation of these developments despite the ups and downs of the market make them a win-win affair. “In short, the combination of luxury, exclusivity, investment potential, rental income, and proximity to vibrant tourist hubs makes Dubai’s waterfront properties a prized possession in the city’s dynamic real estate market,” concludes Ghelichkhan.

# KEY TRENDS SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ADVENTURE TOURISM

**Tariq Sherif, Director, Area 83**, an adventure sports resort in Bengaluru, gives an insight into the factors leading to the growth of adventure tourism sector in India



In India, the tourism industry is experiencing a boom, with adventure tourism leading the charge. As more individuals seek out thrilling travel experiences, adventure tourism is taking center stage. The future of adventure tourism looks promising, with several emerging trends driving its growing popularity. Notable shifts in the adventure tourism sector are largely influenced by the changing preferences of travellers, particularly millennials and Gen Zs.

Here are some trends that will shape the adventure tourism industry in India:

**Sustainable Adventures:** One of the most prominent trends in adventure tourism is the growing emphasis on sustainability. Modern travellers are increasingly mindful of their environmental footprint and are actively seeking experiences that align with their eco-conscious values. From staying in eco-lodges situated amidst pristine landscapes to participating in wildlife conservation efforts, sustainable adventure tourism is on the rise. Travellers are opting for activities that leave minimal impact on the environment, embracing the ethos of responsible travel and conservation.

**Luxury Meets Adventure:** In a world where comfort and adventure meet, luxury adventure tourism has emerged as a compelling trend. Today's travellers crave not only heart-pounding experiences but also the indulgence of high-end amenities and services. From deluxe accommodations in breathtaking locales to curated experiences that combine adventure with lavishness, luxury adventure travel offers those who appreciate the best of both worlds. It's an exploration of exhilaration without compromise, where every moment is infused with refined style.

**Off-the-Beaten-Path Discoveries:** The attraction of off-the-beaten-path destinations continues to captivate adventurers seeking authenticity and solitude. Away from the tourist crowds, these hidden gems offer a glimpse into untouched landscapes and vibrant cultures. Travellers are venturing beyond traditional tourist hotspots, exploring remote corners of the globe, and embarking on journeys that promise exclusive experiences. Whether it's trekking through remote wilderness or immersing in the traditions of lesser-known communities, the appeal of off-the-grid adventures is undeniable.

**Wellness Adventures:** In a time where holistic well-being takes center stage, adventure tourism has seamlessly integrated with the wellness movement. Travellers are increasingly viewing adrenaline-pumping activities as an essential component of their wellness journey. Engaging in thrilling adventures serves not only to rejuvenate the body but also to nourish the mind and soul. From conquering towering peaks to



navigating treacherous rapids, each adventure becomes a transformative experience, fostering resilience and mental fortitude.

**Hardcore Thrills:** For adrenaline junkies and thrill-seekers, hard adventure travel offers the ultimate adrenaline rush. This rapidly growing segment caters to those who thrive on pushing their limits and conquering the impossible. Whether it's scaling vertiginous cliffs, braving tumultuous whitewater rapids, or delving into the depths of uncharted caves, hard adventure travel promises unmatched excitement and challenge. It's an exploration of the outer limits of human endurance, where each daring feat becomes a reminder of the indomitable spirit of adventure.

To conclude, the adventure tourism industry is growing thanks to new trends that meet the varied needs of contemporary tourists. There's a notable recognition within the industry of the significance of mental health and well-being during travel, signifying a meaningful transition from the past. Additionally, a rise in backpacking travellers and a newfound appreciation for weekend adventures point to a shift towards prioritizing fulfilling experiences and sustainable approaches. These trends indicate optimism for the future of adventure tourism, promising continued growth and exciting opportunities for exploration and enjoyment.

# Leading the Kingdom of Natural Beauty



**Winnie LIW, Founder & CEO of Kingdom of Esther & WD TCM Lifestyle Products, has pioneered a holistic approach to health and beauty**

**W**innie LIW, the visionary Founder and CEO of Kingdom of Esther & WD TCM Lifestyle Products, has created a chemical-free universe where healing is both swift and devoid of harmful side effects. Her journey from the financial sector to the forefront of the beauty industry is a testament to her entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to holistic wellness. Rooted in traditional Chinese medicine, the WD TCM Lifestyle products (formerly known as White Dragon) are crafted to nurture the body, mind, and soul. In an interview with **Business Frontier**, Singapore-based Winnie LIW shares the essence of Kingdom of Esther, her leadership journey, and her views on maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

## What inspired you to leave a successful career in finance to start Kingdom of Esther?

I spent more than a decade in the financial industry before discovering an opportunity to venture into the beauty industry in Hong Kong. My initial project, a 'Beauty Programme', didn't take off as planned, but it led me to an exciting opportunity. I met a group of elite professors who had innovated and created a range of 100% chemical-free beauty products based on traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). I then created the brand name 'White Dragon', which positioned itself as the WD TCM Lifestyle Brand, and was granted exclusive OEM rights to these products. This offer ignited my entrepreneurial spirit, and in 2008, I founded my first company in Hong Kong, White Dragon Global Limited, to promote these products.

The transition from finance to beauty was challenging yet rewarding. My experience in finance taught me the importance of discipline, strategic planning, and risk

management—all of which have been invaluable in running my business. The move to Singapore was necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic and political unrest in Hong Kong. We relocated our marketing, sales, management, design and development, and finance operations to Singapore while maintaining logistics and warehousing in Hong Kong. This strategic move ensured the continuity and growth of the Kingdom of Esther despite the challenges. When I moved back to Singapore due to those reasons in Hong Kong, that's when Kingdom of Esther was born to continue and navigate the WD TCM Lifestyle Brand journey.

## What is the philosophy behind the Kingdom of Esther, and how has your business evolved?

Our philosophy centers on promoting a healthy lifestyle through products that are completely chemical-free. These products are formulated with traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and a patented ingredient blend. Our mission is to enhance lives by encouraging a wholesome lifestyle and caring for the skin—the body's largest organ. The philosophy deeply resonates with me, given my family's background in TCM. My father owned a TCM business, and my siblings are qualified TCM physicians. This heritage has influenced our commitment to natural and holistic health solutions.

Over the years, the Kingdom of Esther has grown significantly. We started with a focus on skincare products, but our range has expanded to include various health and wellness products. Each product is designed to nurture the body, mind, and soul, reflecting our holistic approach to health and beauty. Our commitment to quality and innovation has helped us build a loyal customer base. We constantly seek to improve

and expand our offerings to meet the evolving needs of our customers.

## The Kingdom of Esther offers a diverse range of services. How do you ensure effective delivery as CEO?

When we moved to Singapore, we onboarded professionals from various fields—makeup artists, hairstylists, video artists, and lawyers. We also partnered with experts who assist in setting up SMEs and startups, allowing us to offer comprehensive services. As CEO, I ensure that our team provides seamless and cost-effective solutions by leveraging my entrepreneurial experience and strategic partnerships.

Effective delivery of our services involves meticulous planning and coordination. I work closely with my team to ensure that every project is executed flawlessly. For instance, we recently received an inquiry from a foreign company interested in entering the Singapore market. They sought our business consulting, marketing, legal, and conceptualization services. By offering a single-window professional support system, we help clients reduce costs and streamline their operations. This holistic approach allows us to cater to diverse client needs and deliver exceptional value.

## What is your leadership philosophy, and what is your preferred leadership style?

My leadership philosophy revolves around open and effective communication. I believe that clear and transparent communication is essential for addressing challenges and finding solutions. I work closely with our distributors to ensure that any issues are resolved promptly and efficiently. A leader must align the company's objectives with team spirit, fostering

strong bonds and support within the workforce to overcome obstacles and achieve goals.

I prefer a collaborative leadership style, which involves engaging with team members at all levels and encouraging their input and feedback. This approach helps build a cohesive and motivated team. I also emphasize the importance of continuous learning and development. I encourage my team to pursue professional development opportunities and stay updated with industry trends and best practices. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement, we can stay ahead of the competition and deliver the best possible outcomes for our clients.

## Besides traditional fitness methods like yoga, what emerging trends do you see gaining popularity?

Mental health has become increasingly important, especially post-COVID-19. In Singapore, there's a notable rise in mental health issues among the younger generation. At the Kingdom of Esther, we emphasize a balanced lifestyle that nurtures the mind, body, and soul. A healthy body supports a healthy mind, leading to clearer thinking and better decision-making. We aim to promote a holistic lifestyle and collaborate with like-minded individuals to improve overall well-being.

Emerging trends in the wellness industry include mindfulness practices, holistic healing therapies, and digital wellness solutions. Mindfulness practices such as meditation and deep breathing exercises help individuals manage stress and enhance their mental well-being. Holistic healing therapies, including acupuncture, aromatherapy, and herbal medicine, are gaining popularity for their natural and non-invasive approach to health. Digital wellness solutions, such as wellness apps and virtual wellness programs, offer convenient and personalized support for individuals seeking to improve their health and well-being.

## How do you see traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) coexisting with modern medicine?

With a history spanning 10,000 years, TCM offers unique

“*I believe that as we navigate the journey of life, it is important that we focus on mind, body and soul. One should ensure that there's a time to work, sleep and play.*”

healing methods without immediate side effects. I believe no single system will replace another. Modern science and technology bring valuable advancements, and an 'East meets West' approach can offer the best of both worlds in healing processes.

TCM and modern medicine each have their strengths and limitations. TCM focuses on holistic healing and preventive care, emphasizing the balance of mind, body, and spirit. It uses natural remedies and therapies to support the body's self-healing abilities. On the other hand, modern medicine excels in diagnostics, emergency care, and surgical interventions. By integrating the best practices from both systems, we can provide comprehensive and effective healthcare solutions that address the root causes of health issues and promote long-term well-being.

## How do you maintain your own well-being?

I prioritize regular stretching and start my day with warm water to detoxify. Weekly 'Me' time allows me

to reflect and plan ahead, ensuring efficiency in my work. Planning is crucial, and I organize my schedule a week in advance to stay on track.

In addition to these practices, I focus on maintaining a balanced diet rich in natural and wholesome foods. I avoid processed foods and artificial additives, opting for fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Staying hydrated and getting enough sleep are also essential for my overall well-being. I carve out time for workouts at the gym. These habits help me stay energized, focused, and resilient in both my personal and professional life.

Living a balanced lifestyle requires discipline and mindfulness. I make a conscious effort to manage stress and maintain a positive outlook. Surrounding myself with supportive and like-minded individuals also contributes to my well-being. By taking care of myself, I can lead by example and inspire others to prioritize their health and happiness.



# MOST UK WORKERS HAVE GOOD WORK-LIFE BALANCE: STUDY



The new figures by tech firm Secure Data Recovery found that although working remotely isn't for everyone, those who do report having a good work-life balance more than those in other work settings. For example, 89% of remote workers say they have a good work-life balance, compared to only 85% of hybrid workers and 71% of office-based workers. When it comes to hours worked, office-based workers work the most hours per week on average, at 36 hours and 20 minutes. Hybrid workers work the least, averaging 35 hours and 30 minutes.

Office-based workers are also more likely to respond to messages from their boss after hours and more likely to be expected to be available for work communication after hours, the research states. It's "not all doom and gloom" for office workers, though:

many still enjoy being office-based and having a structured environment, access to resources, social interactions and other benefits.

After-hours work communication isn't exclusive to office-based workers, either. Those working remotely are more likely to respond to work messages while on holiday or during the weekend than workers in any other setting. With a flexible work environment comes distractions, from laundry that needs to be done to staying updated on your social media feed, and remote workers are most likely to engage in a non-work-related task at least once a day while clocked in.

The key findings from the research include:

- Only 28% of Britons say they truly work 40 hours a week or more

- Government, healthcare, and education workers reported the best work-life balance in the UK and Ireland

- 42% of Britons do non-work related tasks during their workday at least once a day

- Only 28% of Britons say they're expected to be available for work communication after hours

- 55% of Britons have responded to a work message while on holiday

Secure Data Recovery surveyed 1,016 full-time workers in the UK and Ireland in March 2024 about their workday habits and technology norms, receiving nearly 200 responses from each country. Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 76 years old, with 53% being female, 46% male and 1% nonbinary.

# TOYOTA OPENS INCLUSIVE MOBILITY PARK IN PARIS

Most of the solutions presented at the park were also used at the Olympics Games Paris 2024



Automobile giant Toyota has opened an inclusive mobility park in Paris. As the worldwide mobility partner of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), the company is committed to providing sustainable inclusive mobility solutions to the athletes, officials, volunteers, accredited media, and spectators. Most of the solutions presented at the park were used at the recently-concluded Olympic Games Paris 2024 and will also be used at the upcoming Paralympic Games Paris 2024.

## Sustainable Inclusive Mobility

The Toyota Inclusive Mobility Park, located near the Eiffel Tower, will be open to the neighbourhood on September 9-10. "We are delighted to welcome the Toyota Inclusive Mobility Park in Paris, a city that is committed to promoting green and inclusive mobility for all," said Pierre Rabadan, deputy mayor of Paris in charge of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, Sport and the Seine. "The park is a great opportunity to discover and experience the innovative mobility solutions

that Toyota and its partners have developed."

## The park features several solutions such as:

- Toyota battery electric vehicles such as the Accessible People Mover (APM), designed to be used in and around the Athletes Village and competition sites to transport athletes and spectators
- Last-mile micromobility solutions, such as C+Walk S, C+Walk T and Yosh-E. These are compact and easy-to-use devices that can assist people with different mobility needs in urban environments and are in use during Paris 2024
- Innovative mobility solutions created by partners and startups that Toyota supports such as self-balancing personal transporter by Genny or a first-of-a-kind wheelchair brake system by Eppur

Hydrogen (H2) cartridge technology, bringing hydrogen power to daily life – and a H2 cartridge-powered cargo bike to showcase this technology. "The Toyota Inclusive Mobility Park is

a showcase of how technology and accessibility can go hand in hand, and how the Olympic and Paralympic Games can drive positive change in society," said Andrew Parsons, president of the International Paralympic Committee. "It is great to see all the innovative inclusive solutions that Toyota is bringing to the Games in one place. Their commitment to their vision of delivering Mobility for All at Paris 2024 and beyond truly comes through in this effort."

Yoshihiro Nakata, president and CEO of Toyota Motor Europe, added, "We are very proud to open the Toyota Mobility Park in Paris, the host city of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Paris 2024. As a worldwide mobility partner of the Games, we want to contribute to creating a more inclusive and sustainable society through mobility."

"The Toyota Inclusive Mobility Park is a part of the showcase of our vision "happiness for all" & Mission "Mobility for all" and our solutions that aim to make mobility accessible and enjoyable for everyone. We hope that the visitors will learn more about inclusive mobility, have fun and get inspired by the Park."

# DIGITAL TWIN DRIVING TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE ENERGY

By leveraging digital twins, the renewable energy industry can enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and accelerate the adoption of green energy solutions, writes **Dr Hassam Chaudhry, Associate Professor at Heriot-Watt University, Dubai**



The world has witnessed rapid and unpredictable changes in the last few years, highlighting ongoing global volatility. Against this backdrop, there is a firm global commitment to tackle climate change and shift industrial societies towards a sustainable, zero-carbon economy. This transformation is seen as one of the crucial tasks of our time. Leading economies have set ambitious targets. For instance, the UAE's Net Zero 2050 Strategy builds on two key initiatives, the UAE Net Zero by 2050 initiative, which outlines the ambitious path to net zero, and the National Net Zero by 2050 Pathway, detailing the timeline and methods for this transition. This strategy aims to drive economic and societal progress by leading the shift to net zero emissions

As the world turns towards a sustainable future, the renewable energy sector is undergoing rapid advancements. One of the most transformative technologies propelling this transition is the digital twin. This simulation technology creates virtual replicas of physical assets, systems, or processes, enabling real-time monitoring, analysis, and optimisation. By leveraging digital twins, the renewable energy industry can enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and accelerate the adoption of green energy solutions. For instance, in the wind energy sector, digital twin technology is transforming turbine design, maintenance, and operations. Digital twins create virtual replicas of wind turbines, enabling real-time monitoring of performance, predictive maintenance scheduling, and optimisation of energy output. This advancement enhances efficiency, reduces downtime, and ultimately lowers the cost of wind energy production.

Similarly, in solar energy, digital twins prove invaluable by replicating solar panels and entire solar farms. Operators can monitor performance metrics, predict potential failures, and plan maintenance activities proactively. This proactive approach ensures that solar installations operate at peak efficiency and reliability. Moreover, digital twins simulate the impact of environmental variables such as shading, dust accumulation, and weather conditions on solar panel performance. This capability allows operators to implement strategies that mitigate these factors, thereby optimising energy output. In energy storage, digital twins are crucial for managing battery reliability and efficiency. They



monitor real-time factors like charge, temperature, and health, allowing timely interventions. Optimisation of cycles through digital twins ensures efficient operation and extends battery lifespan, vital for integrating renewable energy into the grid and ensuring consistent power supply.

*“In today's landscape, with increasing demands to transition to renewable energy driven by both government regulations and public expectations, it's crucial to harness the power of technologies like digital twins”*

## Harnessing the Power

Digital twins are also crucial for managing modern grids. They give operators a full view of the grid, helping them predict and address potential issues before they become serious. By simulating different scenarios, digital twins ensure that the grid remains stable and reliable. They also help predict energy consumption patterns and find ways to prevent grid overloads, improving operational efficiency. For instance, during a hot summer day, energy demand peaks as residents turn on air conditioners. Using digital twins, grid operators can predict this surge in demand and adjust the distribution of electricity accordingly. Meanwhile, solar panels on rooftops are generating power, but cloud cover reduces their output unpredictably. The digital twins monitor these fluctuations in solar energy

production in real time and adjust the grid's balance by redistributing power from other sources, such as wind farms or energy storage systems. This dynamic management ensures that the grid remains stable and reliable, even amidst changing weather conditions and varying energy demands throughout the day.

Digital twin technology offers a substantial advantage through predictive maintenance capabilities. For instance, in the renewable energy sector, digital twins monitor the condition of assets such as wind turbines or solar panels in real time. By analysing data trends, they can predict potential failures and schedule maintenance before issues escalate. This proactive approach minimises downtime, prolongs equipment lifespan, and ultimately cuts down on maintenance expenses. Moreover, digital twins improve operational efficiency by optimising the performance of renewable energy systems. By simulating different scenarios and analysing live data, they help operators determine the most effective strategies for energy generation and distribution. This not only increases energy output but also reduces overall operational costs by ensuring resources are used optimally.

In today's landscape, with increasing demands to transition to renewable energy driven by both government regulations and public expectations, it's crucial to harness the power of technologies like digital twins. Implementing this technology will enhance the operational efficiency of renewable energy systems, strengthen efforts against climate change, and advance sustainable energy practices globally.

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# Straddling Architecture Consultancy like a Colossus



With 42 years in the profession behind him, Danilo Aquino – President & CEO – Archetype Philippines Inc., showcases expertise with collaborators in four continents

The significance of construction consultancy in building projects cannot be overstated. As global demand for sophisticated buildings increases, skyscrapers and towering structures rise to dominate the skyline. In a world constrained by limited land resources, the vertical growth of commercial and office spaces necessitates cutting-edge technological innovations. It is here that qualified experts from reputable companies leverage their expertise to achieve outstanding success.

Archetype Philippines is one such company that has blazed a trail in the industry. Under the leadership of President and CEO Danilo Aquino, the company has earned a distinguished reputation as a reliable partner for clients. Armed with a Master's degree in Structural Engineering and vast experience, Aquino towers over the world of design and construction, exuding an aura of invincibility that enhances the finesse with which Archetype Philippines delivers its projects.

In an interview with **Business Frontier**, Danilo Aquino highlights the crucial role of architectural and engineering consultancy and emphasizes the importance of leading by example for effective leadership



“My approach to leadership is embedded in the fact that effective leadership varies depending on the situation and the individuals involved. I prefer an unconventional approach, leading by example. Rather than simply instructing my team, I like to demonstrate tasks myself first. I foster a collaborative environment, viewing my staff as friends rather than subordinates.”

## You have extensive experience in the architectural consultancy sector. How do you look at your professional past?

My professional journey spans 42 years and is marked by numerous achievements and milestones. It all began with an eight-year tenure at the Lyceum of the Philippines University, where I eventually rose to the position of Chairman at the College of Civil Engineering. Between 1990 and 2007, I held several key positions at prominent international construction companies, including ABV Rock Group, Express Builders, Meinhardt Philippines, and Arenco Architectural and Engineering Consultants.

From 2007 to 2019, I started as a Structural Manager and got promoted as the Director and Head of Structural Engineering and Design Integration at NORR Group Consultants International Dubai. Throughout my career, I have been fortunate to work with some of the best minds in the industry, contributing to a variety of significant projects and advancing my expertise in architectural consultancy.

## Please give us a lowdown on the nature of operations of the organisation.

Archetype Group is a premier international construction consultancy company, renowned for shaping enduring buildings and providing a comprehensive suite of consulting services. Our expertise spans Architecture & Master Planning, Building Engineering, Industrial & Process Engineering, and Project & Cost Management. Since our inception in 2002, we have demonstrated our

proficiency, experience, and extensive knowledge in serving the hospitality, real estate, and industrial sectors, with successful collaborations across four continents—Asia, Africa, Europe, and America.

Our team of highly qualified professionals is committed to delivering top-notch services in various construction domains, including buildings and real estate, industry and manufacturing, and energy and infrastructure. We leverage innovative thinking and exceptional expertise to ensure the successful completion of projects, consistently meeting and exceeding our clients' expectations.

## What is your approach to leadership, and which is your favourite leadership style to lead your team?

My approach to leadership is embedded in the fact that effective leadership varies depending on the situation and the individuals involved. I prefer an unconventional approach, leading by example. Rather than simply instructing my team, I like to demonstrate tasks myself first. I foster a collaborative environment, viewing my staff as friends rather than subordinates. I value creativity and give equal consideration to ideas from both new and experienced employees. My priority is to set specific goals, analyse the market, study the competition, develop long-term strategies, and be prepared to make course corrections as needed.

## What do you envision for the future of the Archetype Group?

In the next five years, we aim to become the premier consulting

firm in the Philippines. Our unwavering commitment to providing environmentally-friendly and sustainable solutions will remain at the core of our mission. With the support of our parent company Archetype Group, we will continue to deliver resilient and sustainable design solutions. By fostering lasting relationships with our clients and offering tailored services, we strive to meet their unique needs. We recognize the significant impact of emerging trends, such as the increased use of digital technology, and are eager to integrate these advancements to offer more sophisticated and innovative designs to our clients.

## Being an experienced professional in the industry, what message would you like to give the others in the sector?

Architecture consultancy is going to evolve rapidly in keeping with the business environment and needs of society. People's lifestyle is also going to have an impact on the sector and the way it evolves. For instance, the pandemic was instrumental in changing the way clients and firms interacted, which has led to the dynamics of operations undergoing significant changes. Several organisations have realised that working from home has its own advantages in terms of cost management and better work-life balance for employees. I would like to tell business leaders to be mentally prepared for the management of change not only in terms of the style of working but also because of the imminent changes to the technological environment that is likely to prove intrusive.

# Transforming the Travel Industry of Bangladesh

Sadia Haque, Co-Founder & CEO, ShareTrip, has travelled far as the founder of a platform that has become a comprehensive travel and lifestyle brand.

Under the stewardship of **Sadia Haque** and her husband Kashef Rahman, **ShareTrip** started as a small firm in Bangladesh where a tiny workforce provided offline travel services. However, due to the passion of the co-founders, it caught the fancy of investors who provided financial support. Hence, the dream of two entrepreneurs took flight and ShareTrip expanded its services to include all travel needs, emerging as a comprehensive online platform in 2018. In a freewheeling interview with **Business Frontier**, Sadia Haque outlines the challenges she faced on the entrepreneurial journey and lays bare her plans for the future of ShareTrip.

## Can you tell us something about the early stages of your professional journey?

I began at Grameenphone, where I worked for about four and half years. From there, I moved to BBC World Service Trust, now known as BBC Media Action, where I focused on marketing, emphasising social community development, which differed significantly from my previous role. Nokia was my next stop, where I worked as marketing manager for a few months before transitioning to Banglalink's PR and Communication department. Eventually, I decided to leave the corporate world to co-found ShareTrip, which gave me the opportunity to fully realise my vision and passion for the travel industry. The diverse experience over the years equipped me with a deep understanding of market dynamics and customer behaviour, which has been

instrumental in making ShareTrip a successful venture.

## What made you enter the travel business?

My husband, Kashef Rahman, and I have always shared a passion for adventure and exploring new countries, even on a tight budget. These experiences highlighted the challenges travellers face and the value we could offer. Motivated by our love for travel, we took a leap of faith and left our corporate jobs to pursue a shared dream. Our primary focus was on making travel affordable and personalised. We started on a small scale with just a few employees, providing offline services, but our passion quickly caught on. Investors recognised our vision for a more internet-inclusive and transparent travel industry in Bangladesh and supported us.

In 2019, with their backing, we rebranded as ShareTrip and expanded our services beyond bookings to encompass all travel needs, transitioning to a comprehensive online platform. Creating a user-friendly online platform was crucial to our mission of making travel accessible and stress-free for everyone in Bangladesh. From the beginning, we were driven by a commitment to work with passion and dedication, building ShareTrip around these principles. Our vision has always been to contribute to the long-term development and advancement of the Bangladeshi travel industry, and we strive for lasting impact rather than short-term achievements.

## How do you think the travel industry is different from other

## businesses as far as the style of working and other important parameters are concerned?

The travel industry in Bangladesh is distinct in its working style and key parameters. Traditionally, it operated manually, with offline management of flights, hotels, and visas. However, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerated a shift towards digital solutions. ShareTrip, which began operations in 2019 as Bangladesh's first OTA, has led this transformation. We introduced a user-friendly B2B platform that enabled local travel agents to serve customers more efficiently using advanced technology. This shift has made the industry more advanced, swift, and modern.

ShareTrip has played a pivotal role in this evolution, with over 8,000 local travel agents using our platform, indirectly creating job opportunities for more than 20,000 people. Our efforts have modernised the travel industry and contributed significantly to the economy by generating employment and improving service delivery, marking a substantial departure from traditional, manual methods.

## You manage more than 250 employees in your organisation. What leadership style do you use to deal with challenges and let the organisation function smoothly?

Leading a team of bright and talented individuals has its own complexities. However, the true reward lies in empowering these experts and unlocking their potential. It's about fostering a culture of innovation and



agility, allowing us to tackle challenges head-on and improve continuously. At ShareTrip, employee well-being matters. That's why we offer a fantastic benefits package, including MetLife health insurance, subsidised meals, and travel allowances. It's more than just perks, though — we cultivate a positive and supportive environment where everyone feels valued.

## Bangladesh is a developing society. Being a woman entrepreneur, did you ever face criticism or resistance from the conservative elements of the country?

As a woman entrepreneur in Bangladesh, I have indeed encountered criticism and resistance from conservative elements in our society, where entrenched gender roles and cultural norms often create barriers for women in business. This criticism has been particularly pronounced when I've ventured outside traditional roles and faced challenges balancing work with personal life. Despite these obstacles, I've been fortunate to receive

unflinching support from my family, with both my parents and husband providing encouragement. My experiences have fuelled a determination to create a more supportive ecosystem for women in our country. For example, I am involved with SheSTEM, a platform dedicated to women's empowerment and transformation that also provides them with the tools and opportunities they need to thrive.

## As the Co-Founder & CEO, what is your vision for the future of ShareTrip?

My vision for the future of ShareTrip is to solidify our position as the leading travel and lifestyle brand in Bangladesh. In the beginning, our focus was on simplifying travel planning for our customers by introducing the country's cutting-edge website and mobile app. We have since evolved from merely a travel service to a comprehensive travel and lifestyle brand. In 2023, we launched ST Pay, the country's first travel wallet, gifting customers a smooth payment process for their preferred services. We've also added

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features like mobile recharge, bill payment, and shopping to enhance the seamless customer experience. Looking ahead, we are committed to offering a holistic travel and lifestyle experience where customers can plan and book their travel effortlessly and enjoy the convenience of purchasing from their favourite brands.

# REDEFINING THE MODERN WORKPLACE

Stacy Stewart, MEA Regional Director at MillerKnoll, takes a look at how innovative furniture solutions are shaping the future of office design



The landscape of the modern workplace is ever-evolving, and what we require of the spaces we work in is shifting in the face of economic, geopolitical, and technological change. Furniture is also evolving, no longer confined to open-plan paradigms, but becoming far more adaptable and purpose-driven, able to meet the constantly changing day-to-day needs of humans at work. At MillerKnoll, we believe that 'work' is best done when people feel connected, when their wellbeing is supported, and when organisations are ready to adapt to change as it happens.

## Fostering Connection

The workforce is increasingly distributed, with a mix of hybrid working arrangements, remote teams, and clients. Humans need connection; it's what creates a sense of community, supports collaboration, and creates a sense of belonging. Innovative and modular furniture solutions play a pivotal role in cultivating an environment where connection thrives—whether that's casual interactions, team meetings, video conferencing, or private conversations.

## Prioritising Well-being

Employee well-being is no longer just a 'nice-to-have'—it's a strategic

imperative. It's become clear that healthier teams work better, and that organisations flourish as a result. This is where innovative furniture solutions prove to be the ultimate support team, naturally championing health. Ergonomically designed chairs, adjustable desks, movable monitor arms, and sit-to-stand workstations are all examples of innovative solutions in the workspace that support physical well-being. Well-being, however, isn't just about physical support; it's also about creating an environment that actively promotes a sustainable and environmentally-friendly space.

## Embracing Change

Adaptability is a cornerstone of success in today's rapidly-evolving business



landscape. After all, it's much easier for humans to respond to changing circumstances—and to take risks—when the environment they work in is fully equipped for that change and ready to support it. This is where innovative furniture solutions are really making their mark, shaping the future of work and workplace design by creating settings that are naturally versatile.

For example, private offices in workplaces have become more than just a space for individual privacy and fewer distractions. Private offices have evolved into multi-use spaces that can be used for private work, team meetings, or collaborative brainstorming sessions, to meet a company's specific needs.

## Furniture Plays a Pivotal Role

Without furniture, a space would simply be a space. Furniture is what takes it from a blank canvas to somewhere that supports work as we know it in all its many facets. The same is true of people: without people, spaces would feel empty, and they would serve no purpose. Furniture that supports people is therefore key. By setting the scene for workspaces that are not only visually captivating, but that also champion wellbeing, connection, and adaptability, the innovative furniture solutions emerging today are helping humans work at their best, every day.

# WALT DISNEY TO LAUNCH NEW CRUISE SHIP IN 2028

The ninth vessel in the global brand's growing fleet is a partnership with the operator of Tokyo Disneyland

Walt Disney has unveiled plans to launch a new cruise ship that will set sail from Tokyo starting in fiscal 2028, adding a ninth vessel to the brand's growing fleet. The new ship, to be modelled after the *Wish* that is the largest vessel in the group, is a partnership with Oriental Land Company (OLC), the operator of Tokyo Disneyland. It is part of a 10-year, \$60 billion expansion of Disney's theme parks and cruise business.

Disney currently has five cruise ships in operation. In addition to the Tokyo-based vessel, it has plans for three others, including one that will set sail from Singapore in 2025. The ship, whose name was not revealed, will have a maximum capacity of 4,000 passengers and is expected to bring in about 100 billion yen (\$621.77 million) in annual sales within several years of launch, OLC said.

"To set sail from Japan will make Disney vacations at sea more accessible to Japanese guests, who we know are some of our biggest fans," Thomas Mazloum, president of Disney Signature Experiences, told reporters. The cruise line expansion comes as the industry is enjoying a rebound from a global shutdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Cruise Lines International Association expects the number of passengers to reach 34.7 million this year, up 17% from 2019.



Josh D'Amaro, chairman of Disney Experiences, said in a recent interview to international media that the ships provide the opportunity to bring themed entertainment to places that are not close to the company's theme parks, such as Melbourne or Vancouver.

Disney also reaches a segment of the cruise market that had gone unaddressed - families. "Forty percent of the people on those ships today will say, 'The only reason I'm on a cruise ship today is because Disney's here,' which means we're creating a market," D'Amaro said.

"When we are in Singapore, with this unbelievable ship that we're building,

the same thing is going to happen," he added. "We know there's an insatiable demand for everything Disney." Disney's experiences business, which includes its domestic and international parks and cruise line, accounted for more than one-third of the company's revenue in the March quarter, and nearly 60% of its operating income.

The company's stock tumbled in May after Chief Financial Officer Hugh Johnston warned about a "global moderation" in travel in the fiscal third quarter and other impacts, including higher wages and pre-opening expenses related to two of the new cruise ships and the new vacation island, Lookout Cay.

The rising tide for Disney's cruise lines could help offset any softness in the company's domestic theme park business, UBS analyst John Hodulik said. The company said its second quarter booking occupancy is at 97% for all five ships. The rapid expansion of Disney's cruise capacity "helps de-risk the medium-term outlook" for the parks business, Hodulik said. The company is expected to announce plans for new attractions at Disneyland in California and Walt Disney World in central Florida in August, at its D23 fan convention.



# An Architect of Success and Hardwork



Having worked in different roles in numerous companies, **Mohammad Imran Qureshi** has emerged as a successful entrepreneur in the industry in just five years. The **Founder and CEO of MetTech Metal and Glass Workshop**, who admits that he loves challenges, worked in the architectural metal and glass industry for many years before deciding to start his own business.

However, COVID-19 soon struck and posed a huge challenge to the business, which was still in its infancy. Not the one to be intimidated, Qureshi took steps at adapting the new business to the changed environment and ultimately emerged a winner. In a candid interview with **Business Frontier's Senior Editor, Megha S Anthony**, he lays bare his views on leadership and navigating business barriers



## How have the early stages of your career helped shape your achievements as the CEO of MetTech Metal and Glass Workshop?

I worked in the service industry before joining the metal and glass sector and had the opportunity to work in various roles related to sales & marketing, business development, commercial and operations departments of different companies. This provided me with a well-rounded understanding of different organisations and their environment and culture, teaching me the importance of collaboration, communication, and empathy in leadership. As I progressed, I focused on building strong relationships with clients, colleagues and mentors, learning from their experiences, and continuously seeking opportunities for growth and development.

These early experiences also helped me develop resilience and adaptability, essential qualities for navigating the challenges of leadership. I learned to embrace failure as a learning opportunity and approach problems with creativity and innovation. Overall, the early stages of my career laid the foundation of my leadership style and approach as a CEO. They instilled in me a deep appreciation for the value of teamwork, continuous learning, positive attitude, self-confidence and a growth mindset.

## What inspired you to start MetTech Metal and Glass Workshop?

I started my career in this industry as a Sales & Marketing Engineer and rose to become an AGM of a leading company. This long journey created a reputation for me as a brand in the sector. In fact, the group that I was working for closed in 2019. So, instead of hunting for another job, I decided to start my own business in the same sector and hence MetTech Metal and Glass Workshop was born. The moment we started MetTech, COVID-19 struck. Fortunately, the pandemic didn't affect the business adversely and we got orders and executed several jobs in different emirates. Since then, there has been no looking back.

Hence, I can safely say that my personal interest, market opportunity, self-confidence, creativity, passion, hard work and 23 long years in the metal and glass

“ Our technological landscape is rapidly changing and advancing with the emergence of artificial intelligence. I focus on being on top of these advancements and learning to integrate them within the organisation through reading and researching online. ”

industry were some of the crucial factors that led me to start this business.

## How did you deal with the challenge of starting your own company during the COVID-19 pandemic when even established businesses were struggling to survive?

Starting a company during the pandemic came with an array of challenges, but also offered opportunities for personal growth and lessons in business adaptability. I had learnt from my previous boss that even a recession provides a good opportunity as we can grab more business shares even if it is at a loss.

During the pandemic, we were pushed to stay open-minded and constantly reassessed our business model and strategies with the changing landscape of the industry and its needs. We also adopted a conservative method of cost management and focused on managing finances where possible. When it comes to quality and services, I don't compromise which has made us stand out in the business.

## What is the change in approach you had in mind when you started your own business after working in other companies over so many years?

It's a big challenge to start your own business. In the other jobs, I was largely independent and able to make my own decisions. But it seemed tempting to do it for myself rather than someone else. When I started there were huge challenges like visa, labour issues and so on. But I am a positive thinker and took the challenges head on to emerge successful and achieve whatever I have today. Today, we are here in five years and in the next five, we hope to grow across the Middle East.

## What qualities inspire you to be a better leader for MetTech?

For me, the first principle of leadership is respect for others which in turn gets us respect from others. If you take care of your team and look after their well-being, the company is sure to grow. The leader has to meet the genuine requirements of his team and be polite or strict in keeping with the requirements of the situation. On the whole, it is about creating a good environment in the company, good policies related to employees, and quality consciousness among staff. It is good to have informal gatherings of employees to know them better and provide a fertile ground for new ideas.

## How do you keep abreast of the changes taking place in your area of work?

Our technological landscape is rapidly changing and advancing with the emergence of artificial intelligence. I focus on being on top of these advancements and learning to integrate them within the organisation through reading and researching online. I also attend conferences such as Big 5, Index and SteelFab to network and learn about different perspectives on the current changes within the industry.

## What are the hobbies and interests that help you maintain a work-life balance and recharge yourself professionally?

I find time to relax by watching TV and spending time with my family after completely logging out of work. I am an avid listener of music and enjoy old Indian songs by Mohammad Rafi and Kishore Kumar. I also like watching sports as a means to de-stress with my favourites being wrestling and cricket. Meeting friends and socialising is another form of relaxation that I like.

# Marrying Artificial Intelligence to Sustainability



Dilip Prasad, Co-Founder & CEO, Ayun AI, speaks to Business Frontier about his professional journey, leadership strategies, secret of success and much more

**D**ilip Prasad, Co-Founder & CEO, Ayun AI, embodies the right fusion of innovative skills and academic achievements to expand the frontiers of creativity. His achievements in exploring the intersections of artificial intelligence, life sciences, physics and environmental sciences are just a few of the pursuits that crown him with leadership skills to provide exemplary leadership at Ayun AI.

In an interview with **Business Frontier**, Dilip Prasad discusses the upcoming field of AI and how he marries it to sustainability.

## What qualities do you think have propelled you to the forefront of success?

My success is rooted in a blend of robust academic achievements, innovative entrepreneurship, and impactful mentorship. My contributions to scalable and sustainable artificial intelligence have led to multiple patents. As a founder of multiple startups, I have shown leadership and an entrepreneurial spirit. Collaborative engagements in academia and industry have expanded my influence and facilitated continuous innovation. Notable awards,

including the Rolls-Royce Inventor Award, and being consistently listed in Stanford's top 2% of scientists validate the high impact and credibility of my work.

## From being a professor at The Arctic University of Norway to a visiting faculty member at the National University of Singapore, you straddle the world of research and academics. What do you think lies behind your academic success?

energy consumption associated with AI development and usage.

## There seem to be few organisations which integrate sustainability in AI. How does Ayun marry the two concepts?

At Ayun AI, we are dedicated to marrying sustainability with artificial intelligence by developing energy-efficient AI solutions for vision, multimodal and NLP AI models. We focus on model compression techniques that significantly reduce energy consumption and lower carbon footprints, making all types of AI including large language models (LLM) more sustainable and environment- friendly.

## AI is buzzing in the business firmament today even more than the dot-com boom two decades ago. What do you think are the challenges AI faces at the global level?

Despite creating a buzz akin to the dot-com boom, AI faces significant global challenges. One major issue is ensuring AI systems are ethical and free from biases. Without careful design and diverse training datasets, AI can perpetuate existing biases. Another challenge is the development of uniform regulatory frameworks across countries, each with its own priorities and legal standards. This makes it difficult to establish a coherent set of global rules governing AI's development and deployment. Additionally, there's a notable talent shortage in the AI field. Data privacy and security are also major concerns. Furthermore, the disparity in AI adoption between developed and developing nations could exacerbate existing economic and social divides. Moreover, the significant computational power required for AI raises environmental concerns.

## What is your advice to young entrepreneurs launching AI start-ups?

Launching an AI startup is an exhilarating yet challenging journey. Start by identifying a clear, real-world problem that your AI can solve, ensuring your solution is deeply rooted in actual needs and pain points. Remember "Webapp is not a startup". If entry barrier is too low for your domain,



“Despite creating a buzz akin to the dot-com boom, AI faces significant global challenges. One major issue is ensuring AI systems are ethical and free from biases. ”

then one cannot maintain an edge for very long. Assemble a diverse team to enhance the effectiveness of your AI and help avoid biases in your models. Focus on collecting, cleaning, and ethically sourcing high-quality data. Forge partnerships with academic institutions and industry leaders to access essential resources and insights that can accelerate your development. Understand the regulatory landscape in your target markets to ensure compliance and build trust. Secure sufficient funding, as AI development is resource intensive. Finally, design your infrastructure for scalability from the start to accommodate rapid growth and demand.

## What do you do when not teaching, mentoring or leading?

At leisure, I indulge my curiosity by continuously learning new and diverse things. Due to time constraints, I often listen to summaries of two to three books every day on various topics to satiate my thirst for knowledge without committing to lengthy reads. I am also an avid outdoor sports enthusiast with a particular passion for water sports. Activities like kayaking, sailing, and surfing provide a great way to unwind and maintain my fitness.



# Engineering His Dreams to Life

Edberg Ponniah of Edsha Solution Sdn Bhd believes that technology cannot completely sidestep people in business



**T**hough futuristic technology is fast moving towards a stage where it seems to take over human endeavour, **Edberg Ponniah** swears by innovation and creativity of the human mind. With the conviction that engineering is not only a profession, but a way of thinking, the chemical engineer believes in leading from the front and back in keeping with the situation. It is this belief of his, along with his passion for creativity, which has enabled him to create a company that makes sustainable furniture. In an interview with **Business Frontier**, **Edberg Ponniah, Director, Edsha Solution Sdn Bhd**, lays out his vision for the business and his inclination to empower people.

## Give us an overview of the early stages of your professional journey.

My career began with one main objective — solving problems. I studied to be a chemical engineer due to my passion for solving problems and a love of chemistry. After graduating from Iowa State University, I did a couple of years of soul-searching in the engineering industry to find the best fit for myself. It turned out the best fit was closer to home — at Edsha Solutions Sdn Bhd.

When I joined the company in 2018, we had only recently been licensed by the Department of Environment Malaysia for the recycling and recovery of hazardous waste. I initially joined Edsha Solutions as an Industrial Effluent Treatment System (IETS) engineer for which I am competent for physical chemical process and biological process.

In 2020, the pandemic hit us hard as it did many other companies. That

was when I was pushed to deliver my best and rose to face the challenges that came with the pandemic. I took on the role of management representative for the implementation of the ISO14001:2015 and ISO45001:2018 systems in the company and attained a safety and health officer competency. In addition, I was part of the duo driving to push for more codes approved for hazardous waste recovery from our meagre 4 codes in 2017 to 11 in 2024. As the company grew with my humble contributions, so did my role. In recent years, I have been inspired to diversify this business — by creating a new company (eTree) that makes sustainable furniture.

## You profess to be an engineering geek at heart. How has your chemical engineering degree helped you in your role as the Director of Edsha Solutions?

Engineering is not just a job, it's a way of thinking. As a company director with an engineering background, I am always up to researching and developing various solutions to adapt to changing demands of customers for the products being produced, while staying within cost limitations. I have a team, of which I am truly proud, and inspire them to continuously focus on improvement. We have not just found solutions to problems by purchasing ready-made machines, but also been able to create our own machines to cater to specific issues. With the mindset of an engineer, I often find myself being able to maneuver through tough times to find a pragmatic solution.

## At the helm of managing people and processes, what are the factors you consider before taking a major business decision?

Profits, environment and community are the three factors we consider when taking any decision. Profit is the obvious criterion to ensure the company thrives. Being an environmental business and one that has integrated environmental sustainability into its culture, it is crucial that our decisions not only have no adverse effect on the environment,

but leave a positive impact on the ecosystem. Finally, it's the community, which is an important variable when taking decisions that can create new jobs, new products, influence the company culture and boost the economy

## How do you keep abreast of the latest technologies that spearhead change in your field of work?

We always keep our ears close to the ground to see what is new around us and assess whether it will bring a positive change to the environment and complement the company's growth. Attending conferences periodically keeps us aware of new opportunities and latest developments in the field. Researching novel green technologies that we can adapt to our business helps us be on our toes on the environmental front.

Furthermore, the company has created its own application and accompanying system to manage its fleet. In addition, we have implemented multiple automation initiatives, and are currently looking into adopting AI technology to handle certain aspects of managing the company.

## What are the leadership principles you like to follow? Do you have a favourite leadership style or you prefer to have different approaches in keeping with the circumstances?

I believe in empowerment. In a day and age of technological advancements that seem to push people to the sidelines, I believe people are capable of innovation, ideas and creativity that technology cannot yet provide. As a leader, I choose to empower my team to solve problems and continuously bring about improvement in keeping with their abilities and in line with the company's vision and mission. Besides, I deeply value the ability to find ways to make a complex job simpler and reward employees who can do this. Someone who can find easier, faster and efficient ways of doing a job is an asset. A good leader must be capable of leading from the back and front in keeping with the demand of the

situation. That is something I pride myself in doing. During times of change or new challenges, I believe in leading from the front to show my team that the hurdle can be overcome. At the same time, there are situations when leading from the back is necessary to give opportunities to team members to rise up to the challenge and lead.

## What are the hobbies and interests that you seek refuge in while unplugging from work?

Work-life balance is a difficult feat when there is so much to achieve in life. However, it doesn't mean that your passions cannot lead to new opportunities. I love inventing things and I channeled this passion into creating sustainable furniture that is being sold under eTree, a spinoff company of Edsha Solutions Sdn Bhd. Being a firm believer in lifelong learning, I am currently picking up a new language and learning a musical instrument. An avid football fan, I believe sometimes business is a lot like football: there are seasons with highs and lows but if a team of individuals comes together and fights for it collectively, they can become one powerful force that is unstoppable.

“ I believe in empowerment. In this day and age of technological advancements that seem to push people to the sidelines, I still believe that humans are capable of innovation, ideas and creativity that technology cannot yet provide. ”

# Acing the Game of Sales

**Vandana Chopra, Head of Business Development for India and South East Asia, APTON, speaks about being a changemaker, the evolving role of women in the industry, work-life balance and more**

**W**ith a natural flair for sales and marketing, ace saleswoman **Vandana Chopra** has carved a niche for herself in the industry with her immense dedication, perseverance and people skills. Currently the **Head of Business Development for India and South East Asia** for the UK-based partition manufacturing company **APTON**, Chopra's role involves travelling across various regions, networking with industry insiders and improving the brand presence and adoption in South East Asia and India.

In an interview with **Business Frontier**, the powerhouse of talent speaks candidly about being a changemaker, the evolving role of women in the industry, work-life balance and much more.

“**Every job comes with its own share of challenges and growth opportunities. Understanding that it's all a part of the learning curve is what makes the journey worthwhile. The most important thing is one's ability to constantly learn and grow.**”

## **Gives us a brief overview of the early stages of your professional journey. What made you opt for sales/marketing as a career?**

I think it would be safe to say that sales chose me rather than the other way round. When I moved from Jodhpur to Bengaluru, I applied for a job at a furniture company and got selected for a sales role. I thought it would be something that I would enjoy as I am naturally a chatterbox and a people's person.

I have never preferred sitting in a place and working on the laptop. I like meeting people and having conversations, more so being able to sell a product. I feel like it challenges me in a way that I truly enjoy. Hence, engaging with a client and convincing them was like a nice game for me where every sale I made, felt like I had won a game. That's how my love for sales grew in the early days of my professional journey and till date, it's something I take immense pride in doing.

## **Could you take us through your key responsibilities and what excites you the most about them?**

I am currently working as the Head of Business Development for India and South East Asia for a partition manufacturing company called APTON. It is a UK-based company with some presence in India at the moment and my role here is to build a dealership network and improve its brand presence and adoption in South East Asia and India.

A regular day for me involves meeting people from the industry, mainly designers and architects; helping them understand our product offerings and creating more awareness about our

brand. My role also requires me to travel extensively and meet people around the region for upcoming projects.

## **As a thought leader and changemaker, how do you perceive the evolving role of women in the industry?**

Honestly, when I started almost two decades ago, sales was a completely male-dominated industry and very ruthless for women trying to carve a niche for themselves. Over the years, women have been able to prove their mettle and change that narrative.

Today, women are more easily accepted and definitely given a fair chance in the industry. In fact, there are so many instances where women have outdone their male counterparts, so much so that we even get flak for being better in many ways. But that's the hard reality.

However, it's also heartening to see talent being recognised over gender bias and women making their way into every sphere purely based on merit and hard work. We are walking shoulder to shoulder and strength to strength with our male peers and people have started recognizing that. I definitely hope and wish more women will take on more demanding roles in companies at senior managerial positions.

## **What are the strategies you employ to deal with the everyday challenges at the workplace?**

Every job comes with its own share of challenges and growth opportunities. Understanding that it's all a part of the learning curve is what makes the journey worthwhile. The most important thing is one's ability to constantly learn and grow.



Learning and upskilling is extremely important in any industry too. This is all the more applicable for sales, which is a highly competitive space. Having said that, I also recognize that it is an opportunity to grow so I take it in my stride. For instance, I am now taking up a course in Workplace Strategy just to stay relevant and upskill myself.

## **What is your favourite leadership style?**

Leadership for me starts with oneself. You should be able to do what is expected of others. Secondly, it is all about empathy. So I would like to believe that my style is transformational, where empowering individuals to achieve their full potential is the key. This approach resonates with me the most because it's centred around the development of trust, encouragement of innovation, and the fostering of leadership qualities within the team.

However, I also adapt my leadership style according to the situation at hand. For instance, at times when quick decisions and swift actions are the need of the hour, I might adopt a more direct approach. Flexibility in leadership is crucial to effectively manage varying circumstances and support the team's needs in my opinion. At the end of the day, it is about fostering healthy relationships.

## **How do you maintain a healthy work-life balance?**

Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is essential for sustained productivity and well-being. I achieve this by setting clear boundaries between work and personal time, prioritising tasks, and delegating when necessary. I also make it a point to disconnect from work during personal time to fully recharge. I have to thank my family for being fully supportive and understanding the demands of my role accommodating my busy days and hectic travel schedules.

Some of my favourite things to do in my free time are going for long drives, watching movies and exploring new restaurants whenever possible. Being a pet mom, my biggest stress buster is my three-year-old fur ball of joy. Spending time and playing with him everyday helps me unwind and relax.

# Building a Brand of Excellence



**Yosuke Suzuki, President, Wieden+Kennedy Tokyo/Seoul, speaks to Business Frontier on the goals he has for his company and why creativity in the most important tool in the journey of success**

**Y**osuke Suzuki, President, Wieden+Kennedy Tokyo/Seoul, believes that creativity is the engine that propels everything towards excellence. The industry veteran leading Wieden+Kennedy Tokyo/Seoul is not only another advertising expert who has emerged to create a name for himself in the industry. He goes beyond casting an eye on the bottom line, with a conviction of keeping things exciting for his employees.

Suzuki believes in being useful in any role that he does and is more than keen to shoulder responsibilities for his decisions. In a candid interview with **Business Frontier's Sr Editor, Megha Anthony**, Yosuke Suzuki spells out his priorities for the company and the development of its employees

**You have a versatile background having worked in different kinds of companies. How has this enriched your experience and helped you evolve?**

Due to my dad's job at Toyota, I got the opportunity to move among several countries. Since childhood, I have been fascinated by different people and cultures. Luckily, despite spending time in the West as a Japanese, I never faced bullying and could get along easily with people. This influenced my thinking and made me tolerant about other people and cultures.

Being exposed to cars as a child, I had wanted to work in a car company, and joined Mazda Motor in 1999. In fact, despite my love for cars, it wasn't cars

per se that motivated me - I was more influenced by the people around me and why they acted in a certain way. I figured out that I need to join the other side — an ad agency — to better understand human behaviour. It was then that I joined BBH Japan as an AE. Even in that role, I was writing my own strategy to develop the account and brand I was working on, the big one being Unilever.

I quickly became the youngest Account Director at the age of 27. For me, working at a company is not determined by how big it is or how large the brand is, but how I can help it. I also wanted to take on the challenges that this role would bring along. That's why I joined Wieden+Kennedy Tokyo/Seoul.

**What keeps you motivated at the top of the corporate ladder?**

Right from the time I started working, I have gone through a lot of experiences which influenced me. But what has essentially not changed in me is the drive to be useful. In different companies and roles, the mantra is about understanding the context and the surroundings. You may have to change in keeping with the surroundings and the people around you. Working with people in different contexts and surroundings is what excites me and keeps me going.

As you go up the ladder, you have more opportunities to delegate. I follow the rule that if I am involved, I have to shoulder the blame if something goes wrong. In fact, that is exciting for me. One cannot get complacent about success. That's a crucial trap that leaders need to avoid.

**Looking at the current generation that is being hired by companies, one expects less loyalty. Do you feel the same and how do you handle this?**

For me, it's more about finding ways to motivate the younger generation than racking our brains over what they are capable or not capable of. More than ever, it's important for the younger generation to understand why they are being asked to do something and what it will lead to. Therefore, the practical thing to do is try to motivate them and get the work done.

**With a view to the future, what are your plans for Wieden+Kennedy Tokyo/Seoul?**

I want to make sure that the company is seen as a place that is all about creativity, play and enjoying things that you like to do. At the end of the day, we should be seen as a company where people work to use creativity to solve business problems. We not only make ads but also create meaning for brands.

The fact that creativity is the answer to most of the problems is slowly being forgotten. I want to revive this idea so that corporations think that the Wieden way is the right one. The development of people is another priority close to my heart. A key part of people's development is not only making them think harder but also letting the company provide them opportunities.

I follow some key guiding principles, the basic one being "do the right thing". This implies asking myself if the decision I

have taken is for me or the company or even the staff? As president of the company, my role is about growing the business, so it is not really about what I want as an individual. If a decision portrays me in a poor light but takes the company in the right direction, that is what I need to do. I also need to continuously think about innovating, in addition to making the work exciting for employees. If the company can't inspire its staff, it is as good as dead.

**You moved from Coca Cola, an international FMCG brand, to leadership roles in the advertising industry. How did**

**you handle the transition and the challenges, if any, that you faced along the way?**

I started from the brand side, then moved to the agency side and then back again to the brand after a couple of years. For me, on either side, you are there to lead the team to accomplish your goal which is always about how you help build a strong connection between the brand and the customer, ultimately to drive sales. And all my roles were to lead strategically. The only challenge is the team. One needs to figure out what one should personally do or what you let others lead and do. I see my role as helping develop the

team while also trying to create the best environment for creativity to flow.

**What are the essential leadership traits that you think are required in the advertising industry?**

Firstly, it's humility. By nature, creative people are sensitive. You need to really think about the people, the process, the work and results on the whole to judge and evaluate people. Secondly, it's strategic thinking. Thirdly, it is creativity.

In this business, you need to be creative not only with the work that goes out but also with how you run the business. Last but not the least, proactivity matters in developing the business.



*“ I want to make sure that the company is seen as a place that is all about creativity, play and enjoying things that you like to do. At the end of the day, we should be seen as a company where people work to use creativity to solve business problems. ”*

# Promoting the Spirit of Family Law



Sim Wen Yee, a legal expert in family matters, speaks about her approach and leadership style

**S**im Wen Yee, a legal expert in family matters, is as passionate about her work as she is about jazz! Technical as it may sound, the solicitor handles International Probate and Estate Administration matters with an unparalleled finesse. She provides legal advice and solutions to feuding families and finds it highly satisfying.

In an interview with **Business Frontier**, the **Founder and Partner of Sim & Rahman Advocates & Solicitors**, opens up about her leadership approach and the qualities needed in a lawyer specialising in family matters.



“*Every job comes with its own share of challenges and growth opportunities. Understanding that it's all a part of the learning curve is what makes the journey worthwhile. The most important thing is one's ability to constantly learn and grow.*”

## What made you choose the legal profession?

I find it immensely satisfying to handle different types of family dynamics and estate distribution and provide the best advice and solutions. I am grateful to be a lawyer specialising exclusively in wills; international probate and estate administration matters; family offices, and advising clients on managing their family assets distribution as well as being an advisor relating to how to manage the client's family businesses.

## Give us an overview of the initial stages of your professional journey.

I started with my conveyancing practice and found my specialisation in estate administration along the journey. With experience in drafting effective client-benefit agreements, I entered wills, probate, and estate administration, starting my own practice after the second year.

## What was the motivation behind creating Sim & Rahman Advocates and Solicitors?

The initial motivation behind the birth of Sim & Rahman Advocates and Solicitors was to help families resolve their feuds as amicably as possible. Due to cases coming up on a daily basis, I decided to start my own practice. We have been blessed with the trust of our clients which allows us to excel in our endeavours.

The firm's two branches in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, help us function efficiently. Having extensive experience handling family estate issues including both non-contentious and contentious matters, we have started our training institute called 'Malaysia Law Institution'. It is the first institute in the country to train lawyers, insurance advisors, trustees, bankers, and practitioners both locally and abroad on actual case studies and provides knowledge that only a practitioner can impart. Our trainers

are experienced lawyers and professionals from financial businesses across Malaysia, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

## You specialise in wills, estate administration and family matters. What special qualities and skills does a solicitor need to argue cases in these areas of law?

A lawyer specialising in wills, estate administration and family matters should possess high emotional intelligence, have a good understanding of family dynamics and background as clients are usually family members with different beliefs, race, upbringing, family values and education. One needs to have knowledge of the legal aspects in addition to corporate governance, company law and practices, family law, investment products, banking facilities, nature of debts and types of liabilities.

## What is your approach to leadership and which is your favourite leadership style?

Leaders are learners. A great leader inspires others to be good leaders too and grow in their pursuits. Being a leader does not necessarily entail a lofty role. Even a homemaker can be a good leader, guiding others to perform household chores to the best of their abilities.

As the leader of my team, inspiring team members is the key to my success. Taking the lead in everything, including training staff, to become leaders is a key factor helping our team grow. My favourite leadership style is inspiring others to lead. Without a great leader, an organisation can't grow and taste success.

## You are also a trainer. What are the topics you hold training sessions on?

I am a trainer certified by Human Resources Corporation. I train lawyers, insurance advisors, housing developers, trustees, bankers including clients on areas such as the importance of functional will, trust law, family offices setup, conveyancing practices, and contracts.

## What are your areas of interest away from work?

I love jazz music and listen to it to relax. Cooking, gardening, and property investments are my other areas of interest, which keep me occupied when I am not working.



# BERLIN-BASED STARTUP NORTHBOUND RAISES €1.3MIL

The company is developing a SaaS platform to streamline operational control within the container supply chain



**N**orthbound, a startup slashing demurrage and detention charges via optimised container logistics, has successfully closed a pre-seed financing round of €1.3 million to expand its software-as-a-service solution. The round was led by Apex Black and included participation from id4 ventures, IBB Ventures, Schenker Ventures, MVP Factory and several prominent business angels. The funding will be used to expand the platform's AI capabilities, grow the team with key hires in go-to-market and software engineering and acquire additional customers.

The company is developing a SaaS platform to streamline operational control within the container supply chain. In that sense, Northbound optimises the flow of goods from the port to the warehouse, considering penalty fees (e.g. demurrage and detention, 'D&D'), capacities, and delivery promises. The solution protects companies from inefficiencies and errors, such as multi-million-euro container D&D charges and late deliveries that frustrate customers.

Up to 40 percent of containers remain in port terminals or storage locations for too long, resulting in up to multiple thousand euros in penalty costs per container. Northbound offers businesses an intuitive dashboard that provides real-time data on the location, status and impending D&D charges of containers. This enables prioritized and coordinated control of container shipments, optimized flows of goods and fulfilled delivery promises.

Northbound was founded in 2023 by Andreas Canel and Rahul Yadav and received initial backing and acceleration from global logistics service provider DB Schenker and MVP Factory.

"International importers frequently incur millions in D&D penalties without having real control over them. Major shipping lines profit from these fees and have little incentive to change. Our vision is to empower importers to independently prevent these fees through active control and automated optimization of container flows," explained Andreas Canel, co-founder and CEO of Northbound.

Northbound has already successfully

validated its software with various pilot customers, including a leading German sporting goods manufacturer. It was proven that over 90 percent of D&D costs within a two-month period could have been avoided through the increased cost transparency and optimized control that Northbound's AI solution offers. Northbound's AI algorithm automatically flags incorrect invoices, enabling disputes on up to 20 percent of all invoices and preventing unjustified payments.

“  
**International importers frequently incur millions in D&D penalties without having real control over them. Major shipping lines profit from these fees and have little incentive to change. Our vision is to empower importers to independently prevent these fees through active control and automated optimization of container flows.**”

– **Andreas Canel**  
Co-founder and CEO of Northbound

According to DB Schenker and numerous customer interviews, oftentimes the majority of D&D fees can be avoided. Without a solution, these costs are commonly caused by a lack of awareness and suboptimal planning. "Northbound's innovative approach to optimizing the container supply chain, including the reduction of demurrage and detention charges, addresses a critical need in the market. The technology empowers importers with real-time cost transparency and intelligence, enabling precise and timely decision-making and significant cost savings," added Rani Saad, Founding Partner at Apex Black.

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