

ANSR Leadership Forum

The Playbook for Next-Gen GCC Leaders



Global Capability Centers (GCCs) are no longer just delivery hubs. They are at the forefront of enterprise strategy, talent innovation, and digital transformation. As GCCs evolve, so do the expectations from their leaders.

At a recent ANSR Leadership Forum, senior industry leaders shared their perspectives on the future of GCC leadership—the skills, mindsets, and enablers that will define success in the coming decade.

The Shifting GCC Leadership Landscape

The leadership demand is clear and urgent:

- **Today, India hosts over 6,500 GCC leaders. By 2030, that number must grow to 30,000.**
- **75% of GCCs are already grappling with leadership pipeline challenges.**
- **The representation of women leaders is set to grow from 15% to 25%.**
- **Over 150 global CXOs are already based out of India GCCs, driving enterprise-wide mandates.**

The question, then, is not whether GCC leaders will have a larger role to play — it is how quickly they can prepare to step into expanded global responsibilities.

Leadership Mindsets: Beyond the Seat at the Table

Ambiguity, disruption, and non-linear growth are constants in the GCC journey. Leaders must embrace them with curiosity, boldness, and a bias for action.

As Amit Kalra, MD & Head, Swiss Re Global Business Solutions, put it: *“Getting a seat at the table is not enough; the real test is influencing and adding value once you’re there.”*

Building enterprise impact requires more than operational excellence. It demands the ability to decode the business strategy, align with informal networks, and act decisively even when information is incomplete.

Vision and Empowerment: Defining the Role of the GCC

For GCC leaders, empowerment is often determined at inception. Was the GCC built to save costs, or was it set up to drive enterprise value? The answer makes all the difference.

Shalini Pillay, India Leader – Global Capability Centres KPMG, India, highlighted the importance of this strategic intent: *“If the GCC is set up only for delivery or cost savings, leadership empowerment will always be limited.”*

She emphasized that the strongest differentiator for both talent and leaders is the vision and narrative of the GCC. A purpose-driven GCC doesn’t just retain people—it inspires them.

Reinvention and Cultural Agility: Keys to Staying Relevant

GCCs cannot remain static. The speed of change—driven by AI, talent shifts, and geopolitics—requires leaders to reinvent continuously.

Prabhuram Duraiswami Executive Director, Head of Referential Services and India Head, CME Group, underscored this point: *“We reimaged our GCC three times in 10 years – reinvention is not optional.”*

Reinvention goes hand-in-hand with cultural agility. Leaders must intentionally blend global HQ culture with India’s strengths while preparing mid-level managers to lead multi-country teams. Cultural blending, as PD reminds us, is a deliberate act, not an accidental byproduct.

The Playbook for the Next Decade

As GCCs evolve into true strategic partners for their enterprises, leaders must embrace a new way of thinking and operating. The journey begins with cultivating the right mindsets—curiosity to continuously learn, boldness to challenge the status quo, and the discipline to translate ideas into action.

At the same time, leaders must sharpen their enterprise lens, ensuring every initiative connects back to the organization's larger purpose.

But mindset alone is not enough. Future-ready leaders will also need to develop critical skills such as enterprise-wide collaboration, talent orchestration, and cultural fluency. These capabilities allow them to navigate increasingly complex ecosystems while keeping their teams engaged and aligned. Along the way, enablers like digital-first operating models, data-driven decision-making, and agile ways of working act as accelerators, helping leaders move faster and with more impact.

Leaders must learn to harness the power of AI, build geopolitical agility to respond to global uncertainties, and establish their GCCs as indispensable to the enterprise's future. These are no longer optional choices but essential priorities for those who want to stay relevant in a world that is being reshaped by technology, talent, and tectonic shifts in the global order.

Closing Note

The future of GCCs is deeply connected with the quality of leadership that emerges from India. Leaders who combine enterprise thinking, cultural agility, resilience, and a purpose-driven vision will not only secure their seat at the global table but also shape the enterprise's future.

As the forum reminded us, the mantra for every GCC leader remains simple yet powerful: Be curious. Be bold. Execute relentlessly. Build trust. Be indispensable.