

Critical HR Metrics for Sustainable Board Performance

Sessions - Summary Report

What are 15 Critical HR Metrics?

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readiness index

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index

Workforce
productivity index

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Human capital
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About HR Metrics

Created in 2012, HR Metrics is a consulting and advisory firm specializing in sustainable people analytics, global HR standards, professional competencies, and inclusion strategies. We support organizations in making data-driven decisions to enhance workforce performance and long-term value. Our purpose is to build inclusive cultures, strengthen HR capabilities, and drive social impact through human capital disclosures, DEI standards, and HR competency frameworks.



Purpose

Our purpose is to empower organizations to build capabilities in creating inclusive cultures, enhancing HR effectiveness, driving meaningful societal impact, and embracing stakeholder capitalism through the effective implementation of Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Standards, HR Management Competencies, and Human Capital Value Creation standards. We are driven by a commitment to fostering environments where every individual thrives, contributing to positive change in their workplaces and communities worldwide.

BOARD DIRECTORS' SYMPOSIUM

Critical HR Metrics for Sustainable Board Performance

ISLAMABAD



JAHANGIR PIRACHA
MD & CEO
Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited



FATIMA ASAD-SAID
CEO & Board Member
Abacus



MUJEEB ZAHUR
MD
S&P Global



QAZI AZMAT ISA
Former CEO
Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund



**DR. SHAZIA
MAQSOOD AMJAD**
Executive Director
Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy



AMIR MASOOD KHAN
President & CEO
HBL Microfinance Bank
LTD



KAZIM MUJTABA
President - Consumer Division
Jazz



UMAR KHAN AZAD
CEO
NADRA Technologies
Limited



AQUEELA MUMTAZ
Chairperson
Punjab Skills Development Fund



**DR. MUBBASHAR
HASSAN**
Director HR
SECP



SYED MAZHAR HUSSAIN
MD PTET & Advisor to
President/GCEO PTCL



ZONISH INAYAT
Joint Director-
Chairman Secretariat
SECP



VIVIEN CHEAH
Director- Malaysia Site Leader
S&P Global



ANEEQ UR REHMAN MALIK
Director HR
Fauji Foundation Head Office



MOMINA TARIQ
Senior Executive VP
HR & CHRO
Askari Bank



AMBREEN IFTIKHAR
Member
Federal Board of Revenue -
Government of Pakistan



FAUZIA AHMAD
CHRO
Mari Energies



FARHAD ZULFIOAR ALI
CHRO
Khushali Bank



WAJID ALI KHAN
Head Human Resources
HBL Microfinance Bank LTD



UMER FARID
Group Chief People Officer
PTCL Group



BAKAR AHMAD
Group Head
ZTBL



JAHANARA SAJJAD AHMAD
Company Secretary
Janana De Malucho Textile Mills Limited



TARIQ BODLA
Company Secretary
ZTBL



RIZWAN HAIDER
Company Secretary
NADRA Technologies Limited



ALEENA TANVIR
Chief People Officer
Mobilink Microfinance Bank Ltd



ATTA REHMAN
Head People Excellence
S&P Global



AMJAD IQBAL
CHRO
HBL Zarei Services



JAWAD AMIN
Founder/Chief Executive Officer
innovative Advisory



SAMIA QAMAR
Pakistan Site Lead and
Regional HR Director
Octus



ZULFIOAR JANJUA
Director
LPDC, Bahria University



UMAIR SABIR
Head of Human Resources
LOLC Microfinance Bank Limited



NIZAR NOOR ALI
Chief Commercial Officer
Pak Oman



ZAHID MUBARIK
CEO
HR Metrics

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KARACHI



VEQAR ISLAM

Director and Chief Executive
JBS Global - Jaffer Business Systems



SAAD AMANULLAH KHAN

Chairman Board of Directors
K-Electric



MONEEZA USMAN BUTT

Partner
KPMG Taseer Hadi & Co



SHAFQA FAUZIL

President & Chief Executive Officer
Pakistan Institute of Corporate
Governance



MUHAMAD LUKMAN

Chairman
Virtuosoft



M. ANWAAR SHEIKH

President & Chief
Executive Officer
Sindh Bank Limited



SADAF HATIF

Director & CEO
HRSG



AHSAN MEHNATI

Managing Director & CEO
Arif Habib Commodities



KAMRAN KHAN

Chief Executive Officer
Automobile Corporation of
Pakistan AUTOCOM



MARYAM AZIZ

Director
Fauji Fertilizer
Company Limited



AMNA ABBAS

Chief Legal Officer &
Company Secretary
easypaisa Bank Limited



SANA MESIA

EVP, Head of HR,
Learning & Development
Al Meezan Investment
Management Limited



NAUSHEEN AHMAD

Independent Director
TLINK (Pvt) Limited



ZAFAR SOBANI

Independent Director
Sindh Economic Zones Management
Company, Government of Sindh



SABIKA KIANI

HR Country Head
GSK



AADIL RIAZ

Director Human Resources
Pakistan Cables Limited



SADAF SHABBIR

Financial Advisor
VIS Credit Rating Company Pvt Ltd.



TANIYA ZAFFAR KHAN

Chief Human
Resources Officer
UBL Fund Managers



MUZAFFAR HUSSAIN

SVP & Head of HR
& Training
Sindh Bank Limited



SARAH MUNAVAR

Head of People & Culture
DVAGO Pharmacy &
Wellness Experts



SANIA NAQVI

Group Head
Human Resources
TPL Corp Ltd.



GULL ZAREEN KHAN

GM HR
Engro Fertilizers Ltd



ASAD ALI

Head HR
HabibMetro Bank



AYESHA AFZAL

General Manager - Aviation,
Marine & Exports
Pakistan State Oil



KANZA AFZAL

Group Head Strategy &
Business Development
House of Habib



SANAM SHAIKH

Head of Human Resources
Sindh Microfinance Bank Limited



TEHMINA ALI KAZMI

Head Of Human Capital,
DE&I
Yunus Textile Mills



SAJIDA BANDUKWALA

Head of Marketing & Innovation
JBS Global -
Jaffer Business Systems



SEMEEN AKHTER

Member Board of Directors
Engro Enfrashare



ZAHID MUBARIK

CEO
HR Metrics

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BOARD DIRECTORS' SYMPOSIUM

Critical HR Metrics for Sustainable Board Performance

Why Board of Directors Symposium on 15 Critical HR Metrics was conducted?

Boards play pivotal role in governing not just financial capital but also social capital. Effective human governance demands outcome focused, accountability driven metrics to create long term value for all stakeholders. Board ESG and HR Committees need global, consensus-based framework for reliable and comparable insights into workforce performance, leadership strength, culture and organizational risk.

The BODs Symposium was designed to help to close this gap.

By focusing on 15 critical HR Metrics aligned with ISO 30414:2025 (first global standard on Human Capital Analytics), the symposium equipped Board Directors and C-level leaders with a transparent, evidence-based framework for understanding how effectively their organizations manage people. These metrics provide a clear view of strategic capabilities, succession readiness, workforce productivity, culture health and risk exposure—areas that directly shape business resilience and competitiveness.

The purpose of the symposium was to:

- Elevate human capital to the boardroom agenda, positioning it as a core component of governance and enterprise value.
- Strengthen oversight by giving directors standardized metrics that enhance accountability and improve the effectiveness of HR Committees.
- Enable informed decision-making through measurable benchmarks rather than intuition or fragmented reporting.
- Build trust and transparency with stakeholders by aligning human capital reporting with global standards.

In essence, the BODs Symposium empowered directors to govern human capital with the same rigor as financial capital—ensuring that every workforce decision supports sustainable performance and long-term organizational success.

Message from HR Metrics

Zahid Mubarik, CEO HR Metrics provided an insightful overview of the evolution of human capital reporting and its increasing importance for investors and regulators. He began by highlighting the investor-driven push in 2017, when 25 U.S. institutional investors with over \$3 trillion in assets petitioned the SEC to require public companies to disclose information on human capital management. This led to the SEC's 2020 amendment to Regulation S-K, mandating disclosure of human capital resources, including relevant measures and objectives. Zahid then outlined how regulators have formalized expectations through international standards, noting his representation of Pakistan on ISO TC 260, established in 2011, and the development of ISO 30414 (2018) and its updated ISO 30414:2025 standard. He emphasized that by complying with ISO 30414, organizations can align with ESG and SEC requirements, provide investors and socially responsible funds with visibility into workforce practices and people risks, and enhance transparency and trust among all stakeholders, including employees, regulators, talent, and host communities. He highlighted that organizations excelling in people analytics are 3.1 times more likely to outperform their peers financially, and that ISO 30414 uniquely addresses employee lifecycle, compliance, and workforce planning risks. Zahid also noted that HR Metrics has certified the highest number of ISO professionals worldwide, particularly in Japan. He concluded by presenting the top 15 critical HR metrics for sustainable board performance, including Productivity Index, Human Capital ROI, Retention Index, Leadership Index, Succession Index, Workforce Cost Index, Diversity Index, NPS, Pay Equity Index, Quality Hire Index, Competency Index, Homegrown Index, Time to Fill, Engagement Index, and Workforce Competency Index.



ZAHID MUBARIK

CEO
HR Metrics

Delegates' Views





FATIMA ASAD-SAID

CEO & Board Member
Abacus

As organizations increasingly embrace digital transformation, Fatima Asad Said emphasized that automation should be viewed as a tool to augment human capabilities, not replace them. While automation enables faster, data-driven decision-making and improves customer experiences, the people experience must remain central. She noted that reskilling and upskilling alone are insufficient unless job roles themselves are redefined to align with evolving organizational strategies. Boards play a critical role in this process, engaging in meaningful conversations with HR and business leaders to ensure that human capital strategies reflect broader governance frameworks. She also highlighted the importance of global standards and ESG adoption, which create consistency and comparability across organizations worldwide, facilitating clear reporting at the board level. Fatima stressed that succession planning and talent mobility are increasingly important, particularly as talent moves toward startups and entrepreneurial ventures, underscoring the need for documented processes and systematic governance. In her view, integrating automation, role redesign, governance, and ESG standards is essential for sustainable growth and continuous human value creation.



MUJEEB ZAHUR

Managing Director
S&P Global Pakistan

Mujeeb Zahur addressed the growing regulatory and reporting challenges faced by organizations operating globally, particularly in North America and Europe. These jurisdictions are rapidly advancing ESG reporting standards, creating pressures for companies, including those in Pakistan, to maintain robust governance, compliance, and transparency. He introduced the Corporate Sustainability Assessment (CSA) framework developed by S&P Global, which evaluates over 7,500 companies worldwide across 77 ESG indicators, including governance, human capital, and performance metrics. Mujeeb highlighted three areas most relevant to boards: strategy alignment, people practices, and future readiness, emphasizing that boards need measurable benchmarks to assess organizational performance and workforce preparedness. He shared practical insights, showing that CSA metrics allow boards to align internal strategies with global ESG expectations and provide a clear, comparable framework for evaluating human capital. He also explained how S&P Global has applied this framework to help organizations develop strategies for talent engagement and human capital development, creating measurable components across multiple regions. Mujeeb concluded by underscoring the value of creating human performance benchmarks, even confidentially, to guide boards and HR leaders in making informed, strategic decisions aligned with global standards like ISO 30414:2025.



MOMINA TARIQ

Senior Executive VP HR & CHRO
Askari Bank

Momina Tariq highlighted the strategic importance of **human capital metrics in financial institutions**, where boards are responsible not only for risk, compliance, and culture but also for **overseeing people as a critical asset**. She emphasized the need to measure **board effectiveness**, including the composition, skills, diversity, engagement, and decision quality of board members. Metrics such as attendance, understanding of sector-specific financial dynamics, and performance in delivering strategic initiatives are crucial. Succession planning at the board level is also essential to ensure continuity and robust governance, particularly in regulated banking environments.

She further explained that human capital metrics must cover the **entire employee lifecycle**, from recruitment, onboarding, and performance management to remuneration, incentives, and succession readiness. In banking, roles such as Material Risk Takers (MRT) and Material Risk Controllers (MRC) require clearly defined governance and succession pipelines. Learning and development measurement remains a challenge, as it is essential to assess not just training completion or satisfaction scores but how effectively knowledge is applied on the job and translated into productivity and business outcomes over time.

Momina also highlighted the importance of tracking **retention, turnover, and diversity-specific attrition**, linking these metrics directly to productivity, profitability, and overall organizational performance. She underscored that HR metrics gain significance only when connected to strategic outcomes, enabling boards to make informed decisions. Concluding her insights, she reminded the audience that regardless of the industry, organizations are fundamentally in the **business of people**, and effective human capital management is critical for sustainable growth, governance compliance, and long-term success in the banking sector.



VEQAR ISLAM

Director and Chief Executive
JBS Global - Jaffer Business Systems

Veqar focused on what boards truly expect from HR and why the function must be treated as a core strategic driver rather than an afterthought. He began by simplifying the fundamentals of business into four essential elements: **customer, territory, portfolio, and people**. While the first three dominate boardroom discussions, he pointed out that people—despite being described as the organization’s “biggest asset”—is often the least discussed and least strategically evaluated.

He emphasized that boards commonly review people-related indicators such as churn rate or eNPS, but these are largely **rear-view metrics**. They tell us what has already happened, not where the organization is going. For HR to truly inform board decision-making, there must be a **front-view strategy** built on these learnings—one that projects future capability needs, workforce readiness, and leadership capacity. He questioned how often organizations calculate **ROI per employee** or benchmark human capital investments with the same rigor applied to customers or portfolios.

Veqar then highlighted the transformative impact of **AI on the global workforce**. Citing the World Economic Forum, he noted that while AI may displace 92 million jobs, it will also create **170 million new roles**—resulting in a net gain of 78 million new roles. He stressed that AI is not eliminating work; it is **reshaping it**, creating entirely new categories of roles across industries. The workforce of the future will be the one that works alongside AI.

Drawing on four decades of experience in technology, he expressed concern that Pakistan is not leveraging systems, transparency, and tech-driven processes to the extent required. While global companies rigorously justify every headcount and strategically plan for AI-enabled growth, local organizations still lack structured conversations about future workforce needs.

Veqar concluded by stating that future economic growth—running into trillions of dollars globally—will be driven not by people alone, and not by AI alone, but by the **powerful combination of both**. Boards must therefore expect HR to provide foresight, strategy, and intelligence on how people capability and AI capability together will shape the organization’s future.



SAAD AMANULLAH KHAN

Chairman Board of Directors
K-Electric

Saad Amanullah Khan discussed the evolution of HR and its growing role in driving organizational and board-level performance. He highlighted how HR has transformed from a traditional Personnel Department in the mid-1900s—focused on hiring, compliance, and record-keeping—to a function centered on employee motivation, welfare, and behavioral insights by the late 1980s. Drawing from his experience at **Procter & Gamble in 1987**, he noted that HR was already shifting toward a more employee-centric and development-oriented approach.

He explained that over the years, HR has become a **strategic business partner**, integrating technology and expanding into workforce planning, leadership development, and aligning talent capabilities with business goals. From 2000 onward, HR's focus has shifted toward strategic excellence, employee experience, DEI, and data-driven decision-making supported by analytics and AI.

Saad also emphasized the **Strategy Development and Deployment (SDS)** process at P&G, a system uniquely led by HR. Across P&G's 70+ countries, employees at every level could clearly articulate how their individual work plans contributed to specific corporate strategies. This strong alignment created a deep sense of purpose, ownership, and contribution across the organization.

He concluded by stressing that a **key responsibility of today's Board HR Committee** is to provide strategic direction and oversight of human capital. In a world where people and capability drive competitive advantage, HR's strategic role has never been more critical.



MONEEZA USMAN BUTT

Partner
KPMG Taseer Hadi & Co

Moneeza Usman Butt highlighted that in today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment, boards can no longer rely solely on traditional financial dashboards. She emphasized that **human governance** is now central to strategic agility, ethical strength, and sustainable performance. Boards that actively use **human capital intelligence** are better equipped to anticipate disruption rather than react to it, enabling long-term resilience.

She explained that resilient boards cultivate a culture that encourages open challenge, clarity of purpose, and continuous self-evaluation. True resilience also requires a deep understanding of the organization—including leadership depth, behavioral risks, and cultural dynamics. Tools such as **leadership and succession indexes** provide boards with critical insights into the strength of their leadership pipeline.

Moneeza stressed that HR Committees must broaden their mandate to embed human governance into **strategic risk oversight**. She pointed to **ISO 30414** as an essential framework for ensuring transparency, accountability, and standardization in human capital reporting.

A key message was the importance of quantifying the financial impact of people-related investments using a **human capital ROI framework**. This shifts HR initiatives from operational activities to strategic investments that drive business value.

She concluded by noting that high-performing boards treat **culture as a strategic asset**, actively monitor human capital risks, and hold leadership accountable for workforce capability and organizational culture. Sustainable board performance, she stated, ultimately depends on how effectively boards use human capital intelligence to foresee challenges and guide the organization toward long-term resilience.



SHAFAQ FAUZIL

President & Chief Executive Officer
Pakistan Institute of Corporate
Governance

Shafaq Fauzil highlighted that many board members may not fully grasp complex financial ratios and often remain focused on policy formulation, whistleblowing, and DEI due to regulatory pressures. To drive meaningful discussions, the speaker emphasized the need for a **clear business case**, enabling board members to make informed and strategic decisions.

She highlighted the importance of **HR representation at the board level**, observing that organizations that elevate HR to strategic leadership positions tend to experience stronger people outcomes and cultural transformation. The speaker also shared that their own organization incorporates **qualitative HR Metrics** into board performance evaluations, ensuring that human capital is assessed alongside financial and operational indicators.

Benchmarking, Shafaq stressed, is essential for helping boards distinguish between strong and weak performance trends. She acknowledged the work done by Zahid in enhancing director training and increasing awareness regarding modern HR standards, human governance, and board responsibilities.

She underscored that it is ultimately the responsibility of professionals to bring these issues forward and ensure they reach the board agenda. They expressed interest in sharing practical guidance materials at various forums to support better governance practices.

Finally, Shafaq recommended presenting **clear, easy-to-read HR metrics and performance snapshots** to board members, making complex information more accessible and enabling more effective oversight.



KAZIM MUJTABA

President, Consumer Division
Jazz

Kazim Mujtaba shared insights from Jazz's transformation from a **traditional telecom operator to a digital services company**, highlighting expansions into financial services, fintech, insurance, education, health, and gaming. He explained that as Jazz's digital revenue grows, the organization faces new challenges in **measuring people effectiveness, attracting specialized talent, and planning succession**. Traditional workforce metrics do not fully apply to the technology-driven and emerging digital business lines, making it difficult for boards to assess productivity and performance effectively. Kazim highlighted the challenge of pay equity, noting that attracting AI and technology experts can cost significantly more than legacy roles, impacting HR cost measurements and talent acquisition strategies. He also discussed the scarcity of qualified successors in technology roles, particularly in data science, and stressed the need for innovative approaches to talent development and retention. Finally, he emphasized the importance of **adapting HR metrics and frameworks** to reflect new business realities, ensuring that evaluation methods are aligned with Jazz's evolving strategy and the digital-first organization.



ANEEQ UR REHMAN

Director HR
Fauji Foundation

Aneeq ur Rehman, Director HR at Fauji Foundation, reflected on the transformative power of human capital by recalling South Korea’s “Miracle of the Han,” a journey inspired in part by Pakistan’s own Dr. Mahboob ul Haq—the architect of the Human Development Index (HDI). He explained that HDI provided the why of human development, ISO standards offered the how of measurement and management, and the SDGs laid out the future vision—all forming the foundation of modern governance and people-centered development. Tracing the evolution from the rise of ISO certifications in the late 1980s to the global shift from GDP-centric thinking toward transparency and governance-driven frameworks, he emphasized that today’s era of AI demands even more clarity, accountability, and future readiness. Speaking from his experience on various Fauji boards, he stressed that adopting ISO 30414:2025 voluntarily would strengthen organizations across three tiers: enterprise governance, corporate transparency, and strategic HR—he refers to it as 64 below 30 years in Pakistan. He concluded that Pakistan must follow the example of precision-driven nations like South Korea by investing in human capital, embedding transparent mechanisms, and building a symbiotic ecosystem where AI and human capability together shape a future-ready workforce.



QAZI ASMAT ISA

Former CEO
Pakistan Poverty
Alleviation Fund

Qazi Asmat Isa, former CEO of the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, emphasized that keeping staff motivated requires combining passion (ishq) and knowledge (ilm) with action (amal). In a rapidly changing environment, engagement is key, and leaders must stay close to their teams. He highlighted that **core values—such as inclusion, participation, governance, and stewardship—anchor the organization**, and every intervention should be measured against them. While metrics are essential for accountability, they must be communicated in the **“language of people”** to ensure meaningful engagement and alignment with strategic goals.



SADAF HATIF

Director & CEO
HRSG

Sadaf Hatif, representing a private limited services-sector organization that has voluntarily adopted strong governance practices, shared that her board—comprising three independent directors from major corporations—places people at the center of every strategic discussion. She noted that product, territory, and people all ultimately revolve around human capital in their business, making people their core asset and competitive advantage. Her board ensures alignment between people strategy and company strategy, with AI now a mandatory agenda item—viewed both as a risk to existing service offerings and an opportunity to enhance value for customers. She emphasized that her board is progressive, supportive, and deeply aware of HR’s strategic importance, despite not having HR backgrounds, recognizing that when culture and people policies are aligned with organizational goals, revenue and ROI naturally follow.



SYED MAZHAR

MD PTET and Advisor to the
President/ GCEO
PTCL

Syed Mazhar, MD PTET and Advisor to the President/GCEO at PTCL, discussed bridging the technical capability gap in organizations, emphasizing the importance of aligning HR strategies with evolving technology needs to build a future-ready workforce. He highlighted upskilling, reskilling, and continuous learning as key levers for closing skill gaps and underscored how strategic HR interventions can drive organizational performance and foster innovation in the digital era.



ZONISH INAYAT

Chairman Secretariat
SECP

Zonish Inayat, Chairman Secretariat at SECP, highlighted the recent ESG reforms in Pakistan's capital markets, emphasizing that people and governance lie at the core of the regulatory agenda. She explained that the ESG disclosure guidelines currently include 36 recommendatory metrics, with 11 under the environment pillar, 14 under social, and 11 under governance. To facilitate compliance, SECP has developed the ESG Sustain Portal, which has already onboarded over 50 companies, providing a platform to track ESG performance indicators from a regulatory perspective. Zoonish emphasized that sustainability extends beyond environmental protection to include safeguarding people, the ultimate stewards of the planet. She noted that amendments to ESG disclosure guidelines are underway, with an aim to make them mandatory by 2028, and highlighted ongoing reforms in corporate governance, including succession planning for CEOs and strengthening governance frameworks of capital market infrastructure institutions like the Pakistan Stock Exchange. She encouraged companies to proactively adopt these standards to align with evolving regulatory and sustainability expectations.



AQUEELA MUMTAZ

Chairperson
PSDF

Aqueela Mumtaz, Chairperson of the Pakistan Skills Development Fund (PSDF) when asked about how PSDF measures the distance covered in changing the skill set of people through training and upskilling, she explained that their initiatives primarily target underserved populations who lack access to formal education, such as those without a BA or MSc, particularly in regions like southern Punjab and northern belts. She highlighted that Pakistan's workforce dynamics are shifting, with urban poverty and non-technical backgrounds now emerging as critical focus areas. PSDF is working to redefine "underserved" by including both management and non-management staff across industries, including manufacturing and services. The goal is to provide rapid economic mobility by equipping, empowering, and certifying individuals with essential skills, even for non-technical roles. Mumtaz emphasized the importance of expanding the talent pool beyond conventional groups, ensuring broader access to skills development, and creating measurable impact in workforce readiness and economic inclusion.



WAJID ALI KHAN

Head of HR
HBL Microfinance Bank

Wajid Ali Khan, Head of HR at HBL Microfinance Bank, reflected on the importance of **human capital and organizational culture** in driving business success. Responding to the question about metrics and performance ratios, he emphasized that numbers like quality of hire are meaningless if underlying frameworks, such as performance rating systems, are broken; much of HR's work happens before these statistics are visible. Drawing from his experience in FMCG and banking, he stressed that **people—not technology—bring life to an organization**, as they are the front-facing drivers of customer experience and retention. He highlighted the growing significance of **diversity**, moving beyond token representation to supporting women and underprivileged groups in achieving economic empowerment. On succession planning, he noted the challenges posed by high turnover at senior and mid-level positions and the need for transparent processes that enable career progression at all levels. His bank approach includes internal training, transparent screening for positions, and ensuring that employees are given opportunities to grow, with the board focusing on prioritizing what truly matters for organizational development and sustainability.



NOOR ALI

Chief Commercial Officer
Pak Oman

Noor Ali, Chief Commercial Officer at Pak Oman, emphasized that beyond HR costs, productivity and alignment with the company's direction are critical. Drawing from past experiences and success stories, he stressed that **employees need clear communication about the organization's goals** so their efforts are purposeful. Investment in people must be complemented by investment in systems and infrastructure to retain top talent. He highlighted the importance of creating a **supportive environment**, offering career growth, training and development opportunities, and fostering a culture that enables employees to perform effectively, which ultimately supports both business outcomes and customer satisfaction.



JAWAD AMIN

CEO
Innovative Advisory

Jawad Amin, CEO of Innovative Advisory, shared his perspective from working as Head HR and Chief HR in multiple organizations, noting that most board members are often **unaware of global standards and HR Metrics**. Drawing from his experience at Pakistan National Shipping Corporation, he emphasized that organizational effectiveness starts with the **personal responsibility and character of individuals in leadership roles**. Leaders who internalize and uphold these standards are better positioned to guide their teams and foster long-term organizational success. He stressed that awareness and adherence to such standards are essential for both short-term performance and sustainable growth.



RABIA KHATTAK

Head of Diversity & Inclusion
Jazz

Rabia Khattak, Head of Diversity & Inclusion at Jazz, discussed the organization's approach to D&I maturity assessment. She explained that by conducting a baseline assessment, Jazz was able to identify its current position and found that they outperformed most industry benchmarks. This process provides clarity on areas that need improvement and informs strategic decisions for advancing diversity and inclusion across the organization. The assessment acts as a guiding framework to advocate, plan and implement targeted initiatives for long-term impact.



SANIA NAQVI

Group Head
Human Resources
TPL Corp Ltd.

Sania shared her experience of leading HR through a period of significant organizational challenges over the past three years. She highlighted the strong interest and involvement of the board—particularly the chairman and board members—in understanding the impact of AI on the organization and the steps HR is taking to prepare the workforce for future skill demands.

She noted that during HR Committee meetings, the board consistently asks critical questions such as:

- What will be the impact of AI on our workforce?
- How are we training and upskilling employees to prepare for these changes?

Sania emphasized that while HR continues to provide the board with regular reviews and updates, the primary focus is now on how to effectively respond and adapt to emerging challenges. She expressed appreciation for the insights shared during the session, mentioning that many of the points discussed will help her further strengthen her approach.

She also highlighted that she is currently in the process of revamping and reorganizing the people function and HR department within her organization to better align with future needs and build readiness for AI-driven transformation.

Sajida Bandukwala shared two key concerns related to HR metrics and board readiness.

First, she highlighted the **challenge of using local organizations—particularly microfinance banks—as the basis for developing national HR indexes**. She noted that Pakistan struggles with data accuracy, insights, and reliability. If the baseline index is flawed, she cautioned, then all corresponding HR metrics built on that foundation may also become inaccurate, leading to misguided decisions.

Second, she raised an important question about **HR competency among board members**. She observed that many board members in Pakistan may not have an HR background and often lack the HR literacy required to understand and interpret human capital metrics at the level being discussed. She referenced UK practices, where governance standards encourage at least **15% of board members** to be evaluated against and certified in an HR competency framework. This, she noted, helps ensure that boards can meaningfully engage with HR strategies and human capital intelligence.

She concluded that the inconsistencies seen in board-level discussions on HR often stem from the **absence of a structured HR competency matrix for board members themselves**, reinforcing the need for capacity building at the board level.



SAJIDA BANDUKWALA

Head of Marketing & Innovation
JBS Global -
Jaffer Business Systems



TANIYA ZAFFAR KHAN

Chief Human
Resources Officer
UBL Fund Managers

Taniya Zaffar Khan noted that while AI is transforming the workplace, strict SECP regulations make its adoption challenging in the asset management industry, creating a gap between organizational needs and regulatory controls. She added that similar constraints exist in the banking sector and it will be important for regulators and financial institutions to eventually find a balanced approach. She also shared, with a touch of humor, the difficulty she faces managing Gen Z employees whose expectations and work styles differ greatly from previous generations, emphasizing the need for leaders to better understand and adapt to this emerging workforce.



AADIL RIAZ

Director Human Resources
Pakistan Cables Limited

Aadil Riaz emphasized that effective HR leadership requires a solid understanding of the organization's P&L and balance sheet, enabling HR professionals to justify their initiatives through analytics and clear ROI. He noted that HR must stand closely with the business, contribute directly to the revenue stream, and integrate people, products, and processes into value creation. Drawing on his own experience, including several years at KPMG, he highlighted the importance of strong analytical skills and business acumen to influence decision-makers and support strategic outcomes.



ZAFAR SOBANI

Independent Director

Sindh Economic Zones Management
Company, Government of Sindh

Zafar Sobani, drawing on five decades of professional experience, reflected on how technology has transformed the roles of finance and HR over time. He recalled the early era of manual accounting and how finance professionals—once seen merely as “bean counters”—evolved into strategic business advisors as technology advanced. He noted a similar evolution in HR, observing that HR committee meetings, once held annually and focused mainly on increments, are now conducted multiple times a year with deeper strategic discussions. Serving on several boards himself, he emphasized that HR’s role has become increasingly critical, and board members must understand business dynamics to integrate people strategies with organizational goals. Highlighting trends such as early adoption of ESG requirements, he stressed that boards are in an ongoing phase of evolution and must show commitment and passion to advance these areas meaningfully.



SEMEEN AKHTER

Member Board of Directors
Engro Enfrashare

Semeen Akhter highlighted that conversations in most organizations still revolve around cutting headcount, whereas her experience at Unilever Netherlands—where she built a 500-person digital selling team—showed what is possible when companies invest in data, analytics, and new ways of working. Emphasizing her background teaching AI with BCG, she stressed that HR plays a pivotal role in upskilling the workforce and helping boards move beyond surface-level awareness of AI to identifying real use cases and driving value creation.



KAMRAN KHAN

Chief Executive Officer
Automobile Corporation of
Pakistan AUTOCOM

Kamran Khan mentioned that while some of the HR ratios and indexes discussed were familiar, others were new and particularly challenging to apply in Pakistan due to weak data practices. He highlighted that metrics like succession readiness and leadership trust require reliable data, which many local organizations struggle to maintain and analyze. Drawing from his professional experience, he emphasized the shortage of qualified HR professionals capable of driving such advanced transformations. Despite these challenges, he shared that even in his small manufacturing company, leadership is actively exploring AI, with every department contributing ideas on how to use it to solve internal and customer problems—showing that change is gradual but underway.



MARYAM AZIZ

Director
Fauji Fertilizer
Company Limited

Maryam Aziz, appreciated the discussions but raised concerns about relying too heavily on historical HR ratios, noting that numbers often fail to capture deeper cultural and organizational challenges that shape a company's future. She pointed out limitations of engagement surveys due to trust issues and highlighted that in Pakistan, many HR practices only evolve when mandated by regulation. She emphasized that HR cannot truly influence strategy unless it is empowered as a genuine business partner with access to information and decision-making. Mariam observed that most HR committees still focus on policies rather than strategic people issues, and boards often overlook underlying HR risks despite strong numbers. She concluded by questioning how organizations in Pakistan can be encouraged to recognize the strategic importance of human capital and embed it meaningfully into internal decision-making and board-level discussions.



AMNA ABBAS

Chief Legal Officer &
Company Secretary
easypaisa Bank Limited

Amna Abbas shared insights from observing two boards at very different stages of maturity. She highlighted the strong gender representation in the room and noted how Easypaisa's board—supported by Telenor and guided by an experienced HR Committee chair—has evolved significantly over the past five to six years. She emphasized that two qualities that no technology can replace are **intent and ownership**, and that Easypaisa's transformation began when these were demonstrated at the top and cascaded through the organization. As HR Committee Chair at ISCO, she is working to apply similar principles despite the complexities of a government-shareholder environment, noting that progress is ongoing.



MUHAMAD LUKMAN

Chairman
Virtuosoftware

Muhammad Lukman, representing a software house exporting services across six continents, shared that human capital is their primary asset, yet managing Gen Z talent in the tech sector has become increasingly challenging—citing frequent last-minute offer withdrawals that directly impact global clients. Drawing on his experience in both structured organizations and fast-growing tech environments, he noted significant gaps in work ethic and accountability among younger employees and stressed the need for standards and guidance tailored to this broader workforce segment. He expressed hope that the software industry will achieve success stories similar to those seen in other sectors, given its potential to drive Pakistan's exports. Finally, he highlighted that AI and data analytics are core strengths of his company and suggested that affordable, locally developed data tools could greatly support board-level HR analysis and decision-making.



M. ANWAAR SHEIKH

President & Chief
Executive Officer
Sindh Bank Limited

Anwaar Sheikh, shared that many of the HR practices and concepts discussed at the event are already being applied in his organization—albeit unconsciously rather than by design. He noted that the ratios and indices presented would help them formalize and analyze trends internally and benchmark against more mature global companies. Acknowledging common challenges like headcount pressures between business and finance teams, he explained that their structured, documented operations allow them to manage workload analysis effectively, even as a relatively young 15-year-old public sector entity.



AYESHA AFZAL

General Manager - Aviation,
Marine & Exports
Pakistan State Oil

Ayesha Afzal, currently heading Aviation, Marine and Export Business at PSO and previously serving in HR, noted that HR is often treated as a procedural function rather than a strategic enabler linked to profitability. She emphasized that organizations hesitate to adopt or disclose advanced HR metrics because results may contradict internal perceptions of leadership strength, reveal skill gaps, or expose biases. She highlighted that many companies rely on self-designed assessments without standardized benchmarks, which undermines objectivity. Ayesha suggested building HR metrics and assessments into a regulatory framework—similar to IFRS compliance in finance—with clear standards, accredited assessment centers, and mandatory reporting to boards to ensure credibility and reduce bias. She added that linking these metrics to AI adoption could further encourage organizations to embrace them, stressing that robust implementation guidelines are essential for their success.



KANZA AFZAL

Group Head Strategy &
Business Development
House of Habib

Kanza Afzal, emphasized the need for three major shifts to bring people discussions to the same level of discipline as financial decisions. First, organizations must move away from anecdotes toward measurable, forward-looking leading indicators, using benchmarks alongside internal reflection to set meaningful KPIs. Second, people metrics should be reviewed frequently—not annually—to build consistency and strategic discipline. Third, averages must not dilute insights; metrics like attrition should be broken down by critical roles to reveal real risks. She also proposed creating **cultural risk registers** separate from enterprise risk registers, as people-related risks can be existential but are often overlooked. On AI, she stressed that leaders must integrate it into their own roles and demonstrate productivity gains, supported by strong ethics and governance frameworks. She concluded that the true litmus test of effective HR intelligence is whether dashboards and risk registers can anticipate the impact of losing key leaders and outline clear mitigation plans.



GULL ZAREEN KHAN

GM HR
Engro Fertilizers Ltd

Gull Zareen Khan, focused that global HR frameworks are never plug-and-play solutions; organizations must tailor metrics to their own maturity, context, and competitive landscape. She noted that board expectations significantly shape HR's effectiveness, highlighting that when HR is placed last on the agenda, discussions are often rushed—or skipped entirely—whereas her organization prioritizes HR first in every board meeting, reinforcing that people truly are the core asset. She added that boards must strike a balance between avoiding operational micromanagement and not staying so high-level that they miss underlying issues. Sharing an experience from a previous organization pursuing World Economic Forum Lighthouse status, she noted that evaluators began by assessing the company's **capability and culture** for adopting AI—underscoring the need for analytical thinking, the right questions, and a willingness to challenge assumptions. She concluded that progress is a journey of excellence, not perfection, and encouraged organizations to adopt a thoughtful, capability-led approach to global standards.



NAUSHEEN AHMAD

Independent Director
1LINK (Pvt) Limited

Nausheen Ahmad, an independent director and HR Committee chair for several companies, noted that standardized HR metrics could become a powerful tool for boards and HR committees, offering quantifiable insights in place of anecdotal information—particularly valuable since boards lack direct visibility into organizational realities. She agreed that these metrics should initially be voluntary, similar to engagement surveys, and suggested that strong companies may later use them as recruitment and branding advantages. Finally, she highlighted the importance of industry-wide benchmarking, recommending that if enough organizations adopt these metrics, a benchmark database would significantly support board planning and decision-making.



SABIKA KIANI

HR Country Head
GSK

Sabika Kiani shared that she was fortunate early in her HR career to be taught that a true business partner must understand the business deeply and be strong with numbers—an approach that has shaped her credibility across both local and multinational organizations. She emphasized that HR metrics have always been essential to her decision-making and are crucial for demonstrating HR's strategic value. Reflecting on her recent experience with board evaluations at GSK, she highlighted that board accountability and understanding of HR's role significantly influence HR's effectiveness. She added that meaningful progress depends on cultivating a culture of continuous improvement and openness to evaluating organizational effectiveness, concluding with appreciation for the learning shared during the session.



AHSAN MEHNATI

Managing Director & CEO
Arif Habib Commodities

Ahsan Mehnati shared that the 15 HR metrics presented are highly valuable, especially given that HR in Pakistan is still evolving. As a chartered accountant, he emphasized that most local organizations have yet to adopt structured HR ratios and analytical tools that are common in multinationals. He stressed that wider adoption of these metrics—supported by professional expertise and advisory input—would significantly strengthen board decision-making, ensure organizational continuity, and enable companies to grow with a long-term, strategic perspective.



SARAH MUNAVAR

Head of People & Culture
DVAGO Pharmacy & Wellness
Experts

Sarah Munavar, emphasized the importance of strengthening board composition by including members with strong people acumen, especially as Gen Z and Gen Alpha become the dominant workforce of the future. She noted that these younger generations are highly adaptive and tech-savvy, and organizations must balance adapting to them while helping them adapt to evolving workplace demands—particularly with AI and digital engagement reshaping work. Drawing from her experience at DVAGO, Descon, and K-Electric, she added that HR's role must now evolve beyond understanding business; individuals with deep people insight should increasingly step into business leadership roles, as business and financial skills can be learned, but people capability remains the most critical asset in any organization.



MUZAFFAR HUSSAIN

SVP & Head of
HR & Training
Sindh Bank Limited

Muzaffar Hussain, mentioned that HR must deeply understand the business in order to credibly represent workforce realities to management and the board. He agreed that data-driven insights are essential for HR to demonstrate value and enable boards to appreciate the reasoning behind key people decisions. Commenting on the Gen Z challenge with a touch of humor, he noted the old saying that work is done either out of passion or fear—yet today’s generation often shows neither—highlighting the cultural shift organizations must contend with.



SADAF SHABBIR

Financial Advisor
VIS Credit Rating Company Pvt Ltd.

Sadaf Shabbir, a financial analyst working in HR credit rating and an independent director on listed company boards, highlighted that the real strength of HR indices lies in the interlinkages between them and the story they reveal collectively. She noted that while some metrics rely on historical data, many—such as the succession index—serve as forward-looking indicators that help organizations assess leadership readiness, quality of hire, and overall talent strength. She emphasized that these indices enable boards to pinpoint weaknesses far more objectively than through general discussions, allowing them to design strategies, implement changes, and measure progress over time. She concluded that the sooner organizations adopt and understand these metrics, the stronger their overall culture and decision-making will become.



SANA MESIA

EVP, Head of HR,
Learning & Development
Al Meezan Investment
Management Limited

Sana Mesia, reflected on how HR metrics in Pakistan have evolved since she first engaged with HR Metrics' initiatives in 2013–14, when her organization began implementing early analytics such as time-to-hire, quality-of-hire, and overtime dependency. She emphasized that HR professionals and board HR committees still need time to move beyond operational housekeeping and adopt a more strategic, forward-looking perspective. While efforts around ESG, DEI, and engagement surveys are underway, she stressed that meaningful progress requires sincere, sustained effort rather than just numbers. Citing the example of 950 Japanese professionals certified in HR Metrics, she highlighted the importance of continuous improvement and awareness building. She concluded that HR carries the responsibility to drive these 15 KPIs, contribute to benchmarking, disclose data where appropriate, and support organizations like HR Metrics in creating a stronger, research-based human capital ecosystem.



TEHMINA ALI KAZMI

Head Of Human Capital, DE&I
Yunus Textile Mills

Tehmina Ali Kazmi, questioned why HR alone is expected to speak the “business language” when line managers—who are true people enablers—should equally be required to speak the language of HR. She praised the merit disclosures presented and suggested that to ensure board-level implementation, HR risk indices must be explicitly linked to business strategy, so boards begin engaging with them meaningfully. She recommended embedding these expectations directly into the **HRC Committee's Terms of Reference**, rather than relying on HR to raise them at board meetings and stressed that CEOs must take ownership of HR risk disclosures for them to be effective. Drawing on three decades of experience through HR's evolution from admin to strategic people management, she emphasized that retention, culture, and talent flight cannot be addressed if HR remains confined to operational agendas. Real impact requires shifting mindsets at the top—boards and business leaders must understand and adopt HR's language if people KPIs are truly to drive organizational performance.



SANAM SHAIKH

Head of Human Resources
Sindh Microfinance Bank Limited

Sanam noted that benchmarking must be contextual because 70% of their workforce operates in the field, making turnover, cost, and productivity metrics fundamentally different from those of large corporate offices. She emphasized that HR metrics are especially critical in microfinance, where service delivery and community impact rely heavily on field staff performance. These metrics help track productivity, training needs, engagement, and readiness to serve. She added that because field performance directly influences HR indicators, understanding and improving these dynamics is essential for achieving results.



ASAD ALI

Head HR
HabibMetro Bank

Asad Ali shared that their department consistently faces pressure to request additional headcount whenever a solution is needed, echoing the challenge highlighted earlier by Veqar. With a goal to rationalize and streamline headcount by 2026, they noted that this remains a significant operational and strategic challenge, requiring disciplined processes and better workforce planning to move away from defaulting to new positions as the only answer.



*Thank
You*