

**Insight Series**  
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**CONSUMER, RETAIL, SERVICES  
CHRO views in the #newnormal**

 <p><b>RAJESH SRIVASTAVA</b> Chief Human Resources Officer, Capital Foods</p>	 <p><b>NIRBHIK GOEL</b> Executive Vice President Human Resources, The Oberoi Group</p>	 <p><b>KAUSHIK DASGUPTA</b> Partner, Accord India</p>
 <p><b>ASHUTOSH PHADKE</b> Human Resources Director- India, ME Africa &amp; SE Asia, General Mills</p>	 <p><b>ARIJIT SENGUPTA</b> Director Human Resources - India &amp; Neighboring Countries, Bacardi</p>	 <p><b>ANJALI SINGHANIA</b> Partner, Accord India</p>



## Introduction

Covid-19 has created A VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex ambiguous) period, forcing businesses to re-evaluate all aspects including people needs. There has been a massive disruption in how we make, sell, and consume products, some of it having a lasting impact on the consumer, retail and services industry.

Human resources has emerged as the change maker to manage the crisis and to prepare for the changes in how we work, communicate, socialize and adapt technology in workplace- physical and virtual..<sup>1</sup>

### What keeps CHROs busy all day / awake at night

Some of the key areas that CHROs have been driving are:



HR leaders have had to respond quickly and comprehensively, considering immediate, short-term, and long-term consequences of this global crisis.

1. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/hrs-role-crisis-dave-ulrich/>

## Leading the way in a crisis

<p><b>react</b></p> 	<p><b>During such a crisis, behavioural science points to an increased human transparency, guidance, and making sense out of what has happened. HR has been leading from the front in</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased dexterity in technology adaptation</li> <li>- Building trust through transparency and communication</li> <li>- Keep energy and momentum flowing in absence of physical connect</li> <li>- Heightened focus on Hygiene, Security and Safety of employees</li> <li>- Creating a sense of normalcy and driving positivity.</li> <li>- Helping people deal with paradigm shifts in role, approach to life &amp; work</li> <li>- Managing the Fight or flight response</li> </ul>
<p><b>respond</b></p> 	<p><b>How organizations balance expectations, respond to immediate crisis while balancing continuity will define the #newnormal. Some measures that CHROs have taken include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HR as a driver for change management</li> <li>- Expectation management - Business needs with Employee expectations</li> <li>- Balancing short term impatience of with long term staying power</li> <li>- Rallying inclusivity and social connect in a virtual world</li> <li>- Standing with employees in times of personal need and grief.</li> <li>- Increased focus on employee well-being, non-work related issues through helplines, counseling and helplines</li> <li>- Family as an extension of employees. Involving family members in decision making, and recognizing their support</li> <li>- Employers speaking up for the larger cause, create a purpose larger than the job description for the employee.</li> <li>- Instill community service through leading by example, and follow through on sustainability as a practice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>reboot</b></p> 	<p><b>The crisis has led to a period of learning and opportunity for organizations to rethink workspaces and re-engage with employees. This has manifested in:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employee driven, timely pivots in business lines and ways to do business</li> <li>- Borrowing knowledge from global resources and implement best practices</li> <li>- Maintaining, measuring productivity, institutionalizing new processes</li> <li>- Create a future ready workspace/ roles. eg: Chief Hygiene Officer</li> <li>- Creating employee driven, malleable, flexible work policies</li> <li>- Implementing short term measures targeting employees and community; leading to increased “employer branding”</li> <li>- Increased traction with employee and family as one unit; leading to organizations becoming more real, more relatable.</li> </ul>



## The #newnormal

While business continuity has been at the forefront of every organization’s agenda, the actions and short term measures that were taken by Human Resources will be the basis on which their employer branding gets built. Employee-generated content showcasing what the new normal looks like, and sharing stories of courage, perseverance, and goodwill that emerge from within the organization will be flagbearers of its culture and brand.

Agility, Flexibility, Empathy, Collaboration, Mind-set change and the “Ability to take nothing for granted” are key skills to look for in the #newnormal.

In our participant’s words:

*“Employees get motivated and engaged and discover purpose through community service”*  
- Nirbhik Goel, Oberoi Hotels

*What was projected to happen in 2025 in terms of digitalization is happening now in 3 months. HR’s role is to help facilitate that change*  
-Arijit Sengupta, Bacardi

*“Safety; more psychological safety and creating a sense of confidence amongst employees that they are taken care of”*  
-Rajesh Shrivastava, Capital Foods

*“If your house is now your office, you in your house are our responsibility”*  
- Ashutosh Phadke, General Mills

## About Accord

Accord has 25 years of retained executive search for C Suite leadership searches and strategic team builds in India. Our team of 35 experienced professionals serve clients from 5 offices nationally and ~ 50 offices internationally via AltoPartners, the top 10 global partnership of executive search and leadership consulting firms. We are also worldwide members and serve on the global board of the AESC (Association of executive search and leadership consulting firms)

Our approach blends both the art and science of executive search. We have a collaborative one firm, bespoke approach to each search. Our consultants have deep domain and search experience and have extensive and long standing candidate relationships, with reach that extends nationally, globally including global Indians.

Over 60% of our work comes from clients with whom we have longstanding relationships. We walk the talk on Diversity & Inclusion with female candidates being 20% of our placements in the last 3 years.

### Services

- Retained Executive Search
- Career Transition Services
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Independent Reference Checks
- Interim Consulting
- Leadership Coaching
- Market Mapping

### Coverage

We serve both Indian and MNC conglomerates, mid-sized / family owned companies and PE portfolio companies for leadership needs at Board, CEO and CXO levels. The sectors we work in include

- Banking & Financial Services
- Consumer & Retail
- Digital & Media
- Education & Not for Profit
- Healthcare & Pharma
- Industrial & Infrastructure
- Private Equity & Portfolios
- Real Estate
- Services & Offshoring
- Technology

### Thought Leadership

We drive the dialogue around leadership, diversity and professional growth through discussion, events and published insights online, on TV and in various trade and mainstream business publications, in India and internationally. To receive updates please connect via [info@accordindia.net](mailto:info@accordindia.net) and follow us on **LinkedIn** on [@accord india](https://www.linkedin.com/company/accord-india)

For more details on this discussion please connect on email with **Anjali Singhania** | [Anjali@accordindia.net](mailto:Anjali@accordindia.net) and **Kaushik Dasgupta** | [kaushik@accordindia.net](mailto:kaushik@accordindia.net)