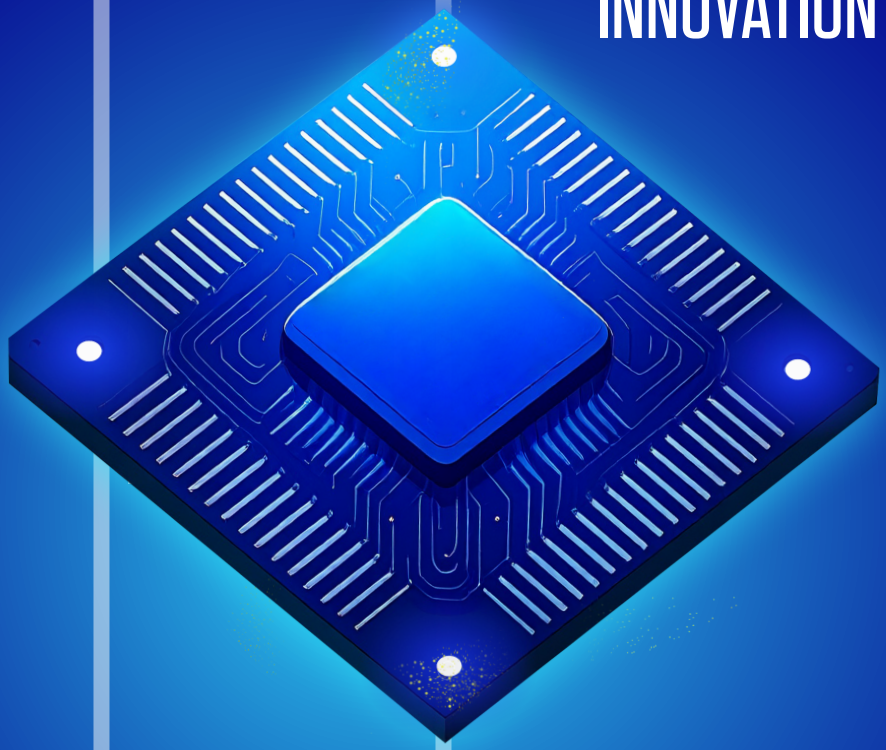
VIEW POINT

AI AT THE HELM: UNLOCKING GCCs' NEXT CHAPTER OF INNOVATION AND IMPACT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Global Capability Centers (GCCs) are rapidly evolving from cost-efficient service hubs to strategic innovation engines powered by AI and advanced technologies. This transformation demands a comprehensive rethinking of talent models to build hybrid human-AI and human-digital roles, foster an agile workforce, enable AIDLC, and embed continuous learning. Future-proofing these talent models requires scenario planning, organizational adaptability, and investment in next-wave technologies coupled with sustainable talent ecosystems. For GCC leaders, the priority is to integrate AI innovation with people-centric strategies that ensure resilience, agility, and long-term value creation in a rapidly digitizing global economy.

When new employees joined Global Capability Centers (GCCs) of Fortune 500 companies in India circa 2005, their roles were typically straightforward: execute standardized processes with precision, following detailed standard operating procedures that left minimal room for creativity or strategic thinking.

Fast-forward to 2024, and many of these same professionals now lead teams of data scientists, AI / GCCs specialists, and innovation experts who pioneer cutting-edge solutions that enable their parent companies to identify market opportunities ahead of competitors. This transformation from process executors to innovation architects perfectly encapsulates the remarkable evolution that GCCs have undergone over the past two decades.

Traditionally, GCCs were established with the primary objective of cost arbitrage, but that is now ancient history. Today's GCCs serve as innovation centers, enabling organizations to prototype, validate, and optimize new operational frameworks before enterprise-wide implementation. No longer viewed as support structures, they are now integral to shaping enterprise resilience, customer-centricity, and future-ready business models.

As GCCs ascend to unprecedented levels of strategic importance within the enterprise, their talent acquisition strategies have also undergone a fundamental transformation. From needing entry-level operatives with basic skill sets, today's GCC talent profile encompasses AI and cloud-native professionals, advanced technologists, and strategic business architects.

AI AS THE TRANSFORMATION CATALYST FOR TALENT EVOLUTION IN GCCs

As agentic AI integrates into business processes, talent acquisition must evolve to suit the new requirements. GCCs' pioneering role in AI enablement and their accelerated adoption timelines make this shift more conspicuous and measurable. Leading Banking Financial Services and Insurance (BFSI) GCCs are pioneering this approach as they pull in previously outsourced IT functions to meet more stringent regulatory, compliance, and cybersecurity requirements. For example, leading global investment banks are capitalizing on their India GCC talent pools to create next-generation AI platforms, automate core banking processes, and deliver superior customer service outcomes. Major financial institutions are leveraging advanced AI technologies to transform their client research and reporting functions through sophisticated analytics platforms.[1]

The adoption of technology like Gen AI , agentic AI, cognitive robotics, advanced analytics, poly cloud deployments, and robotic process automation is transforming GCC roles from operational to innovation-focused, attracting talent in AI engineering, data science, and cybersecurity. This also flattens hierarchies as AI delegates middle-management decision-support roles, promoting agile, democratized decision-making with accessible AI tools.

WHAT IT TAKES FOR GCCs TO SUCCEED IN THE AI ERA

To compete with startups and tech giants, GCCs must act with speed and precision. Building a future-ready workforce requires a multi-pronged approach:

Talent Acquisition

Shift to flexible hiring models (remote, gig, project-based) and craft an employer brand that resonates with millennials and Gen Z, focusing on career growth and social impact.

AI Integration

Cultivate AI fluency across the organization. Position AI as an augmentation tool, not a replacement. Encourage citizen development while ensuring robust governance.

Strategic Investment

Prioritize AI infrastructure, such as cloud and automation. Align budgets to support rapid prototyping and experimentation.

Ecosystem Innovation

Build partnerships with universities, startups, and tech vendors to access top talent and co-innovate, amplifying your strategic value.

[1]https://www.linkedin.com/posts/analytics-india-magazine_indias-bfsi-gccs-are-reshaping-the-traditional-activity-7359486039553437696-3QUA

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FIVE PILLARS OF AI-DRIVEN TALENT TRANSFORMATION IN GCCs

GCCs must realign their talent architecture to effectively harness AI's full potential and center their talent transformation around five strategic pillars: Skill Architecture Redesign, Workforce Composition Evolution, Learning and Development Revolution, New Operating Model AI + human engineers and Performance & Productivity Paradigms. These pillars are essential for future-ready GCCs to attract, develop, and retain talent that thrives in a collaborative human-AI environment.

Skill Architecture Redesign

GCC talent strategies today increasingly recognize the emergence of hybrid roles, which include citizen developers who are domain experts empowered to build AI-augmented applications without deep coding expertise using techniques like Vibe Coding. With this solution, delivery is accelerated; however, robust governance frameworks to ensure security and compliance are also needed.

The competencies required in the future extend beyond coding to be a mix of AI oversight and cross-functional collaboration.

Workforce Composition Evolution

The GCC workforce of 2025 is characterized by new role categories such as AI trainers, Future Deployed Engineers, data ethicists, automation architects, and cloud-native developers who work alongside traditional IT, business professionals. To meet dynamic business needs, GCCs increasingly adopt flexible talent models incorporating gig economy professionals and contingent workers, expanding their ability to scale specialized talent on demand.

Retail giant Target's GCC is a case in point. This GCC embraced a hybrid workforce model, integrating gig AI specialists to rapidly upscale AI-driven supply chain optimization projects.[2]

Learning and Development Revolution

AI-powered personalized learning platforms analyze employee skills, roles, and preferences to deliver micro-learning modules and just-in-time capability building tailored to immediate needs. GCCs must embed training into daily workflows, with digital bootcamps and certification programs designed to rapidly upskill talent on AI, cloud computing, and cybersecurity.

Learning must become a core business growth engine rather than a retention tactic.

Performance and Productivity Paradigms

AI-augmented environments require productivity metrics to be redefined. Performance must be measured by the effectiveness of human-AI collaboration — how well your talent leverages AI tools to accelerate decision-making, innovation, and value creation.

Success metrics must now include innovation velocity, quality of AI-human augmented decisions, and business impact on real-time dashboards combining AI performance data and human feedback to optimize productivity and outcomes continually.

For CXOs and GCC leaders, accelerating this transformation through investment in governance, flexible talent models, cutting-edge learning platforms, and modern performance metrics is critical to creating value beyond traditional efficiency and securing strategic advantage.

New GCC Operating Model

Operating model is being reimagined to shift from project-centric, siloed structures to a product-centric, integrated Technology, Data and Operations organization that operates as a strategic enabler of innovation, resilience, and efficiency. A combination of human, digital (deterministic automation) and AI workers (cognitive automation): **The digital workers to automate and perform deterministic tasks**, RPA bots and APIs-based automation; the AI workers will collaborate with human workers using assistive mode, approval mode; and the human workers will perform high-risk, creative, legally sensitive tasks and also supervise, train, and continuously improve AI and automation services.

CHALLENGES AND RISK MITIGATION

Talent retention is a critical challenge for GCCs operating in competitive markets such as North America, Western Europe, and APAC. GCCs face pressure not only from tech giants but also from a growing gig economy that offers flexible alternatives to traditional employment.

Ethical AI implementation remains a key workforce concern. Workforce education programs that clarify AI's role as an augmenting tool rather than a replacement are critical. Regulatory compliance across geographies adds complexity to AI deployments. Phased AI rollouts, continuous feedback mechanisms, and supportive training that help employees adapt smoothly are required. Identifying and addressing productivity bottlenecks early ensures sustainable transformation outcomes.

[2]https://supersourcing.com/blog/targets-gcc-in-india/

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FUTURE-PROOFING THE GCC TALENT MODEL

GCCs must proactively future-proof their talent models to remain relevant in an era of rapid AI transformation and emerging technologies. A central approach is scenario planning for varying AI adoption trajectories, from incremental automation to full-scale generative AI integration. This foresight enables GCC leaders to prepare flexible workforce strategies, allocating resources between reskilling, recruitment, and technology investments based on evolving demand and organizational objectives.

Agile talent models incorporating gig workers, hybrid roles, and decentralized decision-making empower GCCs to quickly realign priorities and scale capabilities. Change management programs embedding continuous learning and cross-functional collaboration foster a culture open to innovation and rapid adaptation.

GCCs must also prepare for the inevitable next wave of technologies with an early talent pipeline development plan and strategic partnerships with academia and startups. GCCs that actively scout emerging technology trends and invest in future-ready skills will maintain a competitive edge.

Today's GCC leaders face a defining moment and need to proactively shape the AI transformation. Else, it will reshape their centers by default.

For GCC leaders, the path forward calls for bold AI integration combined with a strategic people-first mindset. Those who invest in transformative roadmaps will unlock competitive advantages that redefine GCCs' purpose and impact in the digital economy, positioning these centers as innovation architects of global enterprise success.

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