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Dr. ANUPAMA VAIDYA (hc)

TRANSFORMING
HOW ORGANISATIONS
THINK, GOVERN
AND GROW



INDIA'S
BUSINESS
TRANSFORMATION
LEADERS
2026

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Dr. ANUPAMA VAIDYA (hc)

TRANSFORMING HOW ORGANISATIONS
THINK, GOVERN AND GROW

Shweta Singh | The CEO Magazine

Every organisation begins with an idea. But only a few evolve into institutions that endure beyond their founders, leaders and changing market realities. Dr. Anupama Vaidya (hc) has dedicated more than three decades understanding why some organisations successfully make that transition while others struggle despite having capable people, ambitious strategies and abundant opportunities.

Her career has taken her across industries, functions and boardrooms, but the questions driving her work have remained remarkably consistent: What enables organisations to sustain success? Why do some businesses outgrow their systems? What separates companies that simply grow from those that build lasting institutions?

Today, as the Founder and Chief Transformation Architect of Los Aurigas – The Charioteers, an Independent Director and Advisory Board Member, she works with founders, business leaders and boards to answer those very questions. Rather than viewing transformation as an isolated initiative, she sees it as the outcome of aligned leadership, governance, organisational design and culture.

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Dr. ANUPAMA VAIDYA (hc)
FOUNDER - LOS AURIGAS

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MY PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY HAS NEVER BEEN DEFINED BY A SINGLE ROLE, INDUSTRY OR CONVENTIONAL CAREER PATH. IT HAS BEEN A JOURNEY OF CONTINUOUS REINVENTION WHILE REMAINING ANCHORED TO ONE FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF: BUSINESSES TRANSFORM WHEN PEOPLE, PURPOSE AND PERFORMANCE MOVE TOGETHER.”

THE MAKING OF A TRANSFORMATION ARCHITECT

Dr. Anupama's professional journey did not begin with a plan to build a career in people strategy or organisational transformation. As a child, she dreamed of becoming a surgeon. Although that ambition took a different direction, it shaped an outlook that would define her professional life—the willingness to embrace change with conviction rather than resist it. Every unexpected turn became an opportunity to learn, adapt and grow.

With an academic foundation in Computer Science, she entered her MBA intending to specialise in Finance. A mentor, recognising her aptitude for understanding people and leadership, encouraged her to consider Human Resources instead. At a time when HR was still largely regarded as an administrative function, it was an unexpected shift. Yet it opened the door to understanding organisations through their most dynamic resource—their people.

“When destiny led me towards a different path, I made a quiet promise to myself: whatever field I entered, I would pursue it with complete commitment and give it the very best. I would completely make it mine.” That promise shaped every stage of her professional journey. Although she began in Human Resources, her responsibilities soon expanded well beyond it. In

her early career, she moved into Corporate Marketing, led the successful IPO of an IT company, managed Corporate Services and contributed to business modelling, organisation building, growth strategy and enterprise transformation. Rather than remaining within a functional boundary, she learned how every business function influences organisational success.

Her experience eventually spanned across manufacturing and engineering, construction and real estate, technology and services, hospitality, retail, pharmaceuticals, biopharma and logistics, with organisations including the Saint-Gobain Group, Lodha Group, Colgate-Palmolive, the Hinduja Group, Geometric Software and Mafatlal Industries.

Every role added a new dimension to her understanding of business, leadership and organisational performance. Rather than seeing industries as fundamentally different, she discovered that organisations consistently grappled with similar questions — how to align strategy with execution, build capable leadership, strengthen accountability and create structures that support sustainable growth. Those observations gradually shifted her career from managing people functions to helping organisations design themselves for long-term success.

BUILDING BUSINESSES THAT ENDURE

Years of working inside organisations eventually led Dr. Anupama to a realisation: most businesses did not need another consultant offering isolated solutions. They needed someone who could hold the whole picture the way a founder does — a leader who had lived inside every lever of organisational success, not just studied it from outside, and could connect leadership, governance, culture, organisation design and business strategy into a single, integrated approach to transformation.

That conviction became the foundation of Los Aurigas — The Charioteers, established with a clear purpose — ‘Making a Difference, Creating Meaningful and Lasting Impact.’

Rather than functioning as a conventional consulting practice, Los Aurigas integrates and partners with founder-led and growing organisations at the precise inflection point where entrepreneurial instinct alone is no longer enough — where scale demands a different kind of leadership and success must be matched, deliberately, by stronger governance, deeper leadership capability, considered succession planning and organisational design built to last. Working alongside founders, leadership teams and boards, Dr. Anupama



aligns these elements with business strategy, enabling organisations to evolve from founder-driven enterprises into institutions built for long-term resilience. Her focus is never simply on solving immediate challenges. It is focused on strengthening the organisational capability & architecture that can sustain and scale growth well into the future.

Alongside her advisory work, she serves as an IICA-certified Independent Director on the boards of John Cockerill India, Wanbury Ltd. and PlatinumOne Business Services and contributes as an Advisory Board Member across multiple organisations. Having spent decades inside operating businesses before entering the boardroom; she approaches governance through both strategic and operational perspectives, bringing in rigour at every table she is at.

“Governance, for me, is never a checkbox exercise. It means raising the uncomfortable question before it becomes a risk and ensuring that approval is never a rubber stamp.”

Whether advising founders or contributing in the boardroom, Dr. Anupama continues to pursue the same objective that has guided her career from the very beginning: helping organisations build the leadership, systems and governance required not just to grow, but to endure.

THE LOS AURIGAS APPROACH

If Dr. Anupama Vaidya's career revealed the recurring challenges organisations faced, the next chapter of her journey was about finding lasting solutions. Years of working across a plethora of industries convinced her that transformation could not be achieved through



isolated initiatives or functional excellence alone. For her, people strategy has never existed separately from business strategy.

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PEOPLE DECISIONS ARE, IN REALITY, BUSINESS DECISIONS. LEADERSHIP QUALITY, ORGANISATION STRUCTURE, ACCOUNTABILITY, CAPABILITY AND CULTURE AREN'T THE SOFT SIDE OF STRATEGY. THEY ARE STRATEGY – THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PLAN THAT LOOKS GOOD ON PAPER AND ONE THAT ACTUALLY CREATES VALUE.”

This conviction shapes every engagement she undertakes today. Whether she is partnering with a founder to build the business performance structures and governance their entrepreneurial instincts never demanded, forming leadership teams capable of delivering the business's next mandate, guiding an organisation through the discipline of turning strategy into execution, or pressing a board on the one clause in a term sheet everyone else was ready to sign off on – her objective remains constant: strengthen the enterprise as a whole, not simply optimise the function in front of her.

Experience also taught her that while every organisation is unique, the challenges leaders face are often strikingly similar. Founder-led businesses struggle with execution at scale, people who cannot grow fast enough into the widening demands of their own roles, and ways of working that hold together only as long as the founder is personally watching. As organisations grow, consistency is impacted, culture dilutes and leadership teams quietly lose alignment. Human Resources remains disconnected from the strategic decisions that most need its voice. And governance, too often, is either missed formally or treated as a compliance requirement rather than a driver of long-term value.

Rather than offering one-size-fits-all solutions, Dr. Anupama translated these recurring challenges into a body of proprietary practical frameworks – each built for a different stage of organisational evolution, together reflecting a single philosophy: enduring organisations are architected – leadership, governance, culture and capability built to evolve together rather than in isolation.

She evolved the E8X Transformation Model™ from a pattern she saw repeat itself across every industry she worked in: organisations investing/missing in plans and processes, driving/overlooking the leadership behaviours needed to actually bring those plans to life. E8X™ names the eight elements she believes close that gap – from establishing clarity and disciplined execution to encouraging experimentation and empowerment to enthusing teams and building the ecosystems that strengthen growth – moving an organisation from a strategy that looks right on paper to one that is genuinely lived, day to day, by the people responsible for delivering it. The model has since moved well beyond theory – applied across her engagements with real, measurable results – and it was this body of work that led to her being conferred an Honorary Doctorate in Strategic Innovation, with a specialisation in Business and Workforce Transformation.

She is also reshaping the role of Human Resources itself. Through the OMG™ Framework – Orchestrate, Mitigate, Generate – she makes the case that HR's future lies not in supporting the business but in architecting it: aligning people strategy with business priorities, governing enterprise people risk with the same rigour applied to financial risk, and demonstrating people decisions as a measurable driver of enterprise value. For Dr. Anupama, the question is no longer whether HR has earned a seat at the table. It is whether, when HR speaks, the table shakes and moves to create value. Her interesting body of work extends further still. The Next-Gen Readiness Framework prepares the next generation of founders and family businesses for succession and continuity. Wisdom Forge™ brings situation-based leadership coaching – real-time guidance shaped to the moment a decision is actually being made, rather than a generic model applied after the fact. And Brain:Zenith sits at the intersection of psychology, neuroscience and business, exploring how an understanding of the brain itself can unlock more self-aware, more effective leadership.

Binding these frameworks together is GUIDE, her personal leadership philosophy built around Growth through Reinvention, Unflinching Candour, Impact that Outlasts Me, Devotion to Learning and Empathy.



“These five values are not statements displayed on a wall. They are standards I return to whenever a real decision is in front of me.”

For Dr. Anupama, these values are neither aspirational slogans nor organisational branding exercises. They serve as decision-making principles that influence how she advises boards, mentors leaders and approaches transformation itself.

LEADERSHIP THAT BUILDS CAPABILITY

Experience gradually reshaped Dr. Anupama's understanding of leadership. Early in her career, she associated leadership with expertise, experience and the ability to deliver results. Today, she believes its true measure lies in creating capable leaders rather than indispensable ones.

“A leader's role is not merely to provide answers. It is to create an environment in which people can think, contribute, question, learn, take ownership and thrive. Leadership is not demonstrated by how dependent the organisation becomes on the leader but by how capable the organisation becomes because of the leader.”

That belief was shaped by mentors who trusted her with responsibilities far beyond her formal role, encouraging

her to think beyond functional boundaries. Among them, her former reporting manager, Mr. Vinda Chitnis, has remained both mentor and family in equal measure for over two decades – continuing to influence her approach to leadership.

What Dr. Anupama values most in it is its candour. The mentors who shaped her most, she says, were rarely the ones who offered comfort; they were the ones who challenged her thinking and held her to a standard she hadn't yet set for herself.

Those experiences reinforced her belief that mentorship is not about transferring experience or creating followers.

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MENTORSHIP, FOR ME, IS NOT ABOUT CREATING FOLLOWERS OR REPLICAS. IT IS ABOUT HELPING INDIVIDUALS DISCOVER THEIR OWN VOICE, STRENGTHS AND LEADERSHIP IDENTITY.”

These lessons strengthened during Dr. Anupama's years as a mother – an experience that taught her leadership is not about creating someone in one's own image but about giving another human being the roots to remain grounded and the wings to discover who they are. Growth, she came to believe, cannot be forced or scripted; every leader, like every individual, develops through their own unique experiences and challenges. The role of a mentor is not to determine that journey but to provide the confidence, perspective and support that allow others to navigate it on their own terms.

Today, when she has been a source of strength for someone, she considers her real success the moment she can step back and watch them stand taller than they ever imagined – remaining, in her words, only “the quiet architecture behind a strength they now believe is entirely their own.”

Some of the professionals she once mentored now occupy senior leadership roles across global organisations – including a young talent she nurtured early in his career who now leads as a global CFO.



For Dr. Anupama, being remembered for those early years of grooming is a far more meaningful measure of success than any award or title.

Leadership, she believes, is ultimately measured not by how many people depend on a leader, but by how many become capable of leading without one.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP

Transformation has been the defining theme of Dr. Anupama Vaidya's professional life, but some of its most enduring lessons were learned beyond the boardroom. At a pivotal stage in her journey, she found herself rebuilding both her personal and professional life while raising her daughter, Ishita, as a single parent. It was a period marked by uncertainty, responsibility and difficult choices, demanding resilience not as a leadership principle but as a daily practice. Rather than allowing circumstances to define her future, she chose to see every setback as an opportunity to begin again. “Life did not always give me a clear path, but it gave me the courage to create one.”

That experience profoundly shaped her leadership philosophy. It reinforced her belief that meaningful transformation cannot be driven by strategy alone. Every organisational change affects people before it affects performance, and leaders who fail to recognise that human dimension rarely succeed in creating lasting impact.

This perspective proved invaluable during periods of organisational disruption, particularly through the COVID-19 pandemic, when she served as Fractional CHRO for one of the organisations she closely supports. At a time when businesses were navigating unprecedented uncertainty, her focus extended beyond policies and processes to maintaining trust, communication and emotional stability across teams. For Dr. Anupama, resistance to change is seldom rooted in unwillingness. More often, it arises from uncertainty, fear or a lack of clarity. Leadership, therefore, is not simply about driving change but about hand-holding people to understand it, participate in it and find confidence within it.

“My approach is to combine empathy with execution: acknowledge the human experience of change while maintaining clarity, accountability and momentum.”

LEADING THE NEXT ERA

Having spent decades helping organisations adapt to changing business realities, Dr. Anupama views artificial intelligence the way she views every major shift she has guided organisations through: not something to resist, but something to architect around.”

She believes AI will fundamentally reshape how organisations analyse information, make decisions and operate at scale. Yet, in her view, technology alone cannot build resilient organisations. Without capable leadership, ethical governance, clear accountability and an adaptive culture, even the most sophisticated technologies cannot deliver meaningful transformation.

“AI may enhance intelligence and intellect. Leadership must still provide intention. Technology can generate possibilities; human beings must decide which of them are worth pursuing.”

The same thinking informs her vision for the future of Human Resources. She believes the function is steadily evolving from an operational enabler to a strategic architect of enterprise value. HR leaders, she argues, must become equal partners in shaping business strategy, strengthening governance, managing enterprise risks and developing future-ready leadership.

Equally important is continuous learning. Throughout her own career, Dr. Anupama has consistently expanded her perspective through board assignments, cross-industry experience, research and ongoing study. Today, her work increasingly integrates business strategy with behavioural science, neuroscience, leadership development and organisation design, reflecting her belief that tomorrow's organisations will

require leaders who can connect disciplines rather than operate within them. For her, staying relevant is not about accumulating information but about recognising patterns and translating insight into action.

WHAT TRULY ENDURES

When asked about the legacy she hopes to leave behind, Dr. Anupama's response returns to the same belief that has shaped every stage of her journey.

She does not measure success through titles, designations or professional recognition. Instead, she speaks about institutions that become stronger, leaders who become more capable and organisations that continue to grow long after her direct involvement has ended.

She hopes the founders she advises build enterprises that outlast them. She wants the leaders she coaches to create opportunities for others. She trusts young professionals will remember not simply the guidance they received but also the confidence they discovered in themselves because someone believed in their potential. Through Los Aurigas, she aspires to leave behind a body of work demonstrating that business and human transformation are inseparable dimensions of the same journey.

For aspiring professionals, her advice reflects the lessons that have shaped her own career. Build capability before designation. Welcome reinvention instead of fearing it. Seek mentors who challenge rather than comfort, and measure progress over decades rather than moments.

“Forget the straight line. It was never real. Build capability, not designation, and refuse to let any single label, role or setback tell you what you're allowed to become next.”

Looking back, Dr. Anupama Vaidya's career cannot be defined by any single role – whether as a business strategist, transformation architect, board member or leadership coach. Instead, it is united by a consistent purpose: helping people and organisations realise what they are capable of becoming.

It is a journey built on reinvention, strengthened by resilience and guided by one belief above all: enduring organisations are built long before strategies are written or structures are redesigned. They are built when leaders choose to see possibility where others see limitation. “If my journey leaves one enduring message, I would like it to be this: no individual or organisation is permanently defined by its present circumstances. With clarity, courage, capability and conscious effort, transformation is always possible.”