

Priti Kataria is an experienced human resources expert with more than twenty years in the talent industry. She currently holds the position of Chief Human Resources Officer at Birlasoft, where she has played a key role in guiding large-scale organizational change and capacity development efforts. Priti is known for her strategic HR style, stressing the importance for HR leaders to be closely connected to the business and to have a solid understanding of financial factors. Her leadership approach is based on humility, honesty, and a dedication to combining data insights with intuition and experience.



What does being recognised as one of the Top 30 Talent Leaders of 2025 mean to you?

For Priti Kataria, the recognition signifies both pride and humility. She feels pride because it highlights the increasing acknowledgment of HR and talent as key strategic factors that support organizational ambition, growth, and sustained impact. At the same time, she views it as an act of humility, connecting her to a broader community of leaders engaged in meaningful work to empower businesses. She regards this recognition not as personal validation but as a collective achievement contributing to overall business success.



Which part of your journey to talent leadership are you most proud of and why?

Priti reflects on her journey rather than pinpointing a single moment, sharing a heartfelt story of over twenty years of growth and achievement. What she treasures most are the opportunities where she could drive meaningful change with tangible results. From leading enterprise-wide programs on talent retention, engagement, and onboarding to creating meaningful structures around employee development, she highlights initiatives that have made a big impact across various parts of the business. Recently, programs like Project Athena, which focus on building technical, sales, delivery, and leadership skills, stand out as highlights of her career. For Priti, the most rewarding moments come when talent initiatives are seamlessly woven into the core priorities of the business, making a genuine difference rather than isolated efforts.

What has been the biggest lesson or skill you have learned as a talent leader?

Humility, honesty, and hard work are still core values in a people-focused profession. Priti highlights the need to be highly data-literate while valuing experience and intuition gained over time. She believes effective decision-making depends on analyzing data related to business, people, talent, and skills, without losing the contextual judgment that comes from real leadership experience. This balance has been shaped by mentors and career anchors that influenced her approach.

How has the role of a talent leader changed over the course of your career?

When Priti started her career, HR mainly concentrated on compliance, record-keeping, and organizational hygiene. Now, these are considered basic expectations. Talent leaders must function as business partners with a seat at the decision-making table. It's crucial to understand the business, financials, and balance sheet, as well as how talent influences organizational performance. The role has evolved from peripheral support to being integral to business strategy and execution.

How do you identify the right talent?

Talent identification differs across levels. While assessing technical and functional skills is usually clear-cut, hiring for leadership roles is much more intricate, particularly in organizations going through change. Priti seeks leaders who are at ease with ambiguity, anchored by core values, and able to manage change effectively. She focuses on thoroughly exploring candidates' previous projects and assignments to gauge their authenticity, depth, and relevance. Carefully crafted, targeted questions are used to reveal true capabilities and suitability.

Rapid fire

If Priti hadn't become a talent leader, she might have gone into academia as a university professor or tried her hand at civil services, both childhood dreams of hers. Her perfect superpower would be to eliminate commute times, especially in busy cities like Mumbai and Bengaluru. She believes that often, the most remarkable talents are found among quiet contributors who make a big impact without seeking the spotlight. Her heroes include her mother, who reinvented herself professionally after retirement, and her daughter, who constantly reminds her to stay aware of unconscious biases and adapt to changing work environments. One thing she's always kept is the habit of arriving early at the office. Her heartfelt advice to talent leaders is to strike a balance between being strong business partners and trusted advocates for employees, fostering psychological safety through genuine engagement.

PRITI KATARIA

CHRO, BIRLASOFT