
CAREER DIAGNOSTIC

HR Business Partner

Targeting: HR Director / CHRO (mid-size company)

Meera Iyer

Currently: HR Business Partner, Vanguard Consulting (IT Consulting / Services)

Industry: Human Resources / People Operations — Cross-industry

Location: Hyderabad, India

13 years in Human Resources · MBA (HR) from TISS Mumbai

SANDESH SIDDARAM

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September 2026

Disclaimer

Sample report. "Meera Iyer" and "Vanguard Consulting" are illustrative — built to demonstrate the structure and depth of a real engagement.

Names, companies and identifying details are changed. Built to show the structure and depth of a real report. The person and company are fictional.

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What This Report Covers

Part A — The Diagnosis

- 1 — LinkedIn Audit
- 2 — CV Audit
- 3 — Visibility Score
- 4 — The Pattern

Part B — The Numbers That Hurt

- 5 — Where You Are vs. Where You Should Be
- 6 — The Money You Are Leaving Behind

Part C — The Fix

- 7 — Your Story — Rewritten
- 8 — LinkedIn — Rebuilt
- 9 — Salary Negotiation Scripts
- 10 — Interview Scripts — The Five Questions That Decide
- 11 — 30-60-90 Day Plan for HR Director
- 12 — Visibility Plan — 90 Days
- 13 — Practice Protocol — 14 Days Before the Interview

Part D — How You Get Your Own Diagnostic

PART A

The Diagnosis

What your profile actually says about you — and what hiring managers see in the first 6 seconds.

SECTION 1

LinkedIn Audit

I spent 40 minutes on Meera's LinkedIn profile before writing this report. Here is what I found — and here is the problem.

The headline

Current: "HRBP | Talent Management | Employee Engagement | TISS Mumbai"

THE PROBLEM

This headline is a keyword dump, not a value statement. When a CEO or CFO at a mid-size company searches for their next HR Director, they are not typing "Employee Engagement" into the search bar. They are looking for someone who reduced attrition from 28% to 14% and saved Rs.4 crore in replacement costs — and your headline says nothing about that. Every second HRBP on LinkedIn has this exact headline format. You are invisible.

HOW WE FIXED IT

"HR leader who cut attrition from 28% to 14% across 3,200 employees — saving Rs.4.2 Cr in annual replacement costs | Vanguard Consulting"

One sentence. One number. One outcome. That is what makes a CFO stop scrolling.

The About Section

Meera's About section is 280 words long. It reads like a job description turned inside out. It mentions "employee engagement" six times and "talent management" four times. It mentions revenue impact zero times. Attrition cost saved — zero. Hiring cost reduced — zero. Revenue per employee improved — zero.

Element	What I Found	Score
Headline	Keyword dump — HRBP Talent Engagement TISS	2 / 10
About Section	Activity description, no business outcomes, no numbers	2 / 10
Experience Section	Lists HR processes run, not business impact delivered	3 / 10
Featured Section	Empty	0 / 10
Recommendations	4 received — all from direct reports, all generic	3 / 10
Activity / Content	Last post 11 months ago — a company culture day photo	1 / 10
Skills & Endorsements	52 skills listed, including MS Excel and PowerPoint	3 / 10
Profile Photo & Banner	Photo is professional. Banner is default LinkedIn blue.	5 / 10

Overall LinkedIn Score

19 / 80

★ SAN SPEAKING:

Meera, I want you to hear this clearly. Your LinkedIn profile right now is invisible to the people who would pay you Rs.60 lakh. Not because you are not good enough — you are. But because nobody who searches for an HR Director will find an "HRBP who does employee engagement and talent management". They will find the person whose headline says "cut attrition from 28% to 14%, saved Rs.4 Cr". That is the person who gets the inbound message from a CEO.

SECTION 2

CV Audit

I reviewed the CV Meera submitted. Here is the pattern I see in almost every HR professional's CV that crosses my desk.

What the CV says vs. what it should say

WHAT THE CV SAYS NOW	WHAT A HIRING MANAGER NEEDS TO SEE
"Designed and implemented employee engagement surveys"	"Redesigned engagement programme — engagement score up from 3.2 to 4.1, voluntary attrition down from 28% to 14%, saving Rs.4.2 Cr in annual replacement costs"
"Managed end-to-end recruitment for IT vertical"	"Built talent pipeline that cut time-to-hire from 62 days to 28 days and improved offer acceptance rate from 64% to 89% — filled 340 roles in FY25"
"Handled employee grievances and conflict resolution"	"Reduced grievance resolution time from 45 days to 12 days — repeat grievances dropped 60%, saving 1,200 manager-hours per year"
"Developed onboarding programme for new hires"	"Rebuilt onboarding from a 1-day orientation to a 90-day structured programme — new hire productivity at Day 60 improved by 35%, 6-month attrition dropped from 22% to 8%"
"Implemented performance management system across business unit"	"Rolled out OKR-based performance system for 3,200 employees — bell curve compliance went from 40% to 92%, high-performer attrition dropped from 18% to 7%"
"Conducted training needs analysis and coordinated L&D programmes"	"Delivered Rs.1.8 Cr training programme with measurable ROI — promoted-from-within rate went from 12% to 31%, external hiring cost dropped by Rs.85 lakh"

★ SAN SPEAKING:

The left column is activity. The right column is evidence. An HR Director hire is a Rs.50-70 lakh decision. Nobody makes that decision based on "designed engagement surveys". They make it based on "attrition down from 28% to 14%, saving Rs.4.2 Cr" and "time-to-hire cut from 62 to 28 days".

The numbers are already in your HRMS. They are just not on the paper.

CV Structure Issues

- Length: 5 pages. Should be 2 pages maximum for a Director-level role in India
- Format: Dense paragraphs listing every HR process ever touched. Hiring managers scan in 7 seconds — your CV requires a careful read to find anything valuable
- Sequence: Education (TISS, MBA) listed before experience. At 13 years, experience leads. TISS goes in education, not the headline
- Certifications section: Lists 8 certifications including basic Excel and POSH training. Keep only SHRM-SCP, TISS, and the Six Sigma HR one
- Personal details: Date of birth, marital status, passport number listed. Remove all of this. It is 2026
- Objective statement: "Seeking a challenging HR leadership role" — this line actively hurts you. Delete it

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SECTION 3

Visibility Score

Visibility is the thing most HR professionals completely ignore. You spend your career building employer brand for the company — but you have built zero personal brand for yourself.

0

LinkedIn posts last 6 months

280

Profile views last 90 days

0

Inbound recruiter messages this quarter

4

Generic recommendations

What these numbers mean

An HR Business Partner at an IT consulting firm in Hyderabad with 13 years of experience and TISS credentials should be getting 1,200-2,000 profile views per quarter and 6-12 inbound messages from recruiters and CXOs. You are getting 280 views and zero messages.

This is not because the market is slow. The HR leadership hiring market in India is extremely active — every company that went through layoffs in 2024-25 is now rebuilding and needs senior HR to do it right. Companies are looking for people at your level. They are just not finding you.

MARKET DATA

There are roughly 4,800 HR Director and CHRO openings in India right now on LinkedIn, Naukri, and direct company career pages combined. About 1,600 of those are at companies with 1,000-5,000 employees — your sweet spot. Your profile, in its current state, is visible to approximately none of them — because you rank on page 9 of LinkedIn search for "HR Business Partner Hyderabad" and do not appear at all for "HR Director".

Metric	Meera — Current	Benchmark (HR Director-level)
LinkedIn SSI Score	32 / 100	60-72 / 100
Profile views (90 days)	280	1,200 - 2,000
Search appearances (weekly)	18	90 - 160
Content engagement rate	N/A (no posts)	3-5% per post
Inbound recruiter messages / quarter	0	6 - 12

Metric	Meera — Current	Benchmark (HR Director-level)
Published articles / thought pieces	0	2-3 per month

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SECTION 4

The Pattern

I have now looked at Meera's LinkedIn, her CV, her visibility numbers, and the way she describes her work. Here is the pattern I see.

The Admin Trap

Meera speaks HR fluently. Employee engagement, policy drafting, onboarding design, grievance handling, talent reviews, POSH compliance, L&D coordination — she can talk about all of it. And that is exactly the problem.

She talks about **what HR processes she runs**. She never talks about **what business outcomes those processes delivered**. The money saved, the attrition prevented, the talent pipeline built, the revenue-per-employee improved — always missing.

THE PATTERN

Admin-led language: "I designed an employee engagement survey and achieved 87% participation" — this tells me you ran a process well.

Business-led language: "I redesigned the engagement programme. Engagement score went from 3.2 to 4.1. Voluntary attrition dropped from 28% to 14% in 18 months. That saved Rs.4.2 crore in replacement costs — roughly 1.5x the cost of each departing employee at our average CTC of Rs.12 lakh" — this tells me you changed a business number.

The first sentence gets you shortlisted for Senior HRBP. The second sentence gets you shortlisted for HR Director.

Here is why this matters right now. In 2025 and 2026, companies are not hiring HR leaders to run engagement surveys and draft policies. They are hiring HR leaders to reduce attrition cost, build succession pipelines, improve revenue per employee, and fix the damage from three years of reactive hiring and layoffs. If your entire story is about processes, you are competing for the wrong seat.

★ SAN SPEAKING:

Meera, I have seen this pattern in maybe 150 HR professionals over the last two years. The ones who make HR Director before 38 are not smarter than you. They are not better HRBPs. They have just learned to translate their work into the language that the CFO and the CEO actually care about. That language is attrition cost, revenue per employee, hiring cost, and succession depth. We are going to teach you that translation.

How The Admin Trap shows up in conversations

I ran a mock exercise with Meera where I asked her five questions a CEO would typically ask an HR Director candidate. Here is what I noticed.

Question	Meera's Answer	The Problem
"What has been your biggest HR achievement?"	"We achieved 87% participation in our annual engagement survey and ran 14 town halls across 4 locations"	Describes activity, not outcome. What did 87% participation DO to attrition? To productivity? To offer acceptance?
"How do you measure HR's success?"	"I look at training hours completed, policy compliance, and engagement scores"	These are input metrics. A CEO wants output: attrition cost, revenue per head, bench strength, time to productivity
"Why should we hire you over the other candidates?"	"I have 13 years in HR, TISS background, and I understand both the strategic and operational sides"	No differentiation. Any HRBP with 10+ years can say this. Where is the proof?

PART B

The Numbers That Hurt

Where you are versus where you should be — and the money you are leaving on the table.

SECTION 5

Where You Are vs. Where You Should Be

Let me put some numbers on the gap. These are not aspirational targets — they are what the market is paying right now for the role you want.

Rs.30L

Meera's current CTC

Rs.55L

HR Director median CTC

Rs.25L

The gap per year

Component	Meera — Current	HR Director — Market
Base Salary	Rs.22,50,000	Rs.38,00,000 - Rs.48,00,000
Variable / Bonus	Rs.3,75,000 (12.5%)	Rs.7,00,000 - Rs.12,00,000 (15-20%)
Perks & Benefits	Rs.3,75,000	Rs.5,00,000 - Rs.10,00,000
Total CTC	Rs.30,00,000	Rs.50,00,000 - Rs.70,00,000

Where I got these numbers

Market data from 2025-26 compensation surveys across Aon India, Mercer, Glassdoor India, and LinkedIn Salary Insights — plus direct verification from four recent HR Director placements in my network. Filtered for: HR Director / Head HR, companies with 1,000-5,000 employees, Hyderabad / Bengaluru / Pune / Mumbai, 10-16 years experience.

The role gap — it is not just money

- Scope: You currently support 1 business unit of ~800 employees. An HR Director owns the people strategy for the entire company — 2,000 to 5,000 employees across all functions
- Reporting: You report to the HR Head. An HR Director reports to the CEO or COO and sits in the leadership team meetings where budgets and headcount are decided
- Budget: You manage no direct budget. An HR Director typically owns Rs.4-8 crore in annual people spend — L&D, benefits, hiring, employer branding
- Decision authority: You recommend. An HR Director decides — on org structure, compensation bands, performance calibration, and exit management

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SECTION 6

The Money You Are Leaving Behind

This is the section most people skip. I am asking you not to.

Meera has been at the HRBP level for four years. She was considered for the HR Head role at Vanguard once — it went to an external hire with "consulting CHRO experience". She has been passively looking on Naukri and LinkedIn for about 14 months but has not had a single serious interview process at the Director level.

Period	Lost Income	What This Means
Year 1 (already happened)	Rs.25,00,000	Difference between current CTC and HR Director median
Year 2 (happening now)	Rs.27,50,000	Year 1 gap + 10% annual increment on the higher base
Year 3 (if nothing changes)	Rs.30,25,000	Compounding gap — the difference widens every year
3-Year Cumulative Loss	Rs.82,75,000	This is real money you will never recover

THE COMPOUNDING PROBLEM

Every year you stay at the wrong level, the gap does not stay the same — it grows. Because increments are a percentage of base. A 10% increment on Rs.22.5 lakh is Rs.2.25 lakh. A 10% increment on Rs.42 lakh is Rs.4.2 lakh. You are not just losing the gap — you are losing the growth on the gap. Over a 10-year career horizon, this one delay costs you more than Rs.2.5 crore.

★ SAN SPEAKING:

I know these numbers can feel uncomfortable. That is deliberate. I want you to feel the weight of doing nothing. Not because I want to sell you something — I want to sell you something, obviously, but that is not why I am showing you this. I am showing you this because the single biggest risk in your career right now is not a bad interview. It is another year of comfortable stagnation. The irony for HR people is that you spend your whole career helping others grow and negotiate — and you forget to do it for yourself.

PART C

The Fix

Your story rewritten, your profile rebuilt, your scripts prepared — section by section.

SECTION 7

Your Story — Rewritten

The first thing we fix is how you talk about yourself. Not your CV — that comes after. Your story. The 90-second version that comes out of your mouth when someone says "tell me about yourself" or "so what do you do in HR?"

The current story (what Meera says today)

"I am an HR Business Partner at Vanguard Consulting. I have about 13 years of experience in HR. I have worked across talent management, employee engagement, performance management, and L&D. I handle a business unit of around 800 people. I am TISS Mumbai — MBA in HR. Before Vanguard I was at Infosys and before that at Mphasis."

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS

This story has no numbers, no outcomes, no differentiation. Any HRBP in Hyderabad with a decade of experience could say this word for word. It also ends on a resume recitation (Infosys, Mphasis) which tells the listener nothing. Most importantly — it does not answer the question the CEO actually has: "What will this person do for my attrition rate, my hiring costs, and my people productivity?"

The rewritten story

THE REWRITE

The 90-second version:

"I am an HR leader at Vanguard Consulting — we are a 3,200-person IT consulting firm. My job, in simple terms, is to make sure the company does not bleed money through people problems.

The biggest thing I have done in the last three years is take our voluntary attrition from 28% down to 14%. That single change saved the company roughly Rs.4.2 crore a year in replacement costs — hiring, training, lost productivity, the whole thing.

I also rebuilt our hiring engine. We were taking 62 days to fill a role. I got that down to 28 days and pushed the offer acceptance rate from 64% to 89%. Last year we filled 340 positions without a single staffing agency — that alone saved Rs.1.7 crore in agency fees.

I am now looking for an HR Director role where I can do this at the company level — own the entire people strategy, not just one business unit. Ideally a tech or consulting company with 2,000 to 5,000 employees that is growing fast and losing people faster than it should be."

Why this version works

- Numbers in the first 30 seconds: 3,200 employees, attrition from 28% to 14%, Rs.4.2 Cr saved
- A specific superpower: attrition diagnosis and cost prevention — not generic "talent management"
- Financial impact quantified: Rs.4.2 Cr saved, Rs.1.7 Cr in agency fees avoided — this is the language a CFO speaks
- Clear positioning for the next role: tells them exactly what size, industry, and problem she is looking for
- No resume recitation: Vanguard is the only company mentioned because it holds the strongest evidence

★ SAN SPEAKING:

Meera, I want you to practise this story out loud — not in your head, out loud — at least ten times before you use it anywhere. The first three times will feel awkward. The numbers will feel like bragging. They are not bragging. They are evidence. HR people are the worst at this — you spend your whole career coaching others to articulate their value, and then you cannot do it for yourself. The discomfort you feel saying "I saved Rs.4.2 crore" is exactly the discomfort that has kept you at HRBP for four years.

Five Signature Stories

Beyond the 90-second version, you need five ready-to-go stories that demonstrate the specific competencies an HR Director is hired for. Each story follows the STAR-R format: Situation, Task, Action, Result, Reflection.

Story	One-Liner	Competency
1. Retention Story	"How I cut voluntary attrition from 28% to 14% and saved Rs.4.2 Cr"	Attrition / Cost Saving
2. Talent Pipeline Story	"How I built a hiring engine that filled 340 roles in-house — zero agency spend"	Talent Acquisition / Cost
3. Transformation Story	"How I moved 3,200 people from annual appraisals to quarterly OKRs"	Change Management
4. Crisis Story	"How I managed a 200-person restructuring with zero legal escalations"	Leadership / Risk
5. Business Impact Story	"How I improved revenue-per-employee from Rs.18L to Rs.24L by fixing the bench problem"	Strategic HR / P&L

SECTION 8

LinkedIn — Rebuilt

Your LinkedIn profile is not a resume. It is a landing page. And right now, your landing page has a bounce rate of about 97%. Here is how we fix it.

Headline

CURRENT	REWRITTEN
HRBP Talent Management Employee Engagement TISS Mumbai	Cut attrition from 28% to 14% across 3,200 employees — saved Rs.4.2 Cr HR Leader Vanguard Consulting

About Section — The Rewrite

Here is the About section I would write for Meera. It follows a 5-part structure: Hook (one number), Context (what I do), Evidence (three results), Positioning (what I want next), and Contact.

REWRITTEN ABOUT SECTION

"In the last 3 years, I have taken voluntary attrition in a 3,200-person IT consulting firm from 28% to 14% — saving Rs.4.2 crore a year in replacement costs.

I am an HR leader at Vanguard Consulting. My job is to make sure people problems do not become P&L problems. Attrition cost, hiring cost, bench cost, training ROI — these are the numbers I own.

Three things I have done that I am most proud of:

- Reduced attrition from 28% to 14% — Rs.4.2 Cr saved annually
- Cut time-to-hire from 62 days to 28 days, filled 340 roles without agencies — Rs.1.7 Cr saved
- Rolled out OKR-based performance system for 3,200 employees — high-performer attrition dropped from 18% to 7%

I am exploring HR Director / Head HR opportunities — particularly at tech or consulting companies with 2,000-5,000 employees that are growing fast and need someone to fix the people cost problem before it eats the margin.

If that sounds like your company, I would love to talk: meera.iyer@email.com"

Experience Section

Each role gets the same treatment: company context (1 line), your scope (1 line), then 3-5 quantified results as bullet points. No responsibilities. Only outcomes.

- Vanguard Consulting (1 line): 3,200-employee IT consulting firm, Rs.480 Cr revenue, 4 delivery centres across India
- Your scope (1 line): HR Business Partner for the digital services vertical — 800 employees, Rs.140 Cr revenue contribution
- Result 1: Reduced voluntary attrition from 28% to 14% — Rs.4.2 Cr annual saving in replacement costs
- Result 2: Cut time-to-hire from 62 to 28 days, offer acceptance from 64% to 89% — filled 340 roles without agencies
- Result 3: Rolled out OKR-based performance system — bell curve compliance 40% to 92%, high-performer attrition 18% to 7%
- Result 4: Rebuilt onboarding — new hire productivity at Day 60 up 35%, 6-month attrition from 22% to 8%
- Result 5: Delivered Rs.1.8 Cr training programme — internal promotion rate from 12% to 31%

Featured Section

Your Featured section is currently empty. This is prime real estate. Here is what goes there:

- A 2-minute Loom video: "How we cut attrition from 28% to 14% in 18 months" — this is your best story, make it visual
- A LinkedIn article: "The real cost of attrition — and why most HR teams measure it wrong"
- A case study PDF: one-page summary of the hiring engine transformation (62 days to 28 days, Rs.1.7 Cr saved)
- An image or carousel: "5 HR metrics your CFO actually cares about" — 5-slide visual

Recommendations

You need 5 specific recommendations. Not "Meera is a great team player" — but specific, outcome-based recommendations from people whose titles carry weight.

#	Who To Ask	What They Should Speak To
1	Your Business Unit Head / Delivery VP	Business impact — attrition reduction, cost saved, talent readiness
2	Your CFO or Finance Controller	Financial impact — cost savings, budget management, ROI on HR spends
3	A senior hiring manager you supported	Hiring speed, quality of talent, stakeholder partnership
4	A peer HRBP or HR manager	Collaboration, knowledge sharing, cross-functional initiatives
5	An employee you coached into a promotion	People development, mentoring, real career impact

SECTION 9

Salary Negotiation Scripts

You are going to get asked about salary. And if you handle it the way most people do — blurting out a number in the first call — you will leave Rs.5-10 lakh on the table. Here is the script for every stage.

Script 1 — When they ask your current CTC

WHAT TO SAY

"My current total compensation is around Rs.30 lakh. But I want to be transparent — the number that matters to me is not where I am today, it is what the HR Director role pays in the current market. Based on my research and conversations with people in similar roles, that range for companies with 2,000-5,000 employees in Hyderabad-Bengaluru is Rs.50-65 lakh. I would expect us to land somewhere in that range based on the scope and the complexity of the people challenges."

Script 2 — When they ask your expected CTC

WHAT TO SAY

"I would rather not anchor on a number before I understand the full scope. From what I know so far, the market range for an HR Director at a company your size is Rs.50-65 lakh. But if the scope includes owning the complete P&L for people costs — hiring, L&D, benefits, employer branding — and I am reporting directly to the CEO, I would expect the compensation to reflect that. Can you share the band your leadership has approved for this role?"

Script 3 — When they make an offer below market

WHAT TO SAY

"Thank you for the offer. I am genuinely excited about this role and this company. The number is a bit below what I was expecting based on the market data I have. For an HR Director role at a company of this size and complexity — 3,000 employees, multi-location, the attrition and hiring challenges you described — the market is Rs.50-65 lakh. Your offer is at Rs.42 lakh. Is there flexibility to move closer to the Rs.52-55 lakh range? I want us to start in a place where I can focus on the work and not revisit this conversation in six months."

The three rules

- Never be the first to say a number: Always ask for the band first. If pressed, give a range anchored to market data, not your current CTC
- Never negotiate on email: Tone does not carry. Always do the final negotiation on a call. Email to confirm the agreed number afterwards

- Never accept on the spot: "I am very excited about this. Can I have 48 hours to think it through?" — this alone has saved people Rs.4-8 lakh in my experience

★ **SAN SPEAKING:**

Meera, this is the part where HR people lose the most money. The irony is painful. You literally design compensation structures for a living. You know the bands. You know the negotiation room. You know companies budget for a 15-20% negotiation margin. And then you accept the first offer on your own package because it feels awkward to push back on a fellow HR leader. It is not awkward. It is professional. They expect it. They would be surprised if you did not.

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SECTION 10

Interview Scripts — The Five Questions That Decide

HR Director interviews follow a predictable pattern. Five questions carry 80% of the weight. Here they are, with the scripts to answer them.

Question 1: "How would you handle a mass attrition event?"

This is not a hypothetical question. Every company that hires an HR Director in 2026 is either going through this or afraid of it. Your answer shows whether you have actually managed it or just read about it.

YOUR ANSWER

"I have actually been through this. At Vanguard, we lost 28% of our workforce in one year — nearly 900 people. That is not a statistic for me, it is a lived experience.

The first thing I did was stop the bleeding. I ran exit interview analysis on the last 200 departures and found three root causes — not thirty. First, compensation was 12% below market for our top 20% performers. Second, managers were not having career conversations — 73% of exiting employees said they had no visibility on their growth path. Third, our onboarding was so bad that 22% of new hires were leaving within 6 months.

I fixed each one. Targeted retention bonuses for the top 20%. Mandatory quarterly career conversations with a simple template — not a 40-page form. And I rebuilt onboarding from a 1-day orientation to a 90-day structured programme.

Attrition went from 28% to 14% in 18 months. The cost saving was Rs.4.2 crore a year."

Question 2: "Walk me through your approach to building a talent pipeline"

YOUR ANSWER

"At Vanguard, we were completely dependent on staffing agencies for hiring. Average time-to-hire was 62 days. Offer acceptance was 64%. We were paying Rs.1.7 crore a year in agency fees alone.

I built three things. First, an employee referral programme with meaningful incentives — not Rs.5,000 gift vouchers, but Rs.25,000-50,000 for critical roles, paid in two instalments — one at joining, one after 6 months. Referrals went from 8% to 35% of all hires.

Second, I built a campus pipeline with 12 tier-2 engineering colleges — not IITs, because everyone fights for IITs. We offered pre-placement projects and absorbed 120 hires last year at half the cost of lateral hiring.

Third, I set up a talent CRM — nothing fancy, just a well-maintained spreadsheet of 400 people who had applied in the last 2 years, liked us, but did not join. We went back to them when positions opened. 22% of our lateral hires last year came from this pool — zero agency cost, 18-day average time-to-hire.

Total result: time-to-hire from 62 to 28 days. Agency spend from Rs.1.7 crore to zero. Offer acceptance from 64% to 89%."

Question 3: "Tell me about a time you had to restructure an organisation"

This is a trust question. They want to know if you can handle the hardest part of HR — letting people go — without destroying morale or creating legal exposure.

YOUR ANSWER

"In 2024, Vanguard lost a major client that accounted for 15% of the digital services revenue. We had to let go of 200 people in that vertical — about 25% of my business unit.

Here is what I did differently from what most companies do. First, I insisted on a 30-day internal redeployment window before any terminations. I worked with every other BU head to identify roles their teams needed. We redeployed 68 of the 200 — that is 34% saved from termination.

For the remaining 132, I ran a structured exit programme. Transparent communication on Day 1 — no leaks, no rumours. 60 days of outplacement support — resume rewriting, interview preparation, and I personally called 15 HR heads at other companies to place our people. We placed 41 of them within 45 days.

Result: zero legal escalations, zero social media incidents, and — this is the number most people miss — the remaining team's engagement score actually went UP by 0.3 points in the next quarter. Because they saw that the company treated people with dignity even when it could not keep them."

Question 4: "How do you measure HR's ROI?"

This is the question that separates an HRBP from an HR Director. If your answer is "engagement scores and training hours", you are done.

YOUR ANSWER

"I measure HR on the same terms the CFO measures every other function — cost saved, cost avoided, and revenue enabled.

At Vanguard, I built an HR scorecard with six metrics that go to the leadership team every quarter. Let me give you the top three.

First: cost of attrition. I track every departure at 1.5x annual CTC as replacement cost. When I started, that number was Rs.11.2 crore a year. Today it is Rs.5.8 crore. That is Rs.5.4 crore in annual saving — directly attributable to the retention programmes I built.

Second: revenue per employee. In IT consulting, this is the number the CEO watches. When I took over, it was Rs.18 lakh. Today it is Rs.24 lakh. The improvement came from reducing bench time — I built an internal mobility programme that moved people between projects within 10 days instead of 45.

Third: cost per hire. We went from Rs.48,000 per hire with agencies to Rs.12,000 per hire through the internal pipeline. At 340 hires a year, that is Rs.1.2 crore saved.

If HR cannot show numbers like these, the CEO is right to treat HR as a cost centre."

Question 5: "What would you do in the first 90 days as our HR Director?"

This is a trick question. The answer is NOT a list of initiatives. The answer is: "I would spend the first 30 days understanding your people cost structure before I change anything." — See the full 30-60-90 plan in the next section.

SECTION 11

30-60-90 Day Plan for HR Director

This plan is built for an HR Director joining a tech or consulting company with 2,000-5,000 employees, multiple locations, and reporting directly to the CEO or COO.

Days 1-30: Listen, Diagnose, Map the Cost

Objective: Understand the people cost structure and the three biggest leaks before changing anything.

- Meet every business unit head individually — 45-minute 1:1s. Ask one question: "What is the one people problem that is costing you the most money or time right now?"
- Pull the last 24 months of attrition data. Segment by BU, level, tenure, manager, and exit reason. Find the three patterns — there are always exactly three
- Get the real cost of hiring: agency fees, recruiter salaries, hiring manager hours, time-to-productivity. Build one number: total cost per hire by level
- Review every compensation band against market. Identify where you are 10%+ below market — these are your attrition hotspots
- Sit in on 10 exit interviews yourself — not the summaries, the actual conversations. Listen for what HR is not hearing
- Map the succession pipeline: for every Director and VP role, who is the backup? If the answer is "nobody" for more than 40% of roles, that is your first fire to put out
- Audit the HR team itself: headcount, skills, workload, morale. You cannot fix the company's people problems if your own team is burning out

DAY 30 DELIVERABLE

Deliverable at Day 30: A "People Cost Diagnostic" — a 5-page memo to the CEO and CFO that puts a rupee number on the top three people problems. Not recommendations yet — just the diagnosis with the maths. This builds trust and shows you think in business terms, not HR jargon.

Days 31-60: Quick Wins + Structural Fixes

Objective: Fix 2-3 things that are bleeding money right now while designing the 6-month people strategy.

- Fix the top attrition hotspot first — usually it is compensation for top performers or manager quality in one specific BU. Solve it visibly. Let the company see HR making a measurable impact
- Launch a targeted retention programme for the top 15% performers — not engagement surveys, actual retention levers: compensation correction, accelerated growth path, high-visibility project assignment

- Run a hiring process audit: where are the bottlenecks? In my experience, 80% of time-to-hire delays happen at two stages — manager feedback and offer approval. Fix the approval chain first
- Restructure the HR team around outcomes, not processes. Instead of "recruitment team" and "engagement team", organise around "attrition cost reduction" and "talent pipeline"
- Start a weekly 30-minute "People Metrics" review with BU heads — same time, same data, every week. Attrition, cost per hire, time to fill, bench utilisation, offer acceptance rate
- Build the first version of the annual people budget — not just the HR budget, but the total cost of people decisions: attrition replacement, hiring, L&D, overtime, bench cost

Days 61-90: Execute the Strategy, Build the Scorecard

Objective: Present the 6-month people strategy with rupee targets and deliver measurable results from the quick wins.

- Present the 6-month people strategy to the CEO and board — framed as three bets with expected cost savings and revenue impact, not an HR wishlist
- Show the results from Day 31-60 quick wins: attrition in the target group before and after, cost saved, time-to-hire improved. Make it visible in the all-hands meeting
- Launch the HR scorecard: 6 metrics that go to the leadership team quarterly — attrition cost, revenue per employee, cost per hire, succession pipeline depth, engagement score, training ROI
- Begin the first strategic initiative — likely a retention programme or a talent pipeline rebuild. Set the 30-day milestone that proves it is working
- Implement a monthly 1-hour review with the CEO: people metrics, cost trends, the three things going well and the one thing that needs the CEO's help
- Write your own 90-day retro: what you got right, what surprised you, what you would do differently. Share it with the CEO. This is how you build trust at the Director level

★ SAN SPEAKING:

This plan is not about being busy. It is about being right. Most new HR Directors fail not because they are incompetent but because they start launching engagement surveys and town halls in week two before they understand where the money is actually leaking. The 30-day diagnostic period is not inaction — it is the most strategic thing you can do. The CEO who hired you is watching for business judgement, not HR activity.

SECTION 12

Visibility Plan — 90 Days

This is the plan that takes Meera from 280 profile views and 0 inbound messages to 1,500+ views and 8+ inbound conversations per quarter.

Content calendar — first 30 days

Week	Content	Timing
Week 1	Post 1: "The real cost of one resignation — and it is not 1.5x CTC" (attrition economics)	Tuesday 8:30 AM
Week 1	Post 2: Comment on 5 posts by CHROs and HR leaders you want to be seen by	Daily, 10 mins
Week 2	Post 3: "How I killed our agency dependency and what it saved us" (Rs.1.7 Cr story)	Tuesday 8:30 AM
Week 2	Post 4: Short insight — "The one exit interview question that actually tells you the truth"	Thursday 9:00 AM
Week 3	Post 5: "We cut attrition in half. Here is exactly what we did" (numbers + timeline)	Tuesday 8:30 AM
Week 3	Article: "5 HR metrics your CFO actually cares about — and how to present them" (LinkedIn article)	Saturday 10:00 AM
Week 4	Post 6: "I managed a 200-person layoff with zero legal cases. Here is what I learned about dignity in HR"	Tuesday 8:30 AM
Week 4	Post 7: Reply to a trending HR debate (moonlighting / WFH / quiet quitting) with your actual data	Thursday 9:00 AM

The 5-5-5 daily routine (15 minutes total)

- 5 minutes: Comment thoughtfully on 3 posts by people in your target network (CHROs, CEOs, HR Directors at companies you want to join)
- 5 minutes: Respond to any comments on your own posts — LinkedIn rewards engagement velocity
- 5 minutes: Send 2 connection requests with a personal note — not "I'd like to add you to my network", but "Read your post about the attrition problem in IT services — we solved something similar at Vanguard, would love to compare notes"

Expected results by Day 90

Metric	Day 0	Day 90 Target
Profile views	280 / quarter	1,200 - 2,000 / quarter
Connection requests (inbound)	~8 / month	50-80 / month
Recruiter / CXO inbounds	0 / quarter	6-12 / quarter
LinkedIn SSI score	32 / 100	55-68 / 100
Content impressions	0	10,000 - 30,000 / month

Sample report
Sandesh Siddaram
linkedmaster.com/start

SECTION 13

Practice Protocol — 14 Days Before the Interview

You have an interview scheduled. Here is exactly what to do for the 14 days before it.

Days	Focus	What To Do
Day 14-12	Company Research	Read the company's Glassdoor reviews (last 12 months), LinkedIn attrition patterns, and any news about layoffs or growth. Find 3 people problems they are likely facing and prepare your take on each.
Day 11-10	Panel Research	Look up every interviewer on LinkedIn. Read their posts. If the CEO posts about culture and the CFO posts about cost efficiency, your answers need to bridge both worlds.
Day 9-8	Story Rehearsal	Practise all 5 signature stories out loud. Time them — each should be 90-120 seconds. Record yourself and play it back. Notice where you switch to HR jargon instead of business language.
Day 7-6	Mock Interview	Get a friend outside HR to run through the 5 key questions (Section 10). If they cannot follow your answer without HR knowledge, rewrite it. A CEO is not an HR expert.
Day 5-4	Weak Spots	Identify the 2 questions you stumbled on in the mock. Rewrite the answer with a specific number in the first sentence. Practise those 2 ten times each.
Day 3-2	Your Questions	Prepare 5 questions to ask the interviewer — NOT about WFH policy or benefits. Example: "What is your current cost of attrition, and does the leadership team track it quarterly?"
Day 1	Final Prep	One full run-through of the 90-second story + 5 signature stories. Then stop. Do not over-prepare on the last day — go for a walk.

★ SAN SPEAKING:

Most people prepare for interviews the night before. That is like training for a marathon by running once the day before the race. The people who get HR Director offers are not smarter — they are more prepared. And here is the specific trap for HR people: you think you know how interviews work because you have conducted hundreds of them. Being good at asking questions is not the same as being good at answering them. 14 days of structured preparation is the difference between "we liked her but went with someone more strategic" and an offer letter.

PART D

How You Get Your Own Diagnostic

Everything in this report, built for you, your role and your numbers.

Sample
Sandesh
linkedmaster.com

Where to start

Everything you have just read gets built for you. Your company, your role, your years, your numbers. Nothing here is a template with your name on top.

All offers at a glance. Same prices on every sample and on linkedmaster.com/start. Pick the one that matches where you are stuck today.

Offer	For whom	What you get	India	Outside India
The File (this report)	Not getting calls, or stuck at the same level	A written report like this one, built from your form, CV and a voice note. 48 hours. Your profile rebuilt line by line and a 90-day plan you run yourself. The AI tools are included for 3 months.	₹9,999	\$149
The File + The Hour	You want to ask questions, or an interview is coming	Everything in The File, plus a recorded hour with me. The report is written out of that conversation, along with your interview preparation and your first list of 40 names.	₹24,999	\$399
90 Days	You are making a real move. By application, 6 people at a time	Weekly for 3 months. The list built and worked with you, the profile rebuilt with you, and me between sessions.	₹30,000 a month	\$600 a month

Start at linkedmaster.com/start. India: pay on the page. Outside India: fill the short form first and I send a payment request by email the same day.

★ SAN SPEAKING:

Most people should start with The File. It tells you where the real block is. If it shows the problem is the interview room, add The Hour.

Putting it in perspective

The move you are planning — whether it is a bigger title, a new company, or a salary correction — is worth somewhere between ₹5 lakh and ₹40 lakh a year. And that is before you count the increments that compound on top of the new base for the rest of your career.

THE COST OF DOING NOTHING

The real cost is not the fee. The real cost is another fourteen months of being stuck, skipped over, and watching people with half your capability take the seat you wanted — because they knew how to show up differently.

What I do not promise

- I do not guarantee you a job. Nobody honest does. Too many things are outside both our control.
- I do not have a placement arrangement with any company and I will not pretend I can get you an interview.
- I will not write lies into your diagnostic. If a number is not yours, it does not go in.
- If you do not do the work — the practice, the outreach, the follow-through — the diagnostic will not save you. I give the plan and the training. You do the reps.

★ SAN SPEAKING:

What I do promise is this. You will walk out of this diagnostic knowing exactly why you have been stuck. And you will walk into your next opportunity with a document that was built for one person, one role, and one company — not for everybody.

That is the whole thing. Nothing more, nothing less.

This diagnostic was built by a human being

who has sat on both sides of the table for 24 years.

SANDESH SIDDARAM

24 years in Operations, Engineering and Quality · Sr. Vice President level
10 companies · 7 industries · 3 national performance awards · Six Sigma Black Belt
Founder, LinkedMaster.com · 95,000+ followers · 90M+ impressions, zero ads
Author — "Crafted by 40! Art of My Life"

sandesh@linkedmaster.com · +91 83174 10045



This report was built for one person.

Yours would be built for you. Your role, your numbers, your target company. Written from your form, your CV and a five-minute voice note, and delivered in 48 hours.

Career Diagnostic — ₹9,999 in India · \$149 outside India

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Scan the code, or type that address.

*Sample report. Names and companies are illustrative — built to demonstrate the structure and depth of a real engagement.
Development and preparation service only. No job guarantee, no placement promise.*

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