

Arvind Won Silver for

Infi in Agile HR Transformation Practices



Problem Statement



As a diversified conglomerate operating across engineering, real estate, telecom, and water management, Arvind Group needed a new approach to talent - one that was agile, consistent, and deeply aligned with business transformation. The company's HR practices had historically been structured around fixed cycles, rigid hierarchies, and experience-based decisions. Campus hiring was reactive, performance management lacked structure and behavioral insight, and internal mobility was constrained by informal rules and opaque compensation practices.

To build a future-ready workforce and strengthen internal equity, the org required a complete re-imagination of how talent is attracted, assessed, developed, and rewarded - with agility at its core.

Key Challenges

- Transactional campus hiring that failed to build long-term talent pipelines.
- Inconsistent performance practices with limited behavioral or developmental focus.
- Experience-based decisions rather than skill-based evaluation for hiring and promotions.
- Compensation inequity between internal and external hires, often demotivating existing talent.
- Inflexible frameworks across diverse businesses, making scale difficult without compromising relevance.



Darwinbox Solution: Three Pillars of Agile HR Transformation

Technology as a Core Enabler

Across every pillar, Darwinbox served as the backbone - enabling standardization with flexibility, data-backed decision-making, and seamless workflow execution. Whether the objective is structured intern management, contextual performance reviews, or skills-first hiring, technology now delivers scale without sacrificing customization.

Key highlights of tech enablement include:

- Darwinbox workflows automate intern onboarding, check-ins, final assessments, and PPO tracking.
- Customizable review cycles and templates across business units, (e.g., quarterly feedback in engineering, half-yearly ratings in real estate).
- Integrated performance dashboards provide real-time visibility and accountability.
- Automated compensation benchmarking mapped to unique role definitions (Part of phase II).
- Roadmap integration of AI-based skill-role matching in internal and external hiring cycles (Part of phase II).

1. Building a Future-Ready Talent Pipeline

- The company shifted from short-term, demand-driven fresher hiring to a strategic internship model.
- Approximately 200 interns are onboarded each year and embedded in live, high-impact projects.
- The internship experience is governed by a structured Darwinbox workflow - capturing project briefs, midterm check-ins, manager reviews, and final evaluations.
- 50% of final hires now come from this intern pool driving higher retention and stronger culture alignment.

- Post-hiring, trainees follow a 12-month development journey, also managed via Darwinbox.
- High-performing trainees move into roles that previously required far greater tenure - accelerating growth and creating clear career paths.
- Trainees now backfill junior roles through a structured internal career ladder, reducing reliance on lateral hires and lowering cost-per-hire.

2. Performance Management Redesigned for Relevance

- Darwinbox Performance shifted reviews from annual scores to dynamic, behavioral-linked evaluations.
- Dual-assessment model combines KRAs (for variable pay) with a Talent Profile (behaviour + potential) to generate an Overall Rating Senior management follows the dual model above; mid & junior levels use job-specific attributes in Year 1, plus the same behavior/potential framework.
- **Review cadences vary by business via Darwinbox:**
 - Engineering: quarterly feedback (no rating) + annual appraisal
 - Real Estate: half-yearly reviews with ratings
- **Result:** Performance conversations are now continuous, contextual, and culture-aligned.

3. Role-Based Hiring & Skill-Centric Decisions

- A group-wide job-evaluation and salary-benchmarking exercise defined every role's skills, compensation range, and career path.
- Darwinbox Job Architecture decouples roles from designations, enabling recruiters to hire for capability rather than tenure or title.
- **Example:** A Head of Procurement role once filled by executives with 30+ years of experience is now led by a six-year high-potential hire who perfectly matched the skill profile.

- **Benefits achieved:**

- **Ensure fairness:** Role-based compensation bands eliminate disparity between internal promotions and lateral hires.
- **Promote internal trust:** Employees see decisions are driven by capability and not legacy labels.
- Speed up hiring with sharper alignment between role requirements and candidate skills.

Phase II Vision:

Arvind plans to extend Darwinbox AI matching to all internal and external candidates, moving definitively to a skills-first strategy that enhances mobility and mitigates bias.



Impact & Outcomes

1. Talent Pipeline & Mobility:

- 50% PPO conversion from intern batch.
- Structured career ladders enabled by internal mobility and skill visibility.
- Lateral hiring reduced significantly at entry and mid levels.

2. Performance Culture:

- 90%+ adoption of new performance process across units.
- Ratings now reflect both outcome and behavior, driving development conversations.
- Manager confidence increased due to standardized, tech-enabled evaluation.

2. Hiring & Compensation Agility:

- Job roles now drive decisions - not designations or experience levels alone.
- Pay parity established: Internal talent isn't penalized during promotions or lateral moves.
- Enhanced trust and fairness in reward systems.
- Faster decision-making and higher hiring accuracy across units.



Conclusion

Agility at Arvind Group now means adapting to business context, enabling workforce flexibility, and acting with fairness and foresight. From a robust intern-to-impact funnel to behavior-plus-outcome performance reviews and role-based hiring, Darwinbox underpins every step. Phase II will operationalize a full skills-first ecosystem where roles, not résumés, define fit, allowing Arvind to mobilize talent faster, reward fairly, and fuel sustainable growth across all businesses.