

CASE STUDY • PEOPLE MATTERS INFINI-T AWARDS INDIA 2026

Orchestrating a Unified Ecosystem: Darwinbox Powers Our Acquisition- Driven Growth

Straive

Infini-T Awards Category: People Platforms & Ecosystem Architecture (HR Tech & Digital)



Operationalizing
Data Analytics and AI



Executive Summary

Straive operationalizes Data Analytics and AI for global enterprises and works with several Fortune 500 companies. It serves across Banking and Financial Services, GCC, Retail and CPG, Media, Sports and Entertainment, EdTech, Science and Research, Manufacturing and Supply Chain, Education, Energy and Utilities, and Pharmaceutical and Life Sciences industries. Straive is recognized as a Leader in AIM Research’s Generative AI, Data Engineering and Pharma and Healthcare PeMa Quadrants in 2026. Our growth has been built through acquisition, and our workforce has roughly doubled over the last six years.

21,000+ Employees on one global Darwinbox instance	20 Group companies unified, built through acquisition	1.78M Studio credits consumed, January to June 2026	4,110 Hires run through one recruitment architecture in 2026
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That growth arrived with a bill. Every company we acquired came with its own HR stack. Workforce data, talent operations, attendance, onboarding, performance and reporting lived on disconnected platforms, which meant duplicated records, no single source of workforce truth, and an employee experience that changed shape depending on which company had bought you. Our HR teams spent hours every month reconciling data across systems, and each new acquisition took **24 weeks** to reach operational alignment and workforce data readiness.

The decision that defines this story is what we chose not to do. We did not replace systems one at a time, and we did not force every entity onto an identical process. We positioned **Darwinbox** as **the digital backbone of a people ecosystem**: a governed architecture that acquired businesses plug into, carrying workforce data, talent acquisition, onboarding, workforce management, payroll, performance, employee services and analytics, and connected outward to Active Directory, our enterprise data lake, assessment platforms, payroll providers and internal applications.

Today **21,000+ employees across 20 group companies** run on a single global instance. The system carries roughly three lakh automation transactions a month, 150,932 shift changes in six months, 82,000+ workflow runs across FY26 drawn from a library of 207 active flows, and 4,110 hires in a year. But the achievement is not the volume. It is that **post-acquisition integration stopped being a project and became a capability we own**. When we acquired SG Analytics, we implemented every Darwinbox module for it in-house, with minimal support from Darwinbox.

|| 150,932

Shift changes automated

In six months, roughly 25K a month

|| 82,000+

Times the 207 active workflows ran in FY26

Around 4 FTE of effort saved

|| 20,605

Employees enabled

For self-service

|| 207

Unique workflows configured

And active across the ecosystem

|| 600+

Complex Philippines overtime

Scenarios automated

|| ~1 month

Of manual reconciliation effort

Eliminated, every month

Every Acquisition Arrived with Its Own HR Stack

Our workforce runs across India, the Philippines, Vietnam, the United States, Nicaragua, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Canada and Singapore, with India and the Philippines accounting for roughly 96% of it. Our group spans 20 companies including Straive Gramener, Straive Learningmate and Straive Double Line, each acquired at a different time, each arriving with different attendance policies, approval hierarchies, onboarding practices, workforce structures and reporting models.

Alongside that operational growth, we were undergoing a strategic shift of our own, from a traditional BPO-led organization to a value-driven data and analytics enterprise. We needed to integrate acquired entities, keep region-specific flexibility, nurture distinct sub-cultures, hold one organizational philosophy, and stay compliant everywhere, all at once.

Where acquisition-led growth was costing our business

The challenge we faced	The consequence it caused
A fragmented people technology landscape, with each acquired entity on different HR systems, data models and workforce processes	Workforce data spread across multiple platforms, making a single source of truth impossible, governance inconsistent, and enterprise-wide visibility unavailable
Every acquired entity brought unique operating models, compliance requirements, approval workflows and talent processes	Integration became complex and slow, and employees and managers met a different organization depending on which entity they sat in
Recruitment, onboarding, workforce management, payroll, performance and reporting ran on disconnected systems with limited interoperability	Data had to be reconciled across platforms, which cost efficiency, raised governance risk, and put workforce insight out of reach
Global governance had to be balanced against local flexibility across countries, entities and labour environments	Over-standardization risked breaking local operations; over-localization would have created new silos and undone the point of the exercise
The architecture had to absorb future acquisitions without rebuilding processes, integrations or operating models each time	A conventional consolidation approach would have added integration effort, technology complexity and time-to-value with every new deal
Leadership had no unified workforce view across entities, geographies and business units	Strategic workforce decisions ran on manually consolidated information, with no real-time visibility and no reliable governance

A Platform of Platforms, Not Another HRMS

The distinction we drew is between a system of record and a system of orchestration. We did not deploy Darwinbox as an HRMS that happens to be large. We architected it as **the central workforce data and orchestration layer** of the enterprise: the authoritative employee master that everything else plugs into.

On the platform: Core HR, Recruitment, Onboarding, Time & Attendance, Workforce Management, Payroll, Performance Management, Employee Engagement, Workflows, Document Management, Reporting & Analytics, Mobile Self-Service and Darwinbox Studio. Connected outward to **Microsoft Active Directory for workforce identity, our enterprise data lake for analytics, assessment platforms including iMocha, talent acquisition partners, payroll providers for our Philippines workforce, and internal business applications.** Darwinbox stays central as the orchestration layer; the rest of our ecosystem connects to it rather than competing with it.

The consequence of that choice is the one that matters. A new acquisition does not trigger a systems project. It plugs into an architecture that already exists, using reusable configuration templates and region-specific workflows that we designed to be reused before anyone needed to reuse them.

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One Process for All Was the Wrong Answer

Our first approach failed, and it failed for a reason worth stating plainly: we tried to standardize processes across acquired entities and it **proved impractical**. Straive Gramener, Straive Learningmate, Straive Double Line and the other group companies each operated with different attendance policies, approval hierarchies, onboarding practices, workforce structures and reporting models. A common rollout blueprint created adoption friction and slowed integration rather than accelerating it.

We pushed back on the one-process-for-all model, and we were right to. Country-specific compliance, attendance regulation, onboarding documentation and approval workflows vary genuinely across India, the Philippines, Vietnam and the US. Forcing uniformity would have broken things that were working.

So we redesigned the approach around **reusable templates and configurable operating models**, allowing entities to be integrated without forcing identical processes. That is what turned a consolidation programme into a repeatable acquisition-integration framework. The hardest part was never deploying software. It was building one workforce architecture that could support 20 group companies and every future acquisition without creating new technology silos, and the answer was to stop trying to make everyone the same.

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What One Backbone Carries

All figures below are drawn from platform reports for January to June 2026 unless stated otherwise.

Measure	What the platform now carries
Automation throughput	Roughly 3 lakh automation transactions a month, consuming 1,778,539 Studio credits across six months, without separate local solutions
Shift management	150,932 shift changes automated in six months, around 25,000 a month, previously coordinated by hand
Attendance operations	369,052 attendance regularization requests processed through one digital attendance framework
Workflow-driven HR	207 unique workflows are configured and active across the group. Those flows were triggered 82,000+ times across FY26 through standardized digital approval frameworks, saving around 4 FTE of effort
Recruitment	7,858 candidates processed, 6,422 interviews scheduled, 3,878 offers released and 4,110 hires managed through a common recruitment architecture in 2026

Measure	What the platform now carries
Onboarding	3,846 onboarding journeys initiated across the group in 2026, with standardized compliance workflows and localized documentation
Employee self-service	20,605 employees enabled, with login adoption above 95% across most group companies and as high as 99% in several acquired businesses
Localization at depth	Over 600 complex overtime approval scenarios automated for our Philippines workforce; India-specific overtime caps and Sunday work restrictions system-enforced
Reconciliation effort	Approximately one man-month of manual reconciliation eliminated every month through centralized time tracking and automated regularization

The two workflow figures describe different things, and it is worth separating them. **207** is the library: the count of distinct workflows configured and active across the group. **82,000+** is how often that library was run in FY26. What those runs consist of is itself a signal. Employee engagement and listening account for nearly 39% of all workflow activity, led by the Employee Engagement Survey (17.5K) and the Work Setup Survey (14K), while people-operations flows such as billability updates (9.7K+), manager changes (2.2K+) and WBS and cost-code changes (1.5K+) carry much of the remainder. A workforce structure that moves this often is precisely the kind that disconnected systems cannot hold accurate.

The 600 Philippines overtime scenarios are worth pausing on. That is not a configuration statistic. It is the number of distinct ways a single country’s labour practice can bend an overtime rule, and it is the proof that a globally governed architecture did not flatten local reality to achieve its consistency.

Day One, With No One Else in the Room

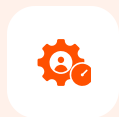
When SG Analytics joined us, nearly 1,400 employees needed to be brought into a new HR ecosystem. In the past, that would have required months of implementation effort and significant external support.

Instead, our team used the Darwinbox blueprint we had built and refined over the years to complete the transition largely on our own. Backed by a deep understanding of the platform, our Enterprise Apps team along with Service Delivery led the implementation with minimal Darwinbox support, enabling a rapid rollout and a smooth, seamless transition for employees.

On Day 1 post Go-Live, employees could access the same HR services, workflows, and experiences available across our group.

For our HR team, it was a defining moment. The challenge was no longer how to implement HR technology for every acquisition. The platform had evolved into a repeatable integration engine, allowing new companies to become part of Straive faster, with less disruption and greater consistency. It demonstrated that we had not only adopted the technology, but also built the internal capability to scale it independently as our business continued to grow through acquisitions.

Why We Believe This Stands Apart



Integration became a capability, not a project

We turned Darwinbox into an acquisition integration engine: a platform-of-platforms that continuously absorbs new entities, workforce models, systems and processes while holding a single source of workforce truth. Post-acquisition HR integration stopped being a one-time exercise and became a scalable organizational capability.



We took the playbook in-house

We built the internal capability to onboard newly acquired entities and implement every Darwinbox module ourselves, using a repeatable integration playbook with minimal support from Darwinbox. SG Analytics was implemented in-house end to end. Integration of this kind usually needs the platform vendor. We stopped needing that.



Governed globally, configured locally

Country-specific attendance rules, overtime policies, onboarding requirements, compliance processes and workforce allocation structures sit inside one common architecture. Over 600 Philippines overtime scenarios and India-specific overtime caps run on the same instance that serves everyone else. The localization is the proof, not the exception.



A backbone, not a bigger HRMS

Darwinbox is the orchestration layer connecting Active Directory, our enterprise data lake, assessment platforms, payroll providers, talent partners and internal applications. Rather than adding another system to a fragmented estate, we made one system the place everything else connects to.

From Our Leadership

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When you grow through acquisition, every company you welcome brings its own systems, its own processes, and its own version of the truth. We decided early that we would not solve that one platform at a time. We built one people ecosystem on Darwinbox, a single source of truth for every employee, with the flexibility for each entity to work the way its business needs. Today, 21,000 people across 20 group companies experience one organization, and integrating the next acquisition is a capability we own, not a project we outsource.

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Manju Bharadwaj • Chief People Officer, Straive

Our recognition includes **Financial Times Best Employers Asia-Pacific 2026**, ranked on an independent employee survey by the Financial Times and Statista covering more than 50,000 employees across the region; the **Global Brand Awards 2026** for AI Operationalization and Enterprise Data Transformation Leadership; and the **Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards 2026**.

CONCLUSION

The Benchmark We Set

A company that grows by acquisition accumulates HR systems the way a house accumulates keys. We had homegrown platforms, spreadsheets, and whatever each acquired business had built for itself over years. Employee records existed several times over in several places. Our leadership had no single view of its own workforce. And every new deal made it worse, because **each acquisition needed 24 weeks** just to reach operational alignment and workforce data readiness. Growth was the strategy, and the cost of growth was landing on HR.

Our first fix failed. Standardizing everyone onto one process created friction and slowed integration down, because the differences between these businesses were real: different attendance rules, different approval hierarchies, different compliance regimes across India, the Philippines, Vietnam and the US. So we stopped trying to make the companies identical and made the **architecture** common instead: one governed backbone, reusable templates, configurable operating models, and local reality preserved inside it.

What that backbone now carries is not modest. **21,000+ employees across 20 group companies** on one global instance. Roughly three lakh automation transactions a month. 150,932 shift changes in six months, and 207 active workflows triggered 82,000+ times across FY26. 4,110 hires. Over 600 Philippines overtime scenarios that a global template would have flattened, running correctly on the same instance as everything else.

But the number that says the most is the one we no longer need. When we acquired SG Analytics, **we implemented every Darwinbox module for it in-house**, using our own playbook, with minimal help from Darwinbox. That is what it looks like when integration stops being something done to a company and becomes something the company knows how to do.

This is the standard we set: a people ecosystem where the next acquisition is not a project to be survived but a template to be applied, and where the company that bought the platform no longer needs its vendor to run it.