TransUnion

May, 2025

Fair Growth at TransUnion India:

A Strategic Investment in Decent and Fair Work

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Word count: 988

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This board paper recommends a strategic investment in a set of structured career pathways, strengths-based feedback, and hybrid leadership development aimed at embedding Decent and Fair Work (DFW) within TransUnion India's Business System Evolution (BSE) team. The proposed investment focuses on three areas: structured internal career development pathways, strengths-based performance feedback redesign, and respect-based hybrid leadership capability building.

The recommendation responds directly to two key gaps in the Fair Work Framework: Opportunity and Respect. It also aligns with responsible management principles (Laasch, 2024), the International Labour Organisation's Decent Work Agenda (ILO, 2023), and the human capital expectations under the ESG 'S' factor.

By improving internal progression visibility, manager capability, and employee autonomy, this proposal aims to reduce attrition, enhance employee engagement, and support long-term talent retention. It also delivers material value aligned with SDG 8: promoting inclusive growth and decent work (United Nations, 2015).

This paper outlines the organisational context, key options, expected outcomes, stakeholder engagement strategy, risks, and final recommendation, which is supported by relevant data, frameworks, and critical reflection.

2. ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT AND INFLUENCING FACTORS

TransUnion India's Business System Evolution (BSE) team plays a critical role in the organisation's digital infrastructure. The team has been central to the transformation of legacy credit-reporting systems into a next-generation, serverless platform, a technically complex and agile-led operation involving QA, engineering, product owners, UDA and business analysts. The internal culture is marked by collaboration and operational voice through stand-ups, retrospectives, and sprint planning. These strengths create a solid foundation for meaningful engagement and shared leadership. Critically, the team's agile maturity offers a natural platform for embedding iterative development conversations, transparent feedback loops, and co-designed progression tools.

However, persistent challenges have surfaced. Employees, particularly in junior and mid-level roles, face delayed career progression despite high performance. The performance management system remains rigid, with predefined KPIs that limit employee autonomy and co-ownership of goals. Additionally, the post-pandemic return-to-office transition was executed with minimal managerial support, contributing to perceived disrespect and hybrid friction.

These gaps directly impact two core dimensions of the Scottish Fair Work Framework — Opportunity and Respect (Fair Work Convention, 2016). They also create an imbalance in the job demands-resources equation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), potentially leading to burnout, disengagement, and attrition if left unaddressed.

Externally, TransUnion India is operating in a highly competitive talent market, where hybrid flexibility and internal progression have become critical to employer value propositions. At the same time, global ESG expectations are intensifying. Investors increasingly evaluate firms on Human Capital Development under the ESG 'S' pillar (CIPD, 2023). Additionally, organisations are expected to align with UN SDG 8 by promoting inclusive, fair and decent work (United Nations, 2015), a factor increasingly scrutinized by both socially conscious job seekers and ESG-minded institutional investors. The proposal outlined here is shaped by both these internal challenges and external imperatives.

3. OPTIONS, AIMS, AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The strategic challenge facing TransUnion India's BSE team is how to address stagnation in career progression, rigidity in performance feedback, and a perceived lack of respect in hybrid leadership without undermining agility or delivery capacity. Two core options were considered:

Option 1: Maintain the Current State

Maintaining existing systems avoids disruption and preserves short-term stability. However, this option ignores growing disengagement signals, slows internal mobility, and increases the long-term risk of voluntary attrition. It also leaves Fair Work gaps unresolved, potentially weakening our talent pipeline and employer brand. As highlighted by the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), sustained high demands combined with limited developmental resources increase burnout risk, particularly in hybrid contexts. While this may appeal to risk-averse stakeholders seeking continuity, it overlooks emerging pressures around retention, inclusion, and human capital disclosure, risks which may erode performance and brand equity over time.

Option 2: Invest in a Three-Part Fair Work Strategy (Recommended)

This option proposes a coordinated investment in:

- Structured internal career pathways, supported by skill maps and transparent progression routes.
- Strengths-based performance redesign, grounded in feedforward coaching and employee-led goal setting (Barends et al., 2022).
- Respect-based leadership training, to equip managers for hybrid engagement and trust-building.

This strategy draws on evidence from Adobe's transition to a strengths-based feedback system is widely credited with lowering attrition and boosting engagement across teams and Amdocs' internal mobility reforms (which raised internal hiring to 56% in India). Bloom et al. (2024) found that well-supported hybrid leadership reduces attrition by up to 33%.

The primary aim is to embed the principles of Opportunity and Respect (Fair Work Convention, 2016) into the BSE team's experience of work. Expected outcomes include:

- Improved retention and internal mobility
- Greater employee autonomy, clarity, and fulfilment
- Higher trust and consistency in people leadership

Critically, this strategy balances structural change with cultural nuance. It is not a top-down transformation, but a co-designed enhancement rooted in existing agile routines and team practices. That makes the outcomes more sustainable and the change more credible.

4. SOCIAL AND BUSINESS BENEFITS & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Business Benefits

This investment is expected to deliver tangible business value by improving performance, retention, and internal capability. Organisations that implement structured career development frameworks report increased internal fill rates and lower external recruitment costs. Amdocs, for example, saw internal mobility rise to 56% in India following system-wide progression mapping (Amdocs, 2023). Similarly, Adobe's redesign of performance management which is centred on frequent check-ins and feedforward-style feedback has led to notable improvements in engagement and retention (Adobe, 2022).

At TransUnion, where technical knowledge and cross-functional coordination are vital, retaining experienced team members reduces productivity loss, lowers the cost of replacement, and sustains delivery continuity. Equipping managers with hybrid leadership skills also improves team cohesion, communication, and trust, critical for distributed agile teams (Bloom et al., 2024).

Social and ESG Value

The proposal directly advances three Fair Work dimensions: Opportunity, Respect, and Fulfilment. It also aligns with SDG 8: promoting inclusive growth and decent work (United Nations, 2015). Within the ESG framework, this initiative strengthens our position on the 'S' (Social) pillar, particularly in Human Capital Development, by embedding inclusive career structures, developmental feedback, and psychological safety.

Critically, this investment supports underrepresented groups by formalising progression pathways, helping reduce bias in promotion and increase equity (CIPD, 2023). It also improves TransUnion's EVP, particularly for Gen Z and early-career professionals who prioritise flexibility, purpose, and visible development opportunities (LinkedIn, 2022).

Stakeholder Engagement

This strategy will be co-designed with both employees and line managers, ensuring shared ownership and contextual relevance. Agile planning rituals and retrospectives will be used to capture feedback and iterate practices. Early adopters and "internal champions" will model behaviours and support culture-building. Pulse surveys will measure perception shifts across dimensions like growth clarity, trust in leadership, and feedback quality. These will form part of a feedback intelligence loop, enabling managers and HR to track shifts in engagement, psychological safety, and inclusion over time using existing dashboard tools.

Reflectively, Stakeholder engagement is not a procedural add-on but it is the mechanism through which culture change is legitimised, embedded, and sustained over time. By aligning the proposal with employee voice and agile culture, we increase the likelihood of both adoption and resilience.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

Risks of Investing

Despite its benefits, the proposed investment carries several risks.

- Managerial resistance may arise due to changes in feedback practices and perceived additional workload.
- Time and resource constraints could limit early implementation momentum.
- There is also a risk of low employee uptake, particularly if progression pathways are not seen as credible or feedback conversations feel performative.

However, these risks are manageable. Managers will be engaged early through co-design workshops and trained via peer-led modules. Delivery will be phased to align with agile planning cycles, minimising disruption. Visibility of internal success stories and real-time feedback will help build momentum and belief. Outcomes such as attrition reduction, promotion velocity, and internal fill rates will be tracked using existing HR dashboards.

Risks of Inaction

Conversely, choosing not to invest carries substantial long-term risks.

- Employee disengagement and silent attrition may increase, particularly among mid-level and early-career staff.
- Stagnation in internal mobility risks reinforcing inequity and damaging inclusion efforts.
- The lack of visible development pathways weakens our Employer Value Proposition and competitive positioning in the talent market.

Critically, failure to address these issues undermines the very strengths that make BSE effective like agility, collaboration, and psychological safety. As Laasch (2024) frames it, responsible management means acting when silence becomes a reputational, ethical, and human capital risk especially in environments where ESG accountability is now standard, not optional.

6. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board approve a full investment in a three-part Decent and Fair Work (DFW) strategy for the BSE team at TransUnion India. This includes the co-creation and rollout of structured internal career pathways, a redesigned strengths-based feedback system, and respect-based hybrid leadership development. While this initiative is proposed for the BSE team, the design principles and learning model are scalable across other agile and technical teams in TransUnion India.

This investment addresses strategic risks around retention, capability loss, and talent engagement. It also delivers measurable value across business and social outcomes, aligning with the Fair Work Framework (Fair Work Convention, 2016), the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), ESG human capital expectations (CIPD, 2023), and UN SDG 8.

The initiative is designed to be co-created, phased, and iterative, grounded in the team's existing agile strengths. It reflects a responsible management approach (Laasch, 2024) that values stakeholder wellbeing and long-term resilience. As stewards of strategic culture and human capital, the Board has a critical role to play in enabling this kind of forward-looking investment.

Critically, this recommendation is not made because it is easy or immediately profitable but because it is timely, justifiable, and essential. It is an investment in fairness that enables performance. A strategy for retaining talent through dignity, growth, and trust. And above all, a commitment to lead with credibility through action, not intention.

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