

This is the brief description about 99x.

99x is a technology company co-creating well-engineered, innovative digital products for the Scandinavian market. Its expertise has been proven through a portfolio of over 150 impactful global digital products, developed together with leading Independent Software Vendors (ISVs). 99x employs over 400 technology and product specialists, who are high achievers, creative thinkers, and team players. The company is one of Asia's Best Workplaces for 2022 and has been recognised as a Best Workplace Legend in Sri Lanka, after being awarded for the tenth consecutive year.

This belongs to the category of 99x overview.

This is the purpose statement of 99x.

99 x's philosophy, or long-term purpose, is simple: "To co-create innovative digital products that are globally impactful, be a life-partner to our employees and make a positive influence on society." We believe that these factors have helped us build a sustainable, successful business and that focusing on this three-pronged philosophy will ensure that we continue to do so in the long term.

This belongs to the category of 99x purpose and mission.

These are the 99x Guiding Principles.

Our Guiding Principles align with this purpose where, “We delight clients, value each other and become our best!”

We delight our clients:

- Strive to deliver excellence
- Innovate and solve problems
- Push boundaries courageously

We value each other:

- Elevate one another
- Celebrate diversity
- Nurture trust in an open culture

We grow to become our best:

- Embrace the freedom to lead
- Contribute through our passions
- Learn and improve continuously
- Become model global citizens

This belongs to the category of 99x values and guiding principles

This is how these guiding principles are institutionalized at 99x.

Progress on company initiatives is reviewed every quarter and corrective actions are taken in the presence of the Management Team, Initiative Owners and Department Heads. Microsoft Teams and Excel is used to record minutes, track action items and next steps.

- Key Performance Indicators: KPIs are used to measure the achievement of the company objectives. The achievement of KPIs are set at different levels which have a cascading effect in meeting the organization's business objectives. Each initiative has its own KPIs, which in turn map onto the department under which it comes. The strategic plan is then created following these performance-based KPIs.
- Strategy Workshops: Employee involvement in contributing to the corporate strategy is important to keep goals aligned and to maintain organizational transparency. We hosted strategy meetings on different subjects including 'Onboarding Remote Workers', 'Preserving Company Culture', 'Innovations and Research', 'Leadership Development', 'University Relationships', 'Appraisal Process' etc.

This belongs to the category of 99x values and guiding principles

This is how employees internalized the company Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles, Values, the Purpose and other policies at 99x.

We believe that all employees strive to meet every day through both their core functions and other work in relation to the organization. For example, “striving to deliver with excellence” is a focus for everyone, both in delivery and support roles.

- Self-governed Teams: Our teams are based on lean and agile processes. We do not have project managers for our teams. It is the team's responsibility to self-organize themselves and deliver. This model aligns with our Guiding Principle, “Embrace the freedom to lead”.
 - Culture built on accessibility, openness and trust: Any employee can request for a meeting with the CEO or a member of the Management Team at any time. Further, our Management Team members sit alongside the other employees at open cubicles, with one or two members placed on every floor, making them accessible to all our people. In this way we, “Nurture trust in an open culture”.
 - MBO responsibilities and Innovatives (Initiatives): Each organizational initiative (branded as Innovatives) links to an operational objective for the year, and is run as an internal project that employees are encouraged to take part in. Whether it's on the Azure Focus Groups or Mobile Development, employees are encouraged to “Contribute through our passions”.
- As stated, the annual company “Excellence Awards” are also aligned with these Guiding Principles.

This belongs to the category of 99x values and guiding principles

This is how the company Vision, Mission, Guiding principles, Values or the Purpose statements deployed and practiced at 99x.

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This belongs to the category of 99x values and guiding principles.

This is the method used to prepare Strategy and how are employees involved in it at 99x.

Our corporate strategic planning is based on the Objectives and Key Results (OKR) framework. Once the financial objectives of revenue and profitability are set for the year, several objectives are derived and cascaded down to various levels. Thereafter, departments and initiatives are identified which help in achieving these objectives. These are tracked using a platform specially built for this purpose by the Internal Applications team. The tool allows for objectives to be set and progress monitored by quarter, department, owner along with the progress on individual tasks. All employees have the opportunity of being a part of these initiatives and thus contributing to the overall achievement of corporate objectives.

Operational Initiatives: As detailed above, the strategic plan is broken down into smaller operational initiatives (E.g.: People, CSR, Internal Systems, University Relationships, Social Media Strategy). Each initiative is run as an internal project in which employees are encouraged to take part. The initiatives ensure that all employees get involved in the annual strategic process.

Innovatives Process: Our decade-old Initiatives model, now relaunched as 'Innovatives Groups' have been one of our most successful programs in building leaders without titles, encouraging employees to pursue their 'blue oceans' and innovate in areas outside their core work. Innovatives is a word coined by 99X by combining Initiatives and Innovation. Employees are motivated to take on the leadership roles (Innovative co-leads) on these initiatives and are free to pick tasks from different Innovatives as per their interests. This platform inspired the structuring of the Management by Objectives model as it has been so successful in building up the next levels of leadership at 99x. The most vital aspect of this platform is that it allows an Xian at any level, even an intern, to take ownership of an activity that can actively contribute to achieving corporate objectives and execute it at his/her discretion, under the guidance of Innovative Group mentors. The list of Innovatives is presented to the entire company at the first quarterly general staff meeting of the New Year, where people join teams and arrive at the backlog of tasks to be done within each Innovative.

Emerging Leadership Team: The Emerging Leadership Team was formed to create the next level of leadership from our up-and-coming talent. The team is given the freedom to contribute to the corporate strategy by identifying pain points within the company and coming up with novel ways to tackle these issues.

This belongs to the category of 99x strategy formulation

This is how you formulate strategies in 99x to respond to the future scenarios.

During 2020 and 2021, 99x ensured a productive home-office setup for every employee to ensure that productivity was never compromised. This included providing new laptop batteries, power backup units for those experiencing frequent power outages, secondary monitors for software developers, backup data connections and even transporting company chairs to employees' residences to enable them to work comfortably. This enabled the company to maintain high customer satisfaction and deliver throughout the pandemic.

As we entered 2022, many challenges awaited us such as the lingering post-pandemic realities, the 'new normal' and turbulence in our talent markets including rising attrition. Add to this, the economic crisis in Sri Lanka and the war in Ukraine were also factors that impacted the business environment. Given the risks of solely sourcing talent in Sri Lanka and our customers' exposure to Sri Lanka as their sole outsourcing location, the company formulated the "Global Delivery Teams" (GDT) initiative to respond to these challenges.

The GDT team consists of the entire Senior Management with the participation of other leaders based on need. During 2022, we have initiated and established our office in Malaysia, hired 15 skilled developers as international remote workers across Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Brazil, enabling our customers to de-risk their exposure within Sri Lanka due to the political and economic crisis.

The key elements of our strategic response to the crisis in Sri Lanka are given below:

- Used our local presence in Norway to position ourselves differently and increase our charge-out rates across every role.
- Became a global company with employees present in Norway, Malaysia, Thailand, Brazil and the Philippines. This has given us the ability to offer customers a 24x5 'follow the sun' accelerated development model, while reducing their country's risk to Sri Lanka.

This belongs to the category of 99x strategy formulation.

This is how the Strategy implementation evaluated and corrective action taken in 99x.

Progress on company initiatives is reviewed every quarter and corrective actions are taken in the presence of the Management Team, Initiative Owners and Department Heads. Microsoft Teams and Excel is used to record minutes, track action items and next steps.

- Key Performance Indicators: KPIs are used to measure the achievement of the company objectives. The achievement of KPIs are set at different levels which have a cascading effect in meeting the organization's business objectives. Each initiative has its own KPIs, which in turn map onto the department under which it comes. The strategic plan is then created following these performance-based KPIs.
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This belongs to the category of 99x strategy formulation.

This is how Management Meetings, Departmental Reviews or operational reviews take place on a regular basis in 99x.

The company has a Management Team, a Corporate Leadership team as well as a Support Management Team, the latter of which consists of heads and representatives from all support departments. In addition, there is also a Project Leads group composed of all individuals responsible for customer deliveries.

Weekly meetings: Management Team, Project Leads meeting, Global Delivery Teams (GDT) Progress reviews.

Fortnightly meetings: Support Management meeting. Individual department meetings for Marketing, Finance, Human Resources teams with CEO and Senior Management.

Monthly meetings: Project Leads (including Management and Corporate Leadership). This meeting takes place once a month and is used as a platform to communicate to project leads to the new policies in relation to new technologies, trainings, messages etc. The Leads in turn communicate these to the individual project teams.

Other regular meetings include:

- Project health review (PHR): The Delivery Department takes a review meeting with each project on a quarterly basis to discuss the health of the project based on different dimensions.
- Management Review meeting: This is a bi-annual meeting, where the management team and support management team discuss the process performance and how it can be improved to cater to new business requirements.

This belongs to the category of 99x reviews and controls.

These are the visual display systems you have to manage performance in 99x.

Our core business revolves around the delivery of software product engineering services. Given our open work environment, dynamic cross-functional teams, and the challenges of having to work-from-home due to the pandemic, being able to observe the team's process adherence and productivity is vital to the business.

- Each project has a sprint burndown chart which a team can see and take corrective action from. We use a project management tool called JIRA in our day-to-day operations, which is a dashboard used to keep track of all project teams, departments and initiatives. This dashboard is accessible to every team member and has features to measure performance in various ways (E.g.: Project-wise, individual-wise, by time spent on activity etc.)
- Overall company performance: The overall performance of the company quarter-wise and annually is disclosed to all employees at the quarterly General Staff Meetings (GSM) run by the CEO and COO.
- Revenue performance: Every month, a management review report is sent across to the Board and Management, which contains the performance of every month and the cumulative performance of the year, including areas such as revenue achieved for the month, variances, billing utilization, sales pipeline, sales target achieved for that month and other information related to human resources.

It should be mentioned that 99x adopted a full work-from-home model during the pandemic, i.e., during most parts of 2020, 2021 and early parts of 2022. As such, most physical indicators were substituted with virtual indicators and reviews as employees were not in office.

This belongs to the category of 99x reviews and controls.

This is what leadership does to inspire and motivate the workforce towards understanding and striving for excellence in 99x.

The activities done to inspire and motivate employees are listed below.

- **Flat Organizational Structure:** We have a flat organization with only a management team, Corporate Leadership team (middle management) and the rest of the staff organized into project teams. Smaller projects have a Delivery Lead shared across projects to address some of the operational/administrative tasks. Every single technical engineer at 99x can interact directly with our customers, regardless of their role or seniority. As a culture, we have leaders who walk the talk and are approachable.
- **Developing the Workforce:** The organization invests in developing and mentoring the workforce, not only in technical capabilities but also in soft skills and leadership to make an individual an all-rounder while helping them specialize and excel in their core skills. The Career Committee, consisting of the Management Team and other senior employees, through appraisals and discussions with employees, identify areas for development for each employee.
- **Leadership as a Core Value:** The company's view on inspiring the workforce is to recognize every employee as a potential leader by creating unique opportunities (Blue Oceans) for them to engage and grow in. Such an environment nurtures 'leaders-without-titles' who are self-motivated and take pride in making a difference.
- **Global Personalities:** We lay great emphasis on our employees building up their professional profiles through the effective use of social media and by other practical means, which may even entail taking on external projects. The company assists employees in building up their profiles through one-to-one chats and awareness sessions. They are given the freedom to speak at meet-ups and the company encourages them to start their own meet-ups as well and provides the infrastructure required for it.
- **Empowerment through Innovatives (branded initiatives):** Most facilities provided by the company are run by the people themselves as initiatives. Some of these include Tea n Tech, Tech in 99 Seconds, Opensource, Blogging, Security and Privacy Management, Trending Tech, IOT and Robotics, Azure Focus Group, AWS Focus Group, and the Mobile Focus Group. Employees can participate, contribute, and take leadership on any of these activities.
- **Awards and Recognition:** We reward our employees who have gone the extra mile through the means of awards, cash prizes etc. This is done at the annual Excellence Awards as well as through informal means where employees value each other through personal notes of appreciation.
- **Emerging Leadership (EL) Team:** Understanding the importance of a long-term succession plan, the EL team was created to form the next generation of leaders at 99x. Important operational and strategic tasks are entrusted to this team to form their leadership skills and thinking.
- **Leads Forum:** Project leads are given the leadership role to manage their respective teams and are given the responsibility of passing on strategic decisions and other information to the teams themselves. The monthly Leads Forum is organized and moderated by individual leads where the agenda is also decided by them.
- **Onsite Visits:** Some of the best knowledge sharing experiences have come through onsite visits to Europe which help our employees broaden their exposure, build relationships with customers and witness their contribution to customers' organizations.

This belongs to the category of 99x motivating employees.

These are the open and regular dialogue between staff, consultative committees and the top management in 99x.

- **Transparent environment:** At 99x, there are no trade unions, but all company-related information is communicated to the workforce in an open and transparent manner through multiple ways. Financial statistics, new sales, notable project statuses, R&D updates, customer satisfaction index, plans for the following quarter, employee promotions and new appointments etc. are all shared and discussed at the quarterly general staff meetings.
- **Flat organizational structure:** Our entire management team takes part in project work, hand-in-hand with the team members. This helps build a good relationship between the management team and rest of the staff, and creates a culture of transparency which helps maintain our flat organizational structure.
- **Corporate Leadership:** To ensure smooth communication between staff and the top management, the Corporate Leadership team, consisting of project leads, acts as an additional communication channel between the rest of the employees and the top management. This ensures that all messages from top management to the staff and vice versa are communicated in a swift and effective manner.
- **ShoutOut Boxes:** ShoutOut Boxes have been placed on every floor where any employee can raise their suggestions, ideas, pain points or any concern directly and if you wish anonymously (an electronic version has also been made available). All employees, including women, are encouraged to express themselves via this medium. These notes are personally checked by the CEO and two members of the senior Management Team (one of whom is female) once every two weeks and are acted upon when necessary. They have proven to be incredibly popular.
- **Virtual General Staff Meetings:** We shifted our general staff meetings to a virtual format, gathering the Xians together on platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams, for our leadership to share information with all our employees, especially during the pandemic, which was a time of uncertainty for everyone. In addition to providing employees with up-to-date details on company operations, the GSMs were a great way for the Xians to virtually meet their extended teams especially during the lockdown period.
- **Ask Anything Hour:** We continued our 'Ask Anything Hour' segment during the virtual general staff meetings, which were an excellent way for employees to air any concerns or questions, as there were many during the pandemic period.

This belongs to the category of 99x culture.

This is how 99x balances the aspects of ownership and control when empowering people.

The company has always encouraged every employee to be 'leaders without titles', i.e., to never be afraid to step up and take charge. 99x has a flat organizational structure with the Management Team and Corporate Leadership team working alongside the Project Leads and Support Functions. Our Project Teams function independently with minimal management oversight where the teams govern themselves and function as self-healing teams. At every level, employees are encouraged to challenge the status-quo and to provide the best value to our customers. Likewise, the support teams such as HR, Marketing, IT and Finance are empowered to move forward on their goals and objectives with minimal supervision.

This belongs to the category of 99x culture.

This is how 99x ensures diversity, gender balance, inclusion and equitable pay.

99x has been recognized as a Best Workplace for Women for four consecutive years since 2019, and a Best Workplace for Millennials in 2021. There are measures in place at every stage in an employee's journey to provide an environment of inclusion and equity. At an organizational level, policy statements are in place in the Anti-discrimination Policy to describe what diversity and inclusion means in the workplace. Currently 99x has a 75:25 ratio for males/females, which is in line with the industry.

Starting from shortlisting applicants, the selection process provides equal opportunity to everyone, regardless of their background. Candidates are taken to the next step purely on merit. Technical assessments are automated using the DevGrade Assessment platform and this eliminates any bias a human marker could have in influencing results.

Performance appraisals are done annually for each employee and every employee has the right to appeal if there is any concern on the feedback or formalities of the process. The appraisal includes a one-on-one discussion with a Management Team member outside of the employee's Project Lead to obtain unbiased feedback.

Promotions and salary adjustments at 99x are done transparently through a Career Committee consisting of the Management Team and HR team leadership. The entire leadership team meet for two full days each year, and the performance of every individual is discussed at this collective forum. The increments and promotions are finalized at this forum factoring in industry salary scales, the employee's performance and other contributions, in comparison to every other employee as well, enabling equitable, performance-driven salary increments.

This belongs to the 99x diversity and inclusion.

This is how 99x ensures meritocracy and fairness in the governance and its structure.

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This belongs to the category of 99x diversity and inclusion.

This is how 99x guards against corruption and anti-competitive practices.

This is addressed at a policy level as well as in terms of behavior. The “Gift Acceptance Policy (L-PL18)” indicates what constitutes a gift and the employee’s responsibility in each case. There is also a “Disciplinary Action Policy (P-PL13)” which describes the nature of offenses, in which bribery is classified as the “Severe Offensive Behavior”, the highest level on the scale.

Any employee can raise a concern anonymously with selected Management Team members using the “ShoutOut Box” mechanism. This allows any issue employees are aware of to be surfaced anonymously and dealt with through the regular channels.

The nature of our business (software services) and type of customers we deal with limit our exposure to anti-competitive practices. The software services industry globally is diverse with thousands of service providers available and any form of price fixing or exclusivity is impossible. 99x does not compete with software services companies in the local market.

This is how 99x ensures ethical accounting and tax practices.

The company has appointed Ernst & Young as auditors and tax consultants. We ensure all our taxes and statutory dues are paid on time, all of which can be viewed in detail in the Financial Statements. Further, we were one of just 11 companies in Sri Lanka to be recognized by the Employees' Trust Fund Board as one of Sri Lanka's Best Employers at the ETF Board's 35th anniversary celebrations, as employers who continuously made contributions on behalf of their employees to the ETF on due dates without any default.

99x has also been awarded the "Certificate of Ethical Trading" by the National Chamber of Exporters of Sri Lanka in 2021.

This belongs to the category of Business ethics and integrity.

During Covid-19, These are the major challenges faced by 99x and what measures were put in place to overcome them.

Spearheaded by our leadership, an initiative was taken in 2019 to invest and equip all our employees on the permanent cadre with laptops and dongles, to afford them the flexibility of working from home, which came to fruition during COVID-19. Employees were able to switch to working from home with extreme ease, with no drop in productivity experienced by our customers.

Formation of COVID Task Force: Identifying the adverse impact COVID was having on the rest of the world, before it reached our shores, the leadership took measures to form a 'COVID Task Force' in February 2020. This team monitored the global situation, advised the leadership on precautionary measures and communicated important updates to all staff on hygiene, staying safe and managing finances carefully.

Setting up a home office: COVID-19 and the resulting lockdowns made it essential for every employee to have a working environment and be able to be 100% productive while working from home. Aspects such as connectivity, uninterrupted power, ergonomic workstation setup, employee well-being/mental health and remote collaboration were all aspects that were considered and addressed. The Work From Home experience across a number of dimensions such data connectivity, productivity, engagement, equipment etc. was monitored week on week for every project team. Corrective action was taken by the IT, HR and Facilities teams.

Resilience videos from customers: Many of our customer testimonials mention that the teams are even more productive and engaged while they work from home, resulting in even higher customer satisfaction scores. We also published a page of customer videos showing the commitment of teams during the crisis, strengthening both the company's image as well as the local IT industry.

This belongs to the category of Covid and resilience.

These are the changes 99x have made to accommodate the new norm.

If the 'new normal' in 2020 and 2021 was to Work From Home, 2022 was the 'next normal' of a hybrid office setup. We realized that some aspects of collaboration, especially when starting up a new customer engagement is done best when co-located and working together. In 2022, we rolled out a hybrid work arrangement, where the 99x offices were open to employees and employees were encouraged to work two days each week in the office.

Regular social events such as 'Fantastic Fridayz' were introduced to bring about more employee engagement and create a buzz around coming back to office. The current practice is for employees to come in on Thursday and Friday each week to the office while working from home or in the office on other days based on their preference.

Virtual onboarding: We moved the entire employee hiring and onboarding process online as we recruited over 100 new employees during the pandemic virtually. We invested in tech platforms such as Workable to manage the recruitment process through automation and workflows. In addition, we used DocuSign to digitally offer and process the employment formalities. We also standardized on Microsoft Teams as our collaboration platform across the company. The IT team ensured that the necessary equipment was delivered to the new recruit's home within the first week of joining the company. HR and the relevant project teams brief the new recruits through a series of calls and a structured virtual induction.

Shifting all forums to virtual setups: All internal forums such as the leads forum, support management meeting, resource meetings and other gatherings at which information is shared and operational activities discussed, were shifted to virtual setups and it was ensured that all the forums took place without delay in order to streamline communication and avoid any lapses.

This belongs to the category of Covid and resilience.

This is how 99x managed the environmental factors / macro economic factors arising from government policy changes, and has built a resilient company.

99x was well prepared as the Government lockdowns were announced in March 2020. The Easter Sunday bombings was a trigger for the 99x leadership team to equip every employee to be able to work remotely.

Laptop-ready workforce: The company invested in high-end laptops that have the same performance as desktop computers and internet connectivity to employees. In fact, 99x employees were already working from home by the time the Government announced mandatory lockdowns.

Addressed power outages: We found many employees in the outstations of Sri Lanka regularly affected by full-day power outages several times a month. We provided battery backup systems and powered wingles that enabled employees to work productively through this.

Optimized employee WFH setups: We did surveys across all employees to understand their work from home setup and challenges faced. The findings of this survey are indicated in the PDF "1.7.3 WFH set up for power outage fact collection". As a result, we provided redundant internet connections to address link outages as the power outages caused drops in internet access as well in some locations. We invested millions of rupees to replace new batteries in laptops, so they have optimal capacity available to last 3+ hours to work through power outages. Every employee was entitled to an additional LKR 15,000.00 to purchase any power banks or other devices that would increase their productivity.

Invested in our own transport systems: In 2022, as the transportation and local courier services failed during the fuel shortage, we deployed our own vehicles to transport laptops to new joiners across the island and ensure they are productive from day one. We provided employees interest-free loans to purchase solar power installations to go 'off-grid' to be unaffected by power-cuts.

Setup satellite offices: We also invested in setting up satellite offices with uninterrupted power to enable employees to work at a location closer to them. We purchased 10 full time seats at a facility owned by Orel IT in Kadawatha to enable employees facing power outages in that area to come in and work.

As a tech services company, the two most serious factors that impacted our teams was power and internet connectivity, factors we have effectively addressed through our interventions.

This belongs to the category of Macroeconomic challenges.

This is how 99x managed to bring in foreign exchange into Sri Lanka or save exchange outflows.

In 2021, 99x brought in significant earnings of foreign exchange into the country. This was done by staying true to our purpose and diligently serving our customers as their trusted product engineering partner while being a life-partner to our employees. The services 99x provides is core to our customers' value chain. I.e., simply put, we build the software product which is marketed by them. As a result, despite the effects of the pandemic, we were able to ensure that there was no reduction in our business. In fact, we hired 125 people during 2021 as well. We also received a US\$ 20 million investment from a private equity firm Driv Kapital (formerly Herkules Kapital) to enable the next steps of growth for 99x.

This belongs to the category of Macroeconomic challenges.

This is how relevant costs have been managed or minimized at 99x to buffer the foreign exchange pressure on cost of imports.

Given the nature of our business, our main cost is the salaries and benefits paid to our employees. This was not an area where we could manage costs due to the globally increasing demands for software developers and the challenges faced by our employees due to the economic crisis. However, we were able to manage our overheads better in the areas listed below.

Software licenses: We identified several software products that could be consolidated into other platforms and thereby eliminate license fees. This includes Confluence, an intranet/collaboration site that will be replaced with our existing Teams/SharePoint storage, and Krisp, a noise-canceling tool which can be retired due to the advances in voice-clarity in Microsoft Teams. The combined savings of these items is over LKR 11.5 million, saving foreign exchange.

Rent negotiation and consolidation of premises: During the Work From Home period, we negotiated significant discounts on our rent across all our premises. We also closed an office that housed StartupX Foundry on Charles Drive, Colombo 03, which was not being used during the lockdown and consolidated its activity to our premises at #65, Walukarama Road. Plans are underway to dispose of a less utilized facility at #67, Walukarama Road, and further consolidate our presence by acquiring another floor at our Corporate Office at #349, Galle Road, Colombo 03.

This belongs to the category of Macroeconomic challenges.

Yes. 99x has a strong Board of Directors with a mix of relevant professions and experience.

In August 2021, 99x received a USD \$20 million investment from Scandinavian private equity firm Driv Kapital (formerly Herkules Deal-by-Deal Investments). These funds were used to set up a holding company in Europe, build a platform for an acquisition-based growth trajectory and cash remuneration for part of the stakes held by the previous shareholders, resulting in an amended Board of Directors.

Mano Sekaram acts in the capacity of CEO of 99X Technology. He is a past Chairman of the IT/BPM sector's apex body, the Sri Lanka Association of Software and Service Companies (SLASSCOM). He also contributed as a Director and Board Member of the Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA). He has contributed to multiple trade chambers including board positions at the National Chamber of Exporters (NCE) and the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce. He was also the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on ICT Export for the Export Development Board (EDB) of Sri Lanka.

Dag Honningsvåg acts as the Executive Chairman of the Board and accounts for over 25 years' experience from international organizations within ICT and consultancy. His experience ranges from strategic planning, initiating business alliances, securing funding to achieving ambitious expansion plans and M&A. As a 'hands-on' investor, Dag presently engages as the Chairman of the Board in Norwegian companies such as Solwr, Heimdall Power, Windsim, Adline, Penetrace and Data Factory.

Fredrik Toft Bysveen is an investment professional and Partner at Driv Kapital. He focuses on investments in business software and business services companies. Fredrik is currently a director on the boards of PTC, Elektroimportøren, PSW and Sumo. Previously he worked with companies such as Admincontrol, EFG, Hatteland Display, Stamina, Seagull and Harding. Fredrik holds an MSc in Industrial Economics from the Norwegian University of Technology and Science and the University of Edinburgh.

Fredrik Kongsli is an investment professional and a Partner at Driv Kapital. He focuses on investments in consumer, business software, and business services companies. He is currently a director on the boards of Olivia, Sumo, and LMK Group. During his career he has served as a board member in Beckmann, Eterni, Puzzel and Odlo. Fredrik holds an MBA from INSEAD and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Columbia University.

As listed above, the board consists of individuals with strong exposure to entrepreneurship, global IT services, and launching successful software products and platforms.

This belongs to the category of Board of directors.

This is how 99x compliant with the regulations of the Central Environmental Authority.

As we are an IT company, our primary waste is e-waste which we dispose of in a responsible, environmentally friendly manner. In 2021, we disposed 693.35 kg of electronic waste through our partner Infinity Green, Kelaniya. A certificate for this disposal is available.

As part of our ESG initiative, we strive to be a paperless office, using tools such as DocuSign across company agreements and using automation to replace manual processes. Other activities to preserve our environment such as tree-planting programs and beach cleanup activities are described further in Section 6, Excellence in CSR and Environmental Sustainability.

We also completed our green-house gas emission assessment in 2022.

This belongs to the category of Environmental considerations.

These are the policies and guidelines that 99x published and educated employees against corruption.

Each employee is made aware of the policies and guidelines in place during the induction and employee portal hosted on the Confluence platform (intranet). These policies cover aspects relating to giving and receiving gifts, protection of intellectual property, data privacy and protection, and ethical conduct. The Company Gift Policy describes the company's policies on this. Additionally, our People Department conducts thorough character checks on all new recruits and requests police reports for additional security.

This belongs to the category of Business ethics and integrity.

These are the policies and measures 99x has taken to prevent harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace.

99x has been awarded as a Best Workplace Legend by the Great Place to Work Institute, having been ranked as a Best Workplace in Sri Lanka for 10 consecutive years, the only IT company to receive this accolade. In addition, 99x has also been recognized as a Best Workplace in Asia for 5 years as well. We are recognized as a Best Workplace for Women for four consecutive years, since the launch of this special award in 2019.

Providing an engaging work environment, free of harassment or discrimination is addressed in multiple dimensions through these surveys as they are scored on employee feedback. Our practices conform to ISO Quality Standards and have thus far not had any litigation against the company in this regard.

Equal Opportunity Employer: We are an equal opportunity employer, and we recruit irrespective of race and gender – we are a multi-religious and multicultural company. Employment decisions are based on business reasons, such as qualifications, talents and achievements, and comply with local and respective employment laws and are in line with the company's recruitment policy.

Harassment and improper conduct: All 99x employees have a right to work in an environment free from the demoralizing effects of harassment or unwelcome, offensive or improper conduct. Sexual harassment or harassment based on race, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, disability, or any other status protected by law will simply not be tolerated.

Immoral Activities: Employees shall not engage in immoral activities such as gambling, obscenity, or indecency by using company assets or in company premises and business. The use of alcohol is prohibited during company hours and disciplinary action shall be taken against those suspected of being under the influence of alcohol while conducting company business. A Substance Abuse Policy is published, and all employees are made aware of the same.

Maintaining racial and religious harmony: Management and employees shall not cause disturbances by thought, word or deed to the prevailing racial and religious harmony within the company.

Xian Ladies Survey: With the IT industry being a predominantly male industry, women can sometimes end up being marginalized or treated unfairly, knowingly or unknowingly.

Understanding this, an anonymous survey is rolled out among all the Xian ladies twice a year, addressing work conditions, harassment, promotions and other areas in which they may have issues, in order to take any action if required.

This belongs to the category of 99x diversity and inclusion.

99x provides software product engineering services to our clients. We do not sell any products of our own to these markets.

This belongs to the category of New product development.

These are some examples of new products 99x has built for product companies.

As a services company, we have broadened our service offering to include security and penetration testing, test automation, on-demand research & development services among others. However, we encourage our employees to become entrepreneurs and embark on their own ideas and ventures facilitated through our subsidiary StartupX Foundry.

Tracified, a product incubated by 99x received Japanese investment in 2020. This was floated as an independent entity and is currently taking on projects in partnership with UNDP and ADB. Another product “DevGrade”, championed by one of our employees, also incubated at 99x which allows for automated skills assessments for software developers won the Best Innovation for Internal Processes Award at the National Ingenuity Awards in 2021.

In 2022, one of our clients BUS, Norway’s leading vehicle inspection/certification authority with over 75% of market share launched a new revenue stream using a product built entirely in Sri Lanka. The BUSdata platform uses artificial intelligence and machine learning to process data relating to 20 million vehicle defects to predict the likely mechanical issues of a vehicle based on its age and current mileage.

This belongs to the category of New product development.

This is how 99x's services differentiated from your competition.

99x is quite differentiated as we serve a niche market of software product and platform companies. We have moved from being an outsourced vendor to a trusted partner to launch market-winning digital products, together with our clients. With our own Winning Product model (www.winningproduct.com) for product development, we have equipped our teams to engineer and deploy world-class products.

This specialization has enabled us to charge premium rates from our clients, who are software product vendors. We have moved from a 'red ocean' competing with software service providers to a 'blue ocean' as a partner to launch new digital products using our product management expertise.

This is how 99x invested in process innovation to improve quality and productivity.

Core process innovations that led to quality and productivity improvements are the Product Health Review (PHR) process and institutionalizing our own model for Product Management, “Winning Product” www.WinningProduct.com. In addition, we continue to have our ISO audit cycles covering ISO 9001 for process quality, ISO 27001 for Information Security and ISO 27701 for Privacy Information Management.

Product Health Review (PHR): The members of the 99x audit team together introduced the Product Health Review (PHR) to align stakeholders towards best practices when building software products. PHR is an iterative process to improve product health.

Winning Product Model: This is a framework that contains 80 strategic activities important for product teams, mapped across eight areas of the product life cycle. These 80 areas come together in 99x’s product management process to help our customers in co-creating innovative digital products that create global impact.

Internal and External Audits: These are carried out on a regular basis to assess project performance with regard to quality and security.

This belongs to the category of Process innovation.

These are process improvements have been done to enhance quality, reduce defects, shorten cycle times increase workplace safety in 99x

The processes at 99x have been improved across multiple dimensions including delivery quality, productivity, information security, and employee health and safety.

- Continuous external Vulnerability Assessment and Penetration Testing (VAPT): With increased threat landscape and cyber resilience, we performed an external VAPT to understand the gaps in the security infrastructure and to make sure timely actions are taken to fix those identified gaps.
- Reviewed Information Security and IT policies: With the enhanced business operations, the organization has set a revamped information security roadmap to be achieved before end of 2021. With the enhanced roadmap, IT and information security policies and procedures were reviewed and changes implemented where necessary.
- Transition to Microsoft Teams for optimal WFH experience: All the employees have transitioned to using Microsoft Teams as the main communications platform. In addition to making the work from home transition extremely smooth, it offers additional security as all documentation is protected within the Microsoft SharePoint network.
- MDM (Mobile Device Management) Solution: We have onboarded an MDM tool called VMWare Workspace ONE enabling enhanced endpoint management with modern management capabilities by integrating access control, application management and multi-platform endpoint management.
- XDR (Extended Detection and Response): With increased cyber security threats and increased breaches for information security, with the WFH setup current physical security controls are not adequate. Hence, 99x has invested in onboarding a XDR solution to enable improved protection, detection and response capabilities for end points while WFH.
- Migration to Cloud: To make sure all critical services are available while WFH, the mission critical services were moved to cloud infrastructure utilizing both IAAS and SAAS to make sure the total cost of ownership is decreased and managed well in the long term.
- MicroImage Human Capital Management Solution (MiHCM): To effectively manage employee health and safety during the pandemic, the MiHCM system was enhanced to capture vaccination details and other relevant data to respond to employee needs in a crisis.
- DevGrade: Built internally at 99x, DevGrade is a tool that manages the technical assessments of a candidate throughout the entire interview process. It allows the upload of standardized assessments for different technical tracks and creates a better 'candidate journey' for any applicant. This has reduced the time spent on an interview by 20 minutes.
- Workable: We invested in Workable, an Application Tracking System (ATS) with upgraded features aiding in the automation of our recruitment process from sourcing to onboarding. The platform aids in sourcing and attracting candidates, evaluating and reviewing the profiles collaboratively, tracking the interviewer feedback and process flow and communications in one place.
- Spiceworks for Admin, HR & IT Help desk Management: Spiceworks was introduced to track the support tickets raised to the HR, IT and Admin departments and to ensure the internal Service Level Agreements (SLA) are maintained and the KPIs are met.
- Maturify: Maturify is 99x's knowledge management tool which has been widely used over the last year owing to work from home setup. Maturify allows us to create content which can be easily assigned to teams for learning.
- Xian Insight: A team of volunteer Xians have developed the 99x internal COVID-19 Portal tagged 'XianInsight' to assist with risk tracing within our employees and aid subsequent management decisions during the crisis. The portal aggregates multiple information sources and supports contact tracing of employees to manage risk of exposure.

This belongs to the category of Process innovation

These are certifications 99x have relating to processes, security, data privacy and quality.

Our adherence to global quality, information security and privacy guidelines forms the backbone of 99x, which is reflected in our Process Management System (PMS) – a set of policies, processes and procedures required for planning and execution in the core business area (software product engineering) and the support departments. The PMS is based the ISO 9001:2015, ISO 27001:2013 and ISO 27701:2019 international standards for quality, information security and privacy information, respectively. Adopting the integrated PMS was a strategic decision and it has gone a long way in adding value to the business.

- ISO 9001:2015 - Overall process quality, awarded by DNV
- ISO 27001:2013 - Information security, awarded by DNV
- ISO 27701:2019 – Privacy information management, awarded by DNV
- Microsoft Gold Partner Certification: We were recertified as a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, an endorsement given to Microsoft's most highly accredited independent technical support providers
- Amazon Web Services Consulting Partner: Our expertise in Amazon Web Services (AWS) Cloud computing services saw Amazon certify us as an official Consulting Partner, endorsing us as a certified partner in assisting other businesses build successful AWS-based systems.
- Certificate of Ethical Trading: Awarded by the National Chamber of Exporters of Sri Lanka, this is a relevant certificate as the Transparency Act in Norway looks for ethical suppliers.
- Ranked #1 on Clutch (www.clutch.co) for Software Development Services in Sri Lanka – Clutch, a B2B vendor ranking site lists 99x as the Top Ranked software development services company in Sri Lanka
- Ranked #3 in the Best Custom Software Developers category in Oslo on Clutch (www.clutch.co)

This belongs to the category of Process and quality certifications.

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These points showcase that 99x has a continuous focus on learning.

Two of our Guiding Principles relate to knowledge sharing and continuous learning as given below.

Guiding Principle - Contribute through our passions: We pursue our passions and contribute to the local and globally industry. Our outstanding thought leaders reach great heights globally.

Guiding Principle - Learn and improve continuously: We keep ourselves current through continuous learning. We believe in constant improvement and will never settle for ordinary results.

This results in hundreds of internal workshops, TechTalks and learning opportunities for employees every year. Evidence of such programs are visible in “Bits N Bytes”, our internal Monthly Newsletter

This belongs to the category of Learning and development.

This is how 99x encourages employees to gather more knowledge and skills.

The previous section described the learning activities present in the 99x ecosystem and our guiding principles relating to learning and personal growth. Our ability to delight clients is directly dependent on the quality of people we provide. As such, growth in both technical and soft skills are necessary to progress in their careers.

- Personal Branding: We encourage employees to build a public professional image (via blogs, social networks, presentations at local and international conferences/camps, personal branding vs. company branding) and write research papers. Our Guiding Principle “Contribute through our passions: We pursue our passions and contribute to the local and globally industry. Our outstanding thought leaders reach great heights globally”, challenges every employee to reach excellence at a global level.
- Training: Training is organized frequently based on employee requirements and availability of specialized training, either locally or overseas.
- Training gap identification: An employee can request training related to their work requirements during annual performance appraisals.
- Flexibility to switch: Employees are able to switch between projects, project roles and technologies in order to find new areas of competencies. This allows them to develop skills within the overall work spectrum.
- Freedom to Initiate: The company culture encourages employees to contribute to company-wide initiatives or those carried out by peers that add value to the organization. Suggestions are reviewed by the management representatives and achievements of the initiates are well recognized and celebrated.
- Role Specific Plans for Interns: Through this they receive exposure and training in that track via their project work and other company-related activities. This helps them hone their job-specific skills at a very early stage and gives them great insight on how they wish to progress in their careers.
- Certification reimbursements: Full educational / exam fee reimbursement is provided for most industry-recognized certification programs (e.g., Microsoft Azure or Amazon AWS related).

This belongs to the category of Learning and development.

This is how 99x motivates employees through financial incentives and other benefits towards better performance.

- Salaries on par with industry standards: Employees receive remuneration that is in par with the Industry Salary Survey conducted by SLASSCOM together with PwC, accepted as the industry benchmark.
- Performance bonuses paid out in December and April annually. These were not withheld despite the challenges of the pandemic.
- Solar Loan which was introduced during the mid-2022 year to ensure that fellow employees are able to continue both their work as well as household matters free of power interruptions. An interest free loan was provided to employees keen to go 'off-grid'.
- Recruitment Awards: Recruitment and referral rewards for assisting with increased recruitment drive.
- Long-service Awards: Employees who have remained dedicated to the organization for a period of 10 years are recognized at the annual awards ceremony and are awarded gold sovereigns.
- Batch Top Token: A monetary token is awarded to employees who graduate at the top of their batch.
- Team outings: The company sponsors team outings, be it a simple lunch out or a full-fledged day out.
- Health Insurance: All permanent employees are also provided with comprehensive health insurance which covers the employees and their immediate family members. Unlimited access to oDoc is also offered free of charge to all employees.
- Life Insurance: In addition to health insurance, all employees are also provided with life insurance.
- "Joining Bonus" provides additional financial assistance to attract high quality candidates to the organization.
- COVID "Get well soon" pack: Employees contracting COVID were supported in their recovery with the HR team taking personal accountability for each employee. In the early waves of the pandemic, the company booked several locations for employees to isolate themselves and their families in comfort. Employees are also delivered a gift basket, wishing for their speedy recovery.

This belongs to the category of Compensation and benefits

These techniques are used to enhance motivation, such as team building, rewards and recognition and employee engagement at 99x.

- Food Corner: On each floor of the company, complete with a coffee machine, fridge loaded with snacks and spreads, an assortment of biscuits and more, to keep the Xians powered throughout the day.
- General Health Check-Ups: Regular complete health check-ups on yearly basis is provided to all 99x employees. The Annual Health Checkup for 2022 was conducted in November by a team from Durdans Hospital visiting the facility at #349, Galle Road, Colombo 03 for sample collections and medical checks.
- oDoc Medical Benefit: Given the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by visiting hospitals, we made the oDoc app available to all employees. It's offered as a free medical benefit, which allows employees to connect with an SLMC registered doctor for video, audio and chat consultations within the safety of their home. The free benefit covers the employee and 3 family members with unlimited appointments.
- Additional OPD Cover: Employees who have been with the company for over five years receive an additional OPD cover. Additionally, we have included a COVID insurance cover for employees who test positive.
- Recreation Zone: Table tennis, carom and video gaming consoles have been provided for employees to take a break from work and relax. The recreation zone consists of a garden area for the employees to spend their leisure time reading, snacking etc.
- Project outings: Due to the pandemic, the company trips were scaled down to project team outings instead.
- Health insurance & life insurance: All permanent employees are also provided with comprehensive health insurance which covers the employees and their immediate family members. In addition to health insurance, all employees are also provided with life insurance.
- Well-Being Initiative: We have a team of volunteers dedicated to improving the wellbeing of the employees within the company, mainly focused on creating a positive mind-frame in the workplace by providing pleasant working conditions, both physically and psychologically.
- Ensuring mental wellbeing: During the lockdown, many awareness flyers and messages from the leadership on the importance of mental wellbeing were shared with our employees. We also signed up a corporate subscription with InReach Global counseling, providing confidential, unlimited access to protect the mental health of our employees.

This belongs to the category of Employee engagement.

These are the schemes that 99x have available to ensure the health, mental and physical wellbeing of employees.

- Food Corner: On each floor of the company, complete with a coffee machine, fridge loaded with snacks and spreads, an assortment of biscuits and more, to keep the Xians powered throughout the day.
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This belongs to the category of Employee wellbeing.

These are the programs and activities available that are for employee wellbeing and engagement in 99x.

- Personal grooming: To improve personal hygiene and improve overall wellbeing, all employees are sent for personal grooming sessions conducted by a professional corporate trainer.
- Flexible work hours: While we always had flexible work hours, these were extended even further to allow employees to purchase essentials and see to other necessities during the lockdown and other times of difficulty in the past year. Furthermore, considering the present financial crisis in the country, we have introduced Hybrid Working Model where employees are required to come to office only 2 days per week, thereby ensure that we safeguard the company culture through continuous employee engagement whilst providing a flexible working arrangement for our employees.
- Nursing Hours: Nursing is a vital part of an infant's development and to create a work environment attuned to the needs of women who have just entered motherhood, we offer women employees who have returned to work following their maternity leave a 30-minute nursing break during the morning and evening hours (1 hour in total). They are therefore only required to work a 7-hour day (excluding lunch hour).
- 'Quarantine and Chill' series: The Xians' Wellbeing Innovative Group launched a series of challenges to be done from home titled the 'Quarantine and Chill' series. This program aimed at increasing engagement among Xians and improving quality family time during the lockdown period.
- Corporate Fitness: Another program launched by the Xians' Wellbeing Innovative Group was 'Co-operate Fitness', with the aim of building a workout community within Xians through online training. Partnering with Droplt Fitness, these virtual sessions now count an active community of over 25 Xians among its ranks, working out from home.
- Financial Guidance: The Financial Guidance Innovative Group's popularity continued in 2020, with the team focusing on educating Xians on the importance of saving and budgeting during the pandemic period.
- Short leave to all employees: The company offered a short leave to all staff to enable them to spend more time with their families, in appreciation of their untiring efforts during the WFH period. Pizza for the entire family was delivered to 350+ employees on this day.
- Weekly COVID tips: Flyers were sent up to thrice a week to all employees covering current happenings and updates on the pandemic, assistance with finding food supplies (during lockdown), medical supplies, workout and wellness routines, and more.

This belongs to the category of Employee wellbeing.

This is how 99x handles employee grievances and counseling for those requiring assistance.

The company practices a flat structure and the management team at an easy reach for employees to address their issues and find solutions. For any counseling required, the company facilitates a private counselor. We also signed up a corporate subscription with InReach Global counseling, providing confidential, unlimited access to protect the mental health of our employees.

This belongs to the category of Grievance handling.

This is how the budgeting process takes place at 99x and the people that are involved in the process.

We follow a comprehensive process in preparing our budgets, employing all three approaches to prepare our final budget, the Top Down, Bottom Up and Interactive Approaches. The Board of Directors, CEO, Management Team, Heads of Departments, Project Leads, Support Department Leads and Initiative Owners all play an active role in the budgeting process. The following outlines the process followed in the preparation of budgets:

- Review budget objectives & targets
- Note available funding (high-level)
- Instruct relevant departments about required inputs with deadlines and share submission templates
- Create draft cost budget and discuss with management team
- Obtain revenue forecast
- Obtain capital budget requests
- Obtain department budgets and update the draft
- Validate plans for feasibility
- Review the budget and refinements
- Prepare final budget
- Obtain approval
- Lock the budget and send for Board approval

Bottom-Up approach: Initially, information on the current year is gathered in the third quarter. This information is gathered by emailing the heads and initiative owners and hosting meetings with them. This one-to-one approach allows us to get in-depth inputs from the relevant people in administration, HR and projects (Eg: IT, Facility Management (Administration), Training & Development, Technology etc.)

Top-Down approach: Revenue forecasts are prepared to match the targets set by the stakeholders. To meet the revenue forecasts, certain expenses are proportionately adjusted (new staff, new facilities etc.) and new investments are budgeted for.

Interactive approach: The initial budgets prepared are adjusted for inflation and expansion. We also conduct what-if analyses to simulate different scenarios that could arise over the course of the financial year in addition to evaluating the exchange rate impact. The budget owners are engaged and kept informed of changes.

This belongs to the category of Planning and budgeting.

This is the approach to manage variances in performance at 99x.

This is conducted at the end of each month. A variance analysis report is prepared to compare that month's performance against the budget of the month in question. The changes in the actuals and budgeted figures are noted and are analyzed against the amounts, as well as with the percentages.

Additionally, a year-to-date variance analysis is done between the actuals and budgeted to identify any significant variances/gaps between the projected amounts. The Finance Department also produces a report to the Board each month with the performance highlights.

This belongs to the category of Planning and budgeting.

These are the sort of management information systems (MIS) that are used for analysis and reporting to the Board or top management in 99x.

Management Business Report (MBR): The MBR is prepared on a monthly basis and submitted to the Board and top management and this will be reviewed and necessary actions taken based on the KPIs. This MBR includes:

- Financial performance
- Operational excellence
- Project performances
- Business Development / prospect pipeline
- HR performance

MIS dashboards are available in the following areas.

- Strategy map and Key performance indicators
- Project performance
- HR
- Training
- Sales and Marketing
- IT
- Finance

Xero – Cloud-based Financial Accounting and Reporting Platform

In 2021, the entire accounting system was migrated to Xero, a proven, cloud-based financial accounting and reporting platform investing LKR 2.2 million (data migration and licensing for 3 years). This system provides rapid drill-downs, enhanced reporting and automation.

Enhanced reporting and analytics using Microsoft PowerBI

Support teams such as Marketing and IT also automated their entire Management reporting using the Microsoft PowerBI platform. As a result, historical data for trend analysis is available and also the ability to drill-down for any specific details.

This belongs to the category of Performance management.

This is how 99x evaluates the performance of employees.

Our appraisal process has been formulated to align with our culture as described in our Guiding Principles. Our performance appraisal system consists of 5 dimensions, namely:

- A 360' degree competency appraisal by peers, consisting of a minimum of 3 reference points for each employee.
- Culture/value alignment appraisal.
- Additional accomplishments and contributions in addition to core job responsibilities
- Customer feedback of the employee covering competence, responsiveness, etc.
- Adherence to process

Independent Reviewing: We practice a transparent 360-degree appraisal system. Each employee is assigned to an independent reviewer who offers the employee a fair hearing on any concern. A career committee consisting of the management and senior leads discusses employee concerns, compensation plans and development plans for the following year. This system ensures that employees themselves have a fair influence over the career decisions of their peers. The team lead also sits in for the first half of the review along with the independent reviewer in order to address any team-related concerns raised by the employee. Thereafter, the team lead leaves the discussion and allows for an independent discussion with the employee.

Anonymous Feedback: Our 360' degree appraisal comments are anonymous at the system level, to encourage people to provide honest and straight feedback. Leads and management are reverse-appraised by the team members. In addition, employee surveys are carried out anonymously but survey results are published publicly.

Customer Feedback: Customer feedback on each team member is obtained during appraisals. This feedback is often valued by the employees as it indicates the real outcome of their work.

Training gap identification: An employee can request training related to their work requirements during performance appraisals. The requests are reviewed and internal or external training is arranged as necessary. Managers/peers provide frequent feedback on training required for teams and encourage the undertaking of professional certifications in the employee's domain.

Peers can also suggest training needs for their subordinates during performance appraisals.

Assigned a mentor: At the end of the appraisal process, each employee will be assigned a mentor who extends support to the respective employee to excel in his or her career through continuous guidance.

Mandatory Follow-Up: During the management meeting, we discuss achievements, grievances, issues, conflicts that arise among staff members. All identified issues are recorded and assigned a responsible person to attend immediately. During the following meeting, statuses of all the open tasks are followed up and necessary amendments are made.

This belongs to the category of Performance appraisals.

This is how 99x rewards employees based on performance.

Every effort is made to eliminate personal preferences and bias in the performance management and rewarding mechanisms. The performance feedback of employees is normalized during a discussion attended by the “Career Committee” consisting of the Leadership team and HR Compensation and Benefits team. Every individual is evaluated based on project performance, customer feedback, values and other organizational contributions. A formula then computes and indicates what the individual increment should be. This is compared against the current salary, promotion eligibility, industry benchmarks (E.g., the SLASSCOM Compensation and Benefits Survey) and the 99x median before finalizing the increment.

- Employee voted awards: The winners at the year-end awards for work excellence are decided through employee votes. This eliminates management bias and provides an environment for the employees to take important decisions of the company. Winners are rewarded with cash prizes, trophies and gold sovereigns.
- Performance Bonus: Employees receive an annual performance bonus which is arrived at depending on the outcome of the appraisal process as described above.
- Career Committee: Based on the outcomes of the appraisal process, a career committee discusses employee concerns, compensation plans and development plans for the following year.
- Recognizing Hyper Performers: We have a special rewards scheme to recognize the top 10% hyper performers of the company.
- Batch Top Token: A monetary token of LKR 240,000.00 is awarded to employees who graduate top of their batch.

This belongs to the category of Performance appraisals.

This is how 99x manages employee performance issues and addresses performance gaps.

During the management meeting, we discuss grievances, issues, and conflicts that arise among staff members. Poor performers are also identified at the appraisal process and follow-up action documented in a Personal Development Plan (PDP). They are then assigned a mentor who will guide them very closely to overcome the knowledge gaps identified.

This belongs to the category of Performance appraisals.

These are the markets that 99x operates in.

Predominantly, we serve the Scandinavian market but during 2021, we acquired a client in Singapore and in 2022, secured a consulting assignment with a client in the USA. These were prospects who directly reached out to us for services based on referrals.

As a strategy, penetrating and growing our presence in Scandinavia continues to be the prime focus for us. This is driven by the potential market size, shortage of skilled IT staff in that market, favorable charge-out rates for long-term engagements, and our edge in adapting to the Scandinavian culture.

We are selective in our acquisition of new customers as we look for long-term engagements.

The average duration of our engagements is over 5.5 years with a lifetime value exceeding USD 1 million for almost every customer. As such, our expansion strategy is aligned towards a trusted long-term relationship instead of short, project-based assignments in different markets.

This belongs to the category of Market presence.

These are some of the new services 99x has introduced to the market.

In addition to our core business offering, we also offer the following services to our customers.

Architecture Assessments: We offer architecture assessment for customers either as an independent service or as the precursor to a development engagement. This is a technical due diligence of the quality of code (on a sampling basis), technology stack, performance and scalability. Customers and prospects are immediately able to understand our depth of expertise in product engineering as a result of these engagements.

Research as a Service: We offer our R&D team's expertise in machine learning, blockchain, artificial intelligence and Big Data to our customers to rapidly respond to emerging opportunities. In 2021, the 99x research team worked with a longstanding customer BUS to build a machine learning/Big Data solution that became a new line of business for our customer. This system learns from millions of vehicle defect records to predict likely mechanical issues when purchasing a second-hand vehicle.

UI/UX Consulting via HEX: The Human Experience (HEX) team has fine-tuned its user experience as a service offering an end-to-end facility, commencing from conducting market research to assess the new product idea, moving onto the actual design of the product through a close collaboration with the customer.

Security Assessments: This security assessment is a highly detailed one, where our security experts go through the code and architecture of the client's product/service, look into the methods of implementation, and carry out penetration and static testing, in addition to other tactics. At the end of it, a detailed report is issued to the client with actionable recommendations.

Performance Testing: This includes front-end testing of web and mobile applications and backend server-side testing. Our team uses several tools and their fine-tuned expertise to assess product/service scalability, conduct forecasting for the future, etc. through this service.

This belongs to the category of Market presence.

These are some of the awards 99x has won.

- National Chamber of Exporters Export Awards: Gold Award in the Information & Communication Technology (ICT), Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) & related Services Sector, in Extra Large Category – December 2021
- Ranked in LMD's 'Most Respected Entities in Sri Lanka' (2022) as one of the Top 100 Sri Lankan corporates
- Best Workplace in Sri Lanka (2022) by Great Place To Work Institute – Recognized as a Great Place to Work Legend, the only IT company to receive this award (10th consecutive year)
- Best Workplaces in Asia (2022), awarded by Great Place To Work Institute (5th consecutive year)
- Best IT/ITES Workplaces in Sri Lanka (2022) by Great Place To Work Institute (3rd consecutive year)
- "Certificate of Ethical Trading" awarded by the National Chamber of Exporters of Sri Lanka (2022)
- Best Workplace for Women in Sri Lanka (2022) by Great Place To Work Institute (4th consecutive year)
- Recognition for ISO Certifications: ISO 9001 for quality, ISO 27001 for Information Security and ISO 27701 for privacy management (2022)
- Best Workplace for Millennials in Sri Lanka (2021) by Great Place To Work Institute
- National Ingenuity Awards 2021: Best Innovation in Internal Processes Runner-up at National Level for DevGrade (an application built for talent assessment internally at 99x)
- National Ingenuity Awards 2021: Best Technology or Framework Innovation Runner-up at National Level for SuperOffice AI (a solution built by 99x for our customer)
- National Ingenuity Awards 2021: Best Innovation in Internal Processes Winner for the Western Province for DevGrade (an application built for talent assessment internally at 99x)
- National Ingenuity Awards 2021: Best Technology or Framework Innovation Winner for the Western Province for SuperOffice AI (a solution built by 99x for our customer)
- Ranked #26 on LMD's "Most Awarded Hall of Fame" (2019/20) recognizing Sri Lanka's Most Awarded companies
- Gold Award for Export of Business and Professional Services at National Exporters Awards – September 2017
- Overall Bronze in Medium Scale Category at National Business Excellence Awards – December 2016
- Gold Award for ICT services at National Business Excellence Awards – December 2016
- Gold Award in ICT Services Sector at National Business Excellence Awards – December 2014
- Gold Award for Export of Business and Professional Services at National Exporters Awards – December 2014
- Gold award for ICT services at National Business Excellence Awards – December 2012
- Gold Award for Export of Business and Professional Services at National Exporters Awards – November 2012
- Arch of Europe Award for Quality and Technology – May 2012

This belongs to the category of Recognition and awards.

This is how 99x assess customer satisfaction.

We do a bi-annual survey in March and September which is sent to all customers through which we gauge customer satisfaction. After the clients respond, we analyze each question, come out with a customer satisfaction index for the period and analyze this against earlier trends. The Process and Delivery Manager takes up a call to identify improvements that can be made and/or directly coordinates with the customer to sort over any issues. We use this method to improve our overall service to our customers.

Since 2016, we have maintained a 90% average score across the feedback collected. This is a key indicator for us as the bulk of our new business comes to us through customer referrals. Please see attachment “5.3.1 99x Customer Satisfaction Scores” for our customer satisfaction scores. The areas covered within the survey are given below.

- Quality of our deliveries?
- Response time of our team?
- Commitment/dependability of our team?
- Communication skills of our team?
- Measures taken to protect your IP?
- How do you rate the technical skills of our team?
- How do you rate the delivery skills of our team?
- How do you rate the use of QA skills, tools & techniques?
- How do you rate the productivity of our team?
- How do you rate the availability of our team?
- How do you rate the sound quality of the video/voice call?
- How do you rate the connectivity from the home office?
- How do you rate the team's knowledge about your business domain?
- How do you rate the team's understanding of your overall product/services portfolio?

In addition, our 360-degree employee appraisal process contains an element called ‘customer satisfaction’ which carries 30% of the weightage of the overall assessment. The customer representative assesses the competencies of the resources assigned to them across different areas. This feedback is considered during the employees’ final appraisal review.

This belongs to the category of Customer satisfaction.

This is how 99x handles customer complaints.

Any complaint we receive is forwarded to an email address which is monitored by the Process and Delivery Department, aided by the COO and visible to the management team.

This complaint is then raised at the weekly management meeting where the relevant Management Representative, i.e., the member of the Management Team who oversees the project in question, would share the specific issue and corrective measures needed. An update on the complaint and our response is reviewed at subsequent management meetings.

The Management Review Report produced every six months, contains a Complaints Section in which customer complaints are documented. This report is submitted for external audits twice a year. Our external auditors assess the steps taken against the customer complaints and the trend of the complaints over the years.

This belongs to the category of Customer satisfaction.

This is how 99x compensates customers for defects or service breakdowns.

We continue to have an excellent track record of not having shipped any products with critical defects to our customers causing losses or creating other business risks. In the event where the customer should be compensated in some way, 99x values the long-term relationship and will work towards an amicable settlement. In a recent incident, a server instance was started on the cloud, which had not been terminated when the performance testing activity was completed. As a result, there was a cost accruing for these cloud resources. 99x was willing to settle the customer for this unutilized allocation and years later, remains a valued, referenceable customer for 99x.

The customer has the option to inform the management about performance/productivity issues concerning any assigned resource. In such instances, 99x would provide a plan to upskill the individual and if that does not address the issue, provide a replacement with 99x bearing the cost of transition.

In conclusion, our quality processes, customer satisfaction index and issue escalation process ensure that 99x maintains delighted customers. This is evidenced by 20 of our customers engaging in joint-marketing activities with 99x to produce two editions of “Celebrating impactful digital products”, describing their experience in working with 99x and Sri Lankan tech talent. Each of these stories highlight the quality of the software products, the bonds with our technical teams and the love and respect our customers have for our project teams.

This belongs to the category of Customer satisfaction.

This describes the corporate social responsibility concept adopted and the composition of the Steering Committee handling sustainability in 99x.

99x's CSR arm was rebranded in November 2020, along with the company's overall visual rebranding. The team that used to be known as the 99x CSR Foundation is now 'Sustainability by 99x', reflecting our evolving involvement as a responsible corporate citizen, in creating an impact on communities around us.

In March 2022, a cross-functional steering committee led by the Chief Operating Officer was formed to drive the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) initiative, to bring a broader focus to our sustainability efforts.

ESG Steering Committee

Executive sponsor – Shehani Seneviratne, COO

Core team members:

Madhushan Tirimanne – Admin/Facilities

Shalini Ratwatte – Legal/Governance

Sahani Wijethunge, Eeshani Ranadheera – People Department

Hasini Ariyapperuma, Kushan Hansika – Sustainability

Revathy Jeyarajasingam – Finance

Kari Bente Skarbo, Asma Iqbal, Chrishan de Mel – Marketing

Sustainability by 99x is a purely volunteer-driven team, with all activities spearheaded by a group of passionate Xians. It falls within the company's 'Innovatives' platform – through which the company's strategic goals for the year are broken into actionable items and KPIs and trickled down from the leadership to the rest of the company. The sustainability unit operates in this way as well, with the volunteers working in subgroups to achieve the corporate goals set out for the year.

Given our wide range of activities, the sustainability team divides itself up into subgroups, each focusing on a specific area and driving development through that specific segment. The areas of focus are Education and Community Upliftment, Health and Environment. Employees can choose to lead the entire team, lead a subgroup they are passionate about or contribute to any number of activities across the focus areas, based on their passions and interests.

This belongs to the category of Sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

This is how the senior management team participates in sustainability activities in 99x.

The Sustainability team brainstorms and comes up with various strategies and projects that can be undertaken by the company and this analysis is presented to the management team, who then add their input to it. The implementation of all activities is discussed with the management and they in turn give their feedback and fine-tune the ideas. One or more management team members also take part in each project and are present at all meetings.

Additionally, the strategic guidance team composed of members of the top management and Corporate Leadership team conducts a bi-annual review with the co-leads of the Sustainability team to evaluate the activities conducted by the team, give feedback and discuss plans for the upcoming months.

This belongs to the category of Sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

These are the social activities 99x do towards social integration and supporting less-privileged communities.

- Dry-ration packs to vulnerable families during lock-down: Partnering with LEADS (NGO) and government authorities in the Ratnapura district, we distributed 350 hampers to families in difficulty in December 2020 and January 2021. The management and employees of 99x agreed to forego the funds allocated for their own welfare and bless another family in turn. Every gift pack represents a personal gift from a Xian (99x employee) to a recipient. The total value of this project was over LKR 4 million.
- School supplies to children in Trincomalee and Muttur: Partnering with World Vision Lanka (NGO), 99x supported this initiative to ensure that every child has the stationery needed to begin the new school year in 2023. 99x was the principal donor for this project covering 150 children, contributing LKR 1 million.
- Football team kits for Hewawitharana Maha Vidyalaya, Rajagiriya: Designed and donated football jerseys and shorts to this less-privileged school to the value of LKR 75,000.00
- University Relations Initiative: We reach out to universities and State institutions across the island and conduct free programmes and workshops for undergraduates and assist lecturers and instructors with the formation of syllabi etc.
- Small School Development Project: This is where the company adopted Sunethra Maha Devi Maha Vidyalaya, an underprivileged school which was about to be closed down. A majority of the students come from an orphanage nearby and we do our best to provide them with facilities that uplift them, such as the building and equipping a computer lab, building a playground, providing chess lessons and computer classes etc. To date, 99x continues to fund the salary of a teacher at this school.

This belongs to the category of Sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

These are some of the recent CSR and sustainability activities 99x has done.

Each year, we come up with areas we want to focus on – our strategy is to undertake medium to long term projects rather than one-off projects. However, the pandemic and Sri Lanka's economic crisis presented many areas that required immediate support, and we responded to these requests. Some of our key projects include the following.

“Lifeline Sri Lanka” in partnership with UNICEF and Rotary International

In August 2022, contributed LKR 5.4 million (USD 15,000) towards the Lifeline Sri Lankan project, jointly done by UNICEF and Rotary International. UNICEF will use the collected funds to procure essential medicines, medical equipment, water purifiers, and school stationery to support vulnerable communities facing severe shortages across Sri Lanka.

Contributions to Wathupitiwala and Kalubowila hospitals

99x contributed over 190,000 NOK (over LKR 4 million) worth of equipment to the Wathupitiwala and Kalubowila hospitals on two key national initiatives, in response to the COVID-19 crisis in Sri Lanka. The medical equipment and PCR lab were donated on the instructions of the Sri Lankan Ambassador to Norway Godfrey Cooray in collaboration with 99x Chairman Dag Honningsvåg.

Kalubowila Hospital

High Dependency Unit (HDU): Providing medical equipment to the value of NOK 46,250 in the form of Intermittent pneumatic compressor devices (2 units) and Portable suction apparatus devices (3 units) Intermittent pneumatic compressor device 2 units (NOK 24,500). Portable suction apparatus device 3 units (NOK 21,750).

Wathupitiwala Base Hospital

Provided a container-based facility to set up a PCR testing lab at a cost of NOK 145,500 (approximately USD 15,000). This involved sourcing and fitting-out two 40-foot container units, complete with partitioning and air-conditioning.

Donations to Jaffna hospital

A donation of five syringe infusion pumps to uplift the quality of COVID-19 patient care was made to the Teaching Hospital Jaffna.

This belongs to Sustainability and corporate social responsibility

These are the non-governmental organizations and other partners that 99x works with to execute CSR projects.

- Collaboration partners: We have worked with partners including LEADS (NGO), Local Government Authorities/Divisional Secretariats, World Vision Lanka (NGO), Rotary International, UNICEF, Ministry of Health, to collaborate on our sustainability initiatives.
- 99x Blood Drive: In November 2022, partnering with the Blood Bank and Walukarama Temple, organized a blood donation drive at the Temple premises.
- Uplifting Levels of Education: Through our University Relations outreach programme, we work with State and private universities and higher education institutes, and the Sri Lanka Association of Software and Services Companies (SLASSCOM) on a regular basis to improve and uphold the standards of ICT education in the country.
- Tree planting campaigns: A tree planting campaign of 500 plants was done on 10th December 2022 at the Mirigama highway entrance in collaboration with the Environmental Unit of the Road Development Authority. As part of the project, 2,500 kg of fertilizer was purchased by 99x. A similar project was done in Matara to work on a reforestation project, planting trees along the Southern Expressway as well.

This belongs to the category of Sustainability and corporate social responsibility

These are some of the other community development projects in 99x.

- Small School Development Project: The 99x CSR Foundation adopted Sunethra Maha Devi Maha Vidyalaya' in order to offer continuous assistance to a group of disadvantaged children. Located in Pepiliyana, the small, ill-equipped school was prevented from being closed down with 99x's intervention. Many of its students are children from a nearby orphanage, and the rest come from underprivileged families. To date, 99x continues to fund the salary of a teacher to support the education of these children. Please see supporting letter "6.1.2.3 Pepiliyana School Support" for more details.
- Janitorial/support staff Appreciation: Community upliftment commences right at the office for us. Every year, in appreciation of all their hard work we give our janitorial and security staff hampers, gift vouchers and school supplies.

This belongs to the category of Sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

This is how 99x aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

We believe that the only way to contribute meaningfully in the long-term towards SDGs is by reinforcing our position as a premium service provider of IT services. By showing our value as a premium provider, we have the leverage to command higher rates for our services, while maintaining the close relationships as a trusted partner with our clients. This enables us to execute and support programs aligned with SDGs, allowing the value we bring in to cascade to our employees and their communities. As such, while we have executed initiatives across SDGs, our core focus is on #8 – Decent work and Economic Growth, by adding sustained value in our services.

This belongs to the category of Sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

This is how 99x practices ethical sourcing and supply chain practices.

Our sourcing primarily relates to the hiring and development of human capital. We do not subcontract any of our work outside of the organization.

As described in previous sections relating to our engagement with universities and schools, we invest heavily to build capacity and capability in our supply chain. 99x has also renewed the “Certificate of Ethical Trading” awarded by the National Chamber of Exporters of Sri Lanka in June 2022 for an additional two years.

We were first recognized with the “Certificate of Ethical Trading” in 2021 by the National Chamber of Exporters. Since then, we have appeared for the surveillance audit and renewed this certificate for a further two years. We believe we retain the reliability of this certification through our management processes and independent audits for ISO 9001, ISO 27000 and ISO 27701 conducted by DNV.

This belongs to the category of Sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

This is how 99x gives back to its local, national and/or global communities.

Our Sustainability activities focus on the broad themes of Education and Environmental initiatives. Outside of these activities 99X plays a unique role to build the university students through the Dotitude program. 99x invests thousands of volunteer hours into the university ecosystem in Sri Lanka through mentoring and training programs impacting thousands of students. We also provide financial support to universities to organize events. Over 30 educational activities were conducted in 2022.

Sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

This is how the 99x leadership team contributes towards programs of national importance.

CEO Mano Sekaram has contributed as chairman or a board member at the ICTA, SLASSCOM, Lankan Angel Network, StartupX Foundry, University of Colombo, University of Jaffna, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and the National Chamber of Exporters. He was a member of the Presidential Task Force on English and IT, and Member of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Consultative Committee for Computer Science. Former Board Member of the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR) established by the Cabinet to promote a multi-stakeholder effort to create a society that respects fundamental rights, freedom, rule of law, social obligations, mutual respect, non-discrimination, equity, and diversity.

CTO Hasith Yaggahavita maintains an active role in the activities of University of Moratuwa through its Computer Science & Engineering Society.

Chief Business Development Officer Prasath Mahalingam is a Board Member and Past-President of the Nordic Business Council and a General Council member of SLASSCOM.

COO Shehani Seneviratne is the Director Operations and Board Member at SLASSCOM. She is also an inspiration to the next generation of women through the Women in Tech program.

Management Team member Tharindra Jayamaha is a member of the General Council of SLASSCOM.

This belongs to the category of Leadership team.

This is how 99x limits pollution and waste.

As a technology company providing IT services, we do not have any manufacturing activities or emit hazardous chemicals into the environment. However, we have made a conscious effort to become a 'Paperless Office' by reducing the use of paper, especially in administrative tasks by moving various functions online. This has been accomplished in the HR and Finance functions where everything outside of statutory items is handled and processed electronically.

Paperless Human Resource functions:

- Recruitment: The entire recruitment process is done online using Workable – an end-to-end recruitment platform. Candidate profiles are received, screened, evaluated and interview feedback recorded online prior to offers being made.
- Employee onboarding: All employee documentation, contracts, offers etc. are handled electronically and signatures obtained through an online platform DocuSign. Company policies, guidelines etc. are shared electronically as links to employee portals instead of physical documents.
- Performance appraisals: This is also entirely facilitated and signed off online using a HRIS, Microlmage, without any printing done.

Paperless Finance and Accounting:

The finance team has also moved to Xero, a cloud-based financial accounting platform and invoices, reimbursements etc. are done online, minimizing the use of physical vouchers and reducing paper usage.

This belongs to the category of Environmental considerations.

These are the key qualities that make the 99x a great place to work.

At 99x, we believe that creating a great workplace culture starts with hiring the right fit for the company. Our inbuilt technical assessment platform “DevGrade” helps us to achieve this by streamlining the interview process and providing a clear understanding of a candidate's technical abilities and cultural fit. By ensuring that we hire individuals who align with our values and work style, we are able to foster a positive and productive work environment. The platform allows for standardized assessments to be uploaded for different technical tracks, giving our tech teams a clear understanding of a candidate's technical abilities from the start. This eliminates the need for multiple rounds of interviews and allows us to focus on other important aspects such as technical skill and culture fit. By streamlining the interview process and creating a more efficient environment, DevGrade helps to foster a positive and welcoming workplace culture. The key qualities that make 99x a great place to work include our focus on efficiency, transparency, and hiring the right fit for the company.

At 99x, we are committed to investing in the future of our industry and our community. That's why we introduced the 99x Academy scholarship program, an opportunity for undergraduate students to further their education and gain real-world experience. The program provides full sponsorship for the selected candidates' degree program, and also offers the opportunity for them to work with us on projects as interns. So far, we have been proud to provide this opportunity to 16 interns, with 8 in 2020, 3 in 2021, and 5 in 2022. We believe that this program is a key component of our commitment to creating a better future for both our company and the individuals we work with.

This belongs to the category of Culture.

These are some of the learning and development activities done at 99x.

We prioritize reskilling and upskilling in its training programs to keep employees competitive and relevant in a changing job market. The company encourages innovation and proactive thinking to create a culture of continuous improvement, valuing new ideas and perspectives. Championing change has helped us stay ahead of the curve and remain competitive in an evolving marketplace.

In summary, 99x's development practices are centered around Reskilling and Upskilling its employees, and Championing Change within the company.

Online training: The focus for 2022 continued to be on online technical courses through platforms such as Udemy, Pluralsight, and Wizlabs. Employees were also encouraged to participate in workshops and training organized by local and global industry bodies such as SLASSCOM, AWS Community Day, etc. and Our L&D team continued to roll out the standard programmes for everyone such as etiquette workshops, Speechcraft (Toastmasters) and other training that continue to happen virtually.

PIMS certification and training: 99x was among the first companies in Sri Lanka to conform to and receive the ISO 27701:2019 Privacy Information Management System. In line with this, 90% of employees received PIMS training conducted by DNV Global

Tea N Tech: Podcasts have emerged as a great way of communicating tech updates and the Xians have harnessed this platform to do just that. In total, the team completed and published 9 educational podcast series. This included an Angular Series, GIS Series, React Series, QA podcast series,

99x webinars: Over 15 webinars on different aspects of technology were launched by the Xians to educate fellow Xians and the global tech community. These included an AWS DevOps Series, an Azure DevOps Series and a Webinar on 'Launching a Branded online community for your product', among others.

Internet of Things Innovative: Internet of Things is a fast-emerging technology and our teams are always looking at unique ways in which they can be applied to practical business scenarios. As part of this, the teams actively work on educating other Xians and the community on this technology:

- Conducted two sessions on 'IoT with JS' for undergraduates of NAITA
- Introduction to Johnny Five Js library
- Hands-on session on IoT modules using Johnny Five and arduino
- Conducted an Internal IoT session for 99x employees on 'How to make your own home smart'
- Started a bi-weekly newsletter on the latest IoT trends for 99x employees
- Carried out a feasibility study on a social IoT project
- Carried out R&D on implementing an agri-sensor device with blockchain integration

99x Academy - At 99x, we are committed to not only providing our employees with opportunities for professional development but also shaping the future of our industry. To achieve this, we have established the 99x Academy, which is dedicated to providing training, mentorship, and hands-on experience to individuals who are eager to learn and grow. We tie up partnerships with leading universities, through which we offer scholarship programs for students. These programs provide students with the opportunity to receive a top-notch education, while also gaining real-world experience working at 99x. Our scholarship recipients will have the opportunity to work with us from the start of their degree program, allowing them to gain practical experience and build a valuable network of contacts. This is a paid opportunity for all selected students, providing them with a unique and valuable head start in their careers. At 99x, we believe in providing meaningful opportunities for growth and development, both for our employees and the next generation of industry leaders. Our commitment to this philosophy is reflected in the programs and initiatives we offer through the 99x Academy.

This belongs to the category of Learning and development.

These are some of the activities done to engage and motivate employees at 99x.

The Year of Transformation: our CEO, Mano Sekaram, has a tradition of incorporating the company's core values into his annual theme, which he announces during the yearly kick-off ceremony each year and sets as a KPI for the company to strive towards collectively and individually. In 2023, this tradition continued with the theme fittingly named "To Reset and Rebuild" reflecting the company's commitment to embarking on a transformative journey as part of its global delivery strategy.

Annual excellence awards: Our annual Excellence Awards program is closely tied to our 10 guiding principles. Awards such as "Excellence in Striving to Deliver Excellence" serve to recognize employees who embody these values in their work. The nomination process is open to all employees, who may submit a brief story demonstrating how their colleague has embodied a particular value. The senior leadership team then carefully reviews all nominations and selects the most impactful story to receive the award.

On-Site Customer Visits: We recognize the value of on-site customer visits as a means of inspiring our employees who work with international clients on a daily basis. These visits provide a unique opportunity for our customers to show their appreciation for the hard work of our team, which in turn inspires and motivates all employees. On-site visits also bring a sense of connection and understanding that helps to strengthen our relationships with our clients and reinforces our commitment to delivering excellence in all we do.

Inspiring Workspace: Our two buildings have been designed to create a supportive and inspiring work environment for all employees. Each floor features a recreational area equipped with comfortable seating and a musical ambiance, fostering a sense of inspiration and comfort. These thoughtful design elements are intended to enhance the overall experience of our employees and promote creativity, productivity, and well-being in the workplace.

Xian tribe -our employees are proud to be known as "Xians." This moniker inspires a sense of pride and belonging, reflecting the prestige of our company within the industry. All employees take great pride in being a part of this esteemed organization, contributing to a strong and unified culture that drives success and satisfaction within the company.

Xian Reach: This consisted of a group of senior employees, who had casual, confidential chats with employees who were identified as critical to the company's operations. Over 60 employees were spoken to during this campaign, to understand if they were satisfied and if they had concerns, which the leadership then addressed. All concerns raised were recorded and tracked and relevant employees were given updates on the status of concerns raised.

Hybrid working model survey to assess the impact of the transition to a hybrid working model, we conduct regular surveys to gather insights from our employees on their experience. The objective of these surveys is to understand the challenges faced by our employees and to determine ways in which we can provide support. The results of the surveys have shown a strong demonstration of our company culture prevailing, with empowered teams consistently exhibiting exceptional efforts to deliver results.

Delivery Team check-in with project teams: The Delivery Team had one-on-one sessions with every project team, conducting project reviews, following up on the wellbeing of the team and inquiring into the issues faced by the teams.

HR checkups on new recruits: With the new hybrid working model, HR members initiate one-to-one chats with the newly onboarded Xians to ensure they were settled in, and safe, and do note encountering any issues with the virtual setup and team integration.

New Recruit 'Xperience' Survey: A survey is rolled out to new recruits during the 60-90 day period to understand their experience over the initial settling-in period and to see how best we could assist them with any challenges they might face.

Leaders without titles : At 99x, we believe in empowering our employees to take on leadership roles, regardless of their job title or level of experience. That is why we have adopted the philosophy of "Creating Leaders Without Titles". Under this concept, we provide our employees with the opportunity to lead initiatives, solve problems, and drive change within the organization. This approach not only helps our employees to develop their leadership skills, but it also fosters a culture of innovation and collaboration by tapping into the collective intelligence of our workforce.

At 99x, we believe that leadership is not just a role that is assigned, but a mindset and a way of working that is practiced by all employees. By giving our employees the opportunity to play leadership roles, we are not only developing the next generation of leaders, but we are also creating a more dynamic and engaged workforce that is driven to succeed.

Education: The company reimburses professional membership and certification fees such as IEEE, CSSL, BCS, IIBA, ISTQB certification, etc. for all employees, which encourages our people to pursue activities to further their careers, without being burdened by the financial impact.

Innovatives - At 99x, we believe in promoting a culture of continuous learning and innovation. Our 99x Innovative program is designed to bring together like-minded employees who are eager to learn, grow, and support each other in their professional development. Through Innovatives, employees have the opportunity to collaborate and share ideas with their peers, participate in team-building activities, and engage in learning opportunities that are tailored to their interests and needs. The program is not just about participating in workshops and training, but it provides a space for employees to connect with others who share their passion for learning and growth. By fostering a supportive community of learners and providing opportunities for professional growth, we aim to create a work environment where everyone can reach their full potential and contribute to the success of the company. Help them feel that they are a part of something great: We believe in building all-rounders, not just technically adept professionals. 99x's ecosystem, therefore, is set up to help our employees create their own brand and profile within the local and global tech space, with multiple platforms and mentorship programs initiated to inspire them to step out of their comfort zone and grow while giving back to the IT community at large through experience and knowledge sharing. We also encourage our people to get involved with professional bodies and spearhead tech communities such as SLASSCOM, AWS User Group Meetup, Colombo Blockchain meetup, and more.

This belongs to the category of Employee engagement.

This is how 99x onboard employees.

Virtual Induction 360: This program is crafted to not only impart technical knowledge and familiarize new recruits with the processes at 99x but also to inspire and engage them with the story of how the company was built. The sessions aim to help new hires understand their crucial role in contributing to the company's achievement of its corporate goals while fostering their own professional growth and development.

Virtual Buddy Program -This program has been a crucial aspect of our onboarding process for new recruits. During the transition to remote work, the Buddy Program played a vital role in ensuring that virtually on boarded employees felt well-supported and integrated into the team. Recognizing the significance of this program, we have further strengthened it with the implementation of a 'buddy evaluation' at the end of two months. This evaluation serves to gather valuable feedback and insights, which will be used to continually improve and refine the onboarding process.

At 99x places great emphasis on its onboarding process for new employees, with a unique and innovative approach. The process is fully digitized and includes a colorful poster featuring each new hire shared on the company's Teams channel. New recruits receive an online induction process that is an interactive experience with quizzes, games, and other engaging activities. Additionally, they are provided with a welcome pack and a goodie pack, which includes various 99x branded merchandise. On the first day, all new recruits are welcomed with a comprehensive induction program designed to provide a smooth and enjoyable onboarding experience.

Internship 4.0 onboarding - Upon the hiring of an intern, they are assigned a mentor for guidance and support. Both technical and soft skills development training programs are conducted and evaluations are held at 3 and 6 months. Upon successful completion of the internship, an internship certificate is issued. The entire process has been successfully adapted to a virtual format, including virtual award ceremonies for interns who have completed their internship entirely online.

This belongs to the category of Employee onboarding.

These are some of the activities targeting universities and undergraduates in 99x.

University outreach: we made a concerted effort to elevate the capabilities of university students through a series of initiatives. Our outreach activities served as a platform to execute the following programs, aimed at fostering the growth and development of undergraduate students.

EnnobleX - The Emerging Leadership Team introduced a technical induction program titled 'Ennoble X', specifically designed for both fresh and lateral hires in the engineering department. This program represents a comprehensive approach to engineering onboarding.

Dotitude: our university relations arm, as a means of empowering and preparing students for the industry. This initiative involves the active participation of all Xians in the form of mentoring, lecturing, and sharing knowledge. Our employees take great satisfaction in contributing to this important effort, providing guidance and support to the next generation of industry professionals.

This belongs to the category of University relations.

These are some of the internal tools 99x has in place to onboard and engage employees.

SuperGlu - Our inbuilt engagement app SuperGlu allows new recruits to engage with employees without having even met them. SuperGlu's interactive bot 'Matti' allows employees to ask questions like 'Who is Sampath', 'Who likes gaming', 'Find me an iOS expert', and more, allowing new recruits to find other employees with similar interests and connect with them.

Maturify LMS - streamlined remote onboarding with gamified, self-paced learning for new hires, covering company processes, policies, ISO requirements, and team information, saving time for teams.

HR Chatbot - automates HR and IT operations through MS Teams chatbots "Nina" and "Srimal". They offer easy access to information for employees and serve as a first point of contact for inquiries, providing seamless admin support for new hires.

This belongs to the category of Employee onboarding.

These are some of the internal communication channels and frequency of such communications at 99x.

All-staff announcements on MS Teams: Most staff communications have been shifted to Microsoft Teams, which allows everyone in the company to comment on them and raise any concerns they may have.

GSMs: our General Staff Meetings occur on a quarterly basis, bringing our employees, known as Xians, together on a single platform. During these meetings, our leadership shares updates and information on company operations, especially during times of economic and political uncertainty in the country. In addition to providing employees with current information on company operations, GSMs also offer a valuable opportunity for Xians to connect with their extended teams, especially when working from home.

Ask Anything Hour: 'Ask Anything Hour' segment continued during the GSMs, which was an excellent way for employees to air any concerns or questions, related to the company and overall operations.

Emails from CEO: Our CEO Mano Sekaram personally sent all-staff mails with updates, supportive messages, and tips to keep up employee morale and stay connected with our 400-strong team during uncertain times

Project Leads Forum: It is important that the Management and Leads have a strong communication channel. With this in mind, Project Leads, Corporate Leadership, Management, and Support team leads gather virtually on a monthly, to discuss company operations and challenges faced, to overcome these together

Management feedback on company operations at appraisal discussions: A vital aspect of the standard 360 appraisal model practiced at 99x is for the appraisee to have a one-on-one discussion with a Management Representative. During this discussion, apart from the appraisee's individual performance and concern redressal, the Management Representative also shares updates on the company performance and helps the employee understand how he/she could align their performance and activities to bring about greater personal development while helping achieve company objectives and goals.

Shifting all forums to virtual setups: All internal forums such as the leads forum, support management forum, resource meetings, and other gatherings at which information is shared and operational activities discussed, were shifted to virtual setups to adopt our new hybrid working model and it was ensured that all the forums took place without delay in order to streamline communication and avoid any lapses.

Strategy workshop: An interactive workshop was conducted among the leadership and project and department heads, to review the performance of the past year and to create the corporate objectives for the new year in a collaborative manner.

Ouch: We understand the importance of addressing all grievances of employees, big and small. This feature has been built into our employee engagement mobile app SuperGlu to address any issues that our employees encounter in the workplace.

CEO Discussion with Confirmed Employees: Once an employee gets confirmed after his/her probationary period, our CEO Mano meets them for a quick informal chat to understand their experience at 99x so far and get their feedback.

ShoutOut Box: ShoutOut Box has proved to be incredibly popular and every suggestion or comment that comes through it is documented on the company repo, with an action status and when resolved, a comment by the COO or CTO on how it was resolved. These notes are personally checked by the CEO and two members of the Management Team once every two weeks and are acted upon when necessary. A reminder mail is sent out on a regular basis informing employee about the (virtual) boxes.

Glassdoor Reviews: With the company reviewing website Glassdoor gaining traction, the management encourages both current and former employees to share their feedback on the platform. The feedback is monitored closely by the HR team, who escalate any anomalies to the management team so that swift action can be taken to rectify any issues.

Pulse Survey: With rapid changes taking place within the local and global IT industry, 99x rolled out a 'Pulse Survey' to better understand the sentiments of employees in relation to current industry trends, to understand their satisfaction within the company, and align our practices better to suit their expectations.

This belongs to the category of Employee communications.

These are some of the ways 99x appreciates, recognizes and rewards employees.

All staff treats: we organized several treats for Xians, for their dedication, with surprise treats for the entire family delivered to the homes of over 400 employees all across the island. Apart from the treat, a personalized note from the leadership team was also shared, thanking the families for their support.

Appreciative gifts from customers: Our admin teams worked together with customers to send project teams hampers and treats of appreciation for their commitment to our international clients.

Employee Appreciation Day: The sharing of appreciative notes among colleagues has been an unbroken tradition on Employee Appreciation Day at 99x, annually we celebrate employee appreciation by having a get-together with music food, and entertainment.

The 99x Excellence Awards has been a hallmark celebration for over a decade, recognizing and acknowledging the exceptional efforts of our employees. The event is an opportunity for us to express our gratitude and reward our winners with a symbol of their achievement

Excellence Awards serve as a testament to our appreciation for the exceptional work of our employees.

The event, now a staple for over a decade, provides us with a platform to publicly thank and acknowledge the efforts of those who have gone above and beyond in their roles. The awards ceremony culminates with each winner being presented with a commemorative plaque and a gold coin, serving as a symbol of our gratitude for their contributions to the company.

This belongs to the category of Employee benefits.

These are some of the ways 99x appreciates, recognizes and rewards employees.

COVID care: 99x prioritizes providing comprehensive support to our employees and their families who contract COVID-19, offering paid time off, hospital arrangements, and covering expenses. The company is committed to its employee's health and well-being during these challenging times.

Company Doctor: we always provide our employees with access to an in-house doctor, available 24/7, to ensure prompt and effective medical support in case of an emergency. This commitment to the health and well-being of employees demonstrates our dedication to employee care and safety.

Nursing Hours: Nursing is a vital part of an infant's development and to create a work environment attuned to the needs of women who have just entered motherhood, we offer women employees who have returned to work following their maternity leave a 30-minute nursing break during the morning and evening hours (1 hour in total).

Short leaves: we understand the importance of work-life balance and the need for employees to take time for themselves. That is why we have introduced a short leave policy that allows our employees to take time off during working hours. All employees are eligible for up to 4 hours of short leave per month, which can be taken in 2-hour increments.

This policy provides our employees with the flexibility to step away from work when needed, whether it is for a personal obligation, to attend to their health, or simply to recharge. By encouraging our employees to take breaks and prioritize their well-being, we are helping to foster a positive work environment and promoting long-term productivity.

oDoc Medical Benefit: We have made a corporate partnership with oDoc where employees get free benefits covering the employee and 3 family members. It grants access to a doctor 24/7 within 3 minutes and has a database of over 250 GPs and specialists across more than 40 specializations.

Additional OPD Cover: Employees who have been with the company for over five years receive an additional OPD cover. Additionally, we have included a COVID insurance cover for employees who test positive.

Insurance: All permanent employees are also provided with comprehensive health insurance which covers the employees and their immediate family members. In addition to health insurance, all employees are also provided with life insurance.

Full health check-up: we partnered with Durdans Hospital to provide annual full-body health check-ups for our employees at the office premises. These check-ups include vital signs and screening tests, followed by personalized recommendations from a specialist doctor.

Well-Being Initiative: We have a team of volunteers dedicated to improving the well-being of the employees within the company, mainly focused on creating a positive mind-frame in the workplace by providing pleasant working conditions, both physically and psychologically.

This belongs to the category of Employee benefits.

These are some of the ways 99x appreciates, recognizes and rewards employees.

Xian Healthcare: In addition to the annual health check-up, the Well-Being Team introduced corporate discounts for all employees and their immediate families at Durdans and laboratories.

Ensuring mental well-being: The company continues to promote physical and mental well-being. The company counselor's details were available on call to all employees for emotional guidance and support.

Inreach global: We have formed a partnership with InReach Global, an organization that specializes in providing mental health services. Through this partnership, we are able to offer our employees 24/7 access to confidential mental health and counseling support. This means that our employees can receive professional and confidential help whenever they need it, without worrying about the stigma that can be associated with seeking help for mental health issues.

Cost of living allowance: We are committed to supporting our employees and helping them navigate the challenges posed by the rapidly changing economic landscape in Sri Lanka. In response to the decision by the central bank to float the Sri Lankan rupee against the dollar and the resulting impact on the cost of living, we have decided to provide a cost of living allowance to all of our employees. Under this program, the salaries of all of our employees are pegged to the dollar, providing them with additional support to offset the rising costs of living. This allowance, which is equivalent to 80% of each employee's salary, is designed to help ease the financial burden faced by our employees and provide them with the stability they need to manage their household expenses. We understand the importance of providing our employees with a stable and competitive compensation package, and we are committed to doing everything we can to help them succeed both personally and professionally. By offering this cost of living allowance, we are demonstrating our commitment to the well-being of our employees and our belief in their value to our organization.

Powering home offices – we have taken initiatives to support our employees during the current economic downturn and power cuts in Sri Lanka. Providing access to solar power through our Inhouse off-grid power loan scheme, educating employees about the best solar vendors, and providing power backup machines and power banks to help alleviate the burden of power cuts on your employees.

Hybrid working model: we believe in offering flexible work arrangements that meet the needs and preferences of our employees. Long before the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been providing our employees with the option to work from home. Building on this success, we have now introduced a hybrid working model that offers our employees the best of both worlds. Under this model, employees are free to choose whether they want to work from the office or from home, depending on their individual needs and preferences. At 99x, we understand that the way people work is evolving, and we are committed to staying ahead of the curve by providing our employees with the tools and resources they need to be productive and engaged, no matter where they are working from. By offering this hybrid working model, we are demonstrating our commitment to our employees and our belief in the value of a flexible and supportive work environment.

Child care support: we understand the importance of supporting our employees with families. To alleviate the stress of finding quality child care, we have formed a partnership with CeeBees Preschool and Childcare, a leading near-site child care provider. Our customized agreement offers convenient access to childcare facilities located in close proximity to our office locations for our employees who are parents. This belongs to the category of Employee benefits.

These diversity and inclusion practices are in place at 99x.

Employee mix: we are committed to promoting diversity and inclusivity in all aspects of our business. Our employee mix is well-balanced, encompassing individuals from a variety of age categories, religions, and regions of the island. We believe that a rich diversity of personalities enriches our workplace and strengthens our ability to serve our customers and clients. Furthermore, we make a deliberate effort to ensure gender diversity on our project teams and are proud to have 40% of our leading positions held by women.

Balanced interview panel: The recruitment team has implemented a balanced interview panel process to eliminate bias in the hiring process. The team strives to include at least one woman on every panel, this effort has helped to bring greater balance to the recruitment process and maintain a workforce with a higher representation of women, exceeding 30%

Xian women forum: Since 2017, we have hosted the Xian Women's Forum every quarter, which aims to create a space for all the women in the company to meet, share experiences, and discuss any issues faced in the workplace as women. We have continued this forum virtually over the years.

Multiple interview recruitment process: To ensure that candidates have the right skill set and are a good fit for our open culture, we have a recruitment process that includes multiple technical interviews, a mandatory management interview with a senior member, and a final interview with the HR team. This has helped us to ensure fairness and avoid discrimination in the recruitment process.

Chief People Officer to combat discrimination: We have a Chief People Officer whose key responsibilities include promoting diversity and employee engagement, and ensuring discrimination of any kind does not take root within our organization. Our management and leads also actively promote diversity and discourage any form of discrimination in the workplace.

Leaders without titles: 99x has an open, flat organizational structure where everyone – from an intern to a manager – is empowered to challenge and bring about change, without the fear of any repercussions. We refer to this as 'leaders without titles'

At 99x, we believe in celebrating both our successes and our failures as a way to build a strong and supportive work culture. Celebrations serve as an opportunity for our team members to come together and bond, creating a sense of camaraderie and teamwork. Some of the celebrations we have held at 99x include:

- New year celebration
- All religious festival celebrations
- Halloween
- Employee Appreciation Day
- Employee personal milestone celebration such as newborn baby and weddings
- Women's day
- Team appreciation celebration
- Excellence awards

This belongs to the category of Diversity and inclusion.

99x provides these in terms of compensation and benefits.

Salaries that are on par with market standards – this is based on the industry salary survey conducted by SLASSCOM together with PWC. This is supplemented by the following financial incentives:

- Performance based annual bonus
- Increments tied to the 360-degree appraisals
- Investing in employees via internal and external training, workshops, conferences etc., both locally and internationally
- Food and travel allowances for employees who need to work after hours to complete an urgent project requirement
- Project teams receive a quarterly allowance for a team outing
- Health insurance for all permanent employees
- Appreciation for long-standing service
- Recruitment rewards for assisting with an increased recruitment drive
- Employees are recognized with Excellence Awards at an annual function for various contributions under different categories
- The CEO's award, a memento and a cash prize, is gifted to an employee with a good work/life balance. The award winner is gifted with two custom-made gold sovereigns
- Gold sovereigns are awarded to employees who have remained dedicated to the organization for a period of 10-15 years
- Reimbursement of educational certifications and professional memberships
- Gym and swimming membership reimbursements

This belongs to the category of Compensation and benefits.

This is the corporate social responsibility and sustainability focus at 99x and activities done.

At 99x have committed to focusing on three key areas in its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives this year: health, education, and the planet.

Blood donation- Our recent blood donation event was a huge success with over 200 donors joining us. The outpouring of support from the community was truly heartwarming and demonstrated the kindness and generosity of our employees and neighbors. The donated blood will make a critical impact on the lives of countless individuals and will help to ensure a steady supply for those in need

Economic crisis - In our commitment to support those impacted by the crisis in Sri Lanka, we are proud to have joined forces with two respected organizations - UNICEF and Rotary International. Together, we are working to ensure that critical lifesaving supplies reach families in need.

Football T-shirt donation - We are thrilled to donate a set of football jerseys to the students at Hewawitharana Maha Vidyalaya in Rajagiriya. This underprivileged school will now have the necessary equipment to continue developing their skills in the field

Seruwila maha vidyalaya in Jaffna donation - In partnership with Work Vision Lanka, we donated necessary education supplies and cash to an underprivileged school Seruwila maha vidyalaya in Jaffna. This contribution will help to support the student's learning and provide them with the resources they need to succeed. We are proud to have made a positive impact on the local community and hope to continue supporting education initiatives in the future.

Planet: Tree planting "make our earth green" - In our effort to make our earth green, we recently planted 100 trees along a highway. This tree planting initiative will not only provide shade and beauty but also help to combat air pollution and mitigate the effects of climate change. We are proud to have made a positive impact on the environment.

ESG practices : At 99x, we strive to be a responsible corporate entity by focusing on our Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices. Through our ESG initiative, we are committed to promoting sustainable business practices that have a positive impact on the environment, social, and governance.

This belongs to the category of Sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

This is how 99x ensures everyone at 99x can reach their highest potential.

We strive to provide our people with several key things within the workplace. A great work-life balance, being able to work freely and independently and as an individual in the tech space – exposure to trending technologies, are just a few of those. An open culture and flat organizational structure at 99x allow us to provide our people with all these advantages and more. We create opportunities at every level for people to thrive and grow as successful professionals. Importantly, personal goals are considered and an effort is taken to align them with the overall objectives of the company.

Leaders without titles: our leaders without title concept are most important, the level of employee engagement is what makes a great workplace stand out. Our people are able to challenge norms with efficient alternatives, without any fear of repercussion. Such an environment nurtures 'leaders without titles'.

Sense of belonging: Employees need to feel a sense of belonging in a cultural context, to perform to the best of their abilities. Trust is the defining principle of a great workplace, which is created through the leadership's credibility. The respect and fairness with which employees feel they are treated, appreciation and the levels of energy that bring about employee comradeship all form the essence of a great place to work.

Trust and transparency: We always convey transparency and trust, to offer employees a greater sense of control in their professional lives. It also motivates them to pursue their aspirations with confidence, and relate their personal goals with organizational growth and success.

Opportunities to explore new avenues: 99x has an open, flat organizational structure where everyone – from an intern to a manager – is empowered to challenge and bring about change, without the fear of any repercussions. We refer to this as 'leaders without titles'.

Management by Objectives: Our corporate strategy and objectives are broken up into structured milestones that any employee can take ownership of outside their core job role, and work towards achieving. This is referred to as 'Management by Objectives' (MBOs). This goes on to create new 'blue oceans' for our employees to excel in. Any employee can take ownership of an 'MBO' outside their core job role, and work towards achieving it. All this creates opportunities to excel, refines leadership skills, and helps them map their personal goals with the organization's objectives. In addition to creating these opportunities for our employees to contribute that align with their values and goals, we've understood that they require frequent feedback and recognition of their efforts. This is inculcated into our culture through a top-down approach to encourage it at all levels and supported by both financial and non-financial merit-based incentives.

Encouraged to pursue innovative ideas: 99x inspires 'technopreneurship' among our employees and encourages the pursuing pet projects through its startup accelerator StartupX Foundry, by offering support, business acumen, and even resources to execute these ideas and fast-track them to the global marketplace. We are proud to note that two of our most successful in-house incubated startups are both driven by women: Charindra Wijemanne, Co-Founder and CTO of Maturify, and Uthpalie Thilakarathna, Co-Founder and Manager – eCommerce of Tracified.

This belongs to the category of Career development and growth.

This is about the transparent performance management system at 99x.

Career committee: At 99x, we believe in creating an inclusive and supportive work environment where every individual has the opportunity to reach their full potential. One key way we ensure this is by having a dedicated career committee composed of senior members of our organization. This committee works to help all employees. The career committee offers a variety of resources and support to employees, including personalized career development plans, mentorship programs, and training and skill-building opportunities. The committee also works to identify and remove any barriers that may prevent employees from reaching their full potential. By having a career committee and offering these resources, we are committed to supporting all of our employees in their personal and professional growth and helping them reach their highest potential.

Clear career paths, recognition, and transparent rewards: We encourage a performance-driven culture built on a proper cycle of evaluation and recognition. This happens in multiple ways but the foundation is a 360-degree evaluation for every employee, which takes into account feedback from customers, peers, seniors, juniors, and of course the employee's own comments. The effort put towards Management through Objectives, Innovative Groups, and Project Health Review receives a separate grading in the evaluation and contributes to an individual's final score. Having their efforts put towards innovation and contributing to achieving corporate objectives quantified in the annual evaluation acts as positive reinforcement, as employees are able to see how their efforts directly correlate to their career progression within the company. However, rewards and recognition are not limited to a yearly evaluation and are not purely financial. Frequent appreciation is encouraged among colleagues, teams, leads, and from leadership.

This belongs to the category of Performance management.

These are the 99x's values or guiding principles.

To co-create innovative digital products that are globally impactful, be a life partner to our employees, and make a positive influence on society.”

Brand story: As we grow rapidly, we've understood the importance of 'storytelling' to help our new recruits better understand our values and what we stand for, especially for those whom we've been onboarding virtually and have not had a physical connection as yet with any Xians. In line with this, we've created a simple brand story that reflects 99x's journey from its humble beginnings to where it is now – this story encapsulates who we are, what we do, the importance of our people, and how they support our customers.

The three Cs: Our values have been condensed into three easy-to-remember 'Cs', focusing on Client, Community and Character, under which other guiding principles have been grouped:

Expanding on guiding principles: For the Xians to better understand how they can apply the guiding principles to their day-to-day work, each principle has been very simply expanded upon:

1. Strive to deliver excellence: We build impactful digital products by striving for excellence. We aim to exceed customer expectations by consistently delivering value with quality.
2. Innovate and solve problems: We are curious and innovative to fulfill our end-user's needs and wants. Our proven expertise enables us to do this repeatedly to produce impactful digital products.
3. Push boundaries courageously: We don't blindly follow instructions. We challenge ourselves to see how things can be done better and are brave enough to champion these ideas.
4. Elevate one another: We are quick to celebrate team accomplishments and any Xian's success. 99x and fellow Xians invest, mentor, and encourage each other.
5. Celebrate diversity: We have an equal opportunity, inclusive culture that genuinely welcomes and cares about each employee. Our caring culture overflows to impact those around us.
6. Nurture trust in an open culture: We are successful because of the mutual trust and respect among all Xians. We choose to do the right thing even when no one is watching.
7. Embrace the freedom to lead: We embrace the freedom given to take ownership and lead and are never restricted by a title. Our company is a place where everyone is a leader.
8. Contribute through our passions: We pursue our passions and contribute to the local and global industry. Our outstanding thought leaders reach great heights globally.
9. Learn and improve continuously: We keep ourselves current through continuous learning. We believe in constant improvement and will never settle for ordinary results.
10. Become model global citizens: We strive to be exemplary, responsible citizens who genuinely care for the society and environment around us. We are disciplined, accountable, and transparent and aim to do the right thing, always.

This belongs to the category of 99x values and guiding principles.

This is the strategy and philosophy that 99x follows for ensuring a successful business.

99x's philosophy, or long-term purpose, is simple: "To co-create innovative digital products that are globally impactful, be a life partner to our employees, and make a positive influence on society." We understand that it is these three factors that have helped us build a sustainable, successful business and that focusing on this three-pronged philosophy will ensure that we continue to do so in the long term.

Amidst the economic downturn, our primary short-term strategy has been centered on our most valuable asset: our employees. Our aim has been to weather this difficult period without having to lay off a single team member, despite the challenges we have faced. Our approach to business and our strategies have been structured around this crucial short-term objective. Additionally, we have also established a long-term strategy aimed at safeguarding both the business and our people during these financially challenging times. This includes the introduction of the GDS initiative, (Global delivery strategy) which will help us to achieve our goals in a sustainable manner

Our CEO declared this the 'A Year to Reset and Rebuild' where we as a company while staying true to our long-term objectives of delivering value to our customers, ensuring employee wellbeing, and accelerating customer acquisition, would need to find newer ways of achieving these objectives in the light of the 'New Normal'.

A key trait of our leadership is the flatness of the organizational structure. The management team forms the top tier of decision-makers, followed by the Corporate Leadership team forming the middle management. This is rounded off by the project leads, who are the day-to-day decision-makers within their project teams. This decentralization of responsibility and leadership ensures that Xians at all levels get actively involved in contributing towards achieving both the short-term and long-term company strategies, as opposed to a top-down approach, creating leaders at all levels.

This belongs to the category of Strategy and goal setting.

This is how strategy, business direction, and goals developed and communicated across the 99x.

Strategy development

A collaborative approach is followed in developing the strategy, business direction and goals, together with the management, corporate leadership and heads of departments and key project accounts. While the management maps the company's long-term strategy (5-year plan) based on forecasts, market behaviors and targets, the annual strategy and objectives are developed together with the corporate leadership and heads of departments and key project accounts.

As these teams and leaders are given the freedom and ownership to innovate and come up with creative solutions throughout the year to achieve corporate objectives, involving them at the strategizing phase brings in their collective inputs from the very beginning, and allows the leadership to build a robust, all-encompassing and achievable strategy, as opposed to following a purely top-down approach.

Future planning: In order to assess changes in the business environment and map future scenarios, specialized teams conduct market research, continuously work on our recruitment strategies to meet our targets, and carry out assessments in areas such as currency fluctuations to better understand what we should prepare for in the coming years.

Extensive workshop: The process commences with an extensive workshop with the management, corporate leadership, and heads of departments and key project accounts. First, the performance for the year is reviewed, with learnings and improvements identified. The second half of the workshop focuses on identifying the corporate objectives for the coming year, based on the outcomes of the year gone by and future forecasts. Based on the information gathered at this workshop, the corporate objectives are identified for the following year.

Management by Objectives: The Corporate Objectives are broken down into correlating goals and key results and entered into the Management by Objectives platform. This allows leads, heads of departments, corporate leadership and management to work on the listed key results throughout the year in a proactive manner, tracking progress and working together to achieve an overarching goal.

Innovatives Model: To ensure that all our employees are able to actively contribute towards achieving corporate objectives, these goals and key results are trickled down into the Innovatives Platform and converted into KPIs for individual Innovative Groups to achieve, by conducting a range of activities throughout the year.

Departmental ownership: Activity and progress on key results are further decentralized to relevant departments (technology dept, delivery dept, HR, business development etc.), who take ownership of the objectives that directly correlate to their work. These departments then work closely with the leadership and the leads of Innovatives that fall within their scope, playing a role of mentorship and guidance, to ensure that all teams are working on achieving the same objectives, with no overlap of work.

Tracking progress: Progress on reaching corporate objectives and closing off on key results are constantly monitored in a number of ways.

MBOs for Impact: This dashboard tracks the progress of the Management by Objectives and key results completed.

Regular meetings: The various leads and departments involved in the strategy execution meet on a regular basis. This includes a weekly resource meeting, weekly management meeting, bi-weekly support management meeting, monthly leads meeting and many more among smaller, more specialised groups. Eg: Monthly Architects' Forum

Innovative Groups quarterly review: Innovative Groups are subjected to a quarterly review conducted by the Innovative Drive Team, who assess the activities carried out by the groups and how they've reached the KPIs assigned to them. The feedback from these review meetings detailed above are ploughed back into continuous activities to ensure the achievement of the corporate strategy and objectives for the year. The above model ensures that leads at all levels understand the future goals of the company and get actively involved in shaping the strategy for the year to come. The unique platforms at different lead levels (MBOs and Innovatives) ensure that all Xians are able to contribute to the best of their abilities to achieving 99x's corporate objectives, by launching innovative solutions of their own making.

This belongs to the category of Strategy and goal setting.

These are employees kept aware of company strategy at 99x.

Strategy communication

Additionally, all staff are kept up to date regularly on the company's overall progress and operational updates via the following methods:

Quarterly GSMs: An all staff general staff meeting takes place every quarter at which a highly detailed operations update is shared, along with information about new customers onboarded, recruitment status, notable achievements and more (covered in more detail under Section - Speaking). Every session includes an 'Ask Anything Hour', a session that allows any Xian to pose questions to members of the management

Leads Forum: Every month, all the leads and above from different projects, departments and initiatives gather (now virtually) to discuss their work, challenges they face and the steps can be taken to improve etc., progress on achieving project and corporate goals and any impediments faced in doing so. Leads are encouraged to communicate important updates to members of their teams and each session is recorded so anyone who misses the forum can quickly get up to date by watching the recording or reading the meeting minutes, stored in our shared company wiki.

Company-wide emails: While we prefer communicating with employees directly on calls or at meetings, it is not possible to do so very frequently, especially with the current WFH scenario. Regular operational updates and important news is shared via a companywide mail to keep all employees up to date on organizational developments.

This belongs to the category of Strategy and goal setting.

This is how the strategy communicated and implemented in 99x.

Strategy implementation: Communication of the new Global delivery model

The strategies outlined above came to the fore in the communication of a landmark event in 99x's 15+ year journey. In 2021, the company underwent a capital restructuring program, through which it received \$20 million of investment from a Scandinavian private equity company. In the year 2022 with the political and economic unrest and considering the business continuing and safeguarding our employees the team introduced the global delivery model.

99x's leadership understood the importance of communicating this properly and clearly with all its stakeholders. The news was first communicated to the senior leadership and at a lead level, to ensure that the middle management at 99x clearly understood what was taking place and was prepared to respond to questions from their teammates. The news was then communicated via an all-staff email by our CEO Mano and was raised at a year kick-off, where employees were encouraged to clear any doubts and questions they had during the 'Ask Anything' segment.

Only after it was communicated to staff was the news released to our existing customers – again, this ensured that our employees were all equipped to respond to any queries from the customers they work with. Once these key stakeholders were informed, the news was rolled out to the general public in the form of interviews and press releases in both Sri Lanka and Norway.

The strategies in place and modes of two-way communication at all levels ensured that this milestone was clearly and smoothly communicated not just to our employees but to all stakeholders,

The change in our business model was touched on at the point of announcing the above milestone and was revisited at the end of the year during the strategy workshops to plan for the next 1-3 years. These workshops encompass the senior leadership and middle management. The senior leadership carefully explained the new approach and fresh market segments 99x is aiming for, and encouraged everyone to incorporate this new vision into the plans being formulated for the next 1-5 years.

This was done successfully via the plans formulated by the departments and pitched to 99x's new Board of Directors who were impressed by the level of planning and strategy. These plans have now been rolled out across the company in the form of Management by Objectives (MBOs) and Innovatives, for all employees to work towards achieving.

New products and services exported driven by 99x's strategy and implementation

Our decentralized structure came to the fore here – while the core leadership focused on adapting our short-term strategy to rapidly changing market needs and safeguarding employees, the technology department was empowered and capable of shaping up new service offerings to export to international markets, all while WFH, through online collaboration.

This belongs to the category of Strategy and goal setting.

These are the core 99x service offerings.

Full stack development

The advancements in web and mobile clients, new server and database development frameworks, languages and tools, require developers with a diverse skillset. 99x is uniquely positioned to provide key elements that create the right environment for full stack developers to harness and maintain their skillset of end-to-end application development, rapid technology adoption and also the culture of learning and sharing.

Blockchain

With a profile in blockchain development spanning many years, 99x helps businesses rethink integrations with their partners and across their own organization. Use blockchain to harness new opportunities in information exchange and automation. We can support you in building use cases as well as augment your R&D efforts. We have applied blockchain in multiple domains such as supply chain, utilities and content curation. We are also working on 'Zero Knowledge Proofs' which will power the next generation of blockchains enabling ultimate privacy for business and personal data.

Cloud enablement

With a strong team of skilled engineers and architects, we help our clients accelerate their Cloud journey. 99x's services range from architecting, building, migrating, operational support and carrying out due diligence activities for our clients. We also specialize in Serverless and Cloud automation with both AWS and Azure. With our core competence in software product engineering, we leverage Cloud platforms to innovate faster with strong DevOps.

Machine learning

We offer machine intelligence consulting ranging from cognitive services to deep learning implementations. A strong team of experts drive machine intelligence projects through a commercially adapted process that maximizes the likelihood of generating substantial business value. Our core strength lies in experience in applying machine intelligence in multiple domains and a highly qualified, process-oriented team with strong research skills.

Security as a Service

In parallel to the above activities to attract new customers, we also rapidly developed new offerings for our existing customers, one of the most strategic ones being the 'Security as a Service' offering. Industries and organizations globally were racing to go digital and with that came the increase in security risks. Understanding this, our internal security experts came together to rapidly launch this innovative solution, targeting the current needs of our customers.

This belongs to the category of Service offerings.

This is how 99x involves employees in developing new ideas and better ways of doing things that result in real improvements to your business performance.

Our open and diverse workplace encourages all employees to get involved in every aspect of the company's operations – it is constantly inspiring to witness what they come up with, the impact it has on our business's performance and operations and the heights to which our employees push themselves to achieve greater things. Employees are encouraged to do so in a structured manner, with mentorship provided from the leadership and a continuous review and rewards mechanism inbuilt, to keep them motivated, as is outlined in the practices given below:

Leaders Without Titles: 99x has an open, flat organizational structure where everyone – from an intern to a manager – are empowered to challenge and bring about change, without the fear of any repercussions. We refer to this as 'leaders without titles'. Additionally, corporate strategy and objectives are broken up into structured milestones that any employee can take ownership of outside their core job role, and work towards achieving. This creates new 'blue oceans' for our employees to excel in. Further, 99x inspires 'technopreneurship' among its employees and encourages the pursuing pet projects through its startup accelerator StartupX Foundry, by offering support, business acumen and even resources to execute these ideas and fast-track them to the global marketplace.

Management by Objectives: The Corporate Objectives are broken down into correlating goals and key results and entered into the Management by Objectives platform. This allows leads, heads of departments, corporate leadership and management to work on the listed key results throughout the year in a proactive manner, tracking progress and working together to achieve an overarching goal.

Innovatives Model: To ensure that all our employees are able to actively contribute towards achieving corporate objectives, these goals and key results are trickled down into the Innovatives Platform and converted into KPIs for individual Innovative Groups to achieve, by conducting a range of activities throughout the year.

Creating all-rounders: We believe in building all-rounders, not just technically adept professionals. 99x's ecosystem therefore is set up to help our employees create their own brand and profile within the local and global tech space, with multiple platforms and mentorship programmes initiated to inspire them to step out of their comfort zone and grow, while giving back to the IT community at large through experience and knowledge sharing. We also encourage our people to get involved with professional bodies and spearhead tech communities such as SLASSCOM, AWS User Group Meetup, Colombo Blockchain Meetup and more.

Aligning organizational goals with employee expectations: As detailed above, 99x's corporate strategy and objectives are broken up into structured milestones that any employee can take ownership of outside their core job role, and work towards achieving. All this creates opportunities to excel, refines leadership skills and helps them map their personal goals with the organization's objectives. In addition to creating these opportunities for our employees to contribute that align with their values and goals, we've understood that our people require frequent feedback and recognition of their efforts. This is inculcated into our culture through a top-down approach to encourage it at all levels and supported by both financial and non-financial merit-based incentives.

Merit-based 360 degree performance evaluation: Our comprehensive 360-degree performance evaluation (covered in detail under Section - Listening) encompasses feedback from customers, leads and peers, who are able to give feedback and appreciation for innovations and novel activities carried out by an individual during the year. Additionally, the evaluation specifically requires all assessors to evaluate all individuals on 'Innovation' under the 'General Competencies' section. Efforts put towards Management by Objectives, Innovative Groups and Project Health Review (described below) receive a separate grading in the evaluation, and contribute to an individual's final score. Having their efforts put towards innovation and contributing to achieving corporate objectives quantified in the annual evaluation acts as positive reinforcement, as employees are able to see how their efforts directly correlate to their career progression within the company.

Fostering Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurship is essential to the global economy – it drives innovation and is a way of competing with businesses, big and small. Understanding this, in addition to their core work, we also encourage our employees to accelerate their ideas to market through our own startup incubator. We are proud to note that two of our most successful in-house incubated startups are both driven by women: Charindra Wijemanne, Co-Founder and CTO of Maturify and Uthpalie Thilakarathna, Co-Founder and Manager – eCommerce of Tracified.

Mentorship to students: At 99x, we realize the need to inspire the future generation. To this end, 99x's women conduct in-depth one-to-one mentoring sessions with undergraduates throughout the year. These include technical skills strengthening, soft skills development, overseeing final year projects, sessions by our senior ladies on work-life balance and importantly, educating them on the various careers available within the IT industry, so that young women end up in jobs that they truly enjoy, match their skill set and therefore makes it less likely for them to drop out.

This belongs to the category of Strategy and goal setting.

These are some of the forums through which 99x employees contribute back to the industry.

Encouraging participation in industry initiatives: There have been several initiatives launched by industry bodies to further the role of women in the workplace, and we encourage our employees to get actively involved in them:

SLASSCOM Women Technopreneurs Forum: Shehani Seneviratne is a founding member of this newly established forum, which aims to support women-led startups, and she is supported by Xians Uthpalie Thilakaratne.

Other SLASSCOM Forums: The Xian ladies maintain an active presence in other SLASSCOM forums and initiatives such as the Entrepreneurship Forum (of which Xian Charindra Wijemanne is co-lead), HR Forum (which Shehani Seneviratne drives), Marketing Forum, Quality Forum and more.

Encouraging speaking engagements at industry and university forums: We encourage all our employees to build up their personal brand by presenting and speaking at industry and university events. We see many Xian ladies stepping up outside their comfort zones to showcase their knowledge to their industry peers.

#XianHeroes series - This is a series that focuses on the innovative and out-of-the-box work that our people, the Xians, do. The series is shared across all our social media platforms and empowers our employees and a focused effort is made to highlight the work of our workforce. It highlights the activities done within the company as well as their and promotes their achievements among our customers and extended community.

This belongs to the category of Sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

These are some of the internal process improvement platforms and products built by 99x.

The following are examples of platforms and solutions developed in the past two years by Xians outside our research teams, after identifying a pain point or area of improvement in how we work, or with the vision to create something completely new that could improve the company's overall performance – financially and operationally. While they received the encouragement and support from the company and colleagues in executing the idea, every product listed below was ideated by individual Xian and followed through by them:

Product Health Review (PHR) Process: We at 99x conduct ISO audits and the Product Maturity audit to monitor the health of a digital product. However, this audit culture did not fit well with the objectives of the stakeholders involved in the whole process of product engineering. Understanding the need to come up with a process that addressed the requirements of different stakeholders and avoided the cumbersome nature of conducting audits, the members of the 99x audit team together introduced the Product Health Review (PHR) to cater to all these objectives, in the form of an iterative process to improve product health.

After executing the 2nd PHR review cycle, we have seen that teams have done well in the impact score, which shows the visible buy-in for PHR by the product teams compared to the audit-based process. One of our newer projects, which had technical gaps, has shown a great improvement in customer satisfaction after the improvements made via the product health reviews. Further, this new process has shown a 60% improvement in review efficiency, which previously was a high overhead on reviewers when we had the audit-based process. This new process has saved the time of reviewers as well as product teams.

DevGrade: The brainchild of a group of Xians who identified many loopholes in how we conducted technical assessments when recruitment, DevGrade is an inbuilt technical assessment platform, DevGrade is a tool that manages the technical assessments of a candidate throughout the entire interview process. Further details and impact on end-to-end recruitment process covered in detail under

Bonfire for Workplaces: Created by an Xian who identified gaps in employee engagement as the company grew and the workforce had to work from multiple locations, thereby not meeting certain teams other than at office events, Bonfire for Workplaces is a mobile and web-based corporate engagement app. Further details, new features and impact on employee engagement covered under.

GoodTimes: Until recently, the company used an expensive external tool for tracking activity and time logged on projects. It was cumbersome and incurred a high cost, especially as the company kept growing exponentially, requiring more licenses to use the tool. Identifying these issues, members of our Internal Systems Innovative Group worked tirelessly on a time porting tool titled 'GoodTimes', which was launched last year to great success. Now, GoodTimes is used by over 350 employees with the team driving new updates based on real time feedback. It has also brought about a massive cost benefit for the company as this is a free internally built tool with the team providing support as and when required.

This belongs to the category of Process improvement

These are some of the internal process improvement platforms and products built by 99x.

Time Porting Portal: A second platform to support GoodTimes described above, the same Internal Systems Innovative Group was the brainchild behind this innovation. This simple time porting system allows employees to port time at the end of the month and generate team-wise and organisation-wise reports on hours worked.

Internal application dashboard: With the many apps and innovations being built by Xians, the next problem we encountered was being able to easily access all of them! The internal application dashboard was created to address this specific pain point and displays all the applications used across departments in the company, in one easy-to-access cloud space.

Project Dashboard: Previously, the different measures and indexes used to measure the health of a project were documented in multiple places and generating reports for an easy overview used to be a cumbersome task. Identifying this pain point, the Internal Systems team visualized and created the 'Project Dashboard', a one-stop shop that documents all the measurements of a project including team satisfaction, customer satisfaction, billable utilization and more.

EnnobleX: A technical onboarding model spearheaded by our Emerging Leadership Team. The pilot programme was completed for 10 employees and 11 mentors. Covered in detail further above in this section (Innovation for all) and under Section - Hiring and Welcoming.

XianInsight: An internal team rapidly implemented an internal COVID-19 contact tracing dashboard 'XianInsight', which has access to data on employee locations, contacts and general travel mode to identify high risks and rapidly assist employees on any urgent needs they have.

99x OpenSource portal: The passionate young Xians of the 99x Open Source Innovative Group, in addition to sending out monthly updates companywide on what's hot in Open Source, created a dedicated webpage for open source projects built by our own employees. The portal includes a dedicated page for global Open Source events 99x employees can contribute to and improve their standing in the global Open Source community: <https://opensource.99x.io/>

Winning Products platform: Our in-house developed Winning Product Framework was used to develop one of the top tools in the Norwegian market on privacy compliance for our client Sureway. This and many other success stories from our clients prove that a brilliant idea does not guarantee a successful product. A lot of good ideas fail in the market mainly due to a lack of attention to market winning factors. The lack of a centralized or comprehensive knowledge base where an aspiring software product company could gain access to this information led to the launch of Winning Product. Winning Product innovation enables knowledge sharing and learning in an easy open-source format through online platforms and is very rewarding with certifications. It provides access to audit tools to verify your idea before entering the market.

This belongs to the category of Process improvement

This is how 99x has responded to the economic crisis in Sri Lanka.

Pegging salaries of our employees and supporting startups during the adverse economic downturn - 99x we took a bold act of leadership to improve the root conditions necessary to create great workplaces for all by pegging the salaries of all our employees. This decision was made in light of the current economic conditions and inflation in the country, with the goal of providing financial stability and security for our employees. This decision has had a positive impact on our people, as it has helped them to better manage the current economic challenges and has given them the peace of mind that comes with financial security. It has also helped to boost morale and improve employee satisfaction, as our employees feel valued and appreciated by the company. In terms of business impact, this decision has helped to attract and retain top talent, as it demonstrates our commitment to our employees and our willingness to invest in their future. It has also helped to foster a positive work culture, where employees feel supported and empowered to perform at their best. In terms of impact on the community, this decision has helped to support local businesses and the wider economy, as our employees are now able to spend more money on goods and services. Additionally, it has helped to set an example for other companies, demonstrating the importance of valuing and supporting employees in times of economic uncertainty. Our organization took a proactive approach in addressing the challenges faced by start-ups and businesses during the country's bad economic performance and persistent power cuts. Recognizing the impact this was having on the community, we made the decision to provide a workplace for everyone as an incubator. Our goal was to support the community and provide a solution to the ongoing power interruption issue.

This decision has had a positive impact on start-ups and businesses within the community, as it has provided them with a stable and reliable working environment. The incubator has allowed these businesses to continue their operations and overcome the challenges posed by the power cuts. This, in turn, has helped to support the local economy and provided a much-needed boost to the community.

Moreover, the incubator has provided a platform for collaboration and networking, allowing businesses to connect, share ideas, and support each other in their growth. This has helped to foster a supportive and inclusive business environment and has contributed to the overall success of the start-ups and businesses within the community.

In conclusion, our decision to provide a workplace for everyone as an incubator was a proactive and innovative solution to the challenges faced by the community during the country's bad economic performance and power cuts. It has had a positive impact on start-ups, businesses, and the community as a whole, and has demonstrated our commitment to supporting and empowering the local economy.

Overall, our decision to peg the salaries of all our employees was a bold act of leadership that has had a positive impact on our employees, business, and community. It has demonstrated our commitment to creating great workplaces for all and has helped to improve the root conditions necessary for success.

Hybrid working model – our organization took a bold act of leadership to improve the root conditions necessary to create great workplaces for all by adopting a hybrid working environment. This decision was made with the goal of providing employees with the flexibility and support they need to balance their work and personal lives.

The transition to a hybrid working environment has had a significant impact on our people, as it has allowed them to work from the comfort of their own homes, reducing commute times and stress levels. It has also allowed for better work-life balance, leading to increased job satisfaction and improved employee wellbeing.

In terms of business impact, the hybrid working environment has resulted in increased productivity, as employees are able to focus on their work without the distractions of a traditional office setting. It has also allowed for greater collaboration and teamwork, as employees are able to communicate and work together more effectively through virtual tools and platforms.

In terms of impact on the community, the hybrid working environment has reduced traffic and pollution levels, as fewer employees are commuting to and from the office. It has also allowed for greater economic opportunities, as employees are now able to work from any location, regardless of proximity to the office.

Overall, our decision to adopt a hybrid working environment was a bold act of leadership that has had a positive impact on our employees, business, and community. It has demonstrated our commitment to creating great workplaces for all and has helped to improve the root conditions necessary for success.

Global delivery strategy – With the ongoing challenges posed by the current economic situation, our goal was to ensure the stability and sustainability of our business, while also looking after our employees.

The implementation of a global delivery strategy has allowed us to diversify our workforce, with employees located in different regions and time zones. This has provided us with greater flexibility and resilience, enabling us to respond to changing market conditions and continue to deliver projects effectively, even in adverse situations.

The global delivery strategy has also had a positive impact on our employees, as it has provided them with job security and a supportive working environment, regardless of their location. By hiring employees globally, we have been able to maintain our commitment to looking after our people, even in challenging circumstances. In terms of business impact, the global delivery strategy has allowed us to provide our clients with high-quality services, regardless of their location. It has also allowed us to explore new markets and opportunities, leading to increased growth and success.

This belongs to the category of Risk management.

This is how 99x helped Autotech Development launch a digital platform to simplify digital learning.

Autotech Development: Simplifying digital learning

Anna Elvnejd, Anders Stenmark, Co-founders

Anna Elvnejd and Anders Stenmark are Co-founders of Autotech Development, a subsidiary of Autotech Teknikinformation AB, Sweden, that has a 30-year history in producing learning content, visualizations, and product documentation for both the private and public sectors. Autotech Development's core product Sparkfore, is a subscription-based learning platform with a mission to simplify e-learning. Unlike traditional learning management systems, Sparkfore's primary focus is on companies that need to deliver training or educational content to their customers or resellers.

Describing the roots of the company, Anna stated, "We are from a family of companies focusing on creating and delivering e-learning content. We had an e-learning platform based on Moodle that we offered to clients without a system of their own. While we delivered services and charged for these customisations, our customers weren't willing to pay for the support to maintain and upgrade the system. Even worse, by offering this system on a consultancy basis, the quality of it decreased as applying security fixes and new functionality became something that we did once a year at the most, often with low profitability. Towards the end of 2020, we were discussing how to make the best use of the learning management platform and we decided to form the new subsidiary that Anders and I are leading now. It's been one and a half years since we started the journey."

Commenting on Sparkfore's focus, Anders added, "We've been developing Sparkfore to become a modern SaaS solution for organizations to deliver their training. Our target group are companies that provide training to other companies as their core business. These are companies who need to train or educate their customers about their products and services and our platform enables that. Our ambition is to grow in the next three years to become the leading European provider in this space."

Reflecting on how they discovered 99x, Anna said it was down to a trustworthy recommendation. "We needed more developers and we put out ads here in Sweden. The responses we received was not giving us the extra value we were looking for. That's when Anders got to know about 99x through a mutual contact who had done some work with 99x in the past. That made it a simple decision for us to engage because the recommendation was from a person we trusted. We were impressed with the solution 99x could provide where instead of employing developers here, we had the option to have a remote team and receive the expertise you have within this field. This was a very good option for us in this journey as we moved from the consultancy business to launching a new product online."

The skillset was especially important to Anders. "As Anna said, when we were looking to hire additional developers here in Sweden, we couldn't find someone with a broad skillset as we wanted. One of the key values that 99x brings to the table is that you have very skilled people, but in addition to that you give us access to the entire pool of skilled people. So, when we are venturing into something new, our development team has access to people who might have done something similar before and can ask them for advice." Anna added, "Yes, that has been helpful. From day one, we had meetings on the system architecture and solution approach. We were able to get advice to select the right tools and frameworks and so on. We are happy we had that collaboration before starting off with the two developers we have on our team. As Anders said, we really appreciate that additional expertise that 99x provides. We had lots of ideas based on the trends that we saw as features to be included in the product. 99x helped us to take it step by step to reach these goals."

As co-founders building a SaaS product, Anna and Anders are beginning to enjoy the ride. They have discovered what it takes to make that shift and become a product-oriented company. Anna commented, "While we took a bit of time at the start to get to speed, the contribution has been great after that. We also had input on how to improve our work processes. That has also helped us to improve how we collaborate and move forward." On what it takes for a successful distributed team, Anders shared, "Communication is key. To communicate clearly about the overall scope of the project as well as the nitty-gritty details. I think you also need to get to know the people and understand what their strengths are and their areas of expertise."

"Skilled and professional", that's how Anders described his experience working with the 99x team in two words. Anna's response, "Hmmm, maybe contributory, competent, proactive.... I need more time to decide!"

This belongs to the category of Customer case study.

This is how 99x helped Trintech (formerly adra) launch a digital product to enable a faster financial close.

Trintech – Digitally enabling a faster financial close

Karl Bendixby – Vice President Global Engineering, Trintech

Oyvind Kleppe – Outsourcing Manager, Trintech

Trintech software is the global leader in the 'financial close' software space. Trintech's Cadency is built for large enterprises while the adra product suite, with its roots in Scandinavia, caters to mid-sized companies. Today, Trintech solutions are used by most Fortune 100 companies and over 3,500 mid-sized organizations to streamline high-volume transactions, perform account reconciliation, assure compliance efforts, and speed up their month-end close.

Oyvind Kleppe, Outsourcing Manager started with Trintech in June 1997 and has been with the company for 25 years. He has been part of 99x's engagement at Trintech since its inception in 2011. Oyvind reflected on the initial collaboration. "We teamed up with 99x in 2011 and had our first planning sessions in September. We still have two team members who have been with us since that first interaction. In 2012, we started development of the new cloud-based adra product suite. Working with 99x, we progressively launched single-page applications on Azure for adra Balancer in 2012, Task Manager in 2015, Matcher in 2019, Analytics in 2020. Each a significant milestone in our product journey. It was great to celebrate our 10-year anniversary with the team last September." In his role, Oyvind is responsible for the 38 engineers Trintech has in Sri Lanka.

Karl Bendixby, Vice President, Global Engineering joined Trintech in September 2018. Karl has global responsibility for everything engineering and SaaS-ops related to the adra product suite. Prior to joining Trintech, he was in various roles in small and large Norwegian software companies for the past 19 years. Karl reports to the CTO of Trintech and is responsible for an engineering team with staff in Norway, Sweden, the United States and Sri Lanka.

Karl commented on how he sees his distributed team. "We work in a highly collaborative form and make the different locations work to our advantage. There is never a 'my task' or 'your task'! We treat our teams in Sri Lanka as we treat any other employee at Trintech. Even though they are technically employed by 99x, it's one team. We have the architectural and technical authority so to speak in Scandinavia, but when making decisions they are always based on discussions between teams in Scandinavia and Sri Lanka. Our way of working has grown over time and is now part of our DNA."

Oyvind touched on the close relationships formed through the years. "The team at 99x think they are part of the Trintech team as well and it's natural they work that way. We have had 99x team members presenting solutions directly to our executive leadership team along the way. We have had team members directly engaging with customers when needed and we have had larger parts of our global organization like customer support, product management, sales and professional services reach out directly to the team in 99x whenever they need support from engineering. It doesn't matter if they are Trintech employees or 99x. The team at 99x is integrated in all we do."

Describing how he empowers teams, Karl commented, "We try to strive for as much autonomy as possible between teams and make it an agile process. We can do this because the team consists of skilled resources. We are not just buying bandwidth from Colombo but building a senior, capable team. My job is to ensure that they have direction, clarity, and the autonomy to build without distractions. It's not micromanaged. It's about letting super-skilled people do what they are best at, while ensuring alignment along the way."

Oyvind touched on some practices that the team has adopted to eliminate wasted effort. "We may be semi-traditional when it comes to tools. We use the Atlassian suite, Jira, Scrums and Confluence as a base. New features are mocked up and recorded in Confluence. As soon as a developer has something to show, he has a call with the Solution Owner for a walkthrough. They are also available for frequent calls for any clarifications as they pop up."

Karl summarized working with 99x as an offshore partner. "Compared to other countries I've had outsourcing relationships with, taking Sri Lanka as a country and 99x as a company, our experience has surely been positive. 99x is a very professional partner to do business with. You are reliable, deliver what has been agreed upon and have a great internal culture. We have access to talent and the skill sets we need. What matters most to me is that you have invested into our success as well".

Sharing his closing thoughts on what makes an outsourced relationship successful, Oyvind added, "You must always remember that even though they are based somewhere far away, they have children too. What I mean by that is that they are people, who are motivated by the same things as a developer in Dallas or Oslo or wherever. You must treat them and engage them in the same way as you will do with a colleague seated right next to you. You must invest in building relationships."

This belongs to the category of Customer case study.

This is how 99x helped Carcare to drive profitability through process automation by building a digital platform.

Carcare: Driving profitability through process automation

Lars Eriksson, Chief Executive Officer - Carcare

Carcare commenced operations in December 2019. Lars Eriksson, CEO, reflected on the early years and the product journey. "We are a startup focused on the automotive industry, mainly car dealers consisting of both franchisees and multi-franchisees. What we do is to automate every aspect relating to purchase and delivery of a motor vehicle from a dealership. The process starts when you order a new car and ends when you receive it as an end customer. We automate and track everything in-between. When it's at the factory, when it's on the boat, when it's on a truck and all the way through to pre-delivery inspections and service. We also cover used cars as well, tracking inspections, tests and fixes needed before delivery."

"We stumbled on this opportunity because the automotive industry is changing towards a new distribution model where more vehicles are sold through an agent. What that means for a dealer is that their margins are compressed, and they don't have the same control over their margins as before. So, process automation becomes more important to bring in efficiencies at every stage. It wasn't a big issue before, but now, it is something you must control when you are buying or selling cars."

A key driver for this is the electrification and rise of electric vehicle sales across the world. New brands such as Tesla, Neo and Rivian don't have the costs of maintaining expansive dealer networks when compared to traditional manufacturers like Mercedes or Volkswagen. As a result, they earn more money per car sold. The legacy brands are compelled to lower their costs and have transitioned to a model of trying to sell the cars themselves. This compresses the margins available to dealers, driving the need for greater efficiencies through process automation, providing a business opportunity for Carcare.

Commenting on their growth journey, Lars added, "We are present in Sweden, Norway, and Finland today, with Sweden being our home market. We started exploring Norway and Finland only in January 2022. From a global perspective, these markets are quite small. However, in terms of managing the transition to electric cars, we are front-runners as Norway ranks on top in adopting electric vehicles. We see several Chinese brands coming in as well creating more disruption. We hope to incorporate all these learnings into our product as we go to other markets."

"In the beginning, it was a small team in Sweden who set the foundations of the core product. But when we started seeing a lot of interest in the platform, we realized the need to scale the development of the platform much faster and in a more structured way. It was impossible to do this in Sweden due to the high competition for tech talent and that's when we stumbled across 99x. It was a recommendation from one of our investors who had already worked with 99x before. So, we were willing to try it out."

Describing the engagement with 99x, Lars commented, "We had some experience working with a remote team in India while in another company. However, there was quite a difference in a positive way when working with 99x. The main reason for this was cultural adaptation. The developers from 99x would question things more, and they would speak up and collaborate. As a development team, they brought in a lot more business value to the product than any other supplier we have worked with. 99x has become like our regular employees and I think that it is a great way to scale together and create business value. We work just as closely with the teams in Sri Lanka as those here in Sweden. One incident I remember is when someone from the team in Colombo reached out and suggested we do a games night. I was really pleased to see the initiative and how such events contribute to build one solid team. Something we have learned over time is to really focus on quality. We would rather do things very well, than try to do them fast. Also, in terms of recruiting, we really want to find that special one who fits us and would stay with the team in the long term."

"Too short!", was the phrase Lars used to describe his first visit to Colombo in early 2022. "I will extend my next visit by a few more days to see the countryside and experience nature a bit more. Colombo was nice but I've seen pictures of your mountains and it seems like heading into a fairytale land. I surely plan to do that next time."

When asked to describe 99x in three words, Lars shared, "Quality, business value and recruiting at scale" at the top of the list. "I'm glad that 99x is able to keep pace with our growth needs."

This belongs to the category of Customer case study.

This is how 99x helped Culture Intelligence AS to radically improve their assessment platform.

Culture Intelligence: We radically improve how people work together to create value

Oyvind Tveit, Chief Technology Officer, Culture Intelligence

Oyvind's interactions with Cultural Intelligence and 99x goes back many years to his previous company 4Subsea. "I founded 4Subsea in 2007 with six others. We provided engineering and digitalisation services to oil and gas companies in the region. We began to focus on culture and the role it plays in companies early on. I engaged with Tone Ringstad, the CEO of Culture Intelligence way back then and my current role fully aligned to a cause that is important to me. I believe culture determines the successful execution of a company's strategy – both then and now." The Culture Intelligence platform provides a base for companies to assess and map their culture across multiple parameters to formulate a Culture Code that best aligns to its business strategy. This model can then be used to create an engaging culture journey towards that goal. Commenting on how he encountered 99x, "I first heard about 99x through PuzzlePart AS, a former customer. Years later when I wanted to scale our efforts at 4Subsea, I reached out and renewed my ties with 99x. I've had long-term relationships with at least some of your developers."

Oyvind's role at Culture Intelligence is all about connecting the business model to technology, aligning how these two areas converge to add value. His technical focus is not limited to the software and development processes but also covers quality initiatives and ISO 27001 certification. He also acts as the Product Owner for the SaaS solution and works closely with the development team at 99x. Commenting on his role, "We are looking at a business transformation at Culture Intelligence as well. It's like what took place at 4Subsea but broader. What started out as a specialist consulting services company must make a shift to a SaaS business model."

Sharing his experience on working with the offshore team, Oyvind stated, "We have an excellent relationship with the team and work closely in an agile manner. Continuous improvement is important to us, and we have an adaptable team to make this happen. When Peter Lillevold joined us as an Architect, we adopted this saying which is close to our hearts – 'The only way to go fast is to go well'. It is like our creed on how to engage and be successful together as an engineering team."

"When we joined the team, this was one aspect of the team culture we had to work on. I often see developers pushed by clients to take shortcuts, believing that it will make development faster. But Peter and I believe we must move forward at a sustainable pace. That implies we do everything in a proper manner from the start. Take unit testing for example. Everyone agrees it is important and we should have high unit test coverage. But it was not natural for the team to make the tests before they wrote code and we wanted to change that. We introduced 'Unit Test Fridays' where we brought in that focus by allocating 20% of our time to make this shift. By doing this change, we moved to a more test-driven development model. And speaking of culture, this is a strategy for changing the team culture."

"I strongly believe in doing what is 'Important but not urgent' as that is the only way for successful product development in the long-term. The team is quite happy in how we work, and we collaborate transparently. We use Slack, Productboard, Azure DevOps and Confluence to organize ourselves efficiently. I do not want my team rushed. The only time we should have our pulse racing and push ourselves is when there is a defect preventing our customers from using the system."

Despite the pandemic and concerns on travel, Oyvind visited Sri Lanka in November 2021 to meet the team.

Reflecting on his visit, "It was an incredibly beautiful country especially down in Galle. I loved the warm welcome in the offices in Colombo and enjoyed the dinner with the team. We had several productive workshops as well. What touched me most about my visit was the warmth of the people and the smiles. I look forward to another visit, hopefully after summer."

This belongs to the category of Customer case study.

This is how 99x helped Kahoot in their digital journey to make learning awesome.

Kahoot! The mission to make learning awesome

For Torkjel Austad, QA Manager at Kahoot!, it's about doing what you love. His experiences range from testing applications on Nintendo DS and Wii platforms to owning quality assurance (QA) for a music streaming platform launched across 60 countries. While stationed as Opera Software's QA Test Manager in Japan, he also managed Opera's browser support for many of the largest telcos and mobile device manufacturers, aggregating over 40 million devices.

Torkjel joined Kahoot in 2017 and now heads QA across Kahoot, DragonBox and Poio apps within the group. Kahoot is well on its way to make learning awesome, with over 30 million active accounts, hosting over 300 million sessions annually which are enjoyed by 2 billion participants in 200 countries. Today, the Kahoot! Group includes Clever, the leading US K-12 EdTech learning platform, together with the learning apps DragonBox, Poio, Drops, Actimo, Motimate, and Whiteboard.fi.

Describing the Kahoot platform, Torkjel remarked, "There's a lot happening beneath the platform than what you see. It might seem simple, but it's actually a very complex product with a lot of features you can access through subscriptions. While our core product will always be free, we have paid plans for different kinds of user bases like teachers, students and businesses".

Reflecting on how he encountered 99x, Torkjel commented, "It's funny how I connected with 99x. I've worked with Dag Honningsvag ages ago at Opera Software and years later when my CEO suggested that we explore another testing partner, Dag and 99x popped up as an option. We then had some meetings and then got introduced to the people in 99x Sri Lanka and it all seemed quite professional, and so we initiated the contract".

The Kahoot team at 99x started off with three testers and has now added a fourth member to the team. Torkjel was impressed that he was able to hire every single individual he interviewed at 99x. He praised the solid process 99x for hiring and onboarding employees, enabling access to the right talent. He also appreciated the follow-up provided by the management team.

Commenting on how he has leveraged globally distributed teams into a competitive edge, Torkjel added, "We have testers in the Philippines and Sri Lanka. We make the time zone difference into an advantage for us. We work with a daily release cycle – that's the pace. In Oslo, we prepare the new builds to be tested by the end of our workday. Our test managers here make sure everything is ready and all the information needed is available for our distributed teams. When we come in the next day, we already have 5-6 hours of testing done and the test results. We still have some time overlap as well. Our distributed teams allow us to accelerate our testing to deliver the velocity of a 16-hour workday. Of course, the communication and relationships must be in place for this to work. We use video calls and Slack diligently to keep the teams connected".

"My advice to aspiring QA professionals is to be flexible in your processes. When you come out of school you might have learned a lot of theory, but every team and every product has different needs. In theory we talk about 2-week release cycles. We release it to production every day! How well can you adapt to that? Remember, while you can never know everything, you must aim to know as much as you can about what you are releasing. In terms of personality, you must be curious, asking questions, but always be positive and friendly, even communicating bad news", were some of Torkjel's thoughts for the QA community.

Torkjel concluded that, "The 99x team gives us the ability to make learning awesome for our millions of end-users, by using their strong domain knowledge, analytical skills and attention to detail. They are a great, reliable team that gives us an extra level of reassurance in our daily releases".

This belongs to the category of Customer case study.