

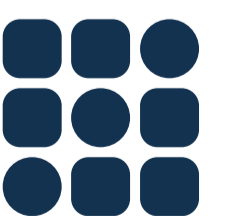


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GCCs in 2026: From Cost Centers to Enterprise Value Engines



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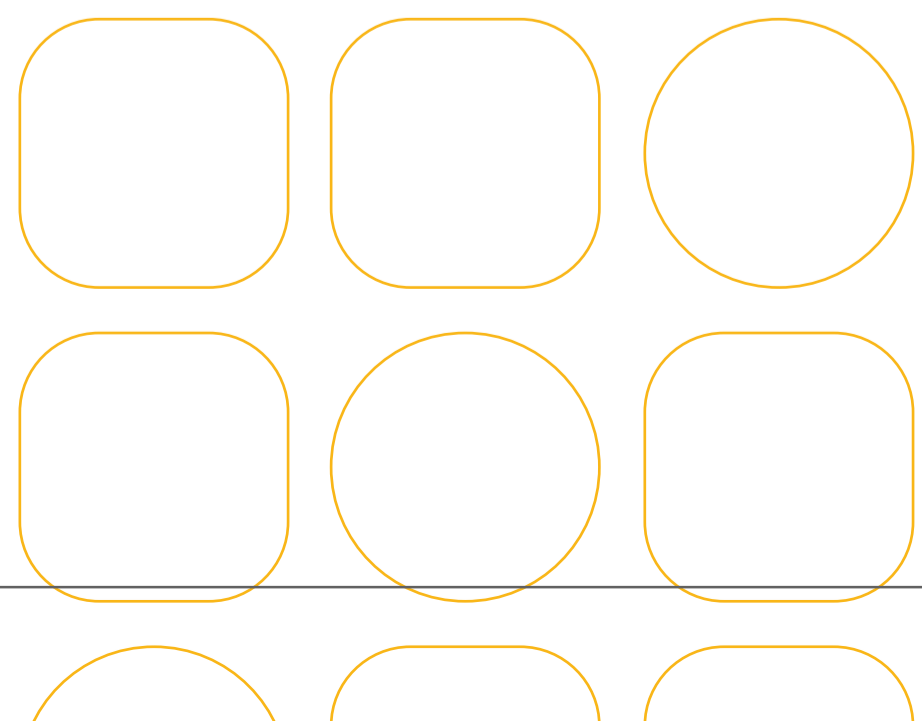


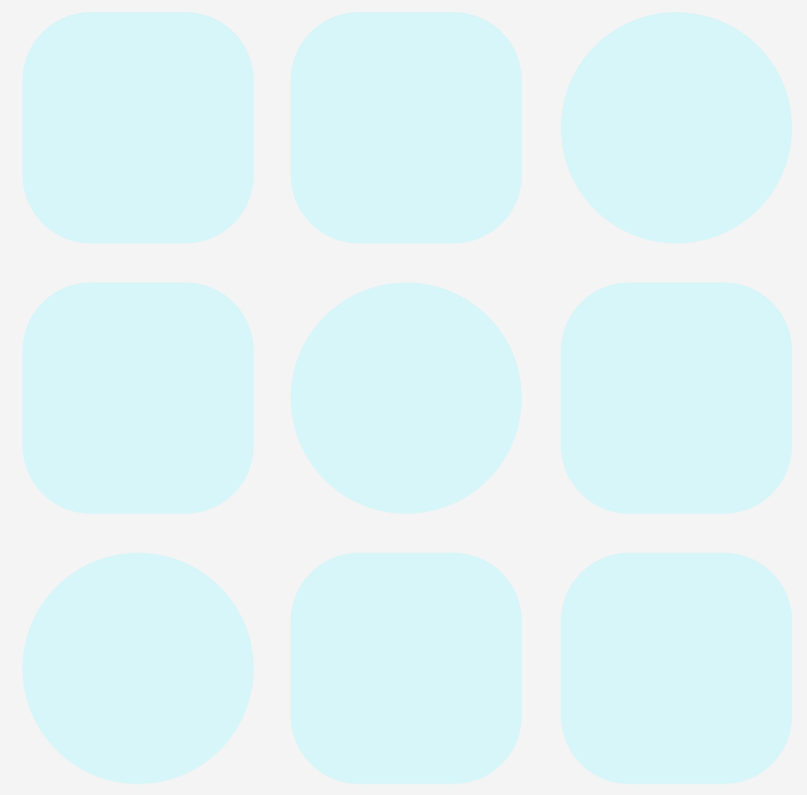


Executive Summary

Global Capability Centers are opening a new chapter of enterprise relevance. As workflows evolve, they are taking on broader mandates that extend beyond functional delivery to include platform ownership, global coordination, and enterprise decision support. This paper explores the structural shifts, maturity phases, and operating model progress that GCCs must undergo to unlock greater business impact.

It also outlines how companies can redesign governance, metrics, and capabilities to accelerate progress and avoid common execution challenges. GCCs that deliberately redefine their roles today will have a greater advantage in shaping business performance and fueling long-term competitive advantage.



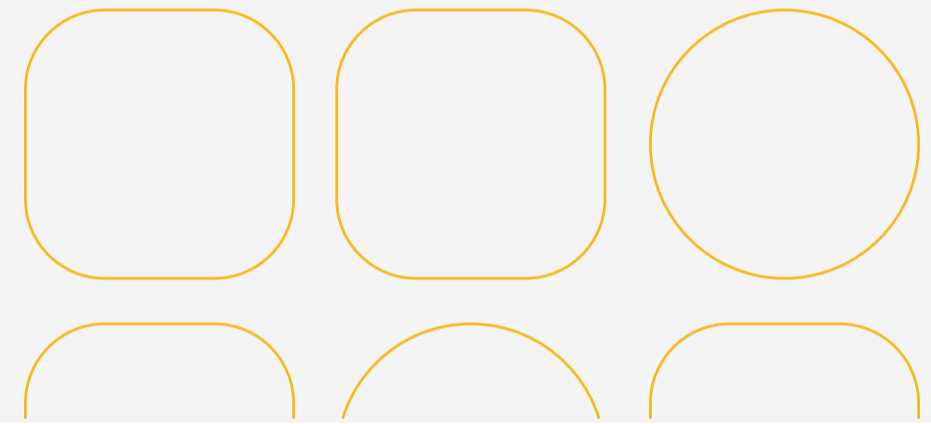


Introduction

For over a decade, Global Capability Centers (GCCs) delivered services to support cost efficiency, labor arbitrage, and scale. The new phase unfolding in 2026 will reposition them as richer contributors for business value.

Organizations are redesigning their operating models around advanced digitalization, real-time intelligence, and decision speed. The rise of AI applications, particularly agentic AI, has expedited this shift, moving their role beyond execution support into orchestration and control.

With the expanding capabilities of GCCs, companies leveraging their expertise have higher expectations. Cost efficiency may still be one of them, but leadership teams need contributions that are clearly visible in performance metrics of an enterprise – faster cycle times, stronger resilience, innovation throughput, and measurable business impact.



The 2026 Inflection: Why the Mandate Has Changed

Constant technological upgrades have decisively reset the operating environment for GCCs. Automation and analytics have become core to their work models. Agentic AI embedded in routine workflows helps by autonomously coordinating tasks, surfacing insights, and reducing the need for manual intervention in repetitive work. By orchestrating multi-step processes—such as planning adjustments, exception management, and workflow routing—it allows GCC teams to manage higher volumes of complex work while concentrating more on oversight and strategic decision support.

As companies adopt more mature tech capabilities, real-time data platforms are also becoming the backbone of their operations. Business performance can now be continuously monitored and managed. Cloud-native architectures reinforce this shift by facilitating scalability, resilience, and rapid deployment of new systems across global operations.

India's role in this transformation is significant. With deep AI engineering expertise, a dense digital talent ecosystem, and an active GCC landscape spanning over two decades, the country has become an innovation gravity center for enterprises across multiple industries. These organizations are concentrating on advanced engineering, analytics, and automation mandates in their Indian GCCs to accelerate business transformation.

The impact is visible. Early manufacturing and supply chain pilots have reported cost-velocity gains of 30–50% and improvements in operational resilience. Predictive maintenance, real-time planning, and integrated control towers are reducing downtime, stabilizing supply chains, and strengthening responsiveness. These results show that GCCs are now in a position to not just support global operations but innovate them for tangible value delivery.

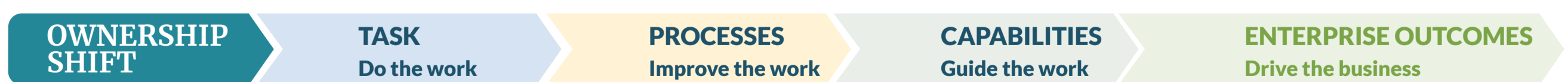
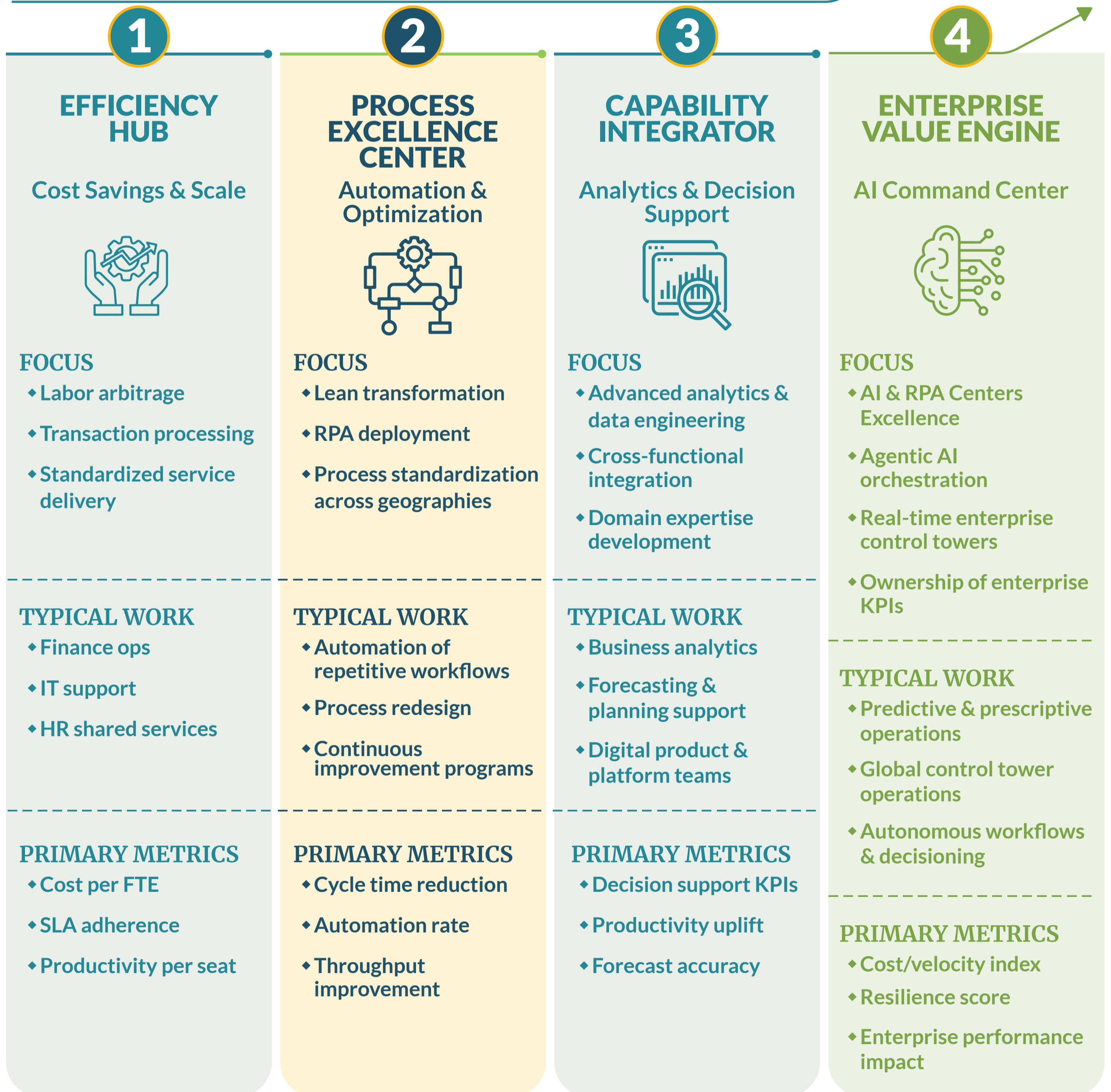


The GCC Maturity Framework: How a Savings Engine Turns into an AI Command Center

THE GCC MATURITY FRAMEWORK

From Savings Engine to AI Command Center

Increasing Value, Decision Ownership & Enterprise Impact



As GCCs move up the maturity curve, ownership shifts from tasks ⇒ processes ⇒ capabilities ⇒ enterprise outcomes.

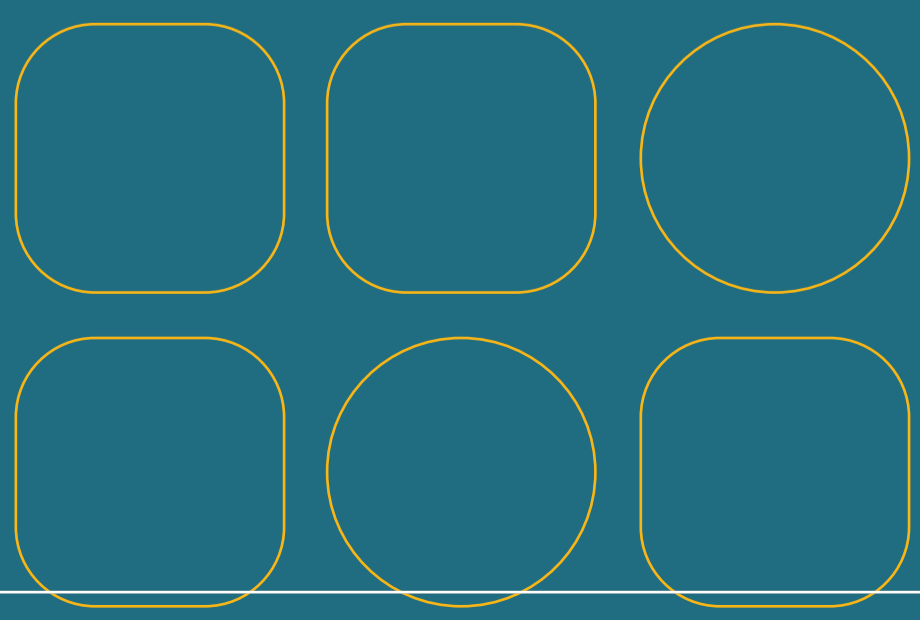


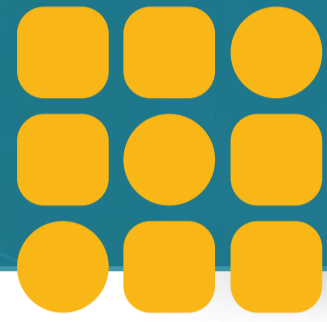
The maturity framework shows how GCCs have grown from being execution-focused delivery centers to value engines shaping business outcomes. In the early stages, the focus was on cost savings, standardization, and service quality. That foundation is still essential, but it does not define the potential of a GCC in 2026.

As modern organizations digitally transform, their GCCs, which had been executing tasks, have begun to improve and integrate mission-critical processes. Automation, analytics, and cross-functional collaboration are empowering GCCs to support decisions that influence enterprise performance.

At the highest maturity level, GCCs operate as AI-enabled command centers. They own automation and AI CoEs, run real-time control towers, and contribute to enterprise KPIs.

The critical shift is in ownership, as value is now measured in terms of business outcomes, establishing GCC as a strategic driver of cost, velocity, resilience, and innovation.





Defining the Enterprise Value Engine: 2026 Model

Mature GCCs acting as enterprise value engines operate like a global operating layer for their companies. The distinction can be observed in how their work is structured, measured, and governed.



Enterprise Mandates Replace Functional Scope

The GCC teams that had been supporting individual functions such as finance, tech support, or HR are now given end-to-end mandates, including running cycles, managing digital platforms, and coordinating operations across countries



Global Control Towers Become Core Operations

In manufacturing and supply chain environments, GCCs run command centers that manage fleet movement, heavy equipment performance, spare parts availability, and logistics exceptions. These hubs intervene in real time to prevent any disruption in the movement of goods.



AI/RPA CoEs Act as Enterprise Utilities

Automation capability is a shared service that can be consumed by multiple business units. Standardized tooling, governance, and reusable automation assets accelerate adoption across the enterprise.



Platform Ownership Replaces Project Delivery

GCCs today can maintain and develop enterprise platforms like planning systems, logistics optimization engines, and predictive maintenance solutions as long-term products.



Embedded Business Collaboration

Domain specialists, engineers, and analysts work in integrated squads as per business priorities. There are no organizational silos in modern capability centers.



Funding Models Shift Toward Value Pools

The budgets previously linked to headcount and function-based allocations are now being aligned with enterprise initiatives and measurable outcomes.



GCC Leadership Joins Enterprise Governance

Leaders participate in global steering committees, strategy cycles, and investment decisions. The model makes GCCs essential components of how enterprises operate and compete. initiatives and measurable outcomes.

Structural Levers that enable GCC value creation

The operating model shifts required to move from functional delivery to enterprise impact

ECOSYSTEM POSITIONING (INDIA AS INNOVATION HUB)

GCCs leverage talent ecosystems and partnerships to accelerate innovation.

- ✔ Deep AI and digital talent pools
- ✔ Startup and academic partnerships
- ✔ Expansion of advanced engineering mandates

KPI REDESIGN

(COST > COST + VELOCITY + RESILIENCE)

Measurement evolves beyond cost.

- ✔ Integrated performance metrics
- ✔ Outcome-based tracking
- ✔ Enterprise performance alignment



ENTERPRISE VALUE CREATION



DECISION RIGHTS REALIGNMENT

Decision authority moves closer to the teams generating insights and running platforms.

- ✔ Participation in global planning cycles
- ✔ Ownership of operational decisions
- ✔ Faster execution and reduced escalation layers

AI & AUTOMATION COMMAND LAYER

Automation becomes an enterprise utility, not isolated projects.

- ✔ Centralized AI & RPA governance
- ✔ Reusable automation assets
- ✔ Scaled deployment across functions

CLOUD-NATIVE OPERATING BACKBONE

Modern infrastructure enables scalability and rapid capability rollout.

- ✔ Platform-based delivery
- ✔ Real-time system integration
- ✔ Global scalability and resilience



ENTERPRISE VALUE EMERGES WHEN GOVERNANCE, TECHNOLOGY, TALENT, AND MEASUREMENT EVOLVE TOGETHER.

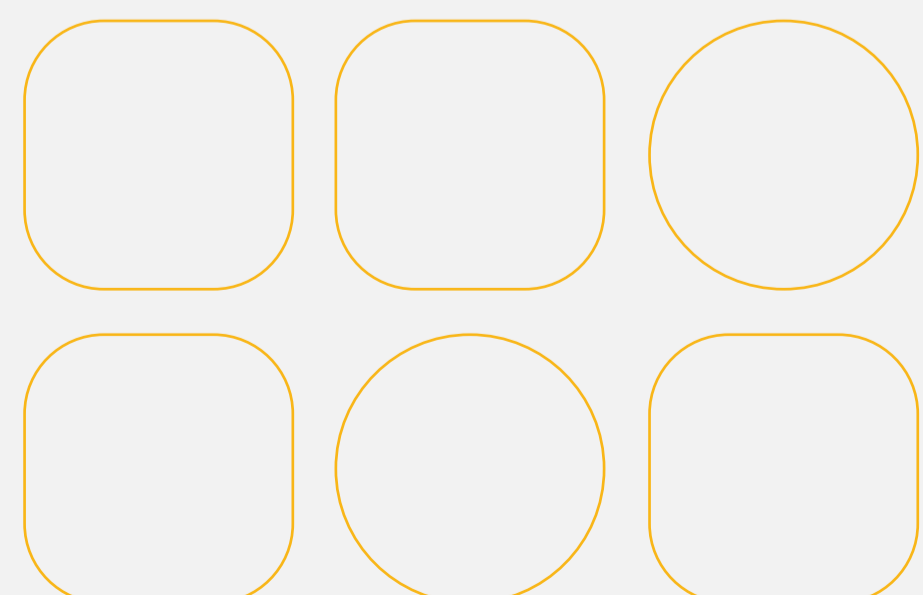


Enterprise value is generated when multiple operating model upgrades move together. The five levers in the framework depicted here represent the changes that empower GCCs to extend their impact on an organization

Realigned decision rights expedite execution, while centralized AI and automation capabilities maintain consistent deployments.

Cloud-native platforms underpin global scalability, and redesigned KPIs keep performance linked to business outcomes.

Positioned in a strong innovation ecosystem such as India and the GCCs, companies also gain access to talent, partnerships, and new technologies that accelerate transformation and sustain long-term enterprise value.



The Execution Gap: Where Many GCCs Stall

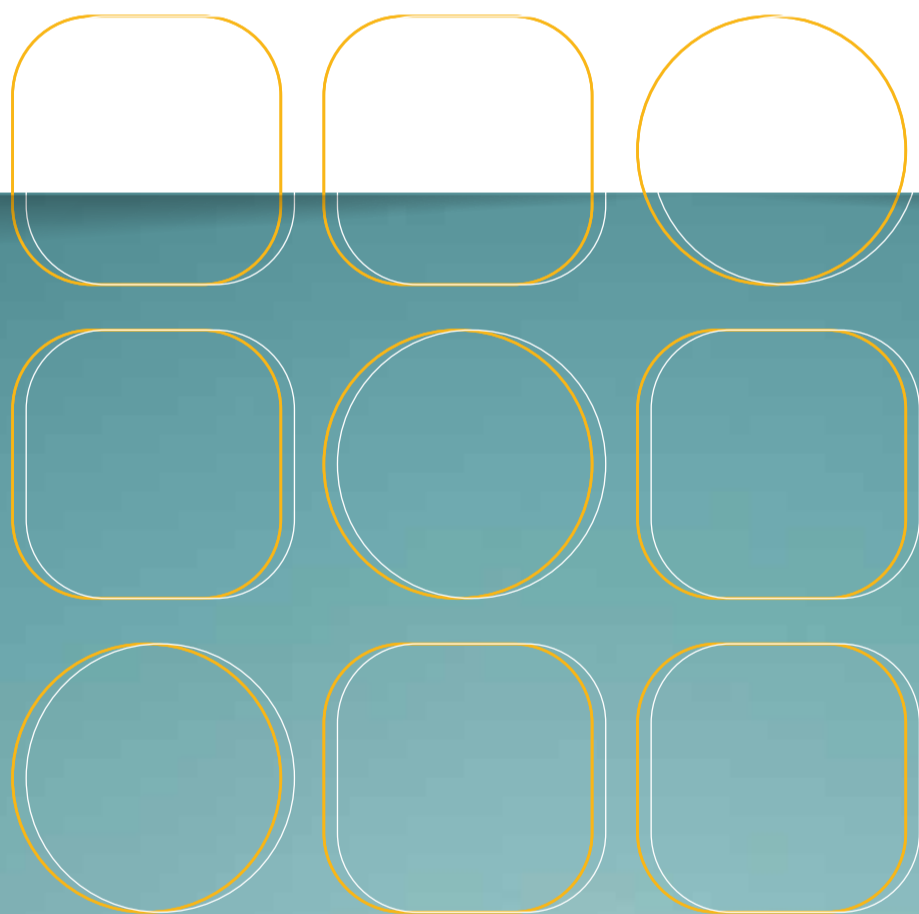
Despite strong plans and growing investments in supporting technologies, several GCC transformations slow down before they generate any enterprise-level impact. And this usually happens due to a lack of coordinated design and governance.

One example is the proliferation of AI pilots that look very promising but do not become operational capabilities or scale. The lack of enterprise-wide governance, reusable frameworks, and funding synchronization keeps these initiatives experimental. Likewise, teams build large data platforms with ambitious goals, but due to poor integration between them, their support for live decision-making also remains weak.

Measurement is another barrier. Even as they shoulder new responsibilities, many GCCs still operate under cost-focused KPIs. That disconnect makes it difficult to justify broader mandates or prove business impact.

Transformation can also become fragmented when initiatives are launched independently across departments, leading to duplication and slowing momentum.

The conclusion is: Progressing from process excellence to enterprise value demands governance resets, aligned funding models, integrated roadmaps, and clear executive sponsorship. The change has to be architected and executed with business intent.



Designing GCCs for Enterprise Advantage

The role of GCCs is entering a new phase of business integration. The work that was viewed as a supportive function has become the core of how global companies strategize, operate, and innovate. With the expertise their teams have developed, GCCs are now positioned to be long-term growth partners designing operating models, scaling digitalization, and enabling cross-border collaboration at enterprise scale.

For the next generation of GCCs, the goal is to provide value that transcends efficiency. Their role is defined by how organizations tied to them expand capabilities, leverage data, and enrich expertise for global operations. Speed, intelligence, and resilience are their new benchmarks of success.

And for businesses, the time to redesign GCC mandates is now. With evolving operating frameworks, centers that take on broader ownership and remain outcome-centric will gain a competitive advantage over the coming years. The ones that remain anchored in legacy expectations risk falling behind the pace of transformation.

Value creation at this new level is engineered through intentional governance and sustained leadership commitment. The organizations that act decisively today will define what enterprise value creation looks like in 2026 and beyond.





About the Author

Rajaram Ganesan is a seasoned transformation leader with over 19 years of experience in Business, Finance, and Digital Transformation. His work spans across industries and organizational scales, where he has consistently driven innovation, accelerated growth, improved customer experience, and streamlined operations to deliver lasting impact.



A qualified CIMA professional and MBA in Finance from the UK, Rajaram has previously set up and led Finance Transformation practices at leading firms including Grant Thornton, Kriya, and KPMG. His expertise lies in shaping forward-looking strategies that enable sustainable business performance in dynamic environments.

