

Creating Experiences at Work That Matter

An Interview with Sanjay Risbi, Americas Chief Executive Officer, Work Dynamics, JLL

EDITORS' NOTE For 25 years, Sanjay Risbi has helped large, global businesses leverage technology to achieve their ambitions. He has deep expertise in complex businesses, transformational change, and the development of disruptive technologies. His JLL Work Dynamics team across the Americas leverages data to build, manage and improve spaces that can transform how people work every day. He is also a member of JLL's Americas Executive Committee, which sets the direction and strategy for JLL in the region.



Sanjay Risbi

Risbi joined JLL in 2018 from IBM, where he ran the Cloud Consulting Services business. Prior to that, he was Chief Information Officer and Group Vice President of Strategic Planning for Johnson Controls Automotive. He has also held roles as a Partner for PwC and Vice President for IBM Global Strategy. He currently serves on the board of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. Risbi holds a BS degree in mechanical engineering, an MS degree in management systems, and a PhD in management.

FIRM BRIEF JLL (jll.com) is a leading professional services firm that specializes in real estate and investment management. JLL shapes the future of real estate for a better world by using the most advanced technology to create rewarding opportunities, amazing spaces and sustainable real estate solutions for its clients, its people and its communities. JLL is a Fortune 500 company with annual revenue of \$19.4 billion, operations in over 80 countries, and has a global workforce of more than 102,000 as of

June 30, 2022. JLL is the brand name, and a registered trademark, of Jones Lang LaSalle Incorporated.

Will you provide an overview of your role and areas of focus?

I am privileged to lead a team that focuses on helping our clients use office strategy and technology to make the most of their workplaces and inspire their people. It's invigorating to work at the intersection of corporate real estate and the workplace, which is evolving so rapidly and plays such a defining role in organizations' ability to attract and retain talent.

What have been the keys to JLL's industry leadership and how do you describe the JLL difference?

At JLL, our vision is "shaping the future of real estate for a better world." Having that leading vision guide everything we do truly is the JLL difference. When I think of leadership – whether it be an individual or an organization – I like to think in terms of "The Three I's." A transformative leader needs to Imagine, Invigorate, and Influence. It's about Imagining what is possible – it requires risk taking; Invigorating – allowing people to be inspired and energized by the opportunity to learn, to embrace emerging capabilities including technology; and lastly we have a responsibility to Influence society and communities.

Our motivation to "shape a better world" sets us apart from the industry and is a driving force in everything that we do.

Will you highlight JLL Work Dynamics' products and services?

Simply put, we create experiences at work that matter – for our clients and their employees, customers, and partners. JLL Work Dynamics helps clients drive strategic value from their corporate real estate portfolios, innovating, and delivering a full suite of products and services that blend human, digital, and experiential elements to build, manage, and improve spaces that transform how people work. Together, those services and products help our clients manage 1.6 billion square feet of real estate around the world, and we have averted more than 112,700 metric tons of CO2 by advising clients on renewable energy projects. Our team of more than 45,000 local and global specialists helps clients to enhance the performance of their real estate portfolios and realize their ambitions of a more sustainable built environment.

How is JLL Work Dynamics blending human, digital, and experiential elements to build, manage and improve spaces that transform how people work every day?

We encourage our clients to see the workplace as a tool for attracting and retaining employees and promoting culture and creativity, rather than an operating expense. That means focusing on the human experience and prioritizing people's individual preferences as well as their overall health and well-being. As just one example, among our own employees we've piloted a digital portal called The Hub that integrates directly with employees' calendars to block time for stress-reducing micro-habits.

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Through The Hub, team members have access to customized, on-demand wellness services like yoga and meditation that match each individual’s interests and needs.

What are your views on the future of work?

As the pandemic subsides, the learnings and experiences of working remotely will remain top-of-mind for companies and workers. Our understanding of what constitutes a workplace has been fundamentally and permanently redefined. And as technology makes talent more portable than ever, culture becomes increasingly important to attracting and retaining talent. Business leaders need to double down on the human element to harness the evolved flexible, dynamic nature of work. We’ve observed the following trends in recent years which I believe will continue to drive the conversation about workplace for the foreseeable future:

- Workplace flexibility as the new normal
- Digital transformation to drive solutions to quickly changing business needs
- Sustainability strategies that translate environmental goals into actions that create real value
- Physical and mental well-being sustained by a regenerative workplace.

How critical is it for JLL to build a diverse and inclusive workforce?

JLL is deeply committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. I firmly believe that building an active pipeline of diverse talent, starting with entry-level positions, is the most effective way to advance more people of color and women to the C-suite in the long term. We have visibly moved

the needle on succession planning, recruitment, and equity to accelerate our efforts to build a leadership team and greater workforce that are representative of the communities we serve.

One approach we’ve taken to make JLL more accessible to those early in their careers is recognizing that commercial real estate’s commission-based salary model can be a huge barrier to entry for some candidates from marginalized groups. In 2022, we announced new programs designed to reduce these inequities, including a \$4 million investment to fund entry-level compensation for racially diverse and female sales professionals to help supplement the industry’s traditional commission-based salary structures. Additionally, JLL’s U.S. Capital Markets business launched a college loan repayment program wherein all new hires for Capital Markets with student loans will receive annual loan repayment support.

What do you see as JLL’s responsibility to the communities it serves and to be a force for good in society?

As an organization that influences real estate and workplaces, we feel a real sense of responsibility towards the environment since the built environment accounts for almost 40 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change will affect us in every way possible, across every industry sector from transportation to utilities and beyond. It will affect how and where commerce takes place and will transform global supply chains.

At JLL, we recognize the urgency of the climate crisis, and we’re working to deliver solutions to help our clients redesign and

retrofit buildings to reduce their carbon footprints. JLL is also one of only a handful of global companies across all sectors to be recognized for bringing net-zero commitments in line with climate science. As part of this commitment, we’ve pledged to reduce our absolute emissions by 51 percent by 2030 and 95 percent by 2040.

What do you feel are the keys to effective leadership?

Teams, not individuals, lead organizations to success. I also believe that empathetic listening has never been more important, and in times of uncertainty like the one we find ourselves in today, being transparent and vulnerable, and yet decisive, is the call of the hour. Soft skills like listening and building morale are as important as the business skills required for effective leadership. In this new era of hybrid work, my leadership philosophy has shifted to integrate soft skills and new behaviors around creating a consistent culture of care and empathy for our employees, regardless of where work happens.

What advice do you offer to young people interested in a career in the real estate industry?

Technology is embedded in everything we do, in our personal lives and our work lives. It is an essential component of virtually every industry, and real estate is no exception. I’d advise young people that having technology expertise and an understanding of how that translates to the commercial real estate industry will certainly give them an advantage in our field. In the post-pandemic world, few domains have the opportunity to make an impact like the domain of work. ●

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