



INFRASTRUCTURE TALENT THEMES:

5 FOR 2025

Next Generation LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

SAVANNAH GROUP ESTABLISHED THE **NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (NGLI)** IN 2023, IN RESPONSE TO WHAT WE SAW AS THE **INCREASINGLY CHALLENGING DEMANDS** BEING PLACED ON LEADERS. THE NGLI IS A THINK TANK WHICH FACILITATES AND COMMISSIONS RESEARCH, EVENTS AND DEBATE ON **THE EVOLUTION OF LEADERSHIP** AND ITS ACQUISITION.

INTRODUCTION

As we begin 2025, the global infrastructure sector faces both unprecedented challenges and exciting opportunities. Rapid technological advancements, changing societal expectations, and evolving workforce dynamics are reshaping the landscape for infrastructure talent. To meet the demands of tomorrow, the industry must continue to address key themes surrounding talent acquisition, development, and retention. Through a series of recent conversations with senior leaders across the sector, we have summarised five key priorities which stand out for the year ahead.





AS INFRASTRUCTURE BECOMES INCREASINGLY RELIANT ON SMART TECHNOLOGIES, **BUSINESSES AND THE TALENT WITHIN MUST ADAPT QUICKLY** TO NEW TOOLS AND SYSTEMS.

ADAPTING TO TECHNOLOGICAL DISRUPTION

One of the most significant themes facing infrastructure talent in 2025 is the integration of advanced technologies and the commercialisation of the data that is gleaned. From artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to automation and data analytics, these innovations are transforming how infrastructure projects are designed, constructed, maintained and operated. However, they also require a new skillset that many 'traditional' infrastructure professionals may not possess.

As infrastructure becomes increasingly reliant on smart technologies, businesses and the talent within must adapt quickly to new tools and systems. Proficiency in digital modelling, BIM (Building Information Modelling), geospatial analysis, and IoT (Internet of Things) applications will be increasingly essential. To meet this demand, firms will have to invest heavily in upskilling their existing workforces while attracting new professionals with these specialised competencies.

The rise of automation also brings a new dimension to the industry. Automation in construction, maintenance and operations processes could reduce labour demands in some areas but create more sophisticated roles in overseeing robotic systems, drones, and autonomous vehicles. This shift calls for a blend of technical expertise and creativity to leverage the full potential of these emerging technologies and at the same time enhance productivity and profitability.



...THERE IS AN URGENT NEED TO PROMOTE THE INFRASTRUCTURE SECTOR AS **A VIABLE AND REWARDING CAREER PATH** TO A YOUNGER, MORE DIVERSE POOL OF CANDIDATES.

ADDRESSING TALENT SHORTAGES

Keir Starmer has promised to fast-track decisions on at least 150 major infrastructure projects by the end of this Parliament, but where will the expertise come from to deliver these?

A significant challenge the infrastructure sector will continue to face is the aging workforce. Many experienced engineers and project managers are nearing retirement, and there is a shortage of younger workers to replace them. According to several industry reports, the infrastructure sector is already grappling with talent shortages, which are expected to worsen in the coming years.

To address this, companies must make infrastructure careers more attractive to younger generations and develop exceptional talent succession programmes. This includes not only competitive pay and benefits but also offering more dynamic learning and development programmes and flexible work environments. Additionally, there is an urgent need to promote the infrastructure sector as a viable and rewarding career path to a younger, more diverse pool of candidates. Whether it is the engineers, contractors, maintainers or infrastructure operators, they must emphasise their purpose to attract talent.

ACQUIRING SUSTAINABILITY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Sustainability is becoming a key driver for infrastructure projects, with both governments and private sector leaders prioritising environmentally responsible practices. ESG can no longer be an afterthought, or communications soundbite. It's imperative that the green agenda of infrastructure shines through and businesses actually 'walk the talk'. In 2025, infrastructure leaders will need to focus on attracting and retaining talent that can lead sustainable and meaningful green initiatives. The demand for professionals with skills in sustainable design, energy-efficient technologies, and carbon-reduction strategies will increase significantly. Executive leaders will be tasked with fostering a workforce capable of meeting these needs while maintaining high-quality and cost-effective project delivery and infrastructure asset management.





A FOCUS ON EMPLOYEE WELLBEING WILL NOT ONLY **IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY** BUT WILL ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO **TALENT RETENTION**, ENSURING THAT WORKERS REMAIN MOTIVATED AND ENGAGED.

FOCUSING ON EMPLOYEE WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

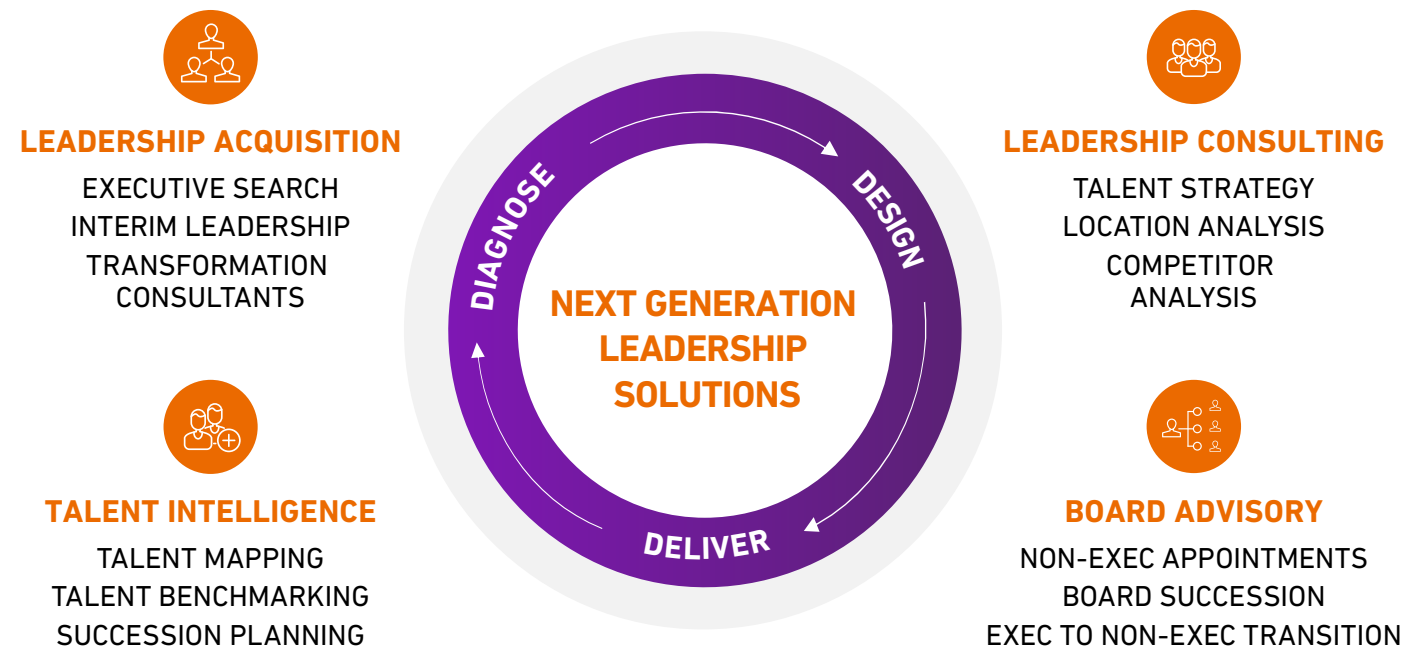
The importance of employee wellbeing and mental health will continue to grow in 2025, particularly considering the continued inflationary and cost of living burdens. The demanding nature of infrastructure projects and frontline service operations, combined with increasing work pressure and deadlines, may result in burnout and mental health challenges for employees. Chief People Officers and executive leaders more broadly will need to create environments that promote mental wellness, provide access to resources, and implement policies that support work-life balance. A focus on employee wellbeing will not only improve productivity but will also contribute to talent retention, ensuring that workers remain motivated and engaged.

EVOLVING THE CFO ROLE

We saw significant CFO leadership change in 2024. This was potentially due to less movement in 2023 owing to financial market instability and reluctance to make significant changes to finance departments. We expect to continue to see an evolution in the CFO leadership position throughout 2025. As transactions continue to gain momentum, CFOs that bring strong strategic and investment expertise, balanced with exceptional stakeholder management capabilities, alongside the more traditional skills will be highly sought after. Financial leaders that demonstrate a strong understanding of market fluctuations, can handle ambiguity and can balance risk versus reward are crucial to success in 2025.



The landscape for infrastructure talent in 2025 will be shaped by rapid technological advancements, demographic shifts, and a growing focus on sustainability. To succeed, organisations will need to invest in workforce development, prioritise diversity, and embrace the digital transformation of the sector. The next generation of infrastructure professionals must be adaptable, tech-savvy, and prepared to meet the evolving demands of an increasingly complex world. By addressing these key challenges, the infrastructure sector can build a workforce capable of shaping the cities and communities of the future.



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Tim is responsible for leading the Global Infrastructure, Construction & Services practice and has deep expertise across the infrastructure life cycle, serving FTSE 100, FTSE 250, Fortune 500, privates, PE firms, infrastructure, and pension funds. His focus is on delivering leadership solutions including executive search, talent intelligence and interim management for multi-national infrastructure funds and assets, engineering, construction, and services clients. His experience spans engineering and construction to operations and maintenance. He has undertaken extensive work more broadly in surface transportation, airports, ports, utilities, renewables, and energy. Prior to joining Savannah, Tim worked for Korn Ferry where he led the Infrastructure, Construction & Services practice across EMEA. He previously co-built the global infrastructure practice at Heidrick & Struggles and before moving to London worked for a boutique search firm in Bristol.

Tim graduated from the University of the West of England, Bristol with a bachelor of science degree in construction management, graduating with honours. He began his career at a leading international recruitment company, working in the specialist property and construction division.