Leo von Gerlach	Hello everybody and welcome to another edition of *The Influencers* on Digital Transformation and Law. I'm Leo von Gerlach and with me today is Kishor Sridhar. Kishor leads Kishor Consultants, one of the main consulting firms in the field of change management and leadership. Kishor has a long history of working with experts in the field, like for example, Daniel Kahneman with his book, "Thinking Fast and Thinking Slow". He himself wrote a couple of books on economical psychology and how to translate that into leadership and change management advisory, and it's absolutely great to have you today, Kishor.
Kishor Sridhar	Yeah, thank you for having me Leo.
Leo von Gerlach	Kishor, let's dive right into it and perhaps first a little bit about your background. What brought you into this field of change management and in particular change management in the digital field?
Kishor Sridhar	Well, I am half Indian, half German, so as I always say, we Indians sort of...I really learned programming from The Core in Bangalore, so this is like sort of in our genes is half Indian, I would say. But on the other hand, I then was an engineer and civil engineer. And then, after some time, I was asking myself why are very reasonable people doing such unreasonable things? I wanted to understand this further and then I had the opportunity to study psychology. Then I met Daniel Kahneman and this hooked me because I understood that, that we're not so reasonable as we always believe that we are, and that understanding our irrational aspects actually helps us really grow and achieve what we want to achieve. And so, this is basically my history.
Leo von Gerlach	So you've got to know a lot of organizations and you've seen a lot of the struggles in change management. So maybe you share with us what is one of the more common challenges that organizations face and what are the more common reasons for that? Is that cultural, organizational, technical, a mix of that, something different?
Kishor Sridhar	It's interesting that you ask about the common aspects because usually when I talk to a company, they usually ask me or they tell me their problems, and I feel like I heard this a thousand times before. Usually, it is the aspect that things are not really implemented as they should be implemented after some time. So they have maybe good ideas, and they are connected to KPIs, but most of the companies, they lack understanding of what actually people really want and how I can treat people. How can I excite people to make change happen? There's more to it, because as I always say, like if you start sports, why does someone start sports? Not to run maybe the half

	marathon in a certain time, there's a higher vision, so you actually need to catch people emotionally, this is always lacking. And then you need to break it down into daily aspects and if you come to digitalization, it is more fear. It creates a lot of fear among people because they say I can be replaced or it creates a transparency which scares me because suddenly people can see what I'm doing. And people may even be able to understand what I'm not doing very well and so, this is why I'm afraid to use digital tools or AI or whatever. So I might be replaced and so these are the basic common aspects you usually have, that people don't understand the why, the vision and then how should it be implemented and how do I make sure that it's not like fading out during the normal working day that we have.
Leo von Gerlach	So I understand organizational challenges easily translate then into individual challenges and certain fields...
Kishor Sridhar	Yeah.
Leo von Gerlach	And well, you spoke about those perceptions on an individual level, there may be then tools to work on those anxieties on those perceptions, to get your arms around to get it done?
Kishor Sridhar	Exactly, and for this you need to understand the basic concept of AI and digitalization. Why are we doing this at all? And there's a reason because it's a way of thinking. Usually, I tell every leader, every leader should understand, how can I make things happen easier, faster and cheaper. And every person in my organization should have the same way of thinking. For this we need to understand what is really important. What is urgent and what is routine. Routine work can be done by AI or any other software. And what is important is something I can contribute as a human-being. Urgent stuff is what pushes us around. Urgent stuff, we can maybe use AI to optimize it or computers to optimize it, but what is truly important and how much time do I invest into important work, into important tasks? And so the whole aspect of digitalization, of introducing AI, is nothing but helping my staff, my people and myself to focus on where I am best at, and free some time. These people usually don't understand, and they're more hiding into routine work because it gives me a comfort zone, and so I'm doing my stuff as I always used to do, because if I'm suddenly focusing on important work, this is where I'm really challenged. And so this is what we usually see in the organization.
Leo von Gerlach	That is interesting. So you try to make people see the importance of their work and even the beauty of their importance and their work and...what are the tricks to actually get people to see this light?
Kishor Sridhar	Oh, that's a very simple question I ask. Once you leave the company, what do you want others to say about you, and what is your legacy? What do you want to leave behind? What do you want to say? I really changed, I made a difference. And this is down to who you actually are and once you understand this about your people, you understand what is important to them, and if this aligns to your company, then it's perfect. Yeah, if it doesn't align with my company philosophy or what I want achieve, not so good, not optimal. But basically below the line, it is about triggering and understanding what people really can contribute. And that's why I'm saying, the area of AI and when AI is now being rolled out more and more. People are scared but

	I'm not scared. As I say, it gives us the opportunity to focus on what we're really great at and to understand what we're really great at, this is important work. It's important work and this is what leaders need to do and we need to understand why are our people actually there and what can AI do better. This is also the other question we have to face.
Leo von Gerlach	So that's kind of an awareness exercise. So, why am I doing this? And once I can respond to that question, I see the kind of importance for me and the organization and the fact, if that fits, all the better. Then let's ping that back to the organizational level and the leadership and that's something you focus on in particular. And what can leaders do to incentivize that transition, that journey of the individuals in the organization to arrive at these points.
Kishor Sridhar	This is basically transformation leadership because everyone in the company needs to understand "What is in there for me." This is basically it. And yes, we were talking a little bit on the psychological, philosophical level just a few seconds ago, but there's money in it. There's benefit in it for everyone. It's not only monies. How can I go? I need to tell people how can I go, what helps them and this is basically what transformation leadership is. I define an aim, together with my people. And when do we want to be there? And then individually when do you want to be there? When do you want to be where and then what is in there for you? And this is transformation leadership, basically you tell people what they get and what you give them, and what they give back, and this is sort of a negotiation process on a marketing level. And this is what was lacking, and the old thinking is that people come and they just love to work for you and your company? No. They have their career in mind, they have their individual needs in mind, and this is what you actually need to focus on, and to tell them what they get and what you give them and what they give back to really have them a transformational spirit in your company. Everyone wants to grow.
Leo von Gerlach	It sounds as if you need a very big map and there is a strategy game just taking place and everything needs to fall into the right place.
Kishor Sridhar	Yes. I'm a soccer fan. Yeah, and if you look at soccer. Soccer is nothing else but really transforming every person through a better football player and the football player understands, I'm getting more out of it because maybe in three years I'm going to play with the champions league team and this is what we need to be aware of. People will think about companies and...uhm, but I need to give them the understanding what they get from me and then they become real great players in my team and they may even leave. This is the risk.
Leo von Gerlach	Just moving away for one second from soccer, which is not an easy thing to do, but just perhaps taking an example from other organizations, unlike sports, where you have just really gained some deeper experience of what we just talked about.
Kishor Sridhar	Yeah. For example, engineering company, [I'm] consulting [for] them now, we're at the very end of consulting them. Well, usually it is a cycle, there will be a next project coming up very soon. What we did there is, we try to identify actually where do they want to be in five years and then we broke it down to every department, to every level and defined actual aims, including

	AI. And we helped each department understand how they can achieve their aims on their level and we identified KPIs, and this is where it's tracking, Leo. We talk about AI and digitalization but until now many companies don't have really good KPIs. Really good KPIs, I don't mean like company overall KPI's but KPI's I can impact as a person, as an employee even on the lowest level. So what we usually do is, for example, this engineering company, we design KPIs for every department and then for every person, which those persons can actually impact, and then we introduced the software accordingly so that it can measure so that people understand, we're understanding basically on a weekly level.
Leo von Gerlach	Speaking about fear. I see that it's not always easy for the individual, if you have a KPI broken down on your individual head but from the organizational points, it makes a lot of sense and I just fully understand that. Perhaps, moving slightly from here in terms of change management on the one side, and the traditional field, and change management now, with these intelligence, smart technologies, including generative AI. Do you see a significant shift from your traditional work and how you went about your advisory as to what is happening now.
Kishor Sridhar	Yes and no. The work is the same because as a consultant, you just talked about fear and KPI, as a consultant what you're doing is you are the trusted advisor and you're helping people. This is something AI can do. AI helps me to give you more time free of unnecessary work so that I could focus on possibly clients. To be more there for them. So all these reports, all these protocols, all these tech stuff, this is taken over by AI. Even assessment of productivity taken over by AI, but the interpretation, this is actually what we are good at, my company, is the interpretation of results and helping you and guiding you and leading you, this is actually the core business. This is why I wanted to become a consultant because this is not the psychology behind it and understanding why people are doing unreasonable things. As I told you before, this is something AI may be able to logically explain. We ran some prompts around that, many prompts around that, so it can explain. But only humans can really help people to grow and become better. So, if you ask me how this changed my industry and my work, it helps me focus more on why I actually wanted to become a consultant and how we can actually help companies. So this is my advice I give to every company, focus on your core benefit, on the core value you bring to the table and all the other stuff AI can do.
Leo von Gerlach	That's very interesting and that's something that fully resonates with my own experience, that intelligent systems help you to become more self aware and just align yourself with your own intentions more than you have been in a position before. So thank you that's really very, very interesting. And perhaps where we are now in this realm of drawing some more abstract lessons, if you take a step back from your advisory role and say these are the things that you really have taken home that you would really like to give to somebody new in the business of the next generation, are there some more just fundamental takeaways that you could pin down?

Kishor Sridhar	Now, if you really take a step back from business and you really asked me my opinion, it is about understanding who people really are. It is understanding our fallacies, our biases, our weaknesses, but also our strength. And embrace people as they are, embrace them as they are. I so often hear that someone doesn't like a colleague or some supervisor, or the CEO, and they have this and that aspect, but below the line they are people and I think the time the, the age of AI can help us focus more on people and I would say the understanding of people is more important than ever. And focusing on that, this is really what the future brings and why I'm looking forward to the future. Because all the nasty stuff we as humans are not made for could be taken off our shoulders and what we're really made for is understanding each other and feeding each other's needs, and build on that one. This is something where we will have more time, if we use our time correctly.
Leo von Gerlach	Wonderful. So this is now my second take away, the first one really just the technology helps us to become more self aware. Now the second, the technology may help us going forward to focus more on people and people stuff. I think that is just a wonderful conclusion of that conversation, Kishor, and I thank you tremendously for this insight. Very, very valuable. So thank you once again, and actually thank you everybody for tuning in. It was great to have you and I hope you join us again for the next session of The Influencers, which is coming up soon. Until then, take care. Goodbye. .
Kishor Sridhar	Goodbye.