

SPOTLIGHT ON CHANDRA DHANDAPANI

Chief Digital & Technology
Officer, **CBRE**

ON Partners Client Spotlight Series offers timely insights and strategies from leading global executives.

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Chandra Dhandapani serves as CBRE's most senior global technology leader, with responsibility for all aspects of technology and digital enablement, serving both clients and CBRE professionals.

CBRE Group, Inc., the world's largest commercial real estate services and investment firm, offers a broad range of integrated services, including facilities, transaction and project management; property management; investment management; appraisal and valuation; property leasing; strategic consulting; property sales; mortgage services and development services.

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Q+A

You've had an unconventional career journey. What drove you to make the pivots you've made?

Chandra Dhandapani: I think of my career as a set of beautiful hiking trails. I have completely changed trails five times during my career. Each change was driven by a desire to do something more impactful and different.

My first big block was focused on socially minded assignments. I worked for a World Bank program investing in the silk industry in India, especially promoting women entrepreneurs. I then consulted with the government of India and a couple of international development organizations to improve core infrastructure through improved damage assessment and rehabilitation efforts following a massive earthquake. I switched to a client-facing role in the exciting world of advertising and was responsible for TV commercials, radio jingles, and multi-language print ads for consumer durables. I then decided to move to the US to pursue my second MBA and began my technology career in the financial services sector, where I spent 17 years. Now, I have been with CBRE for two years.

What made you choose CBRE as the next step in your journey?

Chandra Dhandapani: I love solving problems. To me, problems are like a puzzle waiting to be solved. You don't always get the puzzle right the first time, you may not have all the pieces when you start, but you just keep putting the pieces together until the solution is clear.

When I joined CBRE, the commercial real estate industry was in the early stages of digital transformation. It was a new industry for me, so

that meant continuous learning, which is a key tenet of my operating model. I needed to understand where we were as a company in our journey, as well as the major trends in the industry. Putting those things together and building up our inhouse digital and technology talent enabled us to make great strides in our digital transformation. We have modernized our infrastructure, created an industry-leading experience platform called CBRE 360, and created digital strategies and technology roadmaps for each business line that will continue to give us a competitive edge.

How do you maintain your passion for what you do?

Chandra Dhandapani: Two things drive me: 1) Pursuing the notion of what's possible, the opportunity to paint a picture and create something that's bigger than all of us, that will live on for a long time. 2) Seeing people do amazing things that they didn't believe they could pull off, and often doing so much better than the picture we initially painted.

I am extremely fortunate to be surrounded by a great team at CBRE. I am inspired by CEO Bob Sulentic's vision for our company and honored to be working with the industry's best leadership team as my peers. Together, we have identified our digital strategy priorities and are well on our way to establishing CBRE as the most digitally fluent company in our sector. We have been able to attract and build a highly talented digital and technology team with members who are deep experts in various aspects of technology, have 'fire in the belly' to change the world, and love working together.

From ON Partners, specialists in recruiting extraordinary leadership talent for exceptional corporations.