

# PHL CEOs see AI as key but still face cost, legacy system hurdles

By Beatriz Marie D. Cruz Reporter

MANY PHILIPPINE chief executive officers (CEOs) view artificial intelligence (AI) investments as crucial in navigating geopolitical and economic pressures this year, but they cite cost and legacy system upgrades as challenges, according to Ernst & Young (EY).

“CEOs see technology as one of the fastest ways to strengthen agility, improve competitiveness, and create more resilience in the face of uncertainty,” Noel P. Rabaja, deputy managing partner and strategy and transactions leader at SGV & Co., said in a forum last week.

In its 2026 Philippine CEO Outlook, SGV reported that 32% of Philippine CEOs ranked investing in AI and digital technologies as the most important action for navigating geopolitical and economic shifts.

However, 46% of CEOs said their AI initiatives are underperforming, with 28% citing difficulties in investing due to the rapid pace of technological change.

“Companies still lack sufficient network infrastructure, and their data is still very much non-digitized,” Mr. Rabaja told reporters on the sidelines of the forum.

He also highlighted gaps in companies’ upskilling efforts, while others struggle to transition from legacy systems.

“I think, for some companies, they find high costs of not just the technology itself, but changing their legacy system to be able to adapt the new technology or AI,” Mr. Rabaja said.

The report noted that 48% of Philippine CEOs expressed measured optimism about their business prospects for 2026, citing strong macroeconomic fundamentals despite weaker economic growth last year.

In 2025, the Philippine economy expanded by 4.4%, down from 5.7% in 2024, as the flood control scandal weighed on government spending and consumption.

“Leaders are feeling generally confident about their organizations and the local business environment,” Mr. Rabaja said.

Philippine CEOs, however, remain cautious about the global environment this year amid ongoing geopolitical tensions and trade disruptions.

EY also reported that 73% of Philippine CEOs are confident in their ability to optimize operations and enhance productivity, driven by continued digitalization and process improvements.

The survey showed that 64% of the country’s leaders are optimistic about revenue growth, even as 42% expect a rise in operating costs.

Leaders are pacing expansions carefully to balance governance requirements with market conditions, while facing pressures from input costs, cost pass-through limitations, and free cash flow constraints.

About 42% of CEOs accelerated a planned investment over the past 12 months due to geopolitical and trade policy developments.

EY added that 98% of CEOs reported adjustments to their strategic investment plans over the past year, with 40% delaying and 28% halting an investment.

The Philippines’ CEO Confidence Index declined to 59 in 2026 from 74 in 2025, reflecting a “steady but guarded sense of optimism.”

Compared with last year, CEOs showed lower confidence in price inflation (54); company growth (61); talent (60); technology transformation (60); organic transformation (63); portfolio transformation (55); and investment and technology (59).

The survey also noted that 75% of CEOs remain confident in their ability to improve employee engagement and retention.

“Philippine leaders are strengthening their foundations, accelerating AI adoption, and reshaping their portfolios to stay ahead of shifting economic and geopolitical currents,” Mr. Rabaja said.

SGV & Co. is a member of EY Global Ltd.

# PLDT deploys agentic AI to strengthen risk management

PLDT INC. has announced its first use of agentic artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance enterprise risk management across its operations.

In a media release on Sunday, the Pangilinan-led telecommunications company said it has deployed the Enterprise Risk Intelligence Companion Agent (ERICA), an autonomous system built on its platform.

“For the PLDT Group, the real value of ERICA goes beyond the technology itself... It reflects how we are embedding innovation into core enterprise functions in a way that is deliberate, disciplined, and aligned with how the business actually works,” said PLDT and Smart Communications, Inc. First Vice-President and Group Head of Information Technology and Transformation Office Gilbert O. Gaw.

ERICA was developed by the PLDT Group’s Enterprise Risk Management team in partnership with PLDT and Smart’s Information Technology team and UiPath, an enterprise automation software provider.

PLDT said ERICA is designed to strengthen enterprise risk management across the organization by enhancing risk assessment, identification, and management.

“ERICA was introduced to make risk assessments more seamless and consistent across the organization. By reducing the effort required at each

stage, the solution allows teams to focus on insights and decision-making, rather than administrative efforts,” the company said.

The technology is expected to make risk assessment faster and translate complex operational information into comprehensible insights that can be validated, allowing the company to respond efficiently.

ERICA is built to adapt to the needs of different business units, PLDT added, noting that it supports teams in understanding the impact of operational changes and in pinpointing critical risk areas that need to be managed.

“Human oversight remains central to ERICA’s design. All outputs are reviewed and validated by risk professionals, with full traceability maintained through existing governance systems. This ensures transparency and accountability while supporting the Group’s broader commitment to the responsible use of AI,” the company said.

PLDT is also planning to expand agentic AI adoption with UiPath and may extend ERICA’s use across its business units to strengthen enterprise-wide resilience.

Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of the PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., holds a majority stake in *BusinessWorld* through the Philippine Star Group, which it controls.

— Ashley Erika O. Jose

Career Opportunity in **RELiance Digital Solutions Inc.**

### HEAD OF OPERATIONS (1 Vacancy)

**Job Description**

- Develop, strategize, monitor, and improve organization status.
- Ensure growth and stability by hiring and mentoring individuals to fulfill company goals.
- Set and monitor operational KPIs, ensuring targets are met.

**Qualification:**

- With relevant work experience in operations management or managerial role.
- Must have an excellent written and verbal communication skills in English and Bulgarian languages.
- Excellent leadership, communication and decision-making skills.
- Proficiency in improvement methodologies.

**Applications may be sent to:**  
Name of Company HR: **Aimee Stephanie Volante**  
Email address: **hr@reliancecdsi.com**

Company/ Employer	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position
Company Name: <b>Reliance Digital Solutions Inc.</b> Complete Address: <b>12 Floor Times Plaza Bldg, U.N Avenue, Cor. Taft Avenue, Barangay 666, Ermita, City Of Manila</b> Nature Of Business: <b>BPO</b>	Name: <b>Bogoslovov, Georgi Valeriev</b> Address: <b>Makati City</b> Nationality: <b>Bulgaria</b> Intended period of employment: <b>Two (2) years</b>

**Reliance Digital Solutions Inc.** hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an **Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment - National Capital Region located at 967 Maligaya Street, Malate, Manila**

Career Opportunity in **RELiance Digital Solutions Inc.**

### CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER (1 Vacancy)

**Job Description**

- Ensure that organizational strategies are executed to achieve maximum customer satisfaction.
- Lead agents and representatives in daily operational tasks.
- Create effective customer service procedures, policies, and standards.

**Qualification:**

- At least 1 year proven experience in a customer service position.
- Must have an excellent written and verbal communication skills in English, or British English.
- Excellent leadership, communication and decision-making skills.
- Creative problem solving and a high level of empathy.

**Applications may be sent to:**  
Name of Company HR: **Aimee Stephanie Volante**  
Email address: **hr@reliancecdsi.com**

Company/ Employer	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position
Company Name: <b>Reliance Digital Solutions Inc.</b> Complete Address: <b>12 Floor Times Plaza Bldg, U.N Avenue, Cor. Taft Avenue, Barangay 666, Ermita, City Of Manila</b> Nature Of Business: <b>BPO</b>	Name: <b>Hughes, Blake Thomas Patrick</b> Address: <b>Taguig City</b> Nationality: <b>British Citizen</b> Intended period of employment: <b>Two (2) years</b>

**Reliance Digital Solutions Inc.** hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an **Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment - National Capital Region located at 967 Maligaya Street, Malate, Manila**

Career Opportunity in **Optum Global Solutions (Philippines), Inc.**  
**1 Vacancy**

**Company Name:** Optum Global Solutions (Philippines), Inc.  
**Address:** 1st to 4th Floors, Science Hub Tower 3, Block 38, Campus Avenue corner Turin Street, Mckinley Hill, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City 1634  
**Nature of Business:** Business Process Outsourcing/Business Support Systems

**Contact details of the Company:** Regina Grace Benito | regina\_benito@optum.com

**Job Position:** Director Workforce Planning

**Job Description:**  
Lead the enterprise Workforce Management (WFM) strategy, operating model, and execution for one of the capability divisions in high-scale healthcare operations across multiple business lines (Commercial, Medicare, Medicaid, Provider, Behavioral, Revenue Cycle, Utilization Management). The role ensures demand-supply balance, cost-optimized capacity, and service resilience across omnichannel contact centers, back-office processing, and clinical queues. You will lead a cross-functional team of analysts and managers across forecasting, capacity planning, scheduling, real-time command & control (RTA), and performance analytics to support multiple business units within a capability division, ensuring that millions of members and providers receive timely service while maintaining strict financial efficiency

Also, the incumbent will do seat management at country level, which is a critical subset. It will involve simulating and executing multiple work models, ensuring optimal seat utilization.

**Responsibilities**

- Strategy & Operating Model**
  - Define and execute the **enterprise WFM strategy** (CoE-led) across business lines, sites, partners, and functions.
  - Design the **WFM operating model** (centralized vs. federated) including clear **RACI** with Operations, Quality, Compliance, HR, Finance, and Technology.
  - Lead **capacity councils / IBP (Integrated Business Planning)** aligning demand, supply, hiring, training, and budget cycles.
  - Set **multi-year roadmap** for tooling, automation (RPA), forecasting science, data governance, and skills-based routing optimization.
- Forecasting & Capacity Planning**
  - Own **short/mid/long-range forecasting** across omni-channels and backlogs; incorporate seasonality, policy/program changes, marketing, provider behavior, payer mix, and clinical patterns.
  - Apply **queuing theory** (Erlang-C/E), and **driver-based models** for conversion, AHT, handle mix, shrinkage, multi-skill complexity, concurrency (chat).
  - Lead **capacity & budget planning** (HC/FTE, hiring classes, overtime, cross-skilling) to meet SLAs at optimal cost.
  - Integrate **business continuity** (BCP) scenarios and **surge playbooks** (open enrollment, regulatory deadlines, outages, public health events).
- Scheduling, Real-Time Management & Command Center**
  - Govern **schedule generation**, rotations, flex shifts, split shifts, and **work-at-home** schedules with fair work practices and productivity.
  - Lead **Real-Time Adherence & Command Center**: intraday reforecasting, staffing actions, cross-skill swaps, OT/UT, skilling changes, IVR levers, and backlog reprioritization.
- Performance Analytics & Continuous Improvement**
  - Establish **WFM KPIs and dashboards** (Tableau/Power BI) aligned to **SL, ASA, AHT, Abandon, Backlog Aging, TAT, QA/Compliance**, Schedule Adherence, Shrinkage, Occupancy, Utilization, Staffed Hours vs. Plan.
- Technology, Tools & Automation**
  - Accelerate **automation**: schedule bots, intraday rebalancing, RTA triggers for backlog movement, and **self-service shift bidding**.
- People Leadership**
  - Lead and develop a **high-performing WFM organization** (directors, managers, analysts, scientists).
  - Build capabilities in **forecasting science, storytelling, and consulting**; succession plan for key roles.
  - Foster **collaboration** with Operations, Clinical, Quality, Finance, HR, Compliance, and Product/Tech in a **matrixed** environment.
- Governance, Risk & Compliance**
  - Run **monthly operational reviews** and **quarterly executive governance** on service, cost, risk, and roadmap progress.
- Stakeholder Management**
  - Serve as the **trusted advisor** to business leaders on demand dynamics, service risk, and cost-to-serve.
  - Translate complex WFM insights into **clear business narratives** and investment cases (e.g., automation ROI, staffing trade-offs, digital containment).
- Seat management**
  - Growth forecasting: Align budgets with seat availability
  - Lease options- Create models and proposal to finance based on work models/ targets shared by leadership on scale up or scale down options
  - Stacking plans- Design "floor stacking" strategies
  - Ensuring compliance

**Required Qualifications for the Position:**

- 15–20+ years in **Workforce Management** within **large-scale healthcare** or regulated service operations; 5–8+ years leading multi-site/global WFM teams.
- Minimum 3–5 years in Clinical operations within healthcare
- Bachelor’s degree in finance
- Master’s degree in finance or human resource management or related fields
- Executive communication, matrix influence, and change leadership in complex organizations.
- Minimum 5 years of experience in doing seat management at a country level
- Proven ownership of **enterprise forecasting, capacity planning, scheduling, and real-time management** across contact center, back-office, and (ideally) **clinical queues**.
- Hands-on experience with **NICE IEX / Genesys / Aspect**, or comparable platforms
- Demonstrated success improving **forecast accuracy, SLA adherence, and cost-to-serve** at scale

**Preferred Qualifications**

- Lean Six Sigma** (Black Belt)
- Global operations leadership (Philippines/India/LATAM)

**Core Competencies**

- Strategic Systems Thinking:** End-to-end view of demand → staffing → service → cost → experience → compliance.
- Analytical Rigor:** Comfort with variance analysis, drivers, sensitivity testing, and scenario modeling.
- Operational Excellence:** Controls, cadence, playbooks, and continuous improvement discipline.
- Influence & Narrative:** Converts complex analytics into action through compelling, data-backed storytelling.
- People Leadership:** Capability building, coaching, and culture of accountability and experimentation.
- Risk Mindset:** Proactive management of regulatory, security, and business continuity risks.

**Monthly Salary Range:** PHP 300,000 – PHP 305,000  
**Workplace Address:** Taguig City

**Name of Foreign National:** Taranjeet Singh Bakshi  
**City of Residence:** Makati City  
**Duration of Employment:** 2 years

Optum Global Solutions (Philippines), Inc. hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an **Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment - National Capital Region located at 967 Wasmiya Building, Maligaya Street, Malate, Manila**

**Company Name:** Sodexo On-Site Services Philippines, Inc.  
**Address:** 11th Floor, B.A. Lepanto Building, 8747 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City 1226  
**Nature of Business:** Administrative and Support Service Activities

**Contact details of the Company:** MILITAR Mylene Mylene.MILITAR@sodexo.com

**Job Position:** Chef Level 3

**Job Description:**

- Ensure kitchen team adheres to Sodexo Way Service standards through training and role modeling.
- Ensure standard recipes are used and food is presented according to established standards.
- Direct and co-ordinate the activities of all kitchen staff.
- Ensure kitchen and working area always comply with health and food safety standards.
- Inspect storerooms, refrigerators, and freezers daily, to ensure no wastage.
- Ensure that all machinery, furniture, equipment and utensils are clean and in working condition at all times. Ensure all areas comply with Sodexo QHSE standards
- Participate and contribute in continual improvement process through waste reduction, revenue enhancement, increased customer and staff satisfaction and improved workplace health and safety.
- Play an active role in staff development by identifying training needs and conduct regular training sessions to existing and new staff according to standards, rules, and regulations.
- Manage performance of food production staff ensuring team efficiency, productivity and compliance through coaching, rewards & recognition, positive reinforcement, and disciplinary process.
- Promote teamwork and cohesion by always demonstrating behavioral and positive mindset examples.
- Ensure closing procedures are adhered to such as locking of doors, switch off lights, recording of temperatures, turning off gas, shutting down of all systems and other equipment.
- Ensure to update all scheduled cleaning in responsible area
- Carry any other reasonable duties and responsibilities as assigned.
- Assist other outlet as and when the need arises.
- Maintain an open line of communication, inter and intra department to provide a positive working environment for all employees.
- Schedule working hours of all kitchen staff with the other Sous Chefs, taking into consideration the volume of expected business. Effectively manage staff overtime if warranted by unexpected business or dismiss them earlier if business is slow.
- Assign in detail, specific duties of Sous Chefs and Chef De Partie.
- Determine quality and quantity of food material used with a view of eliminating waste and spoilage, especially meat, fish, products etc.
- Review and closely monitor prices of unlisted food items.
- Responsible of the food preparation standards. Check constantly for taste, temperature and visual appeal. Make sure that all products from the kitchen are correct.
- Ensure all documentations are completed according to Sodexo policies, standards, and requirements.
- Effectively manage food cost, par level and ordering of raw materials.
- Plan menus, consider availability of raw foods and ingredients, availability of skill required in preparing new menus style and standard of Sodexo.
- Supervise cooking and other kitchen personnel, coordinate their assignments and arrangement to ensure economical and timely food production.
- Estimate current and daily requirements of customer for foods consumption base on event orders, daily menus forecast etc.
- Ensure that there is always an adequate supply of food.
- Responsible for all the work performance and efficiency of all employees in food production
- Monitor portion control
- Ensure on the job training is adhered to effectively
- Establish development and succession plan for kitchen team
- Coordinate with the Chief Steward to ensure highest hygiene standards in kitchen
- Take whatever actions are necessary to ensure the safety of all customers, clients and staff within the Unit
- Manage kitchen staff in daily duties to ensure best practice according to Sodexo Company guidelines

**Basic Qualifications for the Position:**

- Experience in a high-pressure catering environment, preferably in a commercial, hospitality or industrial environment
- Experience in menu planning in a volume production kitchen and individual kitchen
- Experience in or exposure to batch cooking
- Knowledge of contemporary food trends
- Food safety and hygiene knowledge
- Demonstrates ability to control food and labour costs
- Understanding service needs of the operation
- Leadership and team building abilities
- Demonstrates ability in staff development
- Well-groomed and able to represent Sodexo in a professional manner
- Customer focused
- Organized
- Self-motivated
- Creativity and an eye for detail

**Monthly Salary:** PHP 150,000.00 – PHP 170,000  
**Workplace Address:** Taguig City

**Name of Foreign National:** Qi Xia  
**Nationality:** Chinese  
**City of Residence:** Taguig City  
**Duration of Employment:** 2 years

**Sodexo On-Site Services Philippines, Inc.** hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an **Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment - National Capital Region located at 967 Wasmiya Building, Maligaya Street, Malate, Manila**



# Aboitiz completes runway upgrades at Laguindingan airport

ABOITIZ InfraCapital, Inc. (AIC) has completed upgrades on most of the runway surfaces at Laguindingan International Airport, advancing its plan to enhance the facility’s overall infrastructure.

“As the operator of Laguindingan International Airport, we take a proactive approach to maintaining and improving critical airside infrastructure. These runway enhancements reflect our ongoing responsibility to ensure that the airport remains capable of supporting current operations while preparing for future demand,” AIC Vice-President and Head of Airports Rafael M. Aboitiz said in a media release on Sunday.

AIC, the infrastructure arm of the Aboitiz group, said the runway surface upgrades cover regular rehabilitation works, including runway repainting, rubber removal, and crack repair, which improve optimal runway surface conditions.

The airport operator said the maintenance works were carried out in coordination with aviation authorities to ensure compliance with national safety and operational standards.

“Sustaining airport infrastructure is an ongoing process that relies on cooperation between regulators and airport operators.

Continued coordination across stakeholders helps ensure that facilities like Laguindingan International Airport remain well-maintained and capable of supporting the region’s growing connectivity needs,” said Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines Director-General Raul L. Del Rosario.

These technical upgrades will enable smoother and safer take-offs and landings, the company said, adding that they also make airport services more reliable.

Laguindingan International Airport logged 2.35 million passengers with three airlines in 2025.

The company officially took over the operations and maintenance of the airport in April 2025. It has committed to enhancing the airport to increase its capacity and improve its infrastructure.

For the first phase of the airport’s capacity expansion, AIC is working to raise the current capacity of 1.6 million passengers per year to 3.9 million, with plans to further scale it up to 6.3 million in the second phase.

The company has partnered with Ireland-based daa International for the upgrade and operation of Laguindingan International Airport. — Ashley Erika O. Jose