

Leading with empathy

Satya Nadella: Executive Chairman and CEO of Microsoft



Born in 1967 in Hyderabad, India, Satya Nadella never imagined leaving his hometown. However, by 2024, after a decade as Chairman and CEO of Microsoft, Nadella illustrates how a strong corporate culture can drive success.

After a brief stint with Sun Microsystems, Nadella joined Microsoft in 1992 as a software engineer and quickly demonstrated his leadership capability, landing his first Vice President role in 1999. By 2001, he had advanced to Corporate Vice President of Microsoft Business Solutions, and in 2007, he was promoted to Senior Vice President of R&D for the Online Services Division. Between 2011 and 2013, Nadella also served as President of Microsoft's Server and Tools Business.

Nadella's later role as Executive Vice President involved overseeing Microsoft's Cloud platform, which supported critical services such as Bing, Xbox Live, and Office 365, becoming a cornerstone of Microsoft's product offerings.

When he assumed the role of CEO in 2014, Nadella faced the challenge of redefining Microsoft's image from a company known for past successes to one with future potential.

His leadership is widely praised for transforming the company, with Nadella attributing his growth to

his diverse roles within Microsoft. His vision focused on rekindling Microsoft's purpose and reinforcing it through a strong company culture. Nadella has openly shared how experiences with his and wife's Anupama's son Zain, who passed away in 2022 aged 26, deeply influenced his leadership style and emphasis on empathy. Zain – the elder brother of Divya and Tara – was born as a legally blind quadriplegic with cerebral palsy. Despite those labels, his interests shone through – like reading American and Indian poetry and playing cricket.

Nadella believes that "empathy has everything to do with business". It is this core belief that has allowed Nadella to recognise the power of diversity and inclusion as a cultural pillar, and with that, remain grounded in a fierce industry. This approach has kept Microsoft competitive in a rapidly evolving landscape, turning it into a learning organisation at its core.

As Microsoft embarks on its next phase, especially with its recent partnership with OpenAI, Nadella's focus on empathy and creativity remains crucial.

In an AI-driven future, Nadella believes these qualities will be more important than ever for shaping the company's trajectory, and space in AI, in the ever-growing tech world. ■

“Empathy is the source to success in any innovative agenda you have

Satya Nadella”



Leaders

Modern Politics

Katerina Sakellariopoulou: President of Greece

A notable Greek politician, Juris Doctor and lawyer, Katerina Sakellariopoulou made history by becoming the first female President of Greece. Elected in 2020, her presidency has since been described as a new era of politics and equality in Greece.

Born May 30th, 1956, in Thessaloniki, Greece, Sakellariopoulou's introduction to law began with her father, who was Vice-President of the Areios Pagos, Greece's Supreme Civil and Criminal Court. After moving to Athens in 1964,

Sakellariopoulou graduated from the Arsakeio School in Psychiko in 1974 and earned her law degree from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens in 1978.

Earning a postgraduate in public law at Paris II University, France, Sakellariopoulou's education provided the necessary foundations for her future leadership roles.

Sakellariopoulou's own judicial career began in 1982 as an Assistant Judge at the Council of State, Greece's Supreme Administrative Court. By 1988,

she had become an Associate Councillor, dealing with cases related to education, civil service, and local government. She was promoted to Councillor of State in 2000, focusing on environmental law, and served as Vice-President of the Council of State in 2015. Sakellariopoulou initially broke barriers as being the first woman appointed President of the Council of State in 2018.

Since her Presidential election in 2020, Sakellariopoulou has been a transformative leader. Characterised by her progressiveness, she has championed human rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and social justice. Her advocacy for women has been particularly notable; in her Interparliamentary Committee meeting opening speech for International Women's day 2021,

she highlighted the importance of placing women at the center of policy-making and economic recovery, and introduced a European action plan advocating for increased female representation and equality in the workforce.

Sakellariopoulou has also addressed major international issues, including Greece's stance on the Russian invasion of Ukraine and climate change. Beyond her political roles, she is a respected academic with numerous publications on constitutional and environmental law. As her first term nears its end in 2025, her presidency represents a significant shift towards modernisation and progressive reform in Greek politics, setting a new standard for leadership both domestically and internationally. ■

“Honouring both justice and the modern Greek woman”
Katerina Sakellariopoulou