

Niren Chaudhary

Former Chairman & CEO

Panera Brands, Inc.

Former COO & President

Krispy Kreme Doughnuts, Inc.



Niren Chaudhary is an experienced board member and former CEO. As Chairman and CEO of Panera Brands, he led an increased pace of innovation, strengthened franchisee partnerships, and created a robust and people-first culture. He has deep experience in consumer goods, corporate governance, and private equity. As an ExCo mentor, Chaudhary brings a purpose-driven and service-oriented mindset to his work with C-suite clients. A passionate and powerful speaker, he is a frequent guest lecturer at top Ivy League schools and a keynote speaker at many corporate leadership events nationwide.

Chaudhary's most recent operational role was as CEO of Panera Brands and Panera Bread, one of the world's largest fast-casual restaurant companies with nearly 4,000 locations in 10 countries. During his tenure, Panera Brands established itself as a leader in the fast-casual segment by expanding its digital capabilities (accounting for 51% of total sales at Panera Bread) while increasing its consumer base to more than 53 million members. Additionally, he launched an innovative loyalty subscription model that resulted in 25% of all Panera transactions. Under his leadership, Panera had industry-leading retention rates for GMs and associates, earning Black Box Intelligence's Employer of Choice Award and being rated as amongst the Top 20 Most purpose-driven companies and Top 10 most sustainable companies in 2022. Chaudhary led Panera to be voted the Most Innovative Company by Fast Company in 2021.

Previously, as Chief Operating Officer and President of Krispy Kreme, Chaudhary implemented a new operating model to elevate consistency across the global brand and created a path for enterprise value growth threefold over a five-year period.

Earlier in his career, Chaudhary served in various global leadership positions at Yum! Brands, including the Global President of KFC and the President of Yum! India. KFC India and Pizza Hut India were rated as the most trusted brands during his tenure, and the company also received the President of India's award for their work on equal opportunity for hearing and speech-impaired employees.

Chaudhary is guided by his deep passion for serving others, building future leaders, and lifelong learning. He speaks four languages – Hindi, English, Dutch, and German. He also holds a black belt in Shotokan karate and is an avid golfer, tennis player, and musician with his own rock band.

A lifelong learner, he holds a bachelor's degree in economics from St. Stephen's College in Delhi and an MBA in marketing from the University of Delhi, Advanced Management Program at Harvard Business School, and is currently pursuing a fellowship at Harvard under the Advanced Leadership Initiative. He is passionate about community service and serves on the boards of the Tufts Medical Centre and DKMS, a leading non-profit with the world's largest stem cell donor registry; and is also an executive in residence at Columbia Business School. He currently resides in Boston, Massachusetts.