

THE 10 MOST INNOVATIVE COMPANIES TO WATCH IN 2025

# CIO VIEWS

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**Ryan Tweedie** Founder & Managing Partner, Sapien Software, LLC

***Sapien Software is Evolving  
HR Technology for Tomorrow***







Cover Story

# At the Intersection of Positive Disruption and Purposeful Innovation

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Sapien Software is Evolving HR  
Technology for Tomorrow

**Ryan Tweedie**

Founder & Managing Partner, Sapien Software, LLC

**W**hat do you get when you put a previously under-supported product in the hands of perhaps the most experienced group of people in its industry? First, you get a fresh new take on a proven solution. Second, you get the opportunity to infuse modern technology and create a challenger in an industry that has been dominated for too long by too few players. And third, you get a company that will disrupt the status quo. That is what's happening at Sapien Software and, in addition to the powerhouse lineup of talent within the company, all of whom are owners who left high-level positions to build something meaningful, and a whole separate group of former clients, CHROs, CIOs and Advisory Firm leaders that serve as advisors to the company, is why we've named Sapien as one of the 10 Most Innovative Companies to watch in 2025. We'll be watching. You should, too.

CIO Views spoke with Founder and Managing Partner, Ryan Tweedie to explore his decision to champion Sapien and his vision for the company and the industry that is projected to grow to \$81B by 2032. And, coming from one of today's most experienced HR Technology leaders who oversaw one of the

largest HR technology implementations in the world, who has founded multiple HR technology companies, and who has led global teams and rewritten rulebooks, we listened.

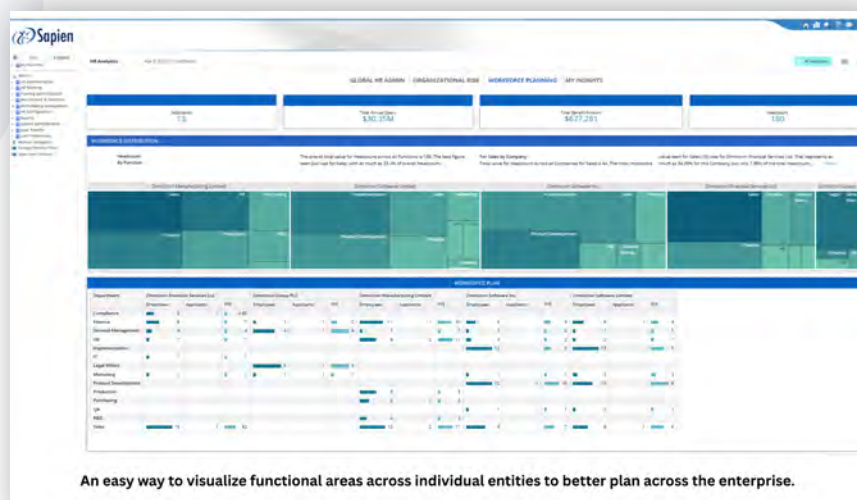
"I knew first-hand how powerful the Sapien platform was because we were once a distributor of the solution and we added upwards of 50 customers, many of whom were mid-market global companies in transition," said Tweedie. "However, distributors are handcuffed from evolving a product into what they often know it could and should be." So, in June 2024, Tweedie and a group of investors acquired the Sapien assets/IP, taking off the handcuffs, and in late Q1 2025 officially opened for business. And

the timing might be even more right today.

As Tweedie shared, the need for companies to collect, maintain and utilize employee data, and to service their employees with speed, accuracy and accessibility has grown even more important as the war for talent, remote/hybrid work, and the business environment itself evolved. However, nobody had mounted a full HRMS/HCM challenge to the three largest solutions built for 20k+ employee organizations, and the largest SaaS offerings for companies with fewer than 1k employees couldn't scale up. That meant that companies in the middle had to remain with outdated legacy systems or overpay for a solution, accept the inherent customization limitations,

***"I chose Sapien when I was CHRO of a company being divested and I would make that same choice over and over again. They know how to lead and deliver, no matter how challenging the situation."***

***- Dean McKenna, Founder and Partner, IV Talent***



and deal with the implementation timing imposed. And for companies undergoing a corporate transition such as a divestiture, the problem was even more pronounced as divestitures represent a significant challenge because they often need to bring their workforce together from around the world, and sometimes from more than one company which makes flexibility, customizability, security, and simplicity critical for these transactions.

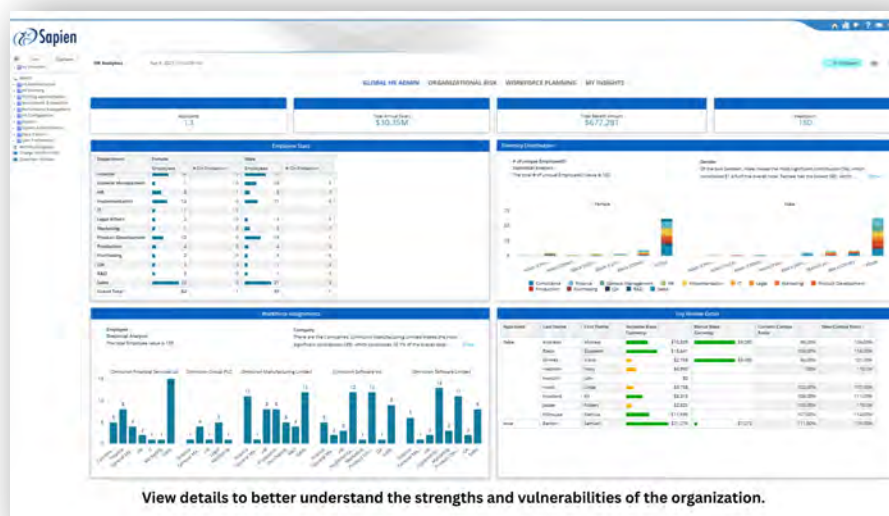
But Sapien isn't just focused on divestitures. They have their sights set on replacing outdated solutions whose time has passed, and on delivering a much more cost-effective and robust solution to mid-market and larger global companies that have had no real alternatives to choose from...until now. Tweedie has every reason to believe that the goals of the company are very realistic, as he knows first-hand that he's got a superior product, and that people will follow the energy that Sapien creates.

In just a few short months under Tweedie's leadership, the company has integrated and reimagined AI into the platform's backbone, upended pricing protocols, compressed global implementation time to a matter of months, and built a Data Warehouse to allow companies to integrate data such as procurement, sales and more so that disparate data can all be analyzed within the platform. It has built a model by which companies can

implement a new HR solution without heavy capital expenditure; has infused continuous improvement into its core service offering; has built a team in North America, the UK and Brazil; and more. No wonder their expectation is to be the first choice for mid-market companies, especially those in transition, and to be the last choice a mid-market or larger global entity will ever need to make regarding managing their people around the world. From our standpoint, that's not just wishful thinking.

### The Culture Code That Powers Sapien

**"Sapien is all about evolution, and we are driven by the relentless pursuit of the possible,"** volunteered Tweedie. Never satisfied to maintain the status quo, the company is hyper-focused on ensuring that its solution evolves with its customers as they evolve, and that it sets the standards for functionality, innovation and value. All of this is reflected in its core values.



# Be Disruptive:

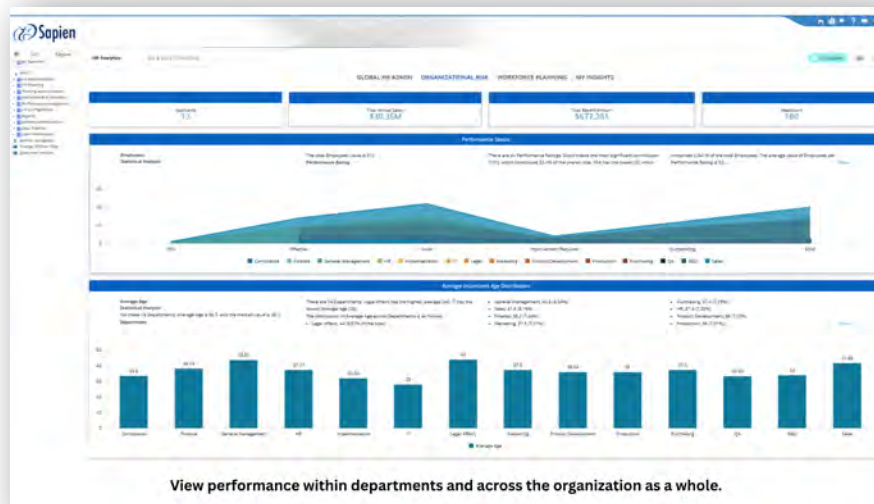
For too long, HR Technology has been mired in the expected. With Sapien, that's changing as the company balances the operational against the strategic, strives for the necessary and unexpected, and seeks to disrupt processes and pricing that don't make sense today.

Disruption has long been a part of the Sapien values. For example, years ago when companies began “outsourcing” administrative HR tasks to help manage the complexities of a global workforce, Sapien introduced *Human Resources Augmentation™ (HRA)* to “augment” HR operations while allowing clients to maintain control of key HR functions in addition to having visibility to their data. Sapien HRA won an award for *Best New Product or Service at the International Business Awards*.

More recently, Sapien is disrupting historical pricing by including continuous improvement in its contracts, making it possible to amortize implementation costs, and including lapsed employees at no additional charge. As Tweedie shared, this is just the tip of the iceberg.

# Be Customer-Obsessed:

Sapien's sole focus is on customers; not on competitors. This allows the company to know, and often anticipate, what customers need. This obsession drives Sapien to deliver a solution that not only meets client needs, but that leads them to outcomes that make it easier and faster for them to make the right



The salary worksheet provides a detailed view of employee compensation. It includes a table with columns for Name, Grade, Grade Group, Performance Rating, Potential Rating, Current Salary, Target Salary, and Total Compensation. A sidebar on the left shows navigation options like 'My People', 'Recruitment', 'Employee', etc. The table lists employees such as Andrew, Michael, and others, with their respective grades and compensation details.

Salary worksheet allows managers to access Hypercards with more data for deeper insight without leaving the worksheet.

decisions. Sapien's embrace of Agentic AI plays a big role in this effort.

# Be Nimble:

Sapien engages early and implements globally in a fraction of the time of its competitors. This agility makes the platform especially relevant in a world where data and AI are rewriting the book on IT value.

In many cases, Sapien's prospects are undergoing a corporate transition and are under challenging timeframes to get up and running as a new entity. In other cases, the transition might be due to their exit from their existing HR system. So, speed is important but so is quality. That's why Sapien explores customer needs early, and stays in constant communication during the implementation so that modifications can be made in the setup rather than wasting time going back to revise screens and functions.



## • Be Visionary:

As Tweedie shared, “At Sapien, we’re observing and considering what we see taking place in the market, but we’re marching to our own beat to make those observations more meaningful. Continually asking ourselves “why,” we take information and then innovate to make it help our customers to be better.”

For example, while everyone is obsessing about AI, Sapien has embraced it, consumed it and, in the process, incorporated it in a way that can make customers smarter by providing access to data that leads to powerful insights and greater efficiencies. Using Agentic AI, Sapien clients can use Natural Language Processing to interpret and address chat box input from users, and can prompt the system to provide insights from data in their own data set.

As another example, Sapien takes a 'one-system/one-world' Master System of Record (MSoR) approach to managing HR, and powers this MSoR by a solid data dictionary that is organized around Position and

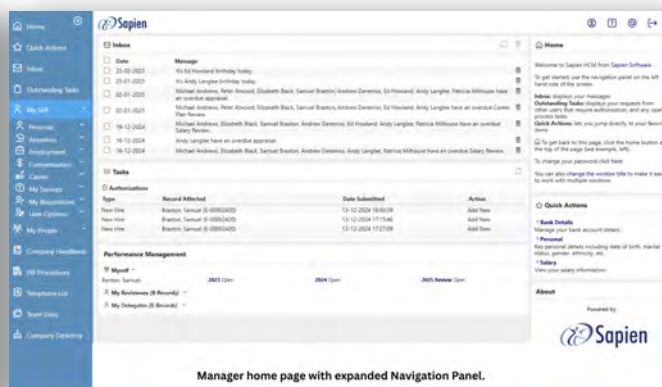
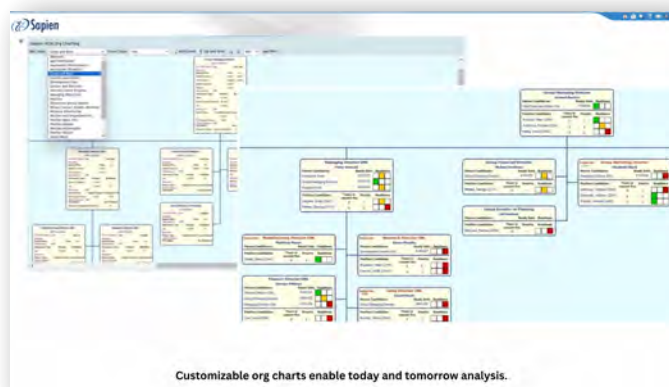
***“Sapien brings agility, insights, cost effectiveness, and a speed to value that materially outpaces other solutions. It's a powerful addition to an enterprise's digital intelligence strategy.”***

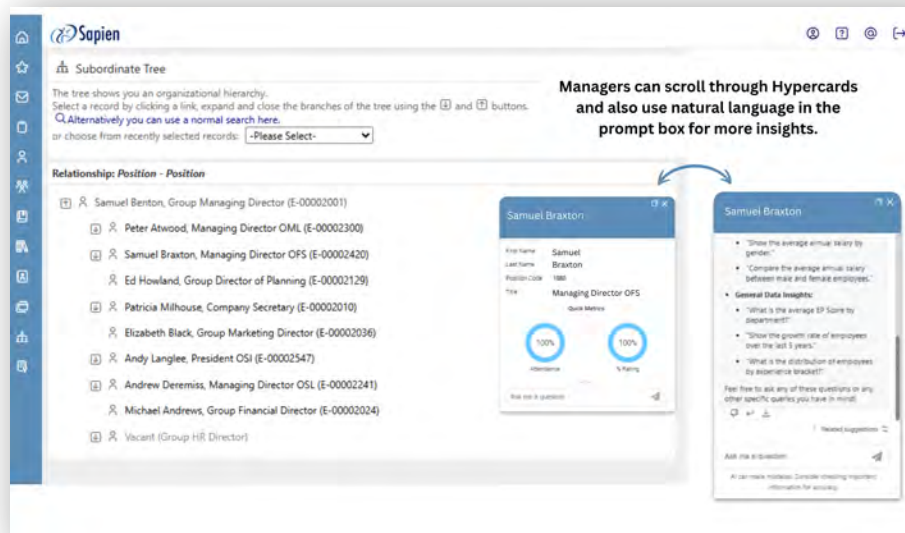
–Andrew Wilson,  
Former CIO, Accenture and Chief Digital Officer, Microsoft

Entity Control and multiple hierarchies. This allows HR to transform from a purely administrative function to a strategic enabler. Sapien delivers this transformation through its enterprise-grade platform that combines robust architecture, rapid implementation, and unmatched support. Importantly, Sapien offers each client a Data Warehouse that can ingest information from other systems like finance, procurement, and more so that all of a company's data can be analyzed within the platform.

## Engineered to Handle HR Today and Tomorrow

Sapien is a full HRMS with Org Charts, ESS/MSS, Benefits Administration, PTO, Time and Attendance, and more; and a full HCM with Succession, Performance, Survey/360, Training Administration, Recruiting, Compensation, Skills, Management Development, and Career Planning. A complete and customizable global platform that covers the whole employee lifecycle, Sapien is multi-country, multi-lingual, and payroll-agnostic, and integrates and coordinates with any payroll





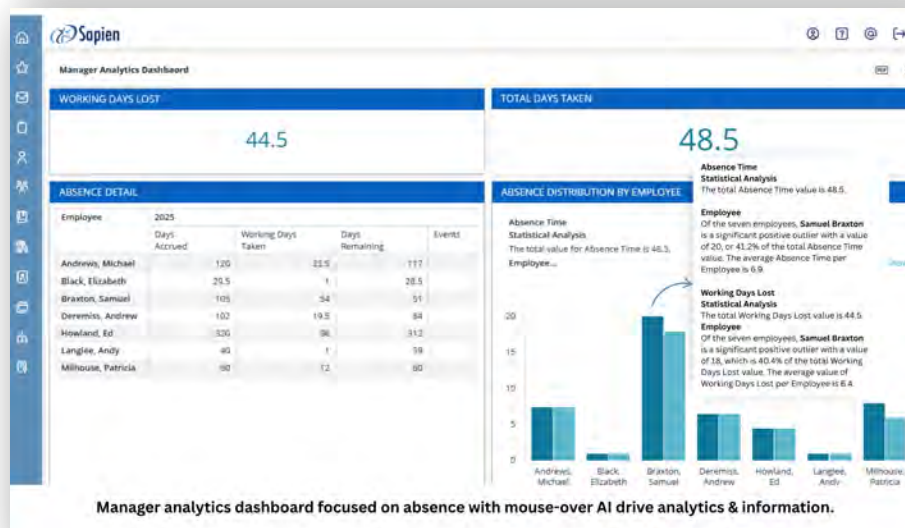
competitors who find it difficult to do quickly, to configure data for maximum value, or to do so at all.

## [2. Sapien provides Centralized Global-Ready MSoR Capabilities](#)

Sapien consolidates HR data from disparate HR sources into a single MSoR source of truth, as it supports global compliance with multi-currency, multi-lingual, and jurisdiction-aware features, and empowers strategic workforce planning with real-time insights and analytics dashboards.

## [3. Sapien enables Rapid Deployment and Customizability](#)

Sapien is uniquely agile. The platform can be deployed in as little as three months and configured using its no-code toolkit, enabling organizations to align quickly without lengthy implementation delays—an essential advantage in M&A or divestiture contexts, as well as when replacing an existing HR system.



provider. It even enables an organization to manage contract and contingent workers directly within the platform, integrating them into their talent pool.

Diving a bit deeper, Tweedie pointed out some highly relevant specifics.

## [1. Sapien was built for Position and Entity-Based Control](#)

Unlike its employee-centric competitors, Sapien is architected to be inherently position and entity-based, supporting complex mappings between entities, people and roles, and flexible relationships (e.g., position-to-position, person-to-person, etc.). This supports the structural precision needed for MSoR, entity governance, and real-time talent analytics. Position and entity control is a major challenge for

## [4. Sapien has Proven Success in High-Stakes Transitions](#)

Sapien was built to manage complex organizational changes. Having cut its teeth on the highly challenging divestiture market, Sapien has the ability to ingest information from multiple sources rapidly,



with upwards of 80% of data often capable of being incorporated onto the platform in a matter of days or weeks.

#### 5. Sapien is Scalable, Secure, and Interoperable

Sapien was built to ensure scalability, security and rapid deployment. That's why Sapien leads the journey to incorporate an auditable and configurable data dictionary; is architected on a position and entity control platform; and provides clients with a 24/7 global managed services team and HR transformation experts. The goal is to provide what customers need now, and to evolve as business changes.

#### **A Platform with Differences that Matter**

Some have described Sapien as an AI company with the best HR solution in the industry. Others have labeled it as a customizable cloud global software solution that understands how to use AI. We just think of it as being in a league of its own. Here are some of the reasons why:

Sapien is 100% payroll agnostic, with front end tools to manage company codes, interface frequencies, earnings, deductions and master data before pushing finalized payroll files to any payroll provider across the globe for gross-to-net calculations and payment processing. This means that clients can use any payroll provider anywhere in the world. Even more, it means that Sapien segregates HR data span of controls from the



payment processors, elevating data security and reducing risk. That's a big deal.

Sapien brings key metrics, dynamic dashboards, and the best of AI tools to a broad spectrum of executive decision-making. Only Sapien informs and enables leadership to track Workforce Productivity, Headcount Changes, Absence Trends, Total Cost Per Employee, Cost Per Hire and any other metrics deemed necessary at CHRO and reporting levels. Plus, Sapien AI provides the ability to accelerate, advance and augment information leading to powerful insights and greater efficiencies. Sapien also

enhances HR operations with AI-driven support for functions such as workflow automation, compliance checks, report generation, and other key HR tasks.

Sapien places HR at the center of an evolving data-driven operation aligning people strategy, insights and organizational readiness with corporate budgets, goals and initiatives. With over 200 standard reports, the ability to track all employees including contingent workers as part of the talent pool, and the MSOR that enables multiple hierarchies, sophisticated position and entity control and multiple languages across a unified platform,

Sapient elevates an organization's HR function.

Sapient adds value in terms of technology costs, speed of implementation, and customer service. Only Sapient can customize ERP grade functionalities without touching code, and includes HRA and Sapient AI as part of every contract. Plus, Sapient is often 3-4x less costly on a PEPM basis and handles implementations in roughly half the time and at half the cost of competitors.

## The Road Ahead

Execution is where Tweedie believes progress begins. Sapient's top priority is to deliver flawless client implementations. No shortcuts or excuses. Beyond that, the company is doubling down on three strategic fronts.

First, it's enhancing its master international build to expand what is possible at the "edges" of the organization. Using AI, Sapient aims to move more transactions into

employee and manager self-service while providing Power Users with smarter, faster tools.

Second, it's focusing on AI as a way to sharpen decisions, not replace them. With Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Agentic AI, Sapient helps users to transition seamlessly from data to action without friction. And, as a true point of difference, Sapient's Agentic AI is infused with the insights and expertise of the global CEOs, CIOs,

and CHROs on its Advisory Board. Very powerful.

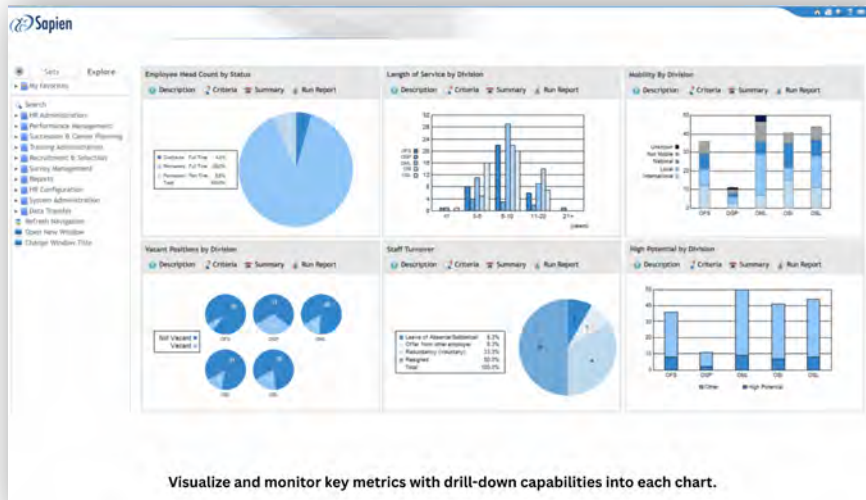
Third, it's building out its Data Warehouse. By pulling in data from finance, procurement, and other sources, the platform becomes more than an HR system; it becomes a command center. Combined with its AI capabilities, this integration will be a game-changer.

## A Foundation Based on People and Progress

From an identity standpoint, Sapient is grounded in people and progress. As its veteran Managing Partner remarks, "It reflects how we want to impact every customer with whom we work." He emphasizes that the brand's true power lies in its utility. Every interaction is designed to help clients as they evolve, and lead with greater clarity and control. While software remains foundational to Sapient's identity, what drives customer conversations today are the pillars that surround it—Value, Experience, Governance, Agility,

*"I was so impressed with Sapient that, not only did I choose it to replace the legacy solution in a 12K employee company, but I also joined the Advisory Board as soon as they asked. Sapient is a game-changer for the industry."*

—Paige Cox-Lisk, Chief People Officer,  
Kyrus Health



and Strategic Relevance to modern, organizationally structured enterprises.

### Leading with Clarity and Conviction

Tweedie describes his leadership style as empowering and wildly transparent. "I'm honest to a fault, and expect the same of everyone in the organization," he says. He champions taking calculated risks, learning fast from missteps, and giving smart, credible people the room to take chances that lead to the best outcomes.

He cultivated this mindset throughout his leadership at HR companies and then embedded it into his practice as a Senior Partner at EY, across his 2,000+-person team as Global Managing Director at Accenture, and is bringing the same philosophy to Sapien today. The loyalty and trust it inspires with customers, employees and other leaders speaks volumes. As Tweedie offers, "The majority of our Advisory Board is comprised of historical Sapien customers and my former superiors at EY and Accenture. I think that suggests this approach works."

### Beyond Business: A Personal Mandate

This seasoned executive draws his most in-depth motivation from a powerful network of relationships -- his family, employees, partners, investors, and Advisory Board. Many of Sapien's current team members have followed Ryan across ventures, and the core leadership team has deep roots in Sapien.

"It's a family," Tweedie says. He describes this extended network as global and generational, underscoring the deeply personal nature of his commitment. His overarching goal, he states, is to cultivate an environment where everyone can grow, enjoy the journey, and change the industry.

One defining push came from his father, who once told him (less politely), "Don't be a wimp, go for it." This clear directive from a man who has "seen it all" evidently solidified Tweedie's resolve to pursue his vision for Sapien.

### Advice to Aspiring Leaders

"Find a mentor and dig in." That's what Tweedie did. He credits key mentors like the late Nick Bolton, his guide at HRSoft and original owner of Sapien's platform; and later, Joe Deegan at EY and Andrew Wilson at Accenture. Both Deegan and Wilson now sit on Sapien's Advisory Board, a testament to the enduring value of those relationships.

He urges aspirants to lean into those who champion them, embrace their guidance, and recognize the mutual value in these connections. "When you're successful, you can look back and call out the people who shaped your success which is powerful and rewarding," he says. He adds, "And then, it's your turn to pay it forward."

### 'The Last' S' in SaaS,' The CEO's Mantra Became Sapien's Superpower

With three decades in HR

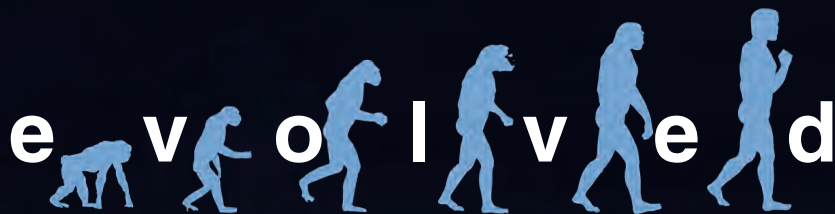
technology, Tweedie has seen firsthand what works and what fails when software meets the real world. His time leading global teams at EY and Accenture shaped a core belief: **great software has less to do with code and architecture, and more to do with the layers of service wrapped around them.** Product performance is a given, but what takes a platform from good to great is the ability to provide on-time and on-budget delivery, ongoing innovation and user insights, and the strategic tools to future-proof a workforce against evolving business demands. The company has eliminated traditional SI models, outsourced Power Users for speed and scalability, and embedded Agentic AI to support decision-making and automate everyday tasks.

"The problem with SaaS is that it too often forgets to focus on the last 'S'," says Tweedie. This isn't just a founder's philosophy; it's the engine behind Sapien, an approach that gets noticed and earns recognition. It is what propels the company to be disruptive and purposeful with its innovations, and that will become a new standard for HR Technology tomorrow.

*'The 10 Most Innovative Companies to Watch in 2025'* recognized Sapien for this rare ability to blend cutting-edge technology with profound human insight, crafting solutions that feel like they're simply part of your business.







Finally, a complete, rapidly-customizable, and affordable global HR solution built for today and tomorrow. Multi-lingual and multi-currency. Payroll agnostic. Personalized customer support. Infused with Agentic AI. Implementable within months. Proven in divestitures and as legacy system replacements. The list goes on and on.

**Say goodbye to yesterday and hello to the future.**



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