

**Company:** Bank of the Philippine Islands, Makati City, Philippines

**Company Description:** Founded in 1851, Bank of the Philippine Islands is the first bank in the Philippines and in the Southeast Asian region. BPI is a universal bank and together with its subsidiaries and affiliates, it offers a wide range of financial products and solutions that serve both retail and corporate clients.

**Nomination Category:** Human Resources Categories

**Nomination Sub Category:** Human Resources Executive of the Year

**Nomination Title:** Maria Virginia "Gina" Eala of the Bank of the Philippine Islands: Redefining HR Through Transformative Leadership, Holistic Wellness, and People-First Digital Innovation

1. Which will you submit for this nomination, a video of up to five (5) minutes in length or a written essay of up to 650 words? Choose one:

Essay of up to 650 words

2. If you are submitting a video of up to five (5) minutes in length, provide the URL of the nominated video here, OR attach it to your entry via the "Add Attachments, Videos, or Links to This Entry" link above, through which you may also upload a copy of your video:

3. If you are providing a written essay for this nomination, submit in this space an essay of up to 650 words describing the nominee's accomplishments since 1 January 2023:

**Total 650 words used.**

Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), Southeast Asia's first bank and the Philippines' second-largest private lender, entered 2021 wrestling with stagnant growth as hybrid work upended employee engagement and leadership development. Recognizing HR as a transformation driver, Gina Eala reimagined HR strategy to align with business goals, transform leadership, and elevate employee experience.

**ELITE Summit: Cultivating Transformative Leadership**

Under Gina's guidance, the annual Empowering Leaders Inspiring Transformational Leadership (ELITE) Summit has become a flagship event for BPI's leadership development since 2022.

The summit embeds BPI's refreshed core values, NICE (Nurturing, Integrity, Customer Obsession, and Excellence) and CHANGE leadership competencies (Customer Obsession, High Performance, Aspiration, Nurturing Spirit, Growth Mindset, and Excellence) into every leader's DNA.

Known for her inclusive and agile leadership, Gina spearheaded each edition of the Summit, engaging with cross-functional teams to ensure relevance and innovation. Keynotes from global thought leaders like Simon Sinek, Adam Grant, and Dennis Snow brought credibility and practical insight.

Results: **Customer obsession scores improved from 3.93 in 2021 to 4.07 in 2022. Competency ratings exceeded 4.31** Bank-wide in 2023 after CHANGE was embedded into performance reviews (vs. an Asia-Pacific benchmark where only ~71% of employees say their leaders show people-centric behavior). By 2024, **BPI ranked #1 in Net Promoter Score among Philippine banks and fintech**, achieved a record **15.84 million customers** (from 10 million by year-end 2023), **₱64 billion in net income** (up 168% since 2021), and a **62% increase in share price** to ₱149.60.

ELITE also won Bronze at the 2025 Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards.

#### **BPI Well: Holistic Wellness Reimagined**

In 2023, Gina launched BPI Well, a wellness program aligned with the Bank's sustainability vision. Moving beyond traditional wellness models, it addresses five dimensions: physical, mental, social, financial, and emotional through the CARES framework (Connect, Attune, Recharge, Energize, Save).

Under "Save", BPI Wealth, the Bank's asset management arm, provided financial education and investment tools to employees, leading to **17,760 (93%)** of eligible employees opening investment accounts.

Another standout initiative is the #BestLifeRun, which was the country's first corporate run launched in 2024 with 4,000 participants from 297 companies. In its second year this June, **participation doubled to 8,000**. New race categories and recycled PET kits supported inclusivity and sustainability, while proceeds funded underserved communities through BPI Foundation.

BPI Well also features webinars and leadership-backed sports tournaments, anchoring well-being in everyday work life.

These efforts earned national recognition in 2024: HR Excellence Awards Finalist, Asia CEO Awards Circle of Excellence, and was awarded as Judges' Choice at the BPI Sustainability Innovation Awards as well as the company's Best Innovation Project of the Year.

This year, **BPI became Great Place to Work®-certified**, with **94% of employees expressing pride in working at BPI**. In the 2025 Engage Survey conducted by global firm Willis Towers Watson, BPI achieved a record **95% engagement score**, surpassing the Philippine average of 92%, and far exceeds both global (72%) and APAC (71%) benchmarks as reported by Gallup.

#### **RHEA: People-First Digital Transformation**

To sustain innovation, Gina led BPI's 2023 partnership with Darwinbox to deploy a unified Human Resources Management System, nicknamed RHEA (Real-Time HR Express Assist). The platform streamlined previously fragmented processes and achieved **98% adoption within its first year** (above the 40–60% global average).

RHEA integrated internal mobility, learning, communications, performance, and more into one seamless platform. This June, HR launched the "Idea Bank" within RHEA, a portal empowering employees to share innovative ideas. Within one week, it received **100+ submissions**, reinforcing a culture of continuous improvement and employee voice.

#### **A Legacy of Purpose and Performance**

Gina's vision elevated HR at BPI from **transactional to transformational**. She fused global best practices with genuine empathy, proving that **financial success and human connection are inseparable**.

This year, Gina received a **Gold Stevie for Most Innovative HR Executive of the Year at the 2025 Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards**, recognizing her enduring impact on leadership, wellness, and digital innovation.

4. In bullet-list form (up to 150 words), provide a brief summary of up to ten (10) of the nominee's chief achievements since 1 January 2023:

**Total 150 words used.**

- Catapulted BPI to **#1 Net Promoter Score** among Philippine banks and fintech in 2024 by embedding values-based leadership into KPIs through the ELITE Summit
- Revolutionized employee well-being with "BPI Well," a five-pillar strategy integrating physical, mental, emotional, social, and financial health—empowering **93% of eligible employees to open investment accounts**
- Founded the #BestLifeRun, the Philippines' first and largest corporate wellness run, **doubling participation from 4,000 in 2024 to 8,000 in 2025**
- Closed the 2024 Collective Bargaining Agreement in just **3 days, the fastest in BPI's 173-year history**, reflecting strong employee-management relations
- Achieved a record **95% employee engagement score in 2025, the highest ever for BPI** and surpassing global benchmarks
- Digitized HR through "RHEA," an integrated platform with **98% adoption in one year**, unifying disparate systems into seamless experience
- **Won Gold at the 2025 APAC Stevie Awards** as the Most Innovative HR Executive of the Year (sole recipient)

#### **Attachments/Videos/Links:**

[Maria Virginia "Gina" Eala of the Bank of the Philippine Islands: Redefining HR Through Transformative Leadership, Holistic Wellness, and People-First Digital Innovation](#)



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