



PALO SANTO CONSULTING

Cohort Brochure / Cohort 01, 2026

Total Rewards Architecture.

Architecture and mechanics. Build, defend, and maintain the compensation system.

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01 / ABOUT THIS PROGRAMME

Move from reactive comp decisions to a defensible architecture.

Compensation decisions arrive constantly. A senior engineer asks for a 30% raise. The sales team challenges the incentive plan. The Board wants to know if there is a gender pay gap. A new hire negotiation reaches the band ceiling. An ESOP decision needs to be made.

Most HR functions handle these one at a time, reactively, without a coherent architecture underneath. The result is comp drift, internal inequity, and decisions you cannot defend when questioned.

This cohort builds the architecture. Job evaluation, band design, pay equity testing, incentive plan mechanics, ESOP structuring, governance — taught at depth so you can build, defend, and maintain a compensation system that holds up to scrutiny from your CEO, Comp Committee, and Board.

02 / WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

12 modules across 4 arcs.

Twelve modules across four arcs. Arcs 1 and 2 are delivered live; Arcs 3 and 4 are self-paced with weekly office hours.

Arc 1 — Architecture

Live · Day 1. Build the compensation architecture from first principles.

M1 Total Rewards philosophy and strategy. Why philosophy precedes mechanics. The four questions that shape every comp decision.

M2 Job evaluation and grading systems. Hay, Mercer IPE, custom. Comparing methodologies. Picking the right one for your stage.

M3 Building your compensation band structure. Bands, midpoints, range spreads, geographic differentials, IC vs Manager parity.

Arc 2 — Mechanics

Live · Day 2. The numbers underneath the architecture.

M4 Market benchmarking and positioning. Mercer, Aon, WTW, NASSCOM, LinkedIn Salary Insights, Levels.fyi. Source quality. Defensible positioning.

M5 Compa-ratio, range penetration, band health. Diagnosing your existing comp structure. Identifying drift, compression, and outliers.

M6 Pay equity regression — the methodology. Multiple regression for adjusted pay gap. Statistical significance. Drill-down. Equity adjustment planning.

Arc 3 — Incentives

Self-paced · Weeks 2–3. Design every variable comp element.

M7 Short-term incentive plan design. Annual bonus structures. Performance multipliers. Funding mechanics. Pool design.

M8 Sales incentive plan mechanics. Quota structures, commission curves, accelerators, decelerators, SPIFFs. Quota-setting methodology.

M9 Long-term incentives and ESOP design. Grant structures, vesting, exercise mechanics, dilution modeling, SEBI June 2025 founder-ESOP reforms.

M10 Flexible benefits and total cost of workforce. FBP structures, benefit choice frameworks, total cost calculation, benchmarking.

Arc 4 — Governance

Self-paced · Weeks 3–4. Make the architecture sustainable.

M11 Comp Committee and Board governance. Charter, cadence, reporting. What the Board needs. EU Pay Transparency Directive implications for India.

M12 Capstone refinement and rollout. Final capstone polish. Rollout plan. Stakeholder communication strategy.

03 / FORMAT AND SCHEDULE

How a cohort runs.

The cohort runs over four weeks. Two arcs are delivered live; two arcs are self-paced. The pitch-back session brings the cohort back together at the end.

Live delivery includes worked examples using anonymised data from real Indian scaleups. Self-paced modules include Excel templates and calculators you can adapt for your own analysis.

When	What happens	Time commitment
Week 1 (live)	Arcs 1 and 2 delivered live. Build the band structure together.	12 hours
Week 2	Self-paced modules 7 and 8. Capstone scoping.	6–8 hours
Week 3	Self-paced modules 9 and 10. Capstone build.	6–8 hours
Week 4	Modules 11–12, capstone polish, and live pitch-back session.	6–8 hours

Live delivery times

Live arc sessions run from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM IST. Sessions are typically scheduled on Saturday and Sunday for the public cohorts listed below, but corporate cohorts can be arranged on weekdays during business hours — please contact us if your organisation prefers a weekday or split schedule. All times shown are IST; recordings available for participants in other time zones.

Recordings and self-paced modules

All live sessions are recorded and shared within 24 hours. Self-paced modules are released weekly and remain accessible for 12 months post-cohort. Office hours run weekly during the cohort.

04 / CAPSTONE

What you build.

Every participant ships a capstone — a real, working artefact built on their own company's context. Faculty reviews each capstone with the participant during the pitch-back session. Pick one of six tracks based on what's most useful for your role.

Capstone 1 · Comp Band Restructure. Full band design with market positioning and role mapping for your company.

Capstone 2 · Pay Equity Audit. Multiple regression analysis with adjustment plan and Comp Committee paper.

Capstone 3 · Sales Incentive Redesign. Quota structure, commission curves, accelerators built for your sales model.

Capstone 4 · ESOP Programme Design. Grant levels by band, vesting schedules, exercise mechanics, dilution modeling.

Capstone 5 · Flexible Benefits Build. Benefit architecture with cost modeling and employee choice framework.

Capstone 6 · Total Rewards Strategy. Comprehensive philosophy document with Comp Committee charter.

05 / WHAT YOU TAKE AWAY

Deliverables in your hands.

On completion, every participant takes the following back to their work:

- Your capstone deliverable — built on your company's compensation context
- 137-page programme handbook with all methodologies and worked examples
- Recorded video modules (~8 hours of self-paced deep dives)
- Pay equity regression Excel template (with worked example)
- Sales incentive plan calculator
- ESOP modeling spreadsheet (grants, vesting, exercise, dilution)
- Band structure design templates
- Comp Committee paper templates (annual review, equity audit, ESOP refresh)
- Certification and digital credential (Standard and Premium tiers)
- 90-day access to the private cohort group (Standard and Premium tiers)
- Lifetime access to handbook updates

06 / WHO THIS IS FOR

Designed for practitioners ready to lead the work.

This cohort works for professionals at multiple career stages. Specifically:

Heads of Compensation and Benefits. This is your day job. The cohort gives you the depth and the calibrated-for-India context.

CHROs and Heads of HR. You present comp papers to your CEO, Comp Committee, or Board. This cohort gives you the foundation to defend every number.

HRBPs supporting senior roles. You handle individual comp decisions and exceptions. This cohort gives you the framework so the decisions hold up.

Finance leaders managing reward cost. You own the workforce cost line. This cohort gives you comp fluency without needing an HR background.

Founders and CEOs. You are making comp decisions without a comp head yet. This cohort gives you the methods so you can build the system before you hire someone to run it.

Prerequisites

- Comfortable with Excel (pivot tables, basic formulas)
- Access to your company's current comp data (anonymised is fine) for capstone build
- No statistical training required — regression is taught from first principles

07 / INVESTMENT

Three tiers. Cohort 01 founding pricing.

Tier	Cohort 01 (founding)	From Cohort 02
Self-Study	₹4,999	₹6,999
Standard (live cohort)	₹19,999	₹24,999
Premium (live + 1:1 mentor)	₹29,999	₹34,999

What each tier includes

Self-Study

- 137-page programme handbook (PDF)
- All recorded video modules (~8 hours)
- All templates, worked examples, and reference materials
- No live sessions, no capstone, no certification

Standard (live cohort)

- Everything in Self-Study
- Live cohort delivery (~14 hours over the live arcs)
- Weekly office hours during the cohort
- Capstone built on your own context, with peer review
- Live pitch-back session with faculty feedback
- Certification on completion
- 90-day access to private cohort group
- Lifetime access to handbook updates

Premium (live + 1:1 mentor)

- Everything in Standard
- 30-minute 1:1 mentor session for capstone review
- Priority support throughout the cohort
- Early access to next cohort if you wish to repeat or progress

Corporate packages

For teams: 5-seat package ₹79,000 / 10-seat package ₹1,49,000. Per-seat pricing significantly lower than individual enrolment. Includes optional team capstone with shared deliverable.

Invoices issued in company name for L&D budget reimbursement. GST applied as per Indian tax law.

08 / UPCOMING COHORTS

Schedule.

Three cohorts of this programme run in 2026.

Cohort	Live arc dates	Pitch-back	Apply by
Cohort 01	22–23 February 2026	22 March 2026	15 February
Cohort 02	19–20 April 2026	17 May 2026	12 April
Cohort 03	14–15 June 2026	12 July 2026	7 June

Subscribe to the public calendar for live updates: palosantoconsulting.com/hr/cohorts

09 / COMMON QUESTIONS

FAQs.

Will I learn the pay equity regression methodology in detail?

Yes. Module 6 walks through multiple regression from first principles — statistical significance testing, adjusted vs raw gap distinction, drill-down for cohort-specific gaps, equity adjustment planning. Worked example for a 600-person Indian B2B SaaS company included.

Do I need statistical training?

No. The methodology is taught from first principles for HR practitioners. Excel familiarity is sufficient. SQL and Python alternatives are covered in appendices for participants who prefer to work that way.

How current is the market data discussion?

We cover comp benchmarking sources active in 2026 — Mercer, Aon, WTW, NASSCOM, LinkedIn Salary Insights, Levels.fyi — including how to evaluate source quality and triangulate between sources.

Does this cover ESOPs at depth?

Yes. Module 9 is entirely on long-term incentives — grant structures, vesting schedules, exercise mechanics, dilution modeling, post-IPO transition planning, and the SEBI June 2025 founder-ESOP reforms.

What about EU Pay Transparency Directive?

Module 11 covers EU Pay Transparency implications for Indian companies serving European customers — disclosure requirements, methodology, and timelines.

How much time will I need to commit?

Approximately 36 hours total across 4 weeks. ~14 hours of live arc delivery, ~16 hours of self-paced module work, ~6 hours of capstone build time, and the 2-hour pitch-back session. Most participants find the self-paced work fits into 6–8 hours per week.

Can my company sponsor my participation?

Yes. Many participants are sponsored by their employer's L&D budget. Invoices are issued in the company name with GST. For 5 or more colleagues, the corporate packages provide better per-seat pricing. Speak with us if you need a justification letter for your manager.

What if I miss a live session?

All live sessions are recorded and shared within 24 hours. If you miss a live session, you can catch up via the recording and bring questions to the next office hour. Missing more than one live arc, however, materially reduces the cohort experience — the live arcs are where most of the learning happens.

Can I take this from outside India?

Yes. The cohort is delivered over Zoom and the content is calibrated for Indian SMEs but is broadly applicable. International payments accepted via Razorpay International. Pricing in INR; your card will be charged at the prevailing exchange rate.

Will I get a certificate?

Yes. Standard and Premium tiers receive a Palo Santo Consulting certificate of completion after the pitch-back session, plus a digital LinkedIn-shareable credential. Self-Study tier does not include certification.

What is the refund policy?

Standard and Premium tiers: full refund up to 14 days before the cohort begins. Within 14 days, 50% refund or transfer to a future cohort. After cohort begins, no refunds but you can transfer to a future cohort once. Self-Study tier: no refunds after delivery, as content is delivered immediately.

10 / HOW TO APPLY

Next steps.

1. Choose your tier

Self-Study, Standard, or Premium. Most participants choose Standard.

2. Choose your cohort

Three cohorts run in 2026 (see Section 08). You can apply for any upcoming cohort. Seats are released in order of application.

3. Complete application and payment

Visit palosantoconsulting.com/hr/cohorts and click through to this programme's page. Application form takes 5 minutes. Payment via Razorpay (cards, UPI, net banking).

4. Confirmation and onboarding

On successful payment, you receive a confirmation email with the cohort calendar, joining instructions, and pre-reading materials. Welcome email sequence begins immediately.

5. Pre-cohort week

One week before the live arc begins, you receive the Zoom link, cohort group access, the handbook, and Module 1 recording for context.

Apply at

palosantoconsulting.com/hr/cohorts/total-rewards-architecture

Or write to info@palosantoconsulting.com / WhatsApp +91 99000 07586