

AWARDS & RANKINGS

## Witad Awards 2025: Vendor professional of the year (data and operations)—Pooja Padgavkar, SmartStream Technologies

Pooja Padgavkar, senior consultant at SmartStream Technologies, wins vendor professional of the year (data and operations) in the 2025 Women in Technology and Data Awards.



WatersTechnology Staff

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### What is your position within your firm?

**Pooja Padgavkar:** My role is senior consultant at SmartStream Technologies.

### How long have you been in the financial services industry?

**Padgavkar:** I have worked in the financial services industry for more than two decades.

### How did you get into the industry? Was it a conscious decision or did you “fall” into it?

**Padgavkar:** When I was growing up, I was determined to have a working career, seeing my parents working tirelessly. I started my journey studying electrical engineering and then I did a master’s degree in computer applications. I found that it was very difficult getting an engineering job in India in those days, and more so as a female. Following my post-grad degree, I managed to get an entry-level role in the IT financial industry and the rest is history.

### What does your day-to-day role entail?

**Padgavkar:** Every day can be very different, which includes but is not limited to working closely with different client teams. My job is to make sure we deliver on our



Pooja Padgavkar, SmartStream

promise in the delivery of best-in-class solutions for all their daily challenges. Along with being customer-focused, I collaborate with and support various internal teams at SmartStream.

**What single project/piece of work are you most proud of during your career in the industry to date?**

**Padgavkar:** Every project has left a unique mark on me. The one project I am most proud of is the cash management implementation for a bank providing FX and payments in emerging markets. This was one of the early cloud implementations, so it meant that I needed to build confidence with the new client, which involved the necessary support for the technical and functional setup. There were a lot of unknowns during this time, and by navigating around their own internal challenges, I helped to integrate their systems. They continue to be a successful case study for cloud migration projects.

**What are you currently working on and what makes it significant in the context of your position?**

**Padgavkar:** I have been working on and continue to work on helping various financial institutions to implement solutions that will enhance their operational efficiency, reduce costs and comply with regulatory mandates. Alongside this, I also provide input to the product teams so that they can enhance the product roadmap based on client feedback and market needs.

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**To what extent were you helped during your career by a mentor or role model within the business?**

**Padgavkar:** My parents and family have been my biggest role models, encouraging me at every step of the way to never give up even in the most challenging times. I have also been very fortunate to have had line managers who understood my capabilities,

believed in me, and gave me the freedom to step outside my comfort zone and push myself to give my best results. I learned closely from some of my clients and most of them still say I have the magic touch!

**What was the greatest obstacle you had to overcome during your career in the industry to date?**

**Padgavkar:** Starting my career in a country with limited opportunities, I eventually moved to a place that opened doors for me. As a female in a male-dominated industry, I've had to work even harder to prove myself. However, times are changing, and I'm thrilled to finally receive the recognition I deserve with this award.

**What is the most valuable lesson you've learned so far during your career?**

**Padgavkar:** Hard work, sincerity and resilience make you go a long way. Even in the darkest, most challenging times, these qualities will keep you going until there is light at the end of the tunnel. Do not hesitate to ask questions and do not shy away from learning new skills.

**What would you advise women just entering the industry?**

**Padgavkar:** There is always something to learn from everyone and every opportunity you are given no matter how trivial it might seem, before you know it, could become an opportunity of a lifetime. Approach every opportunity with an open mind and give your best.

**What does this award mean to you?**

**Padgavkar:** I am very grateful and honored to have won this award. It is testament to all the years of hard work being put in by all the nominees and females in the industry. It surely encourages more females from diverse backgrounds to come forward and give their best.