

Navigating the Complexities of Business Growth in the GCC: Unlocking Opportunities in a Diverse Market

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UAE Federal Government Approves General HR Framework

UAE committed to playing active role in shaping better future for societies,” says Al Awar of MoHRE

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Ines Joao Gomes Godinho, Director Learning Strategy, Innovation and Partnerships, UAE

Ines Joao Gomes Godinho, shares her thoughts on Shaping the Future of Work through Learning in the UAE and beyond.



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Ines Joao Gomes Godinho, Director Learning Strategy, Innovation and Partnerships, UAE

Ines Joao Gomes Godinho, shares her thoughts on Shaping the Future of Work through Learning in the UAE and beyond.

From Research to Learning: How has your background and exposure to diverse experiences shaped your vision for learning?

My journey has taken me from the precise world of geophysics to the dynamic context of learning and development, imparting a deep appreciation for education as a transformative force. From Europe to Africa, and through the deserts of Qatar, culminating in my current stay in the UAE since 2017. My career has touched more than 30 geographies and over 100 nationalities. For each, I have crafted learning projects that resonate with the collective cultural richness of the individuals. The privilege of over 15 years living abroad has been fundamental to my conviction that learning should be adaptable, often informal, culturally resonant, and inclusive, prompting organizations to cultivate an environment where every individual's potential is acknowledged and nurtured.

Leadership Unlocked: In your career, which leadership capabilities can you say you live by, and how have they guided you?

At the heart of my leadership style lie authenticity and resilience, augmented by a deep sense of empathy and a commitment to genuine leadership. These principles have been crucial and successful to lead teams across diverse cultural settings. Authenticity has fostered trust and openness, while resilience has enabled me and my teams to navigate and thrive amid change. Empathy has allowed me to connect on a human level, facilitating a natural team cohesion that's essential for facing the global market's volatility. Fundamentally, my view of leadership centers on adaptability, a commitment to ongoing learning, and respecting the unique working style and personal space of each team member.



Ines Joao Gomes Godinho,
Director Learning Strategy,
Innovation and Partnerships,
UAE

Inclusion Revolution: Can you share an instance where championing diversity has enriched learning outcomes?

In my experience, diversity is not just a metric to achieve; it's essential for creating impactful learning experiences. Effective learning paths often involve using personas that are culturally relevant and relatable, which significantly enhance learners' experiences. This approach promotes a deeper understanding of the message and reinforces employees' sense of belonging. By acknowledging and incorporating diverse cultural backgrounds in learning environments throughout my career, I've observed a spike in learner engagement, which translates into more effective learning

outcomes and ultimately, measurable business impact.

Navigating Change: How do you align learning strategies with the volatile nature of the global market, particularly in the Middle East?

In the dynamic context of the Middle East, particularly the UAE, where market fluctuations are as diverse as the region itself, aligning learning strategies with market volatility is both particularly challenging and crucial. Ideal approaches involve developing agile learning environments that respond to rapid changes and identifying future skill requirements specific to this region, which is massively investing in tech development. A clear focus on advancing digital platforms for effective learning dissemination and promoting a culture of continuous learning and adaptability will likely empower professionals with the skills to adapt, evolve, and stay ahead of others investing less than the UAE.

Future Horizons: What aspirations do you hold for the future of work through learning?

Learning, in my view, should be the central force of the future of work, driving both professional growth and personal transformation. I believe it's about creating ecosystems where technology acts as a facilitator, not an obstacle, making learning experiences more immersive, adaptable, and accessible to all. My vision for the future is a world where every learning opportunity not only enhances businesses but also enriches the human experience, fosters responsible citizenship, and nurtures a lifelong commitment to growth. Ultimately, I believe that when a learning mindset is embedded in our DNA, we evolve and naturally inspire other people to evolve with us. Such is the future! ♦

Clare McDonald, Oliver Wyman, UAE

Clare McDonald tells us how she took a personal health challenge and turned it into an opportunity to create wellbeing in a new role.

Tell me about your role at Oliver Wyman?

I took on the role of Wellbeing Lead for the India, Middle East, and Africa region at Oliver Wyman in October 2023. The Wellbeing Lead is a new role designed to promote health and happiness among employees. I originally joined the company in 2013 as EMEA Talent Coordinator and progressed through several roles before taking on my latest challenge.

In many ways it is a dream role because it is something I am genuinely passionate about, having experienced the positive impact of focusing on my own physical and mental wellbeing. I love helping other people to develop their wellbeing, and then measuring the impact this has at an organizational level.

How is your personal experience helping you in your new role?

A personal health crisis when I was younger led me to make some drastic changes to my lifestyle in terms of fitness, nutrition, and mindfulness. I did a complete 180-degree turn and, as a result, I am now a marathon runner working as a wellbeing lead. My confidence and mental resilience increased, I became more focused and had a lot more energy. This made me realize how important wellbeing is, not just for people and their careers, but also for the organizations for which they work.

It's a subject I've studied and learned from experience, and I've brought a lot of that personal knowledge to Oliver Wyman through our wellbeing initiatives.

What would you say are the biggest wellbeing challenges that you typically see?

Consultants are busy and their work can be stressful. There is often a belief that there isn't enough time to prioritize wellbeing – people think work should come first, and health and wellbeing comes second or third, or maybe doesn't even figure at all. In fact, what's needed

is a mindset shift: The priorities should be the other way around because when you are at your peak physical and mental condition, or in other words your best self, you will perform better at work.

How do you go about implementing wellbeing?

We take a holistic view of wellbeing that incorporates physical health, mental health, and financial and social wellbeing. There are three core pillars in our approach: employee support, wellbeing initiatives, and finally, data collection and analysis to track work life balance at the project level and hold managers and senior stakeholders accountable.

Employee support includes one-to-one conversations with consultants on wellbeing concerns. This keeps the subject top of mind and means everyone has a point of contact for wellbeing.

Data collection and analysis are done via internal Oliver Wyman balance surveys, which are completed once a week. This helps employees assess what went well and what didn't go so well during the week, and how Oliver Wyman can support them. We also have other important Oliver Wyman internal surveys around engagement, inclusion, and satisfaction.

I also work very closely with our HR team to address any wellbeing concerns or systemic issues on specific projects.

At a practical level, we want to ensure that the consultants, and indeed all employees, make time to exercise regularly, eat healthy food, maintain a good work-life balance, and generally consider their wellbeing every day.

How do you try to encourage employees who find it more difficult to implement lifestyle changes?

It's important to accept that you can't have a complete lifestyle overhaul overnight. I like to encourage people to



Clare McDonald, Wellbeing Lead, India & MENA Oliver Wyman, UAE

start by considering smaller steps they can take first, and then build on. A good question to ask is, "What's one thing that you can do this week that's a bit healthier than the week before?"

How have employees responded to these initiatives so far?

Everyone's really excited about it. They love that there's someone keeping an eye on this, and they feel accountable for their wellbeing, along with additional anonymous employee support.

Oliver Wyman extended its maternity and parental leave in the India, Middle East and Africa region. Tell me more about this.

The increase in parental leave means that all new parents in the IMEA region are eligible for six months of paid maternity leave, or eight weeks of paid paternity leave bringing consistency across the entire region.

This initiative sends a clear message to all employees that Oliver Wyman is a company that appreciates them as human beings and supports their wellbeing, making sure that employees can feel they can have both a long term career and a family. ♦

Why Traditional Performance Reviews Often Backfire. 6 Principles to Follow Instead

Michael Miller, Project Manager 6seconds.org shares a Deloitte case study on how to improve performance reviews.

Years ago, I started working at an organization right as they were debating and refining their performance review process. In one of my first meetings, they asked the employees for feedback on the current end-of-year tradition. Many people shared strong feelings, almost all negative:

"Awkward."

"A waste of everyone's time."

"Makes me physically ill to think about it."

I didn't know it at the time, but the generally negative sentiment holds true across roles and industries. Annual performance reviews are deeply unpopular. Employees perceive them as a waste of time – or worse, unfair.

The good news is that many companies have shown the way to creating a more effective system.

First, let's look at the current data on performance reviews.

1. Traditional performance reviews are unpopular, unhelpful and expensive

Not a fan of performance reviews? You're not alone.

According to a survey of Fortune 1,000 companies done by the Corporate Executive Board (CEB), 66% of the employees were strongly dissatisfied with the performance evaluations they received in their organizations. And it's even worse among managers. CEB research found that 95% of managers are dissatisfied with their company's process.

Even though everyone is in agreement that performance reviews aren't working, they mostly keep doing them anyway.

2. Three fundamental issues with annual performance reviews

Too infrequent

To be effective, feedback can't be a once-a-year process. Imagine getting annual feedback from a sports coach or music teacher. It's a comically inefficient way to learn



Michael Miller, Project Manager 6seconds.org

and improve.

Too subjective

The biggest problem with annual performance reviews is a lack of objectivity – even among well-meaning managers with unconscious bias creeping in, along with inconsistent assessments.

Too hierarchical

Traditional performance reviews tend to reinforce existing power structures. The manager talks, the employee listens, disrupting normally healthy relationships.

Case study: Deloitte Future -focused Process.

When Deloitte revamped its performance management system, it calculated that they spent almost 2 million hours a year on its old process – with little to show for it. They decided to ditch the singular, retrospective review (annual 360 with ratings) and replace it with a future-focused process.

Based on the Deloitte case study and other research: Here are 6 principles of a modern, continuous management system.

1. Check in more often. Frequent check-ins allow for more valuable, immediate feedback. Plus, they remove the high stakes and anxiety

of annual reviews, and replace them with an opportunity for managers and employees to connect more frequently and informally. Deloitte found the ideal frequency of check-ins to be weekly.

2. Teach your managers coaching skills. The value of 1:1 meetings will ultimately depend on the managers' ability to support the employee to grow and develop. Though managers often default to giving directives, it is increasingly crucial that they develop EQ coaching skills.

3. Make it a 2-way conversation. I'll never forget the first time a manager asked me in a 1:1, "What can I do better as your manager?" It sets an entirely different tone for the conversation, when we're helping each other grow. That builds loyalty and trust.

4. Measure what measures. Emotional intelligence has been found to be strongly correlated with an employee's engagement – and for managers with their supervisee's engagement. Intentionally growing and developing these skills makes continuous performance reviews more effective.

5. Compare to your past self, not your coworkers. Research has found that employees who are compared to their own past performance in performance reviews perceive those reviews to be more accurate and fair than those who are compared to coworkers. For example: ("You did better than before") rather than social comparison evaluations ("You did better than other people").

6. Leave space for genuine dialogue. The ratings and rankings of traditional performance review systems do not leave space for the messiness of real human experience. Data is essential for performance review, and so is open text response. So let your people, their managers, and their counselors tell the rest

While the system or process of continuous performance review over annual review has many benefits, the success will still depend on the manager's and employee's emotional skills ♦

Relationships Please NOT Transactions

Deepak Desai, Founder and Chief Executive Officer at Ardor Learning makes the case for building values – based relationships over contractual ones.

The rise of globalization has in one part been enabled through the application of western ideas of rule of law to define the conduct of business. Often how we deal with customers, vendors and employees is based on strict interpretation of contracts. While contracts can be useful, I advocate for a different approach to business – an approach that values relationships over contracts.

The foundation of transaction-driven conduct is the contract. Clear contracts create transparency and engender good working relationships. When trust is low, or when there is no history or relationship between parties, the contract can provide a (new) beginning. A well-written contract can even bring new parties to the table and can bridge gaps in cultural understanding.

But oftentimes, relationships evolve beyond the bounds of the contract, and circumstances change in such a way as to muddle what the contract once made clear. I can think of many instances when I have chosen to ignore or forego a written contract in service of my relationship with a customer.

A few years ago, one of our customers had a change in their leadership, and the new leader was not aware that a multiyear contract had been signed. The company was cancelling their program with us and was not budgeting for a renewal.

In this moment, I could easily have turned to the contract and demanded payment for its full term. Our company would have gotten paid despite delivering no value. But instead, I decided to work toward continuing our long-term relationship with the customer. After just one year, we were able to relaunch the program.

Our simple act of forgoing short-term revenue enabled us to win the trust and respect of our customer. Today we have a



A well-written contract can even bring new parties to the table and can bridge gaps in cultural understanding.

much more fruitful and fulfilling business relationship that has lasted many years and dollars beyond what was outlined in that original contract.

Honor and integrity are long term business drivers. There is no form of legal contract that will adequately define and enforce these concepts for you.

This way of thinking can be equally applied to employee contracts. Our conduct as employers should be founded in fairness and equity, not in the terms of an employee agreement.

We should build deep relationships with our team members by providing a shared vision of why we do what we do. We should care for our colleagues, and we should make room for them to care for each other and themselves.

Consider the many stories of employees finding out their keystrokes are being tracked, or reactions to demands to return to working in the corporate office. In low-trust organizations – founded on contracts rather than relationships with their employees –



Deepak Desai, Founder and Chief Executive Officer at Ardor Learning.

the employers do not trust that their people will put in a fair day's work and turn instead to micromanaging and demanding to know what they have been doing with their time.

This is absurd. If organizations can move beyond this narrow view, there will be a huge boost in productivity. If team members are trusted and are inspired by the mission of the organization, they will do amazing things.

I believe each team member is driven by a desire to do great work, and by a desire to be proud of what they do. Our job as employers is to enable this to happen by creating a deep and meaningful relationship with our teams. When we truly care about each other, we can move beyond what is in a job description.

Wouldn't it be a beautiful world if we made it our goal to grow our relationships so much that they are no longer contained by a contract? I, for one, look with excitement and joy toward a future in which this becomes the norm. Won't you join me there? ♦

Navigating the Complexities of Business Growth in the GCC: Unlocking Opportunities in a Diverse Market

Lynsey Sweales, Partner, Cognitive Union, UK and Singapore offers thoughts on the importance of unlocking the full potential of data-driven insights to drive success in business in the GCC.

In the dynamic landscape of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), growing a brand's presence and market share presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. Often likened to managing the travel retail within a brand (it's a hard nut to crack), the GCC market is characterized by a diverse population comprising expatriates, locals, and tourists, with each country operating under its own distinct set of regulations and cultural norms (especially in the likes of the UAE).

Despite its complexities, the region offers immense potential for growth, particularly in the lucrative luxury market. However, navigating this fragmented landscape requires a nuanced approach and a deep understanding of local dynamics.

Fragmentation and Data Deserts:

One of the key challenges facing businesses in the GCC is fragmentation, both in terms of consumer demographics and market dynamics. Retailers operate in silos, and access to comprehensive data is often limited. For instance, despite being a dominant player in the Dubai market, retailers like Sephora withhold crucial data, hindering brands' ability to understand consumer behaviour and tailor their strategies accordingly. This lack of transparency creates what can be described as what I call "data deserts" in retail, where insights are scarce and decision-making becomes challenging.

Leveraging First-Party Data:

Amidst these challenges, the importance of first-party (1P) data cannot be

overstated. Brands that can establish direct relationships with consumers and gather their own data are better positioned to navigate the complexities of the market. By leveraging 1P data, businesses can gain valuable insights into consumer preferences, purchasing behaviour, and emerging trends, enabling them to tailor their offerings and marketing strategies more effectively.

Overcoming Data Sharing Reluctance:

To address the reluctance of leading retailers to share data, businesses in the GCC must adopt a strategic approach. Building trust-based partnerships is essential, fostering transparency and emphasizing the mutual benefits of data sharing. By aligning the value proposition of data sharing with retailers' strategic objectives, businesses can encourage a reconsideration of their stance on data sharing. Additionally, advocating for the establishment of industry-wide data collaboration frameworks and standards can provide a structured framework for secure and standardized data sharing practices.

Proposing anonymized data aggregation as a compromise solution can alleviate retailers' concerns about data privacy while still providing valuable insights into broader market trends. Introducing incentive-based models and offering tangible benefits such as access to exclusive consumer insights can further motivate retailers to participate in data sharing initiatives. Moreover, ensuring compliance with local regulations and investing in education and awareness campaigns can foster a



Lynsey Sweales, Partner,
Cognitive Union, UK and
Singapore

deeper understanding of the strategic importance of data sharing among retailers.

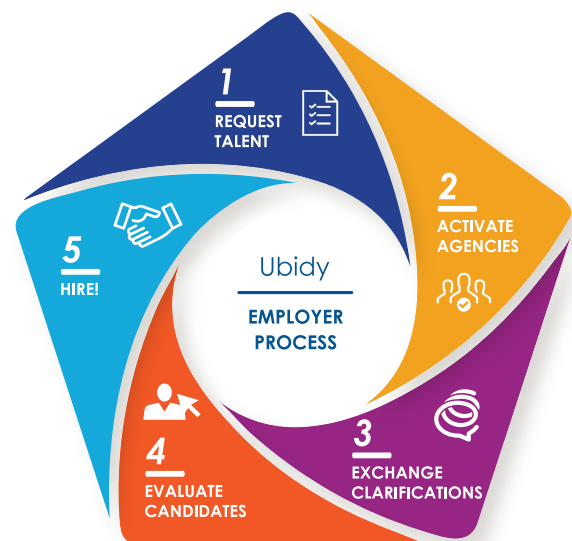
Looking Ahead:

As businesses seek to grow and thrive in the GCC market, leveraging first-party data and addressing the challenge of data sharing reluctance among leading retailers are paramount. By adopting a strategic approach and actively engaging with retailers, businesses can overcome these obstacles and unlock the full potential of data-driven insights. Through collaborative efforts and a shared commitment to driving collective growth, businesses can navigate the complexities of the GCC market and seize the vast opportunities it has to offer. ♦

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Below the Line or Above the Line? Where are you operating from?

Samie Al Achrafi, Pioneer of the Conscious Leadership movement, Speaker, Author of 9 and #Time4Humanity, shares one of the best and simplest models on Conscious Leadership

Above the line and below the line' is a Conscious Leadership model, useful for articulating behaviours and culture.

In its simplest form, take a blank piece of paper and draw a horizontal line drawn through the centre of it. In the bottom half, jot down what your culture looks like behaviorally when you are 'not at your best', and at the top, describe your culture when you are 'at your best'. The line represents a choice for leaders - to operate either above the line or below it.

below the line leadership usually occurs when a leader is closed, defensive and reactive in the pursuit of being right.

Some of the thoughts and beliefs that sit behind these behaviours include:

- ▶ It's not my fault
- ▶ I'm right/they're wrong
- ▶ It's not my responsibility
- ▶ I know everything there is to know about the situation
- ▶ It has to happen this way

While below the line leadership tends to draw energy from the system and breed resentment, operating above the line builds the trust and respect needed to sustain high performance underpinned by values.

above the line leadership is about taking responsibility for your own actions and decisions, interpreting life through a 'by me' lens. It occurs when a leader is open and curious, setting high standards for the team, and staying accountable for their own performance. It is a commitment to developing self-awareness, being challenged, and seeing every interaction



Samie Al-Achrafi, Founder and CEO Marmalade Fish, Certified B Corporation®

as an opportunity to learn.

Some of the thoughts and beliefs that sit behind these behaviours include:

I can always become even better and grow

- ▶ How might I take ownership and accountability for what is happening?
- ▶ What else could be going on in this situation that I'm not aware of?
- ▶ How can I involve the right people and break silos?
- ▶ How can I add value to the collective results?

At any moment, a leader is either above or below the line.

Knowing that you are below the line is more important than always being above



Above the line leadership builds the trust and respect needed to sustain high performance underpinned by values.

it. The first mark of Conscious Leadership is self-awareness. The second is pausing... then making a conscious choice to shift into an open and curious state that raises you above the line. ♦



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Cigna Healthcare Demonstrates How Healthy Employees Improve Business Performance

Employees with high vitality are 60% more likely to perform better at work, so investing in a successful health plan achieves significant business savings with up to 6 times ROI

Poor mental and physical health are impacting employees' overall well-being and costing businesses through absenteeism, lower productivity, and higher medical costs.

Cigna Healthcare, International Health today launched its global campaign, "Your Health Plan, Your Growth Plan" ("YHP, YGP"), raising awareness about the close connection between people's health and business growth.

Healthier employees perform better at work. The latest research by the global health services provider finds that in the US, employees reporting high levels of vitality – a comprehensive measure of people's ability to thrive across all facets of life – feel 60% more capable of carrying out their duties than less healthy peers.

Conversely, high levels of employee burnout and rising incidence of musculoskeletal issues continue to hurt the bottom line. For example, according to the World Health Organization, an estimated 12 billion working days are lost every year to depression and anxiety, costing US\$1 trillion per year in lost productivity, and approximately 1.71 million people are living with musculoskeletal conditions worldwide.

Jason Sadler, President, International Health, Cigna Healthcare, said: "As an organization committed to improving the health and vitality of the people and organizations we serve, we want to share the real-life story of how investing in individuals' health boosts employee well-being and business growth."

"Employees have prioritized their well-being more in recent years. They also expect their organizations to help them stay healthy. Now is the time for senior leaders to recognize the human and



Healthier employees perform better at work. Employees reporting high levels of vitality feel 60% more capable of carrying out their duties than less healthy peers.

business impact of health and take action to support their people and grow their businesses."

Studies have shown that investment in health can generate significant returns. For every US\$1 invested in mental health treatment, an employer can see a US\$4 return from reduction in medical costs, increase in productivity, lower absenteeism and other factors; for integrated care, which embeds mental health expertise into primary care settings, an employer can save US\$6 in overall medical costs for every dollar invested.

The new campaign by Cigna Healthcare will offer such insights that help employers understand the need to invest in their people's health and the benefits of doing so, supporting them to develop health plans that complement their overall business strategy ♦

52% UAE Employees Would Prefer to Work with an AI Colleague

New report from Oliver Wyman, global management consultancy, hails the UAE commitment to AI in the workplace, and suggests employers must do more to train employees.

A new report from Oliver Wyman, a global management consulting firm and a business of Marsh McLennan (NYSE: MMC), provides insight into the extent to which generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming companies and communities across the GCC.

- Use of AI at work surges, with 74% of UAE employees claiming to use AI in the workplace every week.
- UAE surpasses global average with 84% of employees currently receiving training in AI.
- Security in spotlight as 94% of UAE employees who use AI are potentially exposing proprietary data while using public gen-AI tools.

The research, released ahead of The World Government Summit in Dubai on 12-14 February 2024, reveals that while the use of AI is surging amongst UAE employees, employers need to make greater efforts to train and engage employees about its use.

'Artificial Intelligence and The Next Frontiers' is one of six key themes of The World Government Summit, reflecting growing awareness and concern around the area.

While the report demonstrates that the UAE is among the leading countries in the world for deploying generative AI, it also flags up



Jad Haddad, Head of Digital IMEA, Oliver Wyman

some of the challenges this pioneering role is creating. In total, 74% of UAE employees say they use AI in the workplace every week, while 91% would like their employer to offer training in the use of AI tools in the workplace. In contrast, 84% of UAE employees currently receive training in AI, which is above the global average of 64% for the 16 countries covered by the report, but still shows significant room for improvement.

According to Jad Haddad, Head of Digital IMEA, Oliver Wyman: "With the UAE taking a leadership position in AI, it is vital for employers to keep pace with the technology and understand exactly how it impacts their company, and how to best integrate it into their processes and practices. This research underscores the readiness of employees to utilize AI, while also alerting employers of the need to take control of the situation to ensure AI works for their organization, and by extension for employees, customers, and for society as a whole."

The potential repercussions of employees using AI without the right training are serious, particularly in terms of security. Indeed, 94% of UAE employees who are using AI say that they may have exposed proprietary data while using public generative AI tools, posing an ongoing risk to their organisation.

AI may also impact staff retention, with the increasing use of AI in the workplace apparently changing employee behaviour. Some 25% of UAE employees report they are job-seeking due to AI disruption.

The research also revealed that employees are open to using AI as a tool when changing jobs, with 41% of UAE respondents saying they are open to AI screening their job applications, signaling potential shifts in the future of hiring.

Also, more than half of UAE employees (52%) say they would prefer working with an AI colleague over a human one, indicating that staff could respond well to a significant increase in the use of AI in the workplace ♦



How AI and the Metaverse Will Transform Learning

Damian Hehir, Co-Founder at Cappytech Metaverse and E-Learning, UAE, shares his thoughts on how these trends will impact L&D in 2024 and beyond.

In 2024, the learning and development (L&D) sector is poised for exciting changes and challenges. The rapid advancement of technology, especially artificial intelligence (AI) and the metaverse, is reshaping the way we learn and work. Here I share what we at Cappytech are doing to embrace them.

AI: The Power of Personalization and Automation

AI is not a new concept in L&D, but it is becoming more prevalent and sophisticated as time goes by. AI can help us create customised and adaptive learning experiences that cater to the needs, preferences, and goals of each learner. AI can also help us automate and streamline various aspects of L&D, such as content creation, assessment, feedback, and analytics.

One of the areas where AI can make a big difference is content generation. With AI, we can create engaging and relevant content that matches the learner's level, style, and context. For example, we can use natural language generation to produce text, speech, or subtitles in different languages and formats. We can also use generative AI to create images, videos, or simulations that illustrate concepts or scenarios.

Another area where AI can enhance L&D is tutoring. AI-powered tutors can provide personalised guidance and support to learners throughout their learning journey. They can act as mentors, coaches, or facilitators, depending on the situation and the learner's needs. They can also monitor the learner's progress

and performance, and, provide timely and constructive feedback.

At Cappytech, we are always looking for ways to leverage AI to improve our L&D solutions. We are excited to announce that we will be launching a new product in Q1 that will combine AI-powered content generation and tutoring. Stay tuned for more details!

The Metaverse: The Future of Immersive Learning

The metaverse is another buzzword that is gaining traction in the L&D space. The metaverse is a virtual environment where people can interact with each other and with digital content in a realistic and immersive way. The metaverse can be accessed through various devices, such as VR headsets, smartphones, or

computers.

The metaverse offers many opportunities for L&D, as it can create rich and engaging learning experiences that are not possible in the real world. For example, the metaverse can enable learners to explore different places, cultures, or times, and learn from authentic sources and situations. The metaverse can also enable learners to practice skills or behaviours in a safe and controlled environment, and receive immediate feedback and reinforcement.

One of the benefits of the metaverse is that it can foster social and collaborative learning. The metaverse can connect learners with peers, mentors, experts, or instructors, and facilitate communication and interaction. The metaverse can also create a sense of community and belonging among learners, and motivate them to learn from and with each other.

At Cappytech, we are always looking for ways to leverage the metaverse to create immersive and innovative learning experiences. We are seeing an uptick in demand for metaverse and immersive space learning, as organisations are looking for ways to differentiate themselves and stay ahead of the curve. We are proud to offer a range of metaverse and immersive space learning solutions, such as VR simulations, AR applications, and 3D environments.

The Future of L&D is Bright

As we look ahead to 2024 and beyond, we are optimistic and enthusiastic about the future of L&D. We believe that AI and the metaverse will transform the way we learn and work, and bring new possibilities and opportunities for L&D. We also believe that conventional e-learning will not disappear, but rather be augmented and complemented by these new technologies.

At Cappytech, we are committed to providing cutting-edge and effective L&D solutions that leverage the best of AI and the metaverse. We are also committed to continuous learning and improvement, and to staying on top of the latest trends and developments in the L&D sector. We are incredibly excited for what 2024 brings, and we can't wait to see how innovation will drive L&D further during the year ♦



■ **Damian Hehir, Co-Founder at Cappytech Metaverse and E-Learning, UAE**

MoHRE's Inspection Systems Flag 55 Entities Engaging in Illegal Recruitment Activities

MoHRE takes action against 50 companies and 5 social media accounts for illegal recruitment, mediation activities

The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MoHRE) has detected 55 entities engaging in recruitment and mediation activities without obtaining the required permits from the Ministry in 2023, including five social media accounts that were identified in collaboration with the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA).

The Ministry imposed administrative penalties on the violators, including fines, restrictions in the Ministry's records, and referral to the Public Prosecution, while the violating social media accounts were blocked.

The Federal Decree-Law Regarding the Regulation of Employment Relationships prohibits recruitment or temporary employment of domestic workers without a permit from the Ministry. The law states that violators could face no less than a year's imprisonment and fines ranging from AED200,000 to AED1 million (or one of these two penalties).

His Excellency Khalil Al Khoori, Undersecretary for Human Resources Affairs at MoHRE, said: "Legislation prohibits engaging in recruitment and mediation activities without obtaining the required permits from the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, in line with the procedures and conditions outlined in the Federal Decree-Law Regarding the Regulation of Employment Relationships, its Executive Regulations, and all relevant Ministerial Decisions. The Ministry is committed to enforcing legal measures and penalties against any company proven to be involved in such activities without proper licensing."

He highlighted the effectiveness of MoHRE's inspection systems in flagging violations, especially through the proactive detection of parties advertising recruitment or mediation activities, cross-referencing their data in the Ministry's records, and taking



His Excellency Khalil Al Khoori, Undersecretary for Human Resources Affairs at MoHRE

legal action against those practicing without the necessary permits. The Ministry also carries out inspection visits to suspected companies to flag unlawful practices and refer cases of violation to the Public Prosecution.

"The inspection systems track promotional and advertising campaigns circulated on social media, or any other platform, to identify potential violations in the job market," Al Khoori noted.

Al Khoori called on community members to verify entities advertising employment or mediation services have obtained permits from the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation before engaging with them, to ensure their rights and avoid attempts at defrauding them. He encouraged the community to report violations and illegal recruitment practices to the Ministry's call centre at 600590000 or via the MoHRE

smart application.

For his part, TDRA Director General His Excellency Majed Al Mesmar, said: "The Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority is committed to its central role in regulating the telecommunications sector and enabling digital transformation, which requires us to always be prepared to take on any tasks that resonate with that role, in line with the 'We the UAE 2031' vision, which strives to establish the most prosperous society."

He added: "We are dedicated to supporting national efforts and make sure to respond to all requests we receive from various sectors and entities, including our partners at the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, who play a pivotal role in maintaining stability in the labour market and creating an environment that catalyses economic development." ♦

MoHRE Meets and Exceeds Highest Standards of Efficiency Targets in 2023

MoHRE completes over 20 million smart transactions for 3.3 million customers in 2023

The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MoHRE) has successfully completed over 20 million smart transactions in line with the highest standards of efficiency in 2023, serving 3.3 million customers, who expressed an advanced level of trust in the Ministry's services.

MoHRE continues the development of its smart services system, offering over 100 services that are available 24/7 through its website and smart application and follow the highest standards of security and reliability. This forms part of the Ministry's comprehensive vision to boost the labour market's competitiveness, provide top-quality services to customers, and ensure their happiness with the services, which aligns with the government's digital transformation plans and efforts to implement the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy, enhancing flexibility and ease of doing business.

His Excellency Mohammed bin Saqr Al Nuaimi, Assistant Undersecretary for Support Services at MoHRE, said: "The high demand for the Ministry's digital services demonstrates their reliability and compatibility with users' needs and requirements. We always aim for customer satisfaction and happiness, underlining the Ministry's commitment to processing transactions on time, and achieving advanced levels of efficiency, excellence, and competitiveness."

"The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation remains committed to implementing its strategy for providing the best services to customers, to that end, we consistently work to develop and expand our integrated digital services, while striving for more comprehensive and integrated offerings in collaboration with partner entities, in line with the UAE's aspirations for digital transformation, supported by the country's advanced

infrastructure, which strengthens its position as the best place to live and work in the world."

The Ministry has strengthened its efforts to adopt and launch smart services, relying on them to ensure better communication with customers and offer more streamlined processes to access services, report complaints, and submit suggestions and inquiries. It also provides information to customers about how to ensure compliance with new laws and regulations in the labour market.

MoHRE has also enhanced digital inclusion and driven smart

transformation by launching initiatives that strengthen social protection in the labour market. These include the Unemployment Insurance Scheme, the Voluntary Alternative End-of-Service Savings Scheme (Savings Scheme), Wage Protection System, and Workers Protection Programme, among others. The Ministry also employs digital tools to enhance communication between job-seeking UAE citizens and companies through the Nafis programme, in addition to electronic integration projects with various entities, which serve to simplify users' journey and allow them to seamlessly complete their transactions ♦



✦ **His Excellency Mohammed bin Saqr Al Nuaimi**, Assistant Undersecretary for Support Services at MoHRE

MoHRE Aims to meet Zero Government Bureaucracy Targets in 2024

MOHRE discusses service development plan in line with the Zero Government Bureaucracy Programme

As part of its agenda for the “UAE Innovation Month 2024”, the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MOHRE) discussed its service development plan in line with the ambitious government directives to achieve Zero Government Bureaucracy (ZGB) and contribute to the success of the next phase by achieving the targets set by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. The targets include cancelling 2000 government procedures within a year, reducing the time taken for government services by 50%, and reengineering government services to provide advanced, proactive and integrated services, aiming to make the UAE government services the best globally.

The discussion was held at a workshop attended by His Excellency

Dr. Abdulrahman Al Awar, Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation, and the heads of various departments at the Ministry. MoHRE's plan to provide institutional services and efficient digital infrastructure was reviewed to help the customers and enhance ease of doing business thereby strengthening the competitiveness and attractiveness of the UAE labour market.

Additionally, as part of the UAE Innovation Month 2024 activities, the Ministry organised two forums for customers to discuss innovative ideas for developing auxiliary labour services and corporate services to facilitate and expedite service delivery to customers in a way that meets their needs, exceeds their expectations, and supports the “Zero Government Bureaucracy” initiative.

The Ministry also presented three innovative projects, including the Unemployment Insurance Scheme that

provides temporary income for those who lose their jobs - in both the private and federal government sectors - with the aim of providing social protection for them and their families. In addition, the Ministry presented the UAE Labour Market Observatory, which provides regular data about the labour market for the benefit of various stakeholders such as researchers, academics, international organisations, and media outlets, as well as the Alternative End-of-Service Benefits System known as the “Savings Scheme” which aims to offer end-of-service savings for private sector employees.

The Ministry organises the “Customer First” Forum periodically as part of its strategies to enhance communication with partners and customers to achieve the best services and provide proactive services that align with the customers' expectations of the Ministry. The goal is to involve customers in designing an innovative experience based on their ideas and visions.

The Ministry has developed a mechanism for customer councils, a way to communicate with customers and receive their suggestions through the “Customer Voice system”, which includes a system that manages suggestions and feedback from customers about the Ministry's services. This enables the monitoring and governance of all feedback and suggestions received through various approved channels and managing them according to the requirements of Quality Systems International (10001, 10002, 10003, 10004). This is driven by its ability to link with various channels such as the website, call centre, and other platforms affiliated with the Ministry ♦



UAE Federal Government Approves General HR Framework

UAE committed to playing active role in shaping better future for societies,” says Al Awar of MoHRE

The Federal Authority for Government Human Resources (FAHR) launched the General Framework for Employment Patterns and Flexible Work Types in Federal Government, which was approved by a Cabinet decision.

This framework includes details of employment patterns and work types approved at the federal government level, based on the Human Resources Law in the Federal Government and its executive regulations.

FAHR stressed that the framework serves the UAE's strategy towards the governance of future work requirements and ensures business continuity and performance of tasks throughout working days and official working hours in federal entities.

Additionally, it aims to bolster the efficiency and effectiveness of functional and institutional performance, while facilitating the attraction and retention of skilled individuals through the flexibility afforded by Human Resources Legislation in the federal government.

This framework is a qualitative addition that enhances proactive measures, the ability to adapt, and the flexibility of Human Resources Legislation in the federal government, and supports the future directions of the UAE and the objectives of the “We the UAE 2031” vision, which focuses on building the most pioneering and superior system by enhancing government performance and developing the best business models which contribute to



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Federal Authority For Government Human Resources

achieving the best results, enhancing effectiveness, and building the best model for managing human resources and government competencies.

General Framework for Employment Patterns and Flexible Work Types in Federal Government keeps pace with the rapid changes occurring in the work environment, driven by advanced technological capabilities and solutions, and adopts new and future trends in government work, which have prompted many institutions around the world to adopt flexible work systems.

The new framework would clarify how to apply the employment patterns specified by the Human Resources Law (full-time, part-time, temporary work and flexible work), as well as

the mechanisms for benefiting from the flexible work types specified by the executive regulations, which federal authorities can grant to the employee in exceptional cases, and in accordance with the approved conditions (Approved remote work from within the country, remote work from outside the country, hybrid work, and compressed work).

In a special circular, FAHR confirmed that it is about to organise a series of introductory workshops on the General Framework for Employment Patterns and Flexible Work Types in Federal Government during the month of February, targeting HR Managers and officials in ministries and federal entities to ensure its proper application and achieve the maximum benefit from it ♦



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Winners of MEA-HR & Learning Awards 2023

Be Recognised for the HR Industry's Broadest Awards Line-up

Competition brings out the visceral spirit in humans and this years MEA HR & Learning Awards were no exception. It was a lively competition, fiercely competed. Multiple corporates competing for the same Award categories made it an interesting race to the end. It was not easy to decide amongst the rich lineup with their compelling stories and persuasive arguments for their turf rights. No matter who wins the respective award categories, a lot has been achieved by the entrants to these Awards. The trajectory provides a compelling insight into what the future holds for HR and the L&D functions.

No doubt next years Awards would be more difficult to generate convincing arguments for the eventual winners as the field keeps getting more competitive each year.

Congratulations to the winners for your focused attention to detail and your innovative approaches that provided depth to your initiatives.

Congratulations to all the entrants. The mere fact that they entered this competition showcases their intention and their focus. Thank you for competing in this years Awards and making gains towards the eventual improvement of the HR and L&D function.

The winners for this years Awards, by category, are:



Best Employee Engagement & Retention Strategies



Best use of AI / VR / AR



Best approaches in L&D implementation strategies



Best payroll outsourcing



Best payroll outsourcing



Best Onboarding strategies



Best Blended Learning Programme strategies

L3ORON Institute

Best Certification Training Institute



Best Wellness Advisory company

DubaJobsPlus.com

Best Learning Measurement Strategies



Best HR Team of the year



Best Advances in leading a remote workforce



Best Digital Learning solution provider

Uncharted Waters: Discover Your Hidden Depths

Julie Miles Lewis, UAE Explorer, Author, Women's Leadership adventurer launches her Latest Book, Uncharted Waters

Uncharted Waters is an invitation to explore the many ways WATER can teach you important life lessons about embracing change, facing challenges, finding flow, and building resilience.

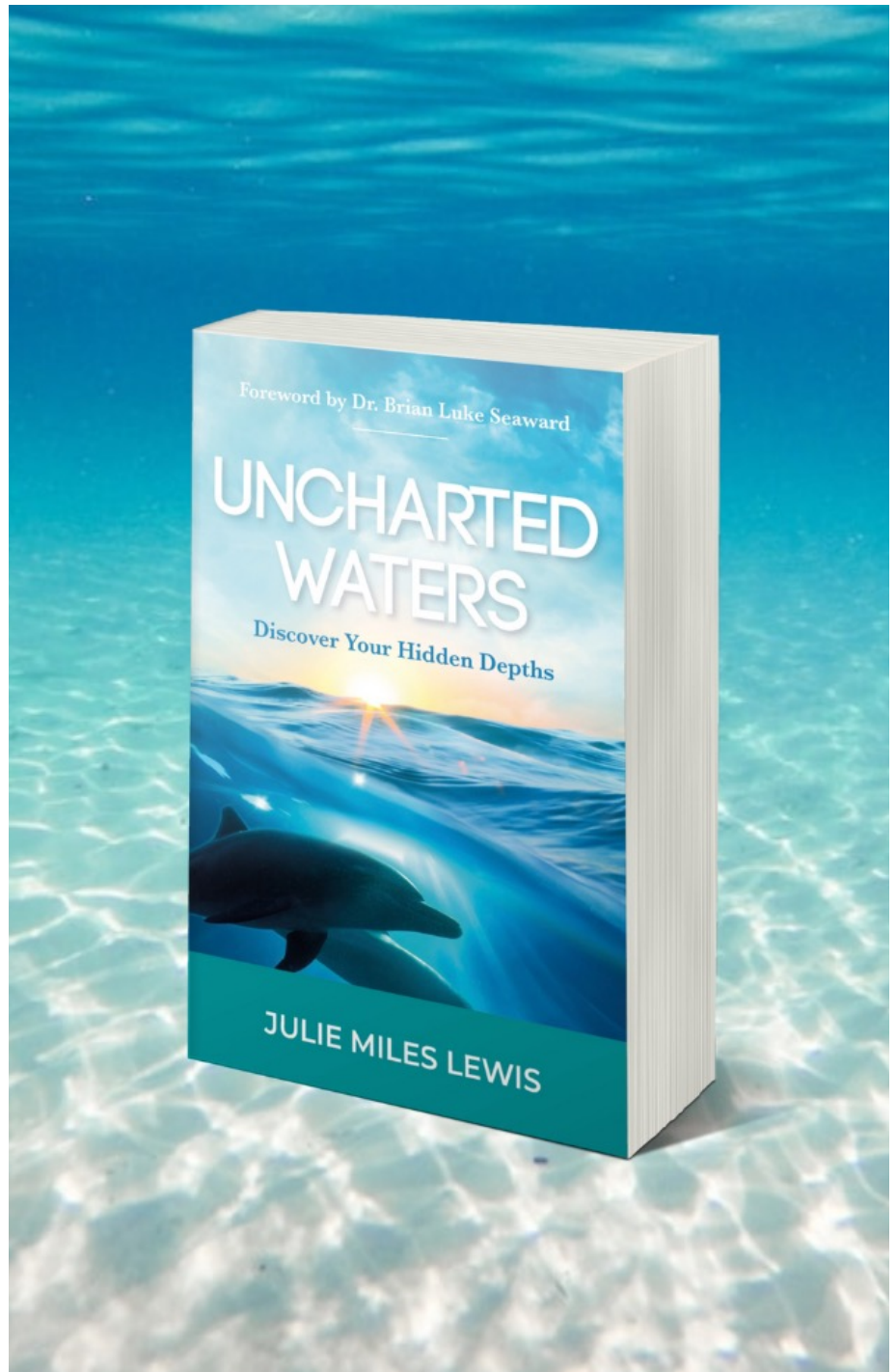
As you dive into the pages, you will embark on a powerful journey of self-reflection and personal growth through thought-provoking journal prompts, inspirational quotes, insights, and stories.

This is more than a book: it's a compass and guide to a more fulfilling and connected life. It's a timely and timeless call for taking action to protect and preserve water so it can take care of us for many generations to come.

Take the plunge, discover your hidden depths and sail into an ocean of new possibilities. Remember you are water and water always find a way.



Julie Miles Lewis, Author, Adventurer, UAE



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Visit these websites to access your future job opportunities

For the latest in the UAE job market, search:

1. Monster.com
2. Bayt.com
3. Hays.ae
4. gulf talent.com
5. dubaicareers.ae

Search for salary and career advice. Some allow you to download your CVs direct, advise you on covering letters, and cv writing. They offer help on interviewing skills, career development and what to do if you wish to move on.

The logo for Monster.com, featuring the word "MONSTER" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is a teal circle, while the other letters are purple.The logos for Bayt.com and GulfTalent. Bayt.com is on the left, with a yellow chevron above the word "bayt" in blue, followed by ".com" in a smaller blue font. GulfTalent is on the right, with "GulfTalent" in a bold, dark blue font and a red triangle above the "t".The logo for Dubai Careers, featuring a blue circle with a white arrow pointing up and to the right, next to the text "وظائف دبي" in Arabic and "dubaicareers" in a bold, dark blue font.

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