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Val Jusufi

From Adaptation to Innovation: How LEORON is Paving the Way for EdTech in the Middle East according to Val Jusufi, CEO of LEORON Institute

Tell us about your company and your experience in the Middle East?

LEORON is a leading provider of professional development in the Middle East's training and development sector, with over 12 years of experience.

Headquartered in Riyadh, our company has expanded significantly since its inception and now operates in seven countries, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, the UK, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Egypt.

Our success is rooted in our ability to adapt and innovate, especially in the face of challenges. When the pandemic hit, for example, we swiftly pivoted by embracing Live Virtual Training, which not only secured our business but also improved our relationships with clients, making us stronger and more resilient.

We follow a similar approach to current trends, and we're at the forefront of adoption when it comes to the integration of training technology, as witnessed by our numerous partnerships with top providers like Kahoot, Skillsoft, edX and more.

How would you describe the culture of your business?

At LEORON, our exceptional talent embodies the message of continued personal development and growth. We have a dedicated team of professionals who celebrate and support their differences, creating a culture of closeness and recognition, where everyone pushes themselves to be better.

What are your biggest challenges in



Val Jusufi, CEO, LEORON Institute

the next 5 years?

As we continue to expand, finding the right talent to support our growth is a significant challenge, as it is for most modern companies nowadays.

However, we pair our extensive tradition of developing people with our bespoke training solutions, strong relationships with clients, and our consultancy-based approach to reach a level of confidence that helps us overcome this challenge and maintain our position as the best quality EdTech company in the MENA region and the world.

What does your company do best?

While we boast a large portfolio of partnerships with international accrediting bodies and off-the-shelf courses, one of our core strengths lies in our ability to create tailored training

solutions that meet the specific needs and objectives of our clients. We achieve this by utilising

our in-house instructional design team and partnering with leading institutions and international industry experts, creating custom-made training experiences that provide impactful ROI.

What does the future hold for LEORON?

The future looks bright for LEORON, with exciting partnerships set to be announced in 2023 all across the MENA. These partnerships will heighten our presence and support our vision of expanding our EdTech offering. Our focus on increasing technological capacity, innovation, and prioritising the needs of our clients positions us to continue our path of success and growth.♦

Andrew Stotter-Brooks

Developing Human Skills: Insights from Andrew Stotter-Brooks, Vice President Learning and Development, Etihad Aviation Group

What are the highlights of your career so far?

I am an HR Professional with more than thirty years of senior Human Resources Management practice in Retail, Hospitality, Leisure and Aviation.

Prior to Abu Dhabi and Etihad Aviation Group, I worked for seven years with Alshaya Group as Head of Learning supporting the career development of more than 90,000 team members in 19 countries. Before joining Alshaya Group, I worked with Peninsula and Orient (P&O) in the South Pacific supporting their international cruise fleet and Hilton International Group as the People and Development Director responsible for HR delivery and Management training within Europe, supporting over 500 Hotels.

In addition to my professional development work with Alshaya Group, Hilton, YUM and P&O, I have been an Executive industry coach for American University Dubai, Harvard University, Greenwich and Nottingham Universities, Rolls Royce and Bass.

People development is my passion, helping others to overcome real and imagined obstacles to achievement, whilst creating an environment of trust and the ability to avoid ambiguity.

How has your experience in the Middle East developed?

My time in the region has been exceptional. I've lived around the world including Russia, the United States of America, Australia, France, The Netherlands, The United Kingdom and even as far out as Vanuatu and Fiji (look these up!) - but I can honestly say that the beautiful people of the UAE, KSA and Kuwait are some of the kindest and most generous on earth. Thank you!

My purpose has always been to create a moment of care and kindness with everyone I meet. Simply asking people



■ **Andrew Stotter-Brooks**, Vice President Learning and Development, Etihad Aviation Group

what they think opens such incredible opportunities. Never underestimate how unique and exceptional you are. Give yourself permission to be you. Remember - people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Own it, be inspired and be brilliant!

Managing such huge teams globally, what would you say was your key to success?

My mantra is: Let's keep it human. The more we develop being human the more effective we'll be. Many businesses forget to focus on being human. Empower your people by coaching, driving diversity and inclusion and daring to care. People never forget how you make them feel. My values? Respect, Hear, Acknowledge and Remember.

What are the biggest challenges for you and your industry in the next five years?

It's absolutely about keeping it human

and developing the power skills for our leaders; Coaching, Emotional Intelligence, Empathy, Authenticity, Independence, Self-Awareness and Humility. In short - being human.

I am proud of our transparency, clarity and our ability to help our teams grow, flourish, succeed and care for our people.

What advice would you give to future talent?

It's difficult to avoid hard work. But aspiring leaders should also think about their legacy and the value they add to the people they lead. Never underestimate the importance of understanding what the person in front of you needs - the power of strong eye contact and a smile; a genuine, warm welcome; a friendly offer of assistance - "How can I help you today?" What do you need from me? Keep it personal - use peoples' names, offer help and bid a fond farewell. Keep it human. ♦

Private Sector Employees to be Registered (Mandatory) for Pension & Social Security

Registration of Private Sector Emirati employees in pension and social security systems is 'mandatory', and a 'precondition' for Nafis support

The registration of Emirati employees working in the private sector in the UAE's pension and social security systems is a precondition to obtain support from the Nafis program, the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MoHRE) said.

"It is the responsibility of the private sector companies to register Emirati employees in the pension and social security systems in the country within one month from the date of work permit issuance," MoHRE explained in a statement today.

Failing to register Emirati employees in the pension and social security systems would result in fines and penalties on non-compliant companies, based on relevant decisions, law and legislations.

The Ministry added: "The UAE government launched the Nafis program as a step to enhance the competitiveness of national cadres to work in private sector companies. One of the most important goals of Nafis is to provide Emiratis with the necessary expertise and skills to join jobs and create professional and academic paths that would guarantee promising opportunities for them in the future."

The Ministry said it is "mandatory" for companies to register their Emirati



employees in the pension and social security systems, adding: "This would ensure the provision of Nafis support to employees and guarantee the rights of both parties."

"Failing to register Emirati employees does not exempt the employer in the future from registering them with retrospective effect and paying penalties for each day of delay," MoHRE continued.

"The registration is the employer's responsibility. However, this does not exempt the Emirati employee from the responsibility of ensuring that they are

registered and contributions are paid on their behalf based on real wages.

Any breach or manipulation in the payment of contributions would decrease the value of the employee's insurance benefits upon retirement, and this also makes the employers liable to penal action."

The Ministry explained that if the work permit of an Emirati employee is cancelled, the employer must coordinate with the concerned pension and social security authority on the employee's end-of-service benefits, as well as service merging. ♦

GCC Labour Ministers Meet at World Government Summit 2023 Dubai

GCC Labour Ministers discuss latest regional & global developments, under the theme, "Shaping future governments."

His Excellency Dr Abdulrahman Al Awar, Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation, thanked the attendees for their active participation in the meeting, which discussed aspects that intersect with the objectives of the summit, including exploring prospects for the future of government work in preparation for facing the changes imposed by technology and new business models, preparing the workforce in the region of the post-oil era and the changes it imposes on the reality of education and employment, and the growing importance of entrepreneurship and the skills that Gulf youth need to acquire in order to compete in the local labour markets.

During the meeting, H.E. Dr Mahad Saeed Ba'owain, Minister of Labour of Oman, said that the brotherly relations

among the GCC countries require strengthening the cooperation bonds to face the challenges facing the region and the world, which are reflected in the labour markets in the world.

The meeting reviewed issues affecting employment and shaping the direction of national labour and employment policies, the latest developments in the Gulf labour markets, technical cooperation programs between the GCC countries, as well as opportunities and prospects for enhancing cooperation between the GCC countries and the ILO, as well as opportunities to increase the employment of Gulf skills.

The meeting reviewed the UAE's efforts in developing labour market legislation to guarantee the rights of both parties engaged in the work relationship in a balanced manner and providing a job

safety net for workers in the labour market in parallel with the packages of government support aiming at developing the sectors of the future economy.

The meeting also discussed how this can affect the rates of national economic growth in line with the impact of the new legislation, which included developing and updating about 40 laws. It touched upon future jobs and the skills that should be acquired by the workforce, as well as the productivity of the labour market, the tools and mechanisms used to measure and improve them, and the economic, political, and technological changes and their impact on jobs.

H.E. Al Awar highlighted the effects of climate change on labour and development issues in the least developed countries, and the UAE's preparations to host the 28th edition of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) in December 2023, which eyes understanding the impact of climate change on markets and the labour migration rates globally.

The meeting also discussed the importance of the participation of the ILO and all members of the global multilateral system in building partnerships and enriching the strategic efforts aimed at redistributing production factors in the least developed countries to the highest productive activities, and the need to make efforts to enhance the global development process and support the achievement of sustainable development goals to meet the challenges facing the world.♦



■ World Government Summit Dubai 2023

Thousands Subscribe to the National Unemployment Insurance Scheme

More than 60,000 workers have subscribed to the unemployment insurance scheme within two days of its launch.

In the first two days after the commencement of the unemployment insurance program, 60,000 employees signed up for it.

The programme has been implemented through a federal decree (No. 13 of 2022), which relates to unemployment insurance that does not incur any additional costs for employers. The scheme aims to provide financial security to workers and professionals in the public and private sectors in case of job losses.

In the first two days, 86 percent of participants chose to sign up via the website <https://www.iloe.ae>, one of seven channels provided by the Dubai Insurance Company, which represents the insurance complex

that is in charge of providing insurance services against unemployment. Other subscription channels include the smart application of the insurance complex, self-service kiosks, businessmen service centres, Al Ansari Exchange, and smartphone applications of banks in the country, as well as telecom bills.

Ninety per cent of participants chose to subscribe to the scheme annually. This option is given to two categories of individuals who are covered by the insurance. One category includes those whose basic wage is AED16,000 or less. The subscription amount is AED5 per month (AED60 yearly), and the maximum value of the monthly pay is AED10,000. The other is made up of

those whose base wage is more than AED 16,000; the monthly subscription fee for this group is AED10 (AED120 annually). The maximum monthly compensation amount is AED20,000.

If the insured employee does not resign or is not fired for disciplinary grounds, the insurance pays him a sum for a maximum of three months. The pay is calculated on 60 per cent of the basic salary in the last six months before being unemployed.

The compensation will be paid within two weeks following the claim date. One has a choice to pay the premium quarterly, monthly, semi-annually, or annually.

The insured individual must submit the claim through the designated channels, which are the Dubai Insurance Company's website <https://www.iloe.ae>, smart application of the insurance complex, and the call centre of the insurance complex (600 599 555).

An individual has to be subscribed to the scheme for at least 12 consecutive months to be eligible for the benefit. The person forfeits his right to the claim if he leaves the country or accepts a new position.

The exempted categories for the scheme are investors or owners of establishments, domestic workers, temporary contract workers, juveniles (under 18 years), and retirees who receive a pension and join a new job.♦



■ 60,000 workers join new unemployment scheme in 2 days

Amendments to Mechanism of Achieving Emiratisation Targets

Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MoHRE), UAE, recently announced amendments to the mechanism of achieving Emiratisation targets



The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MoHRE) announced amendments to the mechanism of achieving Emiratisation targets in private sector companies with 50 employees or more, in line with the amendments of the provisions of Cabinet Resolution No. 5/19 for 2022.

Companies will now be required to increase Emiratisation in skilled jobs by 1% every six months, while remaining on track to achieve the overall 2% target by the end of the year.

This step supports the continuity of the Emiratisation pace in the private sector

year-round, in line with the directives of the Government of the UAE, which prioritises Emiratisation in its national strategy and agenda.

The amendments do not include any additional commitments on the companies, nor any amendments to the amounts of financial contributions imposed for non-compliance. However, these contributions will now be collected semi-annually, encouraging the private sector to continuously employ Emiratis to meet their targets, instead of waiting until the end of the year.

At a media briefing organised today by MoHRE, Dr Abdulrahman Al Awar,

Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation, said, "This step aims to maintain employment and retention rates of Emiratis in the private sector at a time where we witnessed a 70% increase of Emiratis working in the private sector in 2022, compared to 2021."

Al Awar noted that the new mechanism does not amend the annual targets - companies with 50 employees or more are required to achieve a 2% increase in Emiratisation of skilled jobs. The new mechanism stipulates that companies need to achieve 1% increase in Emiratisation before the end of June 2023, and reach the targeted 2% by end of the year.

He pointed out that "supporting Emirati talent is a priority, in line with the vision of the nation's wise leadership to provide a decent living to its people, boost their quality of life, and enhance the job opportunities available to them. This is evident in the exemplary results achieved by Nafis in 2022, which through the amended mechanism, the Ministry aims to support in balancing the pace of job seekers registering and the job opportunities being offered via Nafis' platform."

"The private sector has proven itself as a credible partner, and we are confident that the new amendments will reflect positively on the existing cooperation," he added.

The financial contributions of companies that do not meet the target for the first half of 2023 will begin in July 2023, and the contributions for non-compliance from 2022 will continue to be collected.♦



The private sector has proven itself as a credible partner, and we are confident that the new amendments will reflect positively on the existing cooperation

More than 30 million Customer Interactions by MoHRE in 2022

Mohre's Tawasul System achieves a 91% rate in customer satisfaction

The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MoHRE) has announced that it has conducted over 30 million interactions with its customers during 2022 through the Tawasul System.

MoHRE said it achieved a 91% rate in customer satisfaction and complaint closure during the same year.

The Tawasul System includes 12 digital and online channels and tools, including the call centre 600590000, the WhatsApp chat service, the live chat service through MoHRE's website and application, and MoHRE's email ask@mohre.gov.ae, along with the Tawasul platform across MoHRE's offices, which offers video and voice calls with customers, as well as the Customer Voice system, the Customer First Virtual Forum, and account statements.

The System also includes MoHRE's social media accounts (@mohre_uae), the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, and informative notifications for employers, employees, and the technical support service.

Her Excellency Aisha Belharfia, MoHRE's Assistant Under Secretary for Labour Affairs, said: "The Tawasul System implements the highest quality and excellence standards in providing uninterrupted, 24/7 services. MoHRE believes in the importance of promptly responding to all customer requests across categories."

"It is built on trustworthy technological foundations, with advanced systems to ensure privacy and transparency, ultimately leading to customer satisfaction. The system is also equipped

to keep pace with the emerging trends and meet the requirements for realising the UAE Government's commitment to implementing futuristic services," she added.

Belharfia specified the training and upskilling process of the teams that provide MoHRE's services throughout the Tawasul system, explaining that more than 12,000 training hours have taken place to "ensure quick response mechanisms and offer best-in-class services that fulfil the aspirations and needs of various customers across different categories."

The Tawasul system was also the main access point for addressing customers' inquiries and complaints, as many laws and resolutions related to the labour market were ratified in 2022. These included the Decree-Law on Regulating

Labour Relations, the Domestic Workers Law, the Unemployment Insurance Scheme Law, the Establishment Classification Resolution, the Emiratisation Targets Resolution, and the Resolution on the Wage Protection System (WPS).

MoHRE's call centre handled more than 1,900,000 calls related to customer inquiries, suggestions, and complaints, providing its services in 20 languages, including three main languages and 17 sub-languages. Meanwhile, interactions through the digital channels reached around half a million, through WhatsApp, e-mail, live chat and MoHRE's social media accounts.

MoHRE had sent nearly 24 million text messages and emails to employers and employees to create awareness about labour laws and services. The Customer Voice System received around 258,000 requests, receiving and handling customers' complaints, comments, suggestions, and requests for resolving technical challenges.

The Ministry had also sent around 3.5 million account statements to employers, which is a monthly service that includes an interactive report to provide employers with proactive information on their establishment, thus enhancing their compliance with labour market laws and boosting their stability.

In addition, 27 virtual sessions were held with various customer categories through the Customer First Virtual Forum. The sessions included discussions and informative sessions with more than 5,000 customers in total. The attendees learnt about the latest laws and services related to labour market regulations.♦



■ **Aisha Belharfia**, MoHRE's Assistant Under Secretary for Labour Affairs



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6 Tools for Motivation: Fueling Energy with Emotions

Opinion Piece: Joshua Freedman, CEO, 6seconds.org

Joshua Freedman, CEO, 6seconds.org, offers insights on how to identify and utilise 6 essential tools to harness emotions for motivation and to drive success

Unpacking the purpose and benefits of emotions

At a neurobiological level, emotions are chemicals that carry information and energy to every living cell in our body. Various emotions are akin to 'keys', each with a unique chemical structure; these 'keys' attach to receptor sites ('locks') on our cells to deliver a message (and they can last for up to about six seconds).

The information they carry is about the opportunities and threats that we perceive. Strong emotions indicate significant opportunities or threats.

In other words, emotions are signals to focus us on what's most important - we've all experienced days when emotions feel like a barrier – for example, when we're overwhelmed by uncertainty or exhausted due to burnout.

When our feelings are fuelling momentum and taking us where we want to go, it's fabulous! The question is: can we access emotions as a source of energy and insight even when it's hard? That takes a lot of emotional intelligence.

By developing our emotional intelligence, we can channel our emotions towards nurturing and



✉ Joshua Freedman, CEO, 6seconds.org

safeguarding our top priorities.

What factors contribute to individual motivation? Here are three powerful questions, and three lenses to understand the answers. The third question is the kicker: Will it work for me?

The 3 'pulse points'

During our research for the development of The Vital Organization (How to Create a High-Performing Workplace) Field Guide and our bi-annual Vitality research report, we identified three critical



'pulse points' that play a crucial role in driving motivation in both personal and organisational contexts:

Meaning

Mastery

Autonomy

To enhance motivation, individuals should strive to attach significance to their goals, identify areas in which they excel, and establish a sense of personal ownership by balancing freedom with responsibility.

3 'lenses' to boost motivation

Here are three 'lenses' that I've found helpful in strengthening motivation, and how I use these as a coach:

1. Intrinsic vs Extrinsic Motivation: is the motivation fuelled from inside or driven by external factors?
2. Practical vs Idealistic Motivation: what energises your brain and how does your goal match that?

3. The Vital Signs of Motivation: The Pulse. Are all three 'pulse points' (Meaning, Mastery and Autonomy) active?

How you can apply the 'lenses'

Let's suppose that, against my advice, you've decided to set a New Year's Resolution. If I were coaching you, and you told me that you were not quite sure about this commitment, I might ask you three questions:

1. How important is your goal?
2. How clear is the path to achieve this – is it doable?
3. To what degree do you believe that the path will work for you?

Going in the "way back machine" to Victor Vroom's research on 'expectancy theory' (which proposes that individuals are motivated by the expectation that a behaviour leads to a desirable outcome), these three

questions reveal how likely it is that you'll follow through on the goal. For example, if you rate each on a scale of 1-10 (where 10 is highest), and then multiply your scores, you get a total value from 1-1000. Anything over 700 is a win. You'll quickly see that if any rating is below 7, it's not possible to get over 700.

What's valuable in these questions is that they don't just tell us about a level of motivation: they usually diagnose where the challenge sits. From there, we can design a solution.

Once you see the challenge clearly, you can look at your situation through the three 'lenses' of motivation to craft a solution:

1. Is it important? If your motivation is low, consider the long-term value and seek inspiration. Imagine both the consequences of not achieving your goal and the positive energy of success.
2. Is there a feasible plan to achieve this goal? If you have doubts about HOW you are going to achieve your goal, ask yourself: what parts have already been done? Who has done something like this that I can emulate? Look for practical advice, get a "how to" or find a consultant. Simplify, then make a prototype.
3. Will it work for me? If you're uncertain about whether the task is achievable for YOU, ask yourself: what is a small step I can take to test it out? How can I turn this into baby steps so I can experience some success quickly? Are there people or systems to support me so it will work?

Before I go...

I'd like to leave you with one of my favourite questions about motivation: How are YOU spending YOUR energy? ♦

Mastering the Four Cs of Effective Communication: Lessons from Asia, Africa and the Middle East

Opinion Piece: Rohit Bassi, CEO, ROI Talks, Dubai

Rohit Bassi, CEO, ROI Talks, offers insights for effective cross-cultural communication in the region

Effective communication is vital for building connections, regardless of culture or region. In Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, people recognise the importance of embracing the four Cs. Let's explore how these four Cs influence effective communication and connection, with insights from various regions.

Courage: Embracing Vulnerability and Authenticity

In Africa, courage in communication involves being authentic and transparent, even in challenging situations. This concept is reflected in the term "ubuntu," which emphasises the interconnectedness of all people. It takes courage to express our true selves and embrace vulnerability, which is essential for building genuine connections.

In Japan, the concept of "ganbaru"

emphasises perseverance and determination in the face of adversity. This requires courage to take risks and overcome obstacles, which can lead to personal and professional growth.

In the Middle East, the concept of "shour" emphasises the courage to express oneself and speak out, even in the face of opposition or criticism.

Clarity: Communicating Effectively Across Cultures

In Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, effective communication requires clarity, but this does not mean oversimplifying. Rather, it involves the ability to simplify complex ideas and convey them in a clear, concise manner. This approach helps avoid misunderstandings and builds trust.

In the Middle East, the concept of "sabr" emphasises the importance of patience and endurance. In



In the Middle East, the concept of "wasta" refers to the importance of connections and networking. However, it also emphasises the need to be credible and trustworthy in our communication. By speaking with conviction and integrity, we can establish ourselves as credible and trustworthy.

communication, this requires clarity in expressing our thoughts and ideas while also being mindful of the listener's perspective.

In India, the concept of "jugaad" emphasises creative problem-solving and resourcefulness, even in the face of adversity. This approach requires clarity in communicating complex solutions in a simple and effective manner.

Conviction: Speaking with Confidence and Authority

In Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, conviction in communication involves speaking with confidence and authority, without being aggressive or domineering. It is essential to convey a sense of certainty and purpose in our words to establish credibility and trust.

In Korea, the concept of "jeong" emphasises the importance of



■ **Rohit Bassi**, CEO, ROI Talks, Dubai

human relationships and emotional bonds. This requires conviction in our communication to build trust and strengthen relationships.

In the Middle East, the concept of "wasta" refers to the importance of connections and networking. However, it also emphasises the need to be credible and trustworthy in our communication. By speaking with conviction and integrity, we can establish ourselves as credible and trustworthy.

Compassion: Building Meaningful Relationships

Compassion in communication involves empathy, understanding, and a willingness to listen. It is critical for building relationships and creating a sense of connection.

In India, the concept of "ahimsa" emphasises non-violence and respect for all living beings. This involves seeing ourselves as part of a larger community and striving to build meaningful relationships based on shared values.

In the Middle East, the concept of "tarab" emphasises the importance of emotional resonance and shared experiences. This requires compassion in our communication to create a sense of connection and foster deeper relationships.

Power of The Four Cs

Effective communication is the cornerstone of building meaningful connections across cultures, and the four Cs are essential components of achieving this. By embracing these

values, we can foster authentic communication, build trust and credibility, and establish strong relationships based on shared values.

Moreover, these values are not limited to specific regions or cultures. They are universal, and by embracing them, we can enhance our communication skills and build more meaningful connections with people from all walks of life.

As we navigate an increasingly globalised world, it is crucial to understand and integrate these values into our communication styles. By doing so, we can overcome cultural barriers, foster empathy, and build bridges across diverse perspectives and backgrounds.♦

Paradoxical Leadership

Opinion Piece: Uzair Hassan, CEO, 3H Solutions Group, Dubai

Uzair Hassan, CEO, 3H Solutions Group, shares his thoughts on the dichotomy that is leadership.



■ **Uzair Hassan** CEO - 3h Solutions

Human beings live with paradoxes. They are littered with examples throughout their lives. And, when it comes down to Leadership, it is full of paradoxes as well, pulling them in all directions.

A leader tries to balance multiple expectations. From stakeholders to subordinates. The stakes are high.

1. They are attempting to lead their subordinates to take their place. Not stopping them from taking it (via people development initiatives etc.)
2. They are relinquishing their control, not trying to gain it. (Ensuring empowerment and delegation are optimised)
3. Embracing change while creating change.
4. They should be managing consistently, amongst inconsistencies.
5. Being comfortable with being uncomfortable.
6. Advocating independence while raising the critical nature of interdependence.
7. They are in Act mode, not React mode. (Vision and the ability to forecast the future)
8. They are pushing for digitization while pulling their team towards amplifying the human touch. (Digitization support, humanely applied)
9. They are attempting to achieve a balance between what the organization requires and the needs of their people. (Trying to achieve organisational goals, with their people)
10. There are contradictions and inconsistencies in their efforts. A balancing act indeed.
11. A leader should not order, they should



request or ask. (Servant Leadership).

- 12. They should listen. (Not to respond, not to solve, not to help, not to..... JUST listen. First, To understand)
- 13. They must drive today, with tomorrow in mind (Future focused but tactical)
- 14. Have a helicopter view, but look at the on-the-ground individual values as well.
- 15. The idea is to be able to not only execute all these imbalances, with a certain balance, but to also keep an open mind as to the benefits, and the beneficiaries of these benefits.
- 16. There has to be thought given to their own growth, while ensuring their people develop alongside as well.
- 17. Balancing risks versus potential rewards.
- 18. Harmonising change while extolling the virtues of stability and

- consistency.
- 19. Staying humble while being a hero / leading from the front.
- 20. Promoting the extraction of maximum profits from customers while ensuring customers the benefit from what is on offer.
- 21. Fostering teamwork while pushing individual strengths.
- 22. Stimulating growth while propagating consolidation.
- 23. Pitching a local footing while reinforcing globalisation.
- 24. Demonstrating clarity of thought and direction while remaining open to new ideas
- 25. Aiming for success while accepting failure.
- 26. Driving profits while driving employee wellness / development / happiness.
- 27. Remaining popular while running a tight ship.
- 28. Utilising influence power more than position power.
- 29. Listening, while attempting to be heard.
- 30. Delegating while wanting to do it all yourself

Some of these may be borderline paradoxes while being dual yet parallel focus areas. They may be leading towards the same goals but have divergent approaches and require juggling to ensure both aspects are kept in clear focus.

Whatever the case may be, paradoxical environments are the nature of the beast for leaders. They have to be tackled, managed, monitored, juggled and balanced. Albeit, without leaning too much towards one or the other.

And there in lies the paradox. ♦

When You Ignore Culture There's a Social Downside

Opinion Piece: Ron Thomas, CEO, Strategic Focus

Ron Thomas, of Strategic Focus Dubai, reflects on how culture within organisations is critical to employee retention and corporate reputation.

“ I knew it was time to leave when I realised I could no longer look students in the eye and tell them what a great place this was to work.



■ **Ron Thomas**, CEO, Strategic Focus Dubai.

I came across this article the other day and it resonated with me. A gentleman by the name of Greg Smith resigned from his role at Goldman Sachs not only with resignation but with an op-ed. That was the defining statement from Greg Smith, the now-famous departing employee who resigned from Goldman Sachs via an article on the Op-Ed page of The New York Times.

What would your “movie reviews” look like

As I read the various commentaries about Smith's article, it seemed like reading the movie reviews before you see the movie. That is, the movie being the actual resignation letter.

I would never get into the cause of this breakup because I have always said, in any situation, there are three sides: My side, your side, and the truth. What intrigued me after I read the resignation was his statement about corporate culture.

I visited a former co-worker a year ago who used to work with me on building an onboarding program. Her statement on my last visit was the same: I can't stand it here and tell you that this is a great place to work because it is horrible.



Likewise, when I had tea with another senior executive that I used to work with in the past. We reminisced about what started as the greatest place on earth to work but later turned into the place from beyond. And the amazing part of our conversation was that we both could pinpoint the approximate thing that began to send it downhill: a change in senior leadership.

As the Godfather would say, "how did things ever get so far apart?"

The Bait and Switch

What happens when the culture that you bought into changes? Consumer laws protect all of us from bait and switch, but when bait and switch as a concept infects your organisation, you are on your own. When we start that new job, you signed on because you have bought into what sounds (and seems) like it is the place for you.

As you begin the journey, we all hope that this remains the case. But what happens if you start to notice that the culture is shifting or is on a slippery slope heading south? Whether we admit it or not, we have all been there –

or if you have not gotten there yet, "just keep on living," as my father would always say.

What usually happens is when we finally come around to admitting it, we realise that the thrill was long gone but, we were in some way hoping for a redux to what we signed on for.

Culture is in the driver's seat

Culture, in so many companies, has shifted during these COVID times. The stress for survival has caused fault lines to appear in the cultural framework. These fault lines, if not properly examined and repaired, will eventually produce a level of discontent with the talent pool that is a breeding ground for this type of behaviour.

One of the most important facts about culture is that organisational value systems impact the way change happens. Some key questions include:

What is important to us as an organisation?

What are our values?

What behaviours are rewarded and recognized?

How is bad behaviour dealt with?

Do the values and vision align with our daily decision-making process?

Who is really in charge?

These types of questions are extremely critical for leadership to understand because this is what directly influences the way change is accepted or not. Values are the guiding principles that should direct decision-making and the performance of work. This is not only what employees, but customers, expect from the organisation.

Culture on display

The cultivation of culture is the same as the principle of cultivation in gardening: weeding, fertilising, watering, and lots of attention. When you see a culturally driven company, you will see a company that, from the senior executives down to the mailroom, has a thorough understanding of what the company is all about.

I stopped in the new Apple store in Grand Central Station last week and discussed the new iPad with a store associate. The organised chaos from the sales floor showed that it was apparent that each one of these associates knew what their mission was about. The culture of Apple with their associates is a sight to behold.

With the advent of social media, this gentleman Greg Smith chose old media to display his feelings. This is not the last time that this type of display will come forward, but I do feel we should all take a look at the Greg Smiths of our organisation, and regardless of your feeling towards how this was handled, recognize that this is your new employee.

When you ignore your culture, this is the by-product – whether it is The New York Times, Twitter, Facebook, or Glassdoor ♦

Meet Zimyo, the latest HR-Tech company in the Middle East

Zimyo launches the latest AI driven HR Tech-solution, enhancing the digitalization of HR in the Middle East

Established in 2018, India-based HR-Tech Solution, Zimyo has become one of the fastest growing HR-Tech solutions in the Middle East. A flourishing leader, Zimyo is fueling its global expansion and portfolio growth by building a large client base in the Gulf region.

Zimyo is a powerful cloud-based solution that offers top-tier employee experience with its 40+ suite of modules. From HR & Payroll Management to Time & Attendance Management to Performance Management System (PMS) and Applicant Tracking System (ATS), the platform assists organisations in the entire employee management lifecycle.

The AI-based HRMS Software automates all traditional HR tasks. From managing the workforce, encouraging engagement among employees, and providing additional employee benefits, Zimyo is taking every organisation into the digital transformation era.

Already catering 1000+ customers all around the globe like Kayfi, Ewings, Yash Raj Films, Amity University Online, Soho House, Morni, and Vivandi amongst others, the HR leader is engraving its name on Gulf lands too.

"Digitization of HR in SMBs is a trend that the organisation has been excited about since day one. Zimyo performed exceptionally well over the past few years, as evidenced by its rapid international expansions now in the Gulf too. Furthermore, it allows companies to hire and grow teams, globally

reducing the traditional complexities of managing payroll, taxes and employee benefits," expressed Kumar Mayank, CEO - Zimyo.

The fastest-growing HRMS solution in the Middle East connects companies with sterling employee experience through modern technology on both iOS and Android. Zimyo is a revolution in the HR-Tech industry. It's here to break the old approach of human resources worldwide with its advanced automations powered by AI.

The HRMS software administers and automates all HR operations while boosting the productivity and efficiency of the organisation. With

HR duties being streamlined, quality decisions are encouraged.

The Applicant Tracking System helps organisations by providing top-quality candidates from industry talent pools and aligning them with the job vacancies. It assesses the candidate profile and skills, and helps the organisations find the best fit.

Whereas, the Performance Management Software identifies, encourages, tracks, assesses, and rewards the workforce based on their performance within the organisation. Every single module has its own USP that helps everyone from an employee to the employer to lead the organisation towards success.♦

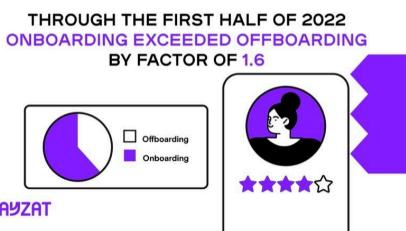


2022 -2023 Trends in E-learning Recruitment

Bayzat highlights the latest data, suggesting the UAE can buck the trend of resignations other regions are experiencing

Amid fears of the 'Great Resignation' in Western nations, it appears the UAE is in the coveted position of being able to buck the trend. This is highlighted in new data from the Bayzat HR & Employee benefits platform which shows that through 2022, the number of employees on-boarded by companies each month has on average exceeded the number off-boarded, either due to resignation or termination, by a factor of 1.6.

The research which analysed the trend over a four-year period found that since January 2019 to the present day, there have been just four months where the number of off-boarded employees has been greater than those on-boarded. Unsurprisingly, three of these months took place in succession between April 2020 to June 2020, when pandemic-related concerns and disruptions to regular business operations were at their peak.



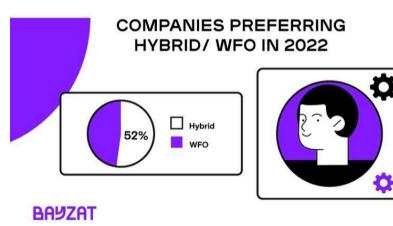
"Backed by government initiatives that have enabled the UAE economy to remain impressively resilient through recent global challenges, companies in the Emirates have been hiring aggressively. While the so-called 'great resignation' doesn't appear to hold true for UAE companies, the steady upward trend in hiring means they must look to gain an edge in the war for talent," said Talal Bayaa, CEO and co-founder at Bayzat.

"As we transition to a knowledge and skills led economy, companies must do everything they can to attract and retain

the most skilled professionals. Research shows that financial compensation is no longer the sole criteria in this endeavour. For the modern employee, it is the overall experience that guides job selection and fosters loyalty. This is shaped by a myriad of factors that include the benefits they receive, the company's policies around emerging themes such as remote work, and the dynamicity of the company's culture," Bayaa added.

Bayzat's data also shone a spotlight on which departments struggle the most with employee churn. Over the four-year period, the company found that Operations departments saw the greatest number of resignations, followed closely by Sales and Marketing. Analysing the trend within the context of employee profiles, among professional job roles, it was sales personnel who demonstrated the highest churn. This was followed by portfolio managers and business development executives/managers in second and third place respectively.

"In the UAE, SMEs comprise a staggering 95% of the workforce and for these smaller organisations, the sales function is absolutely critical to growth, while operations teams are key to keeping business on track. Adapting company policy to align with post-pandemic work trends and employee preferences could be key to attracting and retaining these professionals. This could for example be a demonstrated readiness to support hybrid or remote work, or embrace a new, more fluid approach to performance management," said Bayaa.



Bayzat's data also showed that UAE companies are already adapting to employee preferences. While in 2019, the larger portion (58%) of Bayzat's customers required employees to work from the office, the scales have since shifted and today, it is companies that support hybrid work that have the slight majority (52%). "Clearly, organisations now realise that employees can be just as productive working from anywhere, provided they have the right tools and policies in place to support a remote workforce.

This evolution, made possible by forward-focused government initiatives, bodes well for the UAE's transformation into a global knowledge and services hub where top professionals aspire to be based," Bayaa concluded. ♦



■ **Talal Bayaa**, CEO and co-founder at Bayzat, Dubai

Winners of the MEA HR & Learning Awards 2022 - 2023

MEA HR & Learning Awards 2022 - 2023 were held at the RITZ Carlton, Dubai

The results are in. Congratulations to you all.

It was an overwhelming response for the MEA HR & Learning awards for 2022. It is a testament to the importance of HR & Learning in the success of any business and further proves how talent is the most important asset.

A special thanks to all those who attended the MEA HR & Learning Awards Presentations.

Award Category	Winners
Winner Best Reward and Recognition Strategy	Al Khaleej Sugar
Winner Best Internal Awards Strategy	Al Khaleej Sugar
Winner HR Team of the Year	Dubai Duty Free
Winner Best eLearning Company - ME Region	Xpert Learning
Winner Best Onboarding Strategy	King Salman Energy Park (SPARK)
Winner Best Practices for Internal E-learning	SARA Group
Winner Best Learning & Development Strategy	Dubai Islamic Bank
Winner Best use of Technology in Training	Dubai Islamic Bank
Winner Best Implementation for Internal E-Learning	National Bank of Oman
Winner Best use of AI for HR Strategy	Opus
Winner Best Learning & Development for Loyalty Marketing In The MENA Region	Quick Brown Fox Consulting
Winner Best On-the-Job Training Structure	The Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi
Winner Best use of Diversity/Inclusion/Equity/Equality	KENT
Winner Best Talent Spotting Approach	KENT
Winner Best Face to Face Classroom Training Provider	Leoron

Award Category	Winners
Winner Best Talent Management Strategy	Ejada
Winner Best Education Programme Loyalty marketing	Quick Brown Fox Consulting
Winner Best Learning Delivery Strategy	3H Solutions Group
Winner Best Learning Culture of the Year	Sharjah Islamic Bank
Winner Inspiring Leadership Development	Etisalat Egypt
Winner Best CSR strategy	EmiratesNBD
Winner L&D Team of the Year	Amana
Winner Best Learning Measurement Strategies	Emirates Transport
Winner Best Blended Learning Programme Strategies	Medcare
Winner Best Career Planning & Management Strategies	Dubai Properties
Winner Best Onboarding Programme of the Year	Etoile Group
Winner Best Approaches in L&D Implementation Strategies	Emirates Post Group
Winner Best Approaches to Experiential Learning	Oman Reinsurance
Winner Best Employee Engagement & Retention Strategies	Berain KSA
Winner Best Flexible Work Strategy	Saudi Electricity Company
Winner Best High Potential Employee Programme	Mashreq Bank
Winner Best Online Education Management Programme	Exceed College
Winner Best CSR Initiative	CPL Aromas
Winner L&D Professional of the Year	Andrew Stotter-Brooks, Etihad Air
Winner Best Learning Platform for Working Executives	Eaton Business School

A special thanks to all those who attended the MEA HR & Learning Awards presentations.

Best Education Programme Loyalty Marketing

QBF Consulting



QBF
CONSULTING

For the MEA HR & Learning awards 2022, Quick Brown Fox Consulting picked up the Award for the Best Education program Loyalty Marketing. Their approach, coupled with their ability to deliver the required competencies across a large number of delegates was the winning feature.

This consultancy proudly represents The Loyalty Academy, exclusively across the MENA Region. Led by senior faculty members, over three days, Certification Workshops enable loyalty professionals to achieve the distinction of Certified Loyalty Marketing Professionals on completion. Since launching CLMP certification to the

region in Dec 2021, they have on boarded over 80+ professionals on a journey of being Certified Loyalty Marketing Professionals. Loyalty marketing is not about discounts or about acquiring customers only, it is about retaining customers, building revenues, expanding the required segments etc.

The training being provided is not only theoretical / conceptual, real life examples provide the necessary peeling of the proverbial layers that in turn furnishes the platform to expand the breadth of Loyalty marketing understanding and its eventual success.

Best on the Job Training Structure

Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism



Training can be managed, monitored and regulated easily compared to the On-The-Job element, which generally is less structured and/or focused. But, an organisation managed to capture the essence of OJT and made a habit out of it. **The Award for the Best on the Job Training Structure was won by The Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism.**

This organisation aims to position itself as a global "employer of choice" – especially in the creative and cultural sector. It consistently encourages its team members to embrace a culture of lifelong

learning to empower their career growth and to support the Department's strategic objectives, which is to support its wide and ever-expanding portfolio of museums, heritage sites, festivals, events, and other related creative tourism activities.

The Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism has embarked on a journey to ensure this culture is embedded across the organisation and focuses on sustainability for this initiative.

They are to be applauded for this singular focus on this oft missed aspect of people development initiatives.











Emirates Airlines Appoint UAE Nationals to Key Positions

Emirates has announced a number of appointments to its commercial operations team across the Middle East, GCC and Africa.

The appointments made earlier this year, elevate Emirati talent into key leadership positions. This has been achieved through promotions from within the organisation, or through portfolio rotations, underpinning the airline's commitment to career development and progression of its UAE Nationals.

Thierry Antinori, Emirates' Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer, believes that the unique backgrounds, experience and skills of each appointed member of their commercial team will further strengthen their commercial and business operations and drive strategic initiatives in a new year of growth. Their experience will also be instrumental in focussing on executing many of our commercial initiatives to pursue revenue opportunities, improve margin performance, as well as capture new consumer segments as they continue to develop their operations in the Middle East, GCC and Africa.

The new appointments include:

- Mohammad Lootah:** Jordan Manager. Joined Emirates in 2016.



- Tariq Al-Mutawa:** Kuwait Manager. Eight years service. 2015, (UAE National Commercial Management Programme).
- Hamad Al-Ali:** Commercial Activities Manager, Bahrain. Joined Emirates in 2013.
- Omar Al-Buslaibi:** Manager, Oman. Joined Emirates in 2014 (UAE National Commercial Management Programme)
- Nasser Bahlooq:** Manager, Zimbabwe. He joined in 2015. (UAE National Commercial Management Programme).
- Khalfan Al-Salami:** Manager, Sudan. Khalfan joined Emirates
- Marwan Al-Marri:** Manager, Riyadh. Previously commercial support manager, Madinah.
- Fahad Bastaki:** Manager, Dammam. Joined Emirates in 2015.
- Saeed Khalifa bin Sulaiman:** Senior Manager Abu Dhabi and Al-Ain.
- Omar Al-Banna:** Manager, Sharjah and Northern Emirates. Joined Emirates in 2006.♦



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