PROTALENT ADVISORY

HR in MENA 2027

MENA's workforce is shifting. A practical guide for CEOs, SMEs and HR leaders: the data, the priorities and what to do next.

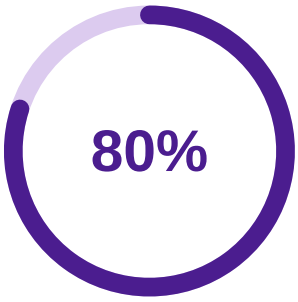
4 National Visions | 5 Key HR Challenges | 8 HR Priorities | 5 HR Tech Trends | 6 MENA Markets

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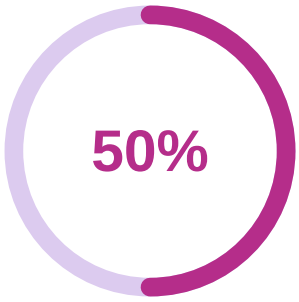
SECTION 1

Executive summary and MENA workforce outlook

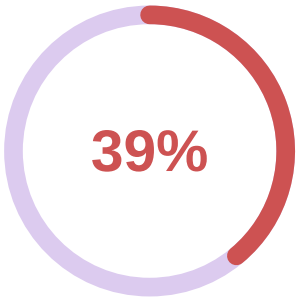
MENA's employers are entering 2027 under three pressures at once: talent that is hard to find, employees who feel stretched, and skills that are changing faster than most training plans. The three headline figures below frame the starting point.



of GCC enterprises report active talent shortages



of MENA employees report high stress levels at work



of workers' core skills will change between 2025 and 2030 globally

What this means

Hiring more will not close the gap on its own. Employers that combine national-vision alignment, skills-based workforce planning, practical HR technology and healthier workplaces will be better placed to attract and keep people. The sections that follow cover each piece and end with recommendations for CEOs and SMEs.

> ***Data note:*** *the 80% and 50% figures are shown as they appear in the source infographic. Attach primary sources before presenting them as verified regional findings (see Section 11).*

SECTION 2

What's Inside: A Complete Picture of HR in MENA 2027

This report covers six topics, each in its own section.

1 4 National Visions

How national transformation agendas are reshaping HR across the region.

2 5 Key HR Challenges

The barriers standing between HR teams and real business impact.

3 8 HR Priorities in 2027

Where HR leaders should focus attention and investment right now.

4 6 Key Factors Shaping HR

Demographics, AI, Gen Z, skills, localisation and changing expectations.

5 5 HR Tech Trends

The technologies and applications moving from pilot to practice.

6 6 MENA Markets

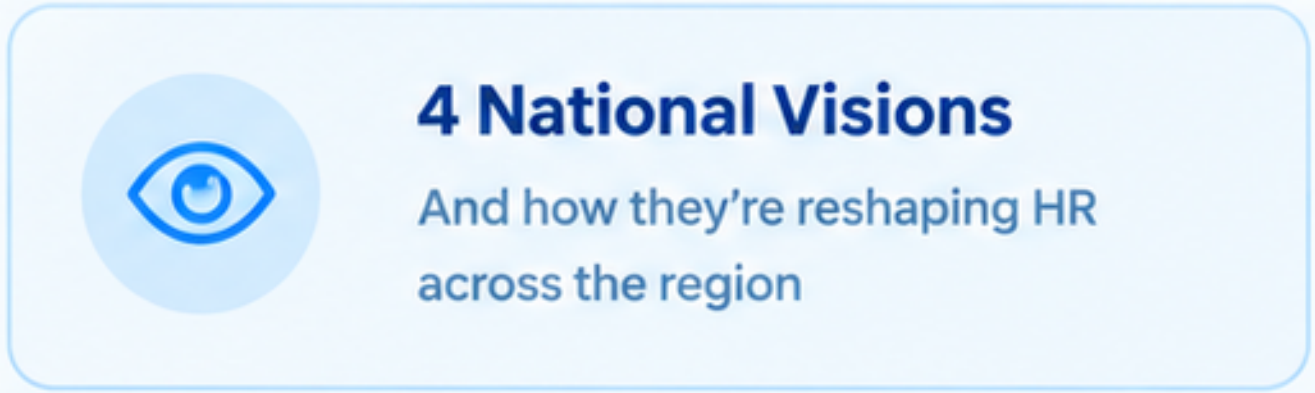
Country-level workforce trends and strategic considerations.

HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

Read the report in order, or jump to the section that matches your most urgent workforce question.

SECTION 3

National visions and their implications for HR



Across the region, national visions set the direction for labour markets: diversify the economy, grow private-sector jobs for nationals, and build future-ready skills. For HR, that turns into concrete workforce targets. These four visions are the most widely referenced.

1 Saudi Vision 2030

Large-scale giga-projects and Saudisation targets raise demand for skilled hires and national talent pipelines.

2 UAE (We the UAE 2031)

Emiratisation targets, a knowledge-economy push and an AI-ready workforce shape hiring, training and retention.

3 Qatar National Vision 2030

Human development and Qatarisation call for stronger capability building and career paths for nationals.

4 Oman Vision 2040

Omanisation and private-sector growth require employers to invest in local talent and productivity.

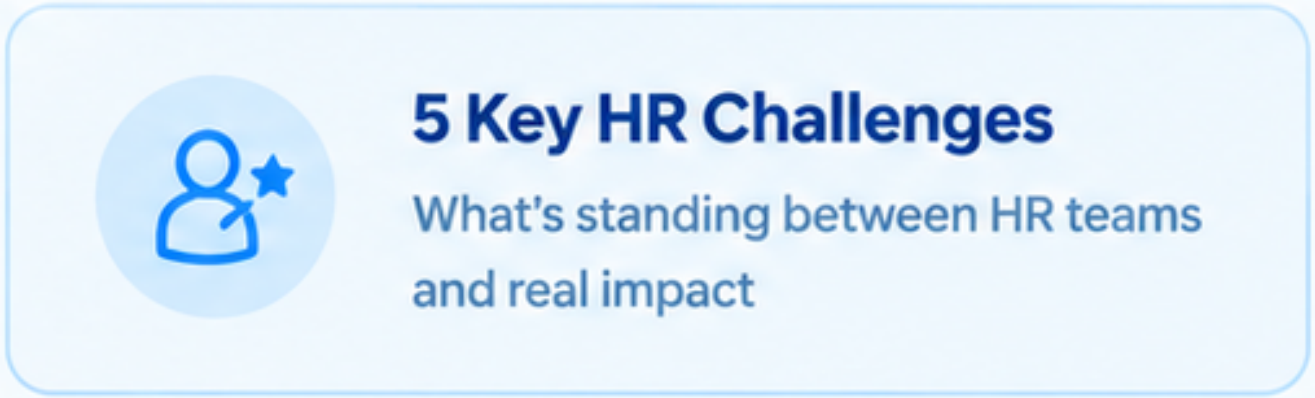
KEY TAKEAWAY

Align workforce plans with the vision your market follows: it sets hiring targets, skills priorities and where support and funding flow.

Note: *the infographic does not name the four visions. These are the four most-cited; confirm the selection before publishing.*

SECTION 4

Five key HR challenges



What is standing between HR teams and real impact:

1 Talent shortages and skills gaps

Roles stay open longer and critical skills are scarce, especially in digital, technical and specialist functions.

2 Localisation targets

Meeting national-workforce quotas while building the capability that makes those hires succeed.

3 Fragmented HR technology

Disconnected systems and poor data quality limit analytics and slow down HR work.

4 Employee stress and retention

High stress erodes engagement and raises attrition when workloads and support are out of balance.

5 Proving business impact

HR teams struggle to link people programmes to revenue, productivity and cost outcomes.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Most challenges trace back to two gaps: skills the business lacks, and data HR cannot yet use. Close those first.

SECTION 5

Eight strategic HR priorities for 2027



Where CHROs are investing right now:

1 AI-enabled HR

Automate routine HR work and use AI assistants for recruiting, queries and insights.

2 Skills-based workforce planning

Plan around the skills the business needs, not just job titles.

3 Upskilling and reskilling

Build learning paths that keep pace with changing core skills.

4 National talent pipelines

Graduate, internship and development programmes that meet localisation goals.

5 Employee experience and wellbeing

Reduce stress, support managers and build healthier ways of working.

6 People analytics

Use workforce data to predict attrition, hiring needs and skill gaps.

7 Leadership and manager capability

Equip managers to lead a multi-generational, Gen Z-heavy workforce.

8 Compliance and governance

Keep payroll, contracts and nationalisation reporting accurate and audit-ready.

SECTION 6

AI, Gen Z, skills gaps and workforce transformation



Six factors are reshaping HR, from demographic shifts to AI investment to Gen Z at scale:

1 Demographics

A young, growing population creates both a talent supply and a need for jobs.

2 AI investment

Governments and enterprises are investing heavily in AI, changing what work looks like.

3 Gen Z at scale

A large Gen Z cohort expects purpose, flexibility, development and fast feedback.

4 Skills change

Core skills are shifting; globally 39% are expected to change between 2025 and 2030.

5 Localisation

National-workforce policies change who employers hire, develop and promote.

6 Changing expectations

Employees want wellbeing, flexibility and clear career growth, not just pay.

Data distinction: *the 39% is a global figure from the World Economic Forum. Its regional analysis puts the projected MENA figure at 46%; verify against the original report before quoting.*

KEY TAKEAWAY

AI and skills change at the same time. Employers who retrain people alongside new technology adopt it faster and lose fewer people.

SECTION 7

Five HR technology trends



What is moving from pilot to practice in 2027:

1 AI assistants in HR

Generative AI for job descriptions, screening support, policy questions and employee help desks.

2 Skills intelligence

Platforms that map skills, spot gaps and support internal mobility.

3 People analytics

Dashboards and predictive models for attrition, workforce cost and hiring needs.

4 Employee self-service and mobile

Mobile-first access to leave, payslips, learning and requests.

5 Integrated payroll and compliance

Single systems that connect HR, payroll and regulatory reporting.

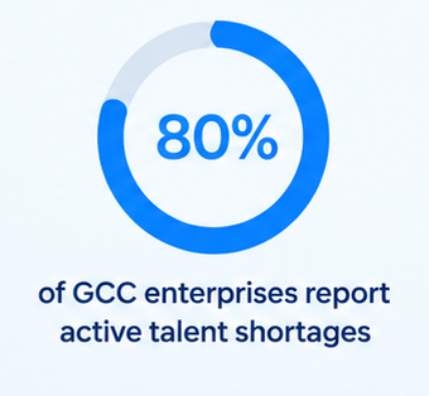
KEY TAKEAWAY

Technology pays off when data and processes are fixed first. Start with one or two use cases and scale what works.

SECTION 8

Why Now: MENA's Workforce Is Shifting in 2027

Businesses need to rethink workforce strategy, HR technology, employee wellbeing and skills development together. Each statistic points to a different pressure.







80% Talent shortages

Hiring and retention strategy: widen sourcing, grow national talent and develop people internally.

50% High stress

Wellbeing and workload design: manager support, realistic targets and early-warning data.

39% Skills change

Skills development: map skills now and fund continuous learning. Global figure, 2025-2030.

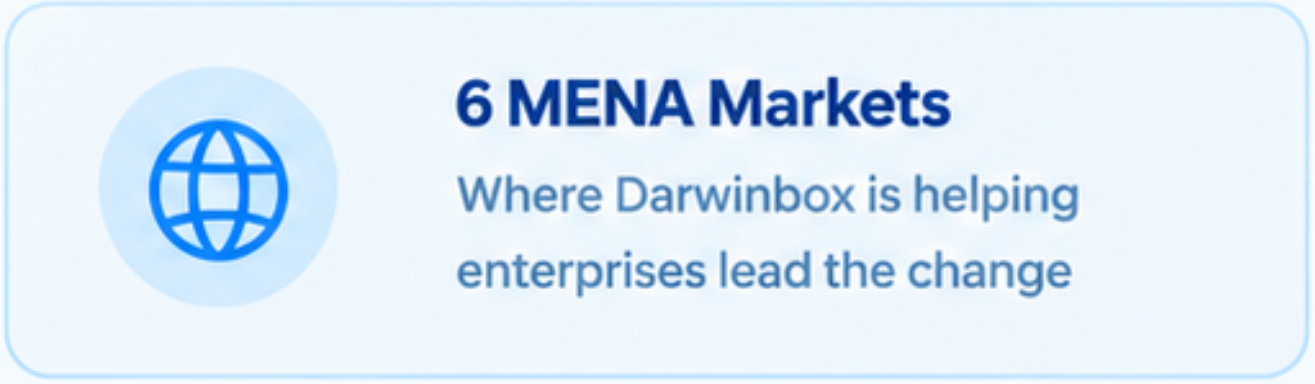
Source status: *the 39% matches the WEF global projection (MENA regional figure: 46%). The 80% and 50% figures still need attributable sources.*

KEY TAKEAWAY

Talent shortages, stress and skills change feed each other. A workforce plan that treats them separately will miss the link.

SECTION 9

Six MENA market snapshots



Qualitative considerations by market. Add current local data before publishing.

1 UAE

Emiratisation targets, a competitive talent market and fast AI adoption.

2 Saudi Arabia

Vision 2030 projects drive large-scale hiring and Saudisation requirements.

3 Qatar

Qatarisation and human-capital development across public and private sectors.

4 Kuwait

Growing need to raise private-sector participation among nationals.

5 Oman

Omanisation and Vision 2040 workforce priorities for employers.

6 Bahrain

Compact market with an emphasis on skills, digital services and national employment.

Note: *the infographic does not list the six markets; this set is illustrative. Swap in the markets you want to feature.*

SECTION 10

Practical recommendations for CEOs and SMEs

Seven steps, in the order we suggest taking them.

1. **Start with a workforce baseline**
   Map current roles, skills, vacancies, attrition and nationalisation obligations before buying tools or launching programmes.

2. **Plan around skills**
   Identify the five to ten skills your business will need in 2027 and decide whether to build, buy or borrow each one.

3. **Treat wellbeing as a performance issue**
   Track workload, turnover and absence; equip managers to spot stress early.

4. **Adopt HR technology in stages**
   Fix data and core processes first, then add automation and analytics where they save the most time.

5. **Build national-talent pipelines early**
   Partner with universities and training providers and give nationals real development paths.

6. **Prepare for Gen Z**
   Offer clear growth, regular feedback and flexible options that fit the business.

7. **Measure and report impact**
   Choose a few people metrics tied to business results and review them every quarter.

FOR SMEs

You do not need a large HR team to start. A baseline, a skills list and one wellbeing metric already put you ahead.

SECTION 11

References and data sources

World Economic Forum

Future of Jobs Report 2025: global and regional skills-change projections (39% global; confirm MENA 46%).

Source infographic

"MENA's Workforce Is Shifting in 2027" (provided): origin of the 80% and 50% figures. Primary sources to be added.

Saudi Vision 2030

Official programme documents.

UAE national strategies

We the UAE 2031 and UAE Centennial 2071.

Qatar and Oman

Qatar National Vision 2030; Oman Vision 2040.

Labour ministries

Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (UAE) and equivalent national bodies for localisation requirements.

Verification status of the headline figures

Figure	Status	Action
39% core skills change (global)	**Matches WEF**	Cite the WEF Future of Jobs Report 2025.
46% core skills change (MENA)	**Verify**	Confirm against the WEF regional analysis.
80% GCC talent shortages	**Needs source**	Find the original survey or report.
50% MENA employee stress	**Needs source**	Find the original survey or report.

Disclaimer: this report provides general information only. Verify labour-law, tax and employment terms with official sources or a qualified professional.

LET'S TALK

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