

Middle East
Human Capital Trends 2025

Stagility: Creating stability for workers so organizations can move at speed

As traditional anchors fade, how can Middle East organizations help their workers find new footing without slowing down?

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The Agility-Stability dilemma

In today's world of work, organizations are under pressure to move fast, restructure often, and innovate continuously. But this drive toward agility often comes at the cost of stability—something workers deeply value. In the Middle East, where economies are undergoing rapid diversification and national visions demand transformation at pace, this tension between speed and certainty is especially pronounced.

As highlighted in Deloitte's 2025 Global Human Capital Trends report, "stagility"—the balance of stability and agility—is no longer a nice-to-have. It is a foundational requirement for high-performing workplaces. Globally, two-thirds of workers want more stability, yet organizational leaders are prioritizing flexibility. In the Middle East, this disconnect risks undermining morale, productivity, and retention just as organizations scale their ambitions¹.

Many public and private institutions across the GCC are simultaneously rolling out transformation agendas while expecting employees to seamlessly keep up. Organizational redesign, new

operating models, and process re-engineering are now common—but often launched with insufficient attention to how workers will anchor themselves in these shifting contexts.

Among the most acute challenges are:

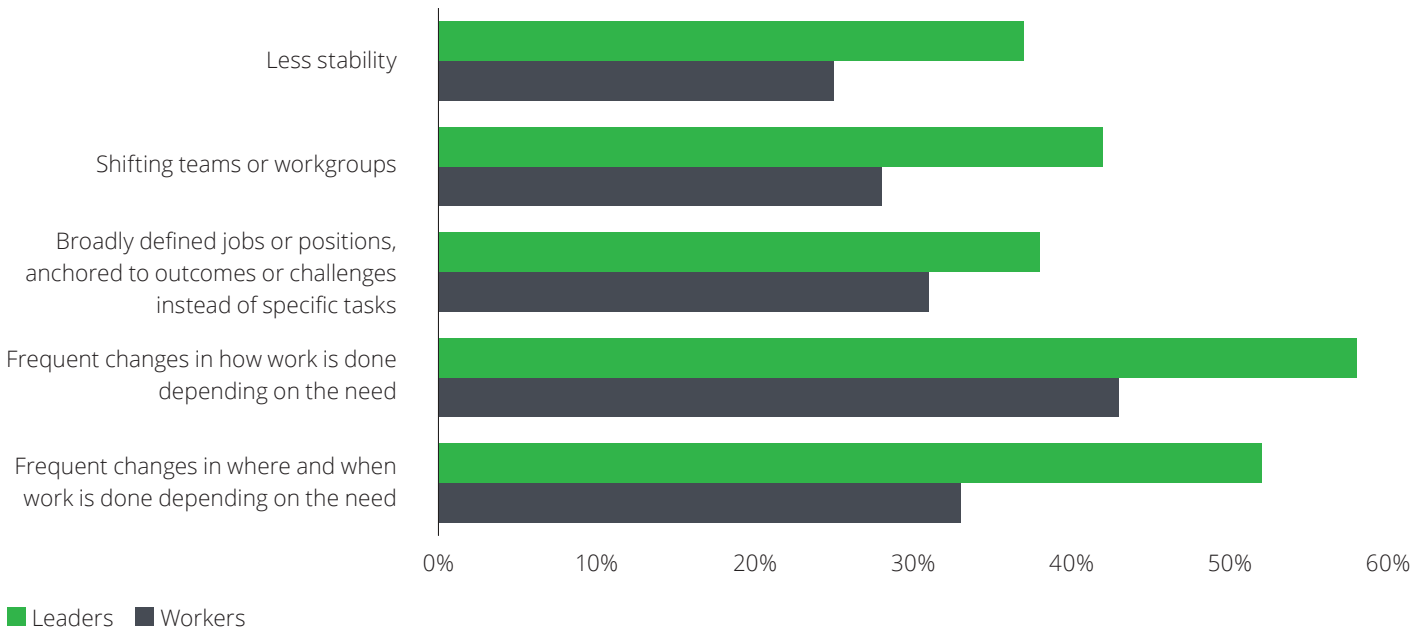
- Ongoing restructures as governments and corporations pivot toward digital, diversified, and knowledge-based economies.
- Gaps between evolving leadership mandates and employees' psychological need for clarity and predictability.
- The erosion of familiar workplace signals—titles, office routines, linear career ladders—with few new guideposts to replace them.

Globally, 72% of leaders recognize the importance of balancing stability with agility, yet only 6% report meaningful progress. In most cases, worker needs are still catching up to transformation timelines¹.



The changing nature of work no longer reflects workers' ideal ways of working

Percentage of workers answering the question, "Which of the following describes your ideal way of working," and percentage of leaders answering the question, "Which of the following statements best describes the changing nature of work in your organization?"



Source: Analysis of Deloitte's 2025 Global Human Capital Trends survey data.

Practical pathways for balancing Agility and Stability

Across the Middle East, some organizations are pioneering approaches that hold space for both ambition and assurance. Drawing on regional case studies, several promising themes emerge:

Stabilizing through change management: Change is inevitable—but stability can be designed. More organizations in the Middle East are embedding structured change management into their transformation programmes. This includes onboarding pipelines for new operating models, consistent communication strategies, and intentional knowledge transfer efforts. These practices help employees process disruption while staying connected to a steady sense of purpose and community².

Anchoring with skills, not roles: The move to skills-based workforce models is gaining traction across the GCC. By shifting the focus from rigid job titles to underlying capabilities, organizations can enable agile deployment while still offering employees clear developmental anchors. Skills visibility empowers people to map their progress and pivot with confidence—provided this transition is paired with learning support and change enablement³.

Psychological safety and flexible growth: Stability also lives in how people are treated. Inclusive talent strategies—such as structured mentorship, lateral career pathways, and safe feedback cultures—are increasingly central to talent management in the region. These initiatives create the trust required for individuals to embrace new challenges without fear of failure or isolation.

Engagement as a stabilizing force: Across the GCC, employee engagement is being elevated from HR metric to strategic imperative. Efforts to deepen purpose and connection—whether through communication rituals, employee voice platforms, or cultural alignment—are helping teams weather change with more cohesion and commitment⁴.

Building agility through learning

As Saudi Telecom Company (STC) evolved from a traditional telecom provider into a digital services leader, it faced the challenge of preserving stability amidst sweeping change. Under its "Culture Change 2.0" initiative, STC introduced agile behaviors, flattened hierarchies, and fostered cross-functional collaboration.



Crucially, this cultural transformation was paired with robust support systems. In 2023 alone, STC delivered over 250,000 learning hours through its internal academy. This included not just technical upskilling, but well-being programmes that supported employees through the uncertainty of transformation. As a result, STC maintained high engagement and scored in the top global quartile in the Organizational Health Index⁵.

Redesigning stability for the public sector

For the UAE's Federal Authority for Government Human Resources (FAHR), the challenge was to infuse agility into the public workforce—without abandoning the stability that defines civil service. FAHR's answer was a strategic pivot to skills-based workforce planning.

By redesigning HR frameworks to prioritize competencies and potential over tenure or titles, FAHR enabled greater adaptability and long-term growth. Updated performance management tools, large-scale skills forums, and future-ready learning interventions have helped equip federal employees to navigate uncertainty with purpose. The result: a workforce that is not only agile, but anchored in meaningful direction⁶.

Conclusion: Designing stability for a shifting world

The path to organizational agility does not require abandoning stability—it requires reimagining it. For Middle East organizations navigating high-speed transformation, stability must evolve from static roles and rigid hierarchies into dynamic anchors: ones that offer clarity, connection, and confidence even amid change.

Through structured change management, skills-based models, inclusive talent strategies, and a renewed focus on engagement, forward-looking organizations in the Middle East are proving that agility and stability are not opposing forces—they are complementary design principles.

To sustain this momentum and build workplaces where transformation is both effective and human-centered, leaders must be deliberate in how they embed stability into the employee experience. Practical levers include:

- Modernizing job architecture: Move beyond legacy career ladders toward fluid frameworks organized around capabilities and growth potential⁷.
- Creating “anchor moments”: Use recurring rituals—team huddles, re-onboarding, open forums—to provide reassurance and clarity during change⁸.
- Fostering belonging: Build connection in hybrid work environments through intentional mentorship, social rituals, and team cohesion strategies⁹.
- Providing predictability: Communicate changes clearly and support transitions with appropriate time, resources, and well-being measures.



Crucially, the tone from the top matters. When leaders demonstrate empathy, acknowledge uncertainty, and engage transparently, they set the standard for how transformation is experienced across the organization. This “stagile” mindset—balancing the drive for progress with the need for grounding—can shape cultures where people feel supported to adapt, grow, and thrive.

By designing for both stability and speed, Middle East organizations can transform not just how work gets done—but how people feel while doing it.

Research methodology

The survey for the Deloitte 2025 Global Human Capital Trends report polled nearly 10,000 business and human resources leaders across many industries and sectors in 93 countries, including across the Middle East region. In addition to the broad, global survey that provides the foundational data for the Global Human Capital Trends report, Deloitte supplemented its research this year with worker-, manager- and executive-specific surveys to uncover where there may be gaps between leader and manager perception and worker realities. The survey data is complemented by more than 25 interviews with executives from some of today's leading organizations. These insights helped shape the trends in this report.

Endnotes

¹ Deloitte (2025), Global Human Capital Trends Survey.

² Celine Chami, "Understanding Change Management", Headspring, Nov 29, 2022

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⁵ STC Annual Report 2023

⁶ FAHR, "Human Resources Club Forum Highlights of Skills in Shaping the Future of Work", Sep 30, 2024

⁷ Kaylen Wood, "Unlocking Workforce Potential Through Job Architecture", LinkedIn, Apr 10, 2025

⁸ Maya Mahfouz, "How Team Rituals Can Enhance Life at Work", Cosmic Centaurs, Jan, 2025

⁹ Imergey, "The Science of Belonging: Designing Workplaces that Cultivates Connection", Jan 27, 2025

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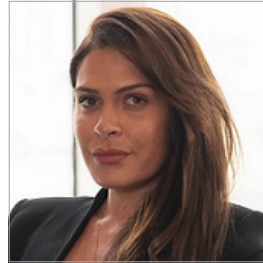
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