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Middle East Human Capital Trends 2025

Reinventing performance management processes will not unlock human performance. Here's what will.

While performance management processes enable business and talent decisions, engineering human performance takes more than a process

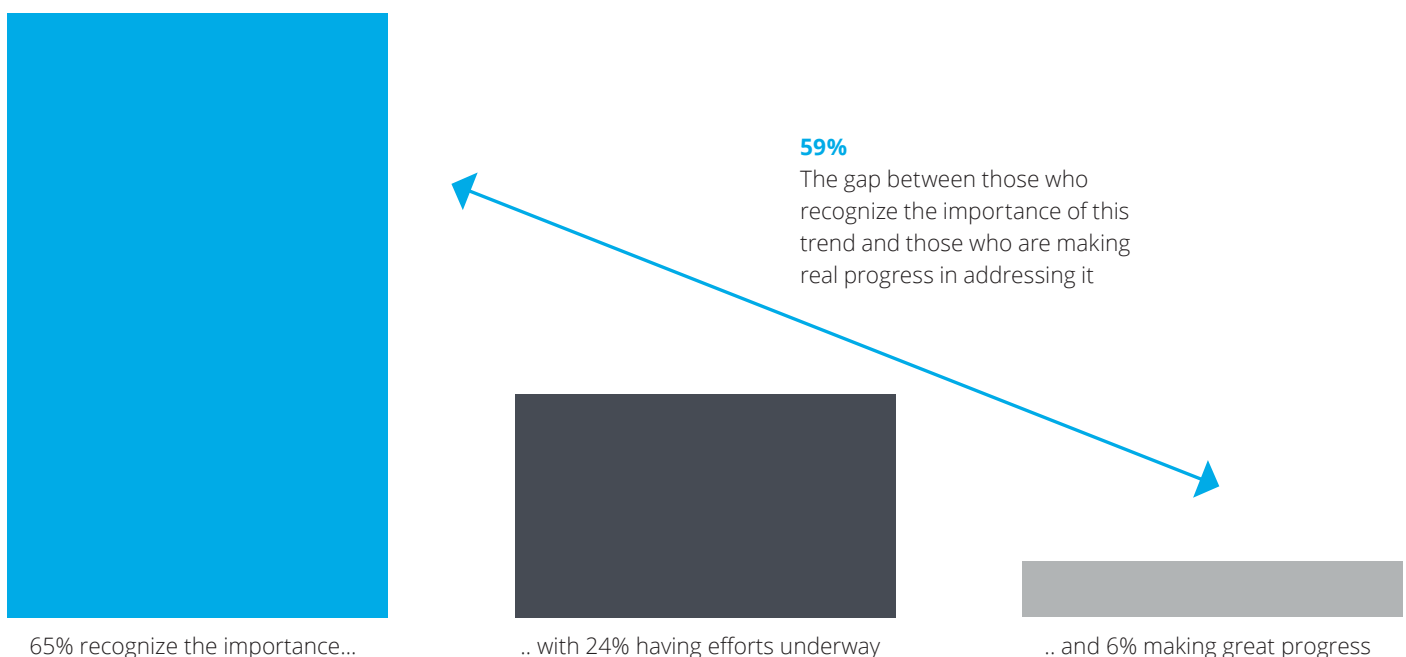
Dana AlMadbak

As business dynamics evolve, so too does the definition of performance. Traditional performance management systems—annual reviews, numeric ratings, rigid metrics—were built for a different era. Today's workplaces demand more than compliance and measurement; they require adaptability, innovation, and above all, human-centered growth.

While performance management has made strides—shifting from static evaluations to continuous feedback and coaching—it often remains focused on outputs rather than outcomes. What's missing is a systemic approach to nurturing human performance: not just what people do, but how they thrive. Human performance includes physical and mental well-being, motivation, and long-term fulfilment, alongside job success. And enabling it requires moving beyond processes toward intentional design.

Organizations say rethinking performance management is important, but few are making great progress

Percentage of respondents answering the questions: "How important is rethinking or replacing performance management to use data/evidence to better capture the full value of workers while also enhancing worker trust?" and "Where is your organization on its journey to address this issue?"



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

Evolving the lens on performance

Deloitte's 2025 Global Human Capital Trends report reflects this transformation. It emphasizes that performance should no longer be confined to traditional KPIs or quarterly targets. Instead, organizations must integrate well-being, culture, manager relationships, and purpose into the performance conversation.

This shift is especially relevant in the Middle East, where transformation agendas are reshaping economies and redefining the employer-employee relationship. Governments and companies alike are recognizing that sustainable success requires systems that elevate people—not just processes that evaluate them.

From practice to performance: What more is needed?

While many organizations in the region are investing in employee programs and well-being, unlocking human performance requires embedding such efforts into the broader organizational fabric. Below are six strategic areas for advancing this approach:

- **Set a human performance strategy:** Define what human performance means within your organizational context, then align the C-suite and people leaders around that vision. A strategy driven from the top sets direction, secures investment, and integrates people outcomes into business priorities.
- **Improve manager and people connections:** Equip managers with coaching skills, feedback models, and emotional intelligence to foster meaningful relationships. High-trust environments—where expectations are clear and feedback is constructive—empower employees to perform at their best.
- **Redesign workforce practices:** Shift from rigid performance reviews to dynamic, personalized development. Embed growth pathways, learning opportunities, and autonomy into everyday work, treating performance not as an evaluation event but as an ongoing journey.
- **Use technology and data:** Leverage performance analytics platforms, sentiment data, and AI-powered insights to enable timely, relevant feedback. When employees see their efforts reflected in the data—and that data is used to support their success—they feel seen and supported.
- **Optimize workplace design:** Physical and digital workspaces should be intentionally designed to foster focus, connection, and well-being. This includes ergonomic layouts, hybrid collaboration tools, and quiet spaces for recharge and reflection.
- **Build a human performance culture and organizational design:** Align culture and structure to reinforce performance through purpose, psychological safety, and shared values. Redesign roles and reporting lines to reflect team-based outcomes, rather than individual control.

Putting human performance first

Across the Middle East, organizations are not just talking about human performance—they are acting on it. In particular, three strategic approaches appear to be gaining traction in the region: strengthening manager-employee relationships, reimagining workplace design, and embedding well-being into organizational culture.

Optimizing workplace design and recognition

DEWA has pioneered a suite of initiatives that go beyond conventional performance management. Through its Employee Happiness Program, the organization introduced more than 10 distinct programs to promote holistic performance and well-being.

A standout initiative is the DEWA Childcare Centres, which provide safe, accessible care for the children of female employees during working hours. This enables working mothers to focus on their roles, knowing their families are supported—an often-overlooked enabler of workplace performance.

Another innovation is Tejori Al Saadaa, a recognition system allowing managers to offer immediate, personalized rewards. This reinforces positive behaviors, deepens trust, and builds a culture of appreciation. As an investment in both motivation and morale, it demonstrates how recognition—when timely and authentic—can become a powerful lever of performance¹.

Fostering a human performance culture

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), Qatar's largest healthcare provider, received the Best Wellbeing Program Award at the 2024 CIPD Middle East People Awards. Its Employee Wellbeing and Wellness Framework is a benchmark in organizational health.

The framework addresses multiple dimensions of human performance: mental health support, financial well-being programs, physical wellness campaigns, and social engagement initiatives. Flagship programs like "Stand Up for Your Health", mental health training, relaxation e-learning, and the "Second Victim" support system for healthcare workers reflect a systemic commitment to people's lived experience.

HMC's approach illustrates how integrating well-being into daily operations does not dilute performance—it powers it².

Improving manager-people connections and strategic culture

Zain KSA has developed an ecosystem of employee-first initiatives rooted in a belief that well-being is a business imperative. Its offerings span psychological consultations, extended maternity leave, childcare support up to four years, and lifestyle benefits through a dedicated employee platform.

Zain's celebration of World Mental Health Day with paid leave reflects a cultural shift toward normalizing self-care. Executive VP of HR Loluwah Saad Alnowaiser explained:

"At Zain KSA, we believe that real investment begins with people; they are the foundation of success and the driving force behind our every ambition."

Zain's holistic strategy exemplifies how human performance can be engineered—not through isolated interventions, but by embedding well-being into workplace design and cultural identity³.

Conclusion: Thriving humans, thriving organizations

Across the Middle East, organizations are proving that the future of performance is not about stricter processes—it is about smarter systems built around people.

Performance management as we know it remains a necessary tool: it sets expectations, tracks progress, and links individual output to organizational priorities. But it will never be enough on its own.

To truly unlock performance, organizations must design with human thriving in mind—using strategy, structure, space, technology, and trust to unleash potential.

Three strategic approaches to prioritize:

- **Strengthen manager-employee relationships:** Equip managers to be motivators and mentors. Recognition systems, real-time feedback, and coaching skills are essential to building trust and driving motivation.
- **Integrate well-being into workplace design:** Design environments—both physical and cultural—that support mental, emotional, and physical health. When people feel safe, supported, and balanced, performance becomes sustainable.
- **Build a culture that aligns performance with purpose:** Embed human outcomes into workforce design, benefits, and policies. Aligning organizational ambition with employee well-being fosters loyalty, innovation, and resilience.

But the opportunity ahead lies in moving from pilot to principle, from promising example to standard practice. When people are supported to thrive—not just perform—organizations do not just grow. They transform.

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 Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (2024), *Employee Happiness Program*.

Available at: [Employee Happiness Program](#)

² Hamad Medical Corporation (2024), *Hamad Medical Corporation Wins Prestigious CIPD Middle East Award for Best Wellbeing Program*.

Available at: [Hamad Medical Corporation Wins Prestigious CIPD Middle East Award for Best Wellbeing Program](#)

³ Zain (2025), *Zain SAUDI ARABIA Stands Out Among 157 Nominees*.

Available at: [Zain SAUDI ARABIA Stands Out Among 157 Nominees](#)

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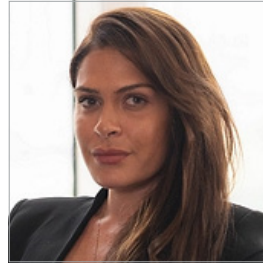
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