

Executive perspectives:  
an audience with HR leaders

## Harboring talent



**Abdulla Ahmed  
AlKohaji**

Director, Human Resources  
Ports, Customs and Free  
Zones Corporation

In response to dynamic shifts in the workforce, particularly in the era of flexible work models, it is vital to acknowledge the important role played by the Human Resources department in fostering a supportive environment. Traditionally, the workforce adhered to conventional structures, but the rise of entrepreneurship and a generation valuing lifestyle flexibility necessitates a reevaluation of HR strategies.

Adapting to evolving expectations, Ports, Customs, and Free Zones recognize that the current generation seeks more than just a monthly salary; they desire a sense of belonging and a supportive organizational culture. This shift requires leadership to adopt a more dynamic approach to talent management. A key aspect of this evolution is the integration of technology into the employee value proposition. The implementation of an ERP system and accessible communication channels like WhatsApp demonstrates the organization's commitment to enhancing employee experience, fostering transparency, and breaking down traditional barriers.

Beyond traditional HR functions, the organization recognizes the importance of thoroughly understanding and addressing its employees' changing needs. This involves proactive strategies and technology integration, creating an inclusive and adaptable work environment that fosters growth and success for all stakeholders.

Data analytics takes a prominent role in decision-making processes. The organization is utilizing Oracle Fusion to access previously unknown data. The ongoing development of a comprehensive dashboard represents a foundational step towards progress, relying on data for all organizational changes and restructuring, including individual line manager activities.

Embracing change will be critical to the future of work. Effective communication is crucial, and the usage of modern tools underscores the need for middle management to have an open mindset. This approach ensures that the new workforce trusts and respects colleagues, facilitating seamless integration into modern workplace dynamics.

In addressing the challenges of the transition from academia to the workforce, we aim to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge gained at universities and practical workplace skills. Our advice to future leaders revolves around trust, empowerment, and effective communication, emphasizing the importance of comprehending both the short-term and long-term impacts of work.

By seamlessly integrating technology, embracing data-driven decision-making, and empowering middle management, HR functions can thrive.

