

Welcome to the March Edition of MENA HRBrief

As organisations across the MENA region navigate an increasingly complex world of work, two imperatives have moved firmly to the top of the HR agenda: protecting the wellbeing of employees and building the organisational agility to grow through change. This edition explores how forward-thinking leaders are reimagining workplace support structures, shifting from reactive benefits to proactive, resilience-centred cultures. We also examine how reskilling, approached not as a remedial measure but as a strategic growth lever is helping organisations future-proof their talent and lead with confidence.

GLOBAL OUTLOOK

Adapting to Evolving Employee Wellbeing Needs

Employee wellbeing is rapidly becoming a defining factor in how organisations attract, engage, and retain talent. As employee expectations evolve, companies must move beyond traditional benefits to create workplaces that actively support mental, emotional, and social wellbeing. The following focus areas highlight how organisations can build a more supportive and resilient work environment.

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On the other side as HR professionals, while supporting employees' concerns, it's equally important to guide them effectively without impacting our own productivity. In this episode of SHRM's Honest HR podcast, they explore how HR can support employees going through mental health challenges while maintaining healthy boundaries for themselves.

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Skill-First Hiring: Redefining the Hiring Landscape

Hiring practices across industries are undergoing a fundamental shift, as organisations move away from degree-based screening toward skills-first talent strategies. According to SHRM's 2025 Skills-First Movement report, 78% of organisations now factor skilled credentials into their hiring decisions, up from 72% in 2021. This article explores the key findings from that research, examining how skills-first hiring is reshaping talent acquisition, what barriers remain, and why the business case for this approach has never been stronger.



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From Process to Partnership

This SHRM case study examines how MS International (MSI), a \$2.5 billion building materials distributor, transformed HR into a data-driven strategic partner by aligning workforce strategies with business outcomes and upskilling for AI-driven change-reducing hiring costs by 50% and attrition by 13%. [Sign in to access the full case study](#) with detailed insights and frameworks.

Access full report [here](#) **MEMBERS ONLY**



Beyond the Chatbot: Are Your Managers AI-fluent?

As AI becomes an embedded presence in the modern workplace, the pressure on managers to lead effectively has never been greater, or more complex. This piece explores why AI fluency is fast becoming a non-negotiable leadership competency, what it means in practice for those managing hybrid Human-AI teams, and why HR and L&D functions must act now to close the capability gap before it widens



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MENA OUTLOOK



SHRM's Competency Assessment Framework

1. Diagnosis

Deep dive into job descriptions, competencies, role realities and leadership expectations to strengthen talent development

2. Customised & Validated Tools

Built from 5,000+ technical, behavioural, and leadership competencies across 12+ industries and 6,000 validated, using globally validated psychometrics and exercises



5. Feedback Sessions

Individual and group insights, creating awareness and capacity for skill building and career growth

3. Platform & Implementation Set Up

Assessment pilot testing, finalise assessment workflow and report design, deploy in Arabic, English, French or Mandarin

4. Go Live

Launch assessments, support execution, and share talent profile reports

As AI reshape the skills landscape, organizations must gain clarity on the current and future capabilities they require. Competency assessments provide the data and insights needed to align talent development with business strategy. SHRM's Competency Assessment Framework helps identify skill gaps, strengthen workforce capabilities, and build future-ready teams.

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HR HACK STACK

5 Tips for supporting your employee's wellbeing during a crisis:

- 1. Communicate with transparency & consistency:** Keep employees informed with honest & timely updates to reduce uncertainty & build trust.
- 2. Model psychological safety from the top:** Leaders set the tone; openly acknowledge challenges & normalise seeking support
- 3. Flex policies before people break:** Proactively adjust workloads, deadlines, & leave provisions before burnout takes hold
- 4. Connect employees to structures support:** Actively signpost EAP resources, mental health tools, & peer networks; don't assume employees will seek them out
- 5. Check in with intent, not just process:** Move beyond routine one-on-ones; ask meaningful questions & listen with the



Simplify HR Compliance: Wolters Kluwer

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Click [here](#) to unlock SHRM's exclusive tools, including the International Labor and Employment Compliance Handbook by Wolters Kluwer. Streamline HR tasks, navigate country-specific employment laws, compare labor regulations, benchmark benefits/compensation, and more-all with ease.

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