crf
CORPORATE RESEARCH FORUM

BUILDING HR CAPABILITY ACROSS THE GCC IN 2027



WELCOME

We are pleased to present CRF's 2027 programme of research, events and learning.

The way organisations create value is changing. AI is becoming a practical force in how work gets done, decisions are made and organisations compete. Yet the organisations that benefit most will not be defined by technology alone, but by how well they build capability, redesign work and lead change. HR therefore has a critical role in shaping the people and organisational conditions for competitive advantage.

Our 2027 programme focuses on where HR can contribute most to competitiveness: transforming the function, helping leaders create value in the age of AI, improving selection and creating the conditions for higher performance.

CRF helps HR leaders address these challenges by building the capability and effectiveness of their function, enabling stronger business focus, better people decisions and a greater contribution to organisational performance. We provide leaders and their teams with trusted insight, senior peer intelligence and research-led development to build judgement, capability and confidence in applying ideas in ways that fit their own organisation.

Our approach combines high-quality research and external evidence with practitioner expertise, independent expert challenge and a senior network of peers. We promote evidence-based practice and critical thinking: helping HR practitioners assess the evidence, learn what others are doing, evaluate their practices and decide what will work in their own context. Research, events, learning programmes, communities and technology make this support accessible across the HR function and relevant at different stages of experience.

We look forward to working with you in 2027.



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How CRF supports you

Research & Events
Original research, in-person and online events addressing the critical issues shaping HR and business performance.

Specialist Networks, Peer Networks & Communities
Exchange ideas with peers and experts facing similar challenges.

Learning Programmes
Open programmes and on demand courses for all experience levels in the HR function.

Custom Development
Tailored solutions designed around your organisation's context.

CRF gives your whole HR team access to trusted research, events and peer communities that strengthen capability, improve decision-making and support greater business impact. You also receive preferential access to CRF learning programmes and specialist networks.

STRATEGIC DIMENSIONS

CRF'S EXECUTIVE SEARCH BUSINESS

Supporting CEO's, MD's and Chief People Officers to add great talent to their teams. Strategic Dimensions has been operating globally in the HR search space for the past 33 years. Strategic Dimensions hires from HRBP through to Chief People Officer level roles across a range of sectors. Whether hiring great national talent or bringing in International expertise SD can assist with delivering exceptional talent in a timely fashion including assessment support.

Recent searches in the UAE include:

- **Chief People Officer** – Leading financial services organisation
- **SVP Reward** – Financial Services organisation.
- **VP L&D** – Major national brand
- **3x Regional HRD's** – Rapidly scaling national organisation.

OUR INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF OVER 200 ORGANISATIONS INCLUDES:

CONFERENCES

6 May, *Abu Dhabi*

Transforming HR: Purpose, Capability and Technology

Across the GCC, organisations are growing, diversifying and entering new sectors, often while supporting ambitious national agendas. New businesses are being built, international players are entering the market, and expectations of speed and scale are rising. Organisations are responding by revisiting what they offer, how they operate and how quickly they can decide and act.

That has direct consequences for HR. A function designed around an earlier stage of growth will find it hard to serve a larger, faster and more complex organisation. Transformation therefore begins with a clear-eyed look at what HR provides today, what the business will need next, and the skills, systems, data and roles required to close the gap.

Done well, this strengthens HR's contribution to the questions the business cares most about: productivity, capability, cost and speed. Where that contribution is visible, HR's influence on business decisions grows; where it is not, the function tends to be pulled back towards administration. Join this event to work through how to move from a changing business context to a clear, deliverable plan for the function.

18 November, *Abu Dhabi*

Effective Leadership Development: Navigating AI and Uncertainty

Across the GCC, ambitious national transformation agendas, international expansion and rapid technological change are increasing the demands placed on leaders. They must set direction amid uncertainty, execute at pace and lead increasingly complex organisations across different markets, cultures and contexts.

For organisations, this raises important questions about whether leadership capability is keeping pace with business ambition. Developing national talent into increasingly senior and international roles is a growing priority, while expansion beyond home markets requires leaders with the judgement, adaptability and cultural awareness to operate effectively in unfamiliar environments.

This event will explore what effective leadership looks like in this context and what it means for how organisations identify, develop and support leaders. We will examine how AI is reshaping leadership, decision-making and work design, and how leadership development needs to evolve to build the capabilities required for future growth.

Additional Research Themes and Webinars

Evidence-Based Selection for Better Business Outcomes

How much of your hiring process is genuinely evidence-based – and how much is habit? This research explores how to define what success in a role really requires, choose assessments that provide valid and reliable evidence, decide where AI strengthens or weakens judgement, and connect hiring to onboarding, development and longer-term outcomes.

18 March, *Online*

Beyond Culture: Creating the Conditions for Performance

Many culture programmes articulate values but rarely change how work actually gets done. This research examines why culture change fails, how culture enables or obstructs strategy execution and how to identify the behaviours that matter most.

17 June & 6 July, *Online*

Driving Value Through Talent

Most organisations can identify their top talent. Far fewer can say whether those people are in the roles where they make the greatest difference to business performance. This research explores how to identify the roles and capabilities that matter most, deploy critical talent more dynamically as priorities shift and measure the business impact of talent decisions.

23 November, *Online*

Our invite-only UAE Communities bring together senior HR leaders and specialists to explore our latest research, participate in peer discussions, and build a trusted network of peers to gain outside thinking and perspective.

- Regularly connect and learn with peers, academics and experts
- Meet on network-led topics
- Stay connected through WhatsApp groups

Chief People Officer Community

CRF's Chief People Officer Community brings together a select group of senior HR leaders shaping the future of work across the UAE and wider GCC. This exclusive, invite-only network provides a trusted space for CPOs to share experiences, test ideas, and explore solutions to the most pressing organisational challenges.

Combining CRF's world-class research briefings with keynote contributions from global thought leaders and our partners, the community offers a unique opportunity to gain insight into emerging trends while benchmarking against peers. Members benefit from candid discussions in a confidential environment, designed to foster practical learning and actionable takeaways.

With the UAE at the forefront of economic transformation and workforce nationalisation, this is the place for CPOs to build meaningful connections, exchange best practice, and ensure their organisations are future-ready.

Talent and Learning Leaders Community

CRF's Talent & Learning Leaders Community connects senior professionals who are responsible for building workforce capability, leadership pipelines, and organisational culture in the UAE. In an era of rapid change and skills transformation, this invite-only forum helps members cut through the noise and focus on what really works in developing people and driving business performance.

Each session blends CRF's latest research, expert speakers, and case studies from leading organisations with space for peer-to-peer exchange. Members benefit from practical insights into how global best practice can be adapted to the UAE context, alongside the opportunity to showcase their own innovative approaches.

Financial Services Community

CRF's Financial Services HR Community is an exclusive network for senior HR leaders working across the UAE's banking, insurance, asset management, investment and fintech sectors. This forum recognises the unique opportunities and challenges facing HR in one of the region's most dynamic and heavily regulated industries.

Through a mix of CRF research insights, expert guest speakers, and peer-led discussions, the community provides a platform to explore issues ranging from workforce transformation and leadership capability to regulatory change and talent mobility. Sessions are designed to encourage frank conversation, shared problem-solving, and the exchange of practical solutions.

CUSTOM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Your people challenges are specific to your organisation. CRF's custom programmes draw on 30+ years of research, frameworks and learning design, creating solutions applicable to your context. You start from proven thinking rather than a blank page, enabling your people to develop faster with a more impactful outcome.

We can adapt established CRF programmes with validated content and faculty, reframed around your strategy, structure and objectives or design something entirely new with you. Or combine both.

Custom learning is the optimum approach when the organisation needs to shift capability at scale, when the content must reflect your strategy, operating model, and/or when the challenge demands applied, contextualised work rather than individual skills development.

Delivered by a blended faculty of CRF's in-house experts alongside carefully selected external specialists and senior HR practitioners, our approach combines commercial insight and practical experience based on current research.

A first conversation is exploratory and without obligation. We'll talk through your challenge, explore options and approaches, and come back with an outline solution and indicative investment.

Deep Expertise: Building Business Partnering Capability

In 2026, we worked with more than 25 organisations in building HR business partnering capability. Programmes are either built around our existing two-day HRBP Programmes or can focus on specific skills such as:

- commercial acumen
- influencing
- stakeholder management
- consulting skills

We can deliver via in person, virtual, self-paced SHRM accredited digital modules or a blended approach. Programmes benefit from our range of experienced generalist HR faculty and subject matter experts, both local and international.

What clients have used Custom Learning for:

- A FTSE 100 energy business needed a consistent standard of HR business partnering across multiple regions. We built a multi-year global online programme for 200+ HRBPs.
- A leading international professional services firm wanted its HRBPs and COE to operate as internal consultants rather than service providers. We delivered an in-person programme developing a consulting mindset.
- The HR leadership team of an international financial services organisation needed to align on people strategy. We designed and facilitated a two-day planning workshop.
- One of the UK's leading universities needed to develop Heads of, high potentials and OD partners at different levels at once. We built a blended programme combining facilitated sessions and e-learning.
- A luxury retailer was reimagining its people partnering strategy. We supported the shift through a combination of formal and on-the-job learning.

OPEN PROGRAMMES

Becoming an Effective Talent Partner

3-4 May, *Abu Dhabi*

Organisations across the GCC face growing pressure to develop and deploy talent effectively, driven by ambitious transformation agendas, changing workforce dynamics and advances in AI. Talent professionals must move beyond managing processes to become trusted advisers who help leaders make better talent decisions.

This interactive two-day programme equips HR and talent professionals with the skills, tools and confidence to become effective talent partners. Drawing on CRF's latest research, participants will explore how to:

- Connect talent priorities to business strategy and outcomes.
- Identify critical roles, capabilities and emerging talent risks.
- Develop evidence-based solutions to business challenges.
- Build commercial awareness, consulting skills and stakeholder influence.
- Challenge assumptions and advise senior leaders on talent decisions.

Through practical exercises and AI-powered simulations, participants will apply their learning to realistic business challenges and develop the confidence to become more effective strategic talent partners.

HR Business Partnering Accelerator

15-16 November, *Abu Dhabi*

A practical two-day development programme designed to help emerging HR professionals accelerate their careers and prepare for senior HR roles. Drawing on CRF research and the experience of leading HR practitioners, the programme builds the commercial, strategic and delivery skills needed to make a greater impact.

Participants explore key HR priorities including talent, performance and change, while developing their ability to engage stakeholders, influence decision-making, lead projects and create effective people plans. Through experiential learning, coaching, peer networking and practical application, participants leave with greater confidence, stronger business partnering skills and a clearer path towards HR leadership.

What makes this programme unique:

Designed to accelerate the transition from HR practitioner to strategic business partner, the programme combines practical development with real-world insight from experienced HR leaders.

Built for career acceleration – develops the skills needed to progress towards more senior HR roles.

Practical, not theoretical – focuses on applying tools and approaches to real HR challenges.

Commercially focused – builds understanding of how HR can contribute to wider business priorities.

Learn from experienced practitioners – gain insights, perspectives and lessons from senior HR professionals.

Develop your influence – strengthen your ability to engage stakeholders, challenge constructively and shape decisions.

Places are 10,000 AED per programme for CRF Members and 14,000 AED for Non-Members.
Discounts are available for two or more attendees.

2027 AT A GLANCE

JAN	**Community: Chief People Officer**	***Abu Dhabi***
FEB	Event: Planning and Preparing for HR Transformation	*Online*
	Event: Delivering HR Transformation in Practice	*Online*
	Work Psychology: Psychological Wellbeing at Work	*Online*
MAR	Learning: Reimagining HR Business Partnering	*Online*
	Event: Evidence-Based Selection for Better Business Outcomes	*Online*
APR	**Community: Talent and Learning Leaders**	***Dubai***
MAY	**Learning: Becoming an Effective Talent Partner**	***Abu Dhabi***
	Conference: Transforming HR: AI, Capability and Growth	***Abu Dhabi***
	Work Psychology Network: Evaluation of Learning Interventions	*Online*
JUN	**Community: Financial Services**	***Dubai***
	Event: Beyond Culture: How Behaviour Drives Performance	*Online*
JUL	Event: Beyond Culture: Aligning Organisational Systems to Drive Performance	*Online*
SEP	**Community: Chief People Officer**	***Abu Dhabi***
	Work Psychology: Assessing Job Performance	*Online*
NOV	**Learning: HR Business Partnering Accelerator**	***Abu Dhabi***
	Conference: Effective Leadership Development: Navigating AI and Uncertainty	***Abu Dhabi***
	Event: Driving Value Through Talent	*Online*
	Learning: Future-Ready Talent Management: Adapting Approaches to a New Reality	*Online*
DEC	**Community: Financial Services**	***Dubai***

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