

DUBAI FAST LIVING | BUSINESS INSIGHTS

Hiring in the UAE Just Got Harder

9 Rules Every UAE Business Leader Needs Before Their Next Hire



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In the age of AI, the traditional hiring process is easier to game than ever.



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27,000

Résumés received

4,000

Interviewed

160

Hired

THE CHALLENGE

Why Hiring Has Never Been Harder

AI Tools

ChatGPT, Gemini & Perplexity let any candidate produce impressive work they didn't actually do themselves.

No Way to Verify

Take-home assignments no longer reveal genuine capability — they test how well someone prompts an AI.

Costly Mistakes

Hiring the wrong person means repeated cycles of hiring, firing, and rehiring — draining time, money, and momentum.

Kill the Take-Home. Do the Job Interview.

01

Kill the Take-Home Assignment

If you send work home with a candidate, you're testing AI, not the person.

There is no reliable way to know if the polished output in front of you came from the candidate or a chatbot.

02

On-the-Job Interviews Only

Watch them do the job, in the room, right now:

Marketing: Pull last week's analytics live.

Engineering: Write a code snippet on the spot.

Sales: Make a cold call. Write an email now.

Hospitality: Carry the plates. Mix the drink.

Case Study Interviews — In the Room, Not Over Zoom



Present real business scenarios. See how candidates reason through them live — no preparation, no Googling.

Scenario	What You're Actually Testing
A department submits a \$200K purchase request; their limit is \$50K	Financial controls & process knowledge
Two employees start dating — it ends badly	HR judgment & conflict resolution
Source 5 full-stack engineers in 30 days	Talent acquisition strategy & network

KEY: Face-to-face, zero advance notice. The moment a candidate can prepare, you stop measuring critical thinking.

04 Drill HR Candidates on Their Actual Specialty

HR is not one job — it's five.

Talent Acquisition

Employee Relations

Benefits Admin

Data / Compliance

Real Estate / Facilities

The right question to ask:

"How many interviews have you personally conducted? If the answer is 20, stop there. You want the person who's done 500+, closed 60 roles, and can tell you exactly what they changed after their first 100 interviews."

05 Ask About Non-Business Activity

Community / Charity

Shows people skills & outward focus

Sports / Coaching

Signals discipline and teamwork

Religious / Cultural groups

Active social engagement

References Done Right & The Resume Gap Test

06 Reference Calls

Most reference calls are useless. The typical exchange: 'Is this person good?' 'Yes.' That tells you nothing.

The right way to frame it:

"From one executive to another — would you rehire this person?"

If the answer is no — ask for one specific reason. Lower the stakes; you'll get the truth.

07 Gaps & Short Stints

Resume Gap

Ask directly. Honest, even awkward answers signal strong character. A candidate who volunteers an uncomfortable truth is often your most trustworthy hire.

Short Stints

8 jobs in 8 years? This person will likely last about a year at your company too. Look for the pattern — not just the individual instance.

Honesty about gaps beats a perfectly polished story every time.

Have They Ever Worked for a Founder?

Corporate CEO

- Fixed salary + bonus + stock options
- Life savings NOT on the line
- Structured pace, defined lanes
- Decisions via committee
- Predictable environment

Founder

- Life savings tied to the company
- High-octane, high-pressure environment
- Multiple hats, long hours (60–80 hrs/week)
- Fast decisions with limited data
- Ambiguity is the norm

If your candidate has only known corporate life — don't disqualify, but be radically honest about what this role actually demands.

Don't Just Sell the Dream. Sell the Truth.

"We want to build a \$100B holding company. But right now — we just hired 160 people from different cultures, everyone is wearing three hats, and if you're here, you're working 60–80 hours a week. Within 3 years of doing that, here's what you could be making. That's the honest picture."

✗ Overselling the dream

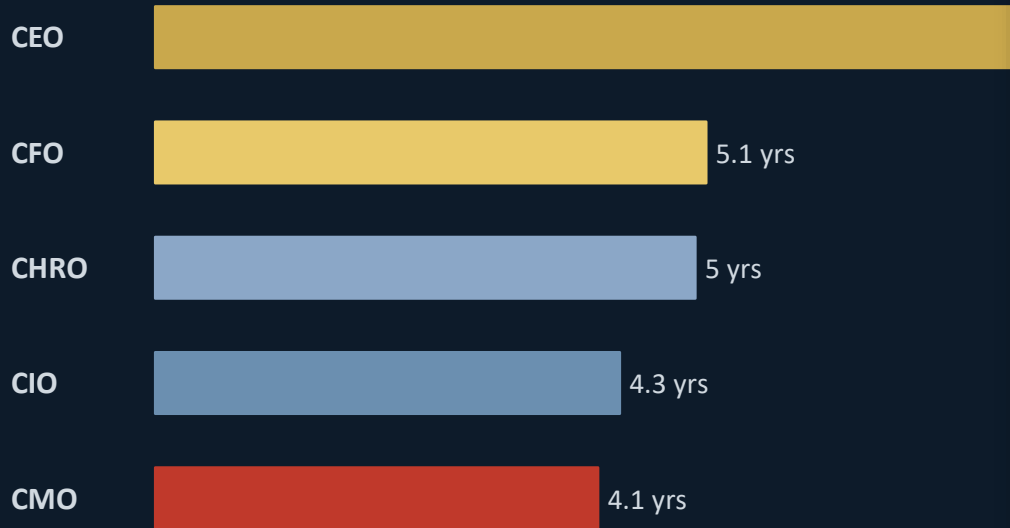
Candidate joins with wrong expectations → leaves in 6 months → you restart the cycle

✓ Selling truth + vision

Candidate self-selects in knowing the reality → higher retention → aligned effort

Tie Marketing Leadership to Numbers, Not Impressions

Average C-Suite Tenure (Years)



The Fix

Consider hiring a Chief Growth Officer or Chief Revenue Officer instead — roles where compensation is tied to hard revenue outcomes.

The conversation to have:

"I need revenue up 48% in 12 months. Your bonus and equity are tied to that number. Can you take that pressure?"

Impressions don't pay salaries. Revenue does.

9 Rules at a Glance



01 Kill take-home assignments — test in the room

02 On-the-job interviews: watch them do it live

03 Case study questions — face-to-face, zero notice

04 Drill HR hires on their actual specialty

05 Ask about non-business activity

06 Run reference calls the right way

07 Probe resume gaps and short stints

08 Ask if they've worked for a founder — and be honest about your reality

09 Tie marketing leadership to revenue, not impressions