The UAE Employee Benefit Panorama
Dawn of a New Era

April 2017
At a glance

Results of the UAE Employee Benefits Panorama survey 2017

A total of 157 firms were interviewed for a RBC sponsored survey which culminated in a Leadership Roundtable, taking place on the 6th of February, 2017.

Of the firms surveyed, some 74% of firms are privately owned. Some 10% are listed public companies. The remaining firms are public sector enterprises (6%), partnerships (6%) and ‘other’ (4%).

The firms are drawn from a very wide range of industries and sectors. The most important are construction & property (14%), industrials (9%), banking & finance (8%), consumer goods & retail (7%), oil & gas (6%) and food & drink (6%).

Most of the firms are well established in the UAE. Some 80% have been established in the country for over 10 years: of this group, more than half have been present for over 20 years.

The sample is dominated by larger enterprises. Some 27% have 500-1,000 employees. Some 13% have 1,000-2,000 employees and the same number have between 2,000-5,000 employees. Larger firms with over 5,000 employees were 10% of the total.

Looking forward over the coming three years, 52% of firms expect that their headcount will increase. Another 27% anticipate that headcount will stay the same. The remaining 22% are looking for headcount to decrease.

Some 55% of firms say that basic salary accounts for over 75% of total payroll in the UAE. Another 37% say that basic salary accounts for 50-75% of total payroll.

In terms of strategic objectives for compensation, attracting and retaining employees is most important. It is the #1 or #2 priority for just over 40% of firms. Employee engagement and welfare is the second most important objective.

Minimum EoSB is provided by 86% of all firms, and is far more common than the alternatives (company voluntary savings plan, share ownership plan, enhanced EoSB, employee savings plan and flexible benefit plan).

Company voluntary savings plans are the least common, and are offered to all employees by just 1% of firms.

NS: As you all know, Insight Discovery has been working with RBC and other partners over the last six years or so to promote greater understanding of the End of Service Benefit (EoSB) system, which is a key element of the way in which most employers compensate expatriate workers. We recently completed research for a new study – the UAE Employee Benefit Panorama. If nothing else, this highlights how the well documented limitations of the EoSB system remain a challenge for companies and, indeed, the economies of the UAE and the wider GCC. This research is very timely because the authorities have made it clear that wholesale reform of the EoSB system is imminent. We are at the dawn of a new era.

SS: I think that it is significant that almost 80% of the companies surveyed are expecting headcount to remain stable or increase over the next three years. Given the gloom and doom in the mainstream media, that is good news.

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Panelists

- Barbara Allen (BA), Partner, Stephenson Harwood LLP, UK
- Emily Areyettee (EA), Associate, Stephenson Harwood Middle East LLP, UAE
- Mubarak Al Mansoori (MM), VP, HR Centre of Excellence, Agthia Group, UAE
- Aby Varghese (AV), HR Director, Reward & Talent Management, Agthia Group, UAE
- Mazen Abukhater (MA), Consultant & Actuary, Mercer, UAE
- Simon Stirzaker (SS), Regional Head, Development & Strategy – Middle East, RBC, UAE
- Ammar Al-Nasseri (AA), Senior Manager Compensation & Benefits, Fly Dubai, UAE
- Nuria Gonzalez-Martin (NG), Head of HR, Food Fund International, UAE

Introduction – The Dawn of a New Era

EA: My view is that the figure is as high as 50% because of a cultural element and the profile of the workforce for whom many are likely to see cash as king, and have less interest in other benefits or incentives like shares whose roles are less likely to attract bonus/commission or other variable pay arrangements.

SS: Of course, we are talking about basic salary here. It is the metric on which the EoSB entitlement is calculated. It does not include housing allowance, education allowance or the various other valuable benefits that are frequently provided.

AV: I have seen figures from other sources that also point to basic salary being a surprisingly high portion of total payroll costs. As per one of the recent Hay reports, for more than 80% of the companies surveyed basic salary accounts for 60-70% of the total.

NG: A lot of the companies here in the UAE have restructured already. As a result, they are operating on (near-) minimum headcount. If there is any growth in the economy, the authorities have made it clear that wholesale reform of the EoSB system is imminent. We are at the dawn of a new era.

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### Survey results

#### Industry type
- Private: 74%
- Listed: 10%
- Public: 5.5%
- Partnership: 5.5%
- Other: 5%

#### Industry sector
- Construction & Property: 14%
- Industrials: 9%
- Banking & Finance: 8%
- Consumer Goods & Retail: 7%
- Oil & Gas: 6%
- Food & Drink: 6%
- Engineering & Power: 5%
- Hotel & Leisure: 4%
- Technology: 4%
- Transport & Travel: 4%
- Other: 33%

#### How long has the company been operating in the UAE?
- Less than 5 years: 11%
- 5 to 10 years: 8%
- 10 to 20 years: 34%
- More than 10 years: 47%

#### Of total UAE payroll, what proportion is basic salary?
- Less than 50%: 8%
- 50% to 75%: 37%
- More than 75%: 55%

#### Level of priority for each of the factors below
- Employee engagement: Very high priority 26%, High priority 46%, Medium priority 5%, Low priority 1%, Not a priority or not applicable 1%
- Compensation and benefits: Very high priority 26%, High priority 53%, Medium priority 5%, Low priority 3%, Not a priority or not applicable 3%
- P&L efficiency: Very high priority 28%, High priority 63%, Medium priority 5%, Low priority 1%, Not a priority or not applicable 3%
- Employee retention: Very high priority 22%, High priority 41%, Medium priority 15%, Low priority 1%, Not a priority or not applicable 1%
- Employee welfare/wellbeing: Very high priority 27%, High priority 31%, Medium priority 15%, Low priority 1%, Not a priority or not applicable 2%
- Employer of choice: Very high priority 13%, High priority 40%, Medium priority 12%, Low priority 12%, Not a priority or not applicable 14%
- Alignment of benefits: Very high priority 9%, High priority 29%, Medium priority 31%, Low priority 17%, Not a priority or not applicable 14%

#### Which employee benefits does your company provide?
- Flexible benefits plan: For all employees 23%, For some employees 6%, Not applicable 65%
- Employee savings plan: For all employees 23%, For some employees 1%, Not applicable 76%
- Enhanced EoSB: For all employees 18%, For some employees 8%, Not applicable 74%
- Deferred bonus plan: For all employees 10%, For some employees 6%, Not applicable 84%
- Employee share ownership plan: For all employees 5%, For some employees 1%, Not applicable 94%
- Company voluntary savings plan: For all employees 5%, For some employees 3%, Not applicable 92%
- Minimum EoSB only: For all employees 1%, For some employees 3%, Not applicable 96%
NS: Let’s now consider remuneration practices here in the UAE in the context of those that are normal in other parts of the world. Are there global best practices that can readily be adopted here?

BA: In the UK, the key components of a remuneration package include: salary; a short-term incentive (e.g. bonus); long-term incentive (e.g. options and/or shares); pension; and flexible benefits such as medical and dental insurance, as well as employee loans for travel. What is striking in the UK is that the long-term incentive of options and/or shares has become a central part of the package, and is expected by most middle and senior managers. This has been driven in part by competition between employees, in part by tax issues and in part to satisfy the demands of investors.

SS: There are broadly two types of all-employee tax-favoured plans which are used extensively. We recently handled an Initial Public Offering (IPO) for a retail company. That company offered an all-employee sharesave plan. The employees were granted share options at a 20% discount to the market value of a share and they save a fixed amount from their salary each month for three years which is then used to buy the shares. Since the options were granted, the share price has risen by approximately 40%, so employees have seen the benefit of joining the share plan. There are also schemes which can provide a real alternative to accessing to locally based pension schemes and other types of remuneration. Properly constructed pension schemes can represent a legal imperative to provide employees with access to locally based pension schemes or through individual savings plans. The constraint on the development of the individual savings plans is, of course, that a lot of expats are being encouraged to save for their own retirement. People are doing this at a time that life expectancy, and the length of time that a typical person will be retired, are increasing.

Leadership Roundtable: Global Best Practices

The typical tax incentive for introducing other types of remuneration is relatively absent here. Nor is there any legal imperative to provide employees with anything more than basic salary, limited allowances and an EoSb.

Emily Arreyetey
Associate, Stephenson Harwood
Middle East LLP, UAE

SS: Would it be fair to say that the majority of companies in the UK provide some or all of these plans to their employees?

BA: The majority would provide a short-term or a long-term incentive plan or both at least some of their employees.

SS: In other words, there is a big gap between where we are here in the UAE and what is normal in the UK, the USA and other parts of the world. In those places, the governments normally offer some incentives to the employers to offer such plans. Here in the UAE, the huge growth in the sophistication and the professionalism of the economy has not been matched by changes to normal practices in terms of compensation.

What is striking in the UK is that the long-term incentive of options and/or shares has become a central part of the package, and is expected by most middle and senior managers.

Barbara Allen
Partner, Stephenson Harwood LLP

NS: Indeed. What changes would you recommend to the government of the UAE – or other GCC countries?

EA: The overwhelming desire is for the introduction of mandatory funding of EoSb liabilities. Another recommendation would be more encouragement or incentive for UAE employers to provide access to locally based pension schemes which can provide a real alternative to EoSb. There is some uncertainty under the UAE Labour Law around whether employers can provide access and contributions to a pension instead of EoSb: we are aware of the UAE courts allowing an employee to claim entitlement to EoSb even though they had participated in their employer’s overseas pension scheme. The courts’ approach may well be different if employees were participating in a local scheme and (non-DIFC) employers might worry less about the chance of confusion around employees being able to “cherry pick” between EoSb and pension entitlement.

NS: There needs to be a change to Article 120 of the UAE’s Labour Law governing termination of employees. EoSb is a retirement savings vehicle: it should not be possible for the employer to deprive a terminated employee of his/her EoSb entitlement.

EA: EoSb vesting rules can be problematic as well. If an employee outside the DIFC resigns from one employer to another with less than five years’ service, he/she will be penalised by a reduction in the benefit payable.

AOS: I agree that the EoSb should not be viewed as a replacement for retirement income. It is not adequate.

On a global level, governments are shifting away from providing benefits for the people and towards encouraging people to save for their own retirement. People are being encouraged to save more and to work for a greater number of years.

Mazen Abukhater
Consultant & Actuary, Mercer

NS: All that makes sense from the point of view of the employee. What is the benefit to the employer from providing savings plans for employees?

MA: In the first instance, the employer will often have to attract employees from the global marketplace. The employer will have to offer benefits that are competitive. Retirement savings plans can represent an attractive incentive. In many cases, the employees will be coming from countries where they have been rewarded with salary, deferred compensation and formally organised retirement savings.

Another important issue is that EoSb can be expensive. A 5% increase in base salary will have a greater impact on the balance sheet, once the increase in EoSb liability is allowed for. Properly constructed pension or organised savings plans can reduce the impact on the bottom line and the balance sheet: in short, well thought out pension plans can reduce the employer’s financial risk.

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Stop press: Major changes to DIFC employment law

Speaking at the Inaugural Laws of the DIFC conference in February 2017, DIFC Authority General Counsel Jacques Visser noted that:

• A Consultation Paper for the new DIFC Employment Law will be launched shortly.

Jacques Visser added:

• The introduction of a Pensions Law into the DIFC is now very likely. Its proposed effect would be to abolish the End of Service Benefit (EoSb), a right afforded to all expatriate (i.e., non-GCC nationals) working in the DIFC. It is probable that the new Pensions Law will also apply elsewhere in the UAE.

RBC and other commentators have long highlighted the deficiencies of the EoSb system – for both employers and employees. The new Pensions Law could replace the EoSb system with an organised savings regime that is much better for all parties. It will represent a very major change to employment law in the DIFC. Unless and until similar changes are made in other GCC countries, the new law may mean that the DIFC is a much more attractive place to work for expats.

We made crucial changes to our compensation structures in 2015. We wanted to attract and retain the right staff as we were looking to expand into new businesses. We needed to attract people from overseas with expertise in our new businesses.

We worked out that a savings plan, in addition to the EoSb, could be the benefit that can help us to enhance our position to an employer of choice in the region. Accordingly, we introduced a savings plan to our senior employees in 2015. There is an employer contribution matching with the employee contribution with a cap. The employee has the option of contributing an additional amount as an additional voluntary contribution up to 15% of his/her salary, which is the maximum that is permitted by the law. The employees have a choice of funds into which their contributions may be invested which were determined in coordination with RBC based on various considerations.

To date, everyone is very happy with the way in which the savings plan is working. A crucial feature, which is extremely popular with our employees, is that they may continue to contribute to the funds even after they leave us to work elsewhere.

NS: Ammar, please tell us what Fly Dubai has been doing in this area.

AA: Working with RBC, we have successfully offshored all EoSb liabilities into an offshore trust and have designed two savings schemes:

1) The Additional Voluntary Scheme, which is available to all our employees. It is an enhanced long-term savings platform. The employees have access to a range of funds that would otherwise not be available to them and requires little intervention from the employees – they just have to identify which fund they would like to invest in and what portion of their basic salary to invest, and it is automatically deducted from their monthly salary.

2) The Enhanced Provident Scheme (which we plan to introduce at a future date) where there will be a contribution from the company based on the length of service of the employee and a contribution made by the employee into the fund.

I agree that in this part of the world, there is a cultural norm that cash – in the form of direct salary – is king. If you are looking to attract staff from the global marketplace, the size of the direct salary will be an important element of the overall compensation package.

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Aby Varghese
HR Director Reward & Talent Management, Agthia Group

RBC Thought Leadership Roundtable The UAE Employee Benefit Panorama

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Simon Stirzaker
Regional Head, Development & Strategy - Middle East, RBC

However, from our point of view, we think that the two schemes serve to help retention of key staff. They make the employees think about long-term relationships and long-term savings. With the Enhanced Provident Scheme in particular, the employees can see the benefit of remaining with the company.

As with any new benefit, communication is key and we are now exploring alternative ways to ensure that the key benefits of these schemes are understood.

AV: I believe that transparent and effective communication is the key to make any new initiative a success. When we introduced the Savings Plan in Agthia, we ensured to communicate the news effectively to all potential participants through emails, flyers, and detailed awareness sessions in the presence of RBC professionals to clarify any queries from employees especially due to the fact that such an initiative is not common in this part of the world.

SS: The impact on profitability of all this should not be forgotten. Turnover of staff generates substantial expense. The benefits of retention of staff over the long-term cannot be measured easily, but it is substantial. The schemes that have been put in place by Agthia and Fly Dubai are by far the most efficient way of attracting, retaining and remunerating employees. That is because there is no EoSIF implication from the payments that are made to the schemes. As Mazen pointed out correctly, a 5% rise in base salary can result in a hit to the profit & loss account of twice that.

NS: Nuria: Please tell us what Food Fund International has been doing.

NG: Our staff are in the hospitality industry. Many of them are on low incomes - of around AED4,000 per month. They appreciate cash salary as opposed to savings plans. They can borrow 12 times their annual income in order to build or buy a house in their home countries. Convincing our people that they could be better off saving for five years through a scheme that we have organised is very difficult.

It is much easier to explain our savings scheme to our senior managers. They have the choice of taking their annual bonus as cash or to place it in our savings scheme. Over time, we will offer the same opportunity to our junior staff, who also receive annual bonuses.

NS: Are there Sharia or other cultural aspects that need to be taken into account in the design of compensation plans for employees?

AA: Some employees place great importance on compliance with Sharia, both in investment and in their everyday lives. They may be reluctant to take part in saving schemes which are not Sharia compliant, because they are constituted on a for-profit basis. What we have done is ensure that there are Sharia compliant funds. Additionally, we have given employees visibility in seeing their current accrued EoSIF on the company website. This provides them with the information they need should they choose to donate any monies they feel were gained in a manner not pursuant with their religious beliefs to charity or other causes.

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MA: That is an innovative approach. There are others. One is to offer to the employees a savings scheme that is based on Sharia-compliant investment funds and/or ethical funds. Another, which we have seen a lot more in truly conservative countries such as Saudi Arabia, is to offer a ‘non-investment’ account that invests only in cash. Because the likely investment returns from a ‘non-investment’ account is probably going to be relatively low, the contributions generally have to be higher than they would be in a scheme where the money is going to investment funds - which could, of course, be Sharia-compliant. From the point of view of the employee, any contributions that are being made by the employer will be a substantial benefit.

NS: Does anyone have a view on so called alternative benefits for employees?

EA: Increasingly, the expats who are coming to the region are Gen Y people. They may not be looking for the same things that other expats want. Apple and Facebook provide useful examples of what can be done in terms of – for want of a better phrase – alternative benefits given the much publicised and debated provisions of expenses to employees to freeze their eggs.

Of course, many expats come here expecting to stay for a long period of time – 10 years or more. They should be interested in benefits that improve the quality of their lives here. Examples include partnerships between their employers and restaurants, so that the employees may enjoy fine dining at discounted prices.

SS: I’d like to see private companies in this part of the world offering their staff shares in the company or the opportunity to buy options and/or stock. That would really boost the employees’ motivation.

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Ammar Al-Nasser
Senior Manager Compensation & Benefits, Fly Dubai.
Other issues

EA: The new Commercial Companies Law of 2015 should make it easier for certain companies to provide such an opportunity as it expressly provides for the establishment of employee share option schemes.

NS: What do you think that the EoSB/retirement benefit landscape of the UAE will look like in five years time?

NG: Hopefully there will be an across-the-board increase in the mandatory contribution to EoSB. I do not believe that 21 days of basic salary, with adjustments, is enough. There should be better communication with employees about what the EoSB actually is. I would like to see the government emphasise that firms have an obligation to talk through retirement planning with their employees. This would provide a good foundation for the development of savings plans.

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NG: I agree that the problem comes mainly from the employees. The issue is that there is a lack of perceived stability in the country. That means that many of the employees lack the faith that is necessary to take the long-term view.

SS: Look for the adoption of company-sponsored savings plans. Look for the funding of EoSB liabilities. Look for the introduction of long-term investment plans. These have been discussed since 2007 – before the global financial crisis – when employee engagement was a key discussion topic in boardrooms. Unfortunately, employee engagement and retention is no longer a key issue for boards. Change will be driven by market forces. As is usually the case in the UAE, there will be a ‘me too’ element to the decisions that are made by the followers.

AA: My feeling is that over the coming five years, there will probably be some relaxation of EoSB rules. For instance, there may be a removal of the reduction to the EoSB that applies when an employee leaves following less than five years of service.

AV: As we have discussed, the EoSB is not a retirement savings plan. As presently constituted, it is not sufficient to meet the needs of most employees who receive EoSB payments. Taking a five year view, I expect that governments will bring in positive policies to address these issues. I also expect that companies will take it upon themselves to develop properly thought out savings schemes for their employees.

MA: With the progressive thinking and visionary government in this country, I think that it is fair to look for the introduction of something that is akin to the Central Provident Fund in Malaysia: it will be open to all expats. It will provide a regulatory framework which will determine how benefits are paid to employees when they move on.

In general, I think that there will be more savings plans. When I arrived 10 years ago, the median age of employees was 20–30 years. Now, it is around 40. The demographic shift means that demand for savings plans has risen. That trend should continue.

5$: Look for the adoption of company-sponsored savings plans. Look for the funding of EoSB liabilities. Look for the introduction of long-term investment plans. These have been discussed since 2007 – before the global financial crisis – when employee engagement was a key discussion topic in boardrooms. Unfortunately, employee engagement and retention is no longer a key issue for boards. Change will be driven by market forces. As is usually the case in the UAE, there will be a ‘me too’ element to the decisions that are made by the followers.

EA: In our UK office, many of our clients are financial services firms that are constrained in how they structure employee compensation. In this part of the world, local regulators will look at what more established regulators in other jurisdictions like the UK and the USA are doing.

For example, in Bahrain, we have seen in recent years the introduction of regulations to place restrictions on variable pay which are similar to those introduced by what is now the UK Financial Conduct Authority, and the Dubai Financial Services Authority has also been monitoring remuneration practices in the sector.

It is therefore a possibility that regulatory and employee pressure will promote consideration by those firms of alternative benefits that could fall outside the scope of any such regulations.

SS: The problem comes from the employers. In the first instance, as we have discussed, employee engagement and retention is no longer the key issue for boards that it was around 10 years ago. In the second, there is a lack of imagination. Company managements see the upfront costs of establishing employee savings schemes. They do not consider the long-term savings that are possible. Also, a lot of HR departments are under time pressure and often fear the implications of raising the issue of employee savings schemes with their boards.

EA: I think it is safe to say that the legal framework has not really supported the introduction of these schemes to date but this should change as awareness of and demand for alternative remuneration structures grows.

NS: Thank you all very much.
Panelist profiles

Ammar Al Nasser
Ammar Al Nasser is a Senior Manager in flydubai and head of its Compensation and Benefits department. He has over 12 years of professional experience in HR working for multinational organizations including Mercer and Deloitte where he gained in-depth expertise in several areas of talent management and retention strategies. In his current role, he focuses on designing and implementing all rewards programs for the airline as well as other strategic HR initiatives.

Mazen Abukhater
Mazen is a Principal and actuary based in the United Arab Emirates and leads Mercer’s Retirement and actuarial business in the Middle East. He joined Mercer Canada in 2002 and relocated to Dubai in 2008 to help develop Mercer’s employee benefits business. Since his move the Retirement business for Mercer has grown significantly and the team has had the opportunity of working with many clients including large state social security systems in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain as well as 70+ private sector companies that require actuarial and retirement-related consulting services.

Mazen graduated from the University of Western Ontario in Canada with a bachelor’s degree in Mathematics and a diploma in honors standing in Statistics and Actuarial Sciences. He is a Fellow of the Society of Actuaries and Canadian Institute of Actuaries.

Barbara Allen
Barbara has over 25 years’ experience of advising both companies and individuals on all aspects of employee incentives and remuneration matters. Valued by clients for her pragmatic and commercial approach, she is recognised as a leading individual in her area of expertise. She is a Legal 500 and Chambers UK. She has particular expertise in the design and implementation of bespoke share plans tailored to meet the client’s business objectives, including specific advice on the tax structuring and corporate governance aspects. She also has vast experience of advising on the impact of corporate transactions on employee incentives, including mergers and acquisitions and initial public offerings, particularly on the Alternative Investment Market. In addition, Barbara works closely with Stephenson Harwood’s employment and pensions experts to advise on senior level appointments and terminations.

Both clients and other employee incentives practitioners rate Barbara highly and clients comment that she is ‘very knowledgeable on directors’ remuneration and share schemes’. Chambers UK 2015 singled her out for her expertise on remuneration issues. They note that clients appreciate her commercial approach and she is well regarded within the market for her depth of knowledge.

Emily Arreyetey
Emily is an experienced employment law specialist. She advises on all contentious and non-contentious HR issues throughout the employment lifecycle from recruitment to termination, including on the employment law aspects of share sales, asset purchases and other corporate transactions.

Emily regularly drafts employment contracts and internal policy documentation relating to domestic employees and also international employee assignments or secondments, which includes advising on remuneration and other incentive terms. Her day-to-day work also includes advising on data protection, tricky grievances and disciplinary procedures and discussions, varying employee terms and conditions, navigating performance management and sickness absence procedures, staff re-organisations and redundancies, termination obligations (including visa cancellation and calculating employee end-of-service benefits), and on protecting business interests from employee competition post-termination.

Emily regularly provides client training and speaks publicly on UAE and DIFC employment law, most recently on workplace privacy and data protection.

Panelist profiles

Nuria Gonzalez-Martin
Nuria is Head of HR at Food Fund International. An experienced Strategic HR Director, with over 18 years experience within large multinational companies covering all areas of HR. Core strengths include headcount analysis, forecast and planning, labour law, new openings/set up, and overall commercial skills.

Over the last three-and-a-half years Nuria has worked within the hospitality industry and opened over 8 independent restaurants.

Simon Stirzaker
Based in Dubai, Simon is a member of the global Development & Strategy team with responsibility for the Middle East. After graduating in Accountancy & Finance in the UK, Simon started his professional career in 1984 with Spicer & Pegler Chartered Accountants in London. He came to the Middle East in 1994 where he was instrumental in the shaping and development of the health insurance market in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE, and has over 20 years’ senior management experience in the region.

Simon joined RBC in November 2009 and is responsible for the development of RBC cees’s business in the Middle East. Simon has an in-depth understanding of the region and the application of employee benefit solutions such as company pension and savings plans, employee stock plans, deferred bonus plans and solutions for funding of the local labour law ‘end of service’ liabilities.

Having witnessed and participated in the growth of the region, Simon is passionate about the development of the employee benefits market and the uptake of professional best practices by responsible employers in the region. He drives this through thought leadership initiatives and collaboration with authorities such as the DED, industry leaders, distribution partners, professional consultants, clients and obtaining media attention on the progress of innovative compensation & benefits solutions for efficient balanced reward strategies.

Aby Varghese
Aby Varghese is working with Aghis Group PJSC, Abu Dhabi as HR Director, Rewards and Talent Management. Aby started his career in UAE with Emirates Airlines Group and then moved to National Food Products Company. He possesses 18 years of experience in various areas of HR at Management and Senior Management level with focus on HR strategy and Talent Management.

Aby holds a Masters in Human Resources Management from University of Pune in India. He is also certified on HR Management (Level 5) - CIPD, Job Analysis & Evaluation, Psychometric testing (British Psychological Society), etc.

He is a Trainer on C&B Practices, Systems & Tools and also attended HR Conferences as Speaker. His technical strength is predominantly on areas such as HR Strategy, Job Evaluation, Internal and external salary benchmarking, Incentive model design, HR metrics and KPIs, Performance Management & Succession Planning, HR Governance, Organizational design and more.
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Company profile

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Over the years Insight Discovery has won many awards for its work, including being voted ‘Best Consultancy firm’ in 2016, 2015 and 2014 by Global Investor, part of Euromoney.

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