



SAUDI WORKFORCE 2025 ARABIA



What Do Professionals in Saudi Arabia Expect from Work in 2025?

In one of the most competitive talent markets in the Middle East, it is essential to understand what motivates professionals across different industries and career stages in the Kingdom. With Vision 2030 transforming the workforce, companies must adapt to evolving expectations to attract and retain top talent.

We invite you to explore the insights ahead to gain a deeper understanding of how professionals in Saudi Arabia feel about work and what drives their engagement and retention.



The Workforce 2025 survey results are clear. The workforce is evolving—and fast. Read on to catch up on 2025's critical workforce insights:

1. Generational Gaslighting?

2. A New AI World Order

3. Reward to Retain

4. Trust in Leadership

How We Did It

Korn Ferry surveyed more than 15,000 professionals worldwide to understand how they really feel about work today. The survey included participants from entry-level positions to CEOs across 10 major markets: the US, UK, France, Germany, Brazil, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Japan, and India.

This report presents a snapshot of insights collected from 513 professionals and leaders in Saudi Arabia, offering a data-driven analysis of workforce trends, priorities, and challenges in 2025.



FOREWORD

As Saudi Arabia advances its Vision 2030 ambitions, the workforce is undergoing a remarkable transformation. At the heart of this change is talent—diverse, dynamic, and increasingly driven by purpose, opportunity, and innovation. This report captures key trends shaping our labor market, from evolving compensation expectations to the rise of AI and multigenerational workplaces.

To stay ahead, organizations must rethink how they attract, retain, and engage talent in a region that is rapidly becoming more competitive. At Korn Ferry, we are proud to support our clients in navigating this journey, ensuring that their people strategies are not only aligned with national goals, but also built to thrive in a future defined by change.



Jonathan Holmes
Managing Director at Korn Ferry Middle East, Africa and Turkey



1. Generational Gaslighting?

Are there any major problems with having five different generations working together? It depends who you ask.

Generational gaslighting is the act of invalidating or dismissing the experiences, values, or challenges of one generation—often by another.

And soon, we'll have six generations in many companies. By 2033, nearly a third of people over 70 will continue to work, while Generation Alpha (born 2010–today) will start filling up the junior roles. This is making the workforce more multigenerational than ever.

This brings significant benefits, such as more senior employees' experience and knowledge that can be shared down through the workforce. But it can also cause significant dissatisfaction for some.

In our 2025 Workforce Saudi Arabia survey, 73% of Gen Z say they need better communication and teamwork training—yet, only 39% of Gen X think there's a problem. That's a serious perception gap. So, is it being overlooked—or simply ignored?

Generations Defined:

- Baby Boomers: Born 1946–1964
- Generation X: Born 1965–1980
- Millennials (Gen Y): Born 1981–1996
- Generation Z: Born 1997–2009
- Generation Alpha: Born 2010–Today



We asked professionals and leaders in Saudi Arabia: What are the biggest challenges you face when working with colleagues from different generations?

73%

OF GEN Z IS CRYING
OUT FOR BETTER
COMMUNICATION AND
TEAMWORK TRAINING

Communication

39%

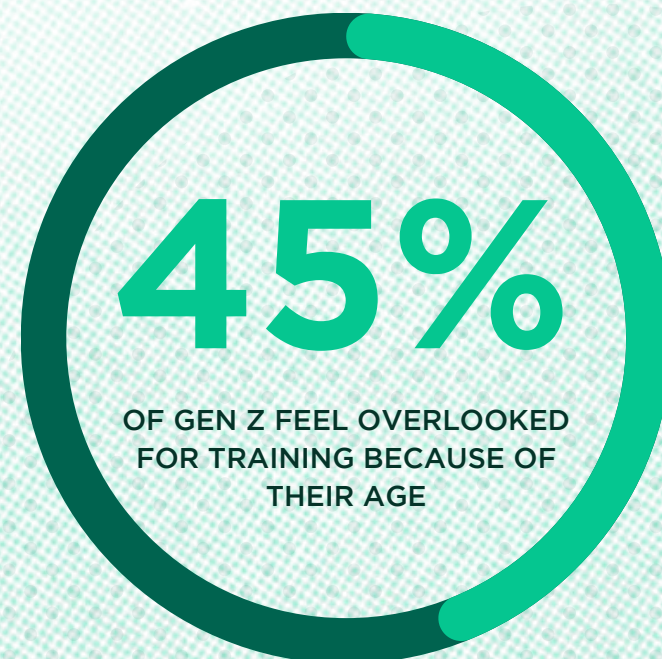
OF GEN X THINK
THERE'S AN ISSUE.
THAT'S QUITE A
PERCEPTION GAP.

52%

52% across all generations agree that technology training is key to closing the gap. It's not just a Gen Z issue—everyone benefits when tools, skills, and expectations align. Investing here boosts collaboration, retention, and overall team performance.

Around 45% of Gen Z surveyed in Saudi Arabia feel they're overlooked for training opportunities because of their age, while 41% believe they're passed up for senior positions due to age as well. This points to a growing perception of being undervalued in the workplace.

Measuring employee perception is essential to understanding how teams feel about their work, leadership, and growth opportunities. By incorporating listening tools—like pulse surveys, feedback platforms, and one-on-one check-ins—organizations can gather real-time insights and act on what matters most. These tools not only surface hidden concerns but also show employees that their voices are heard, fostering a more engaged and empowered workforce.



Business Impact:

Providing training on communication and teamwork is critical to ensure these generations can collaborate to solve business challenges. Focusing the generations around shared goals and values can help to bring them together.

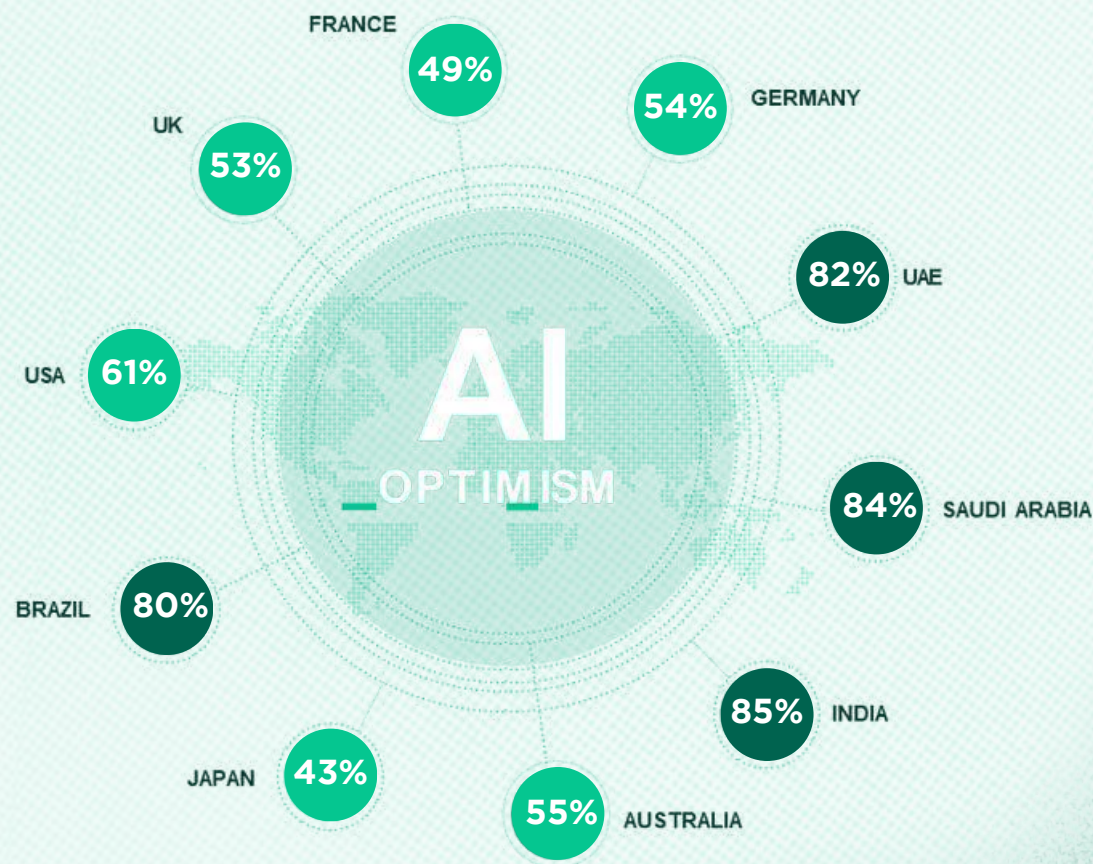
Tailoring training and rewards to meet the needs of different generations can also help bridge gaps.

2. A NEW AI WORLD ORDER

AI isn't just changing the way we work. It's reshaping the work itself.

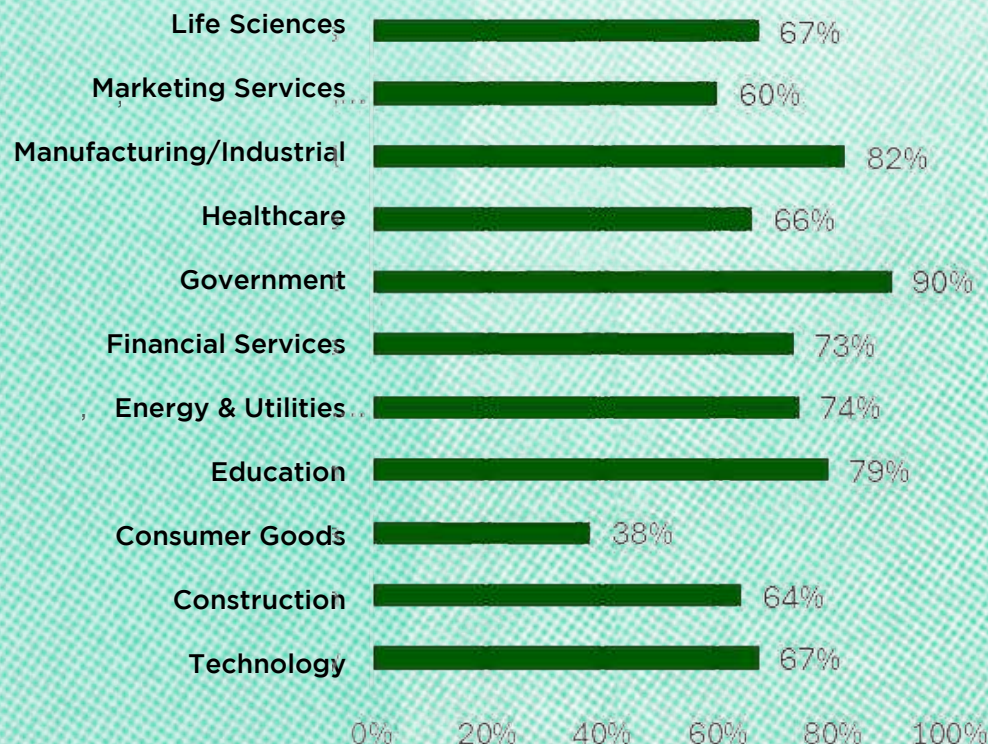
Almost everyone is grappling with AI in one way or another, but the countries powering ahead in the shift to AI might surprise you. While the US, Europe, and Japan have historically driven digital innovation. Saudi Arabia, UAE, and India are leading as the most AI-ready workforces.

A clear example of Saudi Arabia's optimism toward AI is the launch of SADIA (Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority), which is driving efforts to integrate AI into the workforce through training, research, and partnerships. This aligns with the Kingdom's National Strategy for Data and AI, aiming to rank among the top AI-driven economies by 2030—and our data is an indication of that growing momentum.



MOST PROFESSIONALS AND LEADERS IN FAST-GROWING MARKETS FEEL POSITIVE ABOUT AI'S IMPACT ON THEIR ROLES, UNLIKE MANY OF THEIR WESTERN COUNTERPARTS.

When asked: How well do you feel your organization is incorporating AI and providing training to support its use in your work?



Perceived Adequacy of AI Training across Industries

Business Impact:

With insufficient AI training, leaders often misjudge where it could be most effective, leading to a disconnect between their vision and the actual day-to-day application.

At the same time, AI adoption might not be straightforward, as many organizations face regulatory and ethical hurdles that can slow progress.

The government in Saudi Arabia is leading the charge in AI adoption, with 90% of government employees reporting they are receiving AI training. However, other industries are lagging behind, as indicated by the survey. This highlights a growing gap in AI readiness across sectors, with government taking a clear lead in fostering technological upskilling.

3. Reward to Retain

According to Korn Ferry's latest Workforce survey, 80% of employees in Saudi Arabia are now willing to switch jobs for better pay—a 25% increase from last year. However, our 2024 Saudi survey of 920 companies showed an average salary increase of just 4.9%, signaling that pay alone isn't enough. Employees are also seeking benefits, growth, purpose, and long-term stability.

With labor force participation reaching 66.6% in Q3 2024 (GASTAT),* Vision 2030 is fueling job growth and making it easier for professionals to transition between roles and explore new opportunities.

In fact, 3 out of 5 professionals in Saudi surveyed feel that they could easily find a new role if they leave their current role.



We asked: What would most likely make you leave your current job?

Here are the top 5 voted answers in Saudi Arabia:

“Employees are facing increased costs of living, especially in housing and children’s education. However, salaries haven’t kept pace with these rising expenses, and, as a result, benefits and pay has become the leading reason for leaving companies.” - Vijay Gandhi, Regional Director—Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) for Korn Ferry Digital

#1

Inadequate
employee
benefits

#2

Poor pay and
compensation

#3

Reputation of the
organization

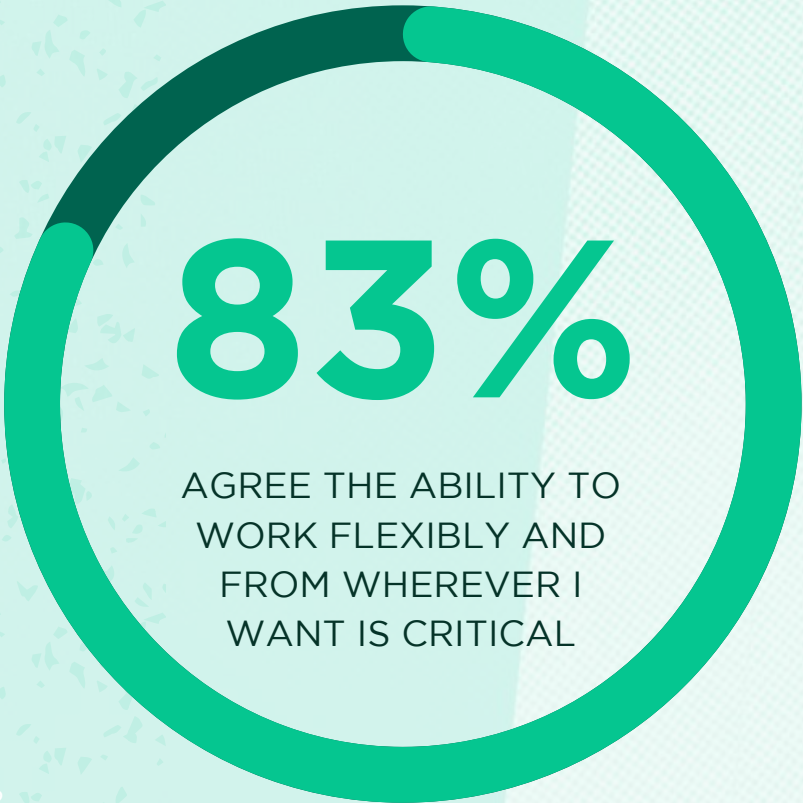
#4

The work
itself

#5

Employer's respect for
personal priorities
outside of work

But most people won't quit their current job just for a higher bank balance, which might only be temporary. Right now, they also really want rewarding work, better benefits, and more control over their working hours. If you can offer these, they'll be powerful tools to attract top talent in 2025, even if you struggle to compete on pay.



83%

AGREE THE ABILITY TO
WORK FLEXIBLY AND
FROM WHEREVER I
WANT IS CRITICAL

Employees who feel the cost of living is outpacing their salary are:

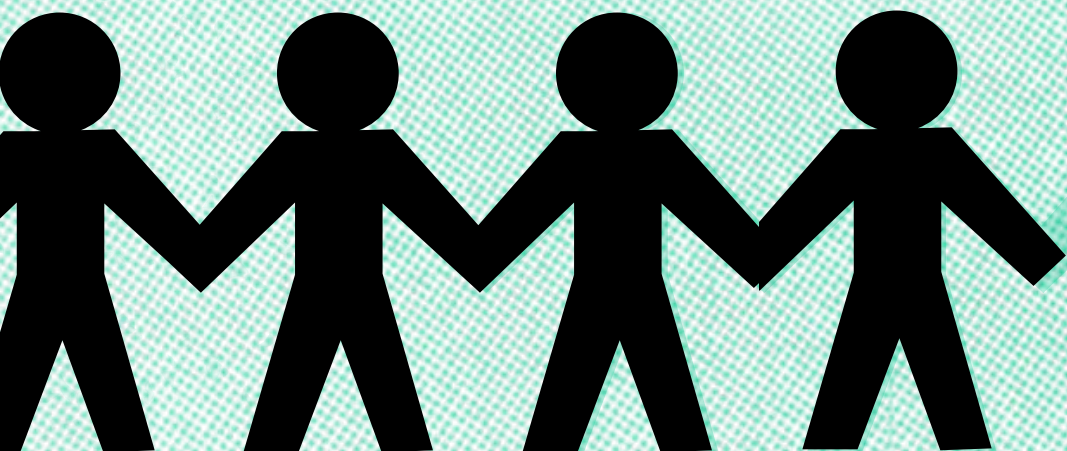
- More likely to leave their job within three months.
- Increasingly focused on the full compensation package (salary and benefits).
- More willing to stay in a job they dislike if the pay is high enough.

Business Impact:

Employers need to realign pay with regional cost of living and market rates. Without action, they risk losing top talent and weakening their competitive edge. Benchmarking rewards against global and regional data—while tracking employee sentiment through listening tools—is essential to staying competitive.

4. *Trust in Leadership*

42% of employees in Saudi Arabia do not feel comfortable sharing personal issues that affect their work with their managers. This represents a substantial portion of the workforce who may lack the psychological safety necessary to open up, potentially impacting their well-being and performance.



4 OUT OF 5 SURVEYED IN SAUDI ARABIA SAY
THEY WOULD STAY IN A JOB BECAUSE THEY
HAVE A MANAGER THEY TRUST

Business Impact:

The lack of psychological safety can lead to decreased productivity, higher turnover, and lower engagement. This impacts team collaboration, absenteeism, and overall business performance.



Ready to Reframe Your Thinking?

Recognize some of your own 2025 workforce challenges in this list? Find out how companies are turning these insights into action by watching our webinar to get practical strategies your organization can use today.

We'll show you how to shift 2025's challenges into your competitive advantage by aligning your pay, organizational structure, and HR policies with evolving expectations.

Want to dive deeper? Talk to one of our experts and start turning insights into impact.



***The full Workforce 2025 Global
Insights report can be found here
—read it now to discover more!***

FIND OUT MORE





Korn Ferry is a global organizational consulting firm. We work with our clients to design optimal organization structures, roles, and responsibilities. We help them hire the right people and advise them on how to reward and motivate their workforce while developing professionals as they navigate and advance their careers.

Business Advisors
Career Makers