

# SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

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## Our People

**The Human Resources department was a critical engine helping to drive many of EDB's biggest accomplishments during 2022. Not only did the department oversee large growth in headcount, it also formalized a range of best-practice policies in areas such as employee engagement, diversity and inclusion, retention and wellness. As a result, the Bank continued to distinguish itself as a preferred employer in the UAE. This was reflected in the 2022 employee satisfaction survey, conducted by an independent third-party, that registered a score of 86 percent, an eight-point increase over last year.**

### Talent acquisition

During the year, the Bank hired 84 new employees, which, alongside departures, resulted in an end-of-year staff count of 194 people. The HR department successfully identified, hired and onboarded highly qualified and enthusiastic new talent to meet the fast-growing needs of the various bank businesses and operations.

To help fill this large pipeline of talent, the HR department participated in a number of career fairs, including at universities located in the UAE. A concerted talent acquisition branding campaign across multiple mediums also helped attract promising candidates. Reflecting this success, the number of people following EDB on LinkedIn increasing to more than 70,000, driven by job postings and the branding campaign.

At the same time it managed this flow of new people, the HR department built out the onboarding process and, longer-term, the full employee journey. It also coordinated the promotion of a large number of top performing employees – demonstrating the potential

for a clear upward career trajectory within EDB. Looking further into the future, an internship program was established, with a soft launch in 2022 that provided opportunities for a handful of university students to work at the Bank.

### Diversity and inclusion

The hiring program reinforced EDB's diversity and inclusion strategy. At the end of 2022, Bank staff hailed from about 25 countries, with UAE nationals comprising 38 percent of all employees and 32 percent of senior level roles. The number of Emiratis hired in 2022 was nearly double the number hired in 2021 and accounted for 35% of new hires.

Women accounted for 44 percent of new hires in 2022 and by the end of the year, also accounted for 44 percent of full-time employees and 27 percent of senior level roles. To ensure EDB provides parents, particularly mothers, with an accommodating work environment, HR initiatives in 2022 included a Back to School Day that supported parent flexibility on the first day of school for nursery, kindergarten and primary students, as well as events marking Breast Cancer Awareness Month, International Women's Day, Mother's Day, and Emirati Women's Day.

### Employee engagement

The Bank is in a period a transformation, making strong employee engagement a crucial component of success. By helping employees understand what changes are happening and why, and by having open channels of communication, the Bank can ensure strong employee buy-in to these changes, thereby facilitating implementation of the five-year strategy. Employee engagement is a top priority for the CEO, as reflected in the many initiatives implemented by the HR department.

During 2022, two major employee engagement activities were formalized. The all-employee Town Hall meeting, a hybrid event that is streamed to ensure employees located in different offices and those employees who cannot attend in person,

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was established as a quarterly event. It provides an opportunity for the CEO and the Management Committee to present quarterly achievements, address employee questions and communicate other information directly with employees.

The second employee engagement activity implemented was the 'Breakfast with the CEO'. During these regular sessions, the CEO met with employees, both new joiners and those who have been with the Bank for years, in an informal setting to foster open discussion where employees can share comments or suggestions and ask questions.

To provide additional avenues for communication with employees, a new Engagement Champions initiative was launched in 2022. Champions were appointed to represent all parts of the Bank's operations, and through regular meetings with the champions, the department is able to assess engagement within each department. In this way, the Champions provide rapid two-way communication between HR and employees.

EDB also launched the Yammer platform, an engaging online portal for all employees. The platform includes features that encourage employees to post and share items such as achievements, awards, new business wins, photos, and a quote of the day. As well, the HR department leverages Yammer to raise awareness of HR policies or important new information through regular "Did You Know?" posts.

Complementing the online communications is a new Suggestion Box system introduced in 2022 and managed by the HR department. Boxes have been placed across Bank offices to empower employees to anonymously submit any work-related comments, suggestions or questions. All feedback received from the boxes is shared with the CEO, who takes action as required. Submitted questions often are addressed during Town Hall meetings.





### **The employee experience**

In 2022, the Bank conducted a reevaluation of employee policies and procedures by conducting employee listening workshops with all departments and divisions to hear their views on existing policies, including what they liked and what they would like to see changed or added. Those results are being analyzed and recommendations are set to be implemented beginning in 2023.

Building on the EDB employee awards, the program was enhanced to feature three distinct honors: a Team Player Award to recognize a staff member who has gone out of their way to support another team to achieve an objective, an Impact Award to recognize behind-the-scenes achievers driving successful bank initiatives, and an Always Growing Award for employees pursuing degrees and professional certifications.

### **Wellness post-pandemic**

Even as life began returning to a post-Covid normal during the year, EDB continued to support flexible working conditions and a liberal work-from-home policy. That continued support to employees reflects the Bank's position in the midst of the pandemic and associated downturn, when it made no cuts or reductions to employee benefits or bonuses. Given the wellness challenges highlighted by Covid-19, EDB continued to expand its commitment to employee wellbeing. This included a healthy snacks initiative that places complimentary nutritious foods in employee pantries and cafeterias, and the introduction of live, online wellness sessions held several times a month to provide education on topics as diverse as breathing for health, gut health, Yoga for beginners, stress management and brain hacks for focus.

### **Learning & Development**

In a related move, the HR department launched access to Coursera, a global online learning platform that makes hundreds of business-focused courses and professional certificate programs available to employees. The immediate appeal of the program saw employees exceed the initial goal of an average 37 hours per employee per year on the platform. The Learning & Development team also built an employee development program for high-achieving UAE nationals that will be ready for its first participants in 2023.

### **Plans for 2023**

Much of the work in 2023 will build on the strong momentum of the previous year. This includes formalizing and implementing policy changes identified during the employee listening workshops.



As the Bank continues to expand headcount to support business growth, the HR department will begin to implement a largely automated onboarding process that allows both new and existing employees to access and review all types of relevant HR information. The new system will ensure that all employees enjoy the same experience and process, irrespective of their branch or office.

In the field of Learning & Development, the development program for high-performing Emirati employees will be launched. Also beginning in 2023 is a training initiative that seeks to develop across the UAE a cadre of young Emiratis with expertise in advanced financial services skills such as project finance.

Within the Bank, leadership development will be the focus for the Learning & Development team, while training workshops will transition from online to in-class, even as Coursera continues to be leveraged for employee growth.

Looking to further expand the potential employee pipeline, the HR department will formally inaugurate the university internship program with a full intake of students.

Building on wellness activities held in 2022, there will be an increased cadence of live online wellness sessions, with some topics selected based on observed health issues identified from anonymized employee health data.

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