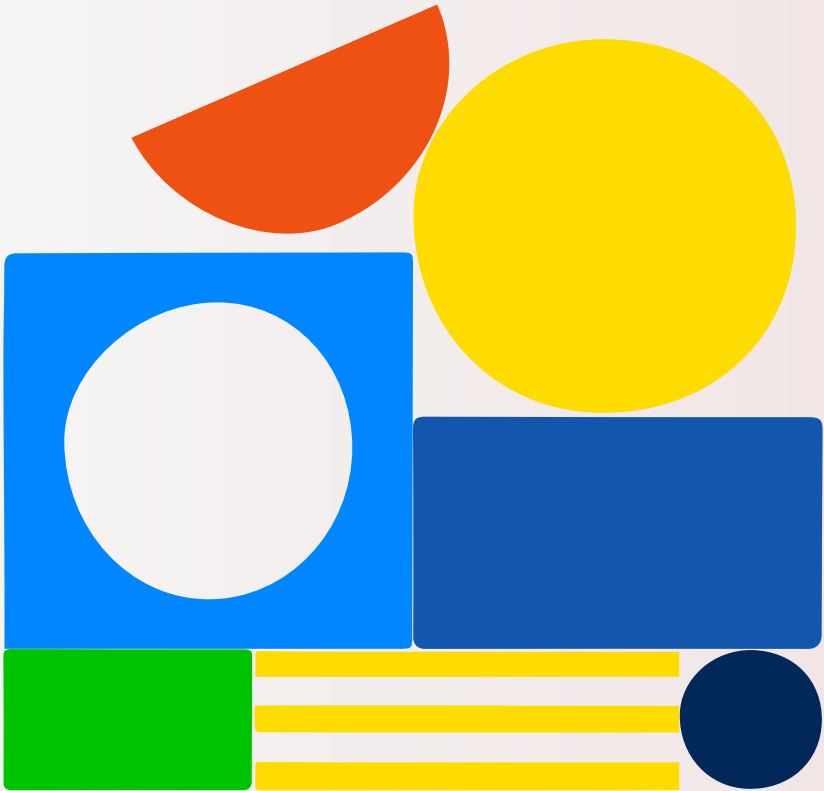




# Performance Management Playbook for UAE

**7-Step Guideline for Effective  
Performance Reviews &  
Sample Question Templates**





# UAE's Competitive Edge

In the UAE's rapidly evolving business landscape, performance management has transformed from an annual administrative routine into a continuous journey of development, engagement, and alignment with strategic goals.

This playbook is designed for HR professionals, people leaders, and business executives who want to elevate how they assess, guide, and grow talent. It blends global best practices with UAE-specific market dynamics, including Emiratisation, hybrid work, AI-powered HR technology, and employee experience as a competitive advantage.

# The New Reality of Performance Management in the UAE

## The Shifting Landscape

The UAE is leading the region's transformation in HR strategy and technology adoption. Human resources departments are no longer back-office functions—they are strategic drivers of productivity, engagement, and retention.

## Performance management now plays a central role in:

- Aligning employees with fast-changing business goals.
- Building a skilled, agile workforce ready for the future.
- Strengthening engagement through continuous feedback and fair evaluation.

## Why Performance Management Matters More Than Ever


- **AI & Automation:** HR teams are integrating AI tools to detect skill gaps, automate feedback cycles, and enhance analytics-driven decision-making.
- **Employee Experience:** Experience is the new currency of retention. Organisations investing in flexible, inclusive, and engaging work models are leading the talent race.
- **Upskilling & Emiratisation:** As nationalisation policies expand, UAE companies must identify, develop, and retain local talent while embracing diversity and inclusion.
- **Hybrid Work Adaptation:** Performance must be measurable across both in-office and remote teams.



# Key Evolving Trends in UAE for Performance Management

## 1. From Ratings to Conversations

The traditional annual review is fading. Leading UAE organisations are replacing one-time ratings with regular, developmental conversations.

 ***“The future of performance management is not a once-a-year talk – it’s a continuous dialogue.”***

## 2. Real-Time and Continuous Feedback

With digital tools, feedback is becoming instant, transparent, and actionable. Teams thrive when they know where they stand and how to grow – not just once a year, but every month.

## 3. Skills-Based Evaluation

Rather than focusing only on what is achieved, UAE companies are now assessing how results are achieved – prioritising adaptability, learning agility, and innovation.

## 4. Integrated Employee Experience

Performance discussions now link directly to engagement, wellbeing, and learning – creating a single, connected talent experience.

## 5. Data-Driven Talent Insights


Analytics help leaders track performance patterns, identify flight risks, and measure skill development progress – vital in a multi-national, fast-changing workforce.

## Step 1:

# Diagnose Your Current State

Before redesigning your performance system, audit what's in place.

**Ask:** Where are we now?

 **Goal:** Understand your baseline before designing the next stage.

### Guiding Questions

- What is the main drive or reason to structure performance management?
- What outcomes are we trying to achieve? (Productivity, retention, alignment, skills growth?)
- What does “performance” mean in our organisation? (Targets, behaviours, cultural fit?)
- What data do we currently collect? (KPIs, peer feedback, customer ratings, engagement scores?)
- How frequently is feedback shared?
- How engaged are managers and employees in the process?

## Step 2:

# Cascade Company Goals for Organisational Alignment

Before diving into check-ins and reviews, ensure your entire organisation is pulling in the same direction. Effective performance management in the UAE begins with clarity and alignment – every employee should understand how their individual objectives contribute to the company's wider mission and strategic goals.

## 1. Cascade Goals Top-Down

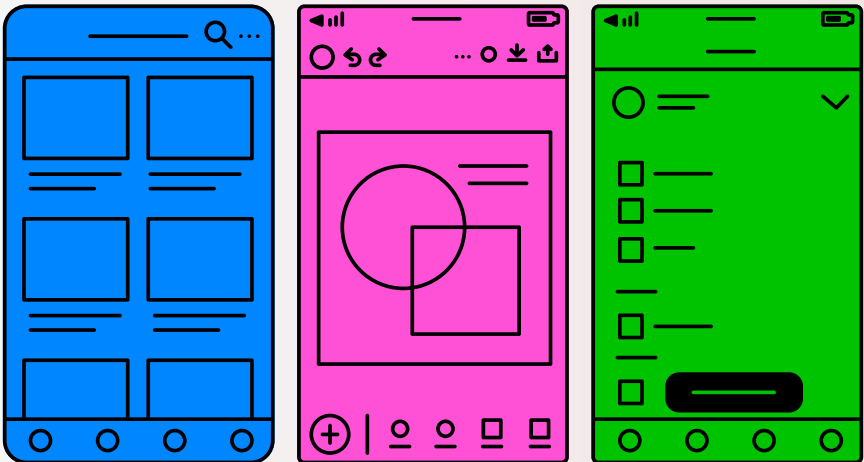
Start from the top:

- Company Goals → Key Leaders → Managers → Individuals

This ensures that strategic ambitions (growth, innovation, localisation, or digital transformation) are translated into tangible team and individual outcomes.

Each leader and manager should define clear, measurable objectives that mirror company priorities. For example, if your company goal is to strengthen digital capabilities, department heads can align targets around automation efficiency or digital adoption rates, while individual contributors focus on specific digital skill gains or process improvements.

**🔗 Goal: Every employee should be able to answer, “How does my work move the organisation closer to its goals?”**



## Step 3:

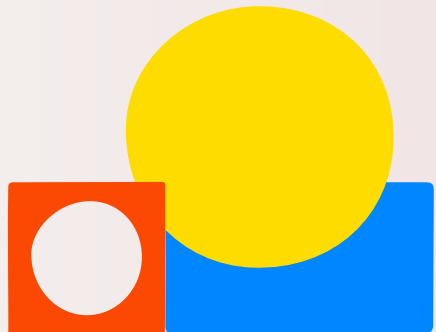
# Activate Regular 1:1 Check-Ins

The most impactful change UAE organisations can make is moving to structured monthly conversations (average 30 minutes).

**Purpose:** Link discussions directly to individual goals and development – not just performance ratings.

### Tips for Managers

- Make goals visible during each check-in.
- Use digital tools (like Sorwe) to track progress and document discussions.
- Add private manager-only questions for strategic insight, such as:
  - Do you see any risk in this employee's current trajectory?
  - How has performance improved compared to last period?



# Sample 1:1 Questions

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## Self-awareness & Initiative

- What's your biggest achievement since our last check-in?
  - What challenges have you faced and how did you handle them?
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## Growth & Development

- Which new skills do you want to build this quarter?
  - What support or resources would help you grow faster?
- 

## Goal Orientation

- How are you progressing toward your main goals?
  - What obstacles are preventing goal achievement?
- 

## Engagement

- How motivated do you feel about your current projects?
  - What would make your role more fulfilling?
- 



## Step 4:

# Build a Manager Appraisal Framework

Decide whether reviews will be manager-only or multi-source (employee, manager, and peers).

Tailor the review content to department, seniority, and role.

## Manager Appraisal Question Bank

### Overall Job Performance

- How effectively does the employee contribute to company goals?
- How well does the employee adapt to changing priorities?
- How consistently are quality standards met?

## Step 5:

# Competency & Behaviour Evaluation

Every organisation may want to define critical competencies linked to long-term goals and national strategies.

Differentiate by function (e.g. Technology vs. Sales).

Begin with 180° or 270° feedback before scaling to full 360° once the culture is ready.

 Tip: Tie these competencies directly to training and development initiatives.

## **Communication**

- How clearly does the employee communicate updates and ideas?
  - How well do they adapt their communication to different audiences?
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## **Collaboration**

- How effectively does the employee work across teams?
  - How well do they resolve conflicts and support cooperation?
- 

## **Creativity & Innovation**

- How often does the employee suggest new ideas or approaches?
  - How effectively do they apply innovative thinking to solve problems?
- 

## **Learning Agility**

- How quickly does the employee learn and apply new skills?
  - How proactive are they in seeking new learning opportunities?
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## **Initiative & Proactivity**

- How effectively do they identify and act on improvement opportunities?
  - How adaptable are they to new tools and challenges?
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## Client & Stakeholder Relations


- How well do they manage client relationships and feedback?
  - How consistent is their professionalism and responsiveness?
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## Step 6:

### Automate End-of-Year Scoring

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Performance management becomes powerful when it's measurable and repeatable.

 *Automation reduces bias, increases transparency, and ensures fair, data-driven decisions.*

#### Use digital systems to:

- Assign weighted averages to performance dimensions (goals, behaviours, competencies).
- Automate end-of-year scorecards.
- Link scores to personal development plans.
- Build a historical data archive for every employee to track growth over time.

## Step 7:

### Connect Performance to 9 Box Analytics & Development Plans

The real impact of performance management lies in how it fuels growth.

## **Each review cycle should end with three outputs:**

1. **Robust 9 Box analyses**, giving you the map of your talent in 9 boxes, enabling you to spot high performers and risky employee groups.
2. **A development plan** – defining skills and learning paths.
3. **A recognition plan** – celebrating contributions and strengthening engagement.

Performance data should flow seamlessly into L&D, career pathing, and reward systems, reinforcing a culture of continuous improvement.

## **Build a High-Performance, Inclusive Culture with Sorwe**

**Sorwe** is a human-centred digital employee experience and performance platform that helps organisations across the Middle East elevate performance and engagement.

With 75,000 users worldwide, Sorwe helps align every team member with company goals, simplifies the review process, and makes the process motivating by enabling career growth.

[\*\*Request a Demo\*\*](#)

**Contact:** [info@sorwe.com](mailto:info@sorwe.com)

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