

The ACCA logo is a red square with the letters 'ACCA' in white, bold, sans-serif font. It is positioned in the top left corner of the page.

ACCA

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a modern building's interior, likely a shopping mall or office space. It features a complex network of dark metal beams and railings. Silhouettes of people are visible on different levels, looking out through large glass windows. The lighting is dim, with some warm lights visible on the railings, creating a dramatic, high-contrast scene. The overall color palette is dominated by dark blues, greys, and blacks, with the red of the ACCA logo providing a sharp contrast.

FINDERS KEEPERS? HOW TO BE THE PERSON THAT COMPANIES FIGHT TO KEEP

Think Ahead

A photograph of two women, one with blonde hair and glasses wearing a white shirt, and another with dark hair wearing a dark green shirt. They are both looking down at a smartphone held by the woman in the white shirt. They are standing in front of a lush green wall of plants. A red horizontal line is positioned above the text block.

Around two years is still generally considered the minimum length to stay in one role so as not to appear too flighty to future employers, while maxing out the benefits of job experience in a particular role enough to step up onto the next rung.

Post-Covid 19 and the ‘great resignation’ more employers are waking up to the fact that retention makes sound business sense. From improvements in flexibility to mental health policies and of course remuneration, is it time to focus more attention on reminding your current employer, instead of your next one, that you’re the best hire they could hope to find – and keep?

Just a few generations ago, the promise of your employer’s gratitude-laden speech and a gold watch on your last day kept many loyal-to-the-end employees in the same company for decades. With end-of-service Rolexes a little thinner on the ground these days, as well as a vastly different economic landscape to contend with, the prevailing wisdom has focused more on strategic job-hopping.

The market is showing signs of steady and reassuring growth following two years of pandemic-driven slowdown. Reports for the region, such as PwC’s Middle East Economy Watch (www.pwc.com/meeconomywatch) predict good recovery; the report notes the IMF forecasting the GCC to return to a fiscal balance in 2023, for the first time since 2014. It’s good news if you’re considering a career move: the job market is finally moving after two years, and conditions favour job-seekers. In the recent Cooper Fitch CEO report, 40% of leaders in the GCC said their biggest challenge was retaining and attracting talent; a 7.7% increase in job creation across the GCC was also reported.

40% OF LEADERS IN THE GCC SAID THEIR BIGGEST CHALLENGE WAS RETAINING AND ATTRACTING TALENT; A 7.7% INCREASE IN JOB CREATION ACROSS THE GCC WAS ALSO REPORTED.

Around two years is still generally considered the minimum length to stay in one role so as not to appear too flighty to future employers, while maxing out the benefits of job experience in a particular role enough to step up onto the next rung. According to past reports from Forbes, employees who stayed in the same company longer than two years earned on average 50% less than those who made it a habit to secure promotions in new companies.

However, Covid-19 changed our landscape seismically, and with that, many business norms have also shifted or been entirely upended.



Employers in 2022 are more motivated to retain the teams they have – which means employees need to ensure they remain perceived as highly valued, skilled and hard-to-replace assets.

‘Companies are realizing that they need to do more to keep their talent and that the costs and time of hiring new talent are less attractive than doing more to retain the talent already within the organisation,’ notes David Mackenzie, group MD of Mackenzie Jones. The leading recruiter specialises in matching candidates with companies across the Middle East, Mackenzie adds that it is important for candidates to keep a keen eye on the market and know their current worth but that: ‘pay is actually often quite low on people’s real motivations for leaving or joining a company. From an employer perspective, if you look after your team and value them then they will be more likely to stay even with the average tenure in the Dubai job market only at 18 months.’

So – what are the key ways to ensure that you’re seen as hard to replace, a key team member and an employee who should be on the company’s internal fast track program? Here’s what leaders like your boss have to say:

‘Step forward when everyone else is stepping backward,’ says ACCA CEO Helen Brand. Being proactive in supporting your line manager’s objectives and offering your time, skills and focus is a surefire way to make yourself indispensable to the person who holds your next move in their hands.

Take a moment to think about your favourite colleagues, clients and business partners – they are usually the people who make those around them feel positive, respected and motivated. You don’t need to wait until you’re a manager yourself to espouse these values. While the advice to dress like your dream role may be a little less relevant for those working more remotely, the concept of conducting yourself in a way befitting the role you aspire to is pretty solid common sense.



Step forward when everyone else is stepping backward’

Helen Brand, Chief Executive, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants



Trust and respect are the cornerstones of all great relationships. Consistent integrity breeds trust and consistent competence breeds respect'

Nasheeda CC, Managing Director,
Nishe Consulting



'Trust and respect are the cornerstones of all great relationships. Consistent integrity breeds trust and consistent competence breeds respect,' adds Nasheeda CC, managing director at Nishe Consulting.

This is as true in any workplace as it is in personal or social settings, but often the nuances of interpersonal behaviour in corporate settings escape those in the very first stages of their career. While it might seem straightforward to apply basic courtesies such as saying please and thank you, keeping your phone on silent and not microwaving smelly food in the communal kitchen, the truth is that as your career grows, you cannot 'sit out' office politics.

And while avoiding gossip or negativity about your colleagues is a desirable goal, failing to forge strong and authentic bonds with your manager and those who will advocate for you can be almost as detrimental to your career as doing the job itself badly.

Carla Harris, vice chairman at Morgan Stanley, tells hbr.org: 'You can't let your work speak for you; work doesn't speak.' Life is a popularity contest, and although making connections may come more naturally to those who are extraverted, being genuinely interested in others and supporting their goals should be seen as an investment in your present and future standing at work.



Challenge roles and teams in the workplace and question whether they are diverse enough in order to advocate change'

Cynthia Corby, Partner, COO and Transformation & Strategy leader, Audit and Assurance, Deloitte Middle East, Deloitte Private Audit Leader, Deloitte, North South Europe



Be open, honest and accountable. Every employee from top to bottom will make mistakes every now and again. This is inevitable, but for me the key is to admit mistakes, don't try to 'cover' them and try to ensure they don't happen again'

Conor McHugh ACCA, Founder Alchemy Search

Conor McHugh, Founder of Alchemy Search, adds: 'Also be open, honest and accountable. Every employee from top to bottom will make mistakes every now and again. This is inevitable, but for me the key is to admit mistakes, don't try to 'cover' them and try to ensure they don't happen again.'

Reputation is hard to earn and easy to burn – a cornerstone of reputation aside from the work you do, is people's perceived trust in you.





Value time and deliver your commitments. You will be valued'

Saad Maniar BSc, FCCA, Senior Partner Crowe

'Honesty, transparency and value-addition: make these part of your everyday routine,' says Saad Maniar BSc, FCCA, Senior Partner Crowe.

'Build your own personal 'brand'. What do you do that differentiates you from your peers? People will value, appreciate and respect you for who you are, over and above the technical skills that you possess,' says Sam Achampong FCIPS, Regional Head of CIPS Middle East & North Africa.

Finally of course, there is the simple fact of regularly appraising where you find oneself at any stage in your career and not letting that define or predict – too strictly – where you'd like to go next. It's important to check in with yourself closely before making any big decisions – a career coach or trusted mentor can help you unpick your reasons for considering a career move and weighing these against the benefits of staying put.

The good news is that it seems the current market conditions favour the job-seeker, and if you're lucky enough to have an employer who realises the value of employee retention, you may find your next exciting and motivating job change may not even take you outside your current office.



Build your own personal 'brand'. What do you do that differentiates you from your peers? People will value, appreciate, and respect you for who you are, over and above the technical skills which you possess'

Sam Achampong FCIPS, Regional Head of CIPS Middle East & North Africa



Contact us

Dubai Knowledge Village
Block No. 19
Office No. S01
Dubai
tel: +971 (0)4 391 5451
fax: +971 (0)4 366 4068
email: info@ae.accaglobal.com

Mailing address

PO Box 500671
Knowledge Village
Dubai
United Arab Emirates

www.accaglobal.com

The information contained in this publication is provided for general purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate and up to date at the time of going to press, ACCA accepts no responsibility for any loss which may arise from information contained in this publication. No part of this publication may be reproduced, in any format, without prior written permission of ACCA © 2022

Think Ahead