



# Becom East B

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Hewitt Associates launched the first study of its scope and breadth on Best Employers in Middle East, setting new standards for business practices in the region. Point of View asked Debabrat Mishra, Middle East Consulting Business Leader at Hewitt, what it takes to be a best employer in today's business world.

# Defining A Middle East Employer

## PoV: What are the goals behind your Best Employers studies and who are they aimed at?

The Hewitt Best Employers in Middle East research project had the aim of honoring organizations that are outstanding places to work as The Best Employers in Middle East.

The study was also focused on understanding the employee practices of “the best” in order to create the definitive benchmark for all work practices in the Middle East.

It was envisaged that the study findings would encourage all stakeholders (governments, industry groups, organizations, etc.) in their endeavors to make the Middle East an even better place to work by providing them with much needed data and insight.

## PoV: The 2009 Best Employers in Middle East is the first ever by Hewitt. What prompted you to do it? Will there be others?

As a consulting firm specializing in People, we felt the absence of an underlying yardstick which synthesizes talent management imperatives into a common language of the region’s very own Benchmark for People Practices. It is in this regard that we decided to launch the region’s very first Best Employers Study – a study which seeks to find and recognize those who have built the best; a research which provides the definitive last word in people practices and benchmarks; an initiative that enables organizations to understand what it takes to be the best in such a complex talent landscape; and a mission that aligns us all towards making the Middle East a better place to work.

The 2009 Best Employers in Middle East was the inaugural study. We plan to conduct this study on a regular basis so that organizations can have access to the latest benchmarks.

**PoV: Why is participation in such a study important for businesses in the Middle East?**

Participating in the Best Employers study provides organizations two distinct benefits. Firstly, they can benchmark their people practices and identify how they stack up with the very best, not only regionally, but globally as well since we conduct this study on a world-wide scale. Secondly, if they do figure amongst the best employers, they can use it to differentiate themselves in the competitive talent market.

Both these aspects are extremely beneficial for organizations in attracting and retaining talent.

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**PoV: What are the participation criteria of such a survey? Which companies qualify to be a part of it?**

We use minimum eligibility criteria of 100+ employees in the workforce and organizational existence for at least one year. Besides these criteria there is no other filter used and participation in the study is free and open to all organizations, irrespective of industry.

**PoV: What is the screening and accreditation process and how is it conducted?**

The Study was divided into six sequential phases, namely: Registration, Data Collection, Data Collation and Random Audits, Judging and Results Announcement.

**Registration:**

Organizations which met the minimum eligibility criteria across all sectors were invited to participate in the study. Over 250 organizations across the Hospitality, Manufacturing, Banking and Financial Services, Real Estate and Infrastructure, Retail, Telecom and Government Services sectors registered their interest to participate.

**Data Collection:**

Each participating organization completed three diagnostic tools developed by Hewitt – the Employee Opinion Survey (EOS), People Practices Inventory™ (PPI) and CEO Questionnaire.

The representative employee base registered for the study crossed the 150,000 mark, making the Hewitt Best Employers in Middle East Study the largest employee research project ever undertaken in Middle East.

**Data Collation and Random Audits:**

Hewitt in parallel collated all information received from participants in order to prepare the materials required by judges in reviewing and making their decision. Hewitt also conducted random audits of up to 20% of the participating organizations in order to verify the accuracy of the data provided by them. A few organizations were disqualified from the study wherein their submitted data did not match with the results from the random audits.

**Judging:**

Hewitt empanelled five respected representatives from the industry, government bodies and large organizations to convene on the Judging Day in order to decide on the list of Hewitt Best Employers in Middle East.

Hewitt did not determine the list of Best Employers. Hewitt's role was to provide clean data and preliminary analysis from the study for their discussions and deliberations.

The judges considered a wealth of data that gave them a 360-degree view of each organization's employee perspectives, leadership perspectives, and HR practices; without knowing which data belonged to which company.

**PoV: What are the selection criteria? How does a company become a Middle East Best Employer?**

The 2009 Best Employers Study identified various traits that were common across the best organizations. These are:

- aligned People Practices
- high Employee Engagement Scores – the 2009 Best Employers in ME average engagement score is 80%
- better career development opportunities
- better benefits
- delivering the Employment Promise
- better investments in People Development
- better Performance Management
- better employee recognition - employees feel more valued

Any organization that offers most of these options can feel comfortable about being on the right path to becoming a Best Employer.

**PoV: Hewitt is, essentially, a Human Resources consultancy working with a large number of companies worldwide. How do you maintain objectivity?**

Being in the People Consulting business, we have to be objective in our research. Organizations globally entrust us with their most sensitive data, such as payroll and benefits, on a regular basis. This credibility also helps. The Best Employer Study is always handled by an independent team. The study is also free for participants and does not have any sponsors or commercial contributors.

This allows us to stay focused on the main objective of the research and ensure that it is accurate and unbiased. We use an independent judging panel that selects the list on a "blind basis" for that same reason.