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## Great Place to Work® reveals UAE's 'Top 15 Companies to Work For' & 'Most Distinguished SMEs to Work For'

- DHL named Top Company to Work For in the UAE for the second consecutive year
- biz-group maintains its position as Top SME to Work For in the UAE

**Dubai, UAE, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015:** Great Place to Work® Institute UAE, part of a global research, training and consultancy firm that recognizes the best workplaces in over 50 countries worldwide, revealed its fifth annual list of the '**Top 15 Companies to Work For in the UAE**' and second annual list of '**Most Distinguished SMEs to Work For in the UAE**' during an awards ceremony at Rixos The Palm resort in Dubai yesterday.

Maintaining the number one position on the 'Top 15 Companies to Work For in the UAE' list was **DHL**. According to GPTW, DHL puts its workplace initiatives on top of its strategic plans and continues to improve its 'employee value proposition'. Every aspect of the employee lifecycle at DHL, from recruitment to retirement, is perfectly aligned to the company's core values, business objectives, vision and mission.

Climbing from fourth place on the 2014 list to become this year's runner-up was **Ericsson**, followed by **Omnicom Media Group** which retained its third position. **THE One** came in at fourth position, climbing up one spot from 2014, while **Marriott** advanced two spots to be ranked fifth position.

Ranking from sixth to 10<sup>th</sup> place on the list were **Estee Lauder**, **Weber Shandwick**, **Hyatt**, **Leminar** and **Fun City** respectively. Rounding out the final five positions on the list were **EMC**, **WSP**, **Apparel Group**, **FedEx** and **Master Card**.

According to GPTW, the competition this year was fierce. "To be recognized as one of the best workplaces in the UAE is a significant achievement and winners should feel proud of their results. Each year the program is becoming more competitive as companies strive to improve their workplaces. We are pleased to see new companies make the list this year and that some of our previous list makers have improved their positions among the top 15. A special mention goes to our top company DHL, which has been busy implementing new initiatives to retain its winning position," said Ron Thomas, CEO of GPTW Gulf.

After five years of evaluating workplace excellence in the UAE, GPTW says the UAE is on track to realize its ambition to become the best country in which to live and work.

"We've seen remarkable development in HR practices in the UAE since we launched our 'Top Companies to Work For' study five years ago. With the UAE Government determined to make the

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country a top business destination, which celebrates diversity and innovation, more companies are realizing the impact a positive workplace experience can have on this goal,” added Thomas.

This year marked GPTW’s first joint celebration of Top Companies and Top SMEs in the UAE, a move which it hopes will allow all organizations to learn from each other.

Ranked the nation’s Top SME to Work For the second consecutive year was **biz-group**, a business strategy, training and corporate team building company with offices in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. GPTW says biz-group achieved the highest score on its proprietary trust measurement tool, thanks to its sound and people-centred workplace practices, especially in hiring, inspiring, welcoming, and thanking staff.

Coming in second position on the SME list was **DABO & CO** followed by new list maker **Abu Dhabi Finance** in third position. Also making the list for the second consecutive year was **Eton Institute** in fourth position while **Advanced Watertek** rounded out the top five.

“We would like to thank all participants in this year’s ‘Most Distinguished SMEs’ program and congratulate them on creating workplaces in which trust, pride and camaraderie flourish. These SMEs have implemented some extraordinary HR practices and remind us that every company, irrespective of size, can build a culture of workplace excellence,” said Thomas.

The annual benchmarking study - which assesses the level of credibility, respect, fairness, pride and camaraderie within an organization - forms part of the world’s largest employee survey. Most of a company’s score (two-thirds) is based on the confidential feedback of their staff, with an audit of management and HR practices by the Institute comprising the remainder of the score.

The ‘Top 15 Companies to Work for in the UAE’ and ‘Most Distinguished SMEs to Work For in the UAE’ were represented by a wide cross section of sectors including logistics, technology, finance, media, retail, hospitality and manufacturing. New listmakers in the Top 15 Companies in 2015 included Apparel Group, Leminar, WSP and MasterCard, while Abu Dhabi Finance and Advance Watertek were the new listmakers among the Top SMEs.

## The ‘Top 15 Companies to work for in the UAE’ are:

Rank	Company Name	Fast Facts	What makes them great
1	DHL	<a href="http://www.dhl.com">www.dhl.com</a> Logistics	Being number 1 on the GPTW list for the second year in a row, DHL proved it puts its workplace initiatives on top of its Strategic plans. DHL’s various people policies and practices are perfectly aligned to its corporate values, vision, and mission. Its human capital work is centered on its ‘employee value proposition’ which includes Growth, Impact and Pride - all of which are evident from its onboarding programme to the customized learning and development plans each employee receives. Every aspect of the employee lifecycle at DHL, from recruitment to retirement, is closely aligned with the company’s core values, its business objectives and mission of inspiring people to give their best – both in and out of the office.

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2	Ericsson	<a href="http://www.ericsson.com">www.ericsson.com</a> Communications	<p>Not only is creating a great place to work culture a challenge, what happens once you get there?</p> <p>Ericsson, in order to maintain a hi-performance culture, took the approach down to Talent Acquisition so that their recruitment and onboarding processes have added filters to ensure that they hire people who closely connect with their culture. This enables new hires to succeed in their fast pace and challenging environment. They have developed competencies for each role so that it enables the hiring process to narrowly define what is needed for each role.</p>
3	Omnicom Media Group	<a href="http://www.omnicommediagroup.com">www.omnicommediagroup.com</a> Media	<p>OMG's keen focus on work/life balance makes it stand out as a leading example of how organizations should integrate health and wellness into a company's culture. OMG also enjoys genuine dedication and commitment from its senior leaders. The OMG's HR forums are championed by the senior management and HR Leaders and provide a confidential team environment for all employees to have a voice about their working lives. This incorporates all facets associated with discussing company initiatives, policies, idea generation, learning and development and enhances the collaboration between management and employees to create empowerment across the entire organization.</p>
4	THE One	<a href="http://www.theone.com">www.theone.com</a> Retail	<p>THE One is arguably the top company when it comes to the visible commitment and engagement of the CEO. Having authentic and consistent support and involvement from the CEO when it comes to the engagement of employees is critical. THE One provides a unique and compelling social mission that its employees can get emotionally attached to, helping to motivate and inspire them. As mentioned in previous years, THE One set up THE Onederworld - a Sustainable Village Community programme with balanced quality Education at its heart. Presently, six classrooms of a brand new school have been built in the Pimbiniet community in Kenya in conjunction with Free The Children.</p>
5	Marriott	<a href="http://www.marriott.com">www.marriott.com</a> Hospitality /Hotel/Resort	<p>Marriott International Inc. is considered as one of the biggest and leading companies in the hospitality industry. It is one of the largest hotel operators worldwide and operates up to 4,200+ hotels across the globe. Hiring process for managers in Marriott International Inc. makes it much more interesting for managerial positions. The group follows an orientation and induction program called "In The Beginning", in which they meet with the management team of the property(ies) and they are introduced to the company's culture, standards, history, and milestones.</p> <p>Marriott International Inc. cares about employees in many different ways. For example, employees can work in any Marriott International Inc. around the world. Marriott International Inc. also cares about employees' development, their career paths and many other aspects of interest for their growth through a program called "Spirit to serve our Associates". Marriott International Inc. is one of the good companies that cares about employees and customers while at the same time treating them ethically. Marriott is engaging its top vendors to supply price-neutral greener products across the company's \$10 billion supply chain.</p> <p>One of the unique programs Marriot undertakes is to reduce its overall environmental impact and support local communities. The company has introduced a Green Meeting and "Spirit to Preserve the Rainforest" program for its meeting planners, and offers its associates on business travel the Hertz Green Collection—including hybrid rental vehicles with SmartWay certification from the U.S.</p>

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			Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
6	Estee Lauder	<a href="http://www.esteelauder.com">www.esteelauder.com</a> Health and beauty	<p>Estee lauder strives to build a culture in which employees are supported and respected. New joiners are welcomed by a welcome card sent to them before joining Estee Lauder. Expatriate employees are provided with a book called “Don’t they know its Friday” which is a resident’s guide and Dubai Map explaining some of the differences in living in the Middle East. The book is couriered to employees before they join.</p> <p>Estee Lauder runs a lot of social campaigns such as a “Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign” which the company is doing consistently and in addition to World AIDS Day and many others. Estee Lauder has a program called “Dream space” which is a digital collaboration tool for employees. It is an innovation portal for idea generation. It basically aims to empower every employee to innovate and lead from every chair.</p>
7	Weber Shandwick	<a href="http://www.webershandwick.com">www.webershandwick.com</a> Communications	<p>Weber Shandwick recently moved offices. It made its in-house creative team work as a liaison between staff members and industrial designers and printers to ensure everything in the office represents the staff. From the plants chosen, to the imagery on the walls and even the bespoke welcome desk (that was custom-built to suit the height of its receptionist) - the Weber Shandwick Dubai office is branded with all of employees’ voices. It chose to engage all team members when branding the company, bringing its motto of “Engaging Always” to life.</p>
8	Hyatt	<a href="http://www.hyatt.com">www.hyatt.com</a> Hospitality	<p>Hyatt’s culture is centered on its people. New joiners coming from outside the UAE are welcomed in the airport by their assigned buddies. Joining gifts are given to all employees. Hyatt HR sends post cards and gives employees a call on their birthdays. Sending dinner vouchers for 2 on associates’ retirement anniversary. Each June, Hyatt hotels around the world participate in “Celebrating Our People,” a week-long event that recognizes the company’s most important asset and their tremendous dedication. Among the fun and exciting activities featured during the 2014 “Celebrating Our People” week at its UAE hotels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zumba classes</li> <li>• Photography workshops</li> <li>• Pastry workshops;</li> <li>• The Amazing Race (treasure hunt)</li> <li>• Flower arrangement and plate painting (Manzil)</li> <li>• Iceland/Wild Wadi Waterpark outing</li> <li>• Mirror Maze outing</li> <li>• Special breakfasts</li> <li>• Ice skating</li> </ul> <p>Hyatt offers a variety of development programs that are dedicated to empower and develop employees. Examples of the offered programs are below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hyatt has contracted with Harvard Business School Publishing to create a blended learning experience on a variety of leadership topics</li> <li>• Hyatt Leadership Network (HLN) is an online learning platform. It serves as the central repository of all Hyatt learning resources</li> </ul>

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9	Leminar	<a href="http://www.leminargroup.com/Industrial">http://www.leminargroup.com/Industrial</a>	<p>Strong CSR programs and community involvement.</p> <p>Culture audit highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspiring community service</li> <li>• Strong CSR programs</li> </ul> <p>Leminar implements best people practices and has built a culture in which employees are valued for their contribution. Testament to this is the long association of employees with Leminar and their growth within the organization. Leminar conducts an “Employee Satisfaction Survey” which allows employees to share their views and innovative ideas.</p> <p>Leminar acts ethically towards employees by supporting them in their own life. For example one of the employees came back from his wedding leave to find that his house was taken by another tenant, Leminar provided him with a suitable house until he found another.</p> <p>Leminar has a concept of festival leaves which employees can take according to their needs &amp; culture. Leminar also celebrates and organizes events for women’s day, breast cancer awareness and Ramadan.</p> <p>Women are part of its reward and recognition program. Employees get the same treat irrespective of gender, age, nationality or religion. Everyone is treated fairly and recognized by their contribution to the organization.</p> <p>Leminar pays good attention to work life balance, employees’ lifestyle, and it celebrates cultural &amp; children’s day where kids participate and perform anything they like. Leminar encourages fun among employees by organizing events like and Annual Picnic, Sports Day, an Annual Party, Marathons, Children’s Day. Big wins, like the MEP Award &amp; Climate Control Award are also celebrated by the company.</p>
10	Fun City	<a href="http://www.funcity.ae">www.funcity.ae</a> Retail	<p>The core competencies needed for any Fun City employee –Fun Citizen, is to have a high degree of creative enthusiasm, service excellence, a smiling face and adaptability. To this end it has created an initiative called SPARK which stands for Spontaneity, Passion, Attention, Result, and Kindness. This process identifies the competencies &amp; traits that Fun City looks for in candidates. A truly unique approach to interviewing and hiring.</p>
11	EMC <sup>2</sup>	<a href="http://www.emc.com">www.emc.com</a> Technology	<p>EMC works hard to provide a caring culture, going beyond what is required. For example, it grants paternity leave, marriage leave, compassionate leave, even though it is not required to do so by labor law. And it grants public holidays in excess of government announcements.</p>
12	WSP	<a href="http://www.wspgroup.com">www.wspgroup.com</a> Professional Services/Consulting Engineering	<p>With over 30% year on year growth over the past 3 years, it is critical for WSP to invest in maintaining a culture that is open, honest, welcoming and inspiring, to ensure it’s a company that employees feel proud to be part of.</p> <p>WSP hosts a networking event, which provided an opportunity for WSP colleagues to inspire and network with likeminded professionals in the industry, as well as share industry knowledge and the success of the prestigious Burj Khalifa Base Jump project. WSP has HR NEWS – this is a newsletter to update employees on initiatives related to its people and celebrate their personal contribution to the business.</p> <p>In WSP the process of listening to employees and caring about them is the main key to success. Employees, during their working</p>

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			hours, can feel free and enjoy their presence.
13	Apparel Group	<a href="http://www.appareluae.com">www.appareluae.com</a> Retail/Clothing/textile/food ware	<p>The Apparel Group is a global fashion and lifestyle brand conglomerate. It personally engages with employees face-to-face on greater frequency through various meetings such as Strategy Meets, Management Review Meetings (MRM) and other regular meetings.</p> <p>At Apparel Group feedback is given by an Employees Satisfaction Survey (ESS), Weekly/Monthly Review Meeting, as well as feedback on emails.</p> <p>Innovation is encouraged through “Bright Idea” a process through which employees can submit their ideas on process improvements via email, a designated Bright Idea drop box, or Suggestion Box Tab of Employee Self Service Menu in Amanat-HRMS. Apparel Group provides employee discounts on all brands for their personal purchases. The company has its own transport fleet which provides free transport services to all employees located in all Emirates. The company also provides subsidized products and free beverages such as coffee and tea. Aside from the Annual Vacation Leave, Apparel Group provides Compensatory Off to those who have worked during their weekly off days, weekends, or holidays. The company also allows the employee to take an off day during special occasions like birthdays and holidays.</p>
14	FedEx Express	<a href="http://www.fedex.com">www.fedex.com</a> Transportation	<p>FedEx’s P-S-P or “people-service-profit” philosophy guides all of its efforts. To thank employees who exemplify PSP, it uses the Purple Promise Award (PPA) which recognizes a team member who goes beyond the typical expectations for his or her job to ensure the customer’s needs are met. Sometimes the individual’s effort requires the assistance of coworkers. In such cases, more than one employee may receive a Purple Promise Award for the same endeavour.</p>
15	MasterCard	<a href="http://www.mastercard.com">www.mastercard.com</a> Information Technology	<p>MasterCard have a “HEART” award programme whereby any employee can nominate another employee at any time to receive an award for having demonstrated one of its corporate values (Agility, Partnership, Innovation, Trust). Winners receive a certificate and small value cash award of up to \$500.</p> <p>MasterCard places strong emphasis on the importance of women in the workplace, as this helps grow its business. MasterCard wants to be viewed as a fantastic place for Women in Technology to work, and has a dedicated Women’s Leadership Network to drive the role of women in the business and the promotion of women in the technology sector.</p>

**The ‘Most Distinguished SMEs to Work For in the UAE’ are:**

Rank	Company Name	What makes them great
1	biz-group	<p>biz-group’s trust level is extraordinarily high. This is a reflection of its sound and people-centered workplace practices. biz-group scores high in all practice areas but it excels in hiring, inspiring, welcoming, and thanking.</p> <p>Culture audit highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core values</li> <li>• Culture fit in hiring process</li> <li>• Shout-outs</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brag books</li> <li>• “best thinking” award</li> <li>• biz-culture manifesto</li> <li>• Dreams book and dreams room</li> <li>• “aha” trophy</li> <li>• Peron and team of the year awards</li> <li>• 10% profit sharing</li> <li>• Welcome gifts and cards</li> <li>• New hire buddy</li> </ul>
2	DABO & CO	<p>Strong practices related to thanking, celebrating, caring and sharing (community).</p> <p>Culture audit highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hires for attitude</li> <li>• Asks questions around brand values</li> <li>• Welcoming: HR, integration, introduction, directors (founders), social outing</li> <li>• Monthly internal awards – peer-to-peer</li> <li>• Annual awards – last year’s party was Hollywood-themed</li> <li>• Discretionary bonuses</li> <li>• Annual bonuses</li> <li>• Social events – personal milestones, “DABO Days”</li> <li>• Weekly company-wide meeting (each week has a different theme)</li> <li>• 6-month performance reviews</li> <li>• Sponsored trainings and education – sponsored one employee’s three-year Master’s program</li> <li>• E-learning program</li> <li>• Both Muslim &amp; Christian holidays off</li> <li>• Caring in times of need is VERY strong</li> <li>• Corporate Social Responsibility – Dubai Cares</li> </ul>
3	Abu Dhabi Finance	<p>Abu Dhabi Finance’s workplace culture is a clear reflection of its corporate values. Management make sure they meet the highest level of credibility through an open and transparent communication with all employees at all levels. Trust is key in all relationships in Abu Dhabi Finance and it is being well nurtured through the company’s different people policies and practices.</p>
4	Eton Institute	<p>Strong on inspiring employees. Integration of core values.</p> <p>Culture audit highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3-phase hiring process</li> <li>• Motivational 5 minutes based on one of the core values during each meeting</li> <li>• Weekly 30-minute stand-up meetings to share achievements</li> <li>• Quarterly “Spirit of Eton” award</li> <li>• Corporate Social Responsibility – Eton Sponsorship Programme</li> </ul>
5	Advanced Watertek	<p>Advanced Watertek offers an open and transparent culture where employees have access to information about the business and get feedback about the outcomes of their efforts. Employees are encouraged to participate in the company’s projects, activities and programs and enjoy a high level of autonomy and responsibility in their day-to-day work. Significant occasions such as projects awarded or completed, HSE milestones and employee achievements are celebrated in addition to regular events such as sports days, Iftar parties and Christmas parties engendering a fun and friendly atmosphere within the company.</p>

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The Great Place to Work® Institute is a global research and management consultancy that recognizes the best workplaces in over 50 countries worldwide and provides premier business and advisory services. Its mission is to improve peoples' lives and create a better society by improving the workplace experience. The Institute was founded in 1991 to provide a simple, research-driven methodology that could be widely used to understand and assess organizations. A proprietary employee survey and assessment of HR policies form the foundation of the Institute's research and consulting services and has been used by companies from all over the world to create strong workplace cultures based on trusting relationships. The Great Place to Work® Institute believes that in a society of great workplaces, employees feel respected, proud, and trust that management is committed to "doing the right thing."

Following increased demand from the GCC countries for its workplace evaluation services, Great Place to Work® Institute expanded to the UAE in March 2010 as a licensed division of Best Companies Group. The UAE operation serves as the regional headquarters for the Middle East, with consultants and sales staff to be appointed in each market.

### **About the 'Top Companies to Work For in the UAE' list**

Any UAE company with 50 or more employees is eligible to participate in the fee-based program. Any company that appears on the list is selected primarily on the basis of their employees' responses to the Great Place to Work® Trust Index®, a proprietary employee survey developed by the Great Place to Work® Institute. In addition, the Institute evaluates materials submitted by the company, including the company's response to the Great Place to Work® Culture Audit®, any accompanying materials submitted by the company for consideration, as well as information gathered from other reputable sources such as media stories about the company. Organizations are able to apply from now and until October 2015 for the 2016 Top Companies list.

Companies interested in applying for the 2016 To Companies list may register their interest with Maha Zaatari at [Maha.Zaatari@greatplacetowork.com](mailto:Maha.Zaatari@greatplacetowork.com).

### **About the 'Most Distinguished SMEs to Work For in the UAE' list**

Any UAE-based company that is two years or older with 20 to 99 employees is eligible to participate in the fee-based program. Any company that appears on the list is selected primarily on the basis of their employees' responses to the Great Place to Work® Trust Index®, a proprietary employee survey developed by the Great Place to Work® Institute. In addition, the Institute evaluates materials submitted by the company, including the company's response to the Great Place to Work® Culture Audit®, any accompanying materials submitted by the company for consideration, as well as information gathered from other reputable sources such as media stories about the company.

Companies interested in applying for the 2016 'Top SMEs to Work for in the UAE' may register their interest with Maha Zaatari at [Maha.Zaatari@greatplacetowork.com](mailto:Maha.Zaatari@greatplacetowork.com).

### **Media Contacts:**

Mutaz Albadri  
Mojo PR  
Tel: +971 50 570 6785  
[mutaz@mojo-me.com](mailto:mutaz@mojo-me.com)

Richelle Fosberry  
Mojo PR  
Tel: +971 56 470 7783  
[richelle@mojo-me.com](mailto:richelle@mojo-me.com)