



The Weekly Business Briefing

Functional Note

10 April 2026

Contents

Edito	2
Human Resources	2
Marketing & Communications.....	6
Key UAE News of the Week	8

Edito

Since the onset of the crisis on 28 February, our community has been navigating a complex and rapidly evolving environment. The two-week ceasefire in place since 8 April, while encouraging, remains fragile and calls for continued vigilance and adaptability.

In this context, CCI France UAE is progressively resuming office presence and selected in-person events, following a cautious and flexible approach. This gradual return reflects our commitment to ensuring continuity while remaining fully aligned with the evolving situation.

Throughout this period, our team has remained fully mobilized, with a clear focus: supporting our members. We continue to listen, advise, connect, and adapt our actions to your needs, so that you are not facing this situation alone.

A special thank you to this week's experts: Julien Velud, Economic Attaché at the Ministry of Economy and Finance – French Treasury, who engaged with our members from the Energy and FMCG sectors; Yves Michel Gabay, Managing Director MEA, Gamned MEA, who contributed to our MarCom Committee meeting and shares this week in the briefing a practical guide for communication leaders on business resilience and best practices in the current context; and Amarante for providing its note, "Ceasefire in the Middle East: what evolution prospects."

This Weekly Business Briefing is part of that commitment - providing you with reliable information and actionable insights to support informed decision-making. As we move forward with both prudence and confidence, our team stands by your side, ready to support you every step of the way.

Kind regards,

The CCI France UAE Team

Human Resources

The situation is now more stable with cautious optimism, supported by a short period of ceasefire and no immediate escalation.

Leadership Approach

Companies are, overall, maintaining a wait-and-see posture, with priority given to safety of employees, management of internal stress and continuity of operations.

One key overarching consideration is that the situation is perceived as a temporary pause rather than a durable stabilization, thereby constraining any structural decision-making.

Workforce Visibility and Monitoring

Continued strong tracking of:

- employee location (in-country vs abroad)
- workforce presence and return rates

Introduction of more structured pulse surveys to monitor:

- employee anxiety levels
- willingness to return or evacuate if needed

Employee Mobility and Evacuation Preparedness

Evacuation remains largely a contingency, not actively pursued by most organizations

Some companies continue to:

- maintain updated evacuation plans and assigned coordinators
- prepare third-country relocation options (e.g., regional hubs)

Mobility trends evolving:

- employees who left are now gradually returning to the country
- limited appetite for further relocation

Visa readiness (for evacuation scenarios) remains encouraged but operationally complex (nationality constraints, system limitations)

Remote Work from Abroad & Sustainability

Clear shift observed:

- organizations are setting deadlines for employees abroad to return
- WFA is being progressively reduced or discontinued in some cases

Diverging approaches:

- some organizations never allowed WFA, simplifying return
- others are now transitioning from flexibility → mandatory return or leave usage

Mobility & Travel

Business travel has been significantly reduced

Increased constraints related to:

- Visas
- permit renewals (with reported cases of refusals or expulsions)

Targeted evacuations carried out in certain sensitive areas

For employees remaining abroad:

increasing use of:

- annual leave
- unpaid leave if return is not feasible

Workplace Strategy (Return to Office)

Consistent shift toward returning to office on a voluntary basis when possible

Practices observed:

- offices open with capacity limits (e.g., ~20%)
- gradual increase in attendance week-on-week
- return encouraged to:
 - maintain team connection
 - ensure business continuity
 - reinforce collective engagement

Positive signals:

- employees increasingly comfortable returning
- visible momentum effect (presence of leadership encourages others)

Flexibility maintained:

- case-by-case exceptions for sensitive situations
- hybrid setups still allowed (e.g., limited remote days)

HR Policies for Prolonged Disruption

Reinforcement of existing policies rather than new measures:

- leave policies remain enforced (limited carry forward)
- WFA restrictions being re-applied or clarified

Workforce discipline increasing: employees abroad expected to return or transition to leave

Some continued flexibility:

- case-by-case arrangements for:
- childcare
- individual constraints

Wellbeing & Mental Health

Continued recognition of varying employee stress levels. A peak in stress levels was observed immediately prior to the ceasefire. A relative improvement has been noted since then, with teams progressively adapting

Increased use of:

- pulse surveys to assess anxiety and comfort levels
- wellbeing hotlines and support services

Observations:

- some employees remain isolated and reluctant to return
- need for targeted, individual support rather than broad measures

Insurance & Employee Protection

Continued validation of insurance coverage:

- confirmation from some brokers that:
- passive war coverage applies regardless of location

Ongoing areas of attention:

- liability in case of incidents outside the country
- disability and work-related claims

Companies remain cautious and in continuous dialogue with brokers

Insurance & Risk Coverage

Insurance policies (health and disability/benefits) generally cover risks related to armed conflict, provided that:

- the company is not actively participating in the war
- the employee is not directly involved in conflict (e.g. combat activities)

There is a risk of loss of coverage if the employee's home country formally calls for the evacuation of its nationals and the employee nevertheless chooses to remain in the country

Overall coverage is generally maintained in passive situations; however, written confirmation from insurers is required due to contractual grey areas.

Employee Communication & Positioning

Increased emphasis on internal communication and the provision of psychological support

Communication evolving toward:

- reassurance and normalization
- encouraging return without forcing

Strong role of leadership visibility:

- presence in office
- informal initiatives (e.g., welcome sessions, group moments)

Messaging emphasizes:

- "Safe to return"
- importance of reconnection and collective presence

Key Takeaways

Shift toward stabilization and gradual normalization

Some organizations are:

- encouraging return while maintaining flexibility
- rebalancing between business needs and employee comfort

WFA is starting to scale back in some companies, with increasing structure and control

Employee sentiment remains mixed, requiring careful and tailored approaches

Contingency planning (evacuation, visas, insurance) remains active in the background

Marketing & Communications

The meeting featured a presentation by Yves-Michel Gabay from the agency Gammed MEA on how companies and Marcom decision-makers should respond during periods of crisis. His analysis was based on lessons learned from major disruptions such as the 2008 financial crisis, the Covid-19 Pandemic and multiple geopolitical tensions. The presentation was focused on the paid media but a global guide on digital strategy and communication is [available here](#). Yves-Michel Gabay explained how consumer behavior evolves during crises and identified both impacted and resilient sectors.

Key insights from the presentation

Main challenges faced by marketing and communication decision-makers and proposed several strategic priorities:

Recommended actions for companies

- Accelerate digital strategy
- Optimize services and products
- Strengthening crisis communication

Crisis communication best practices

- Communicate rapidly and prioritize key channels (Instagram, WhatsApp and Tiktok).
- Increase communication investments to maintain / increase digital performances while adopting a softer and more informative tone rather than aggressive selling.
- Invest in customer loyalty with exclusive communication to create a “VIP” experience and reinforce long-term engagement

Recommended Crisis Action Plan from Gammed MEA

Week 1-2: Assessment:

- Evaluate company resources and operational capacity
- Determine the organization’s ability to respond and adapt

Week 2-3: Strategy:

- Develop a crisis strategy
- Define a short and mid-term business plan and roadmap

Week 4-6: Execution:

- Implement the roadmap
- Monitor and measure performance

Overall, companies must act quickly but strategically, with strong investment in digital capabilities and visibility on Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) platforms to remain competitive.

Participants noted that consumer behavior during the current crisis differs from the COVID-19 period. There is a stronger sense of community, solidarity, and positivity.

Observations from MarCom decision-makers

Initial phase (first two weeks):

- Focus on crisis communication and priority to internal communication, employee wellbeing, client and partners relations.

Current phase:

- Focus on customer communities: organization of small gatherings and events to reinforce community spirit
- Social media performance remains stable with continued customer-centric communication
- Return of press relations
- Due to restrictions on certain communication tools for companies operating from outside the country, organizations have explored alternative formats including:
- Replacing physical events, podcasts and roundtables with online events and discussions
- Developing communication strategies based on expert insights and advisory content.
- Most companies have returned to normal external communication (but softer and more positive) with a significant increase in internal communication.
- Increase in positive engagement and leadership positioning

Key UAE News of the Week

UAE Prepares New Tourism Support Measures

The UAE government is preparing a new support package to help its tourism sector cope with ongoing disruptions affecting travel, aviation, and hospitality. Authorities report that reduced travel flows and operational challenges have put significant pressure on hotels and related businesses. In response, immediate relief measures have already been introduced, including the deferral of key government fees for up to three months, helping companies maintain liquidity and manage short-term costs.

Hotels, hotel apartments, and holiday homes can postpone payments such as sales fees and tourism-related charges, providing crucial financial breathing space. Officials emphasize that the broader support package, currently in preparation, will further address sector-specific challenges.

The government is also working closely with industry stakeholders, holding regular consultations to adapt policies to real needs. Despite current difficulties, authorities remain confident in the UAE's economic resilience and its ability to recover quickly, highlighting strong infrastructure and proactive policy responses.

Source: Gulf News, <https://gulfnews.com/business/tourism/iran-war-uae-readies-fresh-tourism-support-package-minister-says-1.500497599>

UAE Companies Strengthen Support for Small Businesses

UAE companies are rolling out a wide range of initiatives to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) facing economic pressures such as rising operational costs, reduced tourism flows, and ongoing supply chain disruptions. These measures include rent relief, flexible payment plans, direct financial grants, and cash allowances to ease liquidity constraints. In addition, several firms are offering free marketing, consultancy, and digital support services to help SMEs sustain and adapt their operations. Large organizations are also enhancing business visibility by providing retail space, networking opportunities, and improved access to customers.

Meanwhile, the Dubai government has introduced a \$272 million stimulus package aimed at boosting economic resilience and supporting business continuity. Overall, these coordinated efforts between the public and private sectors demonstrate a strong commitment to protecting SMEs, ensuring their stability, and fostering long-term economic growth in a challenging global environment.

Source: Gulf News, <https://gulfnews.com/business/uae-companies-offer-rent-relief-cash-allowances-to-support-small-businesses-amid-war-1.500497757>

UAE Job Demand Set to Surge with AI and Digital Growth

The UAE is expected to create around one million new jobs by 2030, driven by strong economic expansion, digital transformation, and rapid adoption of artificial intelligence. This represents a 12.1% increase in total employment, one of the highest growth rates globally. Key sectors such as manufacturing, education, retail, finance, and healthcare will generate significant employment opportunities, while energy and utilities are projected to grow the fastest.

At the same time, demand for technology-related roles is expected to rise sharply, increasing by more than 50% and requiring over 90,000 additional specialists. Rather than replacing workers, AI is expected to complement human roles, encouraging companies to invest heavily in reskilling, digital education, and workforce development. Overall, the UAE's strategy highlights a shift toward a tech-driven economy, where collaboration between humans and AI will be essential for long-term growth.

Source: Gulf News, <https://gulfnews.com/business/uae-job-demand-to-rise-by-1-million-by-2030-amid-ai-push-1.500497737>