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**Language:** English

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**About Presenters:**

During a career spanning the world, Debra McDermott has worked with young people in Europe, South America and the Middle East in both tertiary-level education and corporate Learning and Development. Working with organizations such as the British Council, she has gained insight into the challenges faced by educators, employers and young people themselves during the final years of education and transition to employment. Debra is particularly interested in how the knowledge and skills of career practitioners can contribute to an enhanced experience for young people during their early work years. Debra has previously presented at a number of international conferences on topics such as: 'Do they Match? The Compatibility of Learning Styles and Teaching Styles in International Settings.', 'Obtaining Worthwhile Learner Feedback: The Brass Tacks, and 'Once Upon a Time: Storytelling in the Classroom'. Debra is also co-author of an English language course book 'English for the Emirates'.

Dr. Roberta Neault is president of Life Strategies Ltd., home of the internationally recognized Career Management Professional e-learning program. Dr. Neault currently serves as editor of the *Journal of Employment Counseling*, teaches for three Canadian universities, and presents internationally on topics related to career and employee development. Recipient of several prestigious awards in the career development sector, Dr. Neault is known for creative, pragmatic, customized approaches to online or classroom-based learning and research projects. Her research interests include individual and organizational sustainability, the challenges encountered in global careers, and career development within the workplace. Dr. Neault has lived, worked, or travelled on six continents in more than 50 countries – and through e-learning has taught students in countless more. Her dynamic presentations are filled with true stories, practical examples, and a delightful sense of humour.



**Title of Paper:**                    **Let's CHAT! In-House Career Coaching for New Recruits in a UAE Bank: An International Partnership**

**Abstract:**

e-Learning facilitates innovative partnerships across the globe. This presentation showcases a career coaching program customized for a large bank in the United Arab Emirates to support a nationalization initiative. Several countries in the Arabian Gulf are undergoing major drives to enhance the participation of nationals in a workforce presently comprising a high percentage of expatriate workers. In this case example, the goal was to support the school to work transition of young Arab nationals by improving the retention and job performance of new employees recruited mostly from high school. The presenters will share the background and rationale for adopting a career coaching approach, as well as the practical considerations and challenges encountered while implementing the strategy. Evaluation methods and preliminary results will be highlighted.

Organizations globally are facing recruitment and retention challenges. In this UAE example, however, despite a growing unemployment problem, recruitment and retention issues are exacerbated in the private sector due to a traditional preference for government posts. Prior to launching the initiative, focus group and survey feedback from new employees indicated that lack of support after deployment and lack of career direction may be significant factors in early resignations. In addition, management reports of trainee performance and attitude problems were making post-training deployment more difficult.

A career coaching approach was proposed as a means of improving both performance and retention. Implementation involved basic career coach training for HR/nationalization staff; among the many considerations was the issue of cultural diversity as representatives from five different countries participated in the project. Dr. Roberta Neault, of Life Strategies Ltd. in Canada, was approached to develop an e-learning solution. The innovative Let's CHAT! coaching model was customized to be culturally appropriate and useful for career conversations; CHAT is an acronym for Communicate, Help, Appreciate, and Take Action. To better meet the needs of the UAE team, asynchronous online learning was complemented by face-to-face sessions on-site facilitated by Debra McDermott, a training manager within the bank. Valuable lessons learned will be shared, highlighting career coaching as an effective tool for organizations committed to developing young workers.