

YOUNG & ENTERPRISING
HEBA AL FARAZI

ANALYSIS
GCC FOOD SECTOR

REAL ESTATE
SOUQ AL MADINA

CEO TALKS
MOHAMED GALAL

IMAGES RetailME

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October 2019

RETAILNEXT THE NEW WAVE OF PEOPLE, PRODUCTS & PROCESSES



Bahrain BD2.0 | Oman RO2.0 | Kuwait KD1.7 | Qatar QR20 | Saudi Arabia SR20 | United Arab Emirates AED20

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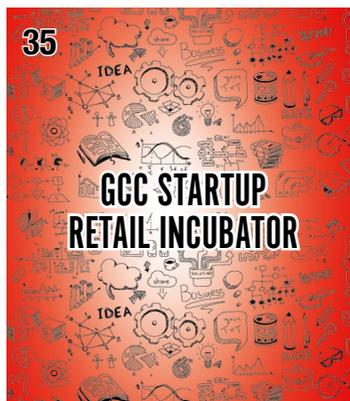
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COVER STORY

We embarked on a journey to create a retail knowledge platform, Middle East Retail Forum (MRF), eight years ago. Since then, MRF has grown and evolved as a unique forum for who's who of the region's retail fraternity to come to gather, interact and share their experiences, ideas, success stories and even failures. Like every year, we have an excellent line-up of speakers converging over two days to share their 'best-kept secrets' at MRF 2019. We have nearly 100 speakers, 100-plus brands from more than 30 retail segments to boast. The finale of the two-day forum culminates in the annual Images RetailME Awards 2019 that recognise best-performing retailers and best practices in the industry, rewarding excellence across a range of retail categories.



DEAR READER

Where is retail heading next?

Do we have an answer to this question? Probably not! That's precisely why we embarked on this journey by creating a retail knowledge platform – Middle East Retail Forum (MRF) eight years ago.

In these eight years, MRF has grown and evolved as a unique forum for who's who of the region's retail fraternity to come to gather, interact and share their experiences, their ideas, their success stories and even their failures.

It is the overwhelming response and enthusiasm shown by the entire retail fraternity from across the region that peps us up to put together a bigger and better forum every year. As usual, we have an excellent line-up of speakers converging over two days to share their 'best-kept secrets'.

Numbers always matter, and it means business. Once again, we have nearly 100 speakers, 100-plus brands from more than 30 retail segments to boast.

We have chosen *Retailnext: the new wave of people, products & processes* as the theme for the 8th edition of MRF this year.

Retail is, and will always remain a people's business. Be that interpreted as customer service, shopper analytics or in-store engagement; people are at the front and centre of every retailer's strategy. There will be discussions on whether retail professionals themselves are innovating and evolving enough to service the dynamic consumers be it millennials or generation Z? What will determine the success of future retail? Will it be people, products, technology or a combination of all these to provide a seamless experience to an evolving consumer? Turn to page 22 for the full agenda.

The finale of the two-day forum culminates in the annual Images RetailME Awards 2019. The awards recognise the best-performing retailers and best practices in the industry and rewards excellence across a range of retail categories.

The 2019 entries are in two parts – submission-based categories and presentation-based categories. We have an impressive line of nominees who are vying for the top spots in their respective verticals. Our eminent jury is busy sifting through the shortlisted nominations in the submission-based categories. The shortlisted nominees in the presentation-based categories will present their achievements live before the on-site jury panel on October 14 at the event venue.

Join us to celebrate retailing excellence and felicitate the stars of the night!



IMAGES RetailME



Editor-in-Chief

Amitabh Taneja | amitabhtaneja@imagesgroup.in

EDITORIAL

Managing Editor

Lawrence Pinto | lawrence@imagesretailme.com

Editor

Rupkatha Bhowmick | rupkatha@imagesretailme.com

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Manager - Business Development

Somesubhra Lahiri | somelahiri@imagesretailme.com

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Graphic Designer

Satish Thapa | satish@imagesretailme.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Jehan Mandap | subscriptions@imagesretailme.com

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SOURCES:

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Published by

IMAGES

PO Box 502316, Dubai, UAE
Tel +971 4 4467555 Fax +971 4 4469707
Email: info@imagesretailme.com • www.imagesretailme.com





MIDDLE EAST RETAIL FORUM 2019

14 & 15 October 2019
Le Méridien Hotel & Conference Centre, Dubai



THE NEW WAVE OF PEOPLE, PRODUCTS & PROCESSES

Retail is – and will always remain – a people’s business. Be that interpreted as customer service, shopper analytics or in-store engagement, people are at the front and centre of every retailer’s strategy. But are retail professionals themselves innovating and evolving enough to service the dynamic consumer universe of today? Along with technology, the future of successful retail

will be determined by the depth of ideas, innovations and people skilled at managing – and benefiting from – the unpredictability of future shopping behaviours. MRF 2019 will bring together the Middle East’s most powerful retail influencers and leaders to focus on the four fundamentals driving profitable innovation in retail: People, Products, Processes and Technology.





October 15
7pm onwards

Le Méridien Hotel & Conference Centre, Dubai

COMMEMORATING RETAILING EXCELLENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The annual Images RetailME Awards, held along with MRF, recognises top-performing retailers and best retail practices in the industry and rewards excellence across a range of retail categories.

We are proud to host the Images RetailME Awards 2019; a ceremony positioned as the most prestigious event of its kind in the Middle East retail calendar and is geared to set benchmarks in this vibrant retail destination.

The 2019 entries are in two parts - submission based categories and presentation based categories. We have an impressive line of nominees who are vying for the top spots in their respective verticals. Our eminent jury is busy sifting through the shortlisted nominations in the submission based categories. The shortlisted nominees in the presentation based categories will present their achievements live before the on-site jury panel on October 14 at the event venue.

The event is presented by Images RetailME magazine, the most widely read trade retail publication in the Middle East, with a 45,000-strong readership across the MENA region. The monthly publication offers unparalleled insight through its network of correspondents, industry analysts and specialists.

Join us to celebrate retailing excellence
and felicitate the stars of the night!



GCC food sector sustains momentum

The food sector in the Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC) states continues to witness a steady growth impetus on the back of rising population, high per capita income and increasing tourist inflow, according to Alpen Capital's GCC Food Industry report.

Growing health awareness and changing lifestyle have altered consumer preferences leading to an increased appetite for organic, packaged and international food in the region. Despite the recent economic slowdown and implementation of value-added tax (VAT), the GCC food sector has demonstrated strong resilience and maintained a steady growth based on governments' support to drive the non-oil economy.

The growing demand for food is supported further by the increasing popularity of modern distribution formats and growing food services segment. Additionally, regional governments are focusing on implementing various food security initiatives to reduce dependency on food imports.

Although Alpen declares the report as an update to its 2017 report, the charts and graphs supporting the study are reflecting 2016 data.

The state of the food industry

Demand for food in the GCC region remains robust on the back of growing population, high per capita income, rising tourist arrivals and evolving consumer preferences. The GCC food sector faced challenging times

in recent years following the economic slowdown and implementation of VAT in Saudi Arabia and the UAE. It has been partially offset by stabilising oil prices and governments' agenda to drive the non-oil economy.

Food consumption continues to grow to meet the changing preferences of an expanding consumer base, supported by modern retail formats and new delivery channels. With limited arable land, the GCC

countries continue to rely heavily on imports to meet their food requirements. Food security initiatives, therefore, remain a priority for the local governments in their efforts to reduce the dependency on imports

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