

MRF 2020
UAE & KSA

SPECIAL REPORT
NRF 2020

MALL WATCH
AL-ANDALUS MALL

CEO TALKS
CHANG SUP SHIN

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February 2020

Evolving face of food & grocery



CONTENTS

News

- 5 AFWME to take place in Dubai
- 6 CÉ LA VI Dubai is now open
- 7 Sumo Sushi & Bento reveals expansion plans
- 8 Arada welcomes Spinneys, Starbucks to Nasma Central
- 9 Ingka Centres acquire London's Kings Mall shopping centre

Focus

- 10 Madar Farms pioneering a new way of living

Young & Enterprising

- 12 Towards a healthier future

Cover Story

- 14 The evolving face of food & grocery

GCC Start-up Retail Incubator

- 22 BRW Society
- 23 Lil' Tots
- 24 Mummyista
- 25 Zest

26 MRF & RetailME Awards 2020



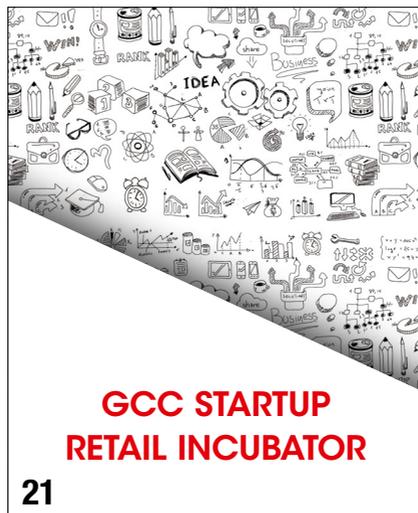
28 MRF & RetailME Awards KSA 2020



Special Report

- 30 Spotlight on more access, more speed, more convenience

12



GCC STARTUP RETAIL INCUBATOR

21

Leisure & Entertainment

- 40 Xstrike popularises a new category of entertainment

Events

- 42 gia celebrates 20 years, honours winners from 31 countries

Food Watch

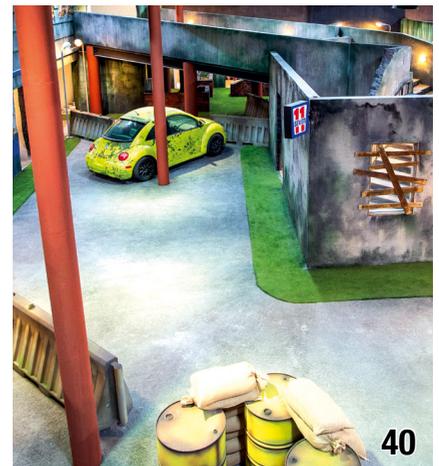
- 44 Wild & The Moon strengthening its tribe

Mall Watch

- 46 Al-Andalus Mall has emerged stronger

CEO Talks

- 48 Raising awareness about Asian food



VOL: 10 ISSUE: 5



COVER STORY

A drive towards everything fresh and healthy; desire to consume sustainably – be that food or packaging; evolving palates leading to the rise of global ingredients and superfoods; need for speed through self-checkouts and doorstep delivery. All these trends dominate the food and grocery landscape in the region...Turn to page 14

Dear reader

Serving customers on their terms

From the cover story – the evolving face of food & grocery to the special report on the ‘Big Show’ – the underlining theme in this issue is serving the customers on their terms.

The trends dominating the regional food & grocery sector are need for speed through self-checkouts to reach customers at or near their doorstep. Regional retailers are also strengthening their presence across channels – online and offline – to offer a seamless experience with convenience.

The UK-based Ocado, a dedicated online grocery retailer launched in 2002, also doubles as a technology company, developing and incorporating artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning and the Internet of Things (IoT) applications into its operations. All these systems were employed to offer the levels of service and customisation that customers seek and demand.

Chris Baldwin, chairman and CEO of BJ’s Wholesale Club, said customers at retailers of all stripes have benefitted from considerable investments to enhance the shopping experience. As a result, consumers today quite simply have more access to products, more information, more speed and more convenience.

One other major takeaway from this year’s Big Show was employee empowerment. “A crucial key to retail success in the new decade is using technology to support employees. Giving data to employees is the single most ROI intensive thing you can do. It increases your conversion rate by 15% and your satisfaction rate by 10%,” said Microsoft CEO, Satya Nadela.

Inspiration, empowerment and better wages were subject of Walmart US president and CEO, John Furner’s session with MIT Sloan School of Management professor and author Zeynep Ton, presenting “Why Retail Jobs Can Be Good Jobs.” Furner was inspired by Ton’s book, “The Good Jobs Strategy: How the Smartest Companies Invest in Employees to Lower Costs and Boost Profits.” Ton, while complimenting Furner, noted that a change is possible even for a low-cost retailer. “The change is not only the right thing to do, offering good jobs, but it’s the smart thing to do from a competitive and financial point of view.”

Do turn to pages 26-27 & 28-29 for announcements on MRF 2020 – UAE and KSA.

Also, look out for RetailME March 2020 edition for the special feature on leisure and entertainment.



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The evolving face of food & grocery



A drive towards everything fresh and healthy; desire to consume sustainably – be that food or packaging; evolving palates leading to the rise of global ingredients and superfoods; need for speed through self-checkouts and doorstep delivery. All these trends dominate the food and grocery landscape in the region.

“Grocery remains the lynchpin of retail where the consumer shopping journey has been evolving over the recent years, driven by technological advancements and shifts in purchasing priorities,” states The Gulfood Global Industry Outlook Report 2019.

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Spotlight on more access, more speed, more convenience



Laurence Pinto

The National Retail Federation's (NRF) annual Big Show is the world's most fabulous showcase for technology designed to create exceptional shopping experiences. Retailers attend the show to listen, learn and benefit out of the knowledge treasure shared.

The annual convention is simply called the Big Show for its scale. It hosts 400+ speakers, 200+ sessions and 40,000 attendees. The show spreads over an area the size of four football fields and showcases more than 800 companies.

What sets NRF aside from the rest of the shows around the world is the professional camaraderie of the American retailers who converge at the Javits Centre in New York every year in large numbers. The show's success also illustrates the clout that NRF enjoys as Washington's most powerful voice supporting the retail industry, the country's largest private-sector employer supporting one in four US jobs - 42 million working Americans.

This year's event took place amid a stable US economy, unemployment at a record low and an average fuel price of around \$2.50 a gallon meant that consumers had money to spend.

The NRF always showcases 'what's now and what's next in retail,' and the 2020 edition was certainly such a spectacle. From keynote addresses by industry luminaries such as Chris Baldwin of BJ's Wholesale, Erik Nordstrom of Nordstrom Department Stores and other top global brands, to educational sessions covering a wide variety of in-store and online topics, to the expo floor packed with vendors and partners, there was no shortage of experiences to occupy the attendees' time.

The confluence of offline and online experiences was the overriding theme of this year's Big Show, as retailers sought to capitalise on the popularity of online commerce while continuing to offer top-notch in-store shopping experiences. The term "click-and-mortar," playing on the traditional "brick-and-mortar" term for a physical retail presence, was dominant throughout the event, driving home the importance of breaking down the online/offline barriers in providing the customer with sheer convenience.



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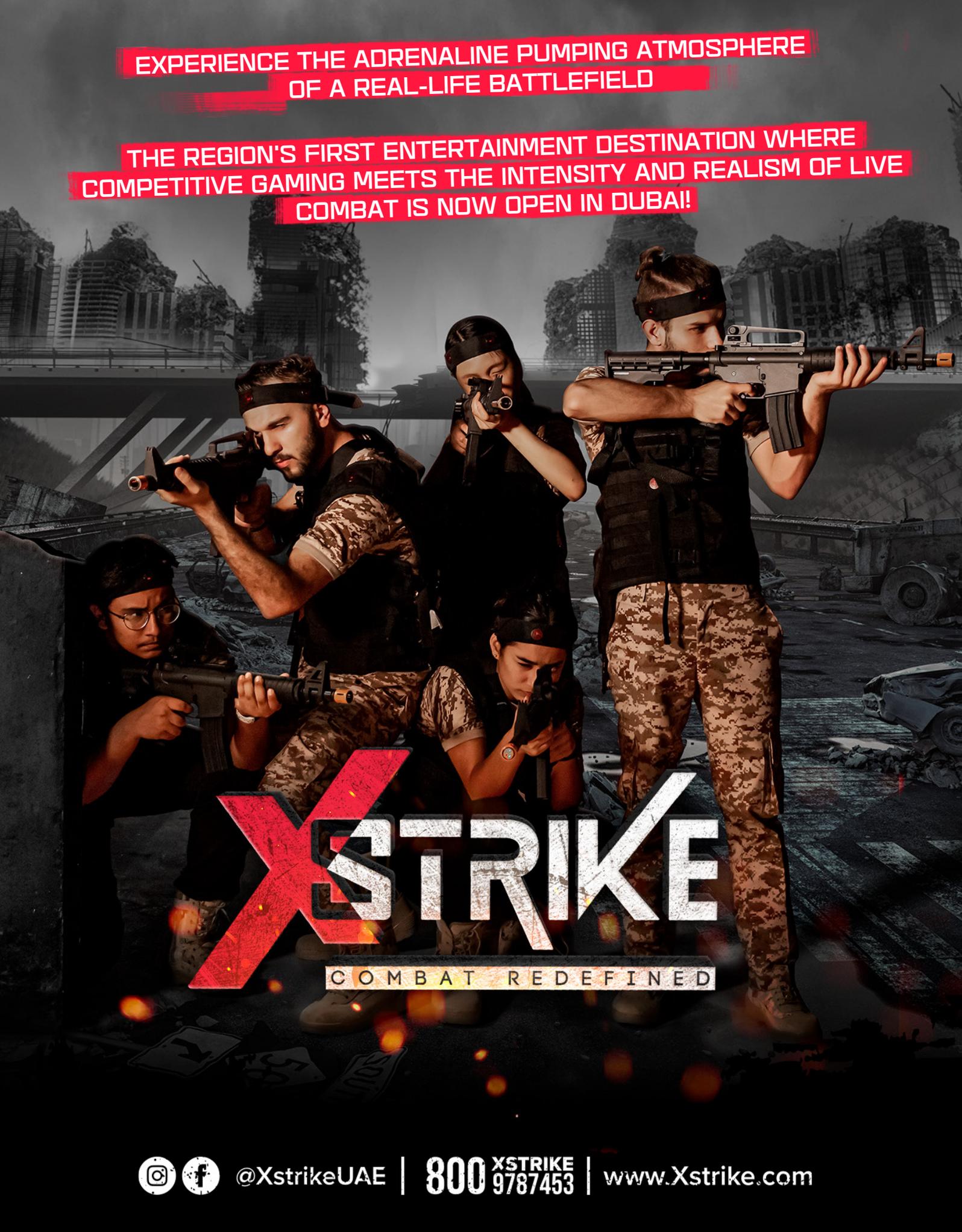


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