

# IMAGES RetailME

Future of Businesses

[www.imagesretailme.com](http://www.imagesretailme.com)

January 2021

~~MASK OFF?~~  
**MASK ON.**





No deed  
too *small*

VISA



# #WhereYouShopMatters

The **#WhereYouShopMatters** campaign changed lives in a matter of months

We believe in using the power of Visa's network as a force for good. This is why we are proud to have created the #WhereYouShopMatters movement, an initiative that encouraged all people around the world to think about the positive impact their shopping can have in local communities.

We partnered with a variety of the region's favourite small businesses and leveraged our network to give them the support they needed. It's with this that we not only grew our Visa merchants, but also gave them a reason to continue doing what they love.



The way you do business **matters**

*The Visa Partners Network gives everything you need and more.*

As a business owner, the most important part of running your business is the decisions you take to make it better. It's with this that we've established the Visa Partners Network. This exclusive portal gives you access to **create deals, special offers** and **promotions** that will unlock a suite of Visa's marketing tools, to drive new and existing customers to your doors.

We're excited to invite you to be part of this by simply signing up on our website, [visa.com](http://visa.com).

# CONTENTS



## Cover

### Will vaccines kill PPE?

In 2020, sanitisers and masks got added to our 'essential checklist before leaving the house', but with the deployment of the vaccines across the globe, are we going to stop carrying sanitisers and using masks in 2021?



### VAT Impact

Although the VAT legislation was put together in agreement with all member states, its implementation wasn't as unified or uncomplicated. We breakdown the nitty-gritties of the GCC VAT implementation.



### Case Study: Majid Al Futtaim's road to recovery

Majid Al Futtaim's data suggests that if current recovery patterns continue, the UAE's retail economy is moving quickly back to 2019 levels. We look at MAF's W-shaped recovery to validate this claim.

- 6** News Updates
- 28** MRF 2020
- 32** Future foresight with Renuka Jagtiani
- 34** Engagement and loyalty - How data and service upped the ante
- 37** Why are some digital transformations not effective?
- 40** The e-commerce surge
- 42** Tech-ing it forward
- 46** Startup Conclave: Survival of the fittest
- 48** RetailME Awards 2020



### Dubai Shopping Festival

The much awaited retail rush of the year is back again bigger and better carrying the burden of being the most important event or retailers.

## Dear reader

### Looking ahead with optimism!

As we look ahead to 2021 with optimism, we cannot quickly leave behind 2020 and the disruption wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic to move on to return to a level of normalcy in the new year.

While it is hard to gain insights from such an unpredictable year that caused a setback on a retail industry that had already begun adapting to new realities and digital strategies, there are lessons that the industry can learn. It may help it to make informed decisions from now on.

E-commerce retailers were quick to rise to the occasion by filling the gaps which pureplay brick & mortar retailers could not fill during and after the lockdowns. The e-commerce sector in the GCC alone is forecast to more than double to \$50 billion in the next five years, up from \$24 billion in 2020, as pandemic-related movement restrictions lead to a shift in the region's shopping habits.

2020 also marked our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and was not an ideal year! However, despite the challenges, what we could achieve as our contribution to the industry was not just remarkable but trendsetting.

The 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the Middle East Retail Forum (MRF) and 10<sup>th</sup> annual Images RetailME Awards was held at Conrad Hotel Dubai on November 25 and were among the first physical events. More than 250 delegates attended the MRF while thousands of others could view the full-day proceedings' live broadcast.

The RetailME Awards ceremony also drew a near houseful audience to witness 20 brands and personalities across 16 categories honoured.

COVID-19 has changed the global economy forever. While vaccines might bring back confidence and normalcy to life, the retail sector might not be the same again. The technology-led disruption with data analytics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, perceptive analytics, and changing consumer behaviour will forever reshape the retail industry landscape.

Look out for our February 2021 edition for more updates and industry insights!



Published by

**IMAGES**

PO Box 502316, Dubai, UAE

Tel +971 4 4467555 Fax +971 4 4469707

Email: info@imagesretailme.com • www.imagesretailme.com



No part of this publication may be reproduced without the prior written consent of the publisher/copyright owner.

# RetailME

- [www.facebook.com/Images RetailME](http://www.facebook.com/Images RetailME)
- [www.linkedin.com/Images RetailME](http://www.linkedin.com/Images RetailME)
- [www.twitter.com/Images RetailME](http://www.twitter.com/Images RetailME)
- [www.youtube.com/Images RetailME](http://www.youtube.com/Images RetailME)



#### Chairman & Editor-in-Chief

Amitabh Taneja  
amitabhtaneja@imagesgroup.in

#### Chief Operating Officer

Justina Eitzinger  
justina@imagesretailme.com

#### EDITORIAL

Managing Editor  
Lawrence Pinto  
lawrence@imagesretailme.com

#### Executive Editor

Shruthi Nair  
shruthi@imagesretailme.com

#### SALES & MARKETING

Sales Manager  
David Vijay  
davidvijay@imagesretailme.com

#### Marketing Manager

Frankline D'Cruz  
partnerships@imagesretailme.com

#### DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Graphic Designer  
Satish Thapa  
satish@imagesretailme.com

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Venus E. Dela Cruz  
subscriptions@imagesretailme.com

**ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION OFFER  
CALL NOW:  
+971 4 4467 555**

#### SOURCES

UN, IMF, WEF, WTO,  
Economic Intelligence Unit, Euromonitor,  
National Statistics, National Statistical Planning,  
National Chambers of Commerce, Department of Tourism and  
Commerce Marketing (DTCM), Dubai,  
AC Nielsen, KFI Research, McKinsey, Al Rajhi Capital, Al Masah Capital  
Ltd, AT Kearney, Alpen Capital, Cushman & Wakefield, IDG, Colliers  
International, CBRE, JLL.

#### Disclaimer:

Every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of information contained in this publication.  
However, the publisher will accept no responsibility for any error or omission in the content.  
Copyright © 2018 IMAGES Multimedia fz llc. All Rights Reserved.

**It's easy to predict  
what your customers  
will want tomorrow  
and be prepared**



**LS Retail**

We make business easy

**Intelligent unified commerce software**  
for retail, restaurants and hospitality

BIG STORY



# ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GCC VAT

Story: Shruthi Nair





CLUB APPAREL

COME  
AS  
YOU  
ARE™

PRIYANKA CHOPRA JONAS  
ACTOR & ACTIVIST  
CLASSIC CLOG & JIBBITZ™ CHARMS

SHOP ONLINE  
[CROCGULF.COM](http://CROCGULF.COM)

crocs™



**Dubai:** The Dubai Mall, Mall of the Emirates, City Centre Deira, Dubai Festival City, Ibn Battuta Mall, Burjuman Centre, Al Ghurair Centre, Mercato Centre, Arabian Centre, Dubai Outlet Mall

**Abu Dhabi:** Al Wahda Mall, Dalma Mall, Mushrif Mall, Bawadi Mall, Bawabat Al Sharq Mall

**Sharjah:** Sahara Centre, Mega Mall

**Ras Al Khaimah:** Naeem Mall



Maria Hatzistefan

# IS SOCIAL MEDIA THE NEW RETAIL FOR WHOLESALERS?

Story: *Shruthi Nair*

**B**ack in the days, you'd need to be an A-list movie star, rockstar, sports star or some kind of "star" to get people running to you with their autograph books and drooling over your stardom. And then came the social media boom that gave everybody a chance to be a celebrity, resulting in similar reactions (well, selfies replaced autograph books) from fans and followers.

While these new celebrities a.k.a. social media influencers individually started realizing the power of the platforms they used, brands and retailers too, albeit a bit late, realised the potential of these platforms to connect with their followers to convert them into customers.

The unprecedented challenges of 2020 made way for the untapped opportunities that lay in digital technologies. The growth in online

shopping has led to the acceleration of alternative shopping habits like social commerce, which is estimated to grow to \$604.5 billion by 2027, at a 31.4% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) between 2020 and 2027, according to Stock Apps.

A good number of e-commerce companies are either already selling or planning to sell via social media. 15% of these companies worldwide are already selling on social media while 25% are planning to start.



# WILL VACCINES KILL PPE? KEYS? CHECK. WALLET? CHECK. SUNGASSES? CHECK. MASKS? CHECK.

In 2020, sanitisers and masks got added to our essential checklist before leaving the house, but with the deployment of the vaccines across the globe, are we going to stop carrying sanitisers and using masks in 2021?

Story: Shruthi Nair



# FUTURE FORESIGHT

The pandemic has created a new set of rules for the survival and revival of the retail industry but there are a few retail leaders who led by example during this tumultuous year to show the rest of the industry how it's done.

Renuka Jagtiani, Chairwoman & CEO of Landmark Group, is one such leader who stepped up to work with her staff for her customers using all the technology that was at her disposal – but this process started much earlier.

"We started investing in e-commerce way back in 2012 when there was very little belief in the region. The first big omni event we did was White Wednesday in November last year. We had Saudi, we opened Kuwait and Qatar and we started our own fulfilment. It's been a big shift but we couldn't have shifted if we hadn't started the journey earlier", she said joining the Middle East Retail Forum virtually from her home.

**The one thing that doesn't change is how you look at priorities. The customer's expectations have changed and the way we approach them should be far more creative and personalized.**



Renuka Jagtiani



# DUBAI SHOPPING FESTIVAL IS BACK BIGGER AND BETTER

The much awaited retail rush of the year that is traditionally known to have generated millions of dollars in revenue, attract hundreds of thousands of tourists, and start the craziest shopping sprees with some mega deals, promotions, events, and innovations that gets every retailer's creative juices flowing is here.

Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment (DFRE) has announced that the 26th edition of Dubai Shopping Festival will take place from 17 December 2020 to 30 January 2021 and this year's festival is going to be the "most important" one yet.

Apart from the usual yearly festivities, retail promotions, family entertainment, live concerts, DSF this year is aiming to be the best yet with new attractions and entertainment options to be added to the already packed calendar of events as well as an integrated digital offering for residents and tourists.

"We are delighted to once again welcome back the Dubai Shopping Festival. The 26th showcase of the world's biggest and longest running retail festival will be the perfect celebration of everything Dubai is famous for – unparalleled family fun, shopping and with a COVID safety approach. As the flagship event of DFRE's packed Retail Calendar of festivities and activations,

DSF has strategically grown over the years to offer incredible customer-centric promotions and activations that drive footfall, boost sales and position the city on the global map as a must-visit retail destination for visitors from around the world. This is our most highly anticipated edition that will bring 2020 to a close and welcome in the start of 2021 in a positive and fun-packed fashion", said Ahmed Al Khaja, CEO, Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment (DFRE).

There are a number of things that makes DSF 2020 different from any the country has witnessed in the previous years. Conventionally, DSF has been an ideal proposition for retail tourism - considering it comes at a time when a good chunk of the expatriate resident population travels back home for the festive season - attracting people from the neighbouring GCC countries, the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia. This year, given people's hesitation to travel abroad, DSF is more likely to target residents of Dubai and the other emirates and encourage them to come out of their homes to spend money within the country.

Throughout DSF, and in line with local regulations, participating events, malls and shopping destinations will strictly adhere to the required Covid-19 precautionary measures. As a

mark of recognition for industry-wide compliance, Dubai recently rolled out the 'DUBAI ASSURED' stamp in collaboration with the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, Department of Economic Development and Dubai Municipality to certify retail establishments, F&B outlets, hotels and attractions that have implemented the necessary public health protocols in order to maintain the health and safety of residents and visitors.

For retailer's, DSF is going to be the ultimate opportunity to clear off their 2020 inventory so they can start the new year with a stronger OTB. During the pandemic, especially the lockdown months, retail sales across the board were disrupted that left retailers with a stockpile of the current and previous season's product ranges that need to be cleared off. Hence, shoppers at DSF this year can expect bundle offers and big basket sales, where there would be more focus on quantity. This is great for shoppers as the deals are going to be very attractive making DSF 2020 an absolute shopper's market.

Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment (DFRE) outlines the key activities, deals, sales, concerts, events and activations taking place across the city during this year's DSF: