

IMAGES RetailMEE

Future of Businesses

www.imagesretailme.com

April 2021



P · E · A · C · E

#WEAR A smile.

FIND YOURS AT REDTAG



      | RedtagFashion | redtag-stores.com

REDTAG.



ANYTIME
ANYWHERE
EXCHANGE



FIND YOUR
SIZE



FASHION
STYLIST



FREE HOME
DELIVERY



INSTANT
GIFTS

Terms & Conditions apply.

CONTENTS

VOL: 11 ISSUE: 6



30

Cover Story:

Doors open, hands shake

The region has witnessed a few massive breakthroughs in the last year. Apart from the announcement of the Covid-19 vaccines, it was the historic Abraham Accords and the lifting of the Qatar blockade that re-instilled a sense of optimism and hope for the business community. But how will these renewed diplomatic relations impact retail?



16

CXO's Seat:

How do luxury retailers leverage data?

Middle East's leading luxury retailer, Chalhoub Group, has been making strides in digital transformation and data integration even before the pandemic. Read the full interview with chief e-commerce officer, Ryan Den Rooijen on Page 16 or watch the full video on RetailME's app.



20

Report:

Lights. Design. Action

Clear pricing, well-stocked shelves, simple displays and prominent signs can help drive profits while improving the shopping experience for customers. In this research report, we examine the importance of visual merchandising in retail with an in-depth analysis, expert opinions and, a case study.

IMAGES
RetailMIE
ICONS

*The 100 most powerful leaders
of the MENA region*

JUNE 2021

NOMINATE NOW



DISCOUNT CULTURE VICE OR VIRTUE?

Story: *Shruthi Nair*

Who isn't a sucker for discounts? Customers today are spoiled for choice and channels, understand their importance and value in the retail chain, and are more aware and knowledgeable of what they want to buy and how they want to buy.

What this does is, it puts absolute control in the hands of the customers, and why not? A retailer's priority must (if it wasn't already) always be its customers and now, more than ever, they have not just come to realise that the customers can't

be taken for granted, but also the importance of empathizing with them by putting themselves in the customer's shoes.

But empathy must be a two-way street, right? If retailers are willing to work tirelessly to understand each individual customer and tailor their offerings to them, customers too need to understand the plight of the retailers who are healing from a very difficult year. Which means they are not in a position now to offer the massive discounts and bundles they could once afford while reducing their margins.

Source: shutterstock.com



HELPING SHAPE THE FUTURE OF YOUR RETAIL OPERATIONS

Honeywell understands the challenges retailers are facing and has developed solutions to help customers during the current health crisis.

To find out more about Honeywell Retail Solutions, please visit:
www.hwll.co/retail or email: sps_meta@honeywell.com

THE FUTURE IS WHAT WE MAKE IT

Honeywell

PERSONALISATION VS PERSONAL CONNECTION

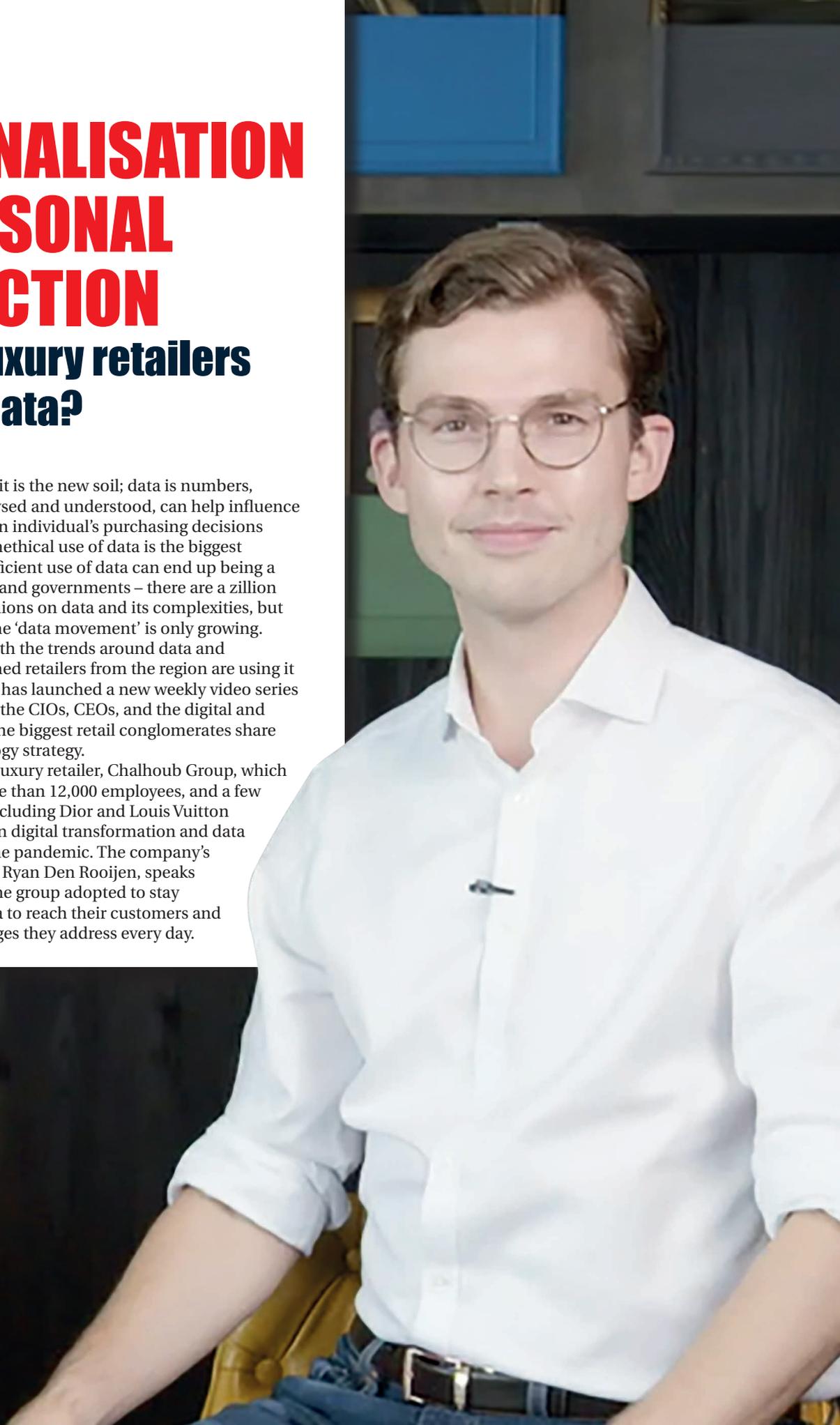
How can luxury retailers leverage data?

Story: *Shruthi Nair*

Data is the new oil, it is the new soil; data is numbers, which when analysed and understood, can help influence everything from an individual's purchasing decisions to full blown elections; unethical use of data is the biggest vice of the decade, but efficient use of data can end up being a gold mine for businesses and governments – there are a zillion polarising views and opinions on data and its complexities, but one thing is for certain, the 'data movement' is only growing.

In order to keep up with the trends around data and understand how established retailers from the region are using it to their benefit, RetailME has launched a new weekly video series titled Up-To-Data, where the CIOs, CEOs, and the digital and data decision makers of the biggest retail conglomerates share insights on their technology strategy.

Middle East's leading luxury retailer, Chalhoub Group, which has about 700 stores, more than 12,000 employees, and a few hundred luxury brands including Dior and Louis Vuitton has been making strides in digital transformation and data integration even before the pandemic. The company's chief e-commerce officer, Ryan Den Rooijen, speaks about the key strategies the group adopted to stay afloat, how they used data to reach their customers and the omnichannel challenges they address every day.





Lay it out right

The art of visual merchandising is more than just about making a store look pretty. When done right with the right kind of architects, investments, and a strategic plan towards achieving a specific objective, visual merchandising can play a vital role in generating money for a store. Clear pricing, well-stocked shelves, simple displays and prominent signs can help drive profits while improving the shopping experience for customers.

Interstore | Schweitzer, a renowned design & shopfitting company with offices around the world, is specialized in developing and implementing concepts for the food and non-food sectors, putting emphasis on product presentation, clear communications and close collaborations with the global leaders of retail.

"In most of our projects worldwide, we bring the stores to a point where they make more money and more margins. Doing a nice store is not complicated but doing a successful store that makes money that the shareholders are happy with, is what we are known for," said Bernhard Heiden, CSO and Creative Director at Interstore | Schweitzer.

Considering majority of the company's clients currently are food retailers, for whom 2020 wasn't a dull or slow year and instead was one of the most active and challenging years, it has been quite busy for Interstore | Schweitzer too.

According to Heiden, it is important to identify what a client has to offer that is different from their competitor and then work towards making them a specialist in their own niche category.

"Migros for instance is the biggest food retailer in Switzerland. A few years ago, all we did was separate the fresh produce from the pre-packed industry produce. Everything that was homemade was arranged in the fresh area and everything that came from industries all over the world was put in another area," he said.

"Just by dividing these categories, we increased the turnover in the homemade section really dramatically," he explained.



TO TECH OR NOT TO TECH?

Story: *Shruthi Nair*

How much technology is too much technology? Technology has inevitably become as standard and mundane as the air we breathe, but it is the where, how, and why, that determines its utility for any business today.

While it is known to make life easier and more convenient, people must realise that an inundation of technology combined with a lack of study and an unclear objective can be expensive, counter-productive and in some cases, catastrophic. It is easy to get carried away with the cool emerging trends, high-tech inventions that are dominating every industry, including retail. But the question every business leader needs to ask is, 'why do I need it and what am I going to gain out of it?'

**A GUIDE TO SHOPPING CENTRES
IN THE MENA REGION**

IMAGES Retail**ME**

**MALLS
IN MENA**

Launching in December 2021
at the Images RetailME Awards Gala -
Top Malls in MENA

VAT IMPACT ON RETAILERS IN OMAN

What should the Sultanate's retailers keep in mind before the implementation of the 5% VAT on April 16th, 2021? Story: *Shruthi Nair*

On 12th October, 2020, Oman announced that it would implement Value Added Tax (VAT) at the standard rate of 5% starting 16th April, 2021. Oman will be the fourth country in the GCC to implement VAT after the UAE, KSA, and Bahrain.

According to initial estimates, the new tax is expected to raise OMR400 million annually to the Sultanate's economy and generate 1.5% of the total value of its GDP. Considering the country's economy shrank 6.4% in 2020, VAT is expected to help with the recovery, albeit modestly.

While basic food commodities, medical and educational services will remain zero-rated i.e. will be exempt from VAT, many elastic goods and services, luxury items, and a few non-essential products will be subject to VAT. So what would this mean for retailers in Oman who trade in products that aren't zero-rated?



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



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