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CLUB APPAREL

WHERE THE FUTURE LIVES: A STORY OF CURATION, COLLABORATION, AND CONNECTION

Story: *Shruthi Nair*

On February 22nd, 2022, the 77ft architectural marvel touted to be the most beautiful building on earth, officially opened its calligraphed doors to the world. Three days later, Museum of the Future's retail shop, seamlessly nestled within the monument, launched as an extension of the overall experience for visitors.

Museums are major repositories of a country's history and heritage, stocks of object and specimens of cultural value. They are also an invaluable contributor to the country's image and economy by extending avenues of recreational and educational tourism. But what is the revenue model of a museum?



DUBAI'S RETAIL JOURNEY FROM TRADITIONAL SOUKS TO LUXURY RETAIL POWERHOUSE

The souk, or marketplace, has stood as the beating heart of ancient cities in Arabia for millennia, serving as the cradle of traditional urban culture in many societies.

Intrinsically linked to the development of cities, architecture and a sense of place, the souk is more than just a mere mode for commercial activity, it was, and remains, an economic institution – if not a way of life.

Woven into the fabric of Arab societies due to their mercantile nature, it is no surprise that Dubai, a century old trading hub, has managed to stake a firm claim in the global luxury fashion arena.

For trade and commerce are not only embedded within the city's DNA, but they are also essentially the foundations upon which it built its glistening global retail reputation.

FROM DUBAI TO THE WORLD

It was the opening of the first modern shopping mall, Al Ghurair Centre in 1981, that truly marked the beginning of the Emirate's retail fairy-tale. One that would see Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment (DFRE) go on to curate Dubai Shopping Festival (DSF) in 1996, which has now become the world's longest running retail festival.

Now home to over 62 per cent of the world's leading brands, Dubai's retail industry is thriving and despite current global challenges, is a major contributor to the UAE's GDP – roughly 14 per cent, superseded only by the extractive industry.

Dubai's wholesale and retail trade sector accounts for around 27 per cent of the Emirate's own GDP, making it one of the largest contributors to its economy, producing value added of AED 105.1 billion (US\$28.6 billion), surpassed only by the tourism sector.

And from the opening of City Centre Deira in 1995, which was then the largest shopping mall in the country, to the opening of the world's largest shopping mall – The Dubai Mall – amidst the global financial crisis in 2008, Dubai's retail sector has reached global heights. Now synonymous with luxury brands and super-sized malls, Dubai is simply a shopper's dream.



RetailME

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Commerce, community, and content are increasingly intertwining, especially in the world of retail, where one can't exist without the other, and refreshingly, this codependence is rather healthy. But the seamless amalgamation of these three components need technology - which for some, is a protagonist, and for others, is a catalyst. But what does technology do for (to) you? It could act as a facilitator and enabler. It could be a driving force that thrusts humanity forward in making life more convenient. And with all the advancements in the digital and virtual spaces, it could also be very scary beckoning the (at the risk of sounding dramatic) death of any social and actual experiences.

Well, there is a cohort of people who have the ability of only viewing technology for its many virtues and not the vices. These people have acquired the ability to exploit the right technologies to benefit themselves and their businesses, equipped with the ability to fight off any terminator-esque phobias associated with it, and use it, therefore, to tie-in commerce, content, and community. At Images RetailME, we like to call them the Tech and Marcom ICONS.

Last year, we launched our inaugural RetailME ICONS series, where we put forth the list of 100

pioneers, visionaries, disruptors and trailblazers of the Middle East's retail industry, who established the large and small retail conglomerates and brands. This year, we aim to celebrate and acknowledge the efforts of the tech leaders within these companies who are bringing the vision and mission of the retail owners to fruition; the founders and tech heads of e-commerce businesses that have disrupted the market and forced traditional retailers to rethink their model; and the marcom chiefs who have elevated the brand's image, value, and customer affinity by changing narratives and driving the company's messaging and purpose.

From leading teams and motivating them to adapt the high-tech tools to ensure smoother inventory management, pricing, and tracking, to crunching data and truly making sense of it in order to make strategic decisions that have changed the game within the company – these retail honchos have been instrumental in bringing and implementing innovations that have led to the transformation of their business as well as elevate the standards of the region's retail portfolio. Through the RetailME Tech and Marcom ICONS list, we aim to celebrate their achievements and acknowledge their contribution to the industry.

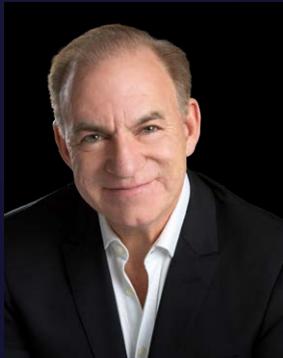
Methodology

This list was put together based on the nominations received, jury scoring, and editorial selection. The retailers that have made it to the list have demonstrated great leadership, provided examples of innovation and transformation, expanded their operations over the years, and have received good testimonies from their industry peers and colleagues. We have also considered factors including total number of retail leadership experience, major initiatives and campaigns they've led, and their contribution to the company's public image and visibility.

The editorial team at RetailME have personally tried to get in touch with all the listees (and/or their teams) to get their bios and some specific questions answered. Some retail leaders have categorically requested to be withdrawn from the list due to company policy or other confidential reasons, in which case we have obliged.

Our aim is to let the world know who the top retail leaders in the region are. However, if you feel that a deserving candidate wasn't featured in the list then please write to editorial@imagesretailme.com

MEET THE JURY



Mark Pilkington

Retail Chief Executive
and Bloomsbury
Author



Tarek Yafi

Head of Retail
& E-commerce
Google



Anna Germanos

Head of FMCG, Retail,
& E-commerce (MENA)
META



Hozefa Saylawala

Director of Sales
- MEA
Zebra Technologies



Amitabh Taneja

Chairman
Images Group



Aref Yehia

Head of Business
Partnerships for Retail
& E-Commerce
TikTok



Justina Eitzinger

COO
Images RetailME



Transforming your Customer Experience

Shopper habits are changing and expectations are higher than ever before. Exceptional experiences make all the difference: boosting sales, loyalty and word-of-mouth marketing.

Your staff ARE your customer experience; our technology gives them the edge!



Connect...

Your team to the data they need, exactly when they need it



Enable...

Them to work smarter, more efficiently and more effectively



Empower...

Your staff to deliver exceptional customer experiences, every time



Discover the Zebra difference at
www.zebra.com/gb/en/solutions/industry/retail.html



Discover the trends and expectations shaping UAE retail

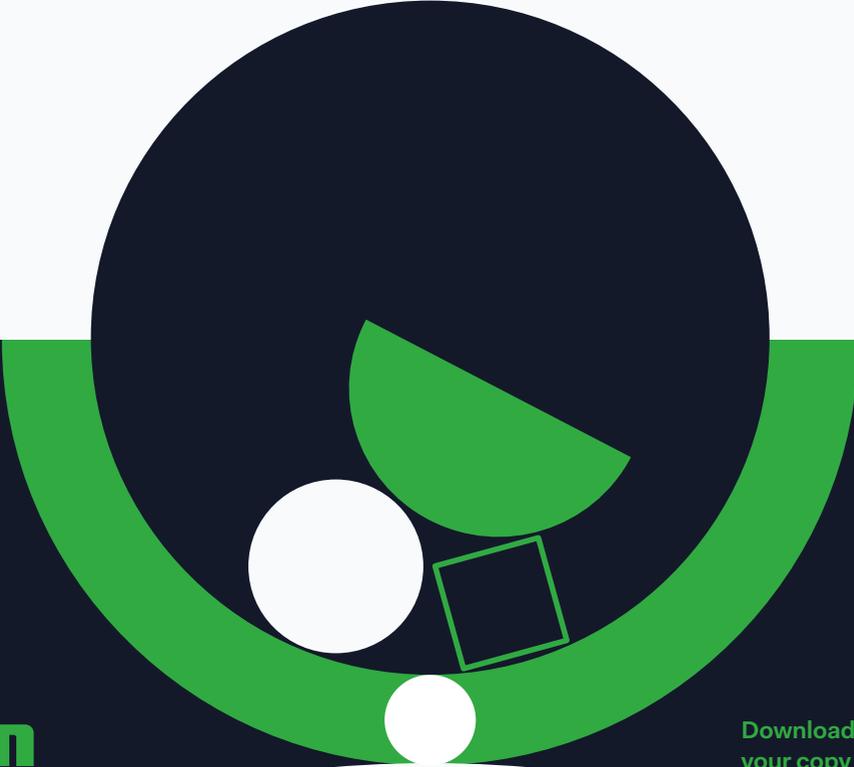
The Adyen Retail Report 2022

Over 200 UAE businesses and 1,000 consumers share insights into top industry challenges and opportunities, and the increasingly vital role of payments technology.

83% of consumers are more likely to shop with retailers that use technology to improve their shopping experience

79% of merchants who connected payments systems across their business grew by 20% or more in 2021

70% of consumers feel retailers need to improve the ways they reward them for choosing their brand over others



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MICHELIN GUIDE DUBAI 2022 REVEALED

Michelin has unveiled the 2022 selection of the MICHELIN Guide Dubai — the first-ever edition in the United Arab Emirates — celebrating Dubai’s spectacular culinary map, that is as vibrant and diverse as it is energetic. A total of 69 restaurants, which covers 21 cuisine types, have been selected and recommended by the anonymous MICHELIN Guide inspectors.

In its inaugural edition, the MICHELIN Guide Dubai 2022 recognizes two 2 MICHELIN Stars restaurants, nine 1 MICHELIN Star restaurants and 14 Bib Gourmand restaurants.

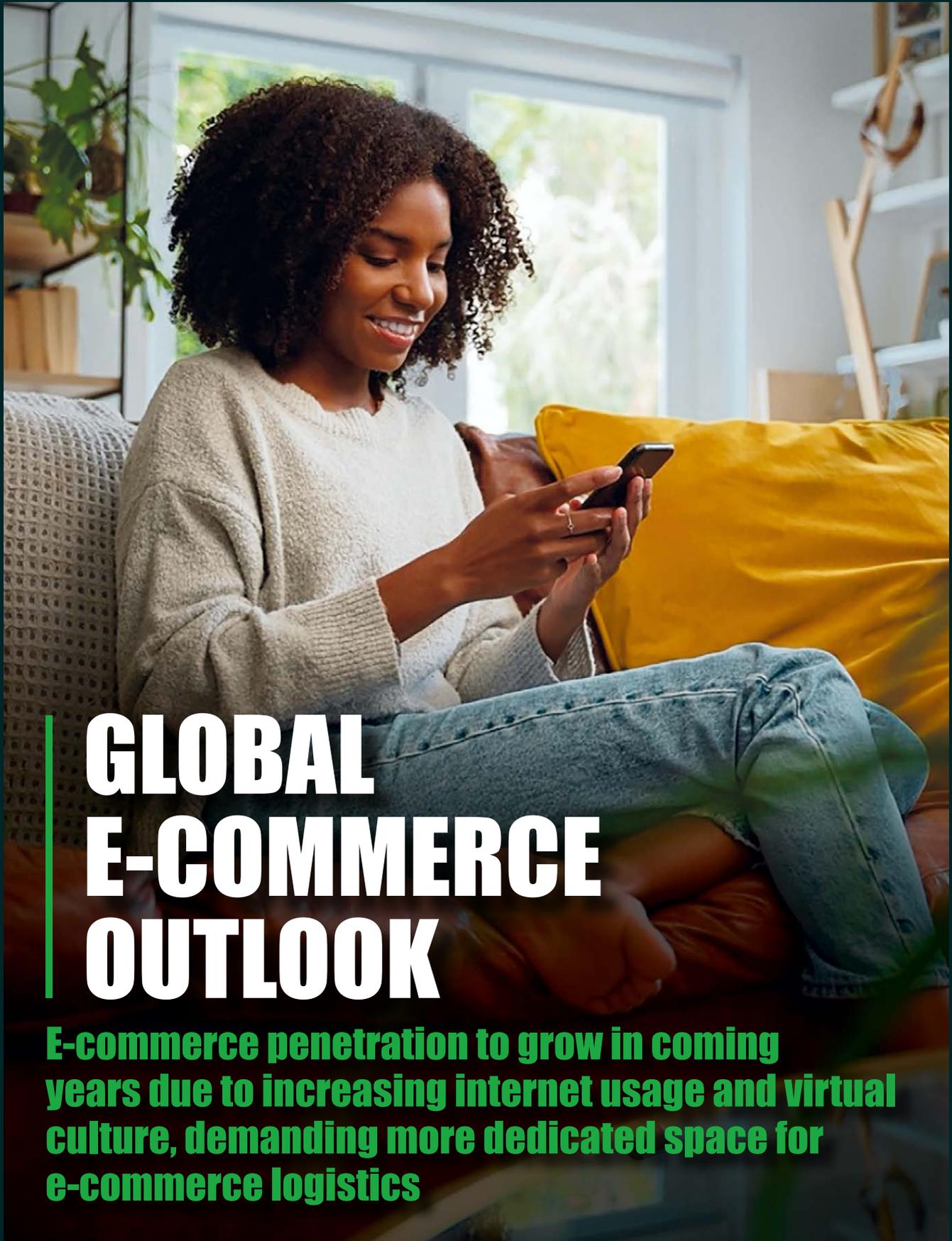
"This very first Dubai selection of restaurants marks a historical moment for the MICHELIN Guide and the Middle East," says Gwendal Poullennec, International Director of the MICHELIN Guide. "What makes Dubai’s culinary landscape so distinctive is its reflection of the more than 200 nationalities that call the city home, delivering an epicurean kaleidoscope. One thing all the restaurants in this fast paced dynamic and elegant city have in common is they are brimming with passion and enthusiasm. Today, Dubai is settled as an inspiring gastronomic destination and we have no doubts that gourmets from all over the world will be seduced by its very unique energy."



RESTAURANT	DISTINCTION
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Il Ristorante – Niko Romito	✿✿
STAY by Yannick Alléno	✿✿
<hr/>	
11 Woodfire	✿
Al Muntaha	✿
Armani Ristorante	✿
Hakkasan	✿
Höseki	✿
Ossiano	✿
Tasca by José Avillez	✿
Torno Subito	✿
Trèsind Studio	✿
<hr/>	
Al Khayma	✿
Bait Maryam	✿
Brasserie Boulud	✿
Fi'Lia	✿
Folly	✿
Goldfish	✿
Ibn Albahr	✿
Indya by Vineet	✿
Kinoya	✿
Ninive	✿
Orfali Bros	✿
REIF Japanese Kushiyaki	✿
Shabestan	✿
Teible	✿





GLOBAL E-COMMERCE OUTLOOK

E-commerce penetration to grow in coming years due to increasing internet usage and virtual culture, demanding more dedicated space for e-commerce logistics

DWELL



BED, BATH AND BEYOND

Story: *Rihea Sadarangani*

Among the various dramatic shifts in consumption habits and behaviours that have come about in the past couple of years is the way people's perspective have changed while buying things. Irrespective of the type of products – fashion, beauty, gadgets – things are broadly classified into home and non-home categories. Athleisure/WFH attire for home, fancier clothes for outside; zoom-appropriate makeup for home, colour cosmetics for outside; smart-home gadgets for, (you guessed it), home, and travel essentials for outside.

Now that the living spaces have become so important, it comes as no surprise that homewares has been one of the best performing non-essentials retail sector as it's been elevated by extended periods inside since the outbreak of Covid-19. Ultimately, these periods have seen many consumers reassess their living spaces, and thus prioritise spending on it.

This provides a brilliant opportunity for retailers in the space and have also urged them to reassess their offerings, diversify their product ranges, and cater to a wider segment. Launched in 2003 by Liwa Trading Enterprises, Dwell has always offered inspirational home solutions including a curated collection of designer brands catering to a variety of tastes. After being a leading retailer of





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Eid *Collection* 2022.