

# IMAGES RetailMIE

Future of Businesses

September 2022

## RESILIENT RETURN BACK TO SCHOOL



The Five Guys Success Story | Breaking Retail Monopolies | Emirati Women's Day 2022  
Overcoming 'Green' Skepticism | State of the UAE Retail Economy



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# Celebrating Emirati Women...

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and institutions. As of 2015, women occupy 66 per cent of public sector jobs, one of the highest proportions worldwide. 30 per cent occupy senior leadership positions associated with decision-making roles. Among the ministers of the UAE government, 9 are women. Female ministers handle the new portfolios of tolerance, happiness, youth and food and water security.

In recent years, the UAE has issued several laws regarding vital women's rights reforms: including passing a new labour law that introduced anti-discrimination and harassment provisions, as well as equal pays and extended maternity leaves. Demonstrating the country's progress in women's inclusion, justice and security, the UAE is ranked 24th among 170 countries, and the highest regionally, in the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security's 2021 WPS Index.

As the nation celebrates Emirati Women's Day in the spirit of acknowledgement, encouragement, and inspiration, we caught up with **Zainab Mohammad Albaloooshi**, Operations Area Manager & Sustainability Site Leader, Amazon MENA to get her insights on working for the region's largest e-commerce employer.

### 1. Describe your career journey at Amazon.

I had just completed my bachelor's degree in Technology Innovation – Security and Networking, and I attended a recruitment fair for UAE nationals organised by the government. At the event, I noticed a sense of excitement at Amazon's booth, where the employees were speaking passionately about their own careers and experiences at Amazon. I was immediately drawn to the vibrant environment at the booth, which I

Among the many stigmas attached to the Arab world includes the (false) consensus about how oppressed its women are. Undeniably, we are still far from the levels of equality we ought to be at when it comes to opportunity or pay, but sadly that applies to the whole world. In the Middle East, the UAE has come a long way in trying to ensure representation, diversity, and inclusivity in the government as well as private sector. In order to serve as a reminder of the achievements of its women and also of the constant and consistent measures that need to be taken across the board to ensure equality, the UAE commemorates August 28th as Emirati Women's Day each year. The choice of August 28 as the date coincides with the founding

of the UAE's General Women's Union, which launched in 1975, on August 28. It focuses on Emirati women – their aspirations, challenges, accomplishments and areas of continuing progress.

This year's theme, "**Inspiring Reality... Sustainable Future**", was announced by Her Highness Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak Al Nahyan, aiming to highlight the ambitions of Emirati women for making the nation a better and prosperous place. Over the course of the last 50 odd years, the UAE has implemented a number of initiatives for the economic empowerment of women in the UAE. In December 2012, the Government issued a decision on the mandatory membership of Emirati women in the Boards of Directors of federal bodies, companies





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# Stepping In

## To Break Monopolies and Fill Gaps

Story: *Shruthi Nair*



When I asked some of my colleagues and friends where they shop from locally, they mentioned brands like Centrepunkt, Aldo, Mango, Zara, Carrefour, Sun and Sand Sports, LC Waikiki, and the ones that like to splurge mentioned Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Dior and the likes. The 'usual suspects' were the brands retailed by a handful of known retailers that have been established in the region for a decade or more. However, when asked about where they shop from when they are travelling, they ended up mentioning a range of different brands, many of which aren't available in the region.







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# Go Green Or Go Home

Story: *Shruthi Nair*

**Let's be honest. There is no such thing as a fully sustainable company and retail as an industry is bad for the environment. But does this mean, it is time for retailers to stop.. well, retailing? No. People will continue to have needs and businesses will keep capitalising on this need to provide them with the products and services they want. Moreover, retail is one of the biggest employers in the world, so the solution in no way is to shut down operation. Retailers would need to continue doing business, but they'd just need to do it better.**



Sustainability and social consciousness aren't seen as a nice-to-have offering for businesses anymore, as more and more customers are demanding it. And today, its no longer just enough for the businesses to say they are sustainable but they also need to prove it to their now more-informed and aware customers.

A well-implemented ESG (Environment, Social, Governance) Program can be hugely beneficial for a company both from a commercial (investor) as well as a consumer standpoint. ESG criteria are increasingly used by investors and REITs to judge

which companies to back. To shoppers, especially Gen Z and millennials, sustainability and social standards are increasingly becoming important such that nearly six in 10 consumers surveyed by IBM were willing to change their shopping habits to reduce environmental impact. Now, top brands that include sustainability in their values also prefer retail partners and spaces that support their ESG initiatives.

Many retailers globally have actively adopted measures to let the world know that they are pro-environment. **Amazon** and **Target** are both seeking net-zero carbon certification for new store



# Five Guys and its Thirteen Stores

*The story of a not-so-fast, yet-so-fresh food joint that is bringing a bit of America to the UAE, one burger at a time.*

**W**e live in a world where flashy billboards, loud ads, in-your-face colours and marketing slogans are viewed as the only way to be seen and heard. The rat race is even more prominent in the digital domain with brands trying really hard to compete for the attention of potential customers whose content retention levels are very low.

Some brand campaigns and advertisements, however, have been far more effective (memorable) than others. Who doesn't know about the McDonalds v Burger King rivalry? While the ads have entertained us and encouraged some healthy competition, it's not just fun and games for these companies. According to Statista, McDonald's spent approximately \$459.9 million on

advertising worldwide in 2021 and Burger King spent \$287 million in the US alone in 2020. In fact, marketing and advertising has played a huge role in the brands' overall success and global performance. McDonald's was the first fast-food chain to spend 1% of its overall sales on advertising, something that was unheard of in the 1960s.



# Fusing Fashion and Sports

## From Scandinavia to The Middle East

Story: *Shruthi Nair*



J Lindeberg was started by Johan Lindeberg in the 1990s with the aim to revolutionise sports fashion, specifically golfing fashion. Golf has been a rather fashionable sport right from its inception consisting of tweed suits with vests and, if knickers were chosen as trousers, knee-high stockings to complete the outfit back in the 1880s.

In the 1920s, Prince Edward of Wales, influenced golf fashion with his dashing personal style, especially in his choice of traditional Fair Isle patterned knit pullover sweaters

and argyle socks. The knickerbockers of the previous century were the preferred trousers at this time, but now were cut four inches longer than the older version, making them baggier at the knee.

As with most fashion apparel, with time, it evolved with more brands capitalising on sports to sell products. However, Golfwear somehow did not have much competition, which is why Johan Lindeberg decided to fill that gap in the market. The Scandinavian Fashion House was founded in 1996 with the

vision to cater to modern and aware consumers who lead an active lifestyle. Today, the brand operates close to 90 stores across 35 countries and recently announced its launch in the Middle East with its flagship store in Dubai Mall.

"J.Lindeberg has a strong global presence and the annual turnover globally is SEK 1.2 Billion (Swedish krona) excl China. Approximately 18% of online sales come from the brand's own e-commerce platform and 18% come from third-party e-commerce sites. We look at business from a global perspective



www.middleeastretailforum.com



# Unfolding Retail Stories

November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022 | Dubai

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# Lenskart strengthens footprint in Dubai



Asia's biggest eyewear brand Lenskart announced the opening of its 7th retail store at the Dubai Hills Mall. The new outlet continues the company's Omnichannel approach and will feature state-of-the-art Artificial Intelligence technology in the form of a 3D Try-On machine integrated with virtual face-mapping that suggests suitable frames to. The innovative store will also feature The Sun Room – a trial room that replicates the outdoors for optimal testing of sunglasses. Much like Lenskart's other outlets, the New Dubai Hills Mall store will also offer free eye tests for wearers of prescription glasses.

The brand's extensive product range is also available online and via the Lenskart App.

"We are a fashion-forward and lifestyle-oriented brand. With each store launch, we grow our purpose of transforming customers' lives through innovation and personalized attention. By establishing our presence in the UAE, it enables us to appeal to new audiences and continue establishing ourselves as a true market leader within the region," said Sudhir Syal, Chief Business Officer - the Middle East at Lenskart.

"Within our first year of in-country operations, we project that Lenskart will become a market leader in the UAE, reaching profitability when it hits \$10 million in sales. To secure 25% of the region's US\$3.5bn ocular market share by 2026, we will open four more stores by end of the year. Looking ahead, we will focus on the launch of our merchandise collections created specifically to cater to the local Emirati population. We aim to reach 20 physical stores in the UAE by March 2023," he added.



# LIWA announces expansion of six new OVS stores over the next six months



**L**IWA Trading Enterprises announces its expansion of six new OVS stores throughout Dubai by February 2023. OVS, Italy’s leading apparel fashion brand for men, women and children has grown significantly since its launch in the UAE. LIWA opened its first OVS store in the UAE in Abu Dhabi Mall and Yas Mall in November 2018. With the demand for shopping at an all-time high, LIWA is expanding the brand’s presence to the community, giving customers more locations to shop for their favourite apparel.

The brand, originally founded in 1972 in Venice, was initially called ‘Magazzini Oviessse’. The 1970s and 1980s saw the store sell apparel goods from household items, sporting equipment, toys, perfumes and leather goods. In the current day, the modern store is located in the heart of Milan and the fashion brand has since grown rapidly worldwide offering everyone the freedom to dress with Italian style. LIWA has grown the brand by opening locations in the UAE and now expanding to additional store fronts, showing its continual commitment to the brand.

The expansion plan covers six stores throughout Dubai in the next six months. The first store will be at The Dubai Mall in September, followed by Silicon Central Mall, Deira City Centre Mall, Dubai Outlet Mall, Dubai Hills Mall and then Ibn Battuta Mall. These openings are set to take place by February 2023.

Commenting on the expansion, David Hall Marketing Manager of LIWA Trading Enterprises, said: “With the increasing excitement from our consumers to be able to shop for their favorite items, we wanted



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