

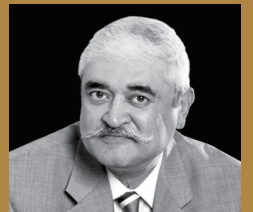
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MENA Retail OUTLOOK 2023 & Beyond



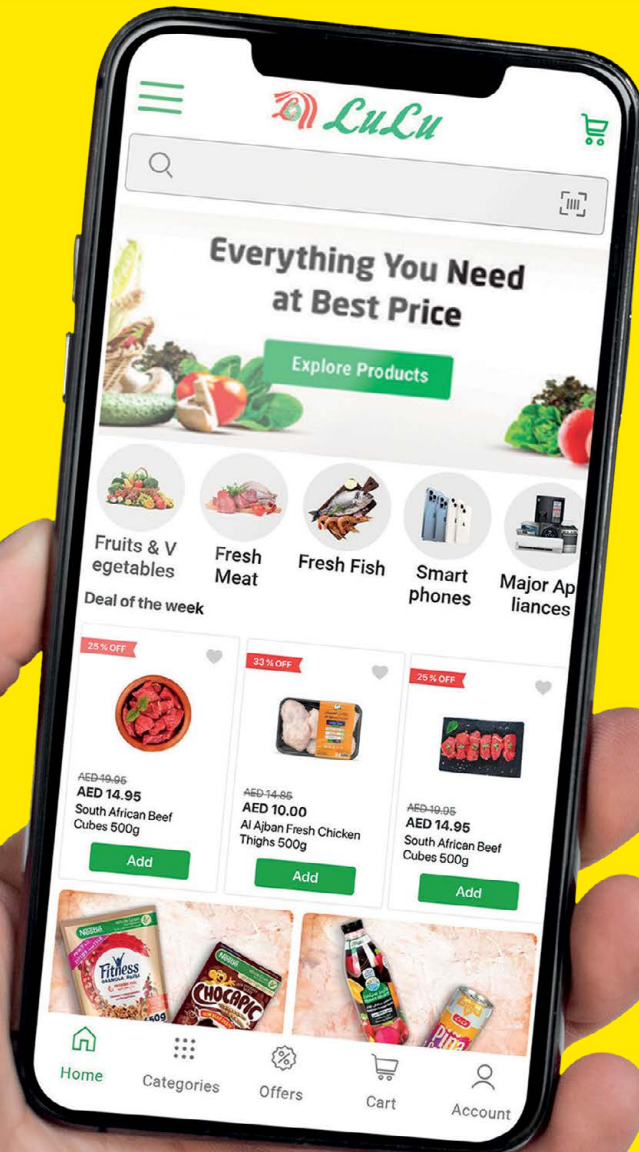
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Sharmila Murat
Chief Investment Officer,
Chalhou Group

Chalhou Group's four pillared growth strategy to focus on investments in brands and technology, new business models and geographic expansion.

A peep into Chalhou Group's four pillared growth strategy

In an exclusive interview with **Rupkatha Bhowmick**, Chief Investment Officer **Sharmila Murat** shared Chalhou Group's four pillared strategic growth outlook focused on investments in brands and technology, new business models and geographic expansion.

By 2023 the GCC luxury market is projected to reach \$11 billion, indicated Chalhou Group's "GCC Personal Luxury in 2021: A Story of Early Recovery and Growth" report that was created in collaboration with the Fashion Commission of Saudi Arabia. Despite headwinds such as inflationary pressures, currency volatility and continued supply chain disruption the outlook for the GCC luxury market is positive.

As the GCC luxury market continues to gain momentum Chalhou Group has developed a strategic growth plan to keep pace with changing market dynamics, evolving customer expectations & shopping behaviours and accelerated digital transformation.

In 2020 Chalhou Group saw a major change as key third generation family members joined the business. "It meant changing the way we were organised and rethinking how we would grow going forward. One element of that growth involved strategic investments. So, we laid out four pillars to accelerate growth through investments," Murat shared.

- Invest in brands to become brand owners. Historically, Chalhou Group partnered with brands and even created some of its own brands.
- Invest in new business models to find new ways to reach consumers who have changed the way they interact with and consume products including but not limited to online shopping accelerated by the pandemic.
- Invest in retail technology and tools to make the business more agile while serving consumers better.
- Invest to expand geographically.

"Alongside the four pillars we also laid out ways of investing. On one hand, we could invest as venture capitalists do in early-stage high growth business getting minority stake. On the other hand, we could also consider more traditional buyouts, mergers and acquisitions and own majority stake."



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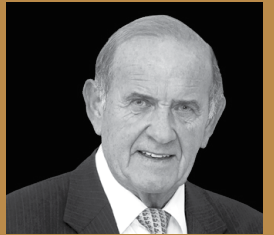
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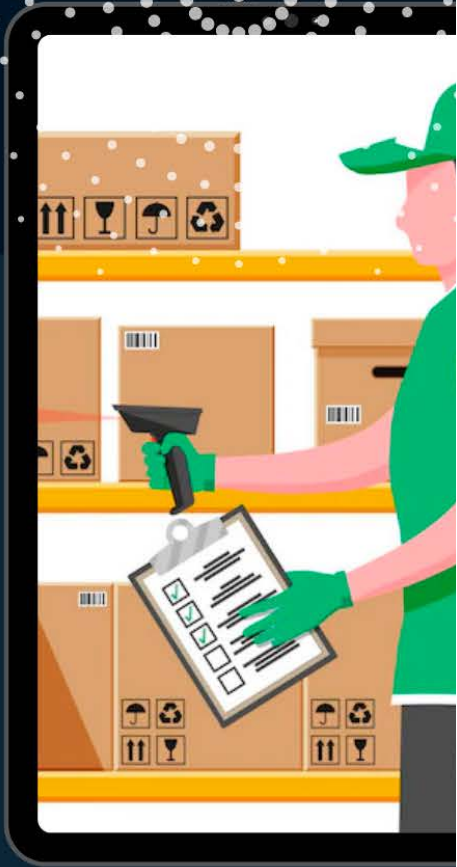




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“ In 2023 e-commerce growth will be fuelled by structural trends such as increasing digitalisation, conscious consumerism, access to previously inaccessible markets and growing convenience-driven value propositions from retailers. ”



The Middle East history will forever remember 2022 as the year of many firsts. From the World Expo to the FIFA World Cup and so much in between the year was characterised by sustained levels of activity.

Among the foremost beneficiaries of heightened economic activities was the retail industry, which continued its digital transformation as brands ramped up their omnichannel pursuits. The International Trade Administration expects the number of Saudi e-commerce users to reach 33.6 million by 2024, a 42% increase from 2019.

So, what are the drivers behind the e-commerce industry's promising outlook?

In an exclusive Q&A with RetailME Imteyaz Khan, General Manager – KSA, REDTAG, a leading value-fashion and homeware brand in the region, touched upon trends and how they could play out in 2023.

Let's start with your thoughts on the pulse of the e-commerce industry, globally and regionally.

The e-commerce industry is primed for significant growth in 2023. However, the driving factors are different from those in the last couple of years, when COVID-19 and the 'pandemic habits' underpinned e-commerce growth. In 2023 growth will be fuelled by structural trends such as increasing digitalisation, conscious consumerism, access to previously inaccessible markets and growing convenience-driven value propositions from retailers.

In the region, especially in KSA, where the demand economics are strong, smartphone penetration is one of the highest in the world and sociocultural reforms are defining consumer choices, the e-commerce industry is set for about 20% growth in 2023. The traction of e-commerce in the region exceeds the corresponding rate in global markets because of the good demographic dividend (young population) and a sense of 'newness' associated with online shopping.

3D (Demand, Data, Delivery) to drive e-commerce growth in the Middle East in 2023

Silicon Central welcomes Sharaf Retail brands



Dubai's latest lifestyle and shopping destination Silicon Central recently welcomed brands from Sharaf Retail with the opening of three stores. These include fashion and accessories label Forever 21; fashion brand Cotton On; and Australian active and loungewear brand for women Cotton On Body.

Commenting on the openings Salim MA, Director, Lulu Group said, "Our aim is to meet the evolving consumer needs and Sharaf Group brands at Silicon Central add value by offering more variety and convenient shopping experience. As more shops open and with upcoming events we hope to offer shoppers opportunities to create memorable moments at the mall."

"With three outlets opening at Silicon Central, we hope to add value to the retail mix and expand our retail footprint by bringing shoppers the best styles, choice and value across our brands. We are delighted to work with the team at Silicon Central and Line Investments & Property and wish them great success," added Yasser Sharaf, Vice President Retail & Financial Services, Sharaf Retail.

In addition to Sharaf Retail outlets, other new shops at Silicon Central include Max, Starbucks, Bath and Body, Haagen Daz, PappaRoti, Flormar, La Senza, Cutting Edge Salon for Men, Splash, Smart Vape and UFC Gym.

With a total of 81,500 sqm GLA and 3,500 car park spaces Silicon Central offers a broad mix of brands tailored to ensure complete satisfaction for

shoppers. Adding to the unique shopping experience, a diverse range of dining options will comprise 24 casual dining restaurants and cafés as well as 21 food court units making it the perfect place to catch up with friends and families.

Silicon Central is strategically positioned 12 km from the city-centre and 15 km from Dubai Airport in Dubai Silicon Oasis. It is the first eco sustainable district in Dubai focused on low carbon footprint and technologies such as artificial intelligence. Silicon Central is conveniently located near the Dubai Al Ain Road where more than 350,000 cars pass by every day. The mall aims to offer a host of new retail outlets to the nearby community of 400,000 people as well as students attending the universities in Academic City. ●



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