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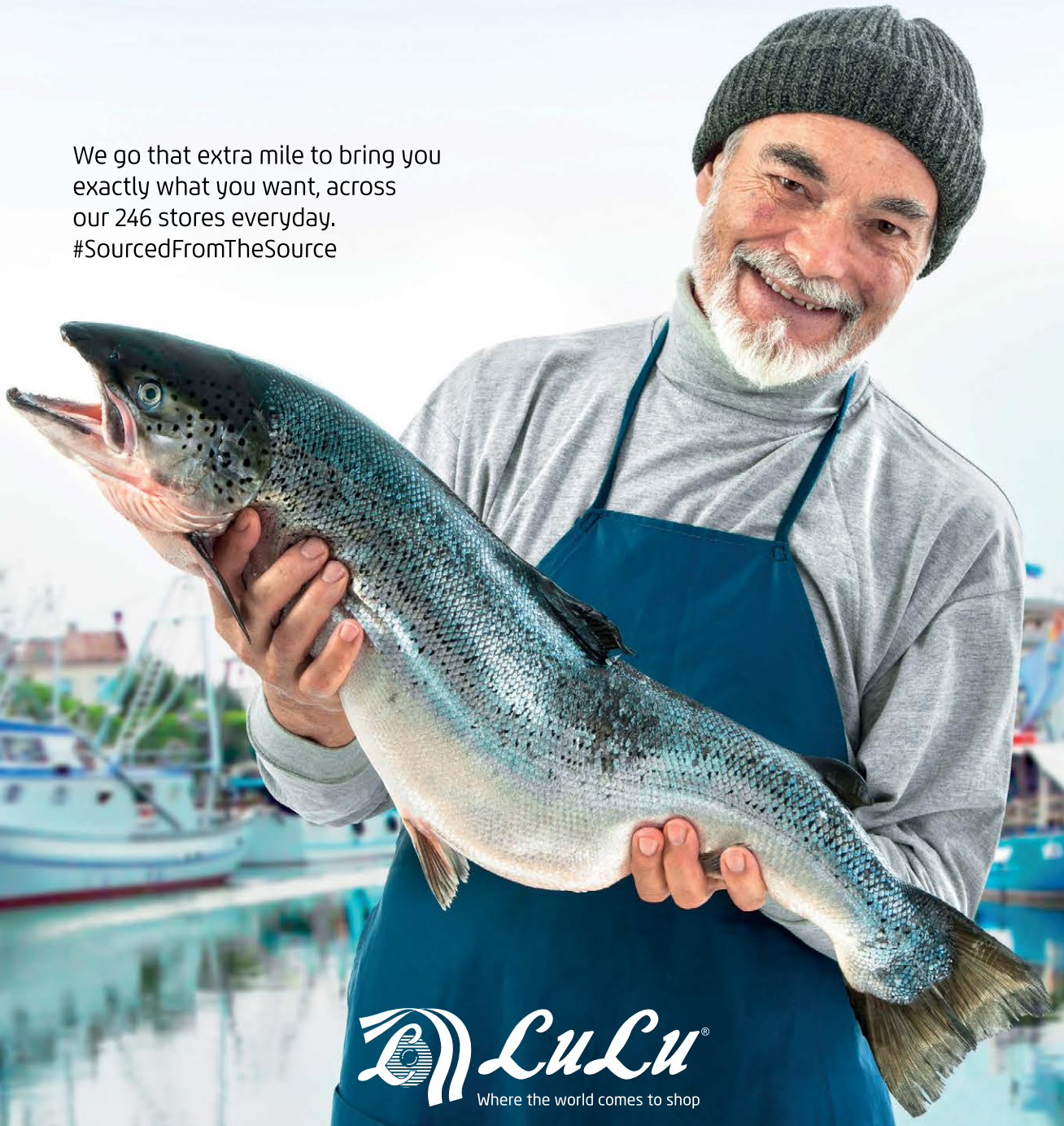
EVOLVE | ENTERTAIN | ECO-CONSCIOUS: 3ES DOMINATING MENA GROCERY RETAIL



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Jones the Grocer is looking at a **20-25%** revenue growth in **2023**.



We don't want to open 100 STORES in a year



Dubai headquartered artisan café, bakery, patisserie, gourmet grocer, deli and cheese monger Jones the Grocer has announced global expansion into the UK. The plan is to open two venues including Jones the Grocer and Jones the Grocer Express at London's Heathrow Airport in 2023. The brand also plans to enter Saudi Arabia this year.

Even as Jones the Grocer is preparing for expansion in the Middle East and beyond, CEO & Owner **Yunib Siddiqui** emphatically said, "We don't want to open 100 stores in a year. We are looking at slow yet steady and well-thought-out growth."

By Rupkatha Bhowmick

A quick look at the backstory

Making an incredible mark on Sydney, Australia's culinary scene Jones the Grocer was founded in 1996 by Lindsay Jones-Evans. It became a very popular suburban neighbourhood destination with a cheese room, café and the option to do groceries. Within three years or so Evans sold the business to another Australian from Melbourne.

That's when the brand opened outlets in New Zealand, Singapore and finally came to the Middle East in 2008-09 when Siddiqui opened Jones the Grocer in the UAE. The brand grew very quickly in the region and "became bigger than the mothership in size and revenues". At a certain point the former owner sold a majority stake to private equity firm L Capital, part of LVMH. And by 2019 Siddiqui acquired 100% of Jones the Grocer's intellectual property and "rather fortuitously" closed the outlets in Australia and Singapore.

"We were fortunate in not acquiring those businesses because when the pandemic hit, both Australia and Singapore witnessed prolonged periods of lockdowns. So, we ended up with a fairly clean business in the Middle East."

So, what's next?

"We will enter Saudi Arabia with three confirmed outlets set to open between the first and second quarter of 2023," Siddiqui responded.

Currently Jones the Grocer has 33 locations in the Middle East (the UAE and Qatar) and India (Bengaluru). With several outlets in the pipeline in various stages of development the count will go up to 41 by the end of 2023 showcasing the brand's steady regional and global expansion.

Alongside community and airport-based locations, mall-based locations are also on the brand's radar. Historically, Jones the Grocer hasn't been a mall-based concept, as Siddiqui confirmed, preferring to be located in the heart of communities. However, the brand can now be found in mall-based locations such as Dubai Mall and Mall of the Emirates in the UAE.



All's well if it ends well: Reinventing retail in a VUCA world

Global retail industry leaders and tech innovators came together at the annual National Retail Federation 2023 Retail's Big Show. Conversations ranged from rethinking consumer and associate experience to collaboratively future-proofing retail, how sustainability, diversity, inclusivity and wellbeing are all becoming business imperatives...

An exclusive report by *Justina Eitzinger*.

If revenge networking or smart shopping is a thing, then the 113th National Retail Federation (NRF): Retail's Big Show 2023 at Javits Centre in Manhattan, New York, showcased just that! The snowstorm that hit New York only two weeks prior to the event, a looming recession and the rise in Covid numbers – nothing stopped the global retail fraternity and ecosystem to gather for a super showcase, shopping intent and discussions on technologies, trends and best practices driving the retail world forward.

Quite like seeing your friends after a long period of hiatus, retailers and solution providers turned up with shopping budgets, high energies, curiosity, great ideas and notable experiences gathered over the past three years that were albeit challenging but also offered untapped opportunities to pivot and evolve.



John Furner
President and CEO
Walmart US

“This past year was a historically challenging time. We did see some relief from the pandemic, but we also saw extreme challenges with global supply chain that collided with surging demands, a shift in sectors from goods to services, high inflation levels that we haven't seen in decades and the start of a war. But we should really be proud of retailers all around the world who rose to meet those challenges head on. We did what we do best; first, we served customers, we got them what they wanted and what they needed, amidst macroeconomic challenges. Second, we innovated. We moved fast to meet the customer's changing needs,” said John Furner, President and CEO, Walmart, US in his opening remarks.

Along with the leading tech players such as Google Cloud, Microsoft, Zebra, Wipro, Salesforce, several startups and lesser-known brands were at the show

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MONOPRIX



Amid lingering impact of inflation and despite continued supply chain disruption MENA's food and grocery retail landscape is evolving.

With multi-directional changes being order of the day – such as preference to shop online for convenience and offline for experience; a genuine desire for sustainable solutions and product ranges; and continued demand for tech-enabled features – the regional grocery retail market is being redefined.

In our annual feature on MENA's grocery retail market, we have spoken with established and emerging regional players about their innovation strategy and growth outlook for 2023 that will ultimately reshape the landscape. Read on to know more...



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Hybrid is the way ahead

In a Q&A with **Nick Batey, General Manager, Marks & Spencer MENA, Al Futtaim Retail** we discussed how the brand is digitally enabling experience centres (offline) and creating delightful and personalised experiences online.

[By **Rupkatha Bhowmick**]

Hybrid shopping is the primary buying method for 27% of consumers, found an IBM study, with 36% of Gen Z opting for hybrid over any other generation. While brick-and-mortar may not be the only place to shop at 72% of consumers still rely on stores to make their purchases. Yet, interestingly, 71% of consumers are keen to use self-checkout and 64% look for order online and pick-up in-store option.

Embracing hybrid or phygital is indeed the way forward for brands to have meaningful conversations with customers. For instance, Marks & Spencer MENA that's part of Al Futtaim Retail in the region leverages the Al-Futtaim Blue loyalty programme through which the brand targets key customer segments and offers them personalised birthday offers when they visit stores.



Nick Batey
General Manager
Marks & Spencer MENA
Al Futtaim Retail

In an exclusive Q&A **Kerem Atasoy, VP, Commercial – FARFETCH Platform Solutions** spoke about the platform's innovation strategies for 2023.



Creating a compelling customer journey

Innovation sits at the heart of FARFETCH, a global platform for luxury fashion. From building a bridge between fashion and crypto cultures to leveraging sustainability-centric solutions FARFETCH is continually looking at new ways to create a compelling customer journey.

By Rupkatha Bhowmick

“The products we build will leverage the intersection between the retailer, the environment and the consumer to deliver a truly personalised customer experience powered by tech.”

Let's start with FARFETCH's major milestones over the past 12 months?

Starting with the announcements of several key strategic partnerships with leading international brands including Reebok, Bergdorf Goodman, Neiman Marcus and Ferragamo. Another huge moment was the launch of our first Japanese FARFETCH Platform Solutions partner, Sacai. Furthermore, the partnership with Yoox Net-A-Porter/Richemont was a milestone. This partnership will leverage FARFETCH's technology platform to advance our Luxury New Retail programme and see YNAP adopt FARFETCH Platform Solutions to facilitate its shift towards a hybrid retail marketplace model. Richemont will adopt FARFETCH Platform Solutions to advance the delivery of the omnichannel strategy of its maisons, which will also join the FARFETCH Marketplace, boosting, among other categories, FARFETCH's watches and jewellery offering.

Technology if leveraged well can drive great experiences. How do you leverage technology in your business?

The products we build will leverage the intersection between the retailer, the environment and the consumer to deliver a truly personalised customer experience powered by technology. This will not only help in expressing a unique brand identity but also create an emotional connection with the consumer. We have built platform technology which not only connects retailers to all their inventory globally (stores, warehouses etc) but the platform's eConcessions model enables brands to connect this inventory to a global audience. This technology is designed to maximise sell-through at every customer touchpoint globally.



Inventory Counting: In-House or Outsourced?

By Stéphane Pignard, General Manager, Altavant

Whether you conduct stocktaking in-house or choose to outsource, you should always be looking at ways to speed up the process while ensuring accuracy, so nothing is counted incorrectly. While there are arguments for and against both methods, it boils down to what you're more comfortable with and how you'd like your stock to be managed.

Stocktaking In-House

You may already be comfortable conducting your stocktaking in-house, simply because you know your own products, you know your staff and can do this wherever, whenever and whichever method you want. Importantly, if there's a problem, you're in full control to fix it.

However, one of the downsides of conducting stocktaking in-house is how long it takes. This might be due to your current stocktaking method such as using pens, paper & Excel. You also need to train and schedule your staff accordingly and make sure they know how to use Excel properly.

A solution to this would be using a completely different method, something more modern and easier to use & manage. This is what Datascan has been made for. Datascan will reduce your own stocktaking in-house by around 66%. This way, you will still be able to oversee your staff performing their counts. You will have your own management platform to check counts, reports, audits, and no more checking individual papers or Excel files.

Here are some quick benefits of using Datascan in-house:

- Digital based counts
- Access to your counts on your computer, phone or tablet
- Instant reports
- Multiple users counting at once, synced together
- No more pens, paper, Excel or double entry
- Frequent updates & support

Now, why to outsource your Stocktaking

12 reasons

1. Shop staff, in general, dislike counting stock.
2. Too much time is wasted in scheduling, training & monitoring staff to ensure they are counting correctly!
3. In-house counting of stock is not impartial, and results could be falsified unknowingly.
4. The hassle of conducting Stocktake and managing staff to ensure accuracy is difficult and unproductive.
5. It's a long day and can result in lost revenues and increased staff costs if people counting are not efficient.
6. Increased overtime/out of hour cost with in-house Stocktaking, adding to unforeseen cost for small businesses.
7. With in-house stocktaking, you may not be able to get detailed reports on your stock – for example, variance reports, wastage, stock on hand etc.
8. Spot checks may not be carried out thoroughly while people are working in full capacity.
9. It takes management and staff that are vital to the business away from their responsibility of putting the customer first.
10. There is an additional cost to renting your own equipment to carry out a Stocktake.
11. Stocktaking is too long while purchases and sales are still in progress throwing your numbers into disarray.
12. Same day reports may not be possible!

If you already outsource your stocktaking process and are still looking to improve performance, why not try with Altavant DMCC?

- Our staff are trained in counting, thus guaranteeing efficiency, accuracy and speed
- Doesn't take staff away from working with customers
- Counts carried out during opening hours, if required
- High quality scanning equipment
- Reports are received on the day of the count without delay

At the end of the day, both methods – in-house and outsourced stocktaking – work. It's all down to personal preference and we, here at Altavant offer solutions for both. Solutions to make your in-house or outsourced stocktaking process faster and more accurate than before. ●

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A predicted rise in flexible working could contribute **\$10.04 trillion** to the global economy by **2030**.



Paving the way for a four-day work week

During a conversation with **Rupkatha Bhowmick**, LPM Restaurant & Bar's Middle East Director of Operations **Alexandra Audon** shared how a four-day work week led to a dramatic change in the restaurant's service culture.

A predicted rise in flexible working could contribute \$10.04 trillion to the global economy by 2030, indicated a socio-economic study of changing workplace practices.

The four-day work week arrangement goes beyond just having one more day off in a week. It actually leads to higher employee engagement and better productivity at individual and business levels, believes Andrew Barnes, the mastermind behind the Four-Day Week initiative and founder of New Zealand based Perpetual Guardian. In fact, the four-day work week trial undertaken by Perpetual Guardian showed a 40% increase in employee engagement.

Against this backdrop as four-day work week is being deliberated and implemented in many countries and organisations across the world to prioritise employee wellness, several UAE-based businesses have started piloting and implementing this new working structure.

One such entity is LPM Restaurant & Bar that recently implemented a four-day work week for its UAE operations team following trials at its Abu Dhabi restaurant that ran from August to October 2022. During the trial period factors such as working hours, wage versus revenue (efficiency), staff happiness, guest satisfaction, task organisation and efficiency were carefully investigated. Finally, from a poll that was shared with the staff, 100% positively reacted to the change.

WORLD CORPORATE SUMMIT envisions global economic transformation



The first edition of the **World Corporate Summit** brought together 2,000 senior executives for 4 weeks of dialogue and networking with 100 roundtables, 25 networking sessions, 4 gala dinners and an award ceremony.

The World Corporate Summit (WCS) is an annual meeting in Dubai where global business leaders come together to discuss and address pressing global issues, support economic growth and promote cooperation. The annual event is supported by Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism and the Ministry of Economy of the United Arab Emirates.

The first World Corporate Summit Annual Meeting took place at the Palace Downtown Hotel, Dubai from November 21 to December 15, 2022, which brought together nearly 2,000 senior executives for four weeks of dialogue and networking with 100 roundtables, 25 networking sessions, four gala dinners and an award ceremony.

The summit took place during the FIFA World Cup 2022 uniting leaders in the Middle East during the historic event, building an ecosystem encouraging and inciting foreign direct investment in the region, supporting human connection and learning, and redefining the future economy's framework across business, finance, sports, education, health, media, technology and other industry sectors.

From deliberating on a future-proofed workforce with the skills needed for economic and social growth to focusing on agritech to solve the global food crisis and exploring future technologies from artificial intelligence to Web3 and their impact on key sectors like retail, the summit took a 360-degree view at ways to improve the world economy.

The World Corporate Summit and the Ministry of Economy of the UAE's Investopia platform conducted a special pop-up event titled "The Future of Investment in Sports" that was attended by 200 global leaders in sports and finance such as Javier Tebas, President of La Liga; Paolo Scaroni, Chairman

of AC Milan; major financiers from Mubadala to Fosun and Barclays Bank; and Abdulla Bin Touq Al Marri, Minister of Economy and Chairman of Investopia.

The summit closed with an award ceremony in partnership with Huawei AppGallery honouring exceptional leaders in their fields, including Chalhoub Group for Retailer of the Year and Virgin Mobile for Innovative Company of the Year.

Sponsors and partners including Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism, Investopia, Apparel Group, Clinova, Iron Mountain, Royaltiz, Huawei AppGallery, Dubai Sport Council, Images RetailME, EurAsia Gulf, Real Estate Industry Magazine, Voss Water, Bateel, CEO Clubs Network, DIFC, Dubai South and Dubai World Trade Centre were also recognised at the gala for their unfailing support towards the summit.

"For the first time in the world a high-level summit has lasted four consecutive weeks with such a high caliber of speakers, moderators and participants, producing innovative ideas and concrete action that will be the engine of change and economic development and will be built on at next year's summit and beyond as the UAE enhances its legacy as a nucleus of growth and innovation," said Bernard Caiazzo, Chairman, World Corporate Summit.

A first-of-its-kind in the Middle East the World Corporate Summit facilitated international dialogue and cooperation in shaping the world's future by anticipating challenges and building a proactive system to tackle challenges and transform various vital business sectors while cementing the UAE's position as a global business hub, and will continue to do so at its next Annual Meeting in November 2023 with a key focus on sustainability as a pressing global challenge. ●



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