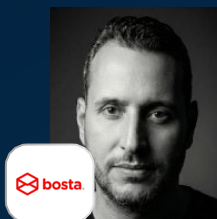




WORLD E-Commerce



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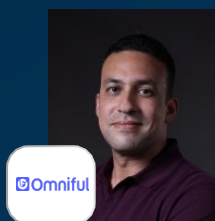
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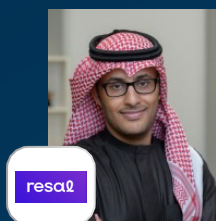
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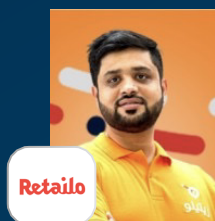
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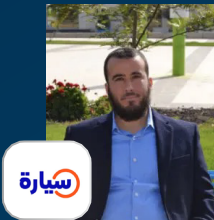
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The MENA E-Commerce 30:
Who is Changing How the Region Shops?

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Editorial



Burak Yalın
Editor-in-Chief

The Builders Keep Building: Resilience in a \$176 Billion Market

We are witnessing a period of profound complexity. As regional tensions escalate, we look upon the ongoing hardships and human losses across the region with deep sadness. Our hearts go out to those affected; in times like these, the human cost of conflict is impossible to ignore. Yet, amidst these challenges, the United Arab Emirates continues to serve as a beacon of stability and a testament to unwavering resilience. The UAE has once again proven it is not merely a regional hub, but a global "safe harbor" that keeps its systems running and its eyes on the future, even when the winds are at their harshest.

As escalating regional tensions continue to dominate global headlines, the reality on the ground, especially here in the UAE, tells a story of remarkable resilience. The Q1 2026 numbers for the digital economy are in, and they highlight a region that refuses to hit the pause button. Despite a cautious global investment climate, the UAE continues to stand firm as the region's primary growth engine, capturing over \$625 million, more than 60% of total MENA startup funding, in the first quarter alone.

E-commerce remains the heartbeat of this movement. Current projections place the MENA e-commerce market at over \$176 billion for 2026, with the UAE's own digital retail sector on a clear trajectory to exceed \$12 billion by year-end. These aren't just abstract figures; they represent a stable, reliable "operating system" for a region that is actively building its future.

That unstoppable momentum is exactly what inspired the cover story for our March-April 2026 issue: The MENA Top 30 E-Commerce Startups. These are the founders and innovators cutting through the friction and rewriting the rules of retail in our region.

Editorial

But a great idea is only as strong as the infrastructure supporting it. In this issue, we dive deep into the mechanics of how this growth is actually delivered. We sit down for an exclusive interview with Raman Pathak, Co-Founder and CEO of Jeebly, who breaks down how they are transforming the delivery experience from the traditional "last mile" into the "fast mile." We also check in with Nabeel AlKharabsheh, General Manager of Zajel Logistics Services, on their relentless push to introduce solutions that bring greater speed and reliability to the market.

Scaling also means breaking borders. Cemre Akkaya, VP of Marketing and Revenue at Desertcart, shares the view from their Dubai headquarters. With a massive logistics network spanning the US, UK, UAE, and India, she explains how they navigate complex consumer dynamics to bring millions of hard-to-find international brands straight to local doorsteps.

Yet, as the technology and logistics become more complex, we cannot lose the human touch. We spoke with Mounir Hijazi, CEO of TP (formerly Teleperformance) GCC Region, about the future of customer experience. He offers a fascinating look at how the e-commerce ecosystem is shifting, and why the most successful businesses are doubling down on human-centered technology.

If you ever need a reminder of why this industry matters, flip straight to our special interview with a seller we are simply calling "Rmuen." He prefers to keep his real name and his Amazon and Etsy storefronts private, but his story was too good not to share. What started as a side hustle for an everyday employee slowly transformed into a thriving main business one that ultimately funded his lifelong dream of becoming a pilot. It is a powerful reminder that behind the massive Q1 stats and global logistics networks, there is real human ambition taking flight.

Finally, for those who joined us recently, this issue includes the comprehensive after-event statistics report from WORLDDEF Dubai 2026. Looking at the numbers and the connections made, I am incredibly proud of what this community achieved.

A massive thank you to our hardworking editorial team, our insightful contributors, and to you, our readers, for making this issue possible. As you dive into these pages, our team's eyes are already turning toward the horizon, building up the excitement for our upcoming WORLDDEF Istanbul event on 11-13 June. Enjoy the read, and we'll see you in Istanbul!





Exclusive Interview

BY LEILA PIRGULIYEVA

"E-commerce is not just a side income; it can become a strategic financial engine"

E-commerce is not merely a sales channel; when built with the right strategy, it can transform into a powerful business model capable of financing personal dreams and creating opportunities on a global scale. The entrepreneurial journey of e-commerce entrepreneur Ekrem Rmuen is inspiring in terms of "turning e-commerce into a strategic growth engine." Rmuen sincerely explained the path to sustainable success, from the critical role of export-oriented thinking to operational discipline, and from the competitive advantage of remaining anonymous to trust-based business relationships. His experiences reveal that e-commerce offers not only profit, but also a transformation in perspective and lifestyle. Anyone whose path has crossed with e-commerce will enjoy reading this interview!

You began your professional life as an employee, not an entrepreneur. What originally pushed you toward e-commerce, and what problem were you trying to solve at the time?

My primary motivation for entering e-commerce was very clear: my dream of becoming a pilot. I am a mechanical engineer by training. I applied to the Turkish Airlines cadet program, and while the process was ongoing, the pandemic broke out. As the aviation industry suddenly slowed down, I was unable to complete the program. After the pandemic, I faced a second reality: I was now above the age limit for applying to the cadet track. That meant only one viable option remained if I still wanted to fly private flight training through a civilian flight school. At that time, however, I did not have the financial resources to fund that path.

I needed two things at once: the ability to create enough time to commit to training, and a strong enough income stream to finance it. When I looked for an answer that could realistically deliver both, the most rational solution I found was e-commerce. I initially started with the goal of generating additional income. But around one year in, I realised e-commerce was not just side income it could become a serious vehicle for long-term change.

At what point did you realise that e-commerce was no longer just an additional income stream, but a serious vehicle for long-term change in your life?

In aviation, almost all major costs are denominated in foreign currency particularly in U.S. dollars. Trying to finance a dollar-based education while earning in Turkish lira makes an already demanding journey significantly harder. That economic mismatch became very clear to me. I realised that if I could earn in foreign currency, the entire equation would change. That was the moment when e-commerce shifted from local sales to export-oriented thinking. Cross-border selling was not just about growth; it was about currency alignment. To give a concrete example: when selling a product domestically, you might earn one unit of profit. Selling the same product internationally can multiply that return significantly –sometimes by ten times– not only because of pricing differences, but because you are operating in stronger currency markets. Additionally, export activities often benefit from government incentives and support mechanisms. These structural advantages reinforced my decision. At that point, e-commerce stopped being side income. It became a strategic financial engine.

What do most people misunderstand about success in marketplaces like Etsy or Amazon?

From what I have observed, the biggest mistake new sellers make is assuming that every product they launch will achieve high sales volume. The reality is very different. In my own experience, my success rate is approximately 5%. That means when I test 100 products, only about five reach the level of sales I initially target. And even that ratio is not guaranteed sometimes it is lower. E-commerce is not about guessing correctly once. It is about systematic experimentation and acceptance of failure as part of the model.

There are many ways to achieve strong sales numbers aggressive marketing, trend chasing, price competition. My personal preference, however, is different. I focus on products where competition is lower and where I have production capability and control. When you can produce what you sell, you gain flexibility in pricing, customization, and margin protection. For me, sustainability comes from controllability not virality.

At scale, what matters more: marketing creativity, operational discipline, or algorithmic alignment? Why?

At scale, operational discipline becomes the dominant factor. When you are small, minor mistakes are manageable. But as volume increases, small errors scale into expensive problems. To give a very recent example: in one of our ongoing operations in the United States, a miscalculation in a single box dimension caused a 45-day delay in the entire process. The financial impact of such an operational oversight at scale is significant.

Marketing can generate demand. Algorithms can amplify visibility. But operations determine whether growth is sustainable or fragile. In my view, systems should be designed to self-monitor and prevent repetition of critical errors. We are not perfect at that yet but we learn quickly. What I can confidently say is this:

the same mistake has not happened twice. Operational maturity is not about avoiding mistakes entirely. It is about building structures that ensure they do not repeat.

You've chosen not to publicly share your store names or product links. Why is anonymity important for successful e-commerce sellers?

I do not share my store names publicly, especially on social media, for strategic reasons. One of the main reasons relates to algorithm dynamics. If a product listing receives traffic but does not convert into sales, conversion rates decline. On many marketplaces, low conversion signals reduce visibility. Unqualified traffic can therefore harm performance rather than help it. Another reason is market positioning. None of our products are sold in the domestic Turkish market.

That means sharing links locally does not create commercial value for us. On the contrary, it creates unnecessary exposure. In highly competitive digital environments, visibility attracts replication. Additional competitors do not need an invitation. Anonymity, in this context, is not about secrecy. It is about protecting conversion integrity, strategic positioning, and operational sustainability.

Do platforms sufficiently protect sellers, or does increased transparency often come at the cost of security and sustainability?

Such uncertainty creates structural risk. When a seller invests years into building reputation, reviews, and operational systems, a sudden suspension without transparent communication can have serious consequences. My experience in domestic marketplaces in Türkiye was not entirely different. I encountered situations involving unfair competition. I reported competitors who were operating without proper invoicing and legal compliance, which naturally makes price competition impossible. Despite formal complaints, enforcement mechanisms were inconsistent, and those sellers continued operating.

One of the reasons I ultimately reduced my focus on domestic marketplaces was precisely this issue of regulatory inconsistency. To be fair, platforms

operate at massive scale, and enforcement is complex. However, sustainable digital entrepreneurship requires balanced accountability not only for buyers, but for sellers who invest capital, time, and compliance effort.



You've shared examples where you prioritised customer trust over short-term profit. How do ethics and long-term thinking shape sustainable e-commerce businesses?

There are moments in business where you must choose between immediate security and long-term trust. I can give a concrete example. A U.S.-based company once placed an order with us worth approximately \$30,000. Shortly after, they cancelled the order. When I asked for the reason, they openly expressed concern about making a high-value payment to a company located in another country.

Instead of insisting on prepayment, I offered blind shipping with post-delivery payment. I told them: "We will ship the products. Once you receive them and are satisfied, you can complete the payment." This was a significant risk. But the company was reputable, and I believed that trust should sometimes be initiated rather than demanded. The order was completed successfully. Over time, this approach has led to long-term partnerships with major international companies including IKEA and Universal Orlando Studios. These relationships were not built on aggressive negotiation, but on reliability and credibility.

There is another dimension that many sellers hesitate to speak about openly. In marketplace environments, sometimes a customer may be dissatisfied for various reasons. In certain cases, within reasonable limits, we issue a refund without requiring the product to be returned. Financially, this may not seem optimal in the short term. However, the long-term effect is measurable. Positive reviews, strengthened reputation, and increased order volume often outweigh the isolated loss. Sometimes, strategic courage is necessary. Trust, when extended wisely, compounds.

If you could speak to your earlier self, the employee who had a dream but no clear path, what would you tell him about e-commerce, risk, and patience?

After university, there were several years where I was searching for direction. If I could speak to that version of myself, I would tell him to invest that time in building an e-commerce foundation. When structured correctly, e-commerce becomes extremely valuable once the system begins to operate independently. When processes are in place and momentum builds, the business no longer depends entirely on your physical presence. With internet access, almost anywhere can become your office. There are no traditional office hours which is both freedom and responsibility. At times, the working hours can be intense and long. But the flexibility is real.

Beyond income, e-commerce expands perspective. For example, on Etsy, when a customer places an order, we can sometimes see the other products they have favorited. Every day I encounter new ideas, designs, and product concepts from around the world. It constantly exposes you to innovation. It develops a research-oriented mindset. In addition, today I have commercial relationships and friendships across multiple countries. Building a global network through trade is one of the most valuable outcomes of this journey. E-commerce, for me, was not only a financial tool it was an intellectual and social expansion.

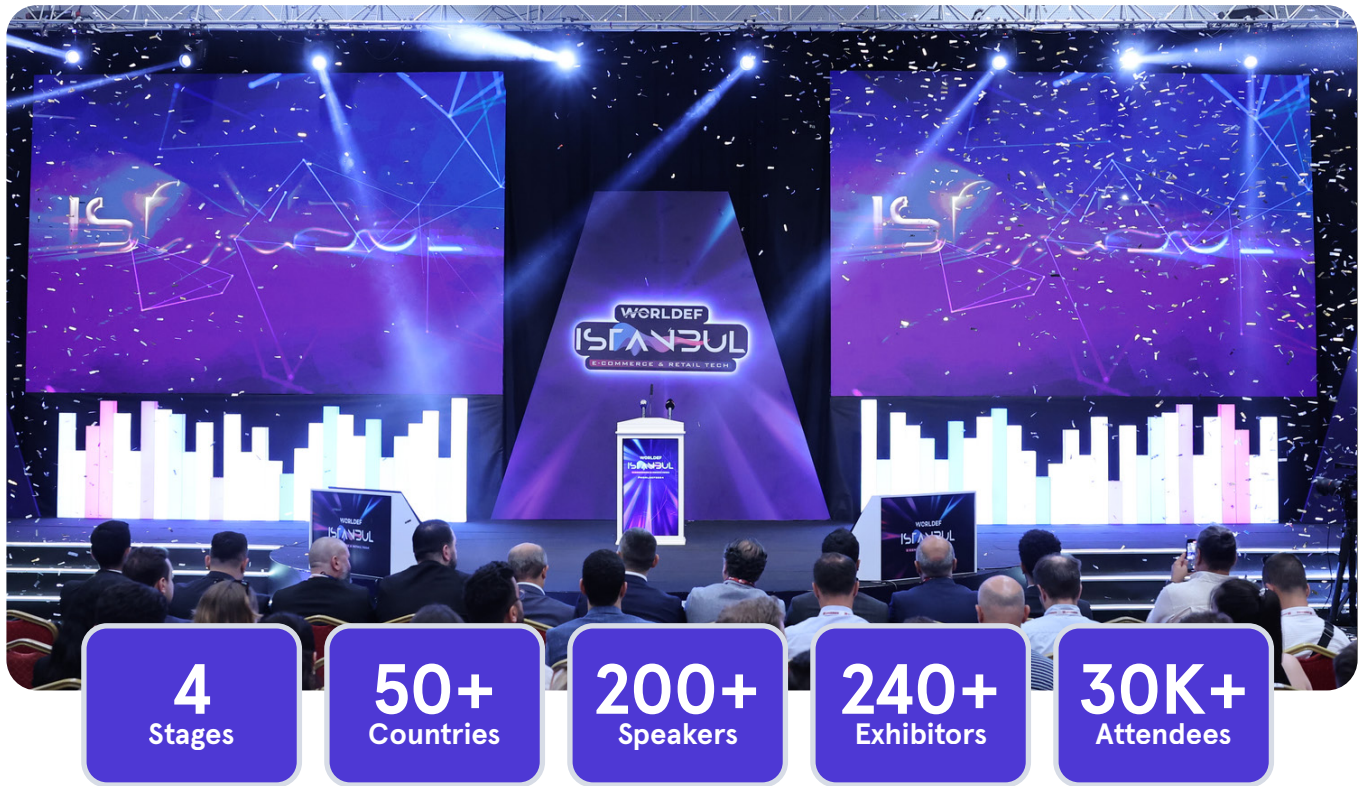


What should ecosystem leaders, platforms, and policymakers better understand about the human side of digital entrepreneurship?

E-commerce, by its nature, is structurally cold. We operate through screens. There is no physical customer entering a store, no face-to-face interaction, no direct emotional feedback. Communication is almost entirely written. This creates both advantages and challenges. On the positive side, you are not required to stand in a physical store all day. In many ways, your business operates 24/7 without being physically tied to one location. That flexibility is powerful.

But on the other hand, we are human beings. We interpret tone, emotion, hesitation things that are difficult to perceive through text alone. The emotional dimension of trade becomes more abstract. Additionally, like all forms of commerce, e-commerce carries structural risks. A single announcement—for example, a new customs regulation introduced by a government—can instantly change the entire operating landscape. Overnight, margins, logistics, and compliance structures may need to be rebuilt.

Because of this volatility, I would hope that platform leaders approach sellers with greater balance and understanding. Behind every seller account is a human being managing inventory risk, capital exposure, and responsibility. We can make mistakes. As humans, that is inevitable. But the tolerance for error in digital marketplaces is often very low. If platforms want long-term sustainability, they must recognise not only performance metrics, but the people behind them.



WORLDEF ISTANBUL Excitement Has Begun; The World of E-Commerce and Artificial Intelligence Comes Together

The countdown has begun for WORLDEF ISTANBUL, one of the most important gatherings of the global e-commerce ecosystem. E-commerce and artificial intelligence leaders, entrepreneurs, and technology companies from all around the world are coming together at WORLDEF ISTANBUL, one of MENA's largest e-commerce events.

WORLDEF ISTANBUL 2026 will open its doors at Yenikapı Event Area between June 11-13, 2026. At the event, the trends shaping the future of e-commerce, AI-powered commerce solutions, and next-generation digital commerce strategies will be discussed. More than 30,000 visitors, more than 240 brands, and over 200 speakers will take part in the giant event that leads the e-commerce and artificial intelligence transformation and continues to grow every year. Hundreds of professionals from more than fifty countries will meet under the same roof. With this broad participation, WORLDEF is positioned as more than an event, but as the strategic meeting point of the global e-commerce ecosystem.

What Does WORLDEF ISTANBUL 2026 Promise?

WORLDEF ISTANBUL 2026 offers participating brands the opportunity to expand into international markets, establish new business partnerships, meet investors, and closely follow global e-commerce trends. Visitors, on the other hand, have the opportunity to discover the industry's most innovative applications in areas such as AI-based commerce technologies, data-driven marketing strategies, and omnichannel solutions.

WORLDEF ISTANBUL creates important opportunities not only for major brands, but also for entrepreneurs interested in e-commerce, technology companies, retailers, logistics companies, and investors. Participants will have the opportunity to develop growth strategies in international markets, establish direct contact with global e-commerce players, and gain insights into new business models.



Omar Nart: Our aim is not only to provide visibility, but to generate direct business development

WORLDDEF CEO Omar Nart used the following statements in his comment about the event:

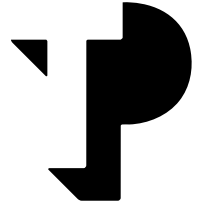
“We position WORLDEF ISTANBUL 2026 as a strategic platform that brings together the global e-commerce ecosystem. Our aim is to facilitate brands’ expansion into international markets, share how artificial intelligence and new technologies transform commerce, and create strong collaborations among industry leaders. WORLDEF offers a unique meeting point for everyone who wants to build the future of digital commerce together.”

Omar Nart added: “The most critical element that distinguishes WORLDEF from other organizations is its focus and how it turns this focus into a business model. WORLDEF is, above all, a platform fully dedicated to e-commerce; it started as the first structure in Türkiye focused on this field and today has become one of the largest e-commerce and retail technologies gatherings in the MENA region. In this respect, it clearly differs from mixed business events. However, the real difference is not only the focus, but how we create value.

We do not position WORLDEF as a classic trade fair or networking event. While bringing together areas such as e-commerce, retail technologies, marketplaces, payment systems, logistics, artificial intelligence, and cross-border commerce, our aim is not only to provide visibility, but to generate direct business development. Participants on our platform do not only gain visitor traffic; they reach real business opportunities through pre-designed, target-oriented, and qualified connections.

Therefore, WORLDEF is now much more than a trade fair where booths are opened. It is an ecosystem that focuses not on today’s, but on tomorrow’s commerce models and turns these models into tangible business results. For us, success is not how many people attend, but how many collaborations are born and how much commercial value is created.”

A Next-Generation Service Model Shaped By Data, Artificial Intelligence, And Empathy: TP



BY UGUR GURBES

Special Interview

At a time when customer experience has moved beyond being merely a support function and has become positioned at the center of brands' growth, trust, and loyalty strategies, TP (formerly Teleperformance) stands out as one of the strongest representatives of this transformation. With its approach that brings together artificial intelligence, automation, data analytics, and human empathy, the company is carrying the traditional understanding of service into a strategic transformation partnership. Operating in more than 90 countries, TP is drawing attention with its growth vision in the GCC region while leading the new era shaped especially by digitalization, omnichannel experience, data security, and predictive customer engagement. We spoke with Mounir Hijazi, Chief Executive Officer of TP GCC Region, about the future of customer experience, the change in the e-commerce ecosystem, and the effects of human-centered technology on the business world.

TP is a global leader in customer experience management. How would you summarize your company's transformation journey from its foundation to today?

TP's journey reflects the broader transformation of customer experience itself. When the company was founded, the focus of the industry was largely on operational efficiency and managing large-scale service interactions. Over time, however, the expectations of customers and citizens have fundamentally changed. Today, service is no longer simply about resolving requests. It is about designing intelligent, seamless, and personalised experiences that build trust and long-term relationships.

At TP, we have evolved alongside this shift. We have moved from a traditional service delivery model to becoming a strategic transformation partner for governments and enterprises worldwide. Our approach today combines advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, automation, and data analytics with the human empathy that remains essential in every meaningful interaction.

This philosophy is central to how we see the future of service. Technology alone cannot define great experiences. The real transformation happens when artificial intelligence is combined with emotional intelligence. By blending the efficiency of machines with the judgment and empathy of people, we are helping organisations design customer journeys that are faster, more predictive, and deeply human.



Mounir Hijazi, Chief Executive Officer of TP GCC Region

As an organization operating in more than 90 countries, how do you balance global scale with local adaptation?

Operating at global scale is a strength, but meaningful customer experience always begins with local understanding. Each market has its own regulatory frameworks, cultural expectations, languages, and consumer behaviours. These factors shape how people interact with businesses and public services.

Our approach is therefore built on a balance between global capabilities and local expertise. We provide a consistent technology platform, operational framework, and data intelligence that can be deployed across markets. At the same time, our teams in each country bring the cultural understanding and contextual knowledge that ensure those solutions truly resonate with local customers.

This model allows us to scale innovation quickly while remaining responsive to the needs of each region. In markets such as the GCC, for example, governments and enterprises are pursuing ambitious digital transformation agendas. By combining our global experience with strong regional partnerships, we can help accelerate innovation while ensuring solutions remain aligned with national priorities and customer expectations.

Customer experience has become a core competitive advantage. In your opinion, what is the most critical factor that differentiates companies in this area?

The companies that succeed in customer experience today are those that understand that service is no longer a support function. It is a strategic capability that shapes brand trust, loyalty, and long-term growth. The most important differentiator is the ability to turn customer data into meaningful insight. Many organisations already collect large volumes of data, but relatively few convert that information into predictive intelligence that anticipates customer needs before they arise.

When organisations combine data insight with intelligent automation and skilled human agents, they create experiences that feel intuitive rather than reactive. Customers feel understood rather than processed. That shift from reactive service to predictive engagement is where the true competitive advantage lies.

How have artificial intelligence, automation, and data analytics transformed TP's service model during the digital transformation process?

Artificial intelligence and advanced analytics have fundamentally changed how customer service can be designed and delivered. At TP, these technologies allow us to move beyond traditional interaction management toward a model built on predictive intelligence. AI enables us to analyse large volumes of interaction data in real time, identifying patterns that help organisations anticipate customer needs, personalise journeys, and resolve issues more efficiently. Automation can streamline routine processes, freeing human agents to focus on complex conversations where empathy and judgment are essential.

What is important, however, is that technology remains an enabler rather than the end goal. Our model focuses on combining AI with human expertise. When machines handle speed and scale while people provide empathy and problem-solving, organisations achieve the balance required for truly effective customer experiences.

Why has customer experience management become even more critical for e-commerce companies? What kind of collaboration model do you follow, especially with fast-growing online brands?

E-commerce has fundamentally changed how consumers interact with brands. The digital environment has removed many traditional barriers to switching providers, which means customer loyalty is increasingly shaped by the quality of the experience rather than the product alone. In this environment, every interaction becomes part of the brand experience. Customers expect fast responses, personalised recommendations, and seamless support across multiple channels. If these expectations are not met, they will quickly move to another platform.

Our collaboration model with e-commerce companies reflects this reality. We work closely with brands to design end-to-end customer journeys rather than simply managing individual interactions. This includes integrating data, technology, and human support to ensure that every touchpoint, from product discovery to post-purchase support, delivers a consistent and personalised experience.

Omnichannel customer experience has become indispensable for e-commerce brands. How does TP integrate online and offline touchpoints?

Customers today move fluidly between digital and physical environments. They may discover a product on social media, research it through a website, purchase through a mobile app, and seek support through messaging platforms or voice channels. The challenge for organisations is ensuring that these interactions feel like part of a single conversation rather than disconnected events. At TP, we address this by building integrated platforms that connect all customer touchpoints into one unified ecosystem.

Through this approach, customer information and interaction history follow the customer across channels. Agents and AI systems have full context, allowing them to provide faster and more personalised support. The result is an experience that feels continuous, consistent, and intuitive regardless of where the interaction takes place.

How are Agentic AI, chatbots, and intelligent automation systems reshaping customer support processes? How do you balance human touch with technology?

Intelligent automation and conversational AI are transforming how organisations handle customer interactions, particularly at scale. Technologies such as chatbots and agentic AI systems can manage routine requests instantly, providing customers with immediate answers while significantly reducing operational friction. However, the goal is not to remove the human element from customer service. The most effective model is one where technology enhances human capability rather than replacing it.

At TP, we describe this approach as combining artificial intelligence with emotional intelligence. AI provides speed, consistency, and analytical insight. Human agents bring empathy, contextual understanding, and complex decision-making. When these capabilities work together, organisations can deliver experiences that are both efficient and genuinely human.

Data security and regulations are particularly critical in e-commerce and fintech sectors. What kind of infrastructure and risk management strategy do you implement in this area?

In a digital economy, trust is built on how responsibly organisations manage data. Customers are increasingly aware of how their information is used, and their willingness to engage with digital services depends on the confidence that their data is protected. For this reason, data security must be designed into systems from the very beginning. Our approach focuses on privacy by design, ensuring that security, compliance, and ethical data management are embedded across every stage of service delivery.

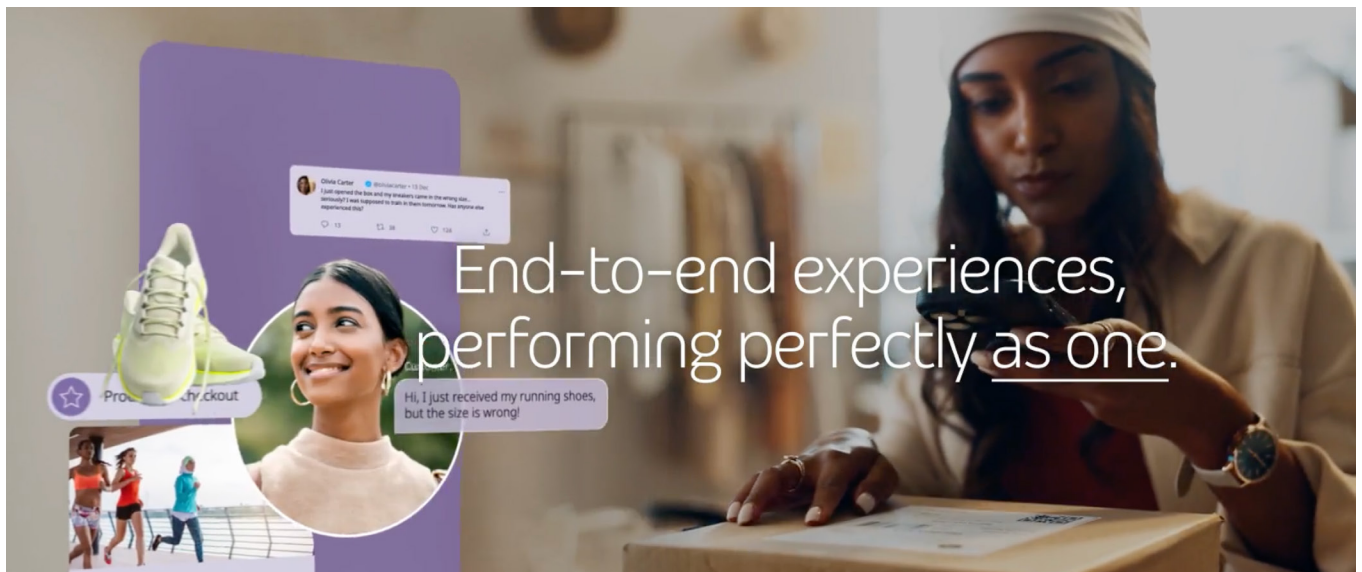
This includes robust infrastructure, strict governance frameworks, and continuous monitoring to ensure compliance with international regulations and regional standards. At the same time, organisations must remain transparent with customers about how their data is used. When security, transparency, and accountability are built into digital systems, organisations strengthen both resilience and customer trust.

Over the next five years, where do you foresee the biggest transformation in customer experience and the e-commerce ecosystem?

The next phase of transformation will be defined by the ability to scale intelligent systems rapidly while maintaining a human-centred approach to service. Artificial intelligence will increasingly move from isolated applications to fully integrated ecosystems that connect data, automation, and customer insight across the entire business. Organisations that succeed will be those that can scale these capabilities quickly and turn experimental pilots into enterprise-wide platforms. At the same time, customers will expect experiences that feel more personal and intuitive. Predictive engagement, real-time personalisation, and seamless omnichannel journeys will become the standard rather than the exception.

If you had to deliver one message to CEOs, what would you advise regarding digitalization and customer experience investments?

Digital transformation should never be viewed purely as a technology initiative. It is fundamentally a leadership challenge. Technology can provide powerful tools, but real transformation happens when leaders align technology, people, and culture around a shared vision. This means investing not only in digital infrastructure but also in the skills, governance, and organisational mindset required to make those technologies work responsibly. For CEOs, the key question is not whether to adopt artificial intelligence or automation. The real question is how to integrate these capabilities in a way that strengthens trust, empowers employees, and creates meaningful experiences for customers. Organisations that approach digital transformation with this balance will be the ones that define the next era of customer experience.



MENA Top 30 *Ecom Startups (A–Z Q1 2026)*



E-commerce has become one of the most dynamic sectors shaping the future of global trade. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in particular has gained rapid momentum in recent years through the digitalization process, making significant contributions to the global e-commerce ecosystem. Fast-growing e-commerce startups in the MENA region are creating an important impact not only in regional markets but also on a global scale. So, what is the importance of e-commerce startups in MENA? What are their contributions to the global e-commerce ecosystem and their future growth potential?

The Importance of E-Commerce Startups in MENA

E-commerce startups in the MENA region are among the key drivers accelerating the region's digital transformation and making a major contribution to economic growth.

The growth of the global e-commerce sector is being supported not only by the young and tech-savvy population in MENA but also by the rapid development of internet infrastructure in the region and the increasing rate of mobile device usage. As a market that is adapting quickly to digitalization, MENA is becoming an attractive hub for both local and international ventures. E-commerce startups are helping the development of regional trade through new business models and innovative solutions. At the same time, they are reshaping the traditional retail sector in the region through digital platforms. These startups, particularly those founded by young entrepreneurs, are not only selling through digital platforms, but are also developing solutions to overcome sectoral challenges by offering innovative approaches in areas such as logistics, payment systems, and customer service.

Contribution to the Global E-Commerce Ecosystem

E-commerce startups in MENA are also making significant contributions to the global e-commerce ecosystem. These startups not only serve regional markets, but also help shape new e-commerce trends by collaborating with global brands worldwide. As the Middle East and North Africa represent a rapidly growing consumer market, startups emerging from this region are developing strategies to serve both developing and mature markets.

In addition, startups in the MENA region are taking important steps to improve e-commerce infrastructure. Factors such as high-speed internet access, advanced payment solutions, and fast logistics networks make it possible for these startups to compete in the global e-commerce landscape.

E-commerce companies in the region are rapidly embracing digital transformation in order to keep pace with the speed of international trade and manage operations on a global scale. For example, some UAE-based e-commerce platforms have expanded into African and Asian markets, building a global network and increasing the speed of trade in the process.

The Growth and Future of E-Commerce Startups in MENA

E-commerce startups in the MENA region are part of a rapidly growing digital ecosystem. Investments made in recent years are further increasing the growth potential of these startups. In 2020 and 2021, digital technology investments in the region showed a major increase. E-commerce startups based in countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, and Morocco are not only capturing local markets but also achieving growth at the regional level. These companies have not only built e-commerce platforms, but have also established themselves in areas such as mobile commerce, social commerce, logistics solutions, and digital payments.

The growing popularity of mobile commerce in particular is further strengthening the growth potential of startups in MENA. The widespread use of mobile devices allows users to access products easily and shop quickly. At the same time, the rapid rise of social commerce, driven by the influence of social media and influencers, is among the factors accelerating the

growth of e-commerce startups in MENA. Startups developing various tools to increase sales on platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp are making commerce through social media even easier.

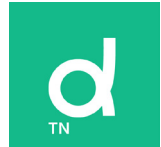
The future of e-commerce startups in MENA appears highly promising thanks to their commitment to technology and innovation. The use of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and big data analytics will contribute to the future growth of these ventures. In addition, sustainability and environmentally friendly business models are becoming increasingly prominent. This shows that MENA startups are not only

targeting economic growth, but are also developing more sustainable business models by taking environmental and social impacts into account.

E-commerce startups in the MENA region are building a rapidly growing ecosystem in a digitalizing world and are leading the digital transformation of regional trade. These startups are contributing to the global e-commerce ecosystem through innovative business models, flexible payment solutions, fast delivery processes, and digital infrastructure. In the future, these ventures will reach broader market shares and continue to secure an important place in global trade.



MENA TOP 30 *Startups (Q1 2026 / A-Z)*



#1

Website: bosta.co

Description: Last-mile and fulfillment infrastructure for online sellers, with parcel delivery, cash collection, and merchant tools built for Egypt's fast-growing D2C and marketplace economy.

Headquarters: Egypt

Date of Establishment: 2017

Founders / Parent: Mohamed Ezzat, Ahmed Gaber

About: Bosta is a last-mile and fulfillment infrastructure built for online sellers in Egypt's fast-growing D2C and marketplace economy, covering parcel delivery, cash collection, and merchant tools. It is a leading logistics-tech company established with the aim of expanding and empowering the logistics industry across the region. It was founded with the promise of seamlessly fulfilling and shipping all types of items, from documents and small parcels to bulky and heavy goods, for all types of businesses regardless of scale. It is the largest e-commerce courier company in the region.



#2

Website: breadfast.com

Description: A vertically integrated grocery and bakery commerce player that built daily-order frequency through fresh bread, essentials, and controlled fulfillment instead of pure marketplace breadth.

Headquarters: Egypt

Date of Establishment: 2017

Founders / Parent: Mostafa Amin, Abdallah Nofal

About: Breadfast is a vertically integrated grocery and bakery commerce player that has built daily order frequency through fresh bread, essentials, and controlled fulfillment rather than pure marketplace breadth. It was founded in Cairo in 2017. It is a quick-commerce platform that provides rapid, same-day delivery of grocery products, fresh bakery items, and household essentials. By managing its own vertical supply chain, the company offers more than 7,000 products and provides delivery in approximately 60 minutes. It operates its own in-house bakeries and logistics operations with the aim of reducing food waste and improving efficiency.



#3

Website: brkz.com

Description: A managed B2B marketplace for construction materials. While not a classic retail startup, it digitizes procurement, financing, and supplier discovery for one of the region's most fragmented commerce categories.

Headquarters: Saudi Arabia

Date of Establishment: 2022

Founders / Parent: Mohamed Ezzat, Ahmed Gaber

About: BRKZ is a Saudi Arabia-based construction technology (con-tech) startup. It is a managed B2B marketplace for construction materials. It digitizes procurement, financing, and supplier discovery for one of the region's most fragmented commerce categories. It aims to digitize the construction materials supply chain across the MENA region. It is a transparent, digital platform that facilitates the supply of building materials for mega projects and the construction sector. As a one-stop solution platform for construction materials, it delivers materials directly to the store or the construction site.



#4

Website: cartlow.com

Description: Refurbished and pre-owned commerce at scale, with reverse logistics, certified refurbishment, and buyback infrastructure that turns returns and used inventory into a retail category.

Headquarters: UAE

Date of Establishment: 2019

Founders / Parent: Mohammed Sleiman

About: Cartlow is a UAE-based reverse logistics and recommerce platform that enables brands and retailers to recover value from returned, excess, and non-moving inventory. By transforming returned and unsold goods into revenue-generating assets, Cartlow helps businesses reduce operational losses while contributing to sustainability through circular economy practices. Its platform connects brands with a wide network of buyers, ensuring efficient liquidation and optimized inventory management.



#5

Website: cartona.com

Description: B2B ordering and supply infrastructure for Egypt's informal retail network, helping small merchants source FMCG inventory with more transparency, consistency, and digitized workflows.

Headquarters: Egypt

Date of Establishment: 2019

Founders / Parent: Mahmoud Talaat

About: Cartona is an Egypt-based B2B e-commerce platform. It provides B2B ordering and supply infrastructure for Egypt's informal retail network. By bringing retailers together with manufacturers and wholesalers on a single platform, it simplifies ordering, inventory management, and payment processes. While offering fast and reliable supply opportunities through its wide product range, it also helps businesses make more efficient decisions through its data-driven solutions. It aims to transform the traditional trade structure with modern technology and provide transparency and operational efficiency in the supply chain.



#6

Website: chari.go

Description: A Moroccan B2B FMCG marketplace pairing retailer procurement with embedded finance, giving neighborhood merchants both product access and working-capital support.

Headquarters: Morocco

Date of Establishment: 2020

Founders / Parent: Ismael Belkhat, Sophia Alj

About: Chari is a B2B FMCG marketplace that combines retailer procurement with embedded finance, offering neighborhood merchants both product access and working capital support. Chari's app enables retailers to order a wide range of consumer goods at competitive prices while benefiting from fast delivery. It provides a digital platform through which local, traditional neighborhood grocers can order consumer goods and have them delivered. The platform is designed to help small retailers compete with large supermarkets through better inventory management and financing opportunities.



#7

Website: dabchy.com

Description: One of North Africa's clearest re-commerce stories: a fashion resale platform turning secondhand apparel into a social, circular, and mobile-first marketplace.

Headquarters: Tunisia

Date of Establishment: 2016

Founders / Parent: Ameni Mansouri, Mahjoub Oussama

About: Dabchy is one of North Africa's clearest re-commerce stories. It is a fashion resale platform that transforms secondhand clothing into a social, circular, and mobile-first marketplace. It is a popular social marketplace where secondhand fashion and lifestyle products are bought and sold. It is referred to as a "Dabchoucha." With an active community, the platform functions both as an e-commerce site and as a social network where users can follow one another, comment, and share stories. Although it initially focused only on women's fashion, it now serves many categories such as men's fashion, home decor, sports equipment, books, games, and luxury products.



#8

Website: eyewa.com

Description: A leading eyewear D2C and omnichannel retailer that proved even prescription-led categories can scale regionally when inventory, trust, and customer experience are tightly managed.

Headquarters: UAE

Date of Establishment: 2017

Founders / Parent: Mehdi Oudghiri, Anass Boumediene

About: Eyewa is a leading and fast-growing omnichannel eyewear retailer operating in the MENA region. It is one of the largest and most trusted eyewear retailers in the Middle East. It offers prescription glasses, sunglasses, blue light glasses, and both colored and corrective contact lenses. It operates more than 200 stores across the GCC. The company was founded with the aim of transforming the region's expensive eyewear market by offering stylish, high-quality, and affordable products. Originally launched as an e-commerce-focused startup, the company rapidly expanded into physical retail stores as well. As of early 2026, it has raised more than \$130 million in funding.



#9

Website: floward.com

Description: A flower-and-gifting platform that built a regional category around same-day fulfillment, vertically managed sourcing, and strong corporate plus ceremonial demand.

Headquarters: Kuwait

Date of Establishment: 2017

Founders / Parent: Abdulaziz B. Al Loughani

About: Floward is an online flower and gifting platform that built a regional category around same-day fulfillment, vertically managed sourcing, and strong corporate and ceremonial demand. It specializes in high-quality flower and gift delivery across the MENA region and the United Kingdom. It operates in more than 40 cities across nine countries. It sources its flowers from international growers and provides last-mile delivery to create a convenient, luxurious gifting experience.



#10

Website: grinta.ai

Description: A pharmacy-commerce and supply startup bringing procurement, fulfillment, and financing to a fragmented healthcare retail chain. It sits at the edge of healthtech and commerce infrastructure.

Headquarters: Egypt

Date of Establishment: 2021

Founders / Parent: Mohamed Azab, Yosra Badr

About: Grinta is a pharmacy commerce and supply startup that provides procurement, fulfillment, and financing to a fragmented healthcare retail chain. It is positioned at the intersection of healthtech and commerce infrastructure. It is an AI-driven managed marketplace modernizing the pharmaceutical supply chain across Africa. It connects manufacturers with pharmacies, providing inventory financing and digital, traceable logistics. Its mission is to empower independent pharmacists by streamlining procurement processes.



#11

Website: homzmart.com

Description: Furniture and home retail online, built around a difficult category where supplier onboarding, bulky logistics, installation, and trust matter as much as assortment.

Headquarters: Egypt

Date of Establishment: 2019

Founders / Parent: Mahmoud Ibrahim, Ibrahim Mohamed

About: Homzmart offers online furniture and home retail services built around a challenging category where supplier onboarding, bulky logistics, installation, and trust matter as much as assortment. It is an e-commerce platform that brings furniture manufacturers and sellers together with customers. The platform offers furniture, decoration, lighting, and home goods with more than 200,000 products and thousands of suppliers. The company has an investment arm in logistics and transportation.



#12

Website: maxab.io

Description: A major B2B commerce player digitizing retailer procurement in food and grocery. Its scale, merger path, and embedded services make it one of the region's most important merchant-supply stories.

Headquarters: Egypt / Morocco

Date of Establishment: 2018

Founders / Parent: Belal EL-Megharbel, Mohamed Ben Halim

About: MaxAB-Wasoko is a major B2B commerce player that digitizes retailer procurement processes in the food and grocery sector. Its scale, merger journey, and integrated services make it one of the most important merchant-supply stories in the region. It is a merged B2B e-commerce and fintech giant serving informal retailers across North and East Africa. In 2024, the company combined supply chain logistics with embedded financial solutions. It serves tens of thousands of merchants by offering same-day product delivery, fintech services, and data analytics.



#13

Website: nana.sa

Description: Saudi e-grocery at scale, connecting consumers to major supermarket chains while proving that local operational depth still matters in a category global players often underestimate.

Headquarters: Saudi Arabia

Date of Establishment: 2016

Founders / Parent: Sami Alhelwah

About: Nana (Nana Direct) is a leading Saudi Arabia-based online grocery platform specializing in the rapid delivery of groceries and household essentials. The platform offers more than 22,000 products and provides delivery within 15–20 minutes in some areas. It offers grocery shopping, household essentials, and quick delivery services through the "Nana Direct" app and the Nana website. It is known for its fast delivery, including its "Dark Store" model designed to shorten delivery times. Kingdom Holding Company is one of the platform's major investors.



Rabbit®

#15

Website: rabbitmart.com

Description: Quick commerce built around dark stores and neighborhood delivery density. Rabbit's significance is not just speed, but its expansion play from Egypt into Saudi Arabia.

Headquarters: Egypt

Date of Establishment: 2021

Founders / Parent: Ahmad Yousry, Walid Shabana

About: Rabbit Mart is a quick commerce (q-commerce) startup known for its promise to deliver grocery products within 20 minutes. The company has rapidly become one of the key tech startups in the MENA region. Based in Cairo, the company has expanded its operations to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The app offers over 8,000 product options, including essentials, fresh fruits and vegetables, personal care items, and pharmacy needs. Using its own "dark store" network and technological infrastructure, it manages the order collection and delivery processes at speeds measured in seconds.



#14

Website: omniful.ai

Description: A supply-chain and commerce-enablement stack for merchants and 3PLs, covering order, warehouse, and transport management as MENA sellers move from fragmented tools to integrated operations.

Headquarters: UAE, Saudi Arabia

Date of Establishment: 2021

Founders / Parent: Mostafa Abolnaser, Alankrit Nishad

About: Omniful is an AI-powered, cloud-based supply chain and order fulfillment platform developed for the retail, e-commerce, and logistics sectors. By combining order management (OMS), warehouse management (WMS), transportation (TMS), and inventory management into a single modular structure, it aims to accelerate operations and increase efficiency. The platform simplifies complex processes by managing retail and e-commerce operations from a single platform. It is specifically designed to address the operational challenges of fast commerce and logistics-focused businesses.

resal

#16

Website: resal.me

Description: Digital gifting, prepaid cards, and rewards infrastructure. Resal is one of the better examples of a culturally native Saudi commerce-enabler that also works well for enterprise incentives.

Headquarters: Saudi Arabia

Date of Establishment: 2016

Founders / Parent: Hatem Kameli, Fouad AlFarhan

About: Resal is a digital gift and loyalty platform. The technology company, headquartered in Jeddah, is a leader in digital gift cards and points management in the Middle East and North Africa region. It allows users to convert their loyalty points into spendable balances, purchase digital gift cards, and manage these cards through the Resal App. The company offers digital infrastructure solutions that allow businesses to send rewards, incentives, or refunds to their employees. It also enables vendors to create their own loyalty programs and accept alternative payment methods.

Retailo

#17

Website: retailo.co

Description: A B2B marketplace for small retailers and restaurants, focused on next-day replenishment, wider assortment, and better procurement economics across fragmented merchant demand.

Headquarters: Saudi Arabia

Date of Establishment: 2020

Founders / Parent: Muhammad Nowkhaiz, Talha Ansari

About: Retailo is a leading B2B e-commerce platform in the Middle East, North Africa, and Pakistan (MENAP) region, founded with the goal of digitizing the retail supply chain. It was established by former Careem executives. The platform provides small and medium-sized retailers, restaurants, and suppliers with a mobile app for ordering inventory, offering over 5,000 products, 24-hour delivery, and frequently 24/7 service. By offering a digital marketplace to browse products, compare prices, and place stock orders, it reduces the need for traditional retail transportation. The platform also uses AI-powered features such as voice search and image-based product addition.

سلة
salla



#18

Website: salla.com

Description: A leading Saudi store-builder and merchant operating system. Its importance lies in lowering the barrier to launch for thousands of regional sellers, not just powering large brands.

Headquarters: Saudi Arabia

Date of Establishment: 2016

Founders / Parent: Nawaf Hareeri, Salman Butt

About: Salla is a leading cloud-based e-commerce platform in the Middle East, particularly in Saudi Arabia and the UAE. The platform enables the creation of professional online stores without requiring technical expertise. It hosts tens of thousands of active stores and has achieved billions of dollars in sales volume. Salla offers full integration with local payment methods (Mada, STC Pay) and logistics companies. It is suitable for various industries, including clothing, digital products, food, jewelry, and services. Stores are optimized for mobile devices. Additionally, it offers the ability to develop custom mobile applications for brands within 72 hours.

sary

#19

Website: sary.com

Description: A B2B wholesale marketplace that digitizes sourcing for baqalas, restaurants, and small businesses. Sary stands out for solving daily procurement rather than flashy consumer use cases.

Headquarters: Saudi Arabia

Date of Establishment: 2018

Founders / Parent: Mohammed Aldossary, Khaled A. AlSiari

About: Sary is a leading cloud-based B2B e-commerce platform that simplifies the procurement process for small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs). The platform offers over 5,000 products, including essentials, fresh food, personal care, and electronics, and provides 24-hour delivery and 24/7 service in many regions. Sary connects businesses directly with suppliers, making it easier for retailers to manage their inventory and efficiently purchase goods. It also provides significant cost savings and operational efficiency by eliminating the need for traditional retail transportation.

Sellou

#20

Website: sellou.com

Description: A video-first social-commerce marketplace designed for merchants and creators who sell through content, conversation, and community rather than traditional catalog browsing alone.

Headquarters: Bahrain

Date of Establishment: 2020

Founders / Parent: Salman Al Khalifa

About: Sellou is an innovative social commerce platform that directly transforms short video content into storefront displays. It specifically aims to simplify the way creators and small businesses sell their products. Sellers upload short videos to promote their products. These posts serve as "mini storefronts" where the product is directly embedded. It seamlessly integrates with channels like Instagram and WhatsApp. Buyers and sellers can chat, ask questions, and negotiate without leaving the app. The platform is optimized for selling products like e-books, templates (such as Canva), courses, and digital artwork.



#21

Website: syarah.com

Description: An automotive-commerce platform that moved beyond listings into a fuller digital buying journey with inspections, financing, warranty, and delivery for new and used cars.

Headquarters: Saudi Arabia

Date of Establishment: 2015

Founders / Parent: Salah Sharef, Fayaz Al-Anazi

About: Syarah is a leading digital automotive marketplace in Saudi Arabia. It enables the purchase of both new and used vehicles through a completely online experience. The platform offers an end-to-end service, managing everything from selection to doorstep delivery. Each used vehicle undergoes a comprehensive 200+ point inspection. Customers receive a 10-day money-back guarantee to test the car; if the vehicle is not suitable, it can be returned for a refund. Used vehicles typically come with a 1-year warranty, with some offering extended warranty options. The platform offers over 2,000 vehicles from various brands.



#22

Website: sylnr.com

Description: Used-car commerce with inspections, financing, and controlled supply. Sylnr is less about classifieds and more about rebuilding trust in a highly opaque transactional market.

Headquarters: Egypt

Date of Establishment: 2021

Founders / Parent: Omar El Defrawy

About: Sylnr is an automotive e-commerce platform designed to make the buying and selling of used vehicles in Egypt transparent, reliable, and efficient. The company operates retail by purchasing, refurbishing, and selling certified vehicles through its online platform. The vehicles undergo a comprehensive inspection of over 200 points to ensure high quality. It offers fixed prices with no negotiation required. The platform provides a 90-day comprehensive warranty, a 7-day money-back guarantee, and options for home delivery or pickup from Sylnr Hub. Sylnr aims to become the most trusted used car seller in Egypt and the region.



Taager

#23

Website: taager.com

Description: Social-commerce infrastructure for sellers who want product sourcing, warehousing, shipping, and cashflow support without carrying inventory themselves.

Headquarters: Egypt, Saudi Arabia

Date of Establishment: 2019

Founders / Parent: Mohammed Elhorishy, Abdelrahman Sherief

About: Taager is an e-commerce platform with the primary goal of enabling individuals to establish their own online businesses without the need for capital, inventory, or operational experience. The platform offers end-to-end logistics and supply chain solutions, particularly for entrepreneurs who sell through social media. The platform manages the entire process, including product sourcing, storage, packaging, shipping, and payment collection. Taager caters to a wide audience, from students looking to earn extra income to digital marketing professionals who want to start their own businesses.



#24

Website: tabby.ai

Description: The region's best-known checkout finance layer. Tabby's significance is not just BNPL scale, but how deeply it has become embedded in merchant conversion across the GCC.

Headquarters: UAE, Saudi Arabia

Date of Establishment: 2019

Founders / Parent: Hosam Arab, Daniil Barkalov

About: Tabby is the leading Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) platform in the Middle East. It enables over ten million users to shop in installments without interest or fees. By partnering with over 50,000 brands, it allows shoppers to split payments or pay later. It lets users split their purchases into four payments or defer payment for up to 40 days. Tabby offers a physical/virtual Visa card, allowing users to use BNPL services both online and in-store. Users can discover brands, track payments, and receive personalized offers. It helps consumers manage their cash flow and provides merchants with increased sales by offering flexible, interest-free payment options.

tamara

#25

Website: tamara.co

Description: A Saudi-born checkout and payments layer that helped normalize split-pay behavior in Gulf e-commerce and became one of the region's defining commerce-fintech stories.

Headquarters: Saudi Arabia

Date of Establishment: 2020

Founders / Parent: Abdulmajeed Alsukhan, Turki Bin Zarah

About: Tamara is the leading fintech platform in Saudi Arabia and the GCC region. It offers "Buy Now, Pay Later" (BNPL) services that allow customers to split their purchases into interest-free installments. By partnering with major brands, it serves over 20 million users. It provides flexible payment solutions such as "Pay in Full" and "Pay in X Installments" (up to 24 months). Tamara is Sharia-compliant and operates without interest or hidden fees. It offers a financial super-app that helps users manage payments and discover deals. Tamara is recognized as Saudi Arabia's first fintech unicorn.

THE LUXURY CLOSET

#26

Website: theluxurycloset.com

Description: Luxury resale in the Gulf, built around authentication, trust, and premium cross-border resale. It remains one of the clearest category creators in regional recommerce.

Headquarters: UAE

Date of Establishment: 2021

Founders / Parent: Kunal Kapoor

About: The Luxury Closet is a leading online marketplace for buying and selling new and pre-owned luxury goods. It is primarily a consignment-based marketplace where individuals can buy and sell pre-owned luxury items. The platform offers authenticated high-quality products, including items from world-renowned brands. It provides sustainability and lifetime authenticity guarantees on products such as bags, clothing, and jewelry. While based in the GCC, it sells to over 40 countries. It also offers features such as installment payment plans, "click and collect," and worldwide shipping.

#27

TOOLMART

Website: toolmart.me

Description: A rare Iraqi e-commerce infrastructure story, focusing on industrial goods and tools. Editorially important because it expands the regional map beyond the usual Gulf-Egypt core.

Headquarters: Iraq

Date of Establishment: 2022

Founders / Parent: Ahmed Al-Hinity, Shawkat Shegem

About: Toolmart is Iraq's first B2B-focused, technology-enabled procurement platform and online store, designed to streamline the sourcing process for industrial, commercial, and technical supplies. Offering over 35,000 products from more than 300 global brands, it serves sectors such as oil & gas and construction. Through its online store and B2B-specific procurement platform, it manages logistics processes with direct delivery to project sites. It offers a wide range of products, including power tools, hand tools, safety equipment (PPE), welding equipment, and electrical tools.



#28

Website: winderapp.com/tr

Description: It is a major global marketplace in the luxury watch industry in the UAE. It offers comprehensive solutions to the challenges of selling luxury watches online.

Headquarters: UAE

Date of Establishment: 2022

Founders / Parent: Baran Kara

About: Winder is a global marketplace that restores trust in the \$43 billion luxury watch industry. It is a dedicated global mobile marketplace app for buying, selling, and sourcing authenticated luxury watches from brands like Rolex, Omega, and Patek Philippe. With over \$200 million in inventory and more than 120 watch boutiques, Winder solves the unique challenges of selling luxury watches online by providing reliable sellers, secure transactions, and comprehensive sales tools for boutiques. It also allows users to track the value of their watch collection and receive price alerts.



#29

Website: zbooni.com

Description: Conversational commerce and payment enablement for SMEs selling through messaging apps and social channels, especially relevant in a region where commerce often starts in chat.

Headquarters: uae

Date of Establishment: 2016

Founders / Parent: Ramy Assaf, Ashraf Atia

About: Zbooni is a social commerce platform focused on the MENA region. It enables businesses to sell through WhatsApp, Instagram, and other social media. It provides tools to capture orders, accept payments, create digital catalogs, and build customer loyalty through conversational commerce. It offers a personalized social storefront link that functions like an e-commerce store without the need for a website. It allows businesses to convert personal, one-on-one chats into immediate transactions. It is an ideal solution for small and medium-sized businesses to start selling online without the need for expensive developers.



#30

Website: zid.sa

Description: A Saudi merchant-commerce platform serving independent sellers who want more control over storefronts, payments, and operations than pure marketplace models allow.

Headquarters: Saudi Arabia

Date of Establishment: 2017

Founders / Parent: Mazen AlDarrab, Sultan H. AlAsmi

About: Zid is a leading e-commerce enablement platform based in Saudi Arabia. It offers a comprehensive, all-in-one platform to help retailers digitize their businesses by setting up online stores, managing logistics, and accepting payments. The platform aims to transform traditional retail into modern commerce. It enables sellers to create their own custom e-stores with their branding, rather than just selling on a marketplace. It provides tools for shipping (Zid Ship), payments (Zid Pay), and a POS system for physical stores.





Special Interview

BY UGUR GURBES

Jeebly Transforms the Delivery Experience from Last Mile to Fast Mile

Raman Pathak, Co-Founder and CEO of Jeebly, told WORLDEF E-COMMERCE about Jeebly's strategies shaped around speed, efficiency, and customer experience, how logistics is being redefined through technology, and his predictions for the future of the sector.

At a time when e-commerce is growing rapidly and customer expectations are rising more each day, the logistics sector is also undergoing a profound transformation. As one of the pioneers of this transformation with its "Fast Mile Logistics" approach, Jeebly offers a fast, flexible, and technology-driven delivery experience for individuals and businesses through the Jeebly One App it has developed. Standing out with a wide range of innovations, from AI-powered operations to micro-fulfillment solutions, the company is making a strong contribution to the e-commerce ecosystem, particularly by closing logistics infrastructure gaps in the GCC region. Specializing in e-commerce, the company aims for "fast-mile" efficiency by offering same-day delivery, reverse logistics, and white-glove services for businesses and individuals.

Jeebly has gained attention with its "Fast Mile Logistics" approach. How does the Jeebly One App translate this concept into a practical advantage for individuals and businesses that need fast, reliable deliveries?



The concept of Fast Mile Logistics is about compressing delivery timelines while maintaining reliability and transparency. With the Jeebly One App, we bring that concept directly into the hands of our users. Instead of navigating complex logistics processes, individuals and businesses can simply open the app, schedule a delivery, and have it executed within minutes.

For businesses – especially SMEs and e-commerce sellers – the app acts as a logistics command center. They can instantly book deliveries, track orders in real time, and manage shipments across different service types, whether it's 60–90 minute deliveries, same-day deliveries, or scheduled deliveries. What makes the model powerful is the combination of technology-driven routing, an agile driver network, and real-time visibility, which enables businesses to operate with the kind of delivery speed that customers increasingly expect today.

As customer expectations around delivery speed continue to rise, how does the Jeebly One App help users access faster delivery options like 60–90 minute, same-day, or next-day services? Do you see instant delivery becoming the new norm?

Customer expectations are evolving rapidly. What used to be considered fast delivery a few years ago is now the baseline. Through the Jeebly One App, we give users the flexibility to choose delivery speeds that suit their needs – from express deliveries within 60–90 minutes to same-day and next-day options. For businesses, this flexibility is critical because delivery speed has become a major factor in customer satisfaction and conversion rates. By integrating these delivery options into

one simple platform, the app allows merchants to scale their logistics operations without having to build their own delivery infrastructure.

Looking ahead, we believe instant or ultra-fast delivery will become increasingly common, particularly in urban markets where customer expectations for speed and convenience continue to rise. Advances in technology, smarter routing systems, and the development of micro-distribution networks are already pushing the boundaries of how quickly goods can move from seller to customer.

At Jeebly, we're already seeing this shift in action through the micro-fulfilment centres we have established for leading e-commerce players, enabling deliveries in as little as 10 minutes in certain areas. As the adoption of micro-fulfilment centres continues to grow, we expect logistics to become even faster, more efficient, and seamlessly integrated into the everyday consumer experience.

Artificial intelligence is transforming logistics operations. How does the Jeebly One App leverage AI to improve things like route optimization, demand forecasting, and operational efficiency?

Artificial intelligence plays a critical role in making logistics faster and more intelligent. Within the Jeebly One ecosystem, AI helps optimize routes by analyzing real-time traffic, delivery clusters, and driver availability to determine the most efficient delivery paths. But the real evolution is moving from automated routing to predictive routing where systems anticipate traffic patterns, understand delivery density, and continuously refine route intelligence over time.

AI also helps us better understand customer behavior and delivery patterns. By analyzing order frequency, urgency signals, and repeat patterns, we can improve delivery allocation, reduce failed attempts, and create a more reliable experience for both businesses and end customers.

In markets like the GCC, cash on delivery (COD) remains important for many sellers. Automation helps streamline reconciliation, improve remittance cycles, and flag risks early strengthening seller confidence and improving working capital visibility. Importantly, technology doesn't replace people it empowers teams. As logistics becomes more data-driven, teams are equipped with better insights to make faster, smarter decisions. AI also contributes to more sustainable operations. Smarter routing reduces unnecessary distance, predictive dispatch improves fleet efficiency, and optimized planning helps reduce rider fatigue.

Ultimately, these capabilities enable the Jeebly One App to deliver a faster, more reliable logistics experience while building a smarter and more scalable delivery network.

The e-commerce market in the Middle East is expanding rapidly. How does the Jeebly One App help bridge infrastructure gaps in the GCC logistics ecosystem?

The GCC region is experiencing tremendous growth in e-commerce, but logistics infrastructure is still evolving to fully support that demand. One of the biggest challenges is ensuring efficient last-mile delivery across densely populated cities as well as suburban areas. The Jeebly One App helps bridge this gap by connecting businesses and individuals directly to a flexible, technology-driven delivery network.



Instead of relying on rigid logistics structures, users can access on-demand delivery capacity through a single platform, making logistics faster, simpler, and more accessible.

What makes Jeebly One unique is that it brings multiple logistics services into one place. Whether users need domestic express deliveries, same-day or scheduled shipments, international deliveries across the world, or movers and packers for homes, offices, and warehouses, everything can be managed seamlessly through the app.

By digitizing logistics processes such as booking, tracking, and delivery management we reduce friction for businesses and individuals while allowing them to scale their logistics needs as demand grows. As e-commerce and digital commerce continue to expand in the region, platforms like Jeebly One will play a critical role in building a more connected, efficient logistics ecosystem.

One of the goals of the Jeebly One App is to simplify logistics for SMEs, entrepreneurs, and D2C brands. What are the biggest logistics challenges these businesses face, and how does the app help them overcome those barriers?

For many small and medium-sized businesses, logistics can be one of the biggest operational challenges. Managing deliveries, coordinating drivers, and ensuring reliable service can quickly become complex and expensive. The Jeebly One App was designed to remove these barriers. It gives SMEs the ability to access professional logistics services without needing to build their own delivery infrastructure.

With features like instant booking, real-time tracking, multiple delivery options, domestic express deliveries, and integrated international shipping, the app allows businesses to manage both local and global logistics from a single platform. Whether they are delivering within the city or shipping products across borders, everything can be handled seamlessly through the app. This empowers businesses to focus on what they do best - growing their products and customer base while Jeebly manages the logistics behind the scenes.

Logistics companies today are becoming technology platforms. With products like the Jeebly One App, do you think the distinction between logistics companies and tech companies is gradually disappearing?

Absolutely. Modern logistics is increasingly powered by technology, data, and digital platforms. Today, logistics companies are not just moving goods they are building technology

ecosystems that enable faster, smarter, and more transparent supply chains. The Jeebly One App is a good example of this transformation. It combines logistics operations with advanced technology to create a seamless digital experience for users. Behind the platform are multiple

management systems that provide real-time visibility across shipments, fleets, and delivery operations, enabling businesses to monitor and manage their logistics more effectively.

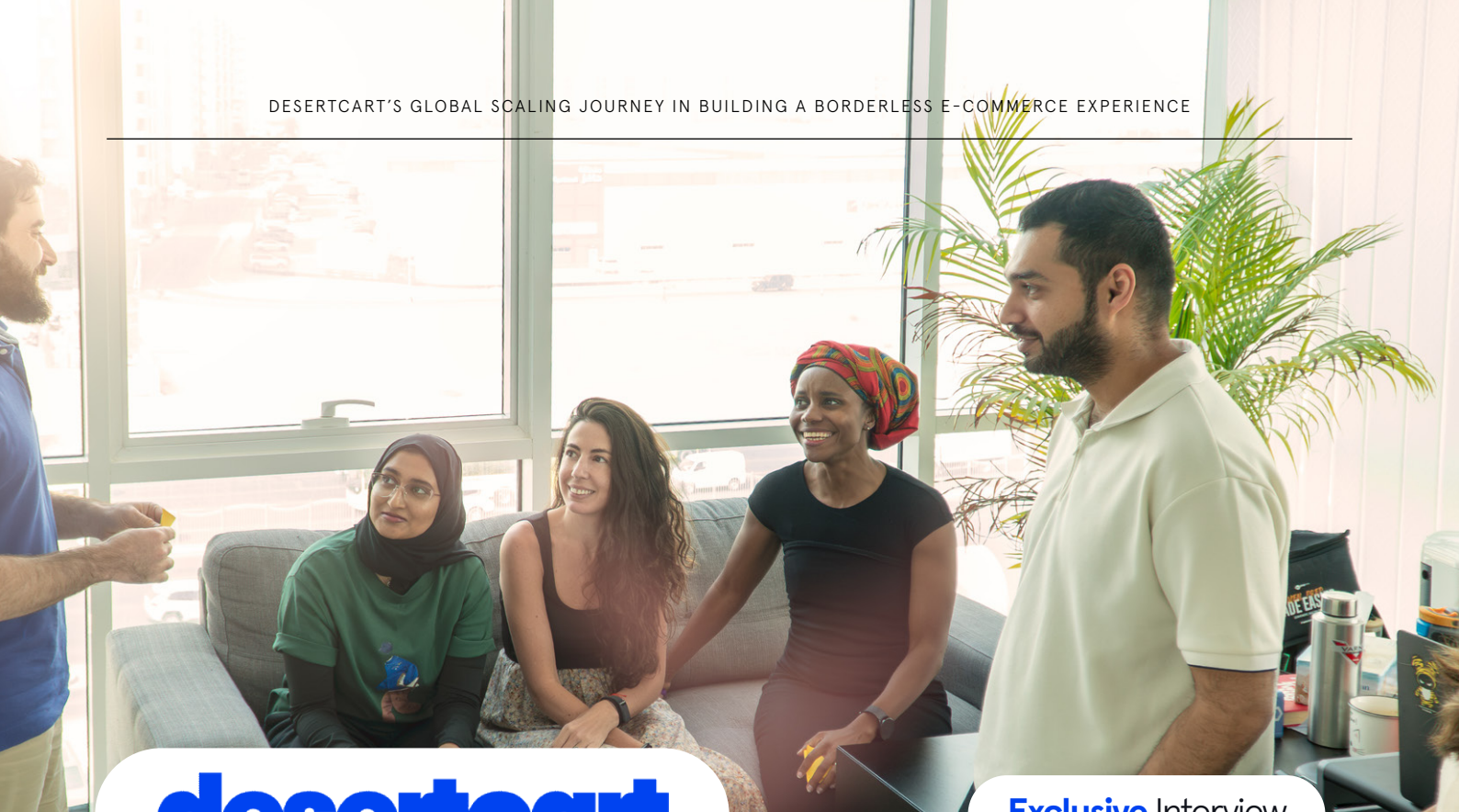
We've also focused heavily on ease of integration for businesses. Through APIs and plug-and-play integrations, merchants and e-commerce platforms can easily connect their systems to Jeebly's logistics network. Features such as automated rate calculators, order management integrations, and a fully self-service platform allow businesses to schedule deliveries, estimate costs, track shipments, and manage logistics operations with minimal friction. In many ways, the future logistics company will look more like a technology platform that orchestrates movement, using data, automation, and connected systems to make deliveries faster, more efficient, and more predictable while simplifying everyday logistics for businesses and individuals alike.

How will the Jeebly One App evolve as Jeebly expands across the MENA region and global markets?

As Jeebly expands its presence across the MENA region and beyond, the Jeebly One App will continue to evolve as the central platform for accessing our logistics services. Our goal is to simplify and solve everyday logistics challenges for individuals and businesses, with a strong focus on understanding and responding to customer needs. A key priority for us is building deeper integrations with the e-commerce ecosystem, allowing businesses to seamlessly connect their online stores to our delivery network. This enables merchants to manage orders, deliveries,

and logistics operations from a single platform while giving them the flexibility to scale as their business grows.

At the same time, our growth is technology-driven and backed by data insights, helping us continuously refine delivery efficiency, improve reliability, and create better user experiences. In the long term, we see Jeebly One evolving into a true "delivery super app" a platform where users can access everything from domestic deliveries and international shipping to packers and movers and other logistics solutions, all in one place. By combining technology, data, and a deep focus on customer needs, we aim to make logistics simpler, faster, and more accessible for everyone.



desertcart

Exclusive Interview

BY BURAK YALIM

Desertcart's Global Scaling Journey

Building a Borderless E-Commerce Experience

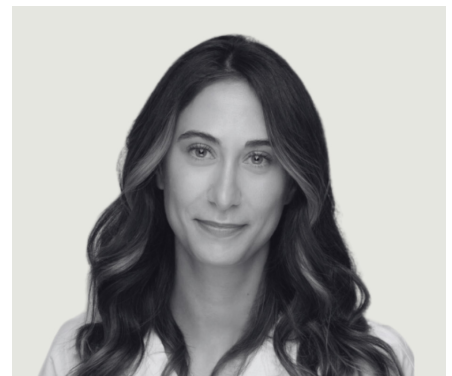
Borderless growth, sharper market discipline, and a marketing model built to scale across regions.

WHY THIS STORY MATTERS

As the world of e-commerce moves away from a "growth at all costs" mindset toward a more sustainable, profitable, and data-driven structure, the role of marketing leadership is also undergoing a profound transformation. One of the key players in this transformation in the UAE, Desertcart has been a global e-commerce platform connecting customers with products from around the world since 2014.

INSIDE THE FEATURE

Cemre Akkaya explains what profitable growth demands from marketing leadership, why expansion should start from operational truth, and how AI can sharpen execution without replacing human market judgment.



CEMRE AKKAYA / VP MARKETING & REVENUE

Marketing Leadership Under a New Profit Logic

A borderless model for profitable growth and regional expansion.

Headquartered in Dubai, Desertcart manages e-commerce operations across multiple markets and closely experiences different consumer dynamics. With its catalog of millions of products, the company enables its customers to discover and purchase international brands that are difficult to find in local markets. Desertcart has an advanced logistics network in the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, and India. It operates through dedicated fulfillment centers and ensures secure transactions, fast delivery, and complete reliability.

Cemre Akkaya, Vice President of Marketing and Revenue at Desertcart, joined WORLDEF E-COMMERCE as a guest. In this interview, we take an in-depth look at the balance between brand, performance, and commercial accountability, the critical breaking points of global expansion, and the real impact of artificial intelligence on marketing. While this conversation offers strategic insights for brands aiming to grow particularly in the MENA region, it also presents a clear perspective on the future of marketing. Enjoy the read.



CEMRE AKKAYA

Vice President of Marketing and Revenue at Desertcart

FOCUS AREAS

Brand and performance
Global expansion
Trust in MENA
AI in marketing

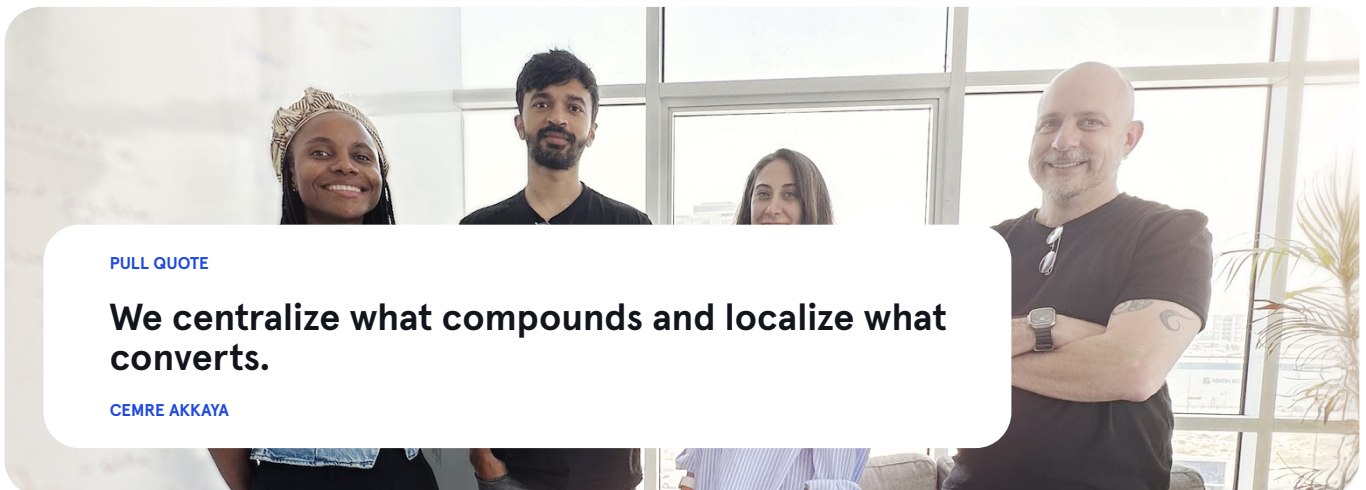
EDITORIAL NOTE

This interview sits at the intersection of commercial discipline and regional nuance. It is not a story about growth at any price; it is about building a system where pricing, trust, delivery, and media work together.

PULL QUOTE

We centralize what compounds and localize what converts.

CEMRE AKKAYA



COMMERCIAL GROWTH

SHIFT IN ROLE

Growth at scale now means defending spend with contribution margin, payback period, and incremental revenue logic instead of channel vanity metrics.



EXPANSION NEEDS MORE THAN LOCALIZED CREATIVE

E-commerce has largely moved from "growth at all costs" to "profitable, defensible growth." From your perspective, how has this shift changed the role of marketing leadership at scale?

The shift is forcing marketing leaders to become commercial. Gone are the days where a nice visual and a full push on performance marketing is how you grow. The CFO is right there asking questions and you have to justify your decisions. Talking about impressions and clicks is not enough anymore. Growth at all costs also looks very different when CAC-to-LTV math is completely different in India versus the UAE, which is exactly the situation at Desertcart. The marketing leaders who will thrive are the ones who can talk about contribution margin, payback period, and incremental revenue. I build systems that connect marketing spend directly to P&L impact. "Should we run this campaign?" became "what's the marginal ROI of this spend versus the next best allocation?" CMO is one of the shortest-tenured roles in the C-suite. And if we cannot answer the CFO's questions, it will keep being that way. So I make sure I always can.

Many brands still treat marketing as a demand-generation function rather than a revenue architecture tool. Where do you personally draw the line between brand, performance, and commercial accountability?

There is no line. These live on a continuous spectrum and our job is to manage the tension, not solve it. It is simply not solvable. The clearest example I can give is from expanding into a new market at Desertcart. Brand work builds

the recognition that makes customers consider you in the first place. Performance captures them when they are actually ready to buy. Commercial accountability tells you whether any of it was worth doing. You cannot separate them. If you cut brand entirely and run pure performance, your CPMs climb over time because your pool of people who recognize you keeps shrinking. If you run brand with no performance accountability, you are spending with no clear path to revenue. And if you ignore the commercial layer, you can have great brand metrics and strong conversion and still be losing money on every order. All three have to be in the room when the decision is being made.

As a VP-level leader, what are the most common strategic misconceptions you see when companies expand into new regions too quickly?

I have operated across 60 plus markets actively. In e-commerce it is becoming easier to expand, so companies assume growth will follow. They think that because they can sell something in their home country, they can sell it anywhere. And because launching is cheap and fast, they launch in ten markets at once.

Then they localize the creative and keep everything else the same. That is the wrong model. You start from the operations. What payment methods work there? What trust signals matter? What are the delivery expectations and can you meet them? What do customers expect when they return something? Once you know you can actually fit what the market needs, then you focus. Launch in one or two markets, get it right, and then the localization becomes the cherry on top.

Desertcart operates across multiple regions with very different consumer behaviors. What elements of your marketing strategy must remain centralized, and which ones must be localized for it to work?

We centralize what compounds and localize what converts. What the brand stands for and who we are stays central. You cannot change who you are. But think about it this way: I am slightly different at work versus with my parents, right? I adapt to the context without becoming a different person. Brands work the same way. You adapt how you talk in a given country without changing what you stand for. Pricing, payment methods, delivery, influencers, the seasonal calendar, customer service, all of that has to adapt to local reality. The brand identity does not.

MENA MARKET REALITIES



Global expansion often fails not because of logistics, but because of misread consumer psychology. Can you share an example where marketing insight, rather than tech or supply chain, made the difference?

It is easy to look at your product, look at consumers in a different country, and focus on the similarities. But more often than not, the differences are what make the biggest impact. When we launched in India, we identified a deeply rooted cultural behavior where people are expected to bring gifts for relatives and friends when they travel abroad. It is almost a social obligation. Instead of adapting an existing global campaign, we built one from scratch around that insight. We positioned Desertcart as a modern replacement for that behavior, using humor-driven content to show that you no longer need to wait for someone to travel to get international products. That campaign reached the highest number of people in Desertcart history and improved conversion rates for the entire period we ran it.

In your experience, what is the biggest mistake brands make when entering the Middle East, especially from Europe or Asia?

They think MENA is one market and they lead with product instead of trust. Both are mistakes and both cost real money. Saudi Arabia and the UAE are fundamentally different as consumer markets. Coming in with one playbook for all of MENA just tells you the brand did not do the work. The trust piece is where European brands specifically get stuck. They bring a digital acquisition model

because it worked at home. Paid performance looks bad, they pull budget, and they leave thinking the market does not convert. But they never built the foundation that makes paid work in the first place. Cash on delivery is still a meaningful share of transactions across many MENA markets. Influencers function differently here, people are buying because of who is recommending it, not because of the brand name. Word of mouth and community still drive a large share of purchases in beauty, food, and lifestyle. If you skip all of that and go straight to campaigns, you are running paid on top of nothing.

Performance marketing has become increasingly competitive and expensive. At what point does over-optimization for ROAS start to erode long-term brand equity?

The signal that it is becoming a problem: new customer LTV-to-CAC trending down while blended ROAS trends up. That sounds like a good thing on paper, but what it actually means is you are acquiring cheaper customers who you cannot keep. The algorithm is optimizing toward the lowest-friction conversions, which are often the customers with the lowest brand affinity, the highest return rates, and the lowest repeat purchase rates. You are improving a metric while quietly destroying the business.

KEY TENSION

Performance can optimize acquisition, but trust still decides whether paid traffic converts into durable customer relationships.

Do you believe that strong brands can afford inefficient performance marketing, at least temporarily, while weak brands cannot? Why or why not?

Yes, but only if they are honest about what they are buying and for how long. If you are a strong brand, you have organic

WHAT BREAKS EXPANSION

Payment fit, delivery expectations, local influencers, and return behavior all shape conversion more than translated creative alone.

demand as a floor. People will find you regardless of paid efficiency. That gives you room to experiment and test new channels. Weak brands do not have that floor. Every inefficiency becomes existential. You stop the spend, you stop existing in the customer's mind. But the trap for strong brands is confusing the ability to absorb inefficiency with permission to do a bad job. Mostly though, I think this comes down to payback period tolerance. A well-funded brand can accept a 24-month payback if it is playing the long game. A cash-constrained brand cannot. Financial structure matters more than brand strength in this equation.

AI, TRUST AND THE NEXT PHASE

CLOSING PERSPECTIVE

AI will automate larger parts of the funnel, but relationship-heavy decisions, market nuance, and trust architecture will remain stubbornly human.

FINAL TAKE

The region still offers room to build, but platform concentration is the structural risk brands cannot afford to ignore.



How do you internally evaluate when to invest in brand storytelling versus doubling down on conversion-driven tactics?

First, look at where the actual broken part of the funnel is. If conversion rate is the problem, brand storytelling can only help so much. You have to fix that first. If the funnel is healthy but volume is low, CPMs are rising, lookalikes are degrading, then you need to expand the pool and reach new people. And second, you actually need the numbers. Cut brand spend versus performance spend for specific periods and regions and see which one actually moves the needle. We are often afraid to run that test cleanly. But that is exactly what tells you where to invest more. Most organizations have strong opinions about this question and weak evidence.

AI is now embedded across targeting, creative, attribution, and CRM. Which marketing decisions do you believe should never be fully automated, no matter how advanced AI becomes?

Anything that is inherently human should stay human. The three I feel most strongly about are crisis communication, influencer decisions in markets where relationships are personal, and anything where being wrong once has a lasting reputational cost. The concrete example: in MENA markets, influencer selection is a relationship decision as much as a data decision. An algorithm looks at reach, engagement rate, audience overlap. What

it does not see is whether that person has the actual trust of the community you are trying to reach, or whether there is reputational context in the local market that changes the picture entirely. We have passed on influencers with strong metrics because the local read was different. That call is not automatable. The same applies to crisis communication. AI can draft. But the decision about what to say, when to say it, and how much to acknowledge in a culturally sensitive market requires reading the room in a way that models are not calibrated for. Automating that is the kind of mistake that takes years to recover from.

Looking ahead to 2026 and beyond, which part of the marketing funnel do you believe will see the most disruption from AI, and which will remain stubbornly human?

Top and bottom of funnel will be almost fully AI-managed. Middle, where trust is built, will stay human. At least if we do it right. Performance marketing, targeting, personalization at scale, churn prediction, these are already seeing massive disruption at companies doing it well. The consideration stage, where a customer actually decides whether to trust you, that will stay human. Community, influencer relationships, earned media. I am sure companies will try to automate this too, will see short-term efficiency gains, take a hit to long-term growth because of eroded trust, and then reverse course.

Finally, what excites you most about the future of e-commerce in the Middle East, and what genuinely concerns you?

What excites me: there is still so much to build here. A lot of global brands have not taken the region seriously and the customer base has high purchase intent and money to spend. That gap is still largely open. What concerns me is platform concentration. Most e-commerce in the region flows through a small number of platforms. Brands are heavily dependent on them for traffic, for data, for their customer relationships. If those platforms consolidate further, brands lose pricing control, they lose visibility into who their customer actually is, and they lose the ability to have any direct relationship with them at all. That is a lot to give up and most brands do not realize how dependent they are until they need leverage they no longer have.

Zajel Redefines Delivery with a Few-Hours Promise

Zajel Logistics Services is advancing its position in the UAE logistics sector through a series of recent innovations focused on speed, convenience, and digital transformation. Leading these developments is the launch of Zajel Now, an on-demand delivery service that enables shipments within just a few hours, addressing the growing demand for fast and flexible solutions.



Nabeel AlKharabsheh,
General Manager of Zajel Logistics
Services.



Complementing this is the introduction of Zajel's mobile application, designed to provide customers with a seamless and accessible way to manage their shipments. Together, these initiatives reflect Zajel's commitment to enhancing the customer experience through technology and more agile service offerings.

"At Zajel, we are focused on staying ahead by continuously enhancing our services and introducing solutions that bring greater speed, convenience, and reliability to our customers," says Nabeel AlKharabsheh, General Manager of Zajel Logistics Services.

Founded in 2008 as a courier service provider, Zajel has grown significantly over the years, expanding beyond traditional delivery to offer a wide range of logistics solutions. Today, its services include express courier, e-commerce logistics, freight forwarding across land, sea, and air, as well as on-demand delivery, reflecting its evolution into a comprehensive, technology-driven logistics partner.

WORLDEF

DUBAI • 12-14 FEBRUARY 2026

AFTER *Event Report*



The 2026 Success Success Snapshot



82%

**Key Decision
Makers**



+124%

Growth

18K+ Total Participants



90+

Countries

Exhibitors & Visitors



91%

**Exhibitor
Satisfaction**

The Scale of the Ecosystem



18K+

Participants



167

Exhibitors



200+

Speakers

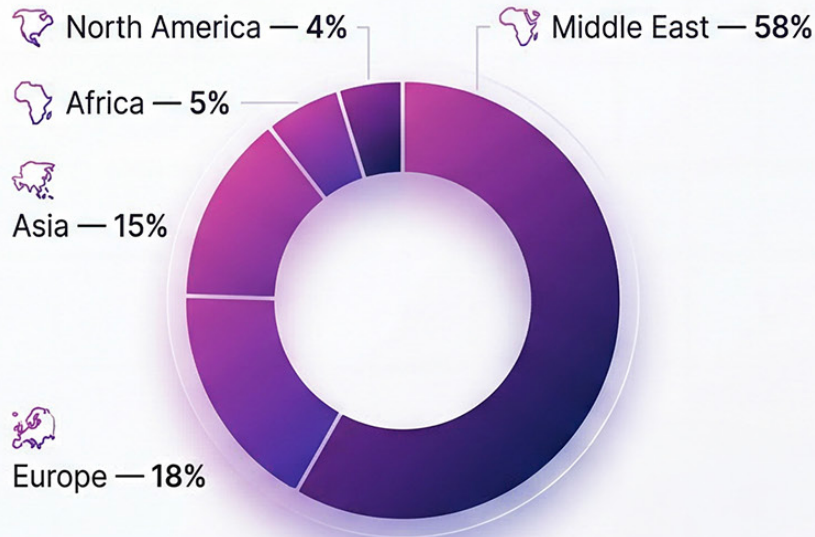


26K+

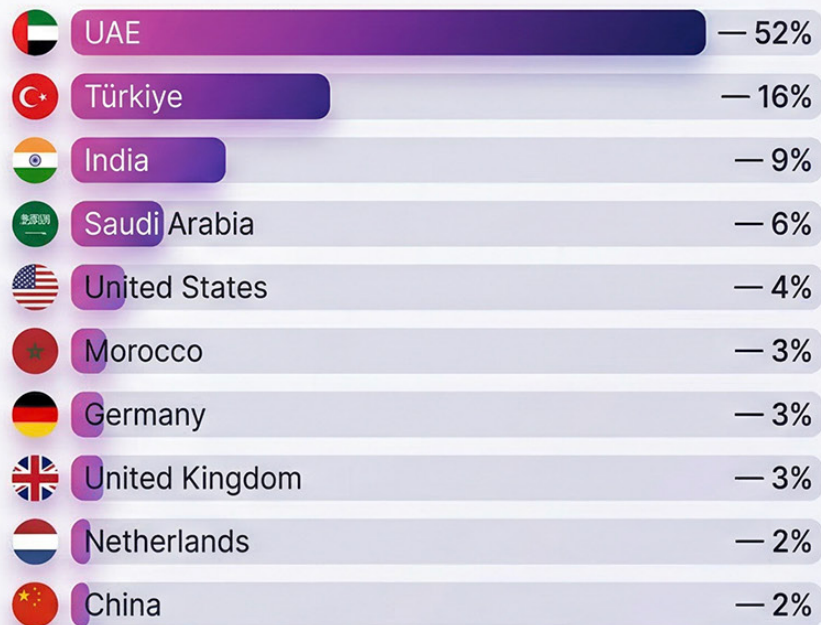
B2B Meetings

The Global Footprint

Regional Influx (100%)



Top 10 Connecting Nations (100%)



Sustainable Growth



**Total
Attendees**

Before: **8K+**



After:

18K+

+125%



**B2B
Meetings**

Before: **11K+**



After:

26K+

+136%



Investors

Before: **250+**



After:

900+

+260%



Start-ups

Before: **30+**

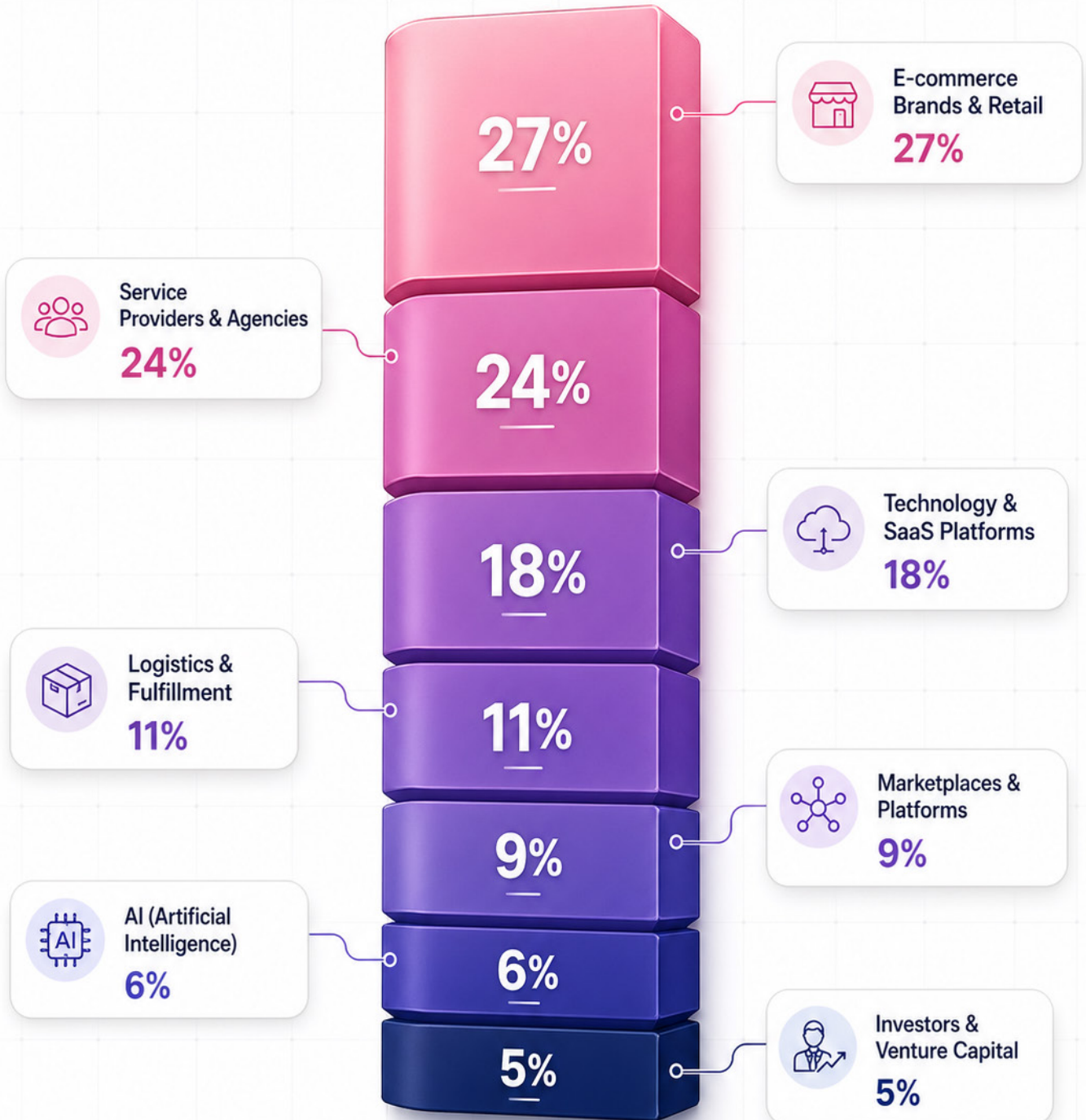


After:

80+

+167%

The Ecosystem Blueprint



The Commercial Engine: ROI Pipeline

Strong commercial engagement translated directly into tangible business outcomes on the event floor.



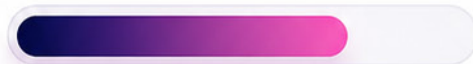
4.8 / 5

average rate of
lead quality



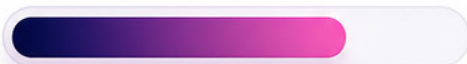
64%

Closed deals
on-site



72%

Generated
qualified leads



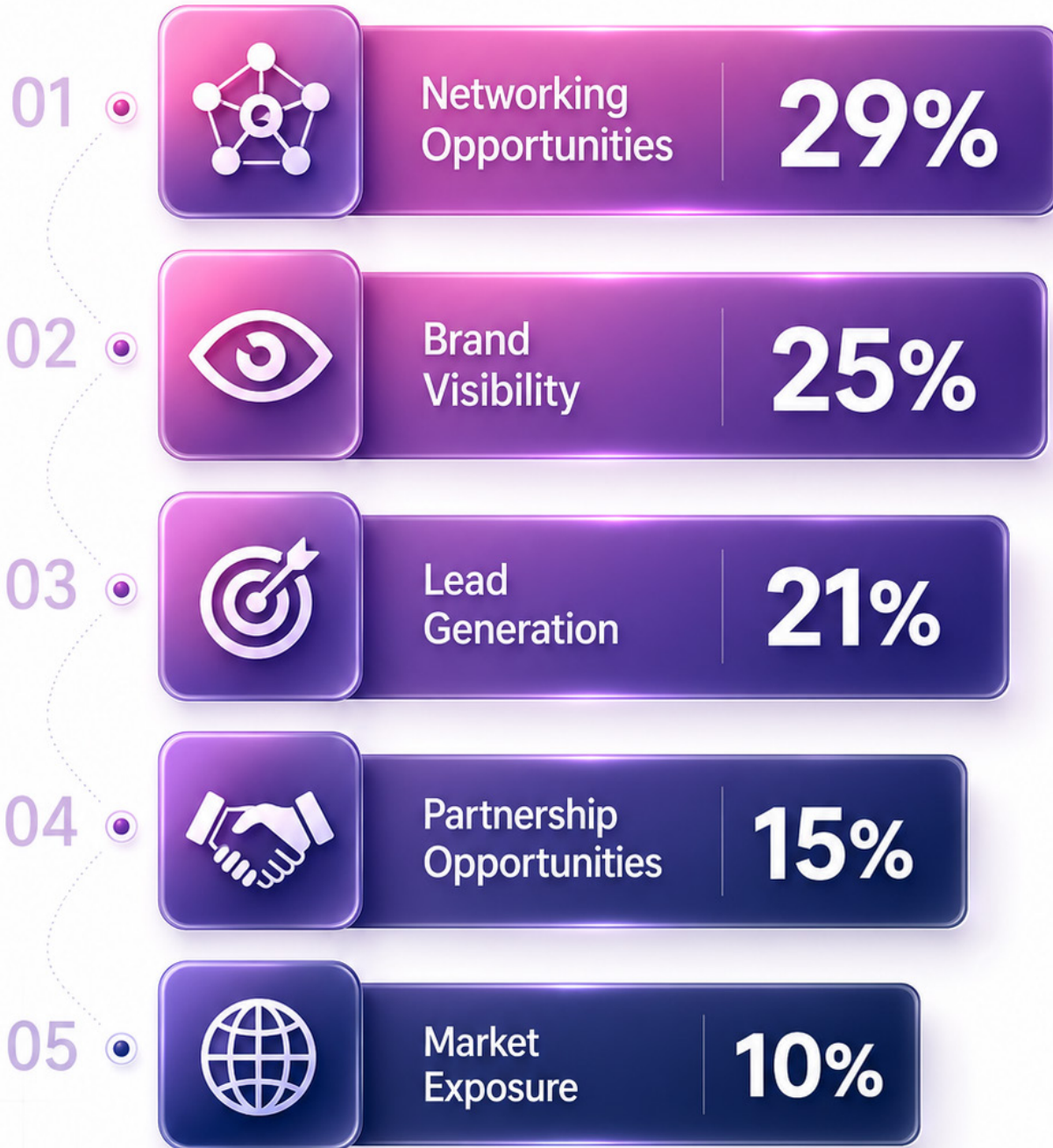
78%

Retention
rate



Key Benefits

What participants successfully gained from the WORLDEF experience



Key Audience Profile

Understanding the key decision-makers who drive impact at WORLDEF events.

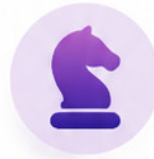
Key Audience by Responsibility



Executive Decision

82%

of total attendees



Execution & Strategy

18%

of total attendees



Audience Breakdown by Role



Founders / Owners



34%



Directors / Heads



26%



C-Level
Executives



22%



Managers



10%



Specialists /
Professionals



5%



Other Roles



3%

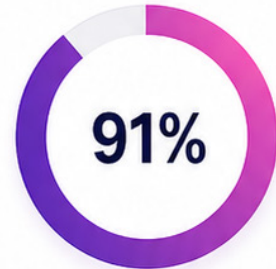
Participant Satisfaction & Retention

Feedback indicates a highly positive experience, with strong satisfaction driving high willingness to return.



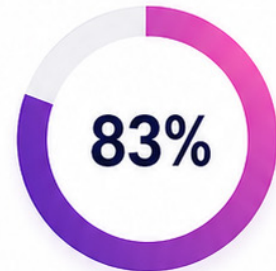
91%

Overall Event Satisfaction



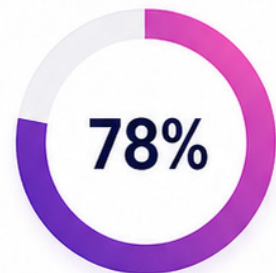
83%

High Quality Networking Experience



78%

Planning to attend WORLDEF Dubai 2027



59%

Interested to attend WORLDEF Istanbul 2026



Social Media Powerhouse



LinkedIn

750K+

Views



Instagram

25M+

Views



YouTube

250K+

Views

This data covers the **two months** leading up to the event.

Global Media Coverage & Press Impact

Media Impact

100+



Global News Websites

3M+



Potential Readership

Featured Media



Anadolu Ajansı

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dubaieye^{ARN}
103.8



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NEWS AGENCY - WAM

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TRTWORLD

ZAWYA
BY LSEG

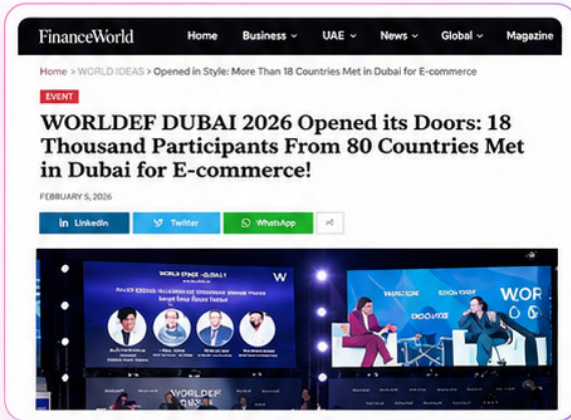
Highlights in the Global Media



Zawya - Feb 2026



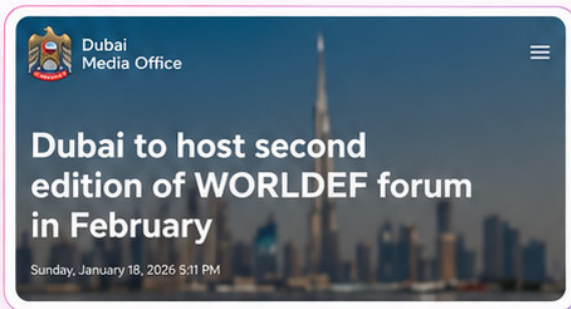
WAM - Jan 2026



FinanceWorld - Feb 2026



TR Business - Feb 2026



DMO News - Feb 2026



Business Today.me - Feb 2026

THE TIMES OF INDIA

MASTHEAD

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The Times of India - Feb 2026

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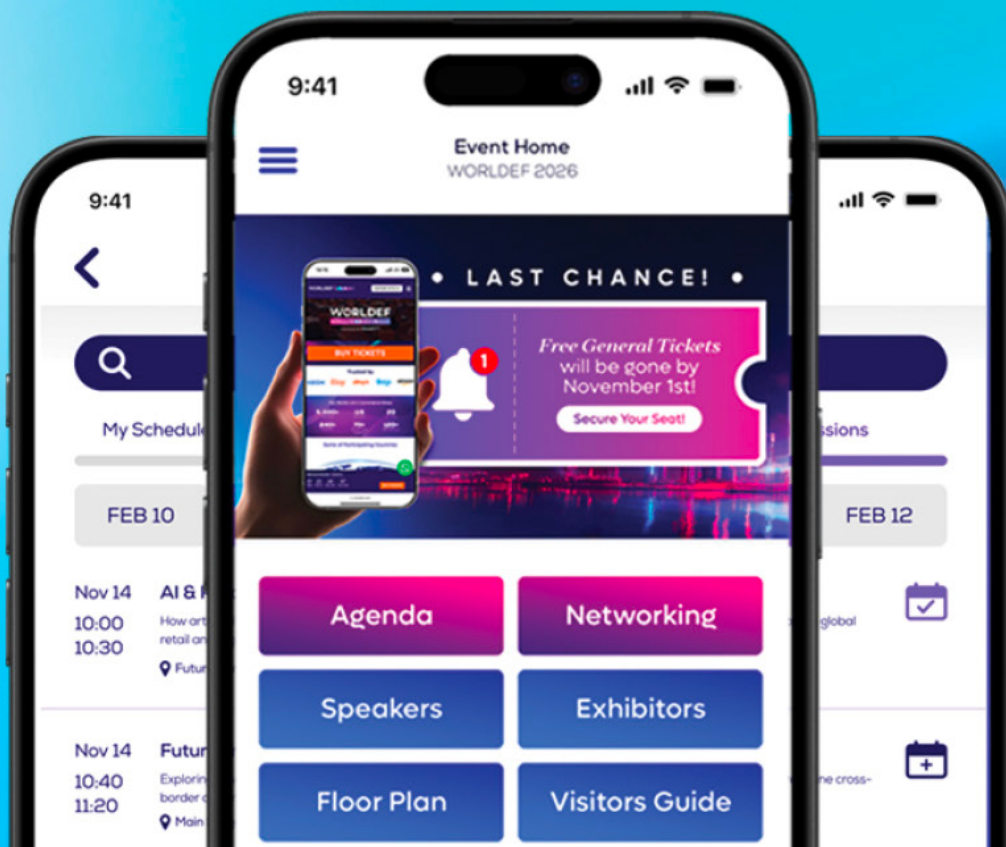
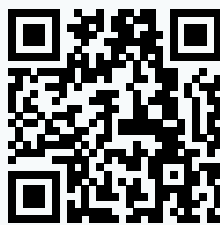


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