Sight for **GROWTH**

- a monthly series

JANUARY | 2024



Whirlwinds of positive change sweep across the Middle East as it scripts its

new narrative and manifesto for change

Economic Diversification

Investing in non-oil sectors such as tourism, technology, and renewable energy

Infrastructure Investments

Substantial investments in transportation, healthcare, and education, to enhance the overall quality of life

Digital Transformation

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Innovation and digital transformation initiatives by promoting smart cities, egovernment services, encouraging adoption of digital payment systems

Cultural & Entertainment Initiatives

Enhanced offering with the development of cultural festivals, museums, and entertainment venues

Sustainable Practices

Increasing awareness and adoption of sustainable practices, in terms of environmental conservation and social responsibility across various sectors

Regional Collaborations

GCC regions collaborate not only economically but also in areas like security and healthcare

Empowerment of Youth & Women in the Workforce

Empowering the youth and increasing women's participation in the workforce are gaining momentum, with focus on education, training, and promoting entrepreneurship

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So, what do these changes mean to consumers?

How is it impacting and influencing the choices they make?

How can companies stay relevant in this new context?

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4SiGHT for Growth is our point-of-view **series*** on the impact of these changes on consumers

Every month we will bring to you insights about a trending topic or a category

We will also look at these trends from the lens of the generational mindsets

*This series is based on the many conversations we have had with consumers over the years.



Key Trends Inspiring Consumer Choices in this evolving context

Trend 1



Middle East countries take Center Stage



Trend 4

Trend 6

Trend 8



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Innovation Meets Nostalgia

Trend 3



Heritage Inspired Creativity



Trend 5

Trend 7

Youth Blaze the Trail



Experience Trumps All





Women Crack the **Glass** Cieling



Health: Beyond the Absence of Illness



Digital Transformation @scale



THEGIVINGMOVEMENT

Trend 1

Middle East takes center stage

Citizens exude **pride, confidence and optimism** about the global allure of their country after hosting events like COP28, Expo 2020, FIFA World Cup, Sound Storm, etc.

IMPACT

This confidence is leading to the **rise of Home-Grown brands** and **Local Influencers** across categories like fashion, food, entertainment, etc.

In the Middle East, we are now creating our own brands that can compete globally... there is a sense of pride to buy brands that reflect our culture and match up to the quality of international brands

> These homegrown Middle Eastern brands are fighting global competitors. Can they win?



Innovation Meets Nostalgia

Popular gems from the past are making a comeback in a **tech-enabled avatar**. From festive rituals, food, fashion, personal care, iconic toys & collectibles, etc. the 80's & 90's **nostalgia makes a come-back**.

IMPACT Many brands are capitalizing on this trend by **reintroducing or modernizing** 80s & 90s **iconic** fashion items, ingredients, games, etc. but with a **new age twist** like technology integration.

McDonald's Grimace shake taps into the secret of nostalgia marketing

A Blast from Ramadan Pasts: Egypt's Nostalgic Song Commercials Trends we hear our parents talk about from when they were young are becoming popular again but in new format... these trends we too can relate to and helps us have a common talking point with our parents...

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Heritage inspired Creativity & Expression

Micro segments are emerging as **every region**, **ethnicity wants to showcase** its **unique culture & rituals.** These regional nuances come alive as every region proudly showcases their unique local practices be it in food, fashion, festivals, music, etc.

IMPACT

Brands are **unearthing creative consciousness** by **supporting local artisans, digital artists, and designers.** These initiatives aim to preserve and innovate within traditional cultures while integrating them into the global economy.

As Saudi welcomes the world, every region wants to showcase their culture... specialties... uniqueness. In specialties... uniqueness. In restaurants they now serve region-specific kabsa... the region-specific kabsa... the way of preparation, spices way of preparation, spices but people feel proud to but people feel proud to serve their specialty... How Islamic customs complement local traditions during Ramadan across Saudi Arabia

BOOMING MUSIC SCENE IN MENA OPENS POSSIBILITIES FOR REGIONAL ARTISTS

Women crack the glass ceiling

The narrative of women's empowerment in the region is rapidly evolving, with significant increase in female workforce participation and female-led initiatives, especially in technology and business sectors.

IMPACT Brands recognize that women's **influence & role** is more **active & in the forefront** across categories traditionally considered male (ex: agriculture, space, nuclear energy, etc.)



Women are not just playing their role in the family but also contributing to the society and economy... we are no more in the background

> Cultivating change: Women as catalysts for agricultural transformation in the MENA region

First Arab female astronaut reaches space station

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Youth Blaze the Trail

A generation that wants to be able to **chart the destiny** not just for **themselves** but also for **their country**.

IMPACT Disrupt the norm, don't rupture the form in communication messages resonate with the desire to **disrupt yet integrate seamlessly** within an evolving social fabric. It is important to become allies in the youth's pursuit of innovation and societal contribution.

Arab Youth Survey 2023: Most young people would boycott brands that damage environment

Arab youth innovations map a bright world future

It is the best time in our region... we are hosting world class events here... it is our time to shine... as youth, we have a critical role in shaping the future of our region... we want to be selfreliant... by drawing on our positive energy & creative capabilities we are keen to build our future & our country's future...



Health: Beyond the Absence of Illness

Slowly & steadily we see a shift from a **reactive to proactive approach** towards health. More awareness and consciousness leading to discussions on health and wellbeing. **Holistic wellness is the key buzz!**

IMPACT

As consumers slowly transition towards embracing healthy choices, fitness activities & mental wellbeing programs, brands too are emerging to meet this growing need.





We always believed that as long as you are not sick you are healthy... if you were seen eating low sugar or low-fat food, people believed you are sick... now they are more aware of being in good health physically & mentally... of course it will take time to change our habits, but we will get there soon...

Cultivating holistic wellness with yoga in Alkhobar

ME Time: Make the Middle East your next wellness destination



Experience Trumps All

Personalization has become an expectation in the region, regardless of the industry. A recent McKinsey study showed that brands providing personalized solutions and communications are favored by 76 per cent of consumers.

IMPACT Consumers demand holistic sensory experiences and there is a growing expectation for immersive and multi-sensory experiences when interacting with brands and products.





One-size-fits-all is a thing of the past... our generation expects everything we wear or eat or do to reflect our personality... our individuality... we expect personalized attention and experiences that make us feel special... we want to feel that the product or service was made for us

Saudi consumers today are no longer satisfied with just any ordinary experience

From ROI to ROE — the experience economy in the Middle East seems to be thriving



Digital Transformation @scale

The **world around them is being digitized** via Smart Cities, E-Government services, Digital Banking & Fintech, E-commerce, Digitial Health care technologies, EdTech, Digital Media & Technology.

All these are an effort to **improve urban living through technology,** enable financial inclusion, revolutionize quality and delivery of services, streamline & **enhance efficiency and transparency**.

IMPACT

Consumers expect brands to also **enhance their digital touchpoints**, offer a wide range of options and also create opportunities for content creators and digital entrepreneurs

Fashion in the Middle East: Optimism and Transformation In 2021, the digital transformation market in the Middle East was valued at \$100 billion and is expected to grow to \$200 billion by 2025

Digital transformation investment in Middle East, Turkey and Africa to top \$74bn by 2026

Mind-the-Gap

As brands navigate these changes in the region, here is a snapshot of the generational mindsets to help better connect with them... d sight

GEN ALPHA (2012 onwards)	GEN Z (1997 - 2012)	GEN Y (1981 – 1996)	GEN X (1965 - 1980)	BABY BOOMERS (1946 - 1964)	
THEMES THAT CONNECT					
Personalization & customization Inclusivity & diversity Ethical & responsible branding	Community & Connection with own tribe Authenticity & Transparency Social Activism & Purpose- Driven Brands	Brand Purpose & Values Experience- Centric Consumption Conscious Consumerism	Individuality & Self-Expression Blend of global trends with cultural sensitivity	Family Values & Cultural Sensitivity Luxury Brands & Status Symbols Brand Trust & Reliability	
CHANNELS THAT CONNECT					
Short-Form Content Visual Appeal	Ephemeral Content Storytelling	Influencer Marketing Peer Recommendations	Retail Experiences Educational Marketing	Traditional Retail & Media Channels Celebrity Endorsements	
ASPECTS OF THE BRAND THAT CONNECT					
Company & its sustainable practices	Company values & its impact on society	Renowned Brand names, its vision & purpose	International brand names	Quality of ingredients & its efficacy	
SELF VS. OTHERS					
I > WE	I > WE	I = WE	I = WE	I = WE	

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We hope you find this series inspiring

Look forward to meeting you next month as our series captures the **evolving** landscape of Ramadan



For more information, contact **info@4sight-global.com**