

طقوس
RITUALS

A LOOK AT
SPORTS RITUALS
IN SAUDI ARABIA

JULY | 2026

THE RITUALS THAT MOVE A NATION

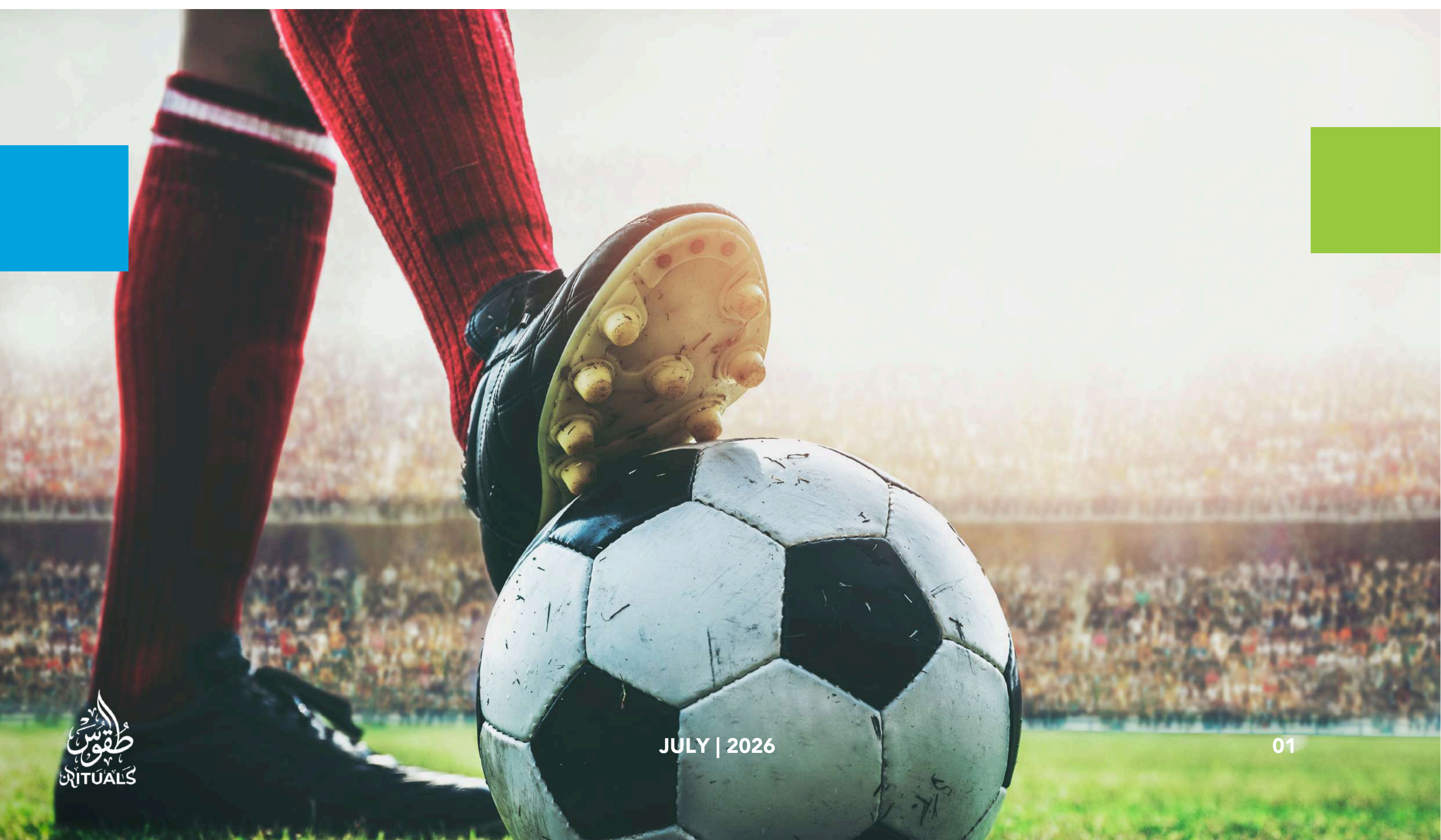
The 2026 FIFA World Cup revealed a defining truth about Saudi Arabia: **sport is far more than just sport or entertainment — it is a cultural ritual.**

As the Green Falcons took the field, homes filled, cafés overflowed, fan zones erupted, and whole neighbourhoods moved to one heartbeat. The result mattered — but gathering, hoping and grieving together mattered more.

In Saudi Arabia, sport has **never been just about sport**. Long before packed stadiums and fitness apps, the Kingdom's **sporting culture was forged in the desert** — falconry, camel racing and horsemanship as **rituals of identity, honour and belonging**.

Today Vision 2030 is reshaping those traditions: **expanding opportunities for women, accelerating participation, and inspiring a generation through clubs, communities and active lifestyles**. The result is a culture where **ancient rituals meet contemporary passions** — a powerful force **connecting generations, strengthening communities and reflecting the Kingdom's evolving identity**.

For brands, this is far more than a sponsorship opportunity. It is one of the **most emotionally resonant ways to become part of how Saudis connect, belong and aspire**.



TRADITIONAL HERITAGE SPORTS



CAMEL RACING

A Bedouin institution elevated to national spectacle

One of Saudi Arabia's most cherished sporting rituals — rooted in heritage, tribal identity and family tradition. Once built around communal Friday gatherings and live TV, it's now evolving through social media, as TikTok, influencers and celebrity participation draw younger audiences in.

THE RITUALS

- **Preparing racing camels** — selected by lineage and age, then put on specialised diets and training.
- **Strict community customs** govern the races, with committees verifying each camel's pedigree.
- **Race day** brings traditional attire, ceremony and celebration — preserving Saudi folklore for the next generation.

KEY EVENTS

- **The King Abdulaziz Camel Festival** — the world's largest camel event — draws 38,000+ camels and pairs racing with the Mazayen al-Ibl beauty contest, falconry displays, poetry recitals and a vast heritage village, with prizes worth nearly SAR 300 million.
- **The beauty contest** is a ritual in itself — an aesthetic judgement of the animal reflecting the owner's lineage, pride and tribal standing.

Camel racing remains a powerful symbol of Saudi culture — bringing generations together and preserving a deep sense of pride and belonging.



I recall watching at my grandmother's house... the whole family watched and picked favorite camels/owners... nowadays interest has declined but is being revived via celebrity influencers like "Raaf Al-Qahtani" entering a camel in the race and going viral on TikTok.

Young Saudi Male



HORSE RACING

A timeless tradition rooted in Arabian heritage

Owning and caring for an Arabian horse is a source of pride; the rituals of breeding, grooming, training and riding pass down through generations — preserving one of the Kingdom's oldest traditions.

THE RITUALS

- **Friday afternoon is the traditional race time in Riyadh** — a custom of deep cultural legacy. The Equestrian Club of Riyadh was founded in 1965 on the strength of the sport's importance.
- **Horses are bred and conditioned for endurance;** the race tests stamina, drawing animals from across the country.

KEY EVENTS

- **Saudi involvement now runs international** — Saudis are dominant players at Royal Ascot, Longchamp and Melbourne.

FALCONRY

A traditional sport rooted in Bedouin culture

Owning a prized falcon is a marker of status; the rituals of preparation — feeding, bathing, tethering — pass down within families.

THE RITUALS

- Raising, taming and training falcons for hunting.
- The falconer–bird bond is built through daily handling: hood removal, lure training and conditioning flights.

KEY EVENTS

- The King Abdulaziz Falconry Festival — the world's largest — celebrates the art through speed races and hunting competitions, with modern veterinary science safeguarding the birds' wellbeing.

FOOTBALL – A NATIONAL PASSION

THE KINGDOM'S MOST PRACTISED, MOST FOLLOWED,
MOST INHERITED SPORT.

FOOTBALL

Football is KSA's most practised and most followed sport, with a rich ritual ecosystem.

CLUB LOYALTY AS INHERITED IDENTITY



Allegiance is passed down through generations, with clubs reflecting tribal, regional, and family identity. Matches become expressions of pride and belonging.

MATCH-DAY DISPLAYS OF LOYALTY



Jerseys, scarves and team colours turn streets and stadiums into public celebrations of affiliation.

PRE-MATCH RITUALS & SUPERSTITIONS



Lucky items and fixed routines build anticipation and connection.

COLLECTIVE VIEWING & FAN CULTURE



Stadiums, fan zones, entertainment spaces and homes bring supporters together through shared viewing, memorabilia and nostalgia.

FOOTBALL CONTINUED...

FOOD AS COMMUNAL RITUAL



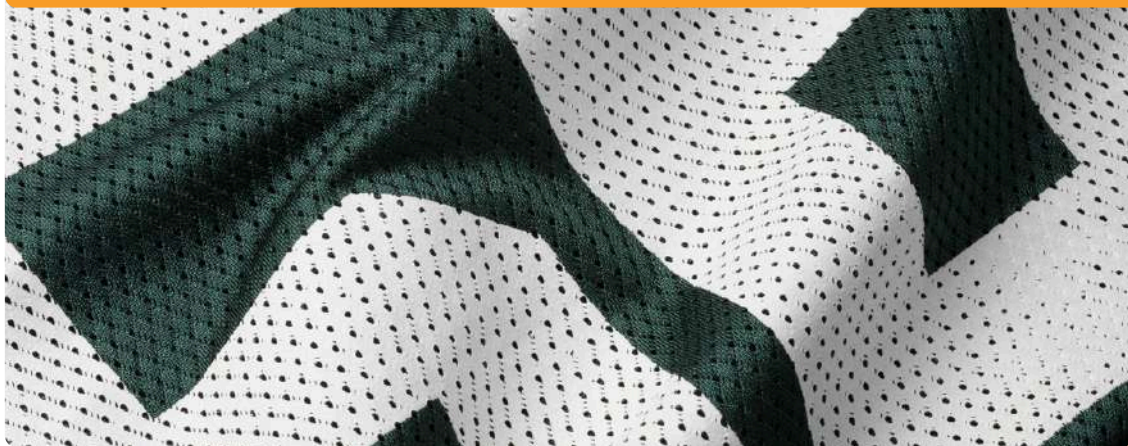
Less individual consumption, more shared atmosphere: passing plates, ordering together, extending the viewing. Crunchy snacks — chips, popcorn, nuts — help bite into the tension.

VICTORY CELEBRATIONS & SHARED EUPHORIA



Wins spill into the streets with chanting and flags, one of the most powerful expressions of public joy.

MEMORABILIA & FOOTBALL HERITAGE



A growing collectible culture, with younger fans embracing both local clubs and global football history.

KEY EVENT

THE KING'S CUP



The highlight of the Saudi league, a championship that carries national weight beyond sport.

FOOTBALL – NEW INCLUSIONS

Football is shifting from a mainly male pastime into a cross-generational ritual embraced by women, families and younger audiences.



- Match days are now curated experiences — especially among women — with team colours, planned outfits, ordered food, themed gatherings, and social sharing.
- Global icons, above all Cristiano Ronaldo's arrival, have accelerated interest among new audiences, including mothers and young women now actively following clubs and players.
- Merchandise, room décor, jerseys, and collectibles are becoming visible expressions of belonging.
- Traditional celebration continues alongside modern fan culture, with heritage performances reinforcing football's role in Saudi identity.

BOTTOM LINE

Football has moved beyond the pitch — into a shared ritual of belonging, self-expression and collective pride.

FROM WATCHING TO LIVING

How a generation turned football from a pastime into a lifestyle.

FOOTBALL



THEN

- Multi-generational club loyalties inherited within families
- Match viewing centred on home gatherings and local cafés
- National tournaments created collective national moments
- Football was primarily consumed

NOW

- Football is consumed, discussed, shared, and experienced
- Match days involve social media, fantasy leagues, prediction games, and content creation
- Stadium attendance has become a lifestyle activity
- International stars have expanded football's appeal
- Growing fan following and spectatorship among women



MODERN & EMERGING SPORTS RITUALS

NEW COURTS. NEW SCREENS. NEW RITUALS.

FORMULA 1

From motorsport to luxury lifestyle ritual

The Saudi Arabian Grand Prix has turned F1 from niche motorsport into a cultural event.



THE RITUALS

- **Then:** Followed by a small group of enthusiasts, mostly on TV.
- **Now:** The F1 weekend is a destination event — hospitality, fashion, concerts, luxury experiences and social media matter as much as the race. Young Saudis increasingly follow drivers, teams and race weekends globally.

NEW RITUALS

- Race viewing parties · Driver fandom · Race-weekend travel · Luxury hospitality · Social content creation · F1 merch as collectables

ESPORTS & GAMING

The fastest-growing ritual

Gaming may be the most influential new ritual among Gen Z and Gen Alpha. Saudi Arabia is fast becoming a leading global gaming market, and Team Falcons is a source of national pride.

MAJOR EVENTS: ESPORTS WORLD CUP · GAMING FESTIVALS · COMPETITIVE TOURNAMENTS

THE RITUALS

- **Then:** Gaming was largely solitary and home-based.
- **Now:** Gaming is social, spectator entertainment, identity— and gender-inclusive.

NEW RITUALS

- Watching livestreams · Following gaming creators · Team fandom · Competitive gaming nights · Discord communities · Tournament viewing parties



PADEL – THE NEW MAJLIS

Padel has become one of Saudi Arabia's most important social rituals.



THE RITUALS

- **Then:** Casual football dominated recreational sports.
- **Now:** Weekly padel matches are scheduled like social appointments. Padel combines fitness, networking, friendship maintenance, and social status.

NEW RITUALS

- Weekly league games · Team WhatsApp groups · Post-game coffee · Equipment upgrades · Club memberships

BOXING & UFC – THE NEW EVENT RITUAL

Major boxing and UFC events have become recurring cultural moments.

THE RITUALS

- **Then:** Followed mainly by hardcore fans.
- **Now:** Premium entertainment events, social occasions, hospitality experiences.

NEW RITUALS

- Fight-night gatherings · Prediction pools · Event travel · VIP experiences · Boxing as a fitness trend among women



BOARD GAMES & SOCIAL GAMING CAFÉS

A surprising growth area among Millennials and Gen Z.



THE RITUALS

- **Then:** Socialising centred on homes and the majlis.
- **Now:** Board-game cafés, escape rooms, interactive entertainment venues.

NEW RITUALS

- Weekly game nights · Friendship groups · Community tournaments

GOLF

Interest is growing, anchored by Riyadh's Dirab Golf Course — Saudi Arabia's first 18-hole championship course. Prominent Saudi golfers learned the game through Aramco connections and now compete internationally.



TRAIL RACING & DESERT EVENTS

The AlUla Trail Race spans 10KM to 100KM, drawing runners worldwide to explore AlUla's landscapes — endurance sport meets heritage tourism, with a pilgrimage-like quality. 4x4 off-roading is popular among young men — modified vehicles, buggies and "desert tanks" at named spots like Al Kubri Al Mayed and Dahban. Despite the climate, outdoor recreation thrives — camping, hiking, desert safaris, sandboarding and dune bashing — carrying ritual social elements: extended-family camping trips, overnight desert stays and seasonal patterns tied to the cooler winter months.



RUNNING CLUBS & WELLNESS COMMUNITIES

Running has become a culturally significant movement, especially post-Vision 2030. Riyadh Urban Runners (founded 2016) is the capital's largest community group — open to all levels, genders and nationalities — while R7 Run Club has 1,000+ active members running early mornings, evenings and Friday mornings. The Friday morning run has become a social ritual akin to the old Friday horse-racing tradition — communal, habitual, identity-building.

THE RITUALS

- **Then:** Individual activity.
- **Now:** Social tribe.

NEW RITUALS

- Weekly group runs · Achievement sharing · Recovery rituals · Community breakfasts · A defined "look" (branded activewear, bottles, bags)



CYCLING & ADVENTURE SPORTS

Growing rapidly among affluent, wellness-focused consumers.

NEW RITUALS

- Weekend cycling groups · Mountain-biking trips · Desert endurance rides



FITNESS & GYM – GYM CULTURE AS DAILY RITUAL

Fitness is increasingly a lifestyle identity. Over 60% of Saudis feel more drawn to a healthier lifestyle than five years ago, and 18–34-year-olds hold 51.9% of the gym market — driven by social media and fitness-as-identity. Powered by Vision 2030, greater access, and broad social acceptance, movement is now seen as a pillar of wellbeing.

THE RITUALS

- **Then:** Exercise was functional.
- **Now:** Fitness is aspirational.

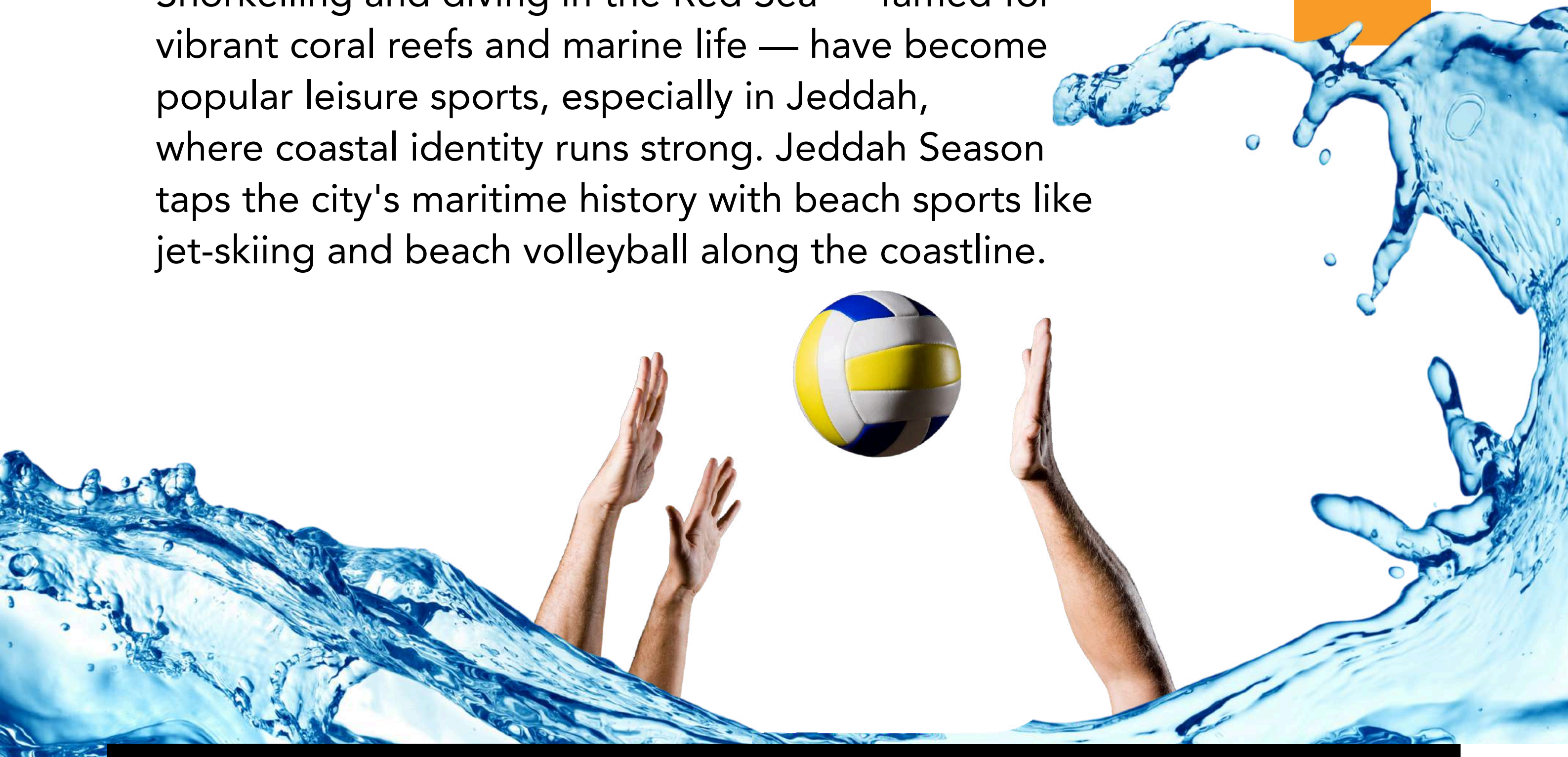
NEW RITUALS

- Early-morning gym sessions · Wearable tracking · Fitness challenges · Recovery culture · Supplement routines · "Gym looks" (branded gymwear, bottles, bags) · Social-media peer advice on gyms, gear, fat-burning routines and meal-delivery diets



WATER SPORTS ON THE RED SEA

Snorkelling and diving in the Red Sea — famed for vibrant coral reefs and marine life — have become popular leisure sports, especially in Jeddah, where coastal identity runs strong. Jeddah Season taps the city's maritime history with beach sports like jet-skiing and beach volleyball along the coastline.

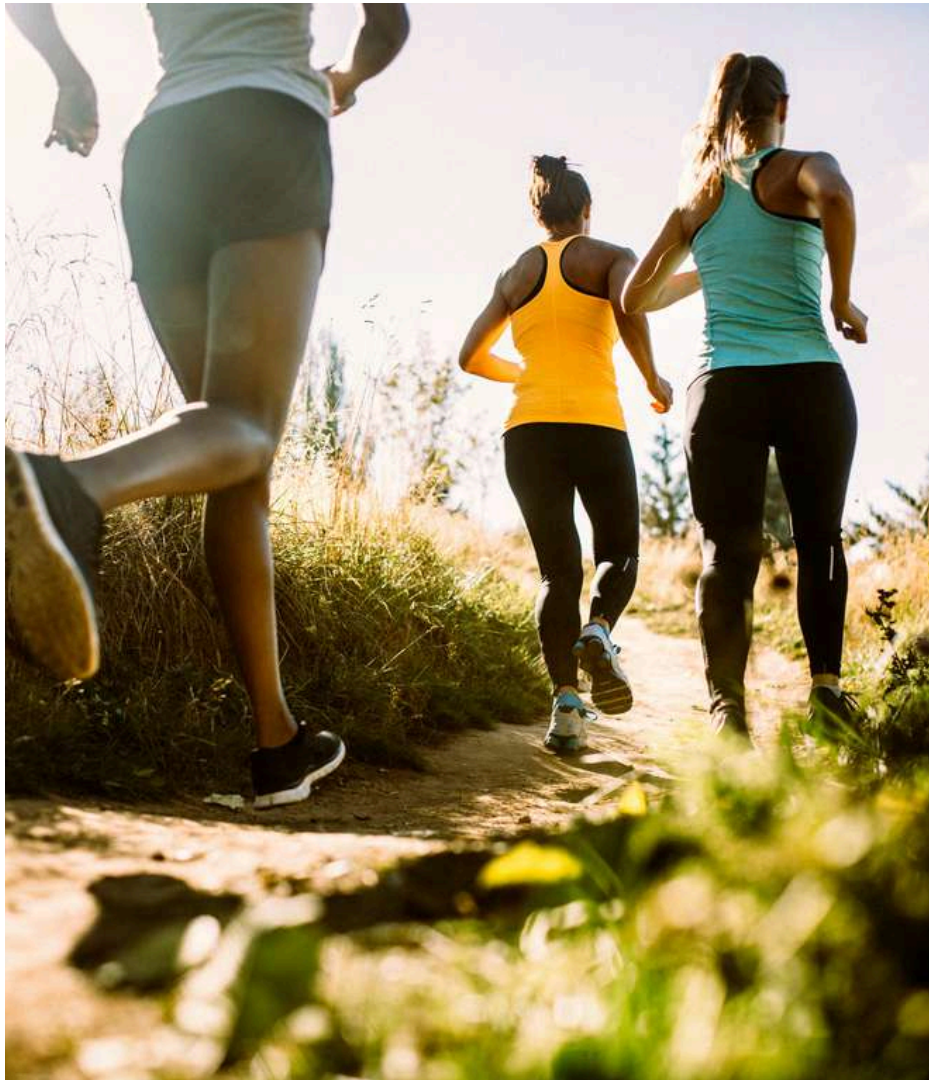


SCUBA DIVING, WINDSURFING & SAILING

Niche but growing, especially among coastal urban populations.

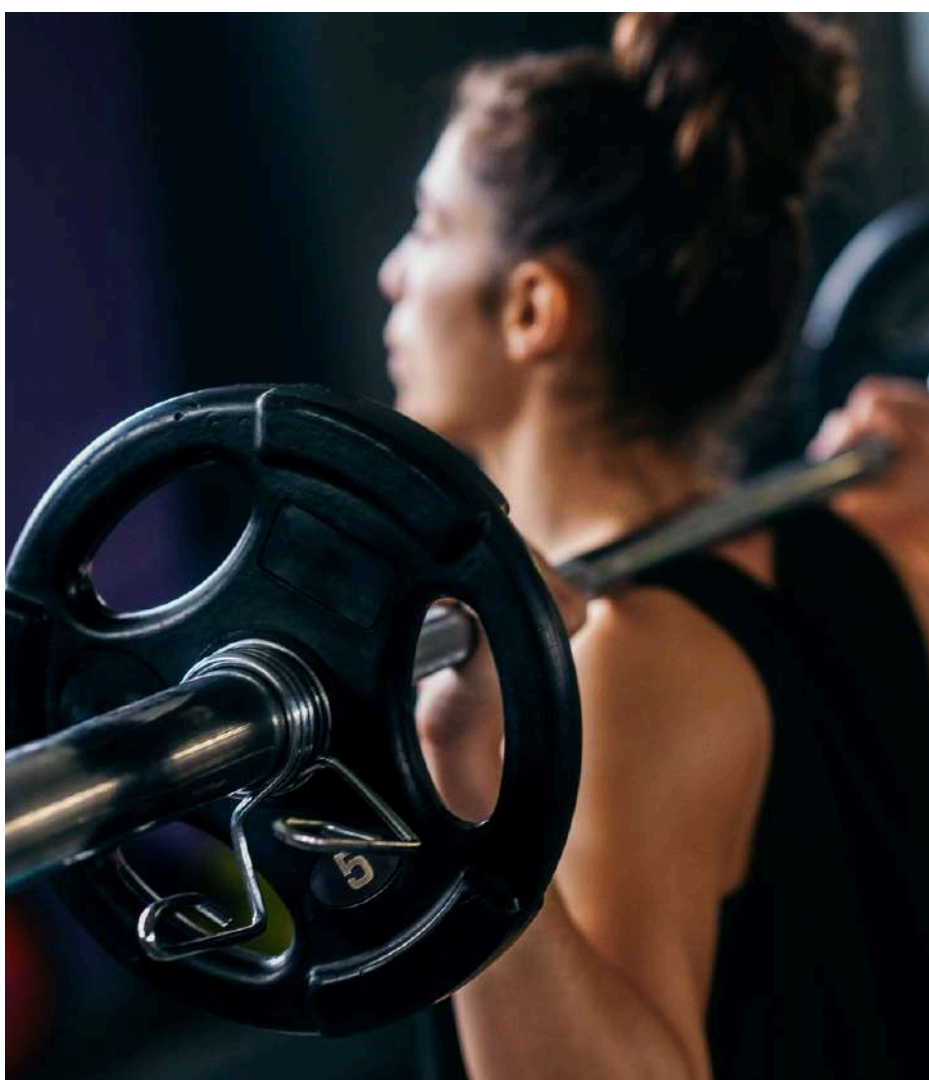


WOMEN & SPORT



WOMEN'S RUN CLUBS

Inclusive groups like MILE Worldwide, Clique (an all-women's running club) and the Eastern Walking Team are emerging Kingdom-wide, normalising outdoor activity and turning trail-focused wellness into a shared social movement.



WOMEN IN GYMS – A NEW RITUAL LAYER

Opening gyms to women in 2018, marked a major shift; rapid uptake produced gains in cardiovascular health, mental wellbeing and social connectedness. For Saudi women, the gym visit is as much a social and identity ritual as a fitness one.



FITNESS INFLUENCER CULTURE

Certified trainers, coaches, nutritionists and lifestyle advocates use Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube to reshape perceptions of healthy living — role models for a culture that now celebrates strength and self-care.

SO – WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR BRANDS?

THE BIGGER EVOLUTION

From	To
Watching sport	Living sport as a lifestyle
Heritage competitions	A diverse sporting ecosystem
Football-centric fandom	Multi-sport participation (padel, running, cycling, esports, combat sports)
Passive spectators	Active participants and content creators
Family gatherings around TV	Hybrid physical + digital fan communities
Male-dominated participation	Inclusive participation across genders and ages
Weekend recreation	Daily wellness and fitness habits
Community identity through tribe	Community identity through clubs, teams and fitness communities
National sporting moments	Always-on sports culture powered by social media
Physical competition	Connected experiences combining sport, data and technology

BRAND IMPLICATIONS: WINNING BEYOND THE GAME

SPONSOR THE RITUAL, NOT JUST THE EVENT

The strongest connections form around sport, not only during it — camel grooming, match-day prep, family watch parties, post-victory celebration. Most brands show up during matches; few own the aftermath — the celebrations, disappointment and shared reflection. That emotional aftermath is a high-impact, low-competition space.

DESIGN FOR THE FAMILY, NOT JUST THE FAN

Fandom here is inherited and multi-generational. **The real opportunity is household experiences** — family viewing, shared meals and collective moments of pride.

BUILD FOR THE FEMALE SPORTS JOURNEY – A CULTURE IN FORMATION

From run clubs and fitness studios to women's leagues, a new sporting identity is forming. Brands that engage authentically now build lasting emotional equity. The opportunity runs far beyond activewear — **the pre-workout ritual, recovery, nutrition, women-only communities and social experiences.**

HERITAGE SPORTS ARE UNTAPPED CULTURAL ASSETS

Falconry, camel racing and equestrian sport carry deep Saudi pride. They let brands **demonstrate cultural fluency** and build meaning beyond sponsorship.



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BRAND IMPLICATIONS: WINNING BEYOND THE GAME CONTINUED...

TRANSFORM THE STADIUM INTO A BRAND EXPERIENCE

Saudi stadiums are becoming **social arenas where passion and collective energy converge**. Brands that create experiences — not ads — own the moments beyond the final whistle.

BUILD COMMUNITIES, NOT JUST CAMPAIGNS

Run clubs, fitness groups and sports communities are modern social spaces. Embed through **participation and value creation, not just visibility**.

INVEST IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF ATHLETES

With a young population and growing youth-sports focus, grassroots programmes, school leagues and academies remain largely untapped. **Invest early and build loyalty that lasts generations.**

OWN THE PERFORMANCE & RECOVERY ECOSYSTEM

As fitness culture accelerates, opportunity spans **nutrition, hydration, recovery, sleep, physiotherapy and wellness** — growing needs with few locally relevant solutions. Apps like Tamreeni are starting to bridge the gap with fitness tracking, nutrition guidance and lifestyle support.

THE FUTURE OF SPORTS MARKETING IN SAUDI ARABIA LIES BEYOND SPONSORSHIP – IN OWNING THE RITUALS, COMMUNITIES AND EMOTIONS THAT SURROUND SPORT.

BLUE OCEAN: CREATING NEW TERRITORIES IN SAUDI SPORTS

The Sports Majlis – Building New Fan Communities

Reimagine the majlis for modern fandom — a physical or digital space where fans gather, connect and celebrate beyond individual events.

Ramadan * Sport – Owning the Sacred Season

A largely untapped intersection. Opportunity around fasting athletes, evening workouts, hydration, nutrition and community fitness rituals.

The Desert as a Sporting Frontier

The Kingdom's landscapes are a unique platform for adventure and endurance sport — an Arabian adventure culture built around experiences, equipment, nutrition and community.

Esports as the Next Sporting Bridge

A digitally native youth offers the chance to connect gaming, football, fitness and broader sporting identity into one integrated culture.

Women's Sport as a Storytelling Platform

The rise of women's sport is creating powerful stories of participation, confidence and transformation — a space for content, communities and conversation.

The Rise of the Sports Traveller

As the Kingdom hosts global events and fans travel, the opportunity is to own the whole sports-travel journey — from planning to fan rituals.

The Strategic Opportunity

Most brands compete for visibility around sport. The real blue ocean is owning the rituals around it — the communities, emotions and everyday behaviours that turn moments into movements. Brands that combine cultural intelligence with commercial ambition will build lasting relevance in Saudi Arabia's evolving sports landscape.

DECODING RITUALS: A FRAMEWORK FOR BRANDS

A framework to explore how Cultural Rituals Turn brands into Meaningful Moments

CONSUMER RITUALS FRAMEWORK

A Guide to Ritual Marketing



MIND THE GAP

A snapshot of generational mindsets — decoded.



THEME	GEN ALPHA BORN 2013 +	GEN Z BORN 1997 - 2012	MILLENNIALS (Y) BORN 1981 - 1996	GEN X BORN 1965 - 1980	BABY BOOMERS BORN PRE-1965
Meaning of Sport	Fun, exploration, digital engagement	Identity, self-expression, belonging	Lifestyle, social connection, self-improvement	Recreation and family bonding	Heritage, tradition, community identity
How Sport is Consumed	Interactive, gamified, on-demand	Mobile-first, short-form, creator-led content	Satellite TV, streaming, social highlights	TV broadcasts and stadium visits	Live events, radio, television
Watching Matches	Interactive viewing with games, AR and digital experiences	Multi-screen viewing while chatting, posting and streaming	Home viewing, cafés, fan zones and social media interaction	Family viewing and local cafés	Family/ Neighbourhood gatherings around the TV
Women's Participation	Equal expectation of participation from an early age	Mainstream participation across fitness, running and professional sports	Growing participation following reforms	Gradual acceptance in private settings	Very limited public participation
Fitness Motivation	Fun, skill-building and healthy habits	Performance, mental wellbeing, confidence and social identity	Wellness, appearance, stress relief	Health and recreation	Physical capability for daily life and work
Sportswear & Equipment	Comfort, personalization and character-driven designs	Fashion, streetwear and limited-edition collaborations	Global brands become lifestyle symbols	Branded sportswear emerges	Functional clothing
Role Models	Athletes, gaming personalities and child influencers	Athletes, influencers, content creators	International football stars alongside Saudi icons	Saudi football legends and regional athletes	Local footballers, horsemen, falconers
National Pride	Growing up seeing Saudi Arabia as a global sporting destination	Pride linked to Saudi's global sporting ambitions and athlete success	Pride extends to hosting international events	Strong support for the national football team	Rooted in heritage sports and national football
Brand Expectations	Blend learning, entertainment and technology through play	Create immersive, shareable and purpose-driven experiences	Enable healthier lifestyles and community participation	Family-oriented sponsorships	Respect heritage and national values

THE 4SIGHT TOOLKIT

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Explore Behavior. Discover Opportunity. Design What Matters.

4SiGHT's signature UX research framework for next-gen digital products.

4SiGHT UXplore™ is a deep-dive, end-to-end UX engine — built to decode behavior, optimize journeys, and design high-performing digital experiences.

It combines **qualitative research depth** with **design precision** across every stage of product development.

Our UXplore™ Journey

Understand Users

- Mental Models & Motivations
- Generative Feedback (NCPI Framework)
- Uncover Unmet Needs, Beliefs & Pain Points

Test Before You Build Big

- Prototype testing
- Moderated usability testing
- Real-time beta feedback

Benchmark & Refine

- Competitor Experience Benchmarking
- UX Gaps, Fixes & Final Recommendations

Design That Resonates

- GUI & Aesthetic Evaluation
- Preference Testing (A/B, Multivariate)
- Wireframe Testing (Low to High Fidelity)

Architect with Purpose

- Open/Closed Card Sorting
- Information Design & Journey Structuring
- Content Grouping Based on Real User Logic

Why UXplore™?

- Strategic UX, start to scale
- Behavioral insight into action
- Business, design, human aligned
- Culturally tuned, market-specific

Don't just
launch.
UXplore.™

Your best ideas deserve decisions grounded
in insight.

FROM ACCESS TO ACTIVATION

OUR 4SIGHT LIVE SUITE

4SiGHT Live — Always-On Consumer Access

Real-time access to consumers across markets.

4SiGHT Live PANEL UAE | KSA

Our pre-recruited ahead-of-the-curve panel for quick, cost-efficient research needs, offering a window into live data.

4SiGHT Live COMMUNITIES

Designed to build an agile system to conduct research while keeping the customer at the heart of the business. Enables clients to make consumer relevant decisions by testing on the go.

4SiGHT Live CONSUMER CONNECTS

4SiGHT's solution to curate and build a customized calendar of immersive interviews for client teams to get the pulse of the consumer. Available as ad-hoc & annual programs.

OUR RESEARCH TOOLS

4SiGHT Research Tools

From testing to execution — tools built for real-world decisions.

INSIGHT EXPRESS

Enables swift, efficient innovation testing — minimizing the risks of full-scale launches and allowing you to explore, experiment, and fail fast.

AASMA | CHATBOT

Facilitates interactive conversations with consumers, streamlining the process of filling consumption/usage diaries. Leading to improved efficiency and quality of data collection.

SPRINT+

Provides an innovative boost to your iterative process by making it more AGILE through co-creation workshops, giving wings to potential ideas and improvements.

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOR IS NOT ENOUGH. WINNING BRANDS ACT ON IT.

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

THE RITUALS CALENDAR 2026

JANUARY

**4SiGHT for Growth
2025 Yearbook**

FEBRUARY

MARCH

**Tapping into the
Power of Rituals**

APRIL

**Everyday Rituals
in KSA**

MAY

**Festivals,
Celebrations and
Their Rituals in Saudi
Arabia**

JUNE

**A look at Personal
Care & Hair Care
RITUALS in Saudi
Arabia**

JULY

**Sports
Rituals in
KSA**

AUGUST

Coming Soon...

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER