

طقوس
RITUALS



A LOOK AT
SHOPPING &
E-COMMERCE RITUALS
IN SAUDI ARABIA

SEPTEMBER | 2026

THE NEW SAUDI SHOPPING RITUAL

*Shopping in KSA is no longer just about buying.
It is about discovering, validating, sharing and making the purchase feel right.*

Saudi Arabia has moved from store-led shopping to an always-on commerce culture.

The phone is the storefront, social feeds the shop window, creators the demonstrators — and reviews and recommendations can be as influential as the brand itself.

But Saudi shopping cannot be understood through global e-commerce behaviours alone.

The rituals around the transaction matter just as much as the transaction itself.

Products are discovered socially, validated through peers and reviews, bought at the right moment — and often become part of wider rituals of gifting, sharing and repeat purchase.

From browsing to belonging

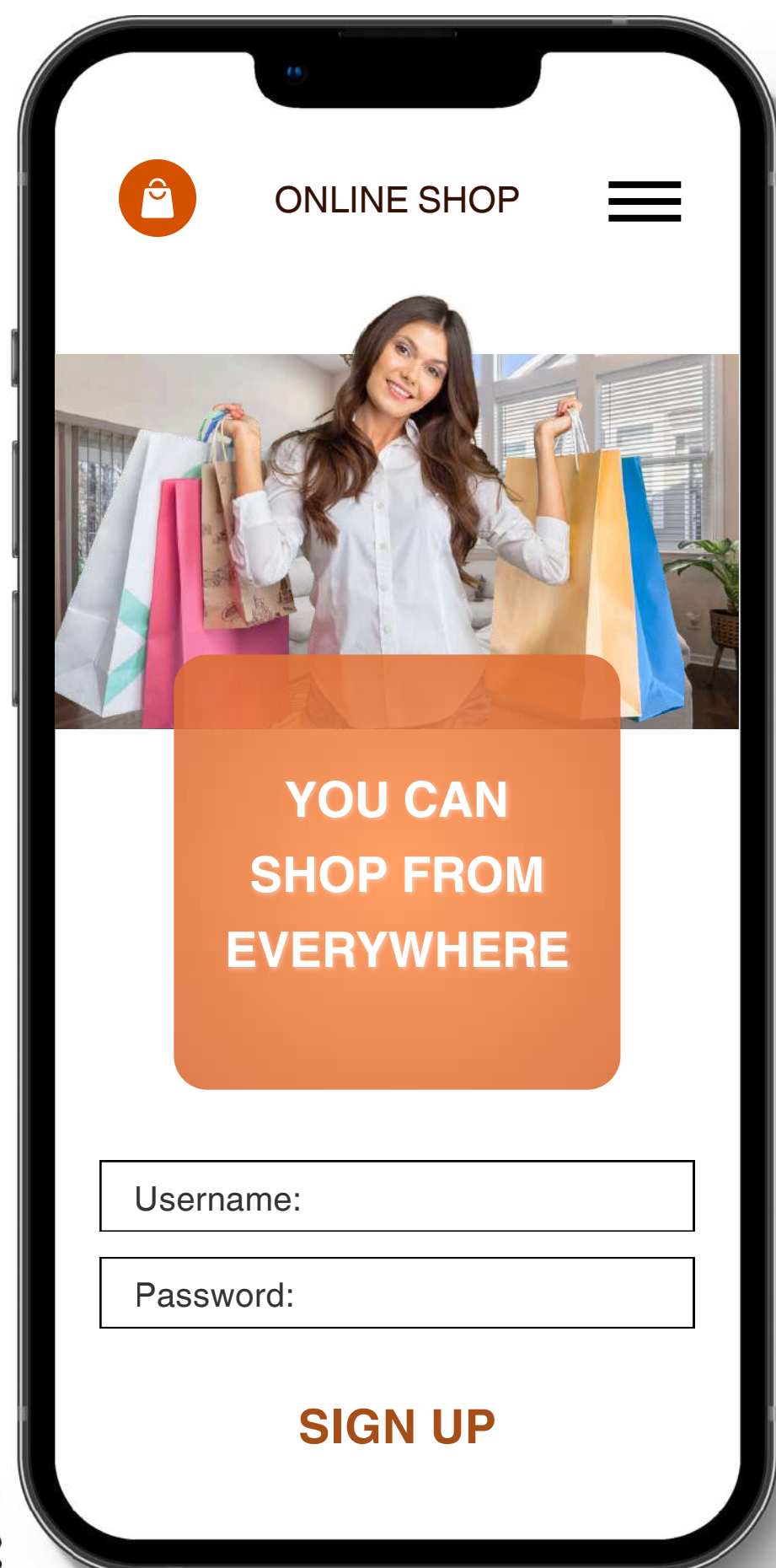
Discovery is entertainment.

Trust is social.

Value goes beyond price.

Shopping remains occasion-led.

And the ritual continues after checkout.



The Opportunity for Brands

The next phase of commerce in KSA is not simply about **removing friction from purchase**. It is about understanding what triggers the journey, who influences it, what reassures the shopper, and what turns a purchase into a habit.

The brands that win will not simply sell into Saudi shopping occasions. They will become part of the rituals that make them meaningful.

01 Discover > 02 Consider > 03 Convert > 04 Experience & Repeat

The Moment	The Ritual	Shows Up As	Why it Matters
02 / Consider <i>The crowd, and the algorithm, now shape the decision</i>	Trusting the Crowd	Star ratings, verified badges, real customer photos before checkout.	A stranger's opinion now closes the sale better than any salesperson could.
	Coming Back to the Cart	The ad that follows you around after you almost bought something.	Hesitation isn't lost — it's the moment every platform is built to win back.



A LOOK AT THE GLOBAL SHOPPING AND E-COMMERCE MOMENTS CONT...

1 Shopping Journey. 4 Moments. 9 Rituals.

The Moment	The Ritual	Shows Up As	Why it Matters
03 / Convert <i>Every friction point is being engineered out of checkout</i>	Flash Sale Urgency	Countdown clocks, "only 2 left", doorbuster windows.	Urgency still beats logic — scarcity is the oldest trick that still works.
	BNPL as Default	"Pay in 4" sitting next to the buy button, not buried in fine print.	Tripled in four years, from 2% to 6% of global e-commerce — spreading the cost is now how the world checks out.

The Moment	The Ritual	Shows Up As	Why it Matters
04 / Experience & Repeat <i>The purchase no longer ends at checkout</i>	Unboxing as Content	Packaging designed to be filmed, not just opened.	A purchase isn't real until it's been shared — the box is now part of the product.
	Subscription & Replenishment	"Subscribe & save" on the everyday things you'd never think to reorder.	Buying becomes a habit the platform runs for you, not a decision you keep making.

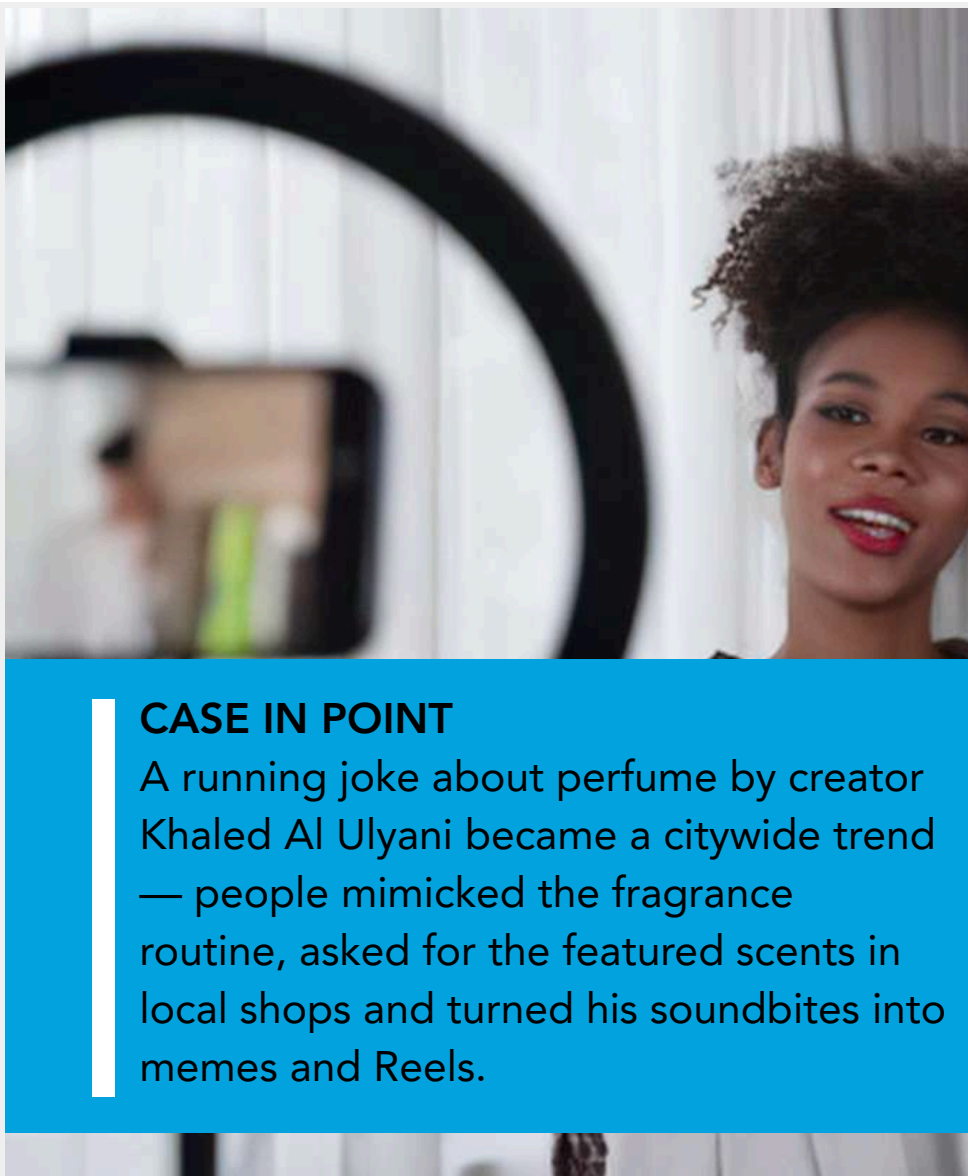


PART TWO A LOOK AT HOW THESE RITUALS MANIFEST IN THE KSA MARKET

MOMENT 01 / DISCOVER

THE FEED AND THE WORLD ARE NOW THE STOREFRONT

Discovery no longer starts with a search. It starts with a scroll, a share, or a screenshot from a cousin.



CASE IN POINT

A running joke about perfume by creator Khaled Al Ulyani became a citywide trend — people mimicked the fragrance routine, asked for the featured scents in local shops and turned his soundbites into memes and Reels.

RITUAL 01 – CREATORS BECOME THE PRODUCT WINDOW

SHOWS UP AS

TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram surface products inside entertainment. Comedy sketches blend so smoothly with the product placement that it doesn't register as an ad until it has already landed. Discovery feels native to the scroll, not an interruption of it.

WHY IT MATTERS

The boundary between content and commerce is collapsing — discovery can move straight into purchase, often before the shopper realises they were being sold to.

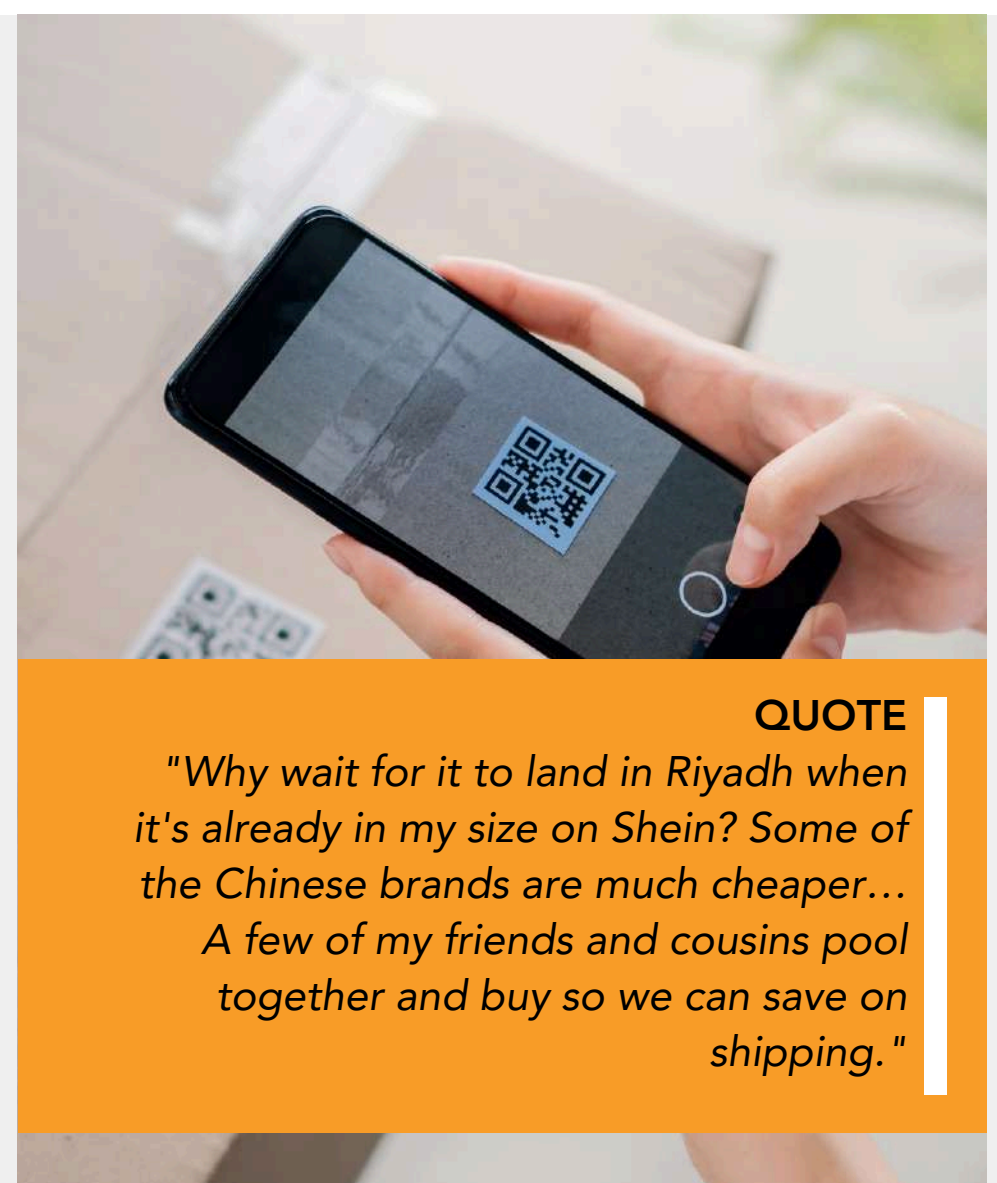
RITUAL 02 – THE WORLD IS THE CATALOGUE

SHOWS UP AS

Shein, AliExpress, and Amazon Global widen the consideration set — but the habit rarely stops there. After spotting something on Shein or TikTok, many shoppers check Noon next, purely to sanity-check the price and legitimacy before buying.

WHY IT MATTERS

Saudi shoppers can browse globally, but a trusted local platform still does the final verification. Global discovery, local reassurance.



QUOTE

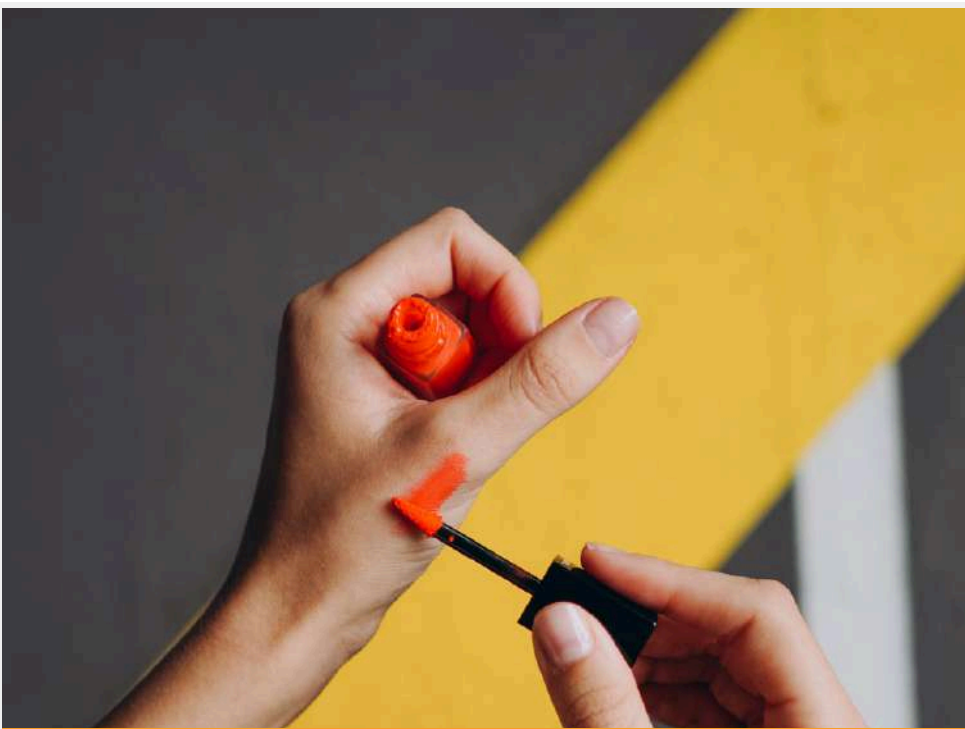
"Why wait for it to land in Riyadh when it's already in my size on Shein? Some of the Chinese brands are much cheaper... A few of my friends and cousins pool together and buy so we can save on shipping."

MOMENT 01 / DISCOVER

THE FAMILY GROUP ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Seeing it online is only step one.

Seeing it on someone you trust is what closes the loop.



QUOTE

"I see someone praising it, so I go see it in real life... I watched three unboxings before I trusted the shade would actually match."

RITUAL 03 – REAL PEOPLE MAKE PRODUCTS FEEL REAL

SHOWS UP AS

Hauls, honest reviews, and before/after content show products in recognisable Saudi homes and skin tones. For shade- and fit-dependent categories like makeup, a compliment online is only step one — seeing it in person, in real life, is what actually closes the loop.

WHY IT MATTERS

User-generated content reduces uncertainty by providing the reassurance a product page can't give alone — especially on shade, fit and fabric.

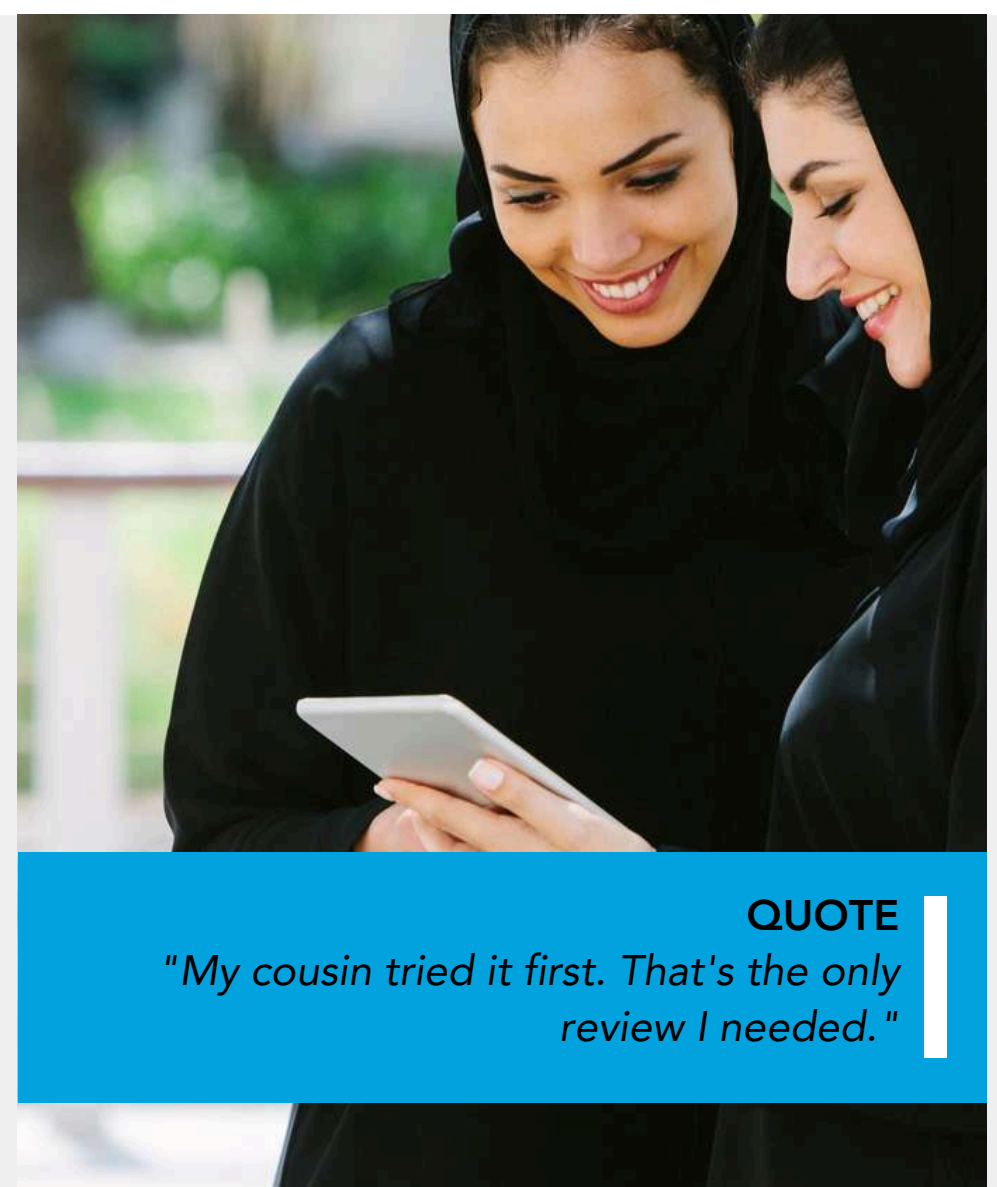
RITUAL 04 – WORD OF MOUTH REMAINS POWERFUL

SHOWS UP AS

A cousin's recommendation, a majlis conversation or a trusted family group can carry more weight than an anonymous rating. Some describe it spreading almost virally — filming a new purchase and sending it straight to friends, who then want to try it too.

WHY IT MATTERS

Relational trust remains a powerful shortcut: who said it can matter more than how many people saw it. Brands that earn one trusted voice earn an entire circle.



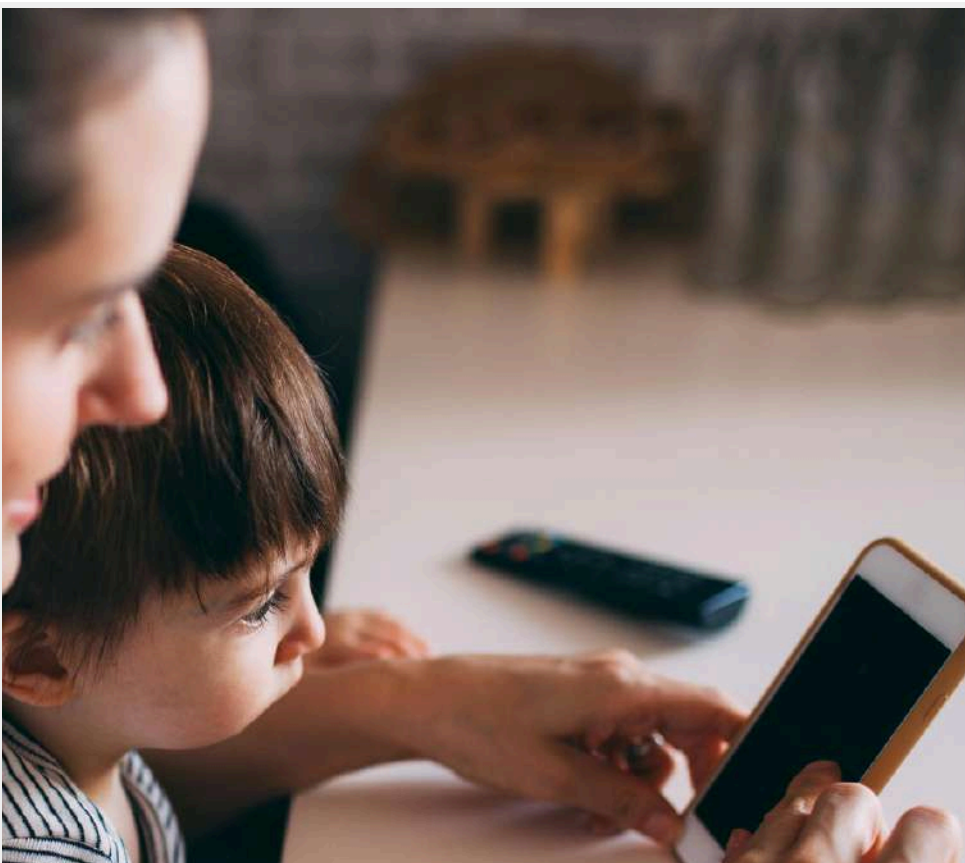
QUOTE

"My cousin tried it first. That's the only review I needed."

MOMENT 02 / CONSIDER

IN SAUDI ARABIA, THE DECISION IS RARELY MADE BY ONE PERSON ALONE

*The cart may belong to one person.
The decision seldom does.*



QUOTE

"I sent the link to our family group before I sent it to my own cart."

RITUAL 05 – THE HOUSEHOLD IS THE SHOPPER

SHOWS UP AS

Links get shared, opinions get requested, and a single purchase can pass through a family or friend group chat before it's confirmed. Sometimes a family member orders on someone else's behalf entirely — a mother buying shared household basics for everyone.

WHY IT MATTERS

The decision-maker and the buyer aren't always the same person. Brands speaking to one individual are often missing the room that actually decides.

RITUAL 06 – TRUST HAS TO STACK UP

SHOWS UP AS

An authenticity certificate or verified-seller badge, real customer photos in the comments, and a cross-platform price check are all standard before a buy. Family recommendation, creator credibility, and delivery reassurance add to that before commitment.

WHY IT MATTERS

Checkout isn't just a transaction — it's the end of a trust-building negotiation that started long before the cart was opened. Each layer answers a different doubt.



QUOTE

"If they don't have [a certificate], you're scared — you'll be robbed."

MOMENT 03 / CONVERT

SAUDI COMMERCE RUNS ON CONVENIENCE AND VALUE EQUATION

By the time a shopper reaches checkout, the real decision has already been made — this is where friction is removed, not created.



QUOTE

"My mum always likes to pay in cash, so when we order, we all pay in cash. But it's a hassle — someone has to be there to collect, the delivery guy may not have change..."

RITUAL 07 – CASH ON DELIVERY STILL SIGNALS CONTROL

SHOWS UP AS

For some shoppers, paying only once the parcel physically arrives remains a reassurance bridge. It isn't always the shopper's own preference, either — a whole household can default to cash because one parent prefers it, even when others would happily pay online.

WHY IT MATTERS

COD is about perceived control, not nostalgia for cash. Removing it too early can remove confidence rather than friction.

RITUAL 08 – ONE-TAP CHECKOUT IS THE NEW BASELINE

SHOWS UP AS

For those comfortable paying online, Apple Pay, Mada and STC Pay turn payment into a near-instant step — chosen specifically for speed. For an already-favoured product, checkout can be pure autopilot: no fresh discovery needed, just a fast route back to something already trusted.

WHY IT MATTERS

Every extra field is another chance to reconsider. Frictionless payment protects momentum that took an entire journey to build.



QUOTE

"If Apple Pay isn't an option at checkout, I just close the app."

MOMENT 03 / CONVERT

SAUDI COMMERCE RUNS ON CONVENIENCE AND VALUE EQUATION CONT...

Price is only the headline. What surrounds it — instalments, speed, rewards, a gift in the box — is where the sale is won.



QUOTE

"Tabby let me buy the bag I wanted, not the one I was settling for."

RITUAL 09 – BNPL UNLOCKS THE BIGGER BASKET

SHOWS UP AS

Instalment options such as Tamara and Tabby increasingly sit right alongside the price tag on fashion, beauty and electronics. For some, it's now used routinely for a year or more — financing everything from a phone to a full kitchen installation, online and in physical stores.

WHY IT MATTERS

It doesn't just enable a bigger basket — it can trigger the purchase itself. Affordability becomes permission to buy on impulse, not just a bigger-ticket enabler.

RITUAL 10 – THE NEW VALUE EQUATION

SHOWS UP AS

Delivery speed, warranties, cashback, and loyalty rewards are weighed alongside the headline price. An unexpected gift included with an order can matter as much as any discount — shoppers compare cashback across food-delivery apps the way they'd compare prices.

WHY IT MATTERS

A surprise gift creates a felt relationship with the seller, turning one purchase into a returning one. With payment friction gone, this is the next battleground for conversion.



QUOTE

"It makes you feel there's a relationship between you and them — like you're friends."

MOMENT 04 / EXPERIENCE & REPEAT

THE PURCHASE BECOMES A SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND SOMETIMES SECOND-LIFE EXPERIENCE

For many Saudi shoppers, checkout is the middle of the ritual — not the end of it.



QUOTE

"I don't just send a gift. I send the unboxing moment too."

RITUAL 11 – GIFTING TURNS CHECKOUT INTO A RELATIONSHIP

SHOWS UP AS

Curated bundles, digital gifting and premium wrapping make fulfilment part of the gesture itself. The relationship it builds can outlast the transaction — repeat behaviour often follows loyalty to a seller, not just satisfaction with a single product.

WHY IT MATTERS

The purchase often stands in for generosity and connection — presentation and timing can matter as much as what's inside the box.

RITUAL 12 – THE UNBOXING IS PART OF THE PRODUCT

SHOWS UP AS

Packaging matters most of the time, not just on special occasions — sellers who invest in colour, detail, and branded stickers are deliberately designing for excitement. Even without posting publicly, many still share the reveal privately over WhatsApp with friends.

WHY IT MATTERS

The box is no longer just a container — it's part of the experience and the perceived value, whether or not it ends up filmed.



QUOTE

"Even if I don't film it, I still expect it to feel like a moment."

MOMENT 04 / EXPERIENCE & REPEAT

THE PURCHASE BECOMES A SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND SOMETIMES SECOND-LIFE EXPERIENCE CONT...

Ownership is now a story to be told — and wanting something is a pastime in itself.



QUOTE

"I don't take pictures of any place, but I photographed this store. It's literally special."

RITUAL 13 – LUXURY BECOMES A VISIBLE JOURNEY

SHOWS UP AS

Research, boutique visits, the purchase moment, and the unboxing can all become part of the visible ownership story. For some, the boutique itself becomes a destination worth visiting purely to photograph the space — independent of any purchase at all.

WHY IT MATTERS

Luxury is increasingly about the story around the item — the journey is now part of what's being bought.

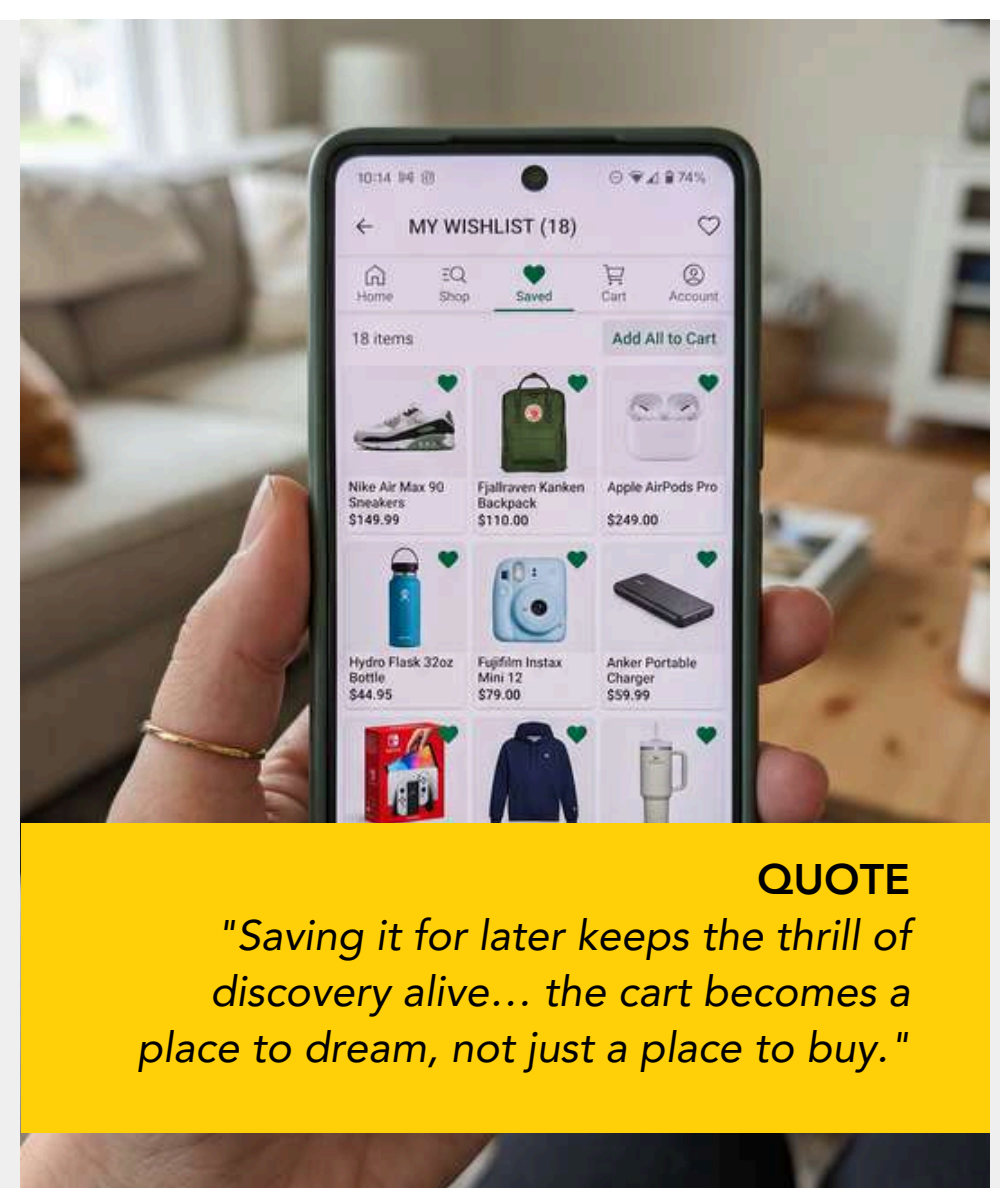
RITUAL 14 – WISHLISTS TURN BROWSING INTO LEISURE

SHOWS UP AS

Saved products, saved carts, and followed drops create a 'not yet, but maybe' ritual that outlasts any single visit.

WHY IT MATTERS

Browsing is now a leisure activity in its own right — the wishlist is where aspiration lives before intent does.



QUOTE

"Saving it for later keeps the thrill of discovery alive... the cart becomes a place to dream, not just a place to buy."

MOMENT 05 / SEASONAL & OCCASION

SAUDI COMMERCE RUNS ON ITS OWN CALENDAR

Global sale mechanics are present, but local cultural moments — and real generational splits — determine when shopping becomes emotionally important.



QUOTE

"Ramadan is the season of everything — advertisements, shopping, promotions, discounts."

RITUAL 15 – RAMADAN IS A COMMERCE SEASON

SHOWS UP AS

Shopping intensifies around Iftar, Suhoor, gifting, and home prep — one respondent called it "the season of everything", with delivery expectations tighter than usual.

WHY IT MATTERS

Transaction volumes run 35–40% higher during Ramadan.

RITUAL 16 – EID TURNS SHOPPING INTO GIFTING

SHOWS UP AS

Eid Al-Fitr often outweighs Eid Al-Adha in shopping importance, and new Eid clothing is close to a mandatory purchase — bought specifically to show off at family gatherings.

WHY IT MATTERS

The purchase stands in for a relationship — presentation and timing matter as much as the item.



QUOTE

"I feel that Eid is better — more."

MOMENT 05 / SEASONAL & OCCASION

SAUDI COMMERCE RUNS ON ITS OWN CALENDAR CONT...

Not every peak is shared. Some moments split the market — and some belong to one shopper alone.



QUOTE

"I don't wait to see what's on sale—I start checking prices and saving beforehand."

RITUAL 17 – WHITE FRIDAY HAS LOCAL MEANING

SHOWS UP AS

White Friday has evolved beyond a discount event into a recurring shopping ritual in KSA—consumers increasingly anticipate it, research products and prices beforehand, build wish lists and time purchases around the promotional window.

WHY IT MATTERS

This creates opportunities to participate well before the event itself.

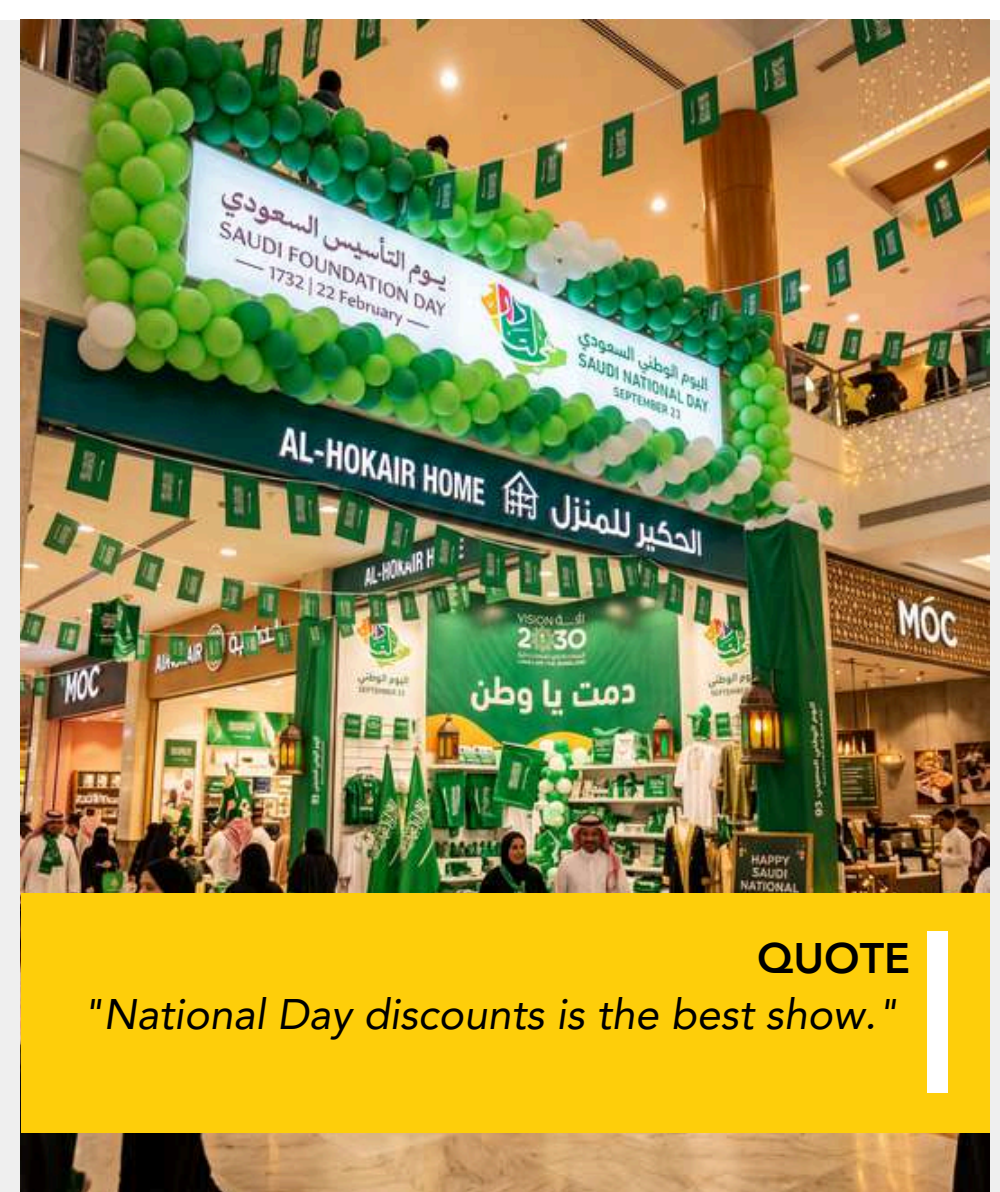
RITUAL 18 – THE CALENDAR KEEPS EXPANDING

SHOWS UP AS

National Day, Founding Day, back-to-school, Riyadh Season, 11.11/12.12, and even a personal milestone like an upcoming wedding all add peaks alongside the religious calendar. National Day alone can mean 30–70% off across malls.

WHY IT MATTERS

Saudi retail has a rolling season



QUOTE

"National Day discounts is the best show."

MOMENT 06 / THE LAST MILE

THE LAST MILE IS BECOMING AN IMPORTANT RITUAL TOO

The courier is often the only face-to-face moment in the entire purchase — packaging, delivery windows and doorstep etiquette all carry brand weight.



QUOTE

"Anything urgent needs to arrive within a couple of hours, or I lose interest."

RITUAL 19 – SPEED BECOMES EXPECTATION

SHOWS UP AS

Quick-commerce platforms — HungerStation, Noon Minutes — shift the question from 'when will it arrive?' to 'how fast can it arrive?' Some shoppers hold a hard line: anything urgent needs to land within a couple of hours, or interest is lost entirely.

WHY IT MATTERS

Once one category delivers in under an hour, every category gets measured against it. Fast fulfilment is becoming the edge, not the extra.

RITUAL 20 – THE DOORSTEP IS STILL HUMAN

SHOWS UP AS

Delivery remains one of the few face-to-face moments in an otherwise entirely digital journey. A rider who doesn't speak Arabic well, calls at an inconvenient time or gives no clear delivery window can undo the confidence built through the rest of the journey.

WHY IT MATTERS

The last mile can reinforce, or quietly undo, everything the brand built online. A late or careless delivery is remembered longer than a discount.



QUOTE

"If the delivery's late or rude, that's what I remember — not the price."

WHAT MAKES SAUDI SHOPPING DISTINCT?

Four threads run through every ritual in this report — whatever the category, the platform or the occasion.

RELATIONAL

Trust moves through people — family, friends, creators and communities.

CULTURAL

Ramadan, Eid, and the Kingdom's expanding calendar of occasions create their own commerce clock.

DIGITAL

Discovery, payment and fulfilment are increasingly seamless and always-on.

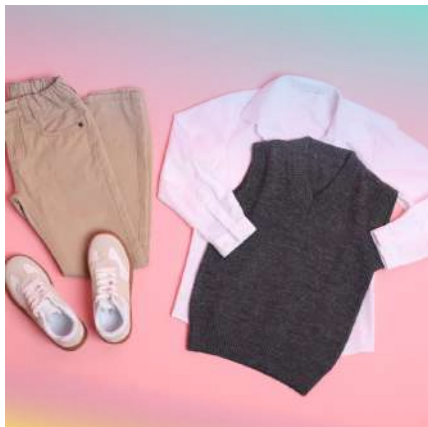
SOCIAL

Shopping can become content, gifting, status, ownership story and resale.



AN EMERGING INSIGHT: NOT EVERY CATEGORY SHOPS THE SAME WAY

The rituals in this report hold across categories — but which channel a shopper trusts depends heavily on what's being bought.



Clothes, Shoes & Accessories – *Preferably in person*

Sizing control and quality assurance matter enough to outweigh convenience — though some shoppers lean online specifically for wider style variety and affordability.



Sportswear – *Online, self-purchased*

Sizing is forgiving enough that shoppers trust it remotely, without needing to touch the product first.



Household Basics – *Ordered via app, bought by a parent*

Often ordered through a dedicated 'care outlet' app, but bought by a parent on behalf of the household, even when the shopper could easily order it themselves.



Small Electronics – *Online, self-purchased*

Low-risk, well-understood category — headphones and similar items are ordered online directly, with little hesitation.



Big Electronics – *Sourced through a personal network*

A friend already abroad sourced a full PC build, not a retail channel at all — "he found a ready PC with the specs he wanted." Trust here runs through a person, not a platform.

SO – WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR BRANDS?



BRAND IMPLICATIONS

Ways to Earn a Place Inside the Ritual

Five moves that follow directly from what shoppers told us.

Design for the Decision Circle, Not the Buyer

Build shareable links, group-friendly bundles and content that plays well in a family chat, not just a single feed.

01

02

Make Trust Visible Before Checkout

Invest in UGC, real reviews, and creator partnerships that do the reassurance work a product page can't do alone.

Remove Friction, Not Choice

One-tap payment and BNPL should sit next to the price — but COD should stay available. Control matters as much as convenience.

03

04

Treat the Doorstep as a Brand Moment

Delivery speed and rider etiquette are now part of the product experience, not backend logistics.

Design for the Life After Checkout

Gifting, unboxing, and resale are where the ritual continues. Brands that show up there earn repeat behaviour, not just repeat purchases.

05



BRAND OPPORTUNITY
DON'T JUST OPTIMISE THE TRANSACTION.
OWN A RITUAL.

WHAT'S NEXT

SIX TRENDS SHAPING THE NEXT CHAPTER OF SAUDI COMMERCE

Directional signals worth watching — not yet universal, but building momentum.

Agentic & AI-Assisted Shopping

Asking a chatbot or voice assistant to reorder, compare or gift becomes a normal path, especially for replenishment categories.



AI assistants start narrowing choices and even completing purchases on a shopper's behalf — shifting competition from the shelf to the algorithm.

Voice & Conversational Commerce



Live Commerce Goes Mainstream

Brands move from broad Ramadan or White Friday campaigns to offers timed to a shopper's own calendar and habits, not the mass one.



Livestream selling matures from a novelty into a standing channel, with creators running recurring shows rather than one-off drops.

Hyper-Personalised Occasion Marketing



Resale Enters the Mainstream

30–60 minute delivery expectations spread into beauty, accessories and gifting — raising the fulfilment bar for every category.



Peer-to-peer resale and pre-loved categories grow from a niche habit into an expected option, especially in luxury and electronics.

Quick Commerce Expands Beyond Groceries



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



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Benchmark & Refine

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

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- Preference Testing (A/B, Multivariate)
- Wireframe Testing (Low to High Fidelity)

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

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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

**Social Media
Rituals in KSA**

SEPTEMBER

**Shopping &
E-Commerce Rituals
in Saudi Arabia**

OCTOBER

Coming Soon...

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER