

POST EVENT REPORT

HIT  RESET
TRANSFORMING RETAIL FOR IMPACT

2025

The Ritz Carlton, DIFC
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
October 13th-14th

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HIT RESET

TRANSFORMING RETAIL FOR IMPACT

FOREWORD

Retail Congress MENA 2025, hosted at The Ritz-Carlton, DIFC, Dubai, champions the theme "Hit Reset: Transforming Retail for Impact." This year's edition focuses on purposeful reinvention, bringing leaders together to reframe strategies, accelerate innovation, and build measurable outcomes across the region. It's an invitation to rethink what's possible, catalyze meaningful dialogue, and forge partnerships that deliver real value for customers, communities, and the wider MENA retail economy.

RESET TO ADVANCE: SMARTER, FASTER, CUSTOMER-CENTRIC

2025 calls for a reset, moving from experiments to outcomes. Retailers are rethinking models to deliver measurable impact: using AI for real personalization, smarter operations, and faster, data-led decisions; empowering teams with new skills; and embedding sustainability where it matters. Partnerships are shifting from loose collaborations to execution-focused ecosystems that turn strategy into results. Together, we're building a resilient, customer-centric retail industry designed for clarity, accountability, and impact.



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HOW THE MECSR RETAIL CONGRESS MENA 2025 MADE AN OUTSIZED IMPACT COMPARED TO OTHER CONFERENCES?

Retail Congress MENA 2025 was more than just an event, it was a defining moment for our industry. Under the theme "HIT RESET: Transforming Retail for Impact," we came together as a community ready to embrace change, rethink possibilities, and shape the next chapter of retail across the MENA region and beyond.

Over two dynamic days, we witnessed the full power of collaboration in action. The conference, exhibition, and deal-making sessions unfolded side by side, bringing together thought leaders, innovators, and decision-makers who are driving transformation across shopping centres, retail, and mixed-use developments. Ideas were exchanged, partnerships were forged, and strategies were redefined all with a shared purpose: to reset, to rise, and to make a lasting impact.

This year's event drew a record-breaking 8,820+ attendees, a true testament to the strength and vibrancy of our community. The energy carried through every hall, from inspiring keynote sessions to interactive panels and networking luncheons, where meaningful conversations turned into opportunities.

The celebration reached its peak during the Gala Dinner and MENA Awards Night on 14 October 2025, where we honoured the best of the best in design, development, marketing, retail, customer experience, sustainability and service excellence awards. With 28 Gold and 104 Silver Awards presented, we recognised the innovation, resilience, and excellence that continue to define our region's retail landscape.

But beyond the numbers and accolades, the true impact of RCM25 lies in the connections we build and the shared vision we carry forward. Together, we are shaping a retail future that is sustainable, digital, experiential, relationship driven and people-centred.

As we look ahead, our focus remains clear to strengthen our community, champion knowledge exchange, and empower every member of the retail and shopping centre ecosystem to thrive in this new era.

Retail Congress MENA 2025 marked a reset, yes but more importantly, it marked a renewal of purpose and highlighted our inclusive community. The journey continues, and together, we will keep transforming retail for greater impact and success.

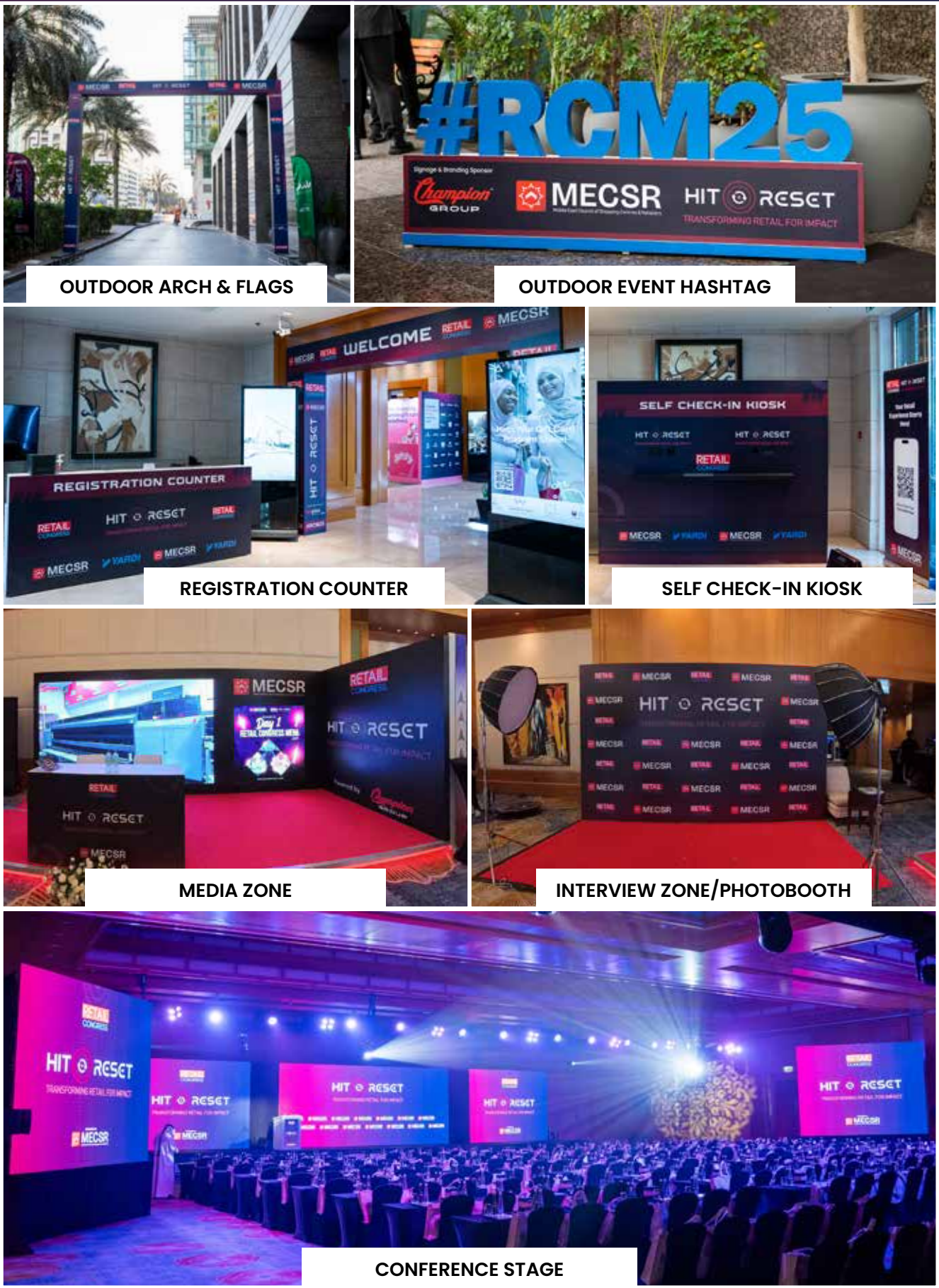
With appreciation,

DAVID MACADAM

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF SHOPPING CENTRES & RETAILERS

BRANDING & COLLATERALS



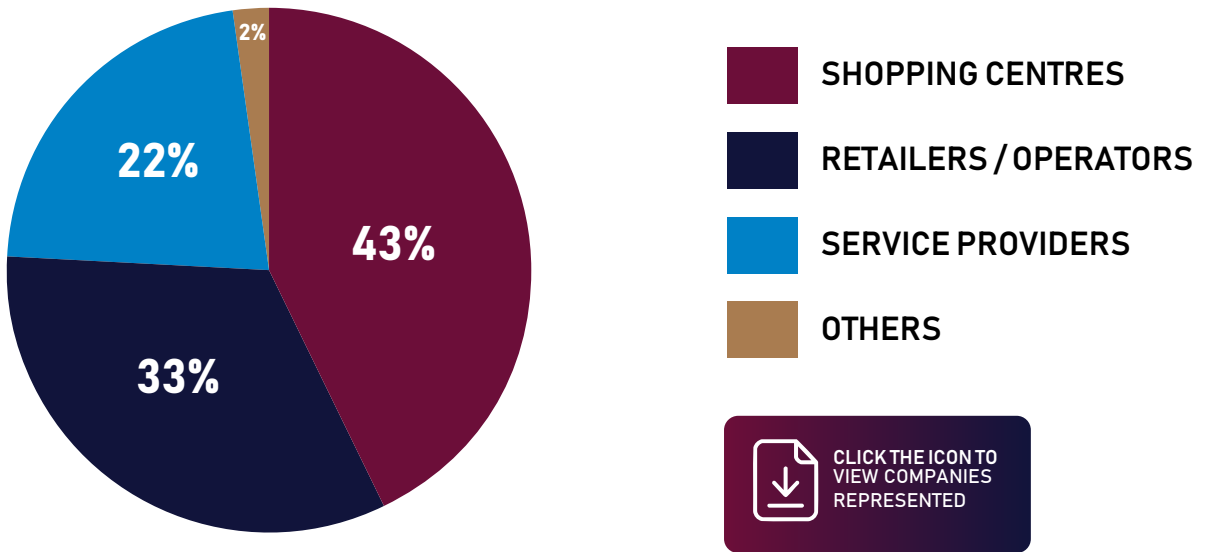
ATTENDANCE & ENGAGEMENT

Insights from Sensormatic Footfall Data

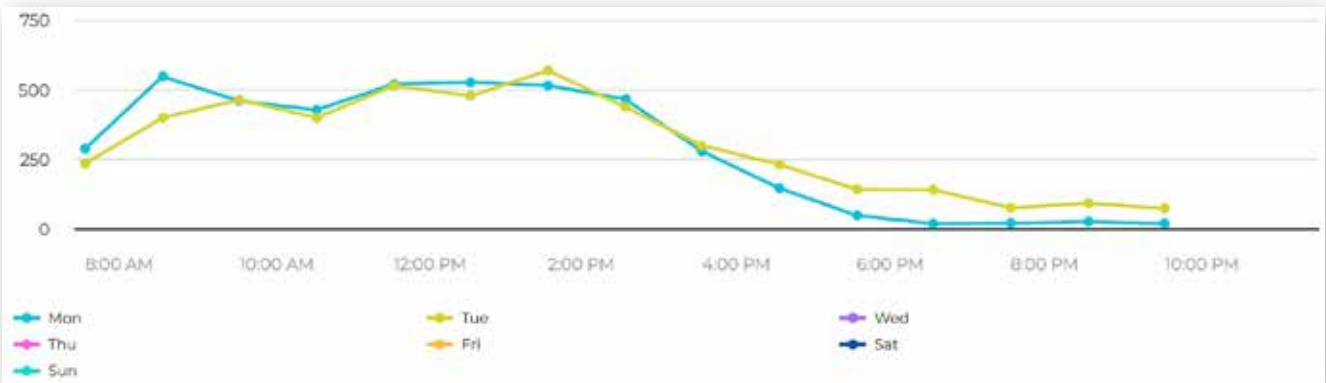
The Retail Congress MENA 2025 maintained strong engagement, supported by Sensormatic Solutions (ShopperTrak Analytics) that provided clear visibility into attendee movement and event impact. Across 13–14 October 2025, the event recorded more than 8,820 visitors, with an average hourly occupancy of 220 and average hourly traffic of 294.

OVERALL NUMBER OF VISITORS FROM OVER 40 COUNTRIES:

8,820



FOOTFALL TRAFFIC





CONVERSATIONS THAT IGNITED RETAIL TRANSFORMATION

RCM25 brought together industry leaders to hit reset on priorities and execution. Sessions examined retail's role in economic diversification and destination growth, CEO perspectives on Vision 2030 pathways, and the next wave of technology across AI, robotics, SpaceTech, and longevity. Developers shared practical tactics on leasing and operations, while landmark projects and partnerships set new benchmarks for destinations.

The program also focused on leadership readiness, workforce transformation with clear steps for frontline and office teams, and retailer-led strategies that elevate community building and the customer journey. The outcome was a focused reset: sharper strategies, stronger partnerships, and takeaways built to drive impact beyond Dubai.



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Retail today is far more than just a space, it's an experience, a lifestyle, and an ecosystem that shapes the identity of a city

Ahmed Al Khaja

Chief Executive Officer

Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment (DFRE)

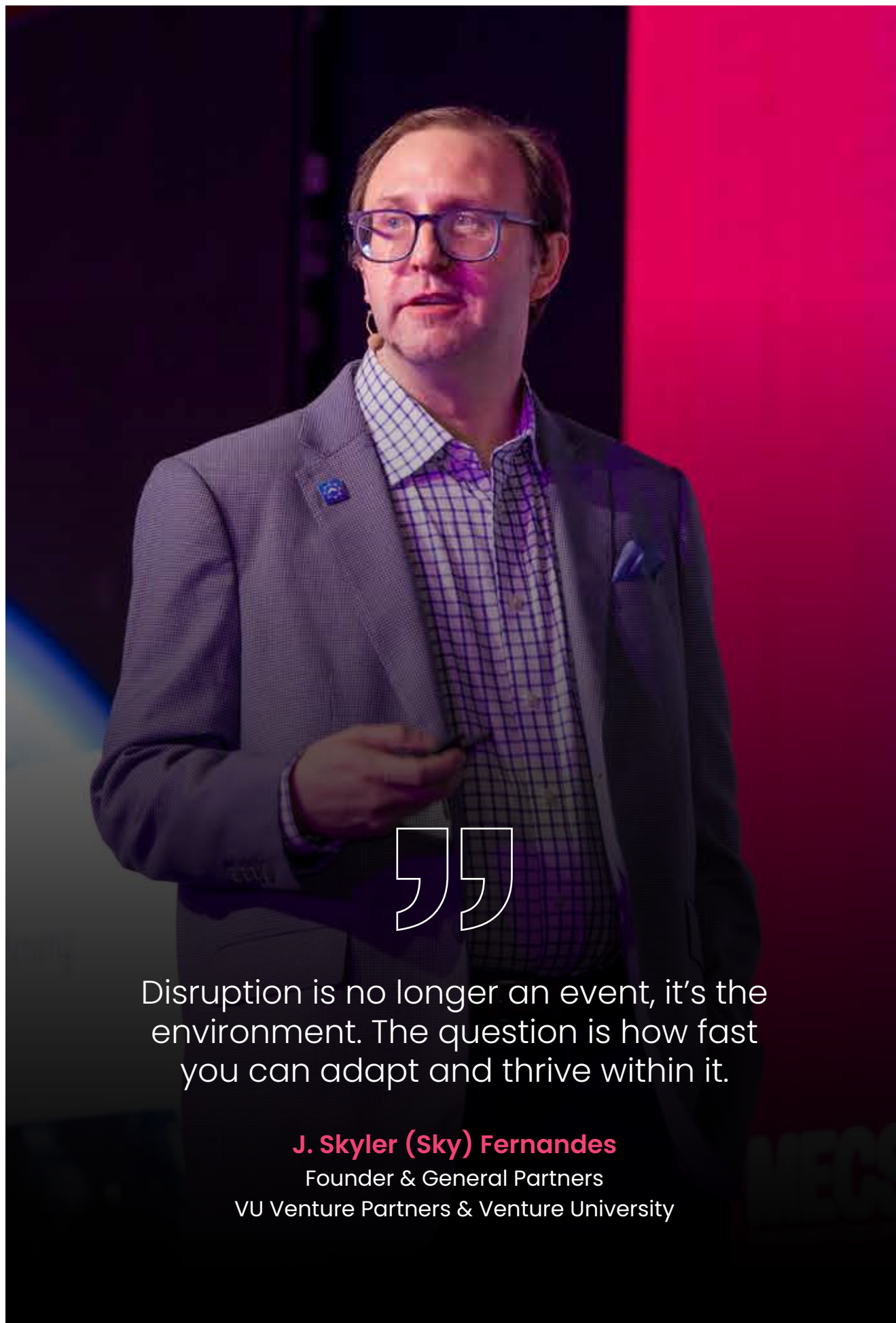
CONFERENCE KEYNOTE HIGHLIGHT

AHMED AL KHAJA: RETAIL'S ROLE IN ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Ahmed Al Khaja, CEO of Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment, outlined how Dubai treats retail as a city-building force that links tourism, lifestyle, and economic growth. He traced the shift from traditional markets to experience-led destinations supported by data and technology, and highlighted a year-round retail calendar of 18 festivals spanning roughly 250 days that activates fashion, gastronomy, fitness, and culture.

Dubai welcomed 11.17 million visitors in the first seven months with a 99.8% satisfaction rate, and retail contributes about 23% of GDP (AED 27 billion) with a goal of AED 275 billion by 2028. His core message was clear: measure satisfaction at every touchpoint, invest in flexible infrastructure, and design experiences money cannot buy.





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Disruption is no longer an event, it's the environment. The question is how fast you can adapt and thrive within it.

J. Skyler (Sky) Fernandes
Founder & General Partners
VU Venture Partners & Venture University

CONFERENCE KEYNOTE HIGHLIGHT

J. SKYLER (SKY) FERNANDES: THE FUTURE OF RETAIL & REAL ESTATE: HOW AI, ROBOTICS, SPACETECH, AND LONGEVITY ARE REDEFINING WHERE WE LIVE, WORK, AND SHOP

J. Skyler Fernandes delivered an energetic look into how emerging technologies, AI, robotics, longevity science, and even space innovation, are reshaping retail and real estate. Drawing on case studies from his venture fund's global investments, he illustrated how the next decade will redefine how people live, work, shop, and play.

Sky emphasized that the convergence of intelligent automation and human experience will drive the most significant transformations in asset design, operations, and customer engagement.

His session encouraged attendees to think beyond today's trends and prepare for a future where retail merges with frontier technologies to create new economies and lifestyles.





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The future of business belongs to leaders who can reset, those who adapt, learn fast, and create meaning in a changing world.

Dr. Corrie Block

Chief Executive Coach & AI Expert

CONFERENCE KEYNOTE HIGHLIGHT

DR. CORRIE BLOCK: FUTURE-READY LEADERSHIP SMARTER DECISIONS, STRONGER CONNECTIONS

Dr. Corrie Block opened his session with a candid perspective on leadership in an era shaped by artificial intelligence. He highlighted that the true challenge facing organizations today is not only technological adoption but the augmentation of executive performance through both neuroscience and evolutionary psychology.

Drawing on his work with global corporations such as ADNOC, Microsoft, and Mastercard, he emphasized that leadership excellence depends on balancing human well-being and business results.

His message was clear, the future belongs to leaders who combine emotional intelligence, cognitive agility, and a deep understanding of human behavior to guide AI-driven organizations toward purposeful growth.





CONFERENCE KEYNOTE HIGHLIGHT

ROMEO MARQUEZ JR.: BRING ENERGY TO RETAIL: SUSTAINING PEAK PERFORMANCE AND UNLOCKING THE NEXT OPPORTUNITY

Romeo Marquez Jr. delivered a high-energy, heartfelt session aligned with Hit Reset that framed leadership as an inside job. Using RETAIL as Refuel Energy to Activate Inspiring Legacies, he showed how personal vitality shapes culture, performance, and outcomes. He coached the room to take 100 percent responsibility through the simple formula Event plus Response equals Outcome, reinforced by daily gratitude, clear affirmations, and small acts that move leaders beyond the comfort zone.

Practical moments, from a quick hand-interlace reset to mindset reframes for setbacks, made the ideas easy to apply with teams. A moving tribute to his father, a lifelong retail professional, linked purpose and perseverance to the industry's human core, while a skydiving clip offered a vivid metaphor for choosing courage.

Participants left with a renewed commitment to protect their energy, lead with gratitude, and build legacies that inspire the people and places they serve.





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If you really want to transform your industry, you must reimagine collaboration between humans, agents, and the robotic workforce.

Matthew Wilkins

Director of Learning Technology
BIZ Group

CONFERENCE KEYNOTE HIGHLIGHT

MATTHEW WILKINS: AI: FROM FEAR TO CURIOSITY & ACTION

Matthew Wilkins captivated the audience with an engaging and highly practical session on how artificial intelligence is reshaping the modern workforce. Moving beyond the hype, he reframed AI not as a technology rollout but as a change management journey that begins with people. Through an interactive demonstration, Wilkins challenged attendees to confront their own adoption habits and rethink how fear, curiosity, and action coexist in every stage of digital transformation.

He presented a clear framework for leaders: first address mindset, then select the right tools, and finally develop the skills needed to sustain growth. Using real-world examples from Shopify, Klarna, and Duolingo, he illustrated the moral and operational dilemmas of automation, emphasizing that the key question is not “Can we automate?” but “Should we?”

Wilkins stressed the gap between corporate and frontline needs, urging AI that empowers rather than overwhelms. His demos showed generative AI personalizing learning, boosting service, and enabling multilingual, visual experiences; the takeaway was clear: align technology with empathy, adaptability, and purpose.



LEADERS IN CONVERSATION



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP, RETAIL IMPACT

Nada Abousaab led an insightful dialogue with Yaser Binmahfouz and Mohyedin Saleh Kamel on how strategic partnerships are shaping Saudi Arabia's retail and investment landscape. Both leaders emphasized the importance of collaboration between family enterprises, government entities, and private investors in advancing Vision 2030 goals across tourism, mixed use, and retail development.

They noted that Saudi consumers increasingly seek family-oriented retail destinations, calling for continuous innovation, upgraded experiences, and operational excellence. The discussion concluded that impactful retail growth depends on aligning investment strategies with national priorities, localizing concepts for the Saudi market, and building partnerships that deliver scale, quality, and lasting community value.



INVESTMENTS, INNOVATION, AND GROWTH PATHWAYS FOR VISION 2030

Moderated by Nada Abousaab, this discussion brought together Ayman Al Burti, Abdullah Al Tamimi, and Hamad Al Hendi to explore how Vision 2030 is reshaping Saudi Arabia's investment and retail landscape. The speakers emphasized that real estate and retail remain central to diversification, driven by infrastructure growth, tourism, and quality-of-life developments. Opportunities across logistics, mixed use, and destination projects require innovation, customer focus, and disciplined asset management.

They agreed that collaboration between landlords, retailers, and government is essential for long-term success. Transparent partnerships, data sharing, and co-created initiatives are improving efficiency and retail performance. The panel concluded that technology and AI must support, not replace the human experience, while heritage and authenticity remain key to Saudi Arabia's evolving retail identity.

LEADERS IN CONVERSATION



INSIDE THE DEVELOPER'S PLAYBOOK: DRIVING GROWTH IN SAUDI RETAIL

Moderated by David Macadam, the panel unpacked the developer toolkit for Saudi growth: mixed use strategy, placemaking, and data led operations tied to clear governance. Majid Algothmi outlined Souq Seven's seven-zone model that blends F&B, hospitality, and heritage with a strong urban catchment. Abdulaziz Al Wasaly detailed Al Andalus Mall's evolution into a lifestyle precinct with healthcare, hospitality, and a Boulevard that lifted footfall above 150 percent and occupancy to about 98 percent.

Neal Gemassmer focused on getting the data layer right, security first, and targeted AI use cases that improve leasing yields, service quality, and operating decisions. The common playbook is disciplined asset curation, community relevant experiences, and technology that enhances the human experience.



ESAS X MINTUS: THE NEW ERA OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN SHOPPING MALL MANAGEMENT

Esas Properties outlined a tech-driven operating model that unifies leasing, CRM, business intelligence, and shopper analytics into a single ecosystem. Cem Eric explained how the Mintus partnership elevates decisions from retrospective reporting to real prediction, consolidating fragmented data from PDFs, Excel, CRM, and market feeds, with options to run on premises or in the cloud.

Tamer Ozmen detailed an AI platform focused on workflow automation, revenue and cost optimization, and risk management, with use cases such as predictive leasing and tenant mix, contract analytics, payment risk alerts, and efficiency gains in maintenance and energy. Guided by David Macadam, the session concluded that AI adoption is now a competitiveness issue, and progress depends on clear governance, measurable results, and technology that enhances transparency, visitor experience, and asset performance.

LEADERS IN CONVERSATION



THE AVENUES RIYADH: SHAPING SAUDI ARABIA'S NEXT RETAIL LANDMARK

Set to become one of the world's largest mixed-use developments, The Avenues Riyadh represents a new benchmark for integrated retail, leisure, and lifestyle destinations in the Kingdom. Covering 1.87 million square meters, roughly the size of 260 football fields, the project will include expansive retail space, luxury hotels, entertainment zones, and government facilities, all connected within a seamless urban ecosystem.

In conversation with moderator Katie Jensen, Jassem Al Muqbel shared insights into the project's vision, emphasizing its role in positioning Riyadh as a global retail and tourism hub. Designed to attract both residents and international visitors, The Avenues will redefine the shopping experience through architecture, accessibility, and immersive placemaking. As completion nears, the development stands as a symbol of Saudi Arabia's ambition to create destinations that blend innovation, scale, and cultural identity.



THE RETAILER'S VOICE: SHAPING CONSUMER EXPERIENCE AND MARKET GROWTH

Retail advances when data informs design. Yasser Taher showed how optical retail can shift from medical need to lifestyle through product curation, storytelling, and community, powered by clean customer data and teams trained to act on insight at the point of sale.

Koral Ibrahim focused on turning stores into destinations with insight led layouts, purposeful digital touchpoints, and measurable journeys from discovery to care. She emphasized pilots over big bang rollouts and culturally tuned creative. Guided by Dr. Heike Lieb-Wilson, the session's takeaway was clear: evidence, empathy, and consistent execution drive consumer experience and market growth.

LEADERS IN CONVERSATION



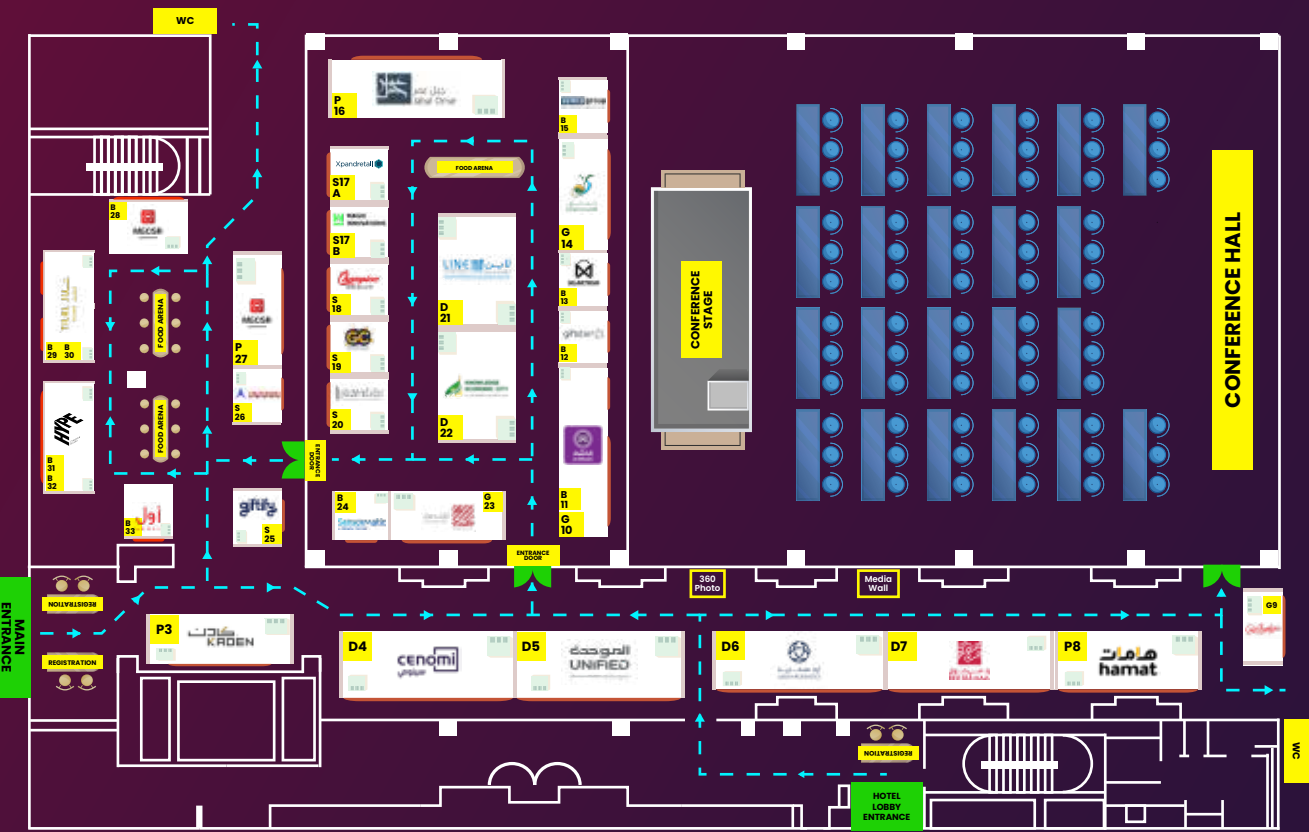
NORTH AMERICAN RETAIL OUTLOOK: LESSONS AND INSIGHTS FOR MENA REGION

North American retail is in transformation, offering key lessons for emerging markets. Michael Kehoe described Canada's retail reset after the Hudson's Bay collapse, with department store closures giving way to food halls, entertainment, and flagship tenants. Despite major shifts, sales and traffic remain strong, while redevelopment of former anchor spaces opens new potential for mixed use.

Michael Hirschfeld pointed to the U.S. pivot toward experience-led destinations, using Las Vegas as a model where retail, sports, and entertainment converge. David Macadam steered the discussion toward parallels for the MENA region, where repurposing legacy assets, curating lifestyle destinations, and blending retail with leisure can sustain long-term growth.



EXHIBITION FLOOR PLAN



EXHIBITORS

BOOTH NO.	COMPANY NAME	COUNTRY
G10 & B11	AL OTHAIM INVESTMENT	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
G23	AL RASHID MALL - KHOBAR DANAH REAL ESTATE	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
D6	AZAD PROPERTIES	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
B33	AWWAL EVENTS	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
G9	BIG APPLE SWEET (CAFÉ BARBERA)	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
D4	CENOMI CENTERS	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
S18	CHAMPION GROUP	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
G14	DALMA MALL	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
S25	GIFTIFY	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
B12	GIFTSTARR	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
S19	GROUND CONTROL	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
P8	HAMAT	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
B31 & B32	HYPE CREATIVE STUDIO	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
P16	JABAL OMAR DEVELOPMENT COMPANY	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
P3	KADEN	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
S26	KALANDOOR GROUP	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
D22	KNOWLEDGE ECONOMIC CITY CO	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
D21	LINE INVESTMENTS & PROPERTY - SP LLC	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
S17B	MAGIC INNOVATION	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
B13	PHIL McARTHUR & PARTNERS - RETAIL DEVELOPMENT SPECIALISTS	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
D7	RED SEA MALL	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
S20	SAUDI BONYAN	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
B24	SENSORMATIC SOLUTIONS (SHOPPERTRAK ANALYTICS)	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
B29 & B30	TILAL VILLAGE (SULIMAN ALRAJHI REAL ESTATE CO.)	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
D5	UNIFIED REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
B15	VEMCO GROUP	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
S17A	XPANDRETAIL	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

DEAL-MAKING

LOCATON	COMPANY NAME	COUNTRY
BOOTH D6	AZAD PROPERTIES	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
SALON 5	CENOMI CENTERS	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
SALON 2	ESAS GAYRIMENKUL	TURKIYE
BOOTH P8	HAMAT	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
BOOTH P3	KADEN	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
BOOTH D22	KNOWLEDGE ECONOMIC CITY	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
SALON 3	LINE INVESTMENTS & PROPERTY - SP LLC	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
SALON 6	UNIFIED REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT CO.	KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
SALON 1	YARDI SYSTEMS	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

We acknowledge the contribution of all exhibitors and partners whose presence and professionalism elevated the exhibition.

Your engagement enabled meaningful networking, product discovery, and business development throughout the Congress.



EXHIBITION SHOWCASE



Cenomi Centers 360°



Unified 360°



Azad Properties 360°



Hamat 360°



Knowledge Economic City 360°



Al Othaim Investments 360°



Kaden 360°



Red Sea Mall 360°



Al Rashid Mall 360°



Jabal Omar Development Co. 360°



Dalma Mall 360°



Line Investment 360°



Saudi Bonyan 360°



Sensormatic 360°



Kalandoor Group 360°



Tilal Village 360°



Champion Group 360°



Giftstarr 360°



Phil McArthur & Partners 360°



Vemco Group 360°



Hype Creative Studio 360°



Giftify 360°



Xpandretail 360°



Ground Control 360°



Magic Innovations 360°



Awwal Events 360°

EXHIBITORS
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STRATEGIC BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

Curated for focused, result-oriented conversations, the Deal Making Session at **Retail Congress MENA 2025** featured exclusive meeting rooms and collaboration-ready exhibitor booths where retailers, developers, investors, and solution providers met face to face. Through scheduled appointments and spontaneous discussions, participants explored opportunities, advanced negotiations, and turned connections into strategic partnerships that will define the next wave of retail growth across MENA.

Facilitating meaningful connections between retailers, developers, and investors to explore new opportunities and partnerships.



Driving productive discussions that turn insights into actionable strategies and long-term alliances.





MECSR Shopping Centre & Retailer MENA Awards 2025 celebrated standout achievements across the region, recognising innovation, creativity, and measurable impact. Honouring leaders who advance the retail landscape, the awards highlighted best practices in marketing, design and development, service excellence, and customer experience. This year's winners set new benchmarks for quality and performance across MENA.

GOLD AWARDS

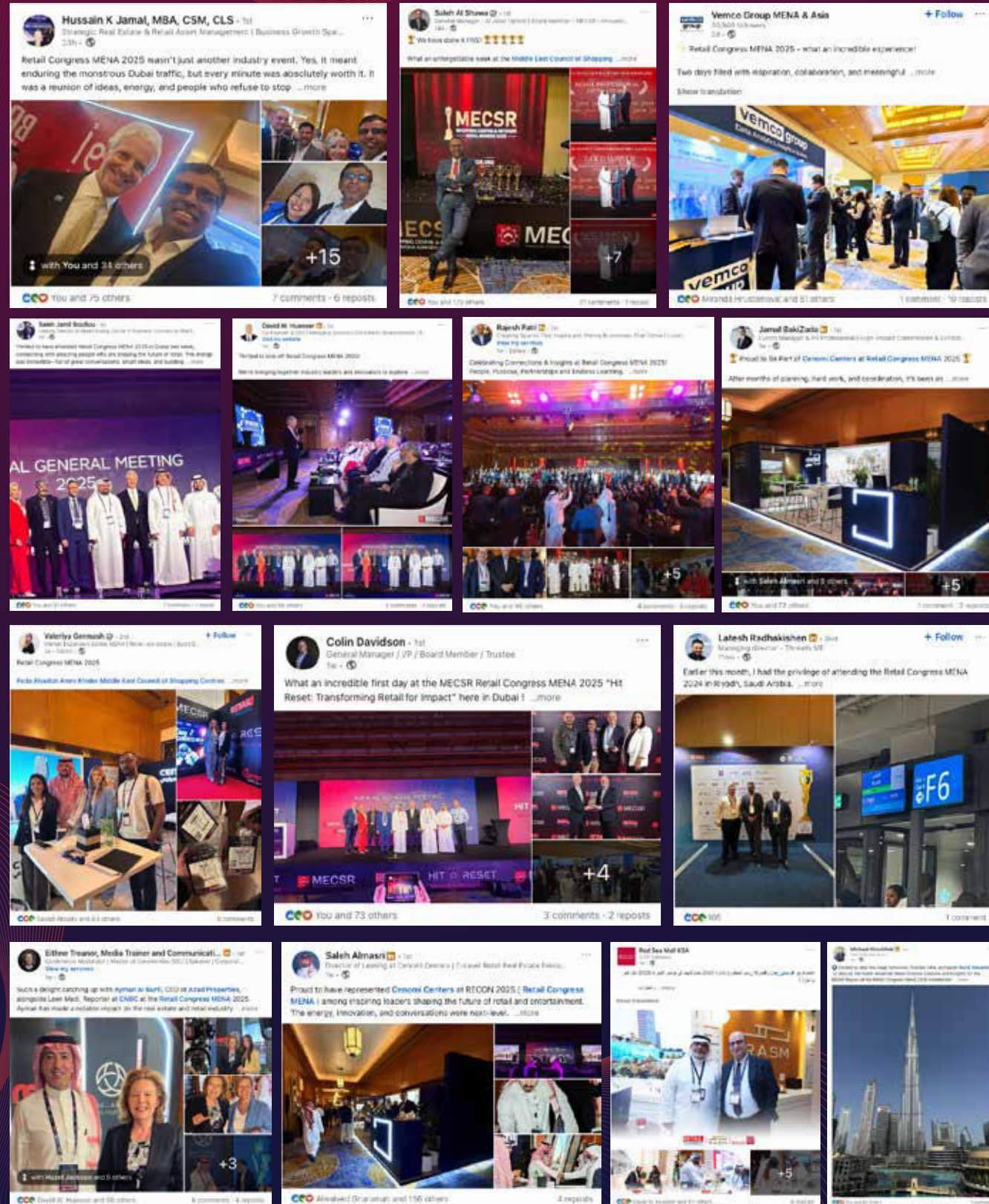
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SILVER AWARDS

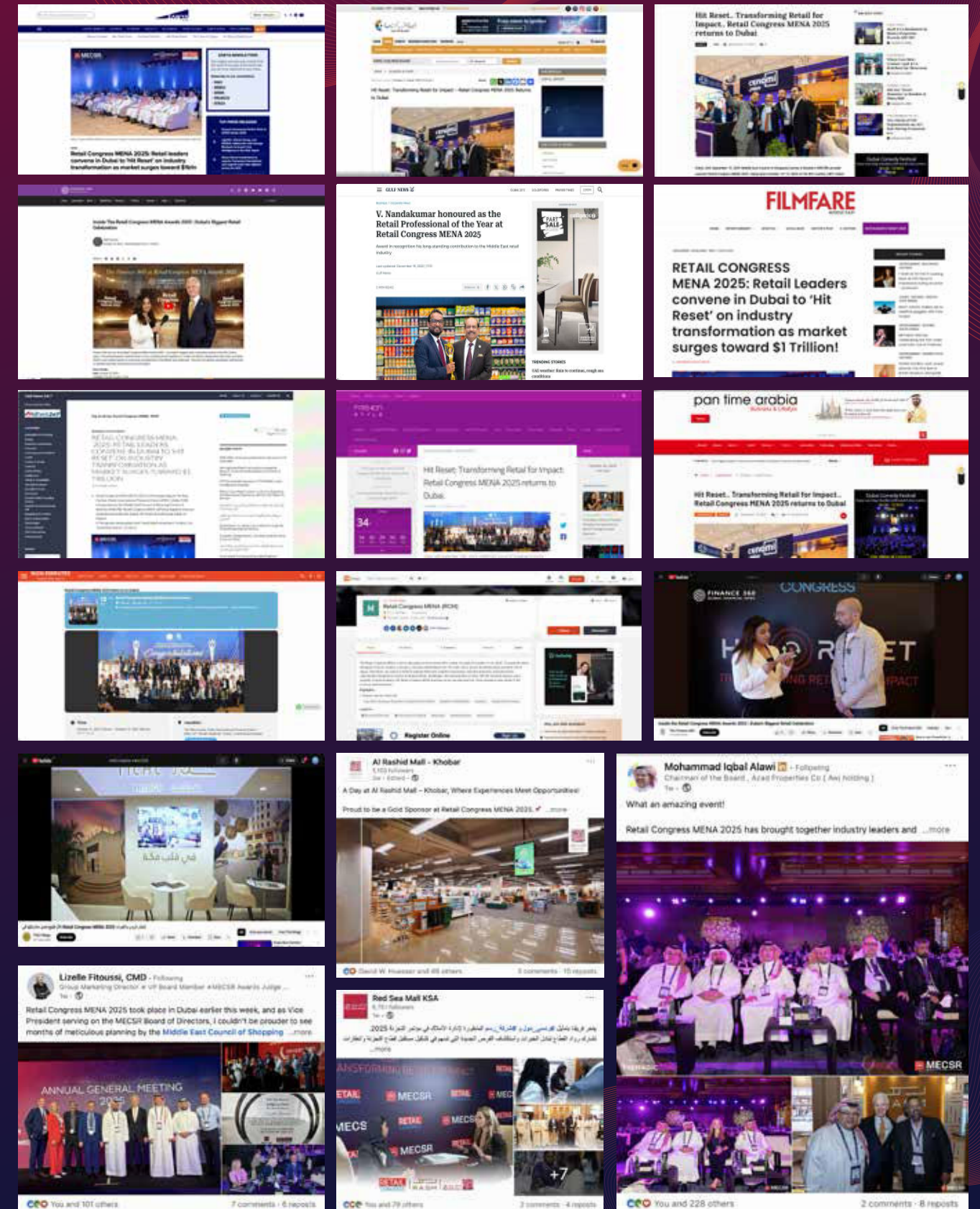
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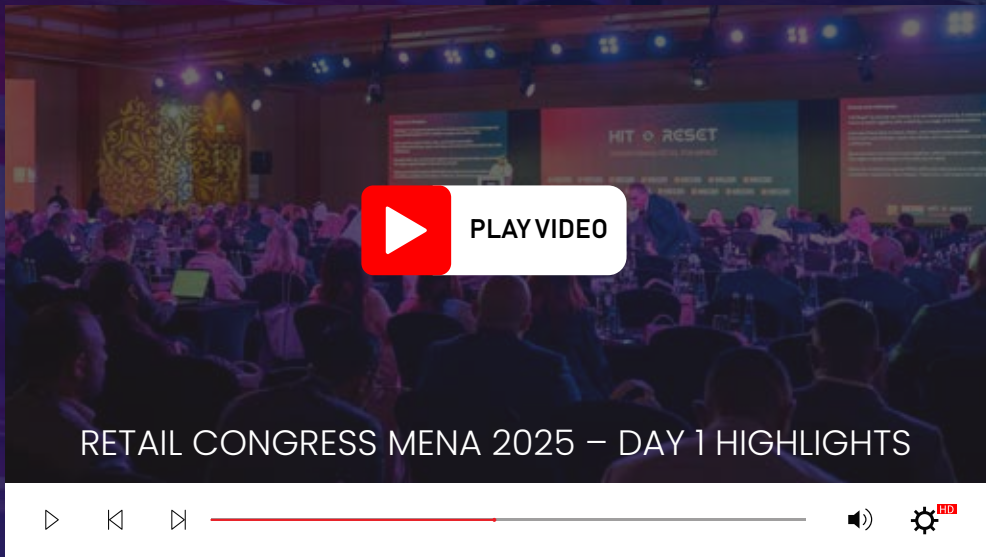
DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA COVERAGE



DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA COVERAGE



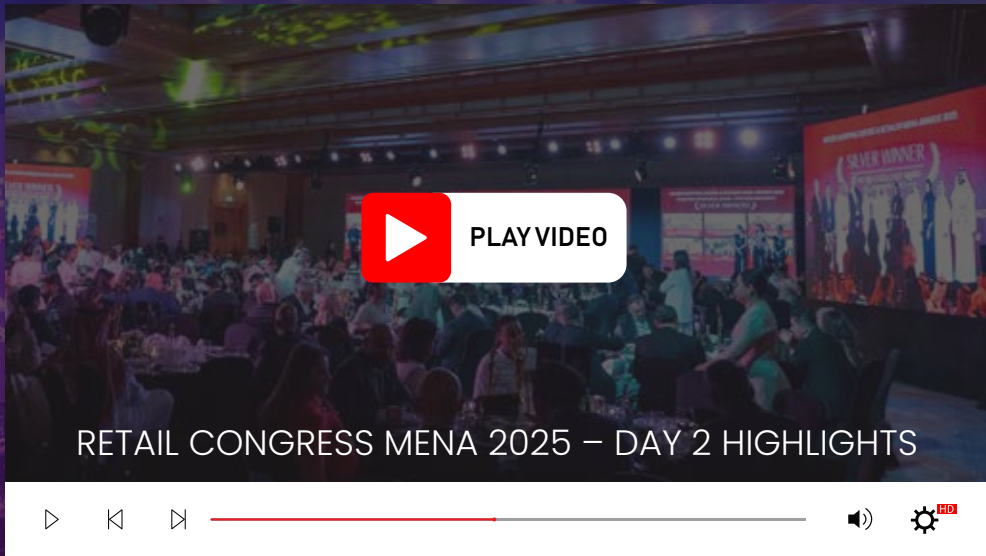
THE BEST MOMENTS FROM RCM 2025



PLAYVIDEO

RETAIL CONGRESS MENA 2025 – DAY 1 HIGHLIGHTS

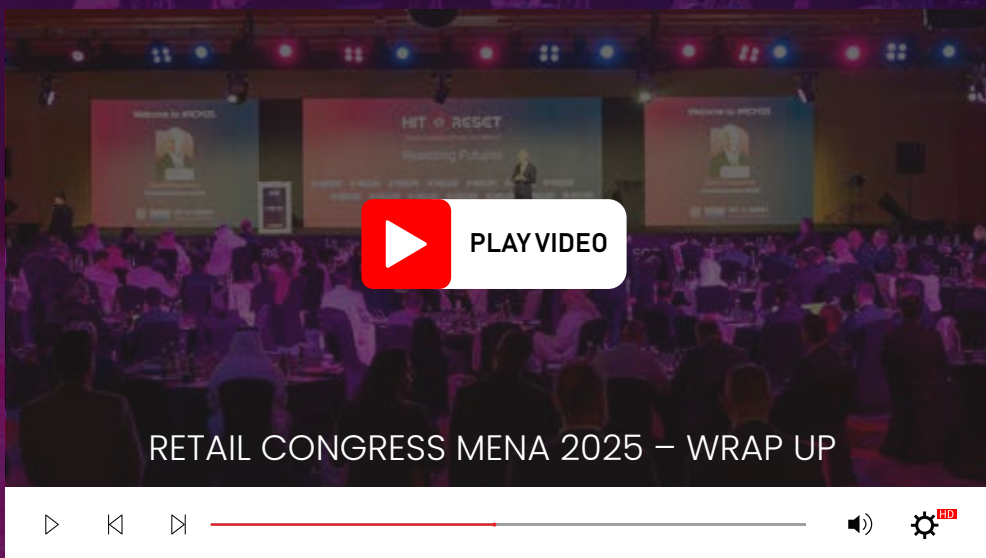
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RETAIL CONGRESS MENA 2025 – DAY 2 HIGHLIGHTS

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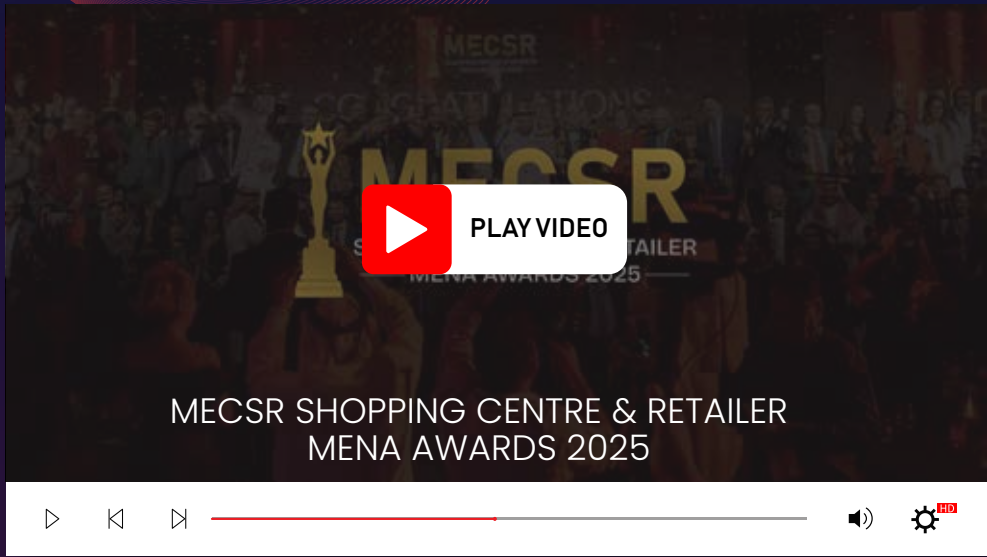


PLAYVIDEO

RETAIL CONGRESS MENA 2025 – WRAP UP

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THE BEST MOMENTS FROM RCM 2025



PLAYVIDEO

MECSR SHOPPING CENTRE & RETAILER
MENA AWARDS 2025

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-  [RETAIL CONGRESS MENA 2025 – CONFERENCE PHOTOS](#)
-  [RETAIL CONGRESS MENA 2025 – EXHIBITION PHOTOS](#)
-  [RETAIL CONGRESS MENA 2025 – AWARDS PHOTOS](#)





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Middle East Council of Shopping Centres & Retailers

HIT RESET

TRANSFORMING RETAIL FOR IMPACT

RETAIL
CONGRESS

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