ماجد الفطيم
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GREAT MOMENTS
FOR EVERYONE,
EVERYDAY

BUILDING THE TRUSTED DIGITAL ECONOMY OF RETAIL

How seamless journeys and trusted infrastructure enable growth at scale

in partnership with
VISA

Introduction

The UAE is home to a shopping culture that extends far beyond transactions. Retail is rooted in experience and deeply embedded in the country's social fabric. Malls function as community hubs; brands compete on service as much as product; and expectations are shaped not only by global trends, but by daily lived experience.

This combination of high engagement and high expectations has positioned the UAE and the wider Gulf region as a proving ground for the future of retail. Consumers are overwhelmingly digital-first, move fluidly between physical and digital channels, and exhibit near-zero tolerance for friction. In this market, expectations are not only elevated — they are constantly evolving.

A Market Defined by Digital Maturity

To remain competitive, retailers must operate within an increasingly complex and digitally accelerated environment.[1] In the UAE, 80% of payments are now made digitally, with cash steadily declining in everyday transactions, a structural shift in behaviour.

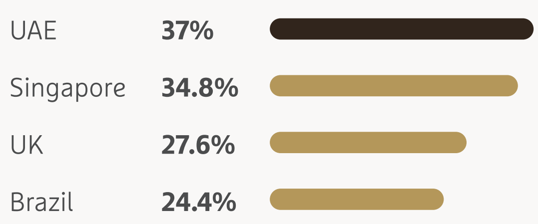
Mobile commerce maturity is equally pronounced.[2] Sixty-seven percent of consumers used their mobile phones as part of their latest retail purchase, and 37% complete online shopping via mobile devices, the highest rate globally, ahead of Singapore (34.8%), the U.K. (27.6%), and Brazil (24.4%). This is not merely digital adoption; it is reliance on frictionless, mobile-first pathways.

At the same time, expectations are uncompromising.[3] Nine out of ten shoppers say they would abandon even their favourite brands after a single poor experience. Seamless execution is no longer a competitive advantage; it is a baseline requirement.

The implication is clear: the next wave of ecommerce growth will be won by players who combine experience intelligence, embedded trust, and true omnichannel continuity. Retailers must remove friction, increase confidence, and ensure that every interaction - digital or physical, simply works.

Yet despite significant investment in digital tools and AI, many journeys remain fragmented. The central challenge is no longer capability; it is credibility. Retailers must deliver experiences that are consistent, secure, and dependable at scale.

Percentages of consumers completing online shopping on mobile devices



[1] Visa Report Highlights Payments Shift in UAE
[2] Visa Acceptance Solutions – PYMNTS Intelligence Study
[3] ecnewswire.com

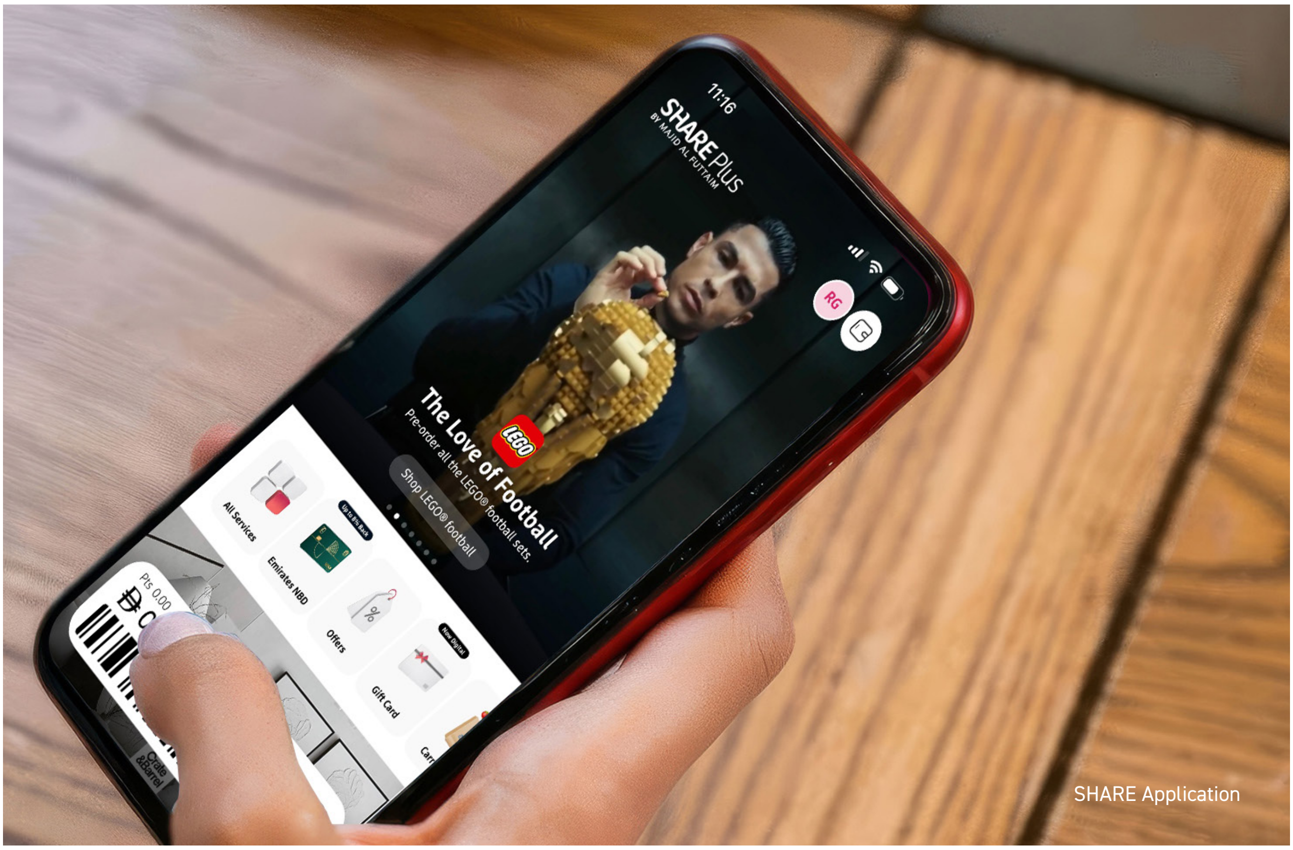
1. Rebuilding Relationships Through Data and Trust

In a digital-first environment, customer relationships are no longer built primarily through face-to-face interaction. They are built through intelligent recognition at every touchpoint.

Retailers must understand context, intent, and preference, and translate those signals into experiences that feel timely, relevant, and effortless. Where loyalty was once shaped by a sales associate who recognised you by name, it is now rebuilt through data orchestration and responsible personalisation.

A strong digital relationship is one where customers consistently feel understood, where personalisation is meaningful rather than intrusive, and where trust deepens quietly through reliability, transparency, and seamless engagement. Loyalty today is not built through proximity; it is built through consistency.

This white paper proposes a strategic blueprint for what we call the **Trust Loop** - a shared framework enabling retailers and payments leaders to collaborate around AI-driven personalisation, omnichannel continuity, and invisible security. It explores how trust is experienced across malls, luxury retail, dining, and entertainment destinations, where physical presence, digital touchpoints, and payments converge at scale.



SHARE Application

The Trust Loop

A CUSTOMER-FACING EXPERIENCE ACROSS RELEVANCE, PAYMENT, AND RECOVERY

Trust in retail is built through a continuous loop of customer interactions that deliver a reliable and coherent experience over time and across channels.

1 Relevance

This Trust Loop begins by creating relevance through discovery and recognition – by using data responsibly, so experiences feel useful, not intrusive. At Majid Al Futtaim, AI-driven personalisation already moves toward journey-level targeting, from next-best offers and personalised search to dynamically tailored rewards. Within the ecosystem of SHARE, a flagship loyalty and lifestyle app, this is already delivering consistent double-digit uplifts in engagement, including a 23% increase in click-through rates for personalised offers within the SHARE loyalty platform.[4]

2 Authorisation

Authorisation is the next step in the Trust Loop, based on identity, credentials, and payments that work quickly and securely, whether in-app, in-store, or across borders. This moment is critical: According to Visa consumer research in the UAE, 82% of consumers say they would shop online more often if checkout were one-click, and two-thirds would use biometric authentication if available.[5] Periods of elevated footfall and compressed decision-making see restaurants, apparel, entertainment, and lodging categories surge by more than 50% year-on-year, underscoring how quickly demand materialises when relevance and authorisation align – and how quickly it is lost when they do not.

3 Resolution

Resolution completes the Trust Loop: customer confidence and loyalty are shaped during moments of returns, refunds, disputes, and service recovery. Majid Al Futtaim's ecosystem data and Visa research show that trust is shaped most strongly at three points: the first purchase, moments of friction such as payment declines, complicated authentication processes, frustrating checkout experience, limited payment methods, and order confirmation failure. How these moments are handled plays a decisive role in shaping repeat engagement and long-term loyalty. Retailers that master this Trust Loop do more than remove friction. They eliminate uncertainty, which gives customers the confidence to continue shopping, regardless of channel or context.

4 Majid Al Futtaim Customer Insights Research
5 Visa Study

2. Building a trust-based and scalable retail infrastructure

A trusted digital economy requires a set of capabilities that lets the retail journey scale without breaking the experience. In practice, this retail infrastructure rests on five interdependent foundations: identity, credentials, consent, interoperability, and recourse.

This matters in practice: 63% of SHARE users who shop online also make purchases in Majid Al Futtaim's physical destinations within the same year.[6]

It shows that customers already shop across the omnichannel experience, provided retail systems support continuity instead of forcing restarts.

Retailers and payment networks need to collaborate closely across three layers to meet consumer expectations during this kind of trusted journey.

- **Privacy-safe insight generation** through environments such as data clean rooms, enabling behavioural understanding without exposing identities.
- **Tokenised identifiers and persona-level signals** that support precision while keeping data non-identifiable and purpose-bound.
- **Consent-driven AI models** that power intelligent commerce while ensuring customers remain in control.

What retail and payments leaders should prioritise now – and what comes next

Near term

Prioritise the moments that most strongly influence trust – including checkout experiences, authentication flows, and clarity around refunds.

Medium term

Move from campaign-level personalisation to journey-level orchestration through data sharing with clear governance and controls.

Long term

Prepare for agent-enabled commerce by ensuring identity, credentials, and consent travel with the customer. Check how ready your data collaboration model is for AI-driven journeys.

[6] Concept Note – Majid Al Futtaim x Visa White Paper (Majid Al Futtaim responses)

CASE STUDY

How Majid Al Futtaim and Visa turn trust into a scalable retail capability

SHAREPay Wallet

Majid Al Futtaim and Visa operate at complementary layers of this ecosystem. Majid Al Futtaim brings ecosystem-level insight into consumer behaviours across digital, physical, and omnichannel touchpoints, informed by operating large-scale, destination-based retail environments for residents and visitors alike.

Visa provides the trust infrastructure and intelligence that underpins secure authorisation, credential protection, and reliable resolution across markets; during the past decade, the company has invested more than $3.3 billion in AI solutions and data capabilities.[7]

A clear illustration of this collaboration in action is SHAREPay, where embedding payments directly into the loyalty journey enables instant rewards at the point of payment.

By removing friction between earning, redeeming, and paying, SHAREPay has materially increased repeat purchase and frequency -increasing overall spend by +9% and purchase frequency by +24%.[8]

This shows how trust and relevance reinforce each other when they are designed into the transaction itself.

[7] Visa trends and insights
[8] Majid Al Futtaim Customer Insights Research

3. Designing trust for AI-driven and agent-enabled commerce

In the Gulf region, destination-led retail, digitally native consumers, and constant cross-border movement make trust a functional requirement rather than a differentiator. Local customers value depth of relationship and long-term benefits; regional customers prioritise speed and recognition across markets; international visitors seek simplicity, trust, and universal acceptance. In such an environment, seamlessness is not aspirational; it is expected.

Digital sophistication across markets like the UAE continues to raise the bar. According to GWI (UAE, 2025), over 52% of consumers actively used generative AI in the past month to seek information, signalling growing comfort with advanced interfaces. Twenty-seven percent believe AI enhances their lives, and 30% express confidence that AI development can progress ethically. Yet this optimism sits alongside caution.

In a Visa survey (UAE, 2025), 99% of consumers stated that they take precautions to secure payments, an almost universal signal that trust is expected to be engineered into systems, not marketed as a differentiating feature.

As commerce evolves toward AI-driven and agent-enabled purchasing, where digital agents increasingly inform or execute transactions on behalf of consumers, the architecture of trust becomes even more critical.

Consent, identity verification, authentication, and secure data collaboration will no longer sit in the background; they will define whether systems are usable at all. Retailers will need to design products, payment rails, and digital channels that are machine-readable, interoperable, and resilient, structured not only for human decision-making, but also for intelligent agents evaluating reliability, transparency, and security at scale.

High fraud awareness, near-universal precautionary behaviour, and measured AI confidence all point to the same conclusion: trust must be engineered into the system by design.

It may not win customers on its own, but its absence will certainly lose them - particularly as new AI-based commerce models reshape how purchasing decisions are made.

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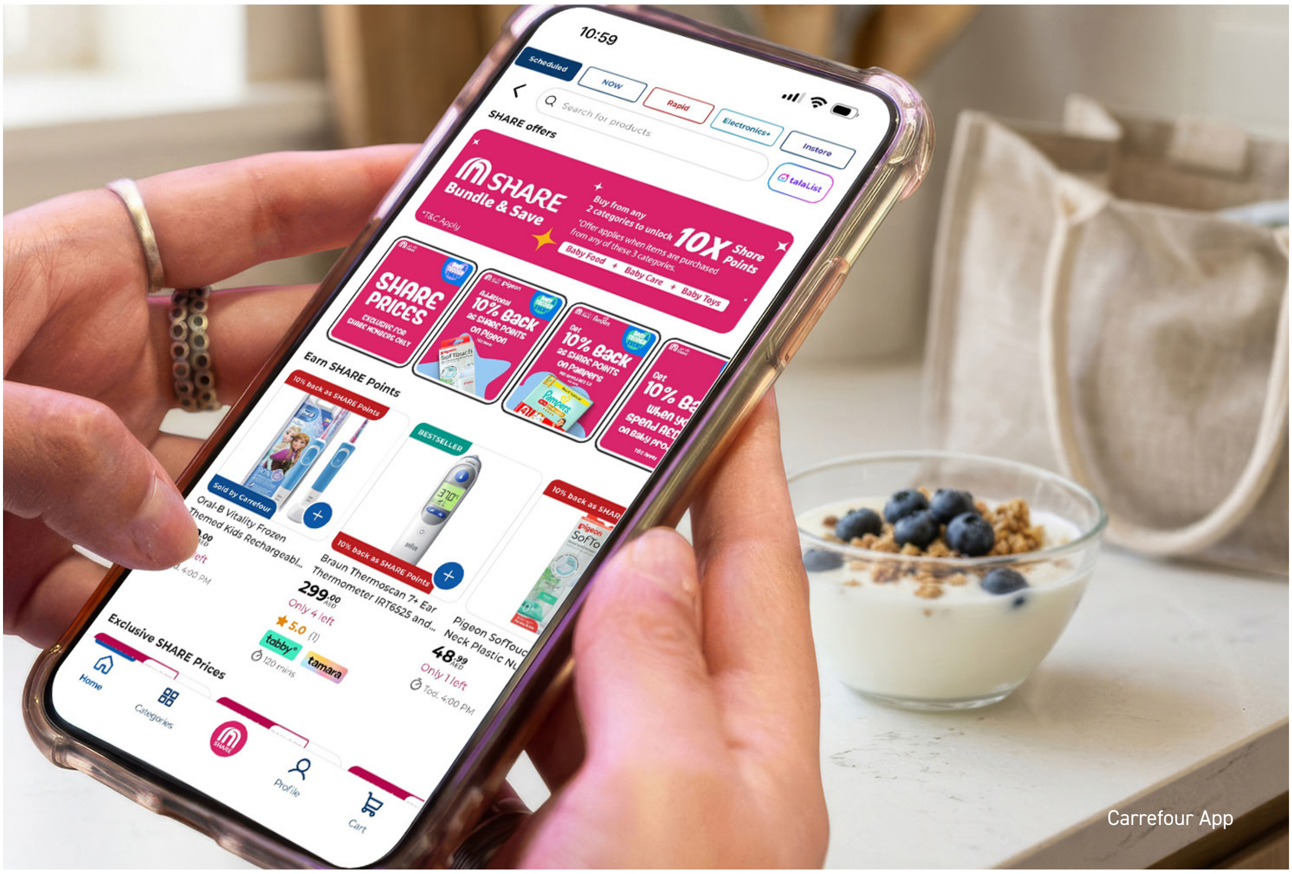
Outlook on Future Growth: Retail Innovation and Trusted Digital Economy Leadership

The next phase of retail growth will be shaped by ecosystems that embed trust consistently across every customer journey. Retail innovation and digital economy leadership are not competing ambitions; innovation demonstrates what is possible, while trusted systems allow it to scale sustainably and responsibly.

As agentic commerce accelerates, consumers will increasingly rely on AI-driven agents to inform, curate, and even execute purchasing decisions on their behalf. This shift fundamentally changes the rules of engagement. Retailers will not only be designing for human customers, but also for intelligent agents that evaluate price transparency, product data integrity, delivery reliability, security standards, and brand trust signals at machine speed.

Products, platforms, and channels will therefore need to be structured in ways that are machine-readable, interoperable, and trust-optimised, appealing as much to algorithms as to individuals.

By aligning seamless omnichannel journeys with governed data collaboration, clear digital identity frameworks, and resilient trust infrastructure, retail leaders can move beyond execution into architecture. In doing so, they will help define, not merely participate in, the next phase of the trusted digital economy.



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