



Region's Retailers Scoping AI & Big Data Analytics in Bid to Drive Personalized Customer Experiences

Dubai – Retailers across the Middle East and Africa spent \$1.95 billion on IT in 2019, according to the latest insights from International Data Corporation (IDC). The global technology research, consulting, and events firm forecasts this figure will reach \$2.04 billion this year and continue rising at a compound annual growth rate of 5.7% over the coming years to reach \$2.43 billion in 2023.

"The Middle East retail industry is going through a transition where the digital marketplace is gaining prominence," says Ranjit Rajan, IDC's associate vice president of research for the Middle East, Turkey, and Africa. "While the bigger players are directing their money and efforts towards building digital platforms, the market's smaller players are exploring new business models in partnership with digital pure plays.

"Regardless of the size or the type of marketplace, the focus is on providing a personalized customer experience that is enabled by data-driven processes and a cloud-based foundation. Technologies such as robotics, artificial intelligence, and big data analytics are becoming an integral part of the retail value chain –from personalized marketing and seamless digital or physical stores to warehouse and delivery automation."

With many consumers wary that organizations are collecting too much data about them online, IDC believes that 60% of major retailers worldwide will implement a consent-based approach over the next two years, with the aim of maximizing the value of contextualized customer journey personalization and automated conversations. Those retailers that fail to do so may find that they can only leverage anonymous and aggregated data, severely limiting their ability to deliver personalized customer experiences.

Enabling a digital commerce platform will also prove to be an essential step for driving commerce across both old and new business models. Indeed, IDC expects that by 2021 around 80% of retailers worldwide will have implemented such a platform. As a core component of these platforms, artificial intelligence will play a key role in optimizing daily operations and gathering insights for innovation, which in turn will drive significant supply-chain improvements and enable greater levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

These trends and their impact on retail supply chains will be discussed during a dedicated session that will take place at the upcoming **IDC Middle East CIO Summit 2020**. The annual event has

served as a beacon of ICT thought leadership across the region since 2008, and this year's edition will be hosted at Dubai's **Atlantis, The Palm** on **February 26-27** under the theme *'The Race to Reinvent: Connecting to Leaders to Empower Digital Transformation'*.

Combining informative presentations, interactive panel discussions, and dedicated focus groups, the IDC Middle East CIO Summit 2020 will provide more than 500 senior C-Suite executives from a broad range of industries with the expert guidance required to benchmark the digital transformation progress of their organizations. For more information about the event or to register your interest in attending, please visit www.idcciosummit.com/dubai or contact Sheila Manek at smanek@idc.com / +971 4 446 3154.

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For more information contact:

Sheila Manek
smanek@idc.com
+971 4 446 3154