

ANALYSIS

INNOVATION SPOTLIGHT: UAE FAST-TRACKING CHANGE

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In their latest special report highlighting how retailers are developing innovative solutions in response to this global crisis, AlixPartners focus on some outstanding examples of best practice in the UAE.

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BRINGING THE MALL INTO THE HOME

Faced with the reality of losing footfall, mall operators and retailers made quick swerves into fast-tracking their ecommerce and delivery capabilities. Mall operator **Majid Al Futtaim** (MAF) upgraded the **Carrefour UAE** portal, which had previously been on trial for almost six months, into an online marketplace. This allowed MAF tenants to continue reaching their customers by listing products on Carrefour's mobile app and website. Similarly, Emaar Malls had tenants not only list their inventory on popular ecommerce platforms Noon and Namshi but also utilize their superior distribution capabilities to get products into the hands of customers.

PRIORITISING ESSENTIALS FOR ALL

Most grocery retailers stayed open during the closures but had to adapt to significant changes in market dynamics. To respond to increased volumes of online shopping, **Carrefour** launched a click-and-collect service, allowing customers to place orders online and pick up their groceries from the stores. **LuLu Hypermarket** ramped up its digital offerings by also launching a new click-and-collect service as well as increasing self-checkout and drive-thru stations at stores to comply with social distancing requirements. Emaar's Noon ecommerce platform launched **nownow**, a new service that delivered groceries, medicines, pet supplies, and fresh meat products to customers in under 60 minutes.

ADAPTING TO THE NEW NORM

Some of the diversified conglomerates took action to redeploy their resources. MAF had more than 1,000 leisure, entertainment, and cinema employees reskill and join the company's Carrefour business on a temporary basis. Carrefour also collaborated with Dubai Taxi Corporation and transport operator Aramex to facilitate fast delivery of essential supplies to consumers through dedicated delivery vehicles. Luxury goods retailer **Chalhoub Group** pivoted its marketing to create videos demonstrating hygiene measures and hosting workshops on social media. With re-opening in mind, volunteers were also trained to provide safety tips and other information to returning shoppers.

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