YAMAMMI

GCC EDITION · NOV 2026



NEW REPORT

Creator Marketing

Guide to 2027 →

5 shifts reshaping creator marketing in the GCC, and what to do about each one.

2027

55%	52%	5	12
swayed by AI	swayed by influencers	shifts for 2027	moves to make

Data: NIQ 2026 Consumer Outlook · Field test: Yamammi AI Shelf Test, Dubai

ABOUT THIS REPORT

5 shifts reshaping creator marketing in the GCC. And what to do about each one.

We read the NIQ 2027 Consumer Outlook, one of the biggest yearly studies of how people shop. Then we tested what AI tells shoppers in Dubai. This guide explains what is changing, in plain words, with the numbers to prove it.

! The headline

SHOPPERS SWAYED BY AI

55%

say an AI suggestion has pushed them to buy a grocery or household product.

SHOPPERS SWAYED BY INFLUENCERS

52%

say the same about a creator or influencer. AI just moved ahead.

? Who this is for

Brand owners

Who want to know where their budget should go in 2027.

Marketing teams

Who brief creators and need content that sells, not just gets views.

Founders

Who want a simple plan they can start this week, without a big budget.

DATA	FIELD TEST	BY
NIQ 2026 Consumer Outlook, 21,000+ people in 31 countries	Yamammi AI Shelf Test, Dubai, November 2026	Yamammi, influencer marketing agency, Dubai

THE WHOLE REPORT IN ONE MINUTE

Five things are changing. Here they are.

If you only read one page, read this one. Each shift has one number you can quote.

01 **55%**

AI is the new shop shelf.

More people now get buying ideas from AI (55%) than from influencers (52%). If AI does not name you, many shoppers never see you.



02 **USD 23B**

The middle is getting squeezed.

Shoppers buy cheap or buy premium. Over USD 23 billion in sales moved away from "middle price" products in one year.



03 **34 vs 31**

"Worth it" beats "cheap".

More people pick on quality (34%) than on price (31%). They will pay, but only if they can see why.



04 **15.1%**

Health is in every basket.

"Is it healthy?" now matters almost as much as price (15.1% vs 15.3%) when people choose what to buy.



05 **79%**

People play it safe.

After all the research, 79% still go back to what they usually buy. Being the trusted, normal choice wins.



THE ONE THING TO REMEMBER

Creator content is no longer just for people. AI reads it too, before it tells people what to buy. Make content that proves you are worth it, and make it easy for both to find.

HOW TO READ THIS

Every shift has two parts. First, **what the data says**. Then, **what it means for creator marketing**, what we see in the GCC, and what to do. The word list is on page 17.

WHERE THE NUMBERS COME FROM

Survey and sales numbers are from NIQ (global, unless we say UAE or Saudi). The AI screenshots are our own test in Dubai, November 2026.

Shoppers ask AI first. Creators come second.

Imagine a shop where a robot helper stands at the door and hands you two products. You never walk down the aisle. That is where shopping is going.



1 What the data says

WHAT PUSHES PEOPLE TO BUY

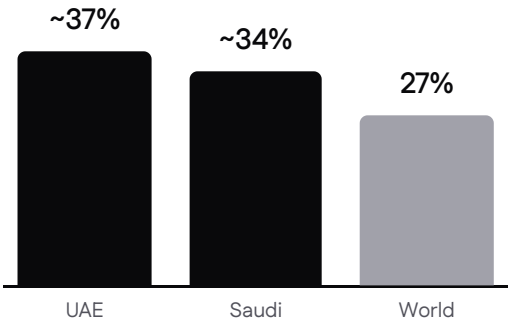
% of shoppers who are sometimes, often or always swayed by each source



Source: NIQ 2026 Consumer Outlook, global.

WHO ALREADY USES AI TO DECIDE

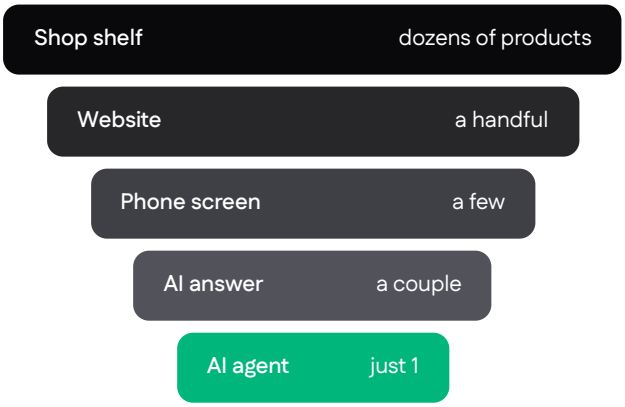
% who use AI tools to help decide what to buy



The UAE ranks **4th in the world**. People here are early. What happens elsewhere next year is already happening here.

Source: NIQ, figure 5.2. UAE and Saudi read from the chart, so rounded.

2 The shelf keeps shrinking



IN PLAIN WORDS

Soon, a computer helper may pick just one product for you. If you are not that one, you are invisible. NIQ says it simply: being seen is now as important as being in stock.

Source: NIQ Digital Shelf, figure 5.3.

We asked AI what to buy. It quoted Instagram reels.

In November 2026 we asked ChatGPT and Google's AI Mode the questions real Dubai shoppers ask. Here is what came back.

1 The results

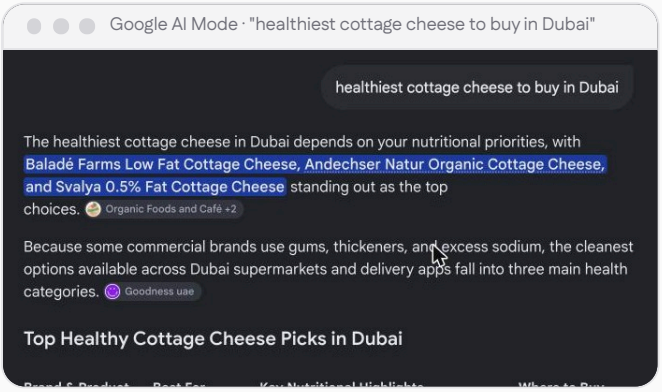
5 of 9
Google AI answers that quoted Instagram or creator content as a source

#1
where a local cottage cheese landed, backed by creator reels

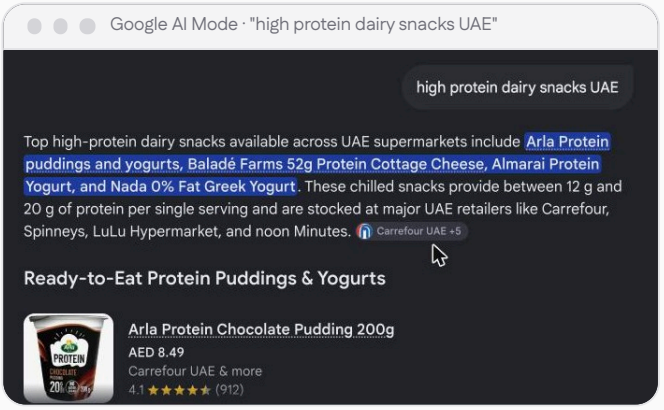
0 of 10
answers that named a big regional electronics retailer with UAE stores

1st
a premium brand ranked for "best", then ChatGPT called it "unnecessarily expensive"

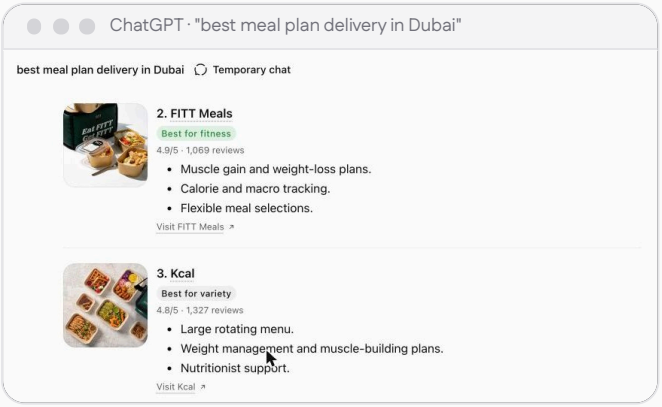
2 What the AI actually showed



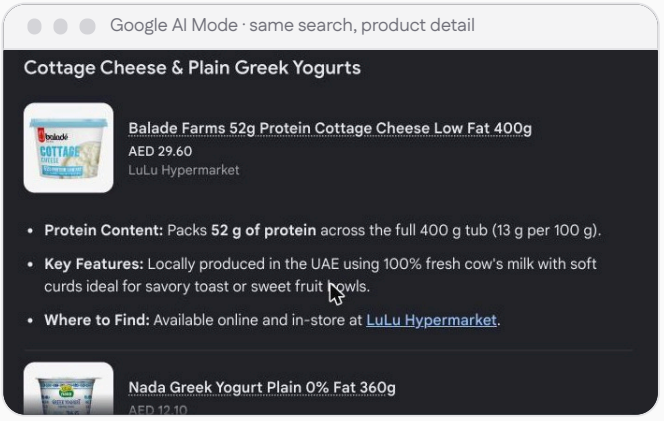
Google names its top 3. A local UAE brand is first. Most brands in the dairy aisle are not mentioned at all.



Four products make the list, with exact protein numbers and where to buy. AI loves clear facts.



ChatGPT gives a ranked list with a label ("Best for fitness") and review scores. Rank 5 might as well not exist.



The winning product shows price, protein per tub and the shop. The headline number (52g) is the same one creators said on camera.

Your content now has two readers. People and AI.

1 What it means for creator marketing

Being named beats being seen.

A reel with 500K views that nobody can find next month is gone. A reel AI quotes keeps working every time someone asks the question. The goal is not only views. It is being the name in the answer.

AI quotes what people say, not only what brands say.

In our test, Google leaned on Instagram reels, shop pages and local sites. Your own website is one voice. Creator videos, reviews and retailer listings are many voices. AI trusts the crowd.

Clear facts win.

The products AI picked all had a clear number (52g protein, AED 22 a meal), a place to buy (LuLu, Carrefour, noon) and a "best for" label. Videos that say these things out loud are easy for AI to use.

2 What we are seeing in the GCC

Shops

AI keeps naming UAE shops as sources: Carrefour UAE, Spinneys, LuLu, noon Minutes. A weak listing there hurts you twice.

Big ≠ safe

A big retailer with UAE stores was named in 0 of 10 answers. Strong stores do not mean strong AI presence.

Labels

AI hands out titles: "best for fitness", "best for variety", "best value". Pick the one you want to own and repeat it.

3 What to do

A

Own one question

Pick the question your best buyer asks, like "best meal plan for weight loss in Dubai". Build every brief around it.

Measure: is your name in the answer?

B

Give creators a "say it" line

Product name, one number and the city, said out loud and written in the caption. "52g protein, from LuLu, Dubai."

Measure: is the reel quoted as a source?

C

Fix your shop listings

Same name, price, size and facts on every retailer page and your own site. AI gets confused by mixed facts.

Measure: AI quotes the right price.

COMMON MISTAKE

Judging creator content only on views and likes, then forgetting it after the campaign.

DO THIS INSTEAD

Keep the best videos live, pinned and linked from your site. They keep feeding AI answers for months.

Cheap or premium. "Just okay" is losing.

Think of three lunch boxes: a cheap one, a normal one and a fancy one. More people now pick the cheap one or the fancy one. The normal one is left on the shelf.



1 What the data says

WHO GAINED AND WHO LOST (WORLD)

Change in sales share vs last year, percentage points

Cheap (discount)	+0.3
Middle (mainstream)	-1.0
Fancy (premium)	+0.6

SAUDI ARABIA, SAME IDEA, BIGGER

Cheap (discount)	+1.0
Middle (mainstream)	-2.5
Fancy (premium)	+1.5

Source: NIQ Retail Measurement, 52 weeks to June 2026.

MOVED AWAY FROM THE MIDDLE

USD 23B

in sales share, in one year, worldwide. Today the world splits 18% cheap, 43% middle, 40% premium.

67% If it is not clearly better, **I would rather save**.

56% If I spend more, I want something **clearly premium**.

55% A middle option needs **a clear reason** to be picked.

2 In plain words

"Pretty good for a fair price" is not a reason anymore. Shoppers want either "the best deal" or "the best one". If you are in the middle, you must show one clear reason, fast.

2.5x The middle is shrinking **2.5 times faster in Saudi Arabia** than in the world (-2.5 points vs -1.0). For GCC brands, picking a side is not a 2030 problem. It is a 2027 problem.

Every video needs one clear reason. Value or premium.

1 What it means for creator marketing

Middle brands need a sharper story.

If you sit in the middle, creators must show the one thing that makes you different. Fresher, faster, made here, lasts longer. One reason, not five.

Premium needs proof, not polish.

A nice-looking video does not prove a high price. Show the ingredient, the craft, the before and after, the expert. The why matters more than the look.

Value needs math, not shouting.

"Big sale" is noise. "AED 24 a meal, less than delivery" is a reason. Creators who do the math on camera make value easy to believe.

2 What we are seeing in the GCC



Splitting the price makes premium reachable. In our electronics campaign with Jarir, creators showed new laptops with a 4-month, 0% interest instalment plan right on screen. The premium product stayed premium. The monthly price made it feel possible.

Small creators can carry big results. In the same campaign, a creator with 7.3K followers reached 174K views. The right message beat the biggest follower count.

Clear lanes in food. AI sorted Dubai meal plans into "budget" (about AED 22 to 25 a meal) and "mid-range". Brands with a clear lane got a clear spot.

3 What to do

A

Pick your lane

Decide: value or premium. Write it in one line and put it at the top of every creator brief.

Example: a café's AED 25 lunch set.

B

Match creators to the lane

Premium: fewer creators with strong taste and trust. Value: many nano creators showing real daily use.

Example: 20 nano creators for a value pack.

C

Prove it in 5 seconds

The first 5 seconds show the reason. The rest of the video backs it up.

Example: a cleaning brand pours it on a real stain.

COMMON MISTAKE

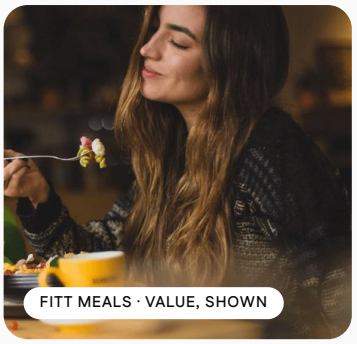
Trying to look premium and cheap in the same video. The shopper gets no clear reason at all.

DO THIS INSTEAD

One video, one lane, one reason. Test two versions and boost the one that sells.

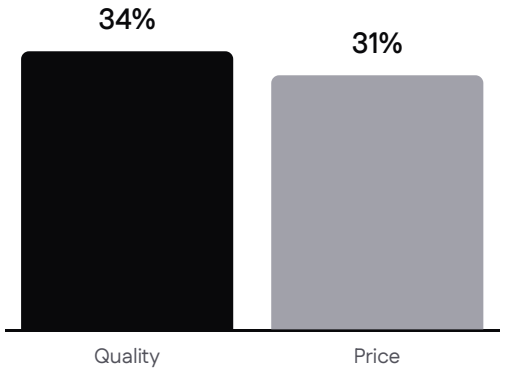
People still spend. They want to see why.

Asked what makes a buy feel worth it, more people said quality than price. But money is tight, so they cut the "nice extras" and keep the basics.



1 What the data says

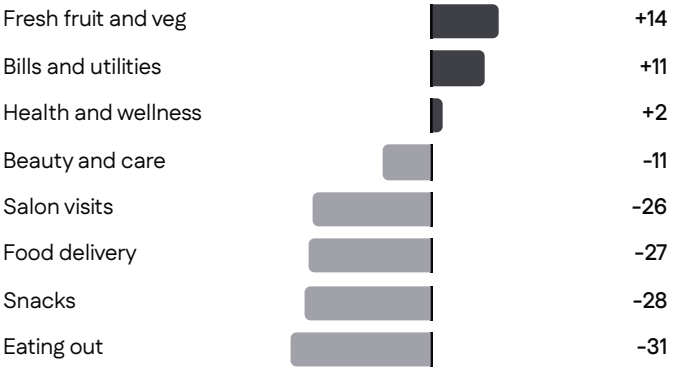
WHAT MAKES IT "WORTH IT"



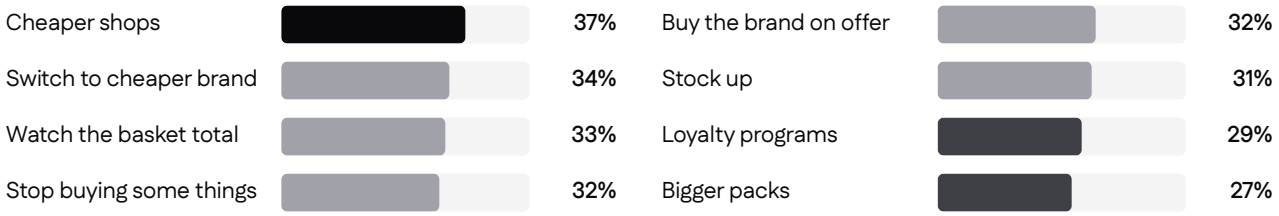
Source: NIQ 2026 Consumer Outlook, global.

WHAT PEOPLE PLAN TO SPEND MORE OR LESS ON

Net %: people spending more minus people spending less



2 How people save money now



IN PLAIN WORDS

People are not just hunting for discounts. They are building their own deal. Show them the math: price per meal, per use, per month.

Show the math. Creators are great at it.

1 What it means for creator marketing

"Treat" categories must sell a moment or a saving.

Eating out (-31), snacks (-28), food delivery (-27) and salons (-26) are the first things people cut. Content here must give a clear reason: a special occasion worth it, or a smarter way to save.

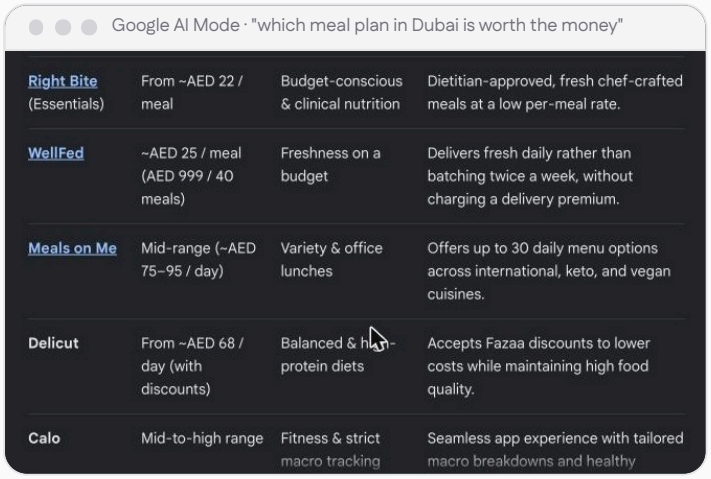
Cost per use is the new price tag.

AED 300 sounds like a lot. AED 10 a day for a month sounds fine. Creators can turn a big price into a small daily number in one sentence.

Fresh is the one thing people add.

Fresh fruit and veg is the biggest rise (+14). If your product is fresh, show it: the time it was made, the kitchen, the farm, the delivery.

2 What we are seeing in the GCC



Ask AI "is it worth it?" and it answers in AED per meal and per day.

AI answers value questions with price per meal. Google ranked Dubai meal plans by cost per meal (from about AED 22) and by what each one is "best for". Brands that publish this clearly get placed.

One exact customer beats a wide net. For FITT Meals we cast 8 creators to one exact buyer and made 16 videos. Clear fit makes "worth it" easy to see.

Delivery is being replaced, not just cut. When people cut delivery, a meal plan or a home kit can become the smart switch. Say that out loud.

3 What to do

A

Put a math line in every brief

Per meal, per use, per month, next to the other option.

"AED 24 a meal vs AED 45 for delivery."

B

Reward people who stay

29% use loyalty schemes and 27% buy bigger packs. Give creator codes that unlock them.

Example: code unlocks the 3-month price.

C

Frame it as a switch

Show what your product replaces and how much that saves.

"I swapped 3 deliveries a week for this."

COMMON MISTAKE

Making discounts the only message. It trains people to wait for the next sale.

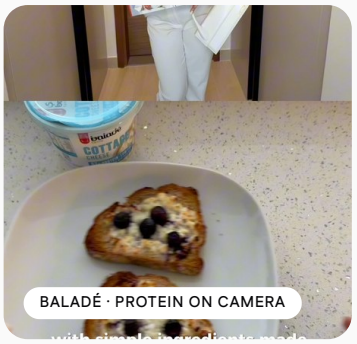
DO THIS INSTEAD

Sell the value at full price. Use offers to reward loyalty, not to get attention.

SHIFT 04 · HEALTH IS IN EVERY BASKET

"Is it healthy?" is now almost as big as "how much?"

Health used to be its own aisle. Now people ask it about everything: snacks, drinks, skincare, even cleaning products.



1 What the data says

WHAT MATTERS MOST WHEN CHOOSING

Share of importance, %



WHO WILL PAY MORE, AND FOR WHAT

% who would pay more, by how comfortable people feel with money



2 Three numbers to know

11%

of people worldwide already use GLP-1 weight-loss medicines. They eat less and choose more carefully.

+14

net plan to spend more on fresh fruit and veg, the biggest rise of any category.

2 in 3

comfortable shoppers pay more for honest labels. Only about 1 in 3 who struggle do.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Show what is inside. Close-ups of the label, the protein number, the kitchen, the farm. A real expert saying it is worth more than a nice photo.

Source for all numbers on this page: NIQ 2026 Consumer Outlook, global.

Say the number. "Healthy" alone means nothing.

1 What it means for creator marketing

Health talk is spreading to every category.

Healthy (15.1) is almost level with price (15.3), and "clean and safe" (13.6) is close behind. Even a cleaning spray or a face cream now gets asked "is it safe?".

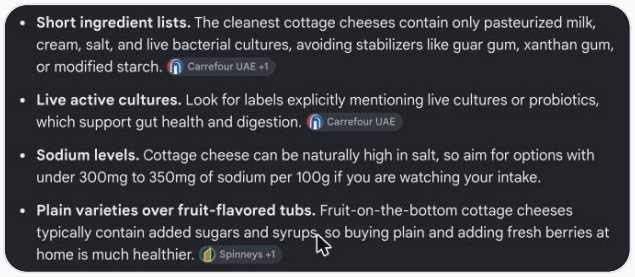
Proof beats claims.

The people with money to spend pay more for clear labels (65%) and expert backing (62%). Show the label, the lab, the number. Let a real expert explain it.

Experts need the right permit.

In the UAE, creators who promote products need a UAE Media Council advertiser permit, since 1 February 2026. That includes gifted products. Health claims get checked closely. Use licensed creators.

2 What we are seeing in the GCC



AI judges health with a checklist. When we asked for the healthiest cottage cheese in Dubai, Google checked four things: a short ingredient list, live cultures, sodium under about 300 to 350mg per 100g, and plain over flavoured.

Numbers get picked. The products named had exact protein numbers (12g to 20g a serving, 52g a tub). If your video and label give the number, AI can repeat it.

3 What to do

A

Open on the label

Start the video with the number, not the logo.

"20g protein, no added sugar."

B

Add one expert

Pair lifestyle creators with one licensed dietitian, doctor or trainer who explains the why.

Example: one snack swap a week.

C

Speak to smaller appetites

With GLP-1 use at 11%, smaller portions, high protein and "less but better" become selling points.

Example: a mini pack with full protein.

COMMON MISTAKE

Vague words like "healthy", "clean" or "natural" with nothing to back them up.

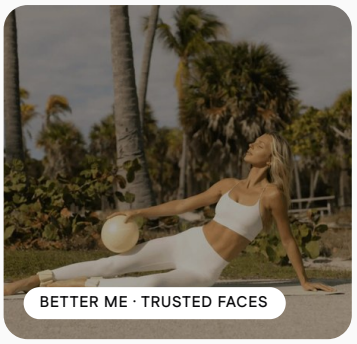
DO THIS INSTEAD

One clear number, shown on the label, said by the creator, written in the caption.

SHIFT 05 · PEOPLE PLAY IT SAFE

Life feels shaky. So people stick to what they trust.

When money feels unsure, people stop taking risks. They try fewer new things and go back to the brands they already know.



1 What the data says

34%
feel worse off with money than a year ago

77%
of those who struggle blame the cost of living

31%
say food prices are their top worry, more than anything else

79%
go back to their usual choice after doing research

PEOPLE TAKE FEWER RISKS THAN IN 2024



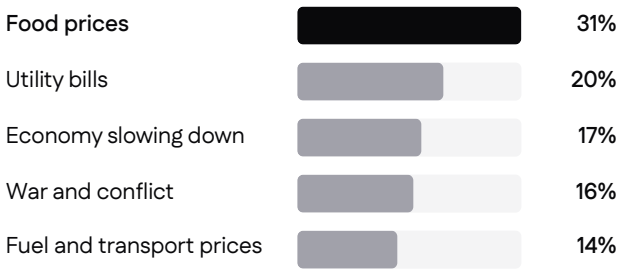
Source: NIQ 2026 Consumer Outlook vs earlier studies.

WHO PEOPLE TRUST TO RECOMMEND



The two strongest voices are habit and people you know. A creator works best when they feel like a friend who really uses the product.

2 What people worry about most



Everyday prices worry people most. Food prices are the top worry worldwide. Utility bills jumped from 4th to 2nd place in one year. Fuel and transport jumped from 11th to 5th.

What this means: people feel every small price change. Brands that look steady and fair get trusted. Brands that look risky get skipped.

Source: NIQ 2026 Consumer Outlook, global, July 2026.

3 In plain words

New brands must look safe to try. Old brands must keep reminding people why they are the safe choice. Real customers, families and long-term creators beat one-off posts.

Be the safe choice. Then stay in sight.

1 What it means for creator marketing

One-off posts do not build trust.

79% go back to their usual choice. To become the usual choice, people need to see you again and again, from the same faces they already follow.

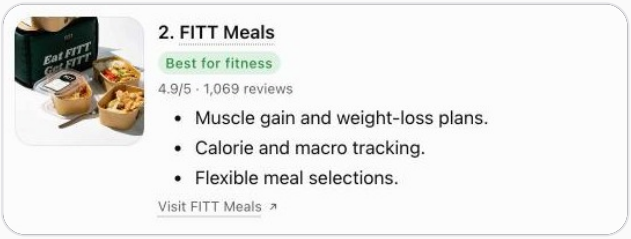
Creators should feel like friends, not ads.

Family and friends (76%) sway people far more than creators online (52%). The closer a creator feels to a friend who really uses it, the more they work.

Reviews now work twice.

They help people decide, and AI shows them next to your name. Star ratings and review counts are now part of your shelf.

2 What we are seeing in the GCC



AI shows trust signals. ChatGPT listed Dubai meal plans with star ratings (4.9/5, 4.8/5), review counts (over 1,000 each) and a "best for" label. The safe-looking choice gets the top spot.

Long programs build habit. For Banqy, a UAE mortgage platform, we run 22 creators across a two-phase campaign from 2026 to 2027. The same faces explain the same product, month after month, until it feels normal.

3 What to do

A

Same faces, all year

Work with creators for 12 months, so the audience sees a habit, not an ad.

Example: 8 creators, 2 posts a month each.

B

Lower the risk

Trial packs, a first-week price or a money-back promise, said clearly on camera.

"Try a week. Don't like it? You pay nothing."

C

Let customers talk

Real families and repeat buyers sharing why they came back. Ask for reviews that name the product.

Measure: reviews and repeat orders.

COMMON MISTAKE

A new creator every month, with a new message every time. Nobody remembers who said what.

DO THIS INSTEAD

A small, steady squad with one clear message, boosted with ads on the videos that sell.

WHAT BUSINESSES CAN DO

12 moves for 2027. With real examples.

Pick the moves that match your biggest problem. Small brands can start with 1, 5 and 11. Big brands should do all 12.

01 **Ask AI about yourself every month**
Type 10 questions your buyers ask into ChatGPT and Google AI Mode. Write down who gets named. Example: a meal plan brand checks "best meal plan for weight loss in Dubai".

02 **Make reels AI can read**
Say the product name, the number and the city out loud, and put them in the caption. Example: "52g protein, at LuLu, Dubai".

03 **Publish a simple facts page**
Price, size, ingredients, where to buy, in a clear table. Example: an electronics shop lists specs and instalment plans per laptop.

04 **Get on the lists AI reads**
Retailer pages, review sites, "best of Dubai" round-ups, local media. Example: ask happy customers for Google reviews that name the product.

05 **Pick a side: value or premium**
Then say it in every video. Example: a café's AED 25 lunch set, or a signature AED 45 drink.

06 **Prove it in 5 seconds**
One proof point a creator can show fast. Example: a cleaning brand pours it on a real stain in one take.

07 **Show the math**
Price per meal, per use or per month, next to the other option. Example: "AED 24 a meal vs AED 45 for delivery".

08 **Reward people who stay**
29% use loyalty schemes and 27% buy bigger packs. Example: creator codes that unlock a 3-month plan price.

09 **Show what is inside**
Label close-ups, kitchen and farm tours. Example: a dairy brand films the morning milk run.

10 **Use real experts**
Dietitians, doctors, trainers, with the right licence. Example: a dietitian explains one snack swap a week.

11 **Keep the same creators all year**
A face people see every month feels like a friend. Example: 8 creators posting twice a month for 12 months.

12 **Measure sales, not likes**
Codes, links and store data per creator. Boost only what sells. Example: put ad money behind the top 3 videos each month.

→ Where to start, by industry

FOOD AND DRINK	RETAIL AND TECH	BEAUTY AND HEALTH	SERVICES AND TELECOM
Moves 2, 7, 9, 10	Moves 1, 3, 4, 8	Moves 5, 6, 9, 10	Moves 1, 7, 11, 12

START THIS WEEK

Your first 30 days. No big budget needed.

1 Week 1 to 2: look

- [ ] Write the 10 questions your buyers ask before they buy.
- [ ] Ask ChatGPT and Google AI Mode each one. Screenshot the answers.
- [ ] Count: how many answers name you? Who gets named instead?
- [ ] Note which sources the AI quotes: reels, reviews, shops, news.

2 Week 3 to 4: act

- [ ] Fix your facts page: price, size, what is inside, where to buy.
- [ ] Brief 3 to 5 creators to say the name, the number and the city.
- [ ] Pick your side: value or premium. Say it the same way everywhere.
- [ ] Ask the AI again in 30 days and compare.

WANT US TO DO THE CHECK FOR YOU?

Free AI Shelf check. We ask the AI 10 buyer questions about your category and show you who wins.

You get a short report with screenshots, like the ones in this guide.

YOUR SCORECARD

CHECK	DAY 1	DAY 30
AI answers that name you (of 10)	__	__
Creator reels quoted as a source	__	__
Shop listings with the same facts	__	__
New reviews that name the product	__	__
Sales from creator codes	__	__

3 After 90 days, you should see

More
AI answers that name you, out of your 10 buyer questions.

Quoted
your creator reels and reviews showing up as AI sources.

Sales
tracked per creator, so you boost the videos that sell.

WORDS IN THIS REPORT

Hard words, made simple. So anyone can follow.

AI shelf	The short list of products an AI names when you ask it what to buy.
AI agent	An AI that can choose and buy for you, not just suggest.
Google AI Mode	Google's chat-style search. It writes an answer instead of showing a list of links.
Source	A page or video the AI used to write its answer. It shows as a small link next to the text.
Creator	A person who makes videos or posts that others follow. Also called an influencer.
Nano, micro creator	Small creators. Nano: 1K to 10K followers. Micro: 10K to 50K followers.
Mainstream	The middle price: not the cheapest, not the fanciest.
Premium	The top price, sold as the best one.
Discount	The cheapest price, sold as the best deal.
Percentage point	The gap between two percentages. Going from 43% to 42% is 1 point.
Net %	People spending more minus people spending less.
Cost per use	The price divided by how many times you use it. An AED 300 plan for 30 days is AED 10 a day.
GLP-1	A type of medicine that makes people feel full sooner, often used for weight loss.
Advertiser permit	The UAE licence creators need to promote products, paid or gifted.
Boost	Paying to show a creator's video to more people as an ad.

METHOD, SOURCES AND HOW TO QUOTE US

Where every number comes from. Check it yourself.

THE DATA

Survey and sales data come from **NIQ, 2026 Consumer Outlook: Guide to 2027**. Survey numbers are global unless we say UAE or Saudi. Price-tier numbers come from NIQ Global Retail Measurement, 26 markets, 52 weeks to 14 June 2026, in US dollars. UAE and Saudi AI-use numbers are read from NIQ's chart, so we show them as "about".

All analysis, plain-language explanations and recommendations are Yamammi's own. NIQ did not write or review this guide.

OUR AI SHELF TEST

Run by Yamammi in Dubai, November 2026. We asked real shopper questions in ChatGPT (temporary chat, not personalised) and Google AI Mode (google.ae, English). We recorded which brands were named, in what order, and which sources the AI quoted.

AI answers change often. Your results may differ. Brand results outside the screenshots are kept private.

HOW TO QUOTE THIS GUIDE

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Yamammi (2026). Creator Marketing: Guide to 2027. 5 shifts reshaping creator marketing in the GCC.
Dubai: Yamammi. Data: NIQ 2026 Consumer Outlook. yamammi.com
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Short version for a post: "55% of shoppers are now swayed by AI, vs 52% by influencers (NIQ, via Yamammi's Guide to 2027)."



TALK TO US

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Book a strategy call. We run your free AI Shelf check, go through what it shows, and plan the fix together.

500+	50K+	4.9/5	5.0/5
campaigns run	creators activated	Trustpilot, 100+ reviews	Google, 200+ reviews