

STRATEGIC CASE STUDY · GCC MARKET ENTRY

Dubai or Riyadh?

The 2026 GCC entry decision.

UAE · DUBAI

\$16–18B FMCG market

\$1,700 per-capita spend · 88% expat · 87% modern trade

KSA · RIYADH

\$176B retail · \$38B F&B

35M consumers · 60%+ under 35 · 46% modern trade

Two markets. One strategy is wrong. *Most brands sequence them backwards — and pay for it for years.*



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FULL 24-SLIDE BRIEFING · LOCKED

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The math: KSA gives you twice the volume. UAE gives you twice the per-buyer margin.

Stop comparing total market size. Compare the model.



01 - TAM

KSA F&B alone (\$38B) is more than 2x total UAE FMCG. Volume case settles in Riyadh.

02 - PER-BUYER ECONOMICS

UAE buyer is worth ~1.7x a KSA buyer at the till. Premium case settles in Dubai.

03 - GROWTH

Both 4.5–5%+ real GDP. Both top-quartile globally. Growth isn't the differentiator — *shape of growth* is.

04 - TOURIST MULTIPLIER

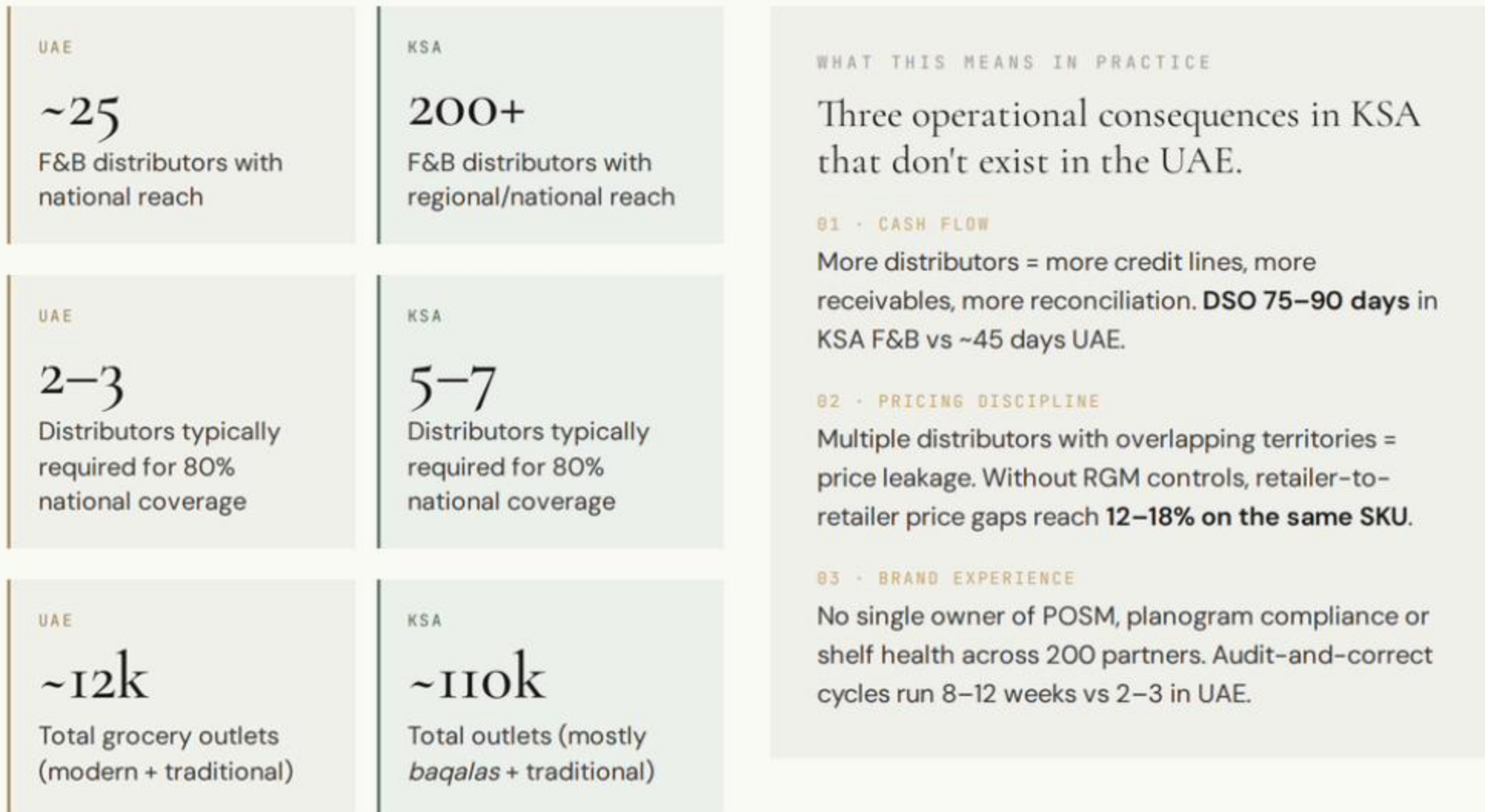
Dubai 25M tourist target · 2030 · adds ~\$3–4B uplift to UAE FMCG that KSA cannot replicate at scale.

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Fragmentation isn't a footnote. It's the single biggest reason brands miss their KSA forecast.

"F&B distribution in KSA is highly fragmented" — McKinsey, 2022. We translated that into operating reality.



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The shelf you're trying to land on doesn't exist in both markets.

UAE is built. KSA is being built. The same SKU launch needs two completely different commercial models.

— UAE

Mature · Western format



🛒 TOP RETAILERS

Carrefour (175) · Lulu (50+) · Spinneys (60) · Choithrams (45) · Union Coop · Nesto · Viva

📦 E-COMMERCE

27% CAGR 2021–23 · Quick commerce: Talabat, Noon · Online grocery 5%+ of FMCG

🏠 REALITY

A new SKU lands in 4–6 retailer chains. Saturation = listing fees high, slot scarcity real.

— KSA

Hybrid · expanding



🛒 TOP RETAILERS

Panda (350+) · Danube · Othaim (390+) · Tamimi · BinDawood · LuLu KSA · Carrefour KSA

📦 E-COMMERCE

25% CAGR · Discounters (Kazyon/Dukan): 13% CAGR, fastest in MENA

🏠 REALITY

Half the market still runs through 100k+ *baqalas*. Distributor coverage decides reach.

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Same region. Two completely different shoppers.

Population numbers are decoys. The real difference is in who walks down the aisle, what they look for, and who they're buying for.

UAE CONSUMER · ID CARD

The expat mosaic.

COMPOSITION

88% expat, 200+ nationalities.
Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi (largest), Filipino, Egyptian, Western residents.

TENURE

Average residency **3–7 years**. Transient consumption, low generational loyalty.

HEALTH AWARENESS

51% read nutrition labels. 50%+ across all age groups want low-sugar / low-fat / natural ingredients.

PREMIUM SIGNAL

Dubai = **30% of ME luxury market**. Women influence 80% of Dubai purchases.

PRICING POSTURE

80% worried about jobs (post-2022). 50%+ cutting back. Trading down ↑15%.

KSA CONSUMER · ID CARD

The young national majority.

COMPOSITION

~70% Saudi national. **60%+ under 35**.
Population path: 35M → 40M by 2030.

BUYING UNIT

Family-led purchase decisions. **Larger basket sizes**. Multi-generational households still dominate outside major metros.

DIGITAL POSTURE

90%+ smartphone penetration. Highest TikTok/Instagram engagement in MENA. Influencer-led discovery.

FEMALE CONSUMER RISE

Vision 2030 has lifted female workforce participation from 17% (2017) → **35%+ (2024)**. Reshaping basket priorities.

PRICING POSTURE

72% job-anxious. 50%+ trading down. Strongest local-pride signals: prefer "Made in Saudi" where credible.

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Anatomy of a \$1 of net price — what reaches your P&L after the channel takes its cut.

Indicative breakdown of trade investment + cost-to-serve as % of net price for a typical FMCG mid-tier brand. Derived from Proccess interim mandate financials and McKinsey's Gulf retailer productivity studies.



UNLOCK THE COST BREAKDOWN

Available in the full 24-slide briefing

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Seven mistakes we see repeatedly. Every one is a year of margin you don't get back.

Patterns from twelve+ interim mandates across UAE and KSA, anonymised.

- 01 Treating the GCC as one P&L line.
One regional MD, one budget, one roadmap. The two markets demand two operating models.
- 02 Picking the distributor before the strategy.
Big-name distributors get pitched first. Half the time they own the competing category. Diligence-first, signature-second.
- 03 Underweighting Saudization cost.
Year-1 P&L modelled at expat-equivalent salaries. By year 2, the Nitaqat band uplift adds ~15% to 6–8 points to opex.


UNLOCK MISTAKES 4-7
Available in the full 24-slide briefing

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You've seen the surface.

The full briefing covers *what to actually do.*

- 01 The four entry archetypes — and which one fits your portfolio
- 02 Two regulatory operating systems compared, line by line
- 03 The cost-to-serve breakdown — KSA is +6 points vs UAE
- 04 Talent operating model: why the team you build in Dubai cannot run KSA
- 05 The 6-question decision framework — settle "Dubai or Riyadh first?" in under an hour
- 06 Mistakes 4 through 7 — the ones that quietly cost you years of margin

HOW TO ACCESS THE FULL 24 SLIDES

"GCC briefing" — DM, comment under the post, or email Dominique at dsilvarelli@proccessconsulting.com for the access link and password.

Free for FMCG operators, founders and investors. No mailing list. No funnel.