



Pivoting to Digital:

The Transformation of B2B E-Commerce in the Middle East

May 2021



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A White Paper on the findings of
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Introduction

Catalysing the growth of B2B e-commerce

The first authoritative study on the B2B e-commerce sector in the Middle East

This white paper follows the success of Tradeling's business model, which encouraged us to study the marketplace further, especially given the lack of informed data on B2B e-commerce. While there are several studies on consumer e-commerce, online B2B trade in the region has gained little attention from researchers, primarily because it has been fragmented in its delivery and continuity.



The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has caused many businesses and individuals to view e-commerce in a new, more important light. The unprecedented challenges that the global pandemic brought on the world, underpinned by lockdowns and quarantines, necessitated a new model of retail, one that is driven online.

Whatever held back the growth in e-commerce for nearly two decades, especially in the Middle East region, has disappeared. At the height of the pandemic, customers had little choice but to resort to online shopping and with it, floodgates of business opportunities opened, most obviously in consumer retail.

According to the Middle East Retailers Forum, the region's e-commerce sales is set to nearly double from US\$26.9 billion in 2018 to US\$48.6 billion in 2022.

But is the B2B e-commerce sector faring as well or better? Why, in the first place, has the B2B digital marketplace been a laggard compared to B2C, failing to gain the traction it needed in a region that has a strong geographic, demographic, trade-related and technological advantage.

Tradeling, in fact, was born from this question: a disruptive idea to build a robust B2B digital marketplace that the region lacked.

In 2020 February, when we marked our soft-launch at the Gulfood expo in Dubai, the world was a different place. We were upbeat and confident of our value proposition. And then came the pandemic, drastically restricting the two core verticals we had built – Food, Beverages & Hospitality and Office Supplies.

The crossroads before us was to stall our launch or take a decisive leap with a new strategic direction.

In what was a test of our agility and flexibility – which continues to be our differentiating strength – we focused on the Health & Wellness vertical, offering access to global supply of high-demand items such as protective masks or gloves, and soon added Logistics as a fourth vertical. Today, we have 13 verticals – and growing.

We made real impact in the shortest lead-time: Instead of chasing for a share of the market and a bigger 'slice of the pie', as consumer e-retail focuses on, we created 'a whole new pie' – a new market, the potential of which was hitherto underleveraged. As a market creator and disruptor, we are today the hyper-growing digital marketplace for the B2B sector, a white space that we have captured with confidence.

This white paper follows the success of our business model, which encouraged us to study the marketplace further, especially given the lack of informed data on B2B e-commerce. While there are several studies on consumer e-commerce, online B2B trade in the region has gained little attention from researchers, primarily because it has been fragmented in its delivery and continuity.

Tradeling's success in creating a decisive market for the B2B e-commerce sector makes us not just a thought leader in this space but also a responsible citizen committed to strengthening it.

The insights that we have gained from this study, which we freely share with the industry and the public, aim to further channel the growth of B2B e-commerce in a region where trade has been the mainstay of the economy for centuries.

We are reassured by the finding of this survey that B2B e-commerce has helped mitigate the impact of the pandemic and encouraged by the confidence of the respondents on market recovery.

For our first study, we have focused on two of our core markets – which are also the largest economies in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region – the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). We intend to expand the geographic scope in our upcoming studies.

In addition to the top five findings that are detailed in this white paper we also plan to introduce a first-of-its-kind Business Confidence Index, which will be an annual platform by Tradeling to present the market dynamics of the Middle East to the world. From the findings of the survey this year, we benchmark the Tradeling Business Confidence in the region at 53 points currently.

In turn, the Business Confidence Index splits into two parts, measuring current confidence, and future confidence. Already, we see a very clear difference in the level of confidence in the current economy, at 40 points, compared to the future economy, which is at 64 points.

So, while there is most likely room for things to improve from the current position, it is clear that UAE and Saudi Arabian businesses expect things to improve, which I am excited to see reflected through our businesses and in this index next year.

The findings of this study are intended to serve as a roadmap for governments and businesses as they navigate the new reality. It also serves as one of the first authoritative studies on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on trade and business confidence.

At Tradeling, we are honoured to present this study, which reiterates our commitment to working together to build a strong trade sector that will continue to be one of the key contributors to the economy.

Marius Ciavola
CEO, Tradeling

Methodology

Tradeling commissioned PSB Middle East, the wholly-owned research subsidiary of ASDA'A BCW, the region's leading Public Relations consultancy, for this study.

The aim was to provide an informative and unique perspective on the UAE and Saudi Arabian business community and how they are using B2B e-commerce.

PSB conducted an online survey covering 500 business decision-makers in the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

The sample size (500) was evenly split between the UAE and Saudi Arabia (250 each). Of the respondents, 384 were in managerial levels and 116 in Managing Director or higher positions. Nearly half of the businesses (247) employed less than 100 employees and the rest (253) had over 100 employees.

The interviews were conducted in Arabic and English from January 7 to January 13, 2021. The margin of error for the total sample is 4.4 per cent and larger for sub-groups.

Numbers may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.





 **Top 5 Findings**

The top findings of the survey, one of the first authoritative studies on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on trade and business confidence



1

Business community

Businesses expect to rebound strongly, with greater investment and higher employment

2

Growth industries

E-commerce and technology are set to outpace other sectors of the economy in the coming years



E-commerce

Businesses expect the use of e-commerce to become universal

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

B2B e-commerce offers SMEs an opportunity to expand and diversify

COVID-19

Greater use of B2B e-commerce has helped mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the private sector



Business Community

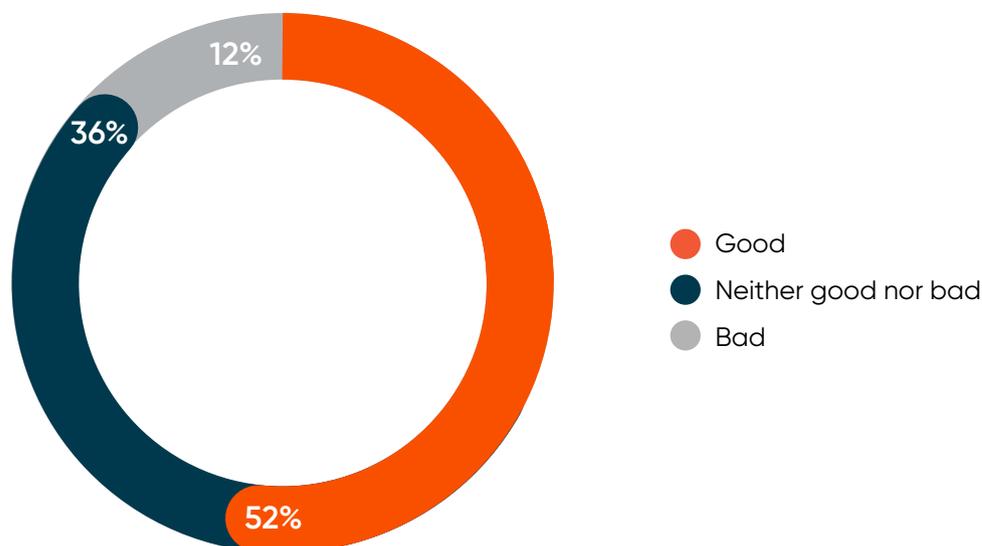
Businesses expect to rebound strongly, with greater investment and higher employment



Around half of businesses currently view conditions positively



'Would you say that business conditions in [UAE/ Saudi Arabia] are:' currently..



The year of the pandemic, as 2020 will henceforth be known, had an unprecedented impact on the business community. Recovering from the financial crisis of 2007/08, the region's retail landscape had weathered the oil price volatility that followed and was finding a gallop when the COVID-19 crisis hit.

The retail sector was badly hurt. A study on the retail landscape in April 2020 reported that 75 per cent of retailers in the UAE took a 'major negative impact' and 12 per cent did not see a positive recovery for the next 12 months. Some retail majors in the region took a hit of over 95 per cent in revenue in just two months.

The challenge was compounded by the extreme oil price volatility around the same time that affected government budgets and diluted liquidity levels and consumer spending. Business confidence was at an all-time low.

Evaluating the market sentiment, nearly a year after the pandemic, our top finding is that 'Businesses expect to rebound strongly, with greater investment and higher employment.'

Asked specifically their view on business conditions in the country, more than half (52 per cent) said 'business conditions are good', highlighting the return to a more positive market sentiment. Positivity about the current market condition is highest in Saudi Arabia, especially among business-to-consumer companies and more senior employees.

In the UAE, while 45 per cent said the existing business condition is good, 41 per cent said it is 'neither good nor bad' and 14 per cent said the market continues to be bad. In Saudi Arabia, only 9 per cent said the business condition is bad now while 60 per cent have a positive outlook and the rest (31 per cent) said the situation is 'neither good nor bad'.

When asked specifically to business-to-business (B2B) customers in both the UAE and Saudi Arabia, half of all respondents (50 per cent) said the market condition is good and only 11 per cent see the situation as bad. Business-to-consumer (B2C) enterprises are more confident of the current situation with more than two-thirds (69 per cent) saying the market is now good compared to 13 per cent who said the business condition is bad, and the rest being neutral.

C-suite leadership is more upbeat about current market condition with 64 per cent of the respondents, who are in Managing Director or higher levels, stating the business condition is good now compared to only 9 per cent who said the situation is bad. At a managerial level, nearly half (49 per cent) share a similar level of positivity.

Most respondents, especially in the UAE, are optimistic that business conditions will significantly improve a year from now, with over three-quarters (78 per cent) in the country sharing their optimism on the business environment improving, compared to nearly two-third (68 per cent) in Saudi Arabia. Notably, one in ten (10 per cent) respondents in Saudi Arabia said 'business conditions a year from now will be worse' compared to only 4 per cent in the UAE.

The positive outlook reflects in more businesses expecting to hire further employees as well as increasing their business investment. More than one-third (43 per cent) of all respondents said they expect the number of employees in their business to increase in the next year, compared to just about one in five (21 per cent) stating their staff strength is likely to decrease and the rest (36 per cent) stating it will remain the same.

Similarly, when asked about their expectations on investment in their business over the next year, more than half (53 per cent) said it would increase, compared to only 32 per cent who said investment levels will remain the same and 15 per cent saying it will decrease.

In a key finding on the investment landscape for the year, digital infrastructure ranked as the top-most priority among respondents in both the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Nearly two-third (63 per cent) of UAE respondents and half of (50 per cent) Saudi businesses said their business will increase investment in digital infrastructure in the coming 12 months.

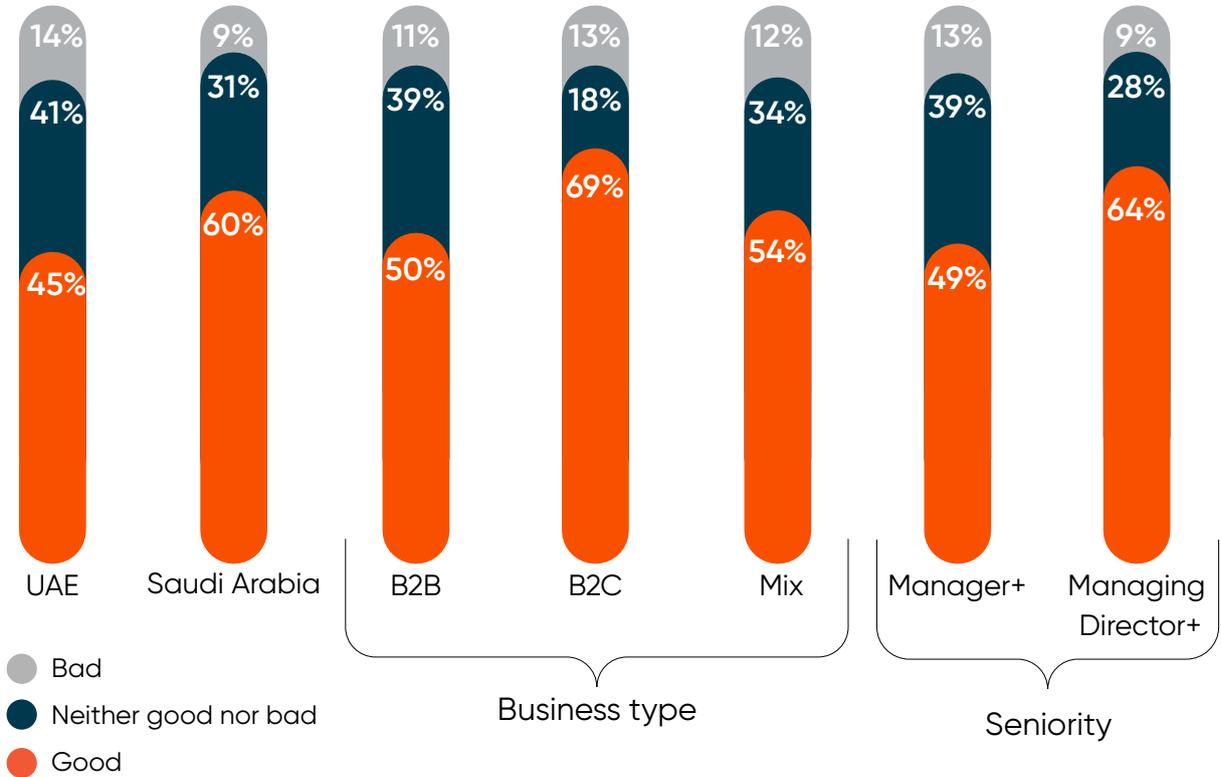
The other areas where they see increased investment are processes and efficiency (54 per cent in the UAE and 45 per cent in Saudi Arabia), employee training (42 and 43 per cent), additional employees (42 and 37 per cent), and machinery (28 and 40 per cent). Respondents foresee the least investment in offices and workspace at 22 per cent in the UAE and 33 per cent in Saudi Arabia.



Positivity about current conditions is highest in Saudi Arabia, among B2C companies and more senior employees



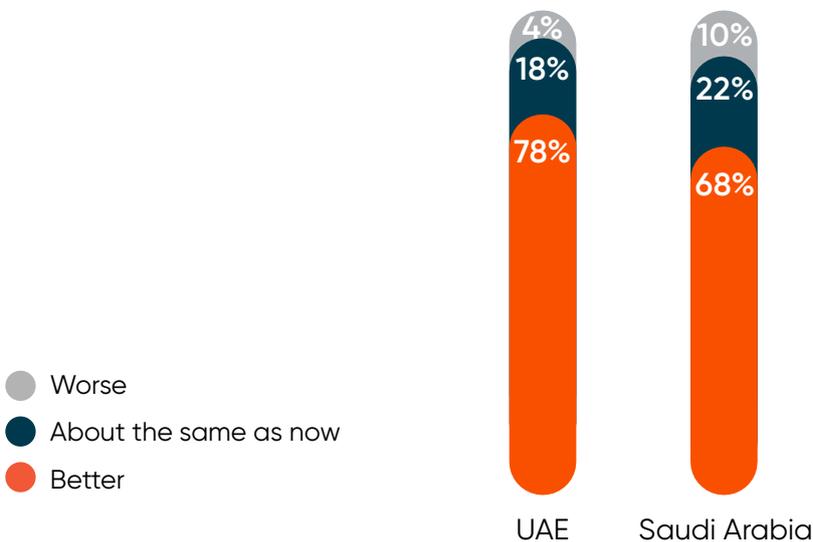
'Would you say that business conditions in [UAE/ Saudi Arabia] are:' currently...



Most are optimistic that business conditions will significantly improve, especially in the UAE

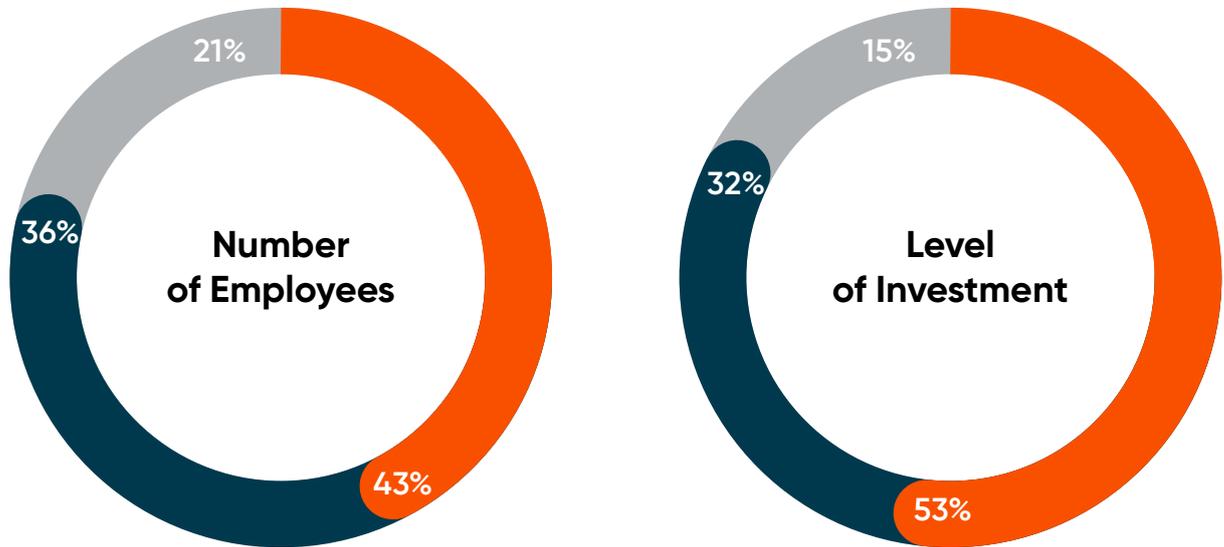


'Now looking ahead, do you think business conditions in [UAE/ Saudi Arabia] a year from now will be...'



Two in five businesses intend to increase headcount, while over half will increase business investment

'Looking ahead over the next year, do you expect the (number of employees/ level of investment) in your business to...'

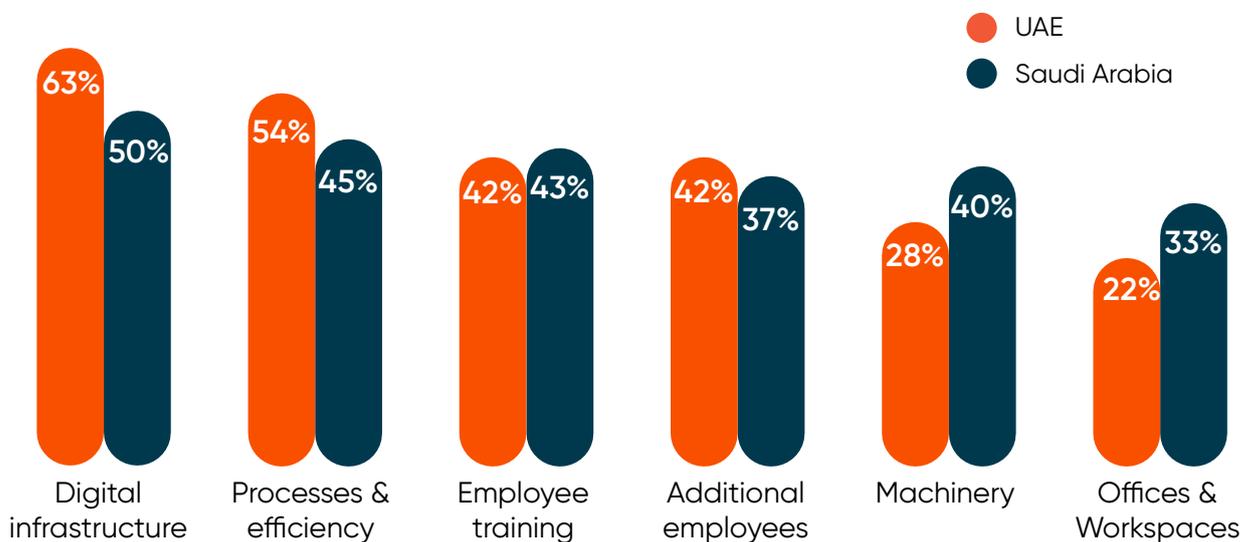


- Increase
- Remain the same
- Decrease

Over half of businesses expect to invest more in digital infrastructure over the next year

'Thinking about each of the following areas of your business, do you expect your business to increase or decrease investment in 2021 compared to previous years?'

Showing % selecting 'increase'



2

Growth Industries

E-commerce and technology are set to outpace other sectors of the economy in the coming years

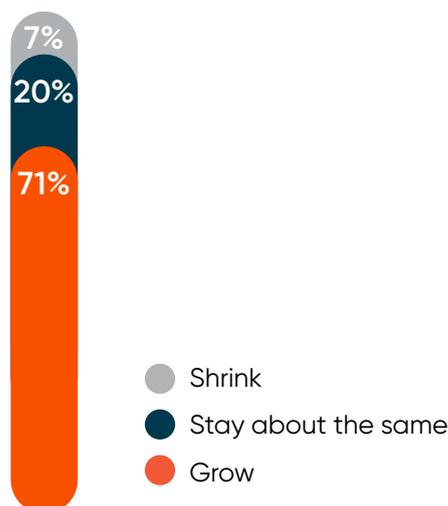




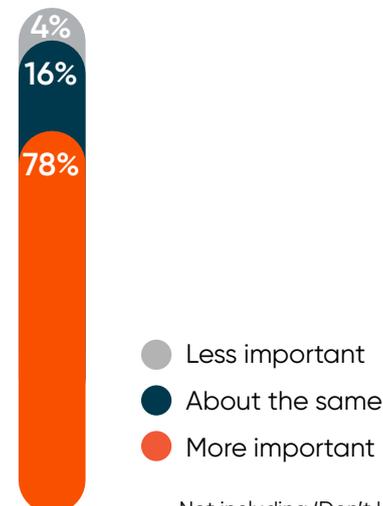
Businesses see a strong outlook for e-commerce in the medium and long-term



'Do you think e-commerce will grow, shrink, or stay the same size in 2021 compared to 2020?'



'Do you think that e-commerce will be a more important, less important, or the same part of [UAE/ Saudi Arabia] economy in the next 5 years?'



Not including 'Don't know'

With business confidence on the rise following the pandemic, businesses are increasingly leveraging the digital opportunity – both in business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) trade.

They see a strong outlook for e-commerce in the medium and long-term, building further on the gains achieved in recent months, as enterprises pivoted to a digital-first model to engage with their customers.

When asked 'do you think e-commerce will grow, shrink or stay the same size in 2021 compared to 2020', a majority – 71 per cent said it will grow, while only 7 per cent believed it will shrink and the rest (20 per cent) said the sector will remain the same. The sentiment echoed when asked about how they perceive the importance of e-commerce in the next five years.

While more than three-quarters (78 per cent) of respondents said e-commerce will become more important, only 4 per cent felt it would have lesser importance and 16 per cent said its importance will remain unchanged – neither more nor less than now.

Technology and e-commerce ranked high in specific business sectors that would assume greater significance in the next five years.

In the UAE, 86 per cent of businesses feel technology will assume greater significance followed by e-commerce at 84 per cent,

while both sectors are perceived to grow in importance in equal measure by Saudi respondents at 73 per cent each.

Other core growth areas ranked by UAE businesses are transport/logistics (60 per cent), tourism/hospitality (64 per cent), aviation (57 per cent), retail (55 per cent) and oil & gas (47 per cent). In Saudi, apart from technology and e-commerce, respondents said transport/logistics will assume the largest importance, voted by 63 per cent of the respondents, followed by tourism/hospitality (55 per cent). Aviation and oil & gas were ranked equally by Saudi respondents at 54 per cent followed by retail at 50 per cent.

The choice of these sectors makes for interesting insight. Businesses are more confident that the sectors more affected by the pandemic – such as tourism, transport, aviation and retail will bounce back, and the oil & gas sector continues to be perceived as a strong driver of the economy, with more than half the respondents stating it will assume more importance in the coming five years.

Respondents said industries more likely to be impacted by new technology in the future are those which use new technology more intensively.

For example, e-commerce and technology are more likely to be impacted by new technology in the future than oil & gas and retail.

These two sectors are also seen to be less important to the economy in the next five years compared to e-commerce or technology businesses.

Respondents also expect technology to play a larger role in the 'traditional' sectors of tourism/hospitality, which underlines the increasing adoption by the sectoral players on digital engagement with customers.

Artificial intelligence is seen as the most important technology impacting business over the next five years.

When asked which technology will significantly change business over the next five years, nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) cited Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning. Specific to B2B e-commerce, 56 per cent of all respondents see AI as a game-changer.

Other technologies that business executives expect to transform businesses in the coming years are cloud computing/mobile computing, robotics and virtual currency (all chosen by 44 per cent of the respondents) followed by the Internet of Things (43 per cent), big data and data analytics/modelling (39 per cent), Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality (38 per cent), 3D printing (37 per cent), drones (27 per cent), quantum computing (26 per cent) and blockchain (25 per cent).

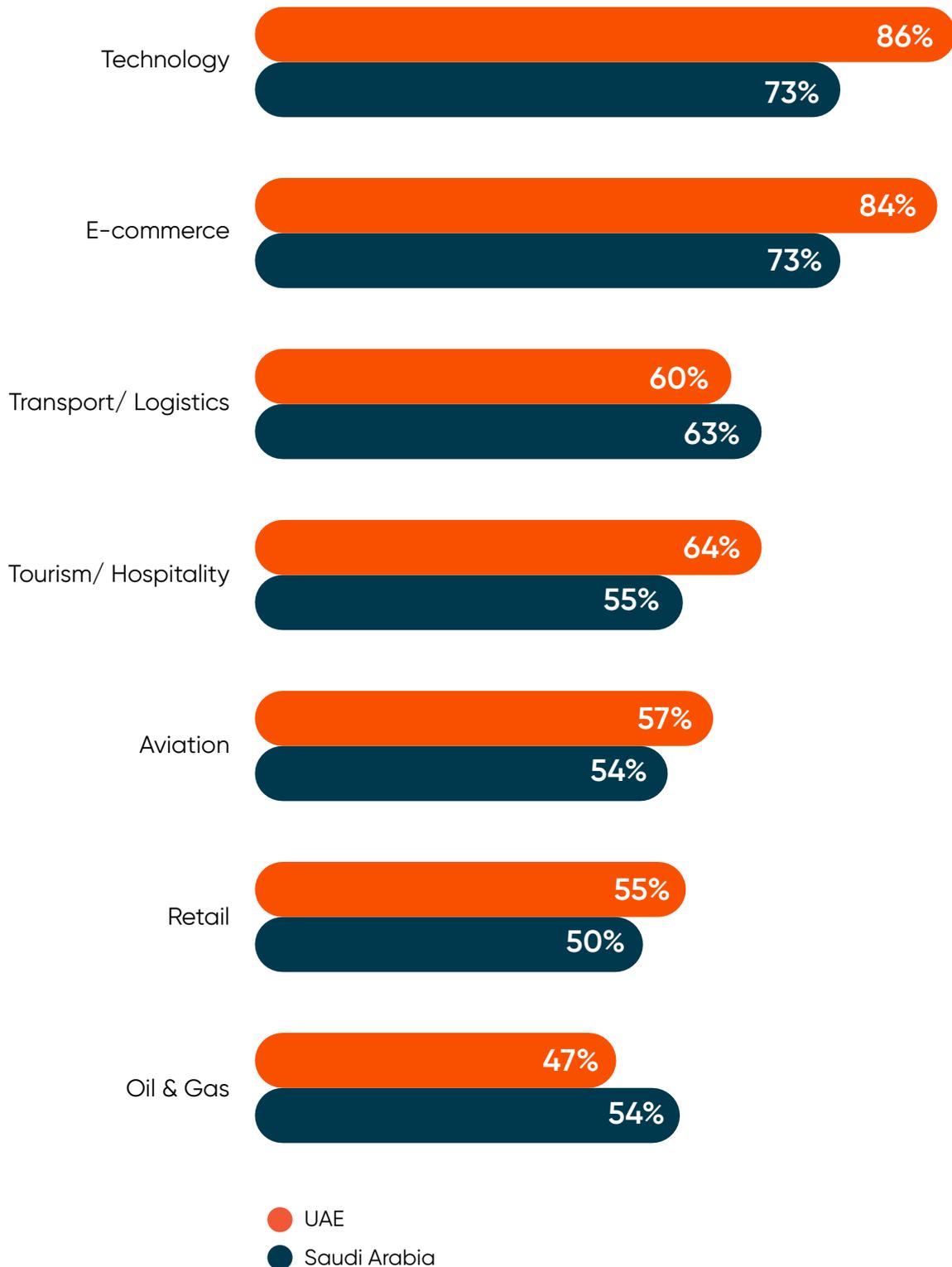


Technology and e-commerce are singled out as becoming more important over the next five years



'Thinking about each of the following sectors, do you think that each industry will be a more important, less important, or the same part of [UAE/ Saudi Arabia] economy in the next 5 years?'

Showing % selecting 'More important'

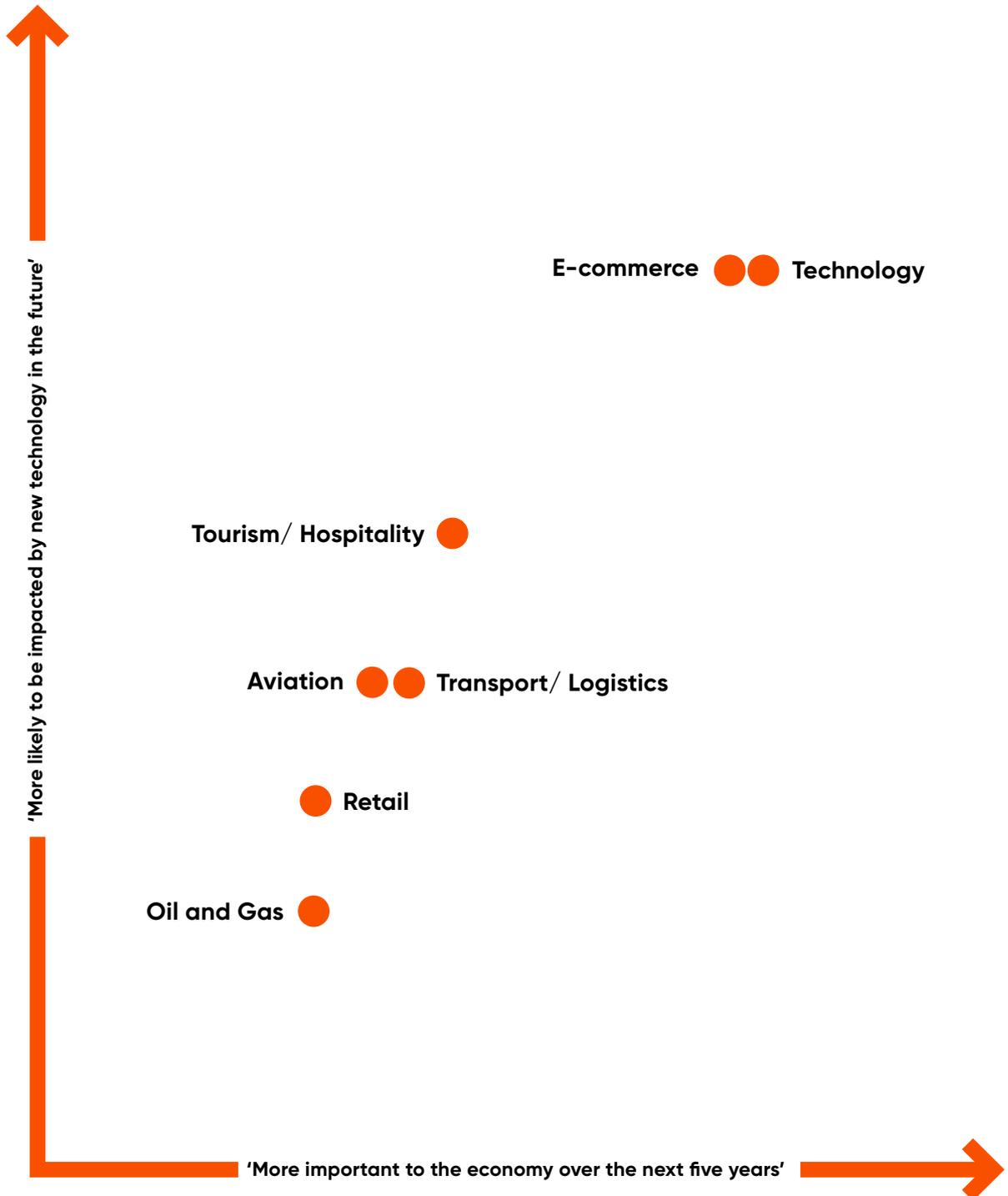




There is a clear connection between an industry's use of technology and its greater role in the economy of the future

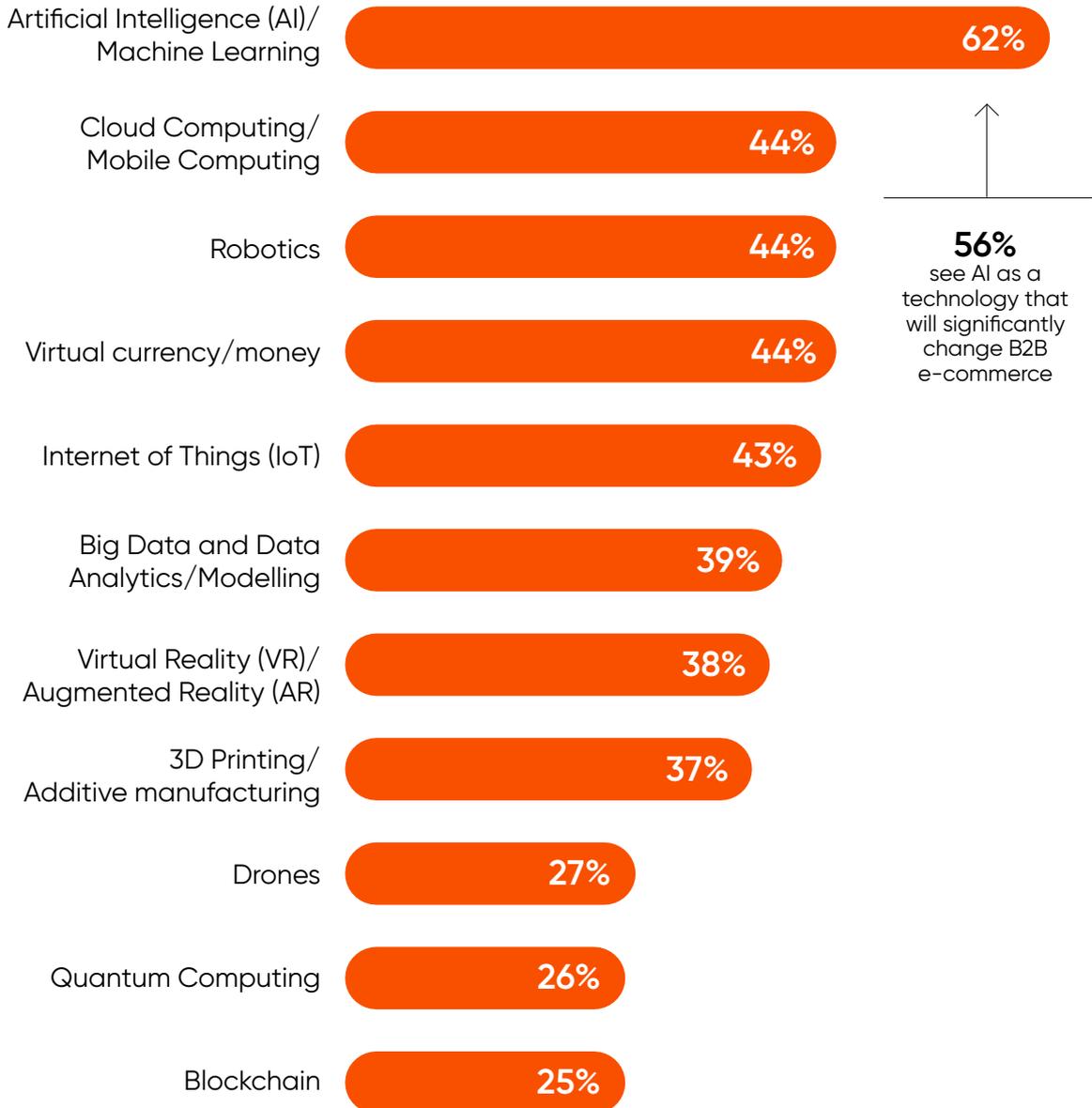


'Comparing industries becoming more important and the role of technology in each'



Artificial intelligence is seen as the most important technology impacting business over the next five years

‘Of the following technologies, which do you think will significantly change businesses over the next 5 years? Please select as many as apply’

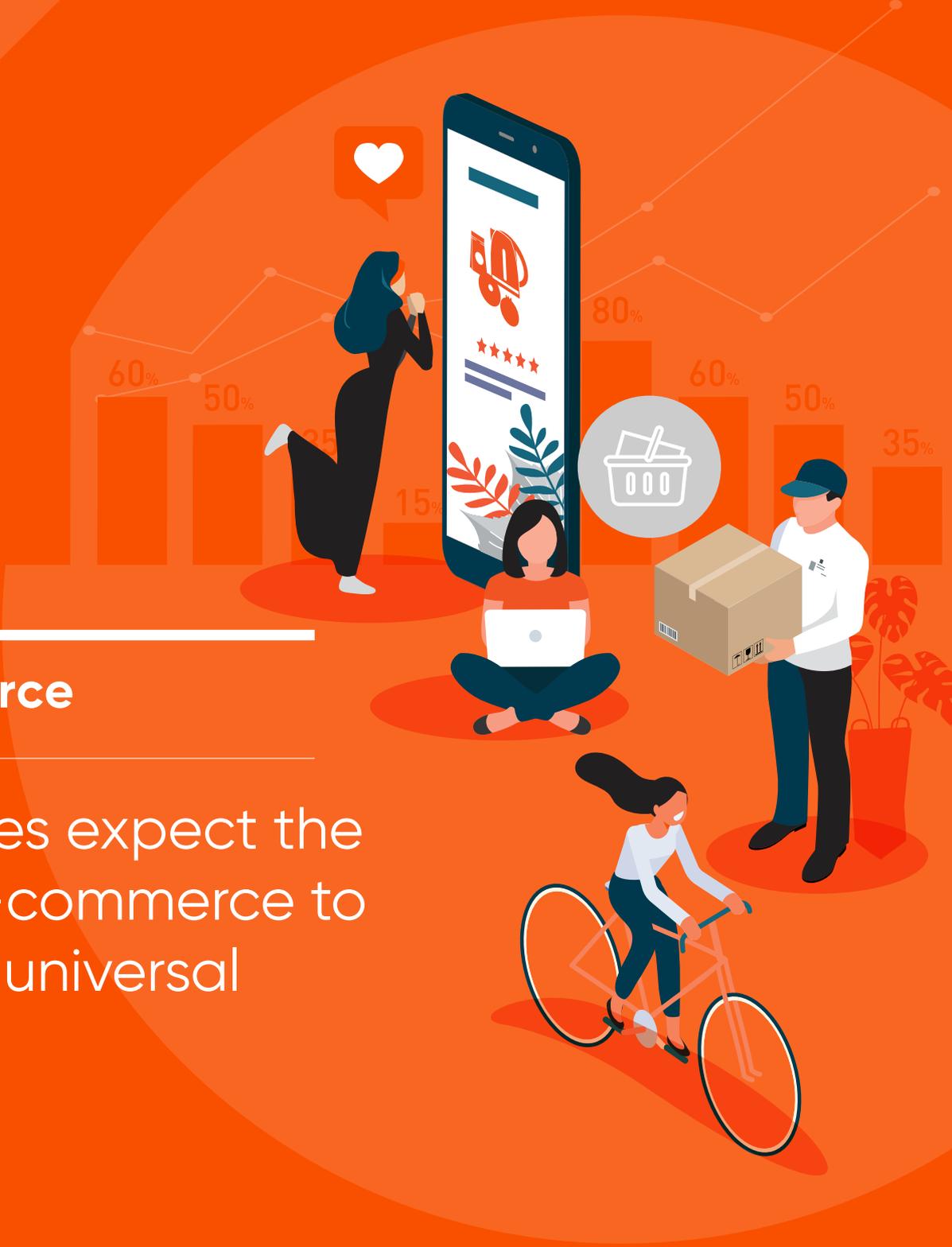




3

E-commerce

Businesses expect the use of e-commerce to become universal



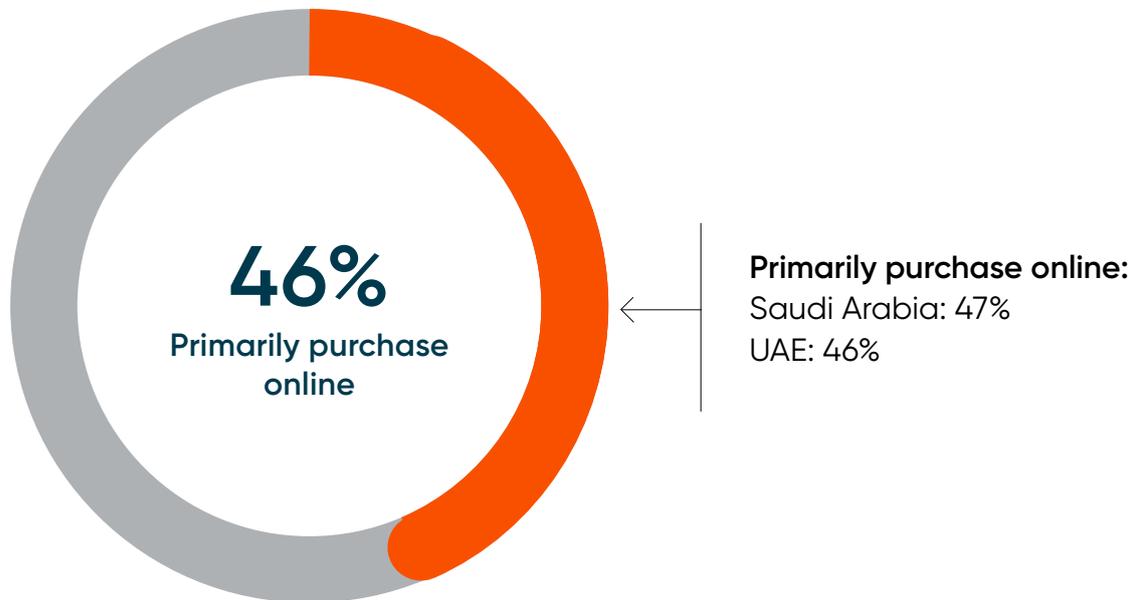


Just under a half of companies are purchasing most of their supplies online



'Which of the following best describes the supplies purchased for your business?'

Showing % selecting 'I primarily purchase supplies online'



E-commerce is increasingly becoming a preferred platform for purchasing business supplies among UAE and Saudi businesses. Nearly half (46 per cent) of all respondents said they primarily purchase online, a similar level in both countries.

Nearly two-fifths (40 per cent) of all respondents also use digital marketplaces most or all of the time when purchasing supplies. While one in ten (10 per cent) executives said they use online marketplaces for all their orders, 30 per cent said most of their purchases are made digitally and 31 per cent resort to B2B e-commerce about one- to three-quarters of the time. Further, 19 per cent said their use of online marketplaces for supplies forms less than one-quarter of the total, and 7 per cent said they never use online marketplaces. This shows the potential for digital marketplaces to drive B2B trade in the region, especially as businesses show an increasing inclination towards adopting e-commerce.

In fact, more than four-fifths (82 per cent) of all respondents think businesses will use more B2B e-commerce eventually. Respondents in Managing Director or higher ranks are more confident of the shift to B2B e-commerce at 87 per cent while 80 per cent of managers too share the sentiment.

One of the challenges in driving B2B e-commerce will be the need to strengthen online payments, as many businesses still use physical payments for supplies. More than two-thirds (68 per cent) of all respondents make physical payments such as cash or cheque always (by over one in ten - 12 per cent), mostly (30 per cent) or for some orders (26 per cent), while only 6 per cent never use physical payments and 24 per cent use cash/cheque only for supplies less than a quarter of the time.

There is a clear opportunity for B2B e-commerce as many businesses have not purchased most categories of products online. More than one-third (38 per cent) of respondents said they never purchase automobiles online.

Other least purchased supplies online include construction materials (35 per cent), machinery and building materials (31 per cent), stationery and office supplies (27 per cent), home, garden & furniture (27 per cent), food & beverage and health & wellness (25 per cent each), sports (20 per cent), fashion & beauty (19 per cent) and electronics & computing (18 per cent).

This shows that businesses are yet to tap the B2B e-commerce model, even in several fast-growing sectors such as food & beverage and health & wellness.

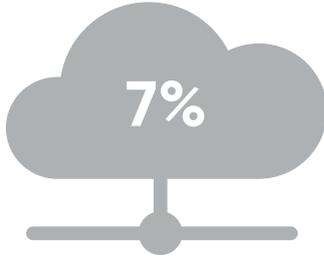


Two-fifths of businesses use online marketplaces most or all of the time



'Please indicate what proportion of your orders for supplies fit the following criteria:'

'Use online marketplaces (choosing from multiple individual suppliers in one place) to order supplies'



No orders

Never use online marketplaces to order supplies



Few orders

Use online marketplaces to order supplies less than a quarter of the time



Some orders

Use online marketplaces to order supplies between one- and three-quarters of the time



Most orders

Use online marketplaces to order supplies more than three quarters of the time



All orders

Use online marketplaces to order supplies all of the time

Excluding those who answered 'don't know'



Many businesses are still using physical payments to pay for supplies



'Please indicate what proportion of your orders for supplies fit the following criteria:'

'Use physical payments, such as cash or cheque, to pay for the supplies for our business'



No orders

Never use physical payments to pay for supplies



Few orders

Use physical payments to pay for supplies less than a quarter of the time



Some orders

Use physical payments to pay for supplies between one- and three-quarters of the time



Most orders

Use physical payments to pay for supplies more than three quarters of the time



All orders

Use physical payments to pay for supplies all of the time

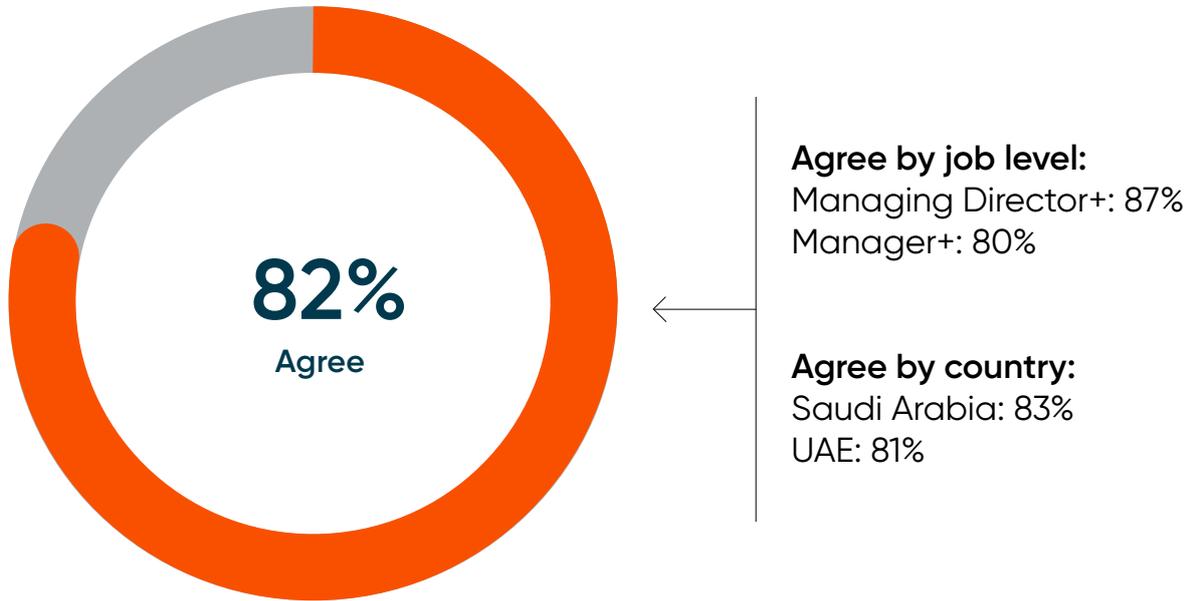
Excluding those who answered 'don't know'



More than four-fifths think all businesses will use B2B e-commerce eventually



'Businesses in [UAE/ Saudi Arabia] will all use B2B e-commerce eventually'

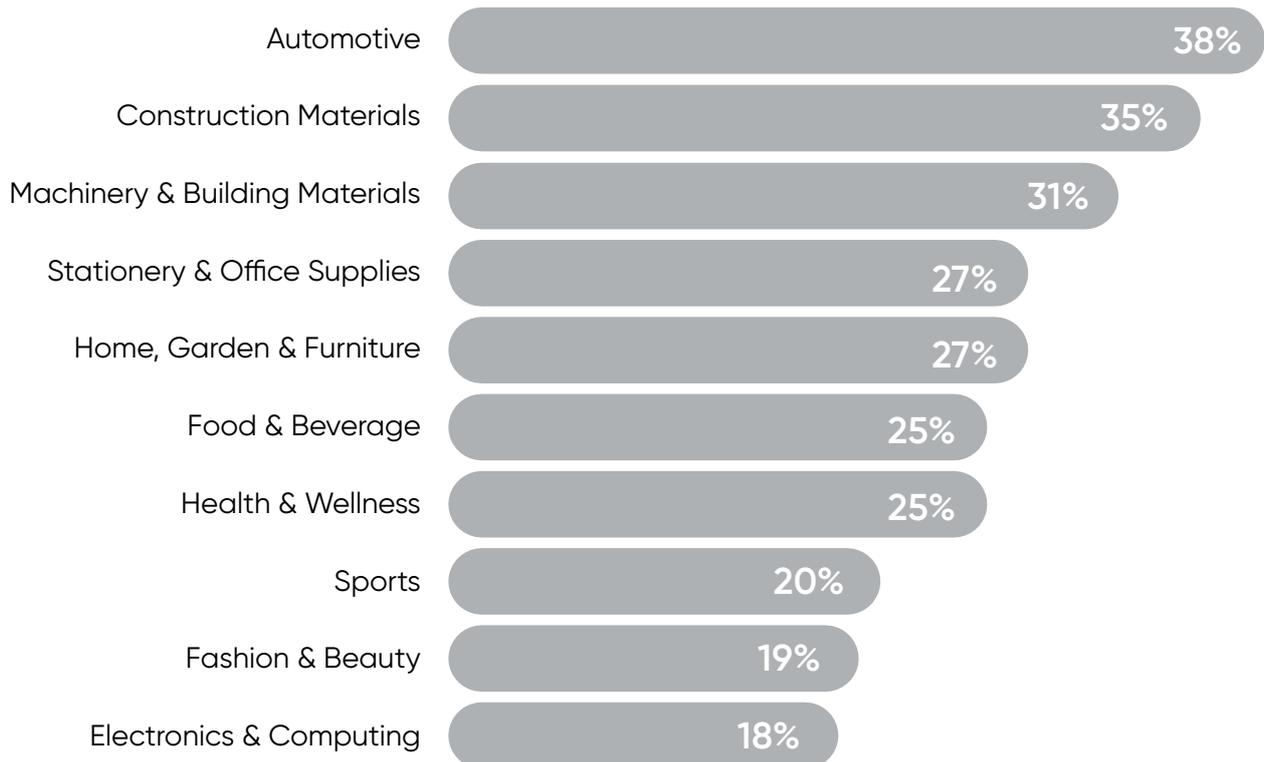


Automotive and construction businesses are least likely to have purchased their supplies online



'To the best of your knowledge, which of the following forms of supplies has your business purchased online?'

Showing % selecting: 'No, we never purchase this form of supplies online'





4



Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

B2B e-commerce offers SMEs an opportunity to expand and diversify

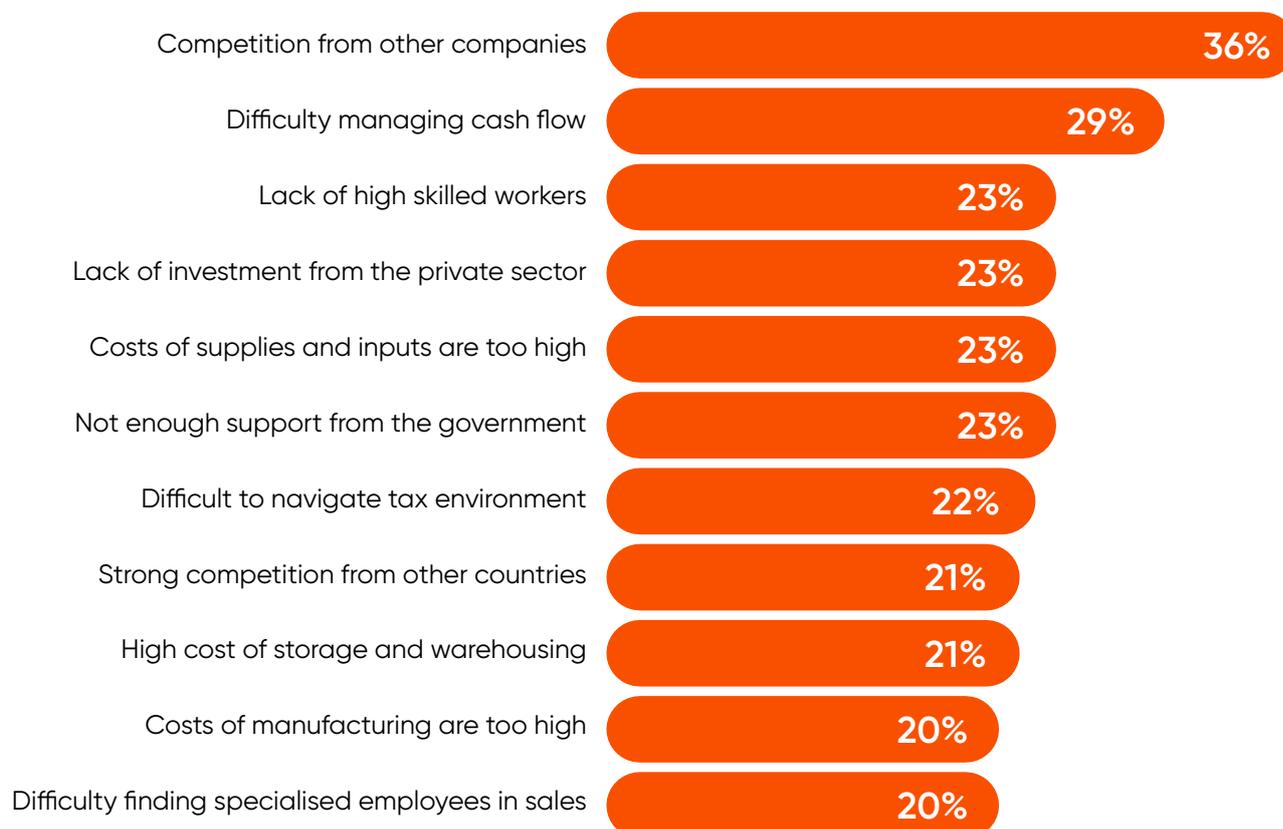


SMEs highlight a range of challenges, including cash flow, costs of inputs and high costs of warehousing that can be mitigated through the use of B2B e-commerce



'What are the main challenges facing private sector organisations such as yours? Please select as many that apply'

Showing among companies with fewer than 100 employees



Regional governments are investing significantly in boosting the small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs), a sector that accounts for 53 per cent of UAE's gross domestic product (GDP) and 20 per cent of Saudi Arabia's GDP.

When asked of businesses that had an employee size of less than 100, they outlined a number of challenges, several of which can be mitigated through B2B e-commerce as Tradeling has demonstrated in the past months.

More than one-third (36 per cent) of respondents with less than 100 employees said competition from other companies is their most important challenge. Nearly one-third (29 per cent) said the difficulty in managing cash flow is a key difficulty while nearly one-quarter (23 per cent each) cited lack of high-skilled workers, lack of investment from the private sector and cost of supplies and inputs being too high as factors that make the business environment difficult.

While 23 per cent of businesses said they do not receive enough support from the government, 22 per cent identified difficulties in navigating the tax environment and 21 per cent said strong competition from other countries are challenges.

Over one-fifth (21 per cent) observed that the high cost of storage and manufacturing is challenging while 20 per cent each said the high cost of manufacturing and difficulty finding specialised employees in sales are obstacles for their growth.

Purchasing supplies raises a number of concerns for SMEs, including challenges around sourcing and availability. Among top concerns by respondents with an employee size of less than 100 are 'not being able to choose between suppliers/merchants' and 'multiple and complicated deliveries' (57 per cent) each; 'not being able to find the right products or supplies when needed' (56 per cent) each; 'being able to easily access products and supplies from across the world' (54 per cent) 'multiple channels of contact' (53 per cent) and 'multiple and complicated invoicing' (51 per cent).

More than half (51 per cent) also said they are very or somewhat concerned about 'onboarding new and reliable international suppliers' – also shared by 57 per cent of businesses with more than 100 employees. High costs of storage and warehousing and access to foreign markets are the two challenges businesses feel that B2B e-commerce is best placed to solve.

Tradeling has been focused on addressing some of these challenges such as managing cash flow as well as the cost of supplies and storage/warehousing. It offers a revolving credit facility for buyers to support business recovery as well as the PayLater initiative that frees up liquidity for customers as they get 60 days to pay the invoice with no deposit and quick approvals. Tradeling also launched Tradeling Smart Freight, augmenting B2B e-commerce with real-time freight procurement via Freightos.com.

Businesses are optimistic that B2B e-commerce will allow a more scalable and diverse range of SMEs to emerge from the region. A strong majority, 83 per cent of all respondents, agreed to the statement that 'B2B e-commerce will help local SMEs scale by finding new customers across the region and globally' – a sentiment shared equally by Saudi and UAE businesses.

An overwhelming 85 per cent of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the statement that 'B2B e-commerce will allow a more diverse range of SMEs to emerge'. The positive outlook is stronger among UAE respondents (88 per cent) compared to 82 per cent in Saudi Arabia.

Purchasing supplies raises a number of concerns for SMEs, including challenges around sourcing and availability

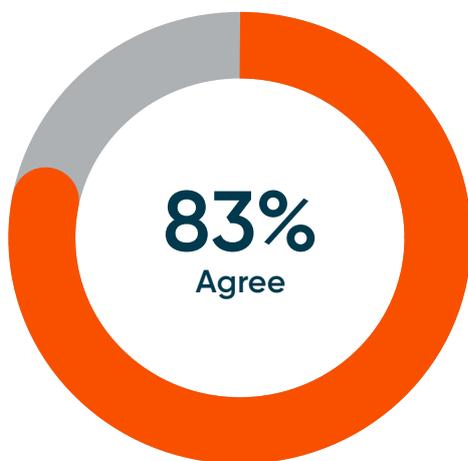
 'Thinking about each of the following challenges facing purchasing supplies in your business, how concerned are you by each?'

Showing among companies with fewer than 100 employees, 'very concerned' + 'somewhat concerned'



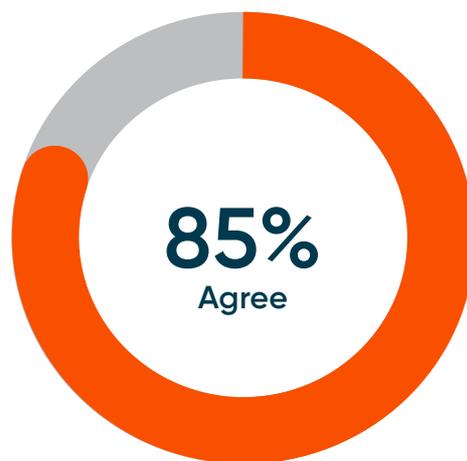
B2B e-commerce will allow a more scaleable and diverse range of SMEs to emerge in the region

 'B2B e-commerce will help local SMEs scale by finding new customers across the region and globally'



↑
Agree by country:
UAE: 83%
Saudi Arabia: 83%

 'B2B e-commerce will allow a more diverse range of SMEs to emerge in [UAE/ Saudi Arabia]'



↑
Agree by country:
UAE: 88%
Saudi Arabia: 82%



5



COVID-19

The pandemic has hit businesses hard but B2B e-commerce has mitigated some of the worst effects

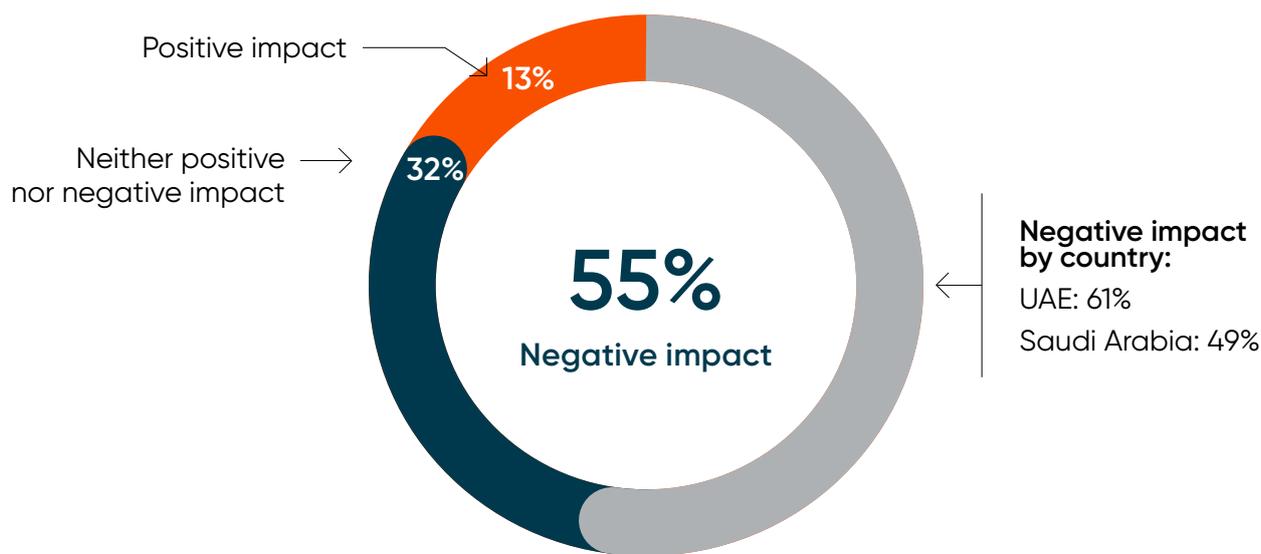




COVID has negatively impacted the majority of UAE and Saudi businesses



'What impact, if any, has the COVID-19 pandemic had on your business in [UAE/ Saudi Arabia]?'



With the pandemic impacting the economy heavily, the study evaluated the immediate impact of COVID-19 as well as the role of B2B e-commerce in mitigating it. Nearly two-third (61 per cent) of all respondents in the UAE and about half (49 per cent) of Saudi businesses surveyed said the pandemic has had a negative impact on their business. On average, just over one-in-ten (13 per cent) of respondents in both countries said the pandemic had a positive impact.

Most companies (79 per cent) expect to make a complete recovery by the end of 2022, and over half (57 per cent) are confident of a business recovery by the end of 2021. Only 3 per cent said they will never fully recover while the same percentage said they have already returned to normality.

Businesses also report increased use of B2B e-commerce due to the pandemic with 82 per cent, on average, citing that their use has increased. This is higher in the UAE where 86 per cent of respondents said their use of B2B e-commerce has increased compared to 80 per cent in Saudi Arabia.

Pertinently, B2B e-commerce has had a positive impact on businesses in adapting to the new reality. When asked whether they strongly or somewhat agree to the statement 'I now prefer to conduct transactions online as opposed to in-person due to the COVID-19 pandemic,' 83 per cent agreed. Similarly, 82 per cent of all respondents agreed that 'Services offered by B2B e-commerce have helped my business adapt to COVID-19' – a strong vote of confidence on the business model that Tradeling offers today, backed by its diverse range of business-support initiatives.

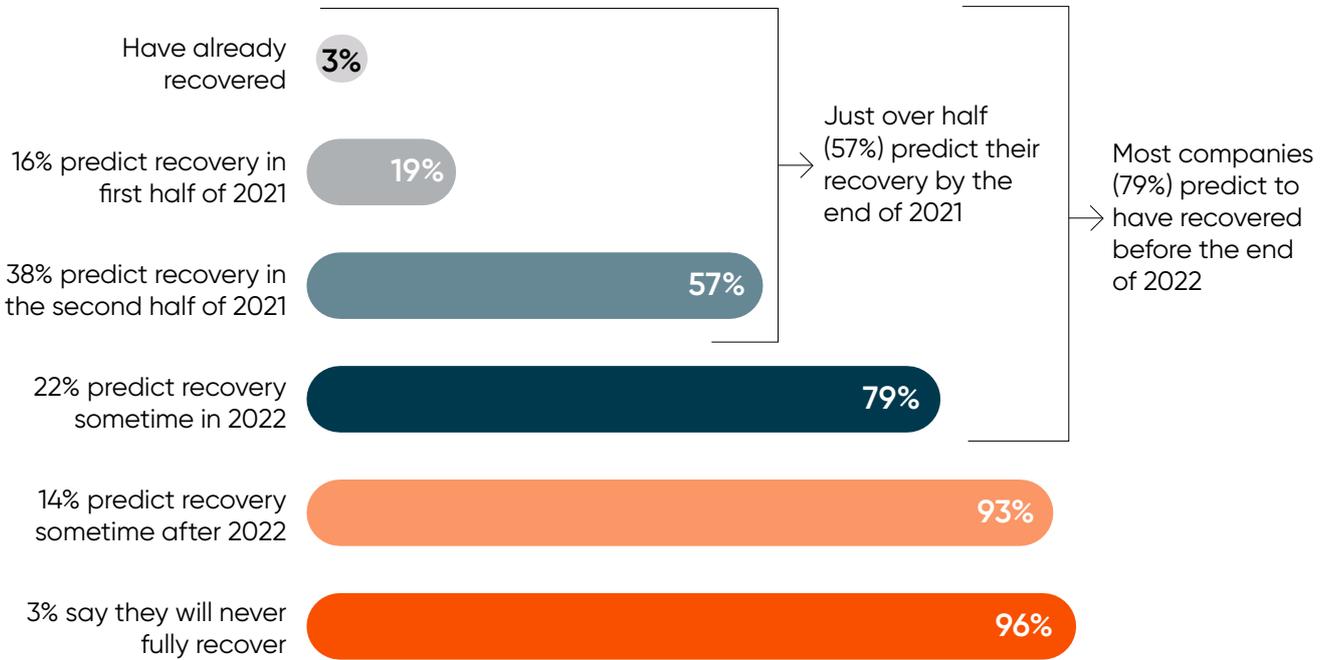
For example, Tradeling's one-stop-shop solution addresses all pain points of the procurement process as it helps customers by having a single supplier for multiple product categories; get the best prices in a transparent and structured way; process one payment and have one statement of account; track and report all the procurement process through single platform; and digitise the procurement process and manage it more efficiently. Other value-added services include trade negotiations being conducted by Tradeling's experts freeing up time and effort for partners.

In addition, the company provides customers with quick and traceable ways to bid for tenders and negotiate with buyers, as well as offers product inspection and certification service to ensure products and services comply with global standards and local regulations.

Over half predict being back on track by the end of 2021, but many will need longer to recover

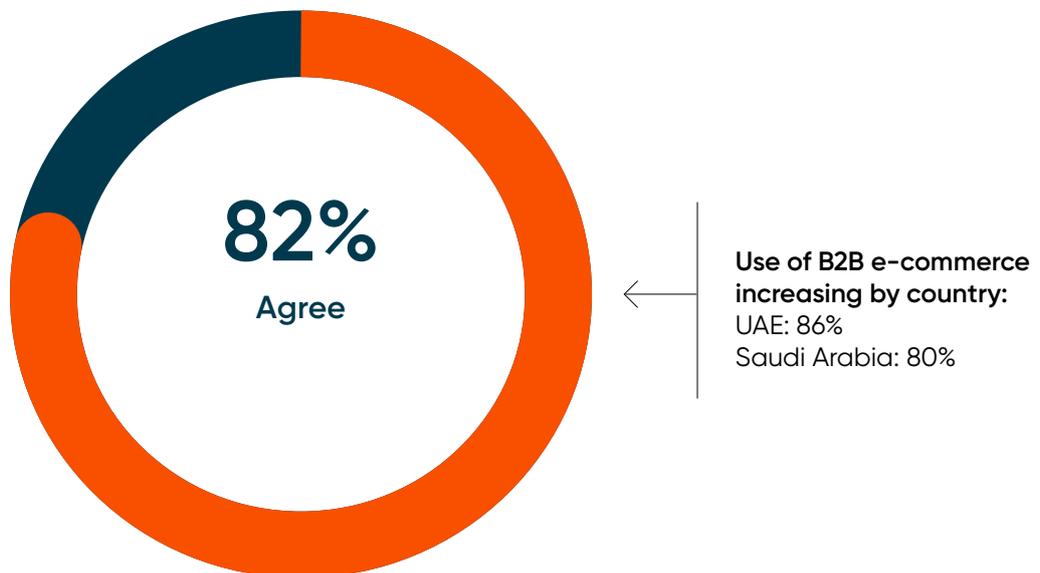
'When do you think your business will fully recover from the negative impact of COVID-19?'

Showing cumulative percentages



Middle East businesses overwhelming report increased use of B2B e-commerce due to the pandemic

'Businesses' use of B2B e-commerce has increased due to COVID-19'

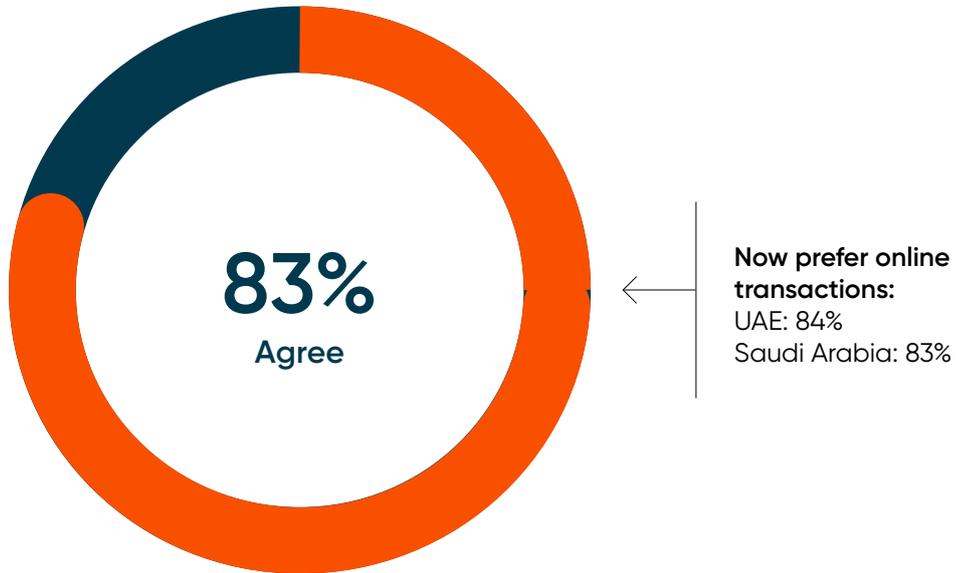




The pandemic has led businesses to prefer online over in-person transactions



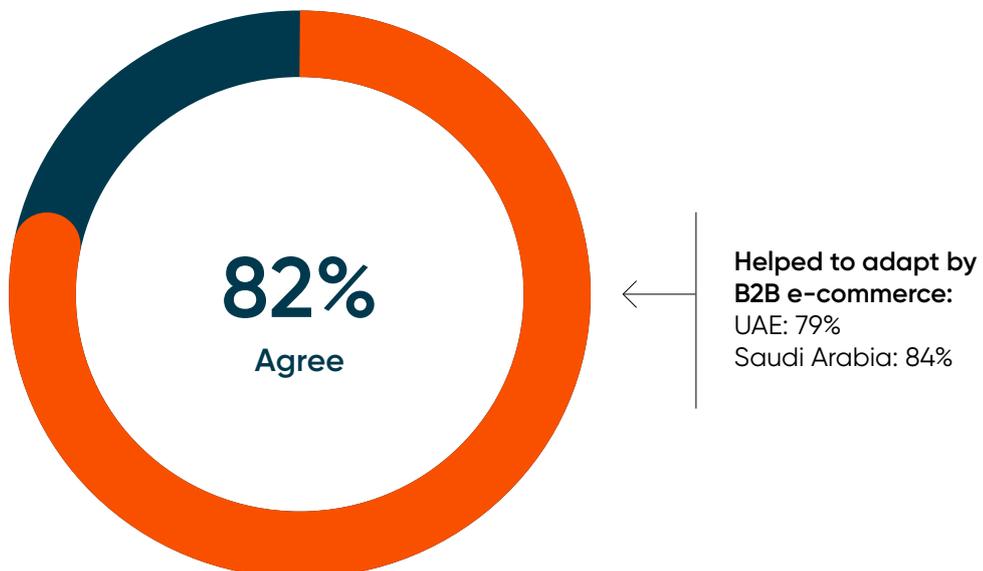
'I now prefer to conduct transactions online as opposed to in-person due to the COVID-19 pandemic'



B2B e-commerce has helped business adapt to COVID-19



'Services offered by B2B e-commerce have helped my business adapt to COVID-19'





About us

Tradeling – the hypergrowing eMarketplace focused on business-to-business (B2B) transactions in MENA Africa and South Asia



About Tradeling

Tradeling is a technology startup with a vision to become the preferred business-to-business eMarketplace in MENA. Led by a team of experienced technology startup builders, with strong financial backing through Dubai Airport Free Zone (DAFZA), Tradeling is on its mission to become the main search and sourcing tool for buyers across the region.

Tradeling ensures a reliable and smooth trade process in addition to providing logistics and financing solutions. Connecting global suppliers with MENA-based demand, Tradeling leverages advanced technology to optimise the supply chain and creates economic value in addition to mitigating risks. Enabling buyers to find the right products and materials as well as engage with new suppliers and Middle Eastern buyers, Tradeling helps in negotiating prices and delivering end-to-end services for business-to-business trade engagement.

www.tradeling.com



About ASDA'A BCW

ASDA'A was founded in 2000 as an independent agency by Sunil John, who leads the agency in its 20th year. In 2008, WPP acquired a majority stake in the firm and ASDA'A became a part of the Burson-Marsteller global network. After the merger of Burson-Marsteller and Cohn & Wolfe in 2018 to create BCW (Burson Cohn & Wolfe), the firm is now ASDA'A BCW. The agency employs more than 160 professionals across seven wholly-owned offices and nine affiliates in 15 Middle East & North Africa (MENA) countries. The agency serves over 100 retained clients and is the leading PR consultancy in MENA.

www.asdaa-bcw.com



About PSB

PSB is a global insights and analytics consultancy. For more than 40 years, PSB has provided actionable insights and guidance for corporate, government and public sector clients in over 100 countries. With deep expertise across qualitative and quantitative research and social and predictive analytics, PSB brings an integrative approach to helping clients solve their most complex challenges and win in highly competitive situations. PSB is a member of the BCW Group of companies, which is part of WPP (NYSE:WPP), a creative transformation company.

www.psbinsights.com

A White Paper by



Pivoting to Digital:
**The Transformation of B2B
E-Commerce in the Middle East**

A White Paper on the findings of Tradeling
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