



The Marketing Society – UAE Awards 2024

Category: Sustainability

Nominee: Sustainability Team at Majid Al Futtaim (Carrefour)

Launching the Choose Better Programme

1. Summary:

Majid Al Futtaim, which owns the exclusive rights to operate Carrefour in 14 countries across the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, launched the Choose Better programme, an initiative designed to empower, educate and reward customers in making healthier and more sustainable choices.

Choose Better is one of Majid Al Futtaim's bigger health and sustainability milestones, and demonstrates the company's commitment towards creating lasting, impactful change. Our vision is to inspire customers in taking transformative steps towards health and sustainability for good. The Choose Better programme is a key enabler of our group-wide Sustainable Business Commitment to promote sustainable living through products, services, and marketing; allowing customers to enjoy great experiences with reduced ecological impact and improved health outcomes. It also is a strategic initiative to deliver on our commitments to the Consumer Goods Forum's Collaboration for Healthier Lives coalition goals, of which we are the only participating retailer in the GCC.

We aim to achieve this through unique, innovative approaches across three pillars, "Better for You", "Better for the Planet", and "Better for Communities", which will encourage positive change towards healthier living, protecting the environment, and supporting the local community. Uniquely, this programme focuses on behavioural change, including and not limited to tangible incentives for customers to engage with a healthier and more sustainable basket including harnessing the power of Carrefour's SHARE rewards programme coupled with empowering educational messages at POS in store and online.

Through effective and impactful marketing that is rooted in transparency, Majid Al Futtaim will continue building brand reputation as a company that inspires other peers in the industry to adopt innovative solutions and sustainable practices.



2. Objective:

According to the UAE's National Nutrition Strategy, 83 per cent of the adult population do not consume their recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables daily, in other words only 1 in 5 adults are eating the recommended intake of fruit and vegetables. Furthermore, based on Carrefour's insights, we recognised how customers wanted to lead healthier lifestyles but struggled to find healthier choices at affordable prices.

With that insight as our motivating force, we launched the Choose Better programme, which aims to educate, empower and reward customers by making healthier and more sustainable choices more accessible, affordable and appealing.

For Majid Al Futtaim, the launch of Choose Better aligns with our purpose to enable people to shop smarter and live better. Moreover, we have long pioneered sustainability in the retail sector and Choose Better is a crucial milestone in Carrefour's sustainability journey towards proactively converting the health, wellbeing and lifestyles of our customers – for the better.



3. Strategic Approach:

To create an all-rounded impact, we designed Choose Better to focus on three pillars: Better “For You”, Better “For the Planet” and Better “For Communities”. Within each pillar, we have adopted unique and innovative approaches that encourage positive change towards healthier living, protecting the environment, and supporting the local community.

1. Choose Better “For You”

This pillar promotes healthier lifestyles by offering a nutritious range of fresh food and superior quality products at affordable prices.

Approaches undertaken:

- Our Traffic Light Labelling is a systematic method helping customers make informed decisions by providing clear nutritional information on our Private Label products. By increasing nutrition transparency, we’re encouraging customers to think twice before tossing a product into their shopping carts.
- We partnered with Healthy Path, a B2B nutrition policy and food sustainability consultancy, to support the Better for You scheme. Collaboratively, we have built a robust nutrient profiling model accounting for the products’ level of processing, nutrient profile score, attribute and claims, taking the best science and tools from around the globe and making it simpler for customers.
- We launched a Healthy Kitchen section in key stores across all our countries, including the Middle East. This section features a curated selection of organic, free-form, and protein rich products, all in one place, making healthier, more sustainable alternatives much easier to find.
- Phase 1 of the Choose Better launch included introducing engaging, colourful and informative point of sales marketing assets for our customers to understand the nutritional value of various fruits and vegetables to help them make an informed choice to support their wellness journey.
- With Choose Better, we’re rewarding customers with even more discounts and SHARE points for customers that choose from our ‘Better for You’ product category.

2. Choose Better “For the Planet”

This pillar enables and rewards customers for making informed choices that protect the environment.



Approaches undertaken:

- We opened a unique, one-of-a-kind store in the Blue Zone at the 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) that showcased a diverse range of 1,500 Private Label products and 1,000 national brands. The store, constructed from repurposed material and equipped with smart lighting, catered to over 22,000 global delegates. Based in a strategic location like Expo City, we demonstrated Majid Al Futtaim’s commitment to sustainability through the launch of the innovative Choose Better programme at the store.
- We established a partnership with HowGood, an independent research database that assesses ingredients and products for environmental and social impact. As such, Carrefour disclosed the sustainability ratings of over 700 products, having become the first and only retailer in the region to do so. This is the first time customers in the region have had a retailer support their choices in store with climate impact labels next to the item price. Labels included water smart, climate friendly, fair labour, and clean label, amongst others. The most sustainable items in the pilot received a Good, Great, or Best rating.
- We’ve introduced green check-out counters dedicated to customers opting for reusable bags. This not only makes the sustainable option more accessible, but also simplifies the check-out process for customers opting more eco-friendly alternatives.



Our Sustainability Milestones



Year	Milestone
2017	First in the region to commit to Net Positive in Carbon & Water by 2040
2018	Launched first company-wide sustainability strategy: Dare Today, Change Tomorrow
2019	Introduced Sustainable Fit-Out Policy for all new store fitouts
2020	Received first Low-risk ESG rating from independent agencies
2020	Pledged to phase out single-use plastics by 2025
2020	Published first Sustainable Procurement policy
2021	Announced Circular Economy Strategy, committing to reduce 50% food waste by 2030
2022	Announced commitment to Animal Health & Welfare
2023	Set approved science based targets for all emissions across supply chain
2023	Launched "Together for Better" Supplier Sustainability Forum with top FMCG partners

2017
First in the region to commit to Net Positive in Carbon & Water by 2040
الشركة الأولى في المنطقة التي للتعهد بتحقيق المحصلة الإيجابية في الكربون والماء بحلول عام 2040

2018
Launched first company-wide sustainability strategy: Dare Today, Change Tomorrow
تم إطلاق أول استراتيجية استدامة على مستوى الشركة، بما تغير المستقبل بجرأة

2019
Introduced Sustainable Fit-Out Policy for all new store fitouts
وضع سياسة الجوزير واستخدام للمساحات الداخلية لجميع المتاجر الجديدة

2020
Received first Low-risk ESG rating from independent agencies
نيل أول تصنيف منخفض المخاطر البيئية والاجتماعية والحوكمة (ESG) من وكالات مستقلة

2020
Pledged to phase out single-use plastics by 2025
التعهد بالتوقف تدريجياً عن استعمال المواد البلاستيكية المستخدمة لمرة واحدة بحلول عام 2025

2020
Published first Sustainable Procurement policy
الإعلان عن أول سياسة للمشتريات المستدامة

2021
Announced Circular Economy Strategy, committing to reduce 50% food waste by 2030
الإعلان عن استراتيجية الاقتصاد الدائري، مع الالتزام بالحد من هدر الطعام بنسبة 50% بحلول عام 2030

2022
Announced commitment to Animal Health & Welfare
الإعلان عن الالتزام بصحة الحيوان ورفاهه

2023
Set approved science based targets for all emissions across supply chain
تحديد أهداف علمية معتمدة لجميع الانبعاثات خلال سلسلة التوريد

2023
Launched "Together for Better" Supplier Sustainability Forum with top FMCG partners
إطلاق منتدى استدامة الموردين "معاً من أجل الأفضل" مع أكبر الشركاء المخصصين بالسلع الاستهلاكية سرهفة التناول

MAJID AL FUTTAIM
مجموعة من
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3. Choose Better “For Communities”

This pillar encourages and rewards customers for choosing goods and services that support local communities and economies and promotes inclusivity for all.

Approaches undertaken:

- We encourage customers to increase their consumption of fresh produce through incentives such as discounts and rewards by educating them about the nutritional benefits of these products, in addition to product sourcing traceability through our blockchain technology
- We support local farmers and provide healthier, more organic products by partnering with the largest private organic farm in the UAE, with annual targets to increase proportion of locally grown fruits and vegetables.
- We collaborate with governments to develop a strong local supply base, creating demand assurance for suppliers.



4. Risks:

We anticipated several risks with the launch of this sustainability initiative.

1. “The Healthy Option” is not every customer’s first choice.

Especially in times of economic challenges, healthy and sustainable products may not be an immediate priority. Customers might want to tick their grocery list with the cheapest available choice and move onto the next. With Choose Better, it is our role to make healthier offerings not only available — but also affordable and accessible to everyone.

2. Supplier, brand, or even ‘cultural’ product preference may be prevalent.

Customers may be loyal users of a product belonging to a specific brand that they’re not willing to switch for a “healthier” alternative — even if the price is higher. The product could fare lower on the sustainability scale or not be as nutritious, but ‘nostalgia’, cultural preferences and other factors may impact choices made. While Choose Better does not discourage customers from shopping their favourites, we must work with our suppliers to ensure healthier products of such brands take centre stage through the initiative.

3. “Health” marketing fatigue is everywhere.

Customers are constantly being bombarded by health marketing daily. The pressure or fatigue of eating healthy, further driven by social media, may cause customers to feel indifferent or disinterested in the initiative when entering the store. As a leading retailer with a large customer base, it is our responsibility to relay the message of Choose Better in a way that inspires and educates our customers, without dictating, pinpointing or shaming them based on the choices they make.

4. What is actually perceived as “healthy”?

Amid all the health marketing, customers that do consciously want to make better choices are uncertain if they are choosing the “healthier” options. What can be categorised as healthy? This may possibly be one of the biggest challenges posed to the initiative, as the term “healthy” could be interpreted differently from one individual to another. Choose Better anticipated this challenge right from the beginning and is undertaking efforts to inform and educate customers on how they can make universally healthier choices through fact-based, detailed nutrition labels.

5. Results:

It was found that products featuring HowGood labels experienced a notable increase in sales performance during the testing period of our Choose Better campaign. Specifically, these labeled products demonstrated a weighted average sales growth rate of 27 per cent, compared to 17 per cent for products without labels during the control period - meaning that there was a substantial higher growth rate by 10 per cent for labeled products.

Moreover, those results position Carrefour among the leading retailers in the region with a reputation for being a health-conscious business.

6. Advocating for the Reputation/Importance of the Marketing industry:

The success of Choose Better is directly linked to the importance of transparency in marketing. To inspire customers in embracing a positive change or transformation, it is paramount to create awareness and engagement that is rooted in transparency.

Our successful historic record of sustainability milestones to date is an outcome of innovative, customer-centric marketing strategies based on authenticity and truthful storytelling.

So, while we're telling a customer to choose better, we're also telling them *why* they should choose better and *what impact* they're going to leave from doing so for themselves, the planet, and their surrounding communities – based on factual information and labelling. With the power of such truth-based marketing, shifting an individual's preconceived beliefs on health and sustainability is far from impossible.

