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مجلس الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا للترفيه والجذب السياحي  
Middle East and North Africa Leisure & Attractions Council

## MEMBER TALK – NOVEMBER 2023

### MEMBER TALK WITH MOHAMED ATTIA GM, AL HOKAIR GROUP

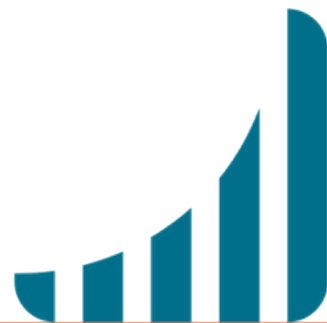


**Al Hokair** is the primary industry frontrunner in providing thrilling experiences for families throughout Saudi Arabia. Over five decades, the group's projects have expanded to include 92 entertainment centres and 35 hotels spread across Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The company is committed to enhancing its tourism investments, aiming to provide premier offerings by attracting expertise and forging strategic partnerships to bring significant leisure and entertainment opportunities to consumers. After a recent streak of honours for the company as well as exciting new collaborations with iconic brands made over the past year, we asked General Manager, Mohamed Attia, his perspective on the present and future of Al Hokair Group.



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**Please tell us what the vision and ethos of Al Hokair Group is and have these changed since the company's founding in 1975?**

**Mohamed Attia:** Since Al Hokair's founding in 1975 its vision is to be "the leading provider of entertainment and leisure experiences in the Middle East." And the company's ethos is to "create memorable experiences for our customers and to contribute to the development of the communities we serve."

This vision and ethos are reflected in Al Hokair's commitment to providing high-quality entertainment and leisure experiences that are affordable and accessible to everyone. While the vision and ethos have remained largely unchanged, the company has adapted its business model to meet the changing needs of its customers. For example, the company has invested heavily in new technologies to create more immersive and interactive entertainment experiences. The group has also focused on developing new and innovative entertainment concepts like the new IP family entertainment centers concepts that the group opened last November in Riyadh. Beside that Al Hokair Group has a plan to expand its geographic reach to include new markets in the Middle East and North Africa.

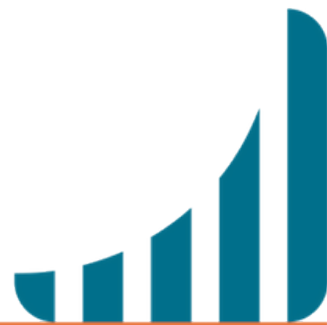






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Lots of exciting things have been happening for Al Hokair recently, including the opening of new FECs, as well as bringing many international brands to Saudi Arabia. Can you elaborate on these significant developments and the impact they have had in the region so far.

**Mohamed Attia:** In a single year Al Hokair has signed contracts with a wealth of big names - Cocomelon Playdate, Playocity powered by Hasbro, Monopoly Lifesized, Brass Monkey, Smurfs, and Mission Play by Mattel.

It has been a dizzying ride for me and the team, with meetings and negotiations taking place across the world. This journey culminated in what the senior management team at Al Hokair wants to see most: something truly, exceptionally new. Most of those brands licensed by Al Hokair Group are available to the company not just in Saudi Arabia, but also across the rest of the Middle East.

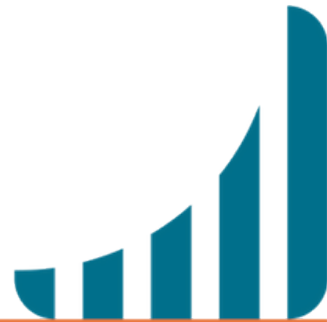
The brands represent a cross-section of the age-groups, although it was noticeable that the lower and higher age sectors are particularly catered for such as Brass Monkey, which will have its premier location open in Riyadh DQ, is specifically targets adults. While others such as Cocomelon Playdate which we inaugurated last December at Riyadh Boulevard World last December is tailored more to the 3-8 age group.





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**Congratulations on receiving the Most Admired Retail Personality of the Year at the Images Retail Middle East Awards 2023. Could you share your perspective on receiving this recognition along with how your contribution has supported the enormous expansion of Al Hokair this year?**

**Mohamed Attia:** I am deeply honoured to receive this recognition. It is a testament to the hard work and dedication of myself and the entire team that we have been able to achieve such enormous expansion, adding first of its kind entertainment concepts in the region.

Al Hokair Group is keeping up with the pace. We also picked up no fewer than 8 awards at the big MECS+R event Retail Congress 2023 including Entertainment Excellence, Best Retail Brands in the MENA Region, and Best Design & Development Store Design.

The group also won three awards during the Images Retail Middle East Awards on October 10, 2023.

- Most Admired Retail Personality of the Year for Mohamed Attia
- Most Impressive Store Design of the Year for Cocomelon Playdate, Riyadh
- Most Impressive Retail Store Launch of the Year for Cocomelon Playdate, Riyadh.

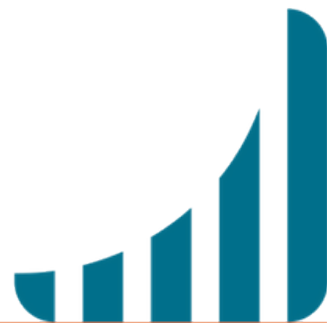






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**What excites you about the growth and opportunities in KSA? And what are Al Hokair's plans to elevate the Kingdom's Leisure and Attractions sector further as we move into 2024?**

**Mohamed Attia:** There are several pillars to KSA's Vision 2030 and leisure is very much one of them, which is broken down into sport, culture, entertainment, and tourism. The two latter areas are very much our concern, and we will consider how Al Hokair will contribute significantly to this.

The opportunities in Saudi Arabia are going to be immense. Al Hokair has consistently set the benchmark in the Middle East, being the largest FEC operator in the region, as you can imagine. It's not a mantle we intend to let slip! With these recent new and exciting projects coming in, in addition to the licenses we have already acquired and more on the way, we are demonstrating that Al Hokair is raising the bar even higher.

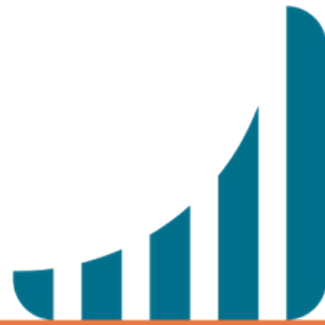
We are introducing a multitude of fresh ideas into KSA, but we must not neglect our responsibility to the hundreds of thousands of families who adore the Sparky's brand and consider it their go-to destination for family gatherings. It's crucial to keep our chain of outlets as vibrant and innovative as possible. As part of the ongoing refurbishment and upgrade program in Saudi Arabia, we are expanding the range of attractions to cater to various family members, including activities like tenpin bowling and laser tag. Alongside this program, we are also introducing new F&B concepts, such as the Nacho Hot café chain.





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### Finally, what three trends do you think will dominate the Saudi Arabian Leisure and Entertainment industry in the new year?

#### FEC Expansion

With the growth of family entertainment centers and specially IP FEC with the global licensed brand in 2024, I believe we will see even more FECs opening in Saudi Arabia. We can also expect to see existing FECs expanding their offerings to include new and innovative attractions.

#### Esports

KSA is seeing an increased popularity in E-sports, therefore, a growth in E-sports events and competitions being held in Saudi Arabia is inevitable. I think we may also see a rise in Esports cafes and gaming lounges off the back of this growing enthusiasm.

#### Immersive and Experiential Entertainment

Immersive and experiential entertainment is gaining momentum in KSA. Saudis are increasingly looking for these types of attractions and experiences due to several factors such as the growing popularity of social media, the rise of Gen Z consumers, and the increasing availability of new technologies.

