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Middle East and North Africa Leisure & Attractions Council

VENDOR TALK – APRIL 2026

THE RISE OF SHARED FAMILY ADVENTURE IN WATER PARKS

An article by:



Across the global attractions industry, a noticeable shift is underway. For years, the conversation around new attractions often focused on extremes – taller structures, faster drops, and record-breaking statistics. While those elements continue to excite thrill-seekers, many operators are recognising a different priority emerging among guests – the desire to experience adventure together.

Families remain the heart of every water park. Increasingly, these guests are looking for attractions that allow them to share the excitement side by side rather than experiencing it separately. Parents want to see their children's reactions in real time, siblings want to laugh together through unexpected splashes, and multi-generational groups want experiences everyone can enjoy.

This growing demand is creating experiences designed for excitement, and for connection.



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Industry Trend-Led

The water attractions industry is beginning to explore attraction concepts designed around longer, shared water ride experiences where families and groups can enjoy the journey side by side rather than on their own.

Rather than focusing purely on speed or height, many new rafting-style concepts reflect a broader movement toward immersive, shared water ride experiences that keep guests connected throughout the journey.

These attractions emphasise interaction, unpredictability, and the feeling of travelling through a living environment rather than simply completing a ride.



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The Importance of Shared Experiences

Water parks have always been social environments, but some attractions inherently encourage interaction more than others. Multi-person rafting rides are among the best examples of this dynamic.

Unlike single-rider slides or attractions designed for one or two guests at a time, raft-based experiences allow families and friends to ride together. This transforms the attraction into a shared adventure, one where reactions, laughter, and anticipation become part of the experience itself. Moments when riders glance across the raft and see their children's excitement often become the memories guests take home with them.

For park operators, this shared element also drives repeat ridership. Guests who experience an attraction together are more likely to return for another ride, bringing new friends or family members along.





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Design Evolution and Engineering

Another major evolution in water ride design is the transition from short bursts of excitement toward longer, more immersive journeys.

In many modern water parks, guests are seeking experiences that unfold gradually rather than ending within seconds. Attractions with extended ride durations allow visitors to become more immersed in the environment and narrative of the ride.

Ride designers increasingly treat water attractions as storytelling platforms. A combination of open and enclosed flume sections, sculpted environments, and changing water conditions can create the feeling of traveling through a living river landscape.

For riders, this creates anticipation and rhythm throughout the journey. Calm sections build suspense before transitioning into energetic rapids or sweeping directional changes, creating a ride experience that feels dynamic from beginning to end.





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One of the most exciting advancements in modern rafting attractions lies in the way designers recreate the movement of natural rivers. Rather than simply flowing in a straight path, water interacts with terrain elements such as boulders, channels, and directional currents, producing waves, splashes, and playful turbulence.

The result is a ride that feels less manufactured and more like a dynamic river landscape. For guests, this natural energy adds excitement and authenticity to the experience.

Impact

Today's families often visit parks in larger and more diverse groups than in previous decades. Multi-generational travel is increasingly common, with grandparents, parents, and children sharing experiences during the same visit.

This reality has encouraged water ride designers to focus on attractions that can accommodate a broad range of guests while still delivering a sense of adventure. Raft-based water rides are particularly well suited to this challenge. Their larger vehicles allow groups to experience the ride together, while the dynamic water environment provides enough excitement to satisfy thrill-seekers without excluding younger riders.



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But beyond guest experience, modern water attractions must also deliver strong operational performance. Advances in engineering now allow parks to operate rafting attractions with higher efficiency and throughput. Continuous water circulation systems help maintain water quality and eliminate stagnant areas, while modern dispatch systems enable rapid ride cycles.

Flexible raft configurations allow operators to accommodate varying group sizes while maintaining consistent capacity throughout the day. For parks experiencing growing attendance, these operational advantages are just as important as the ride experience itself.



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Destination Value

As water parks continue to evolve into full-scale entertainment destinations, signature attractions play an increasingly important role in defining a park's identity. Large-scale rafting experiences often serve as visual centrepieces within the park landscape, drawing guests' attention and encouraging exploration of surrounding areas.

Their flowing layouts allow them to weave through scenic environments, themed elements, and architectural features, creating a dynamic attraction that can be experienced on and off the ride. For guests, these attractions become memorable landmarks within the park. For operators, they represent powerful drivers of attendance and guest engagement.



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The Future of Shared Water Adventures

As the leisure and attractions industry looks toward the future, one principle remains clear – the most successful attractions are those that bring people together. Families are seeking meaningful experiences they can share, moments of surprise, laughter, and excitement that unfold together in real time.

The continued evolution of shared rafting attractions is a prime example of how the industry is responding to this shift, designing rides that combine immersive environments, dynamic water motion, and longer shared journeys for guests.

In the end, the true success of any attraction is measured not just in capacity or height, but in the memories it creates for the people experiencing it together.

About the company:



ProSlide designs and manufactures the world's most sought-after, award-winning water park rides, meticulously engineered to deliver the speed, power, and precision of elite ski racing. Their passionate team works as an extension of their clients', pushing boundaries to deliver innovative water rides that elevate the entire park experience. With installations at the most successful parks around the globe, ProSlide is dedicated to delivering unmatched value and sustaining their clients' long-term success.

