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Manchester City: MENA Fan Engagement Strategy



Challenge Overview: Deepen GenZ Fan Engagement within the Middle East

Current Challenge

Manchester City FC seeks to deepen fan engagement among GenZ fans, focusing in on the **Middle East**, by offering a more personalized, interactive fan experience.



Approach

- Conduct in-depth research to fully understand how GenZ consumes sports, focusing on the Middle East
- Understand Manchester City's **current fan engagement strategies**, digital infrastructure, offerings, and channels
- Leverage insights to craft a new strategy that taps into Middle Eastern GenZ trends.

Main Recommendations

- Leverage Manchester City's **existing extensive digital infrastructure**
- Ensure the strategy **boosts other revenue streams** (merchandise, tickets, etc)
- Ensure the messaging **respects Middle Eastern cultural values** and traditions
- **Start with a pilot test** to evaluate fan feedback and performance data to refine approach before a full-scale launch .

Background: The Changing Football Landscape

Football Industry Trends

- Digital transformation is reshaping how football clubs communicate with fans, creating new opportunities for fan engagement and revenue generation.
- Due to these technological advances clubs can offer more immersive and personalized fan experiences via social media, mobile apps, blockchain and other digital technologies.

Manchester City

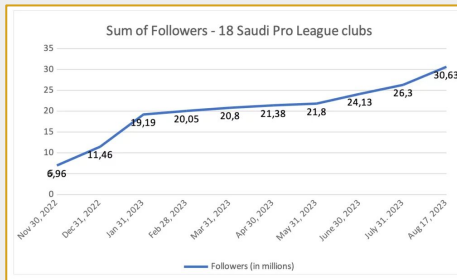
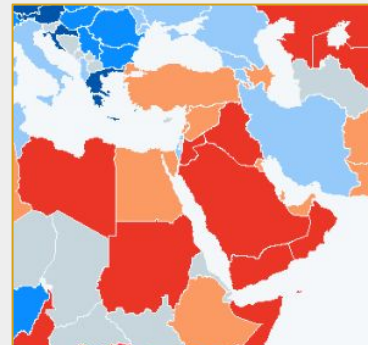
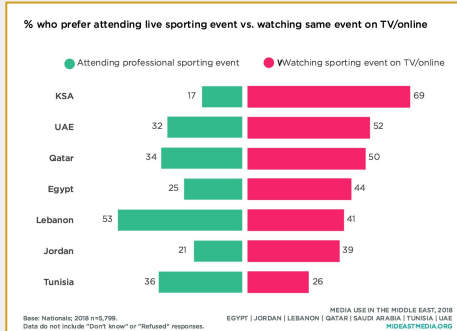
- Manchester City is known to be extremely innovative and has leaned heavily into this new age of digital transformation
- Introduced **\$City Fan Tokens** with *Socios.com*, where token holders can vote on organizational activities
- Introduced meta-verse-style fan platform: **Favorite Space** with Sony where Fans can create personalised avatars and participate various activities
- Introduced **trading card digital collectibles** (NFTs) related to current and former players in partnership with *Quidd*



Background: Key Influential Factors, Middle East

Key Influential Factors in the Middle East

- **Low English Proficiency:** Most countries in the middle east have low english proficiency making it more difficult to connect
- **Media Consumption:** Across GenZ the live event is less important , and fans prefer to consume football through TV and social media.
- **Different Cultural Values:** Local pride and cultural connections are crucial in this region. Gen Z fans in MENA engage more with clubs that align with their culture.
- **Rise of the Saudi Pro League:** The Saudi Pro Leagues in one of the fastest growing leagues in the world, competing for fan attention.



SWOT Analysis: Manchester City's Current Ability to Engage Fans in the Middle East

Strengths

Large Social Media Following: Across all social platforms, which gives the club the ability to reach a huge amount of eyes

Innovation Leader: Man City's innovative experience and large digital infrastructure gives it significant advantage

UAE Ownership: Owned by a UAE group, Man City has a unique advantage when it comes to reaching the Middle-Eastern market

Opportunities

Growing GenZ Fanbase: Currently the Middle East's youth population is booming, and so is their passion for football.

Increased Openness for Digital Tokens: GenZ in general is increasingly open to digital tokens, blockchain technology.

2034 FIFA World Cup: As the host, Saudi Arabia, and furthermore, the Middle East will invest significantly in football infrastructure and events in the future.

Weaknesses

No Arabic Social Media Channels: The lack of any Arabic social media channels limits the club's MENA audience reach

Limited Presence: Outside of the UAE the club lacks any real presence in key markets, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, etc.

Availability of Tools: Popular tools used for fan engagement aren't accessible in the Middle East, like **Favorite Space**

Threats

Intense Competition: Rival clubs expanding in MENA and the rise of local league popularity (e.g. Saudi Pro League)

Geopolitical and Social Risks: Volatility in the region could limit engagement opportunities or create cultural barriers.

Legal and Regulatory Challenges: Changes in laws in the Middle East could hinder digital engagement strategies or fan token usage.

Proposed Solution: Launch New Youtube Show in Arabic, Integrating Fan Tokens for Voting

Launch Dedicated Arabic Youtube Show

- Launch an official Man-City YouTube show, **in Arabic**, tailored for Middle Eastern GenZ audiences, featuring charismatic hosts discussing all things Man-City
- Uploaded weekly, the show offers in-depth match analysis, behind-the-scenes footage, game breakdowns, and lively discussions about club news
- Episodes will bring on special guests, popular and relevant to the MENA region
- Long-form Youtube content will be repurposed into bite-sized clips for social media
- Once established, any **exclusive content** from the show could be strictly available on Man City's streaming service **City+**

Integrate Fan Tokens

- Integrate the new show into the fan token infrastructure on **Socios.com** by creating voting opportunities for fans
- Fans holding **\$CITY tokens** will be able to vote on key aspects of the next episode like talking topics, guest appearances, etc.
- By voting, fans will earn more **\$CITY tokens**, which can then be redeemed for rewards like exclusive merchandise, VIP tickets, and other fan experiences



Supporting Evidence: Increase in Youtube Popularity and Fan Token Acceptance

Youtube Popularity: YouTube is the single most popular platform for Gen Z to consume sports content globally (used by 49% of Gen Z fans several times per week)

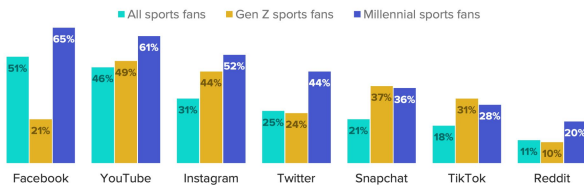
Rise of the Fan Token: 40% of Gen Z and Millennial sports fans say they were familiar with the use of Fan Tokens in sport, almost 75% expressed interest in Fan Tokens providing chances to win valuable rewards.

Decreased importance of the live event: Among Gen Z sports fans, only 25% of respondents said watching live competition is an important part of being a fan. 52% said watching live sports is not too important or not important at all.

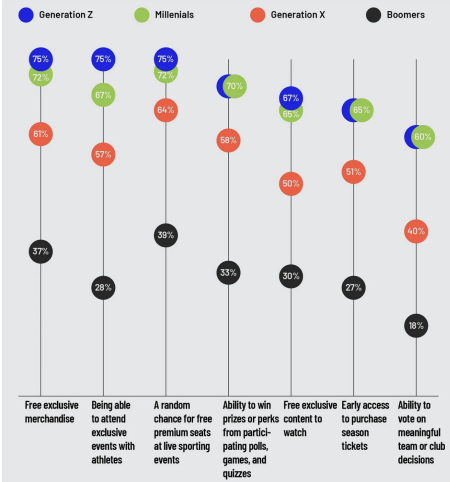
Past Examples: Cristiano Ronaldo broke the record for the fastest YouTube channel to reach 1 million and 10 million subscribers

YouTube, Instagram Are Go-To Digital Platforms for Gen Z Sports Fans

Share of fans who said they consume sports content on each platform at least several times per week



Overall enthusiasm from fans (by age-group) when offered to purchase a Fan Token if a specific benefit were included



Implementation & Next Steps: Build Show Structure and Define Token Integration

Develop and Adjust Youtube Show (Months 1-4)

Define Show Structure: Plan content format (segments, topics, etc.) and production schedule, ensuring it aligns with Man City's brand image and MENA's cultural values

Build Team: Find engaging, Arabic-speaking hosts who connect with GenZ, utilize **City Studios** for production team needs (videographers, editors)

Market and Promote: Use Middle Eastern influencers and digital-ads to drive show awareness, posting clips on main social channels and the **ManCityzens** app

Pilot Episode and Adjust: Test the first episode, gather fan feedback, and adjust accordingly.



Define Fan Token Integration (Months 4-6)

Define and Show Voting: Define what aspects fans will be able to vote on utilizing fan tokens (episode topics, guests, and segments)

Define Tokens Needed: Define number of **\$CITY tokens** needed to cast a vote

Define Token Rewards: Define how many **\$CITY tokens** fans will earn per voting participation (e.g., 20-50 tokens per challenge) and what kind of real life rewards fans can exchange them for.



Understanding Potential Barriers and Measuring Strategy Success

Potential Barriers

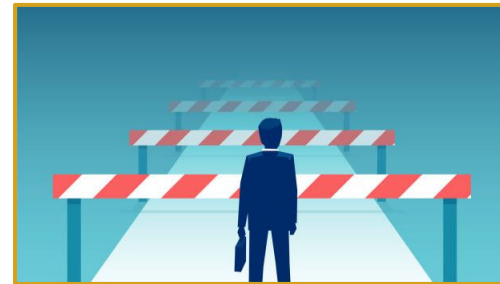
New Youtube Channel: Create an entirely new youtube channel in a new language

Audience Adoption: Convince GenZ to engage with the show over other established content

Cultural Nuances: Account for differences in Arabic dialects and regional preferences

Content Relevance: Balance Man City's brand image with local interests and values

Hiring Team: Find hosts that represent the region and can connect with the audience



KPIs to Measure Success

Viewership Metrics: (Total views per episode, average watch duration)

Audience Growth: (Growth in Youtube subscriber rate, increase in social media mentions)

Fan Token Engagement: (Percentage of token holders participating in show voting, number of associated tokens redeemed for rewards)

Sales Metrics: (Increase in total sales from associated show tokens)



Conclusion: Manchester City's Path towards Deepening Fan Engagement in the Middle East

Proposed Fan Engagement Strategy

- Man City should engage GenZ fans in the Middle East by creating its own Youtube show that is linked to their fan token voting system on **Socios**
- The show will be in Arabic, allowing it to more easily connect with MENA audiences
- Fans will be able to vote on key show aspects including talking topics, guests appearances, etc
- Any exclusive content will only be available on Man City's streaming service **City+**
- The show will go over game highlights, club activities and all things Man City, and will be further chopped up for smaller more digestible social media bites

Call to Action

Football fandom in the Middle East is booming and poised for further growth, driven by the **2022 Qatar World Cup**, the rising popularity of the **Saudi Pro League** and the upcoming **2034 World Cup**.

As one of the most innovative clubs globally, Manchester City has a unique opportunity to tap into the expanding MENA market. By paying attention to changing viewing preferences, and creating culturally relevant content that's integrated their fan token voting system, Man City can deepen fan engagement and capitalize on the region's growth.

