

Synovate EMS ME 2009 reveals media habits, attitudes and lifestyle of the Middle East's top tier consumers

DUBAI - Synovate, a leading global market intelligence company, today released the data from its EMS Middle East 2009 Media and Marketing Survey.

The survey tracks ownership and buying intentions for a wide range of high-end products across eight markets: the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain (Gulf) and Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan (Non-Gulf). Attitudes towards media and brands and lifestyle information are also included.

This information gives media organisations and agencies even greater insight into what's driving affluent consumers at any particular time to ensure they make savvy advertising and marketing decisions.

Because EMS covers the top 13 percent of society in those markets, these consumers are of great importance to media and marketers – since they're the movers and shakers with the most money to spend.

The EMS ME 2009 Survey tracks household and personal ownership of a series of high-end and luxury products and services. A selection of the findings:

Products and Services

What products are owned and what services are used?

Electronics

- 80% of the affluent in the Middle East own a laptop or notebook computer
- 52% own a widescreen TV
- 48% own a handheld/ Palmtop/ PDA

Automotive

- The most popular car in the Middle East is Toyota with 387,007 owners, followed by BMW with 253,283 owners
- The type of car most driven in the Middle East is the sedan. The 4-wheel drive is owned by 42% in the Gulf and 22% in the non-Gulf area

Financial services and real estate

- The top credit card held personally or through the company is the Visa premium/gold/platinum
- 57% of elite in the Gulf area own stocks, bonds or other securities
- 93% in Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt own private property

Leisure activities

The living is easy

- Among cultural activities, going to the cinema is most popular, particularly outside the Gulf, with 84% of respondents in Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan enjoying the movies
- 31% of the elite in Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan also went to the theatre
- 48% of non-Gulf respondents are members of a sports club and 38% are members of a social club

Business decision makers

Which business activities are they involved in?

- 26% of business decision makers formulated a strategic business plan over the past year
- 16% attended meetings abroad with executives from other countries
- 12% set up a new company

Career

Working nine to five?

Middle East elites are very business oriented, with 60% strongly agreeing that they are willing to make extra effort to achieve their career goals. Nearly half are very committed and consider their work as a career and not just a job. But it's not all work and no play. Fifty-four percent consider spending quality time with family and friends important to them.

Advertising attitudes

“Advertising in the media is a useful source of information on new products”. The elite consumer strongly agrees with this for the following types of media:

- Television 48%
- Internet 36%
- Newspaper 38%
- Magazine 31%

“Advertising sometimes makes me want to try new products”. The high-end consumer strongly agrees with this statement for the following types of media:

- Television 42%
- Internet 34%
- Newspaper 36%
- Magazine 27%

Attitudes towards media and brands

Affluent Middle East respondents were asked about their attitudes to a range of statements, to gauge their attitudes and beliefs about purchasing, advertising, brands and products. Some statements examined were:

“Paying extra for quality is worthwhile”

Nine out of 10 respondents in the Middle East strongly agree with this statement. This shows that Middle East elites appreciate quality and are willing to invest in the best.

“I prefer to buy well known brands”

Nearly 45% of elites in the Gulf and Non-Gulf area strongly agreed with this, showing that they appreciate the value of well established brands. The challenge for marketers is to build the brand promise through advertising and to deliver products that excel.

“A home with most modern appliances is important to me”

Nine out of 10 Middle East elites like to stock up on the latest items, highlighting huge opportunities for marketers in the Gulf region.

“I sometimes like to treat myself to something special, even if it is expensive”

Residents in the Middle East admit to being more indulgent, with 93% strongly agreeing with this.

“I follow the developments in technology”

The affluent in the Middle East are technology savvy, with nearly 90% following the developments in technology. And 94% like to try out new things. Eighty-eight percent of Middle East elites claim to be always the first to have technologically innovative products.

“I would like to learn another language”

Nearly half of the elite respondents strongly agree with this statement.

“I like to be well dressed”

Looks are important too, with almost two thirds of the respondents strongly agreeing that they like to be well dressed.

“I think it’s important to contribute to the community I live in”

More than half (54%) strongly agree with this statement. The Middle East elite have a sense of social responsibility as 44% often donate money to charity.