

# Why it's easier for mena businesses to venture into new markets

[Business](#)



Today, people around the world are more connected than ever before. In 2012, there were only 2.7 billion people on the internet. By 2018, that number is expected to be 3.82 billion– a growth of over 40%. And last year, more than 900 million people around the world had at least one international connection on social media.

As technology brings the world closer together, it not only connects people to people, but people to businesses. The ease of access to modern day technology, and the reach it provides, has led to the emergence of first generation entrepreneurs while allowing existing .

In nations where SMBs form the backbone of the economy, the opportunities are massive. Across the Middle East and North Africa, we have seen this hold true. For example, 95% of the UAE economy is comprised of SMBs; this is not just an inspiring statistic, but also demonstrates the potential of the SMB sector in playing a role in the economic progress of nations.

But one question we always receive is: what next? For SMBs that have achieved a certain size, how do they scale up further, secure new customers, and grow revenue? One solution is to simply look at a map of the world, point and go!

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Today, with the help of technology-based tools and solutions, engaging in international markets has never been easier. The region's geographic location means that most Middle Eastern and North African countries have easy customer and logistical access to the rest of the world. Take for

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example Careem, the region's appbased chauffeur-driven car booking service. From a base in Dubai, using services from Facebook. Careem was able to successfully scale its campaign across the Middle East using the Lookalike Audiences tool to further refine its ad targeting across Facebook, Instagram and the Audience Network, which ensured that it could reach more people at a reduced frequency.

Many more businesses in the MENA region have the potential to cross geographies into new markets. In fact, across the UAE, 74% of people are already connected to at least one business in a foreign country. In Egypt and in Saudi Arabia the figure is at 63%. Regional businesses can easily leverage the connectivity on Facebook to grow and expand. Other than Lookalike Audiences, we've developed Worldwide Delivery, which helps businesses set up a global campaign and find efficient conversions. Additionally, Country Snapshots and Insights Playbook help businesses create customized campaigns in each country. As an entrepreneur, this means you can be located anywhere on the planet but still be able to engage with the rest of the world and achieve measurable results.

At Facebook, as we seek to connect the world, . That is why we're evolving our solutions to help businesses connect with new customers in new countries. Being a partner in the growth of small and local businesses means we are able to directly impact a nation's economy positively from the grassroots up. By leveraging the power of technology, we are able to create an ecosystem that spurs economic growth.

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