



The logo for AFIA, consisting of the letters "AFIA" in a bold, green, 3D-style font.

### Afia

This Saudi company manufactures, refines and markets cooking oil in many countries, including Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Sudan, Iran and Kazakhstan. Afia sells more than 200 million bottles of cooking oil each year.

Global Business

## The Top 40 Arab Brands

[Forbes Arabia staff](#) 10.18.06, 12:00 PM ET

Building and maintaining a brand is a key goal of companies across the globe. Brands represent a company's values, products, services and future. While many U.S., European and Asian brands are recognized and respected throughout the world for quality, innovation and market knowledge, in the last decade several successful brands have emerged from the Middle East and are making their presence felt globally. Among them: **Al Jazeera**, **Emaar** and **Aramex**.

With competition heating up in Arab countries, brands have become an effective way for a company to distinguish itself from its competitors in terms of corporate image and product offerings. Understanding local culture and beliefs is imperative for success. Arab companies have to cater to culturally sensitive and complex markets of national residents and expatriates. The key question for those building Arab brands is how to think globally and act locally.

The Forbes Arabia Top 40 Arab Brands list, the first of its kind, looks at companies that not only have created strong brands in Arab countries, but that are gaining recognition worldwide.

### In Pictures: The Top 40 Arab Brands

The Top 40 Arab Brands list considers not only current brand performance but also future growth prospects. It reflects the trust that customers in Arab countries place on these brands.

## **How We Picked The Winners**

The Forbes Arabia research team started with 80 Arab brands from various industries. To be included, the brand must have been created and must be owned by an Arab company. With the help of an exclusive online survey of 1,200 consumers in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen by U.K. market research firm YouGov, we were able to gauge which brands were most admired and trusted by consumers. In some cases, the lack of financial and corporate information on certain Arab companies was a problem, and those brands were left out.

### **We asked these four questions in the following sequence:**

1. Are you familiar with the brand?
2. Is the brand of any relevance to you?
3. Do you trust the brand?
4. Would you recommend the brand?

Seventy-three companies got an affirmative on all four questions, thereby qualifying for the final ranking. We then used two measures to judge each brand and arrive at a composite score, by giving points to brands on how they ranked in the survey in terms of votes, and how well companies adapted their brand to a changing market environment by servicing their customers. We added up the points, then narrowed the list to 40.