

NAJEM ANTONIOS

Marketing Director | Head of Marketing | Retail, Brand and Operations Leader
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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Marketing and retail leader with 20+ years across 7 GCC and Levant markets, spanning multi-store P&L at Mango Jeddah, regional brand leadership for Converse and Nike across 5 markets with 25% share growth, and a decade running a Dubai agency that scaled to 40+ clients and 15M AED in annual managed spend. Hospitality and F&B specialist, including a flagship 3-year engagement with Fairmont Bab Al Bahr covering 6 outlets within the property. Seeking a Marketing Director or Head of Marketing role where commercial discipline, regional reach, and hands-on execution drive growth.

CORE SKILLS

Strategy and Brand: Brand Strategy, Brand Positioning, Go-to-Market, Market Expansion, Multi-Country Marketing, Rebranding, Consumer Insights, Marketing Audits

Performance and Digital: Performance Marketing, SEO, SEM, Paid Social, Paid Search, Google Ads, Meta Ads, LinkedIn Marketing, Email Marketing, E-commerce, Marketing Analytics, Marketing Automation

Retail and Operations: Retail Marketing, Retail Operations, Visual Merchandising, Store Operations, Multi-Store P&L, New Store Openings, Hospitality Marketing, F&B Marketing

Leadership and Sectors: P&L Ownership, Budget Management, Team Leadership, Stakeholder Management, B2B / B2C / B2G Marketing, SaaS Marketing, CRM (HubSpot, Salesforce, Odoo), Lead and Demand Generation, Loyalty and Lifecycle Marketing

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Scaled a Dubai-based marketing agency from 4 founding clients to 40+ active accounts with 75% multi-year retention, managing 15M AED in annual spend over a decade.
- Rebuilt the full marketing system for Fairmont Bab Al Bahr across 6 F&B outlets over a 3-year engagement, with the infrastructure still in operation post-handover.
- Grew Converse regional market share by 25% across 5 Levant and GCC markets as Regional Marketing Manager.
- Owned multi-store P&L for 6 Mango stores and 200+ employees in Jeddah as Area Manager.
- Operating today as Fractional CMO for 10+ regional brands across B2B SaaS, legal, education, and consumer sectors, with combined client budgets exceeding 8M AED annually.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Marketing Director / Fractional CMO

Jan 2025 - Present

Need to Talk Consulting - Dubai, UAE

Senior advisory practice embedded as Fractional CMO with founders, CEOs, and brand owners across the GCC. Define marketing strategy, build growth roadmaps, and architect in-house marketing teams.

Selected Clients: Clinch Tech (B2B SaaS), AX Law (legal services), Universal University (higher education), Mouroj Pro Services (corporate services and business setup), plus 6+ brands across F&B, hospitality, and wellness.

- **Fractional CMO Portfolio:** act as embedded marketing leadership for 10+ regional brands across B2B SaaS, legal, education, professional services, and consumer sectors, with

combined client marketing budgets exceeding 8M AED annually. Define brand strategy, channel mix, and 12-month growth roadmaps tied to commercial KPIs.

- **B2B Growth:** repositioned a B2B SaaS client (Cinch Tech) and a legal services firm (AX Law) with sector-specific GTM strategies, including ICP definition, content positioning, LinkedIn-led demand generation, and CRM setup. Built qualified pipelines for both inside the first 6 months of engagement.
- **Education Marketing:** led brand and admissions marketing strategy for a UAE higher-education institution (Universal University), covering enrollment funnel, digital lead generation, and parent and student communications across a full academic intake cycle.
- **Team Architecture:** guide hiring and structure for in-house marketing functions, building lean, commercially aligned teams of 3 to 8 people for SME and mid-market clients, including role scoping, compensation benchmarking, and 90-day onboarding plans.

Founder and Marketing Director

Jan 2014 - Dec 2024

Need to Talk Marketing Management LLC - Dubai, UAE

Founded and led a Dubai-based integrated marketing firm serving 40+ GCC clients across hospitality, F&B, retail, wellness, real estate, and government services. Owned full P&L, team leadership, and client strategy.

Selected Clients: Fairmont Bab Al Bahr, Marco Pierre White, Palm Destination, Allo Beirut, Grand Cafe, Cafe Najjar, Baalbek Restaurant, Grissino, Mira Amine, Sewar Restaurant and Lounge, Mazzaj Moroccan, plus 30+ regional hospitality, F&B, retail, and lifestyle brands.

- **Portfolio Performance:** scaled the agency from 4 founding clients in 2014 to 40+ active accounts at peak, with 75% multi-year retention, driving client growth through data-led media planning, attribution modeling, and vendor consolidation reported quarterly to client principals.
- **Budget Ownership:** managed 15M AED in annual marketing spend at peak, scaling from roughly 2M AED in year 1, across a multi-brand client portfolio with full P&L accountability and quarterly performance reporting to client principals.
- **Audience and Brand Growth:** scaled brand audiences from zero to category-leading, including Palm Destination (0 to 18,500 followers in 12 months, translating into a 30%+ uplift in direct enquiries) and Baalbek Restaurant (0 to 15,000), through integrated omnichannel campaigns.
- **Hospitality and F&B Specialism:** served some of the region's most recognized hospitality and dining venues, including Fairmont Bab Al Bahr, Marco Pierre White, and 14+ flagship restaurants and lounges.
- **CRM Implementation:** deployed HubSpot, Salesforce, and Odoo across the client base, building segmented lifecycle campaigns and loyalty programs that improved repeat business and customer retention.
- **Team Leadership:** scaled the team from 3 to 18 across the decade, spanning strategy, performance, creative, content, and social media. Built operating cadence, KPI scorecards, and career frameworks; multiple team members were promoted internally or moved into senior in-house marketing roles across the region.
- **Case Snapshot - Palm Destination:** built brand presence from zero, growing audience to 18,500 in 12 months and lifting direct enquiries by 30%+ through integrated content, paid social, and influencer activations.
- **Case Snapshot - Marco Pierre White:** ran the regional launch and ongoing marketing across 3 outlets, delivering measurable footfall growth in the opening quarter and sustained F&B audience engagement across the campaign cycle.
- **Case Snapshot - Fairmont Bab Al Bahr:** flagship 3-year hospitality engagement (2022 to 2024) covering 6 F&B outlets within the property. Rebuilt the full marketing system end-to-end — funnel architecture, channel mix, content engine, CRM setup, and reporting cadence

— with the marketing infrastructure handed over and still in operation at the property today.

Independent Marketing Consultant Nov 2012 - Dec 2013

Independent Practice - Dubai, UAE and Beirut, Lebanon

Transition period between corporate roles and founding Need to Talk Marketing Management LLC. Consulted with GCC and Levant brands on brand strategy, retail marketing, and go-to-market planning, while designing the operating model, service offering, and client pipeline for the firm launched in January 2014.

- **Strategic Advisory:** advised GCC and Levant brands on brand strategy, retail marketing, and go-to-market planning during the transition period, building the case studies and client relationships that anchored the launch of Need to Talk Marketing Management LLC.
- **Firm Buildout:** designed the operating model, service offering, and 18-month pipeline for the agency, including team structure, pricing, and sector focus across hospitality, F&B, retail, and lifestyle.

Regional Marketing Manager

Mar 2009 - Nov 2012

Sidewalk (Licensee for Converse and Nike) - Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Oman

Led regional marketing for Converse and Nike across 5 Levant and GCC markets, including brand strategy, retail marketing, and go-to-market execution as a licensed distributor.

- **Market Share:** grew Converse regional market share by 25% over 3 years through localized brand positioning, GTM execution, and tailored product launches across Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Oman.
- **Retail Expansion:** managed 15+ flagship and mall-based retail launches across 5 markets, driving footfall and sell-through via event-led activations and seasonal campaigns.
- **Campaigns and Social:** delivered 3 annual integrated brand campaigns and built regional social presence through influencer partnerships and sneaker-culture activations.
- **Visual Merchandising:** rebuilt in-store VM standards across the regional store network, improving conversion and brand consistency across flagship stores.
- **Global Brand Alignment:** co-developed regional plans with Converse and Nike global teams, ensuring brand consistency across 5 markets.

Operations Manager (concurrent role)

Apr 2009 - Oct 2012

Smaha Group (incl. Al Oumara Bakery) - Lebanon

Held in parallel with regional marketing role at Sidewalk. Owned end-to-end operations for the group, led the 3-year corporate rebrand of Al Oumara Bakery, and ran an independent retail merchandising practice serving 30+ Lebanese stores during the same period.

- **Operations Leadership:** directed daily operations across the group, with oversight of staff, supply chain, and commercial performance.
- **Corporate Rebrand:** led the 3-year rebranding of Al Oumara Bakery, including new brand identity, store experience, and customer-facing communications.
- **Visual Merchandising Practice:** in parallel, ran an independent VM consultancy for 30+ Lebanese retailers on a twice-weekly schedule, delivering measurable in-store sales uplift through window display, product placement, and merchandising standards.

Area Manager

Sep 2006 - Feb 2009

Mango - Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Led multi-store operations for Mango in Jeddah, owning P&L, retail performance, and people management for 6 stores and 200+ employees.

- **Multi-Store P&L:** accountable for the commercial performance, staffing, and operational standards of 6 Mango stores in Jeddah.
- **People Leadership:** managed 200+ employees across store teams, including store managers, sales staff, and merchandisers.

- **Retail Execution:** drove visual merchandising, customer experience, and seasonal campaign rollout in alignment with Mango regional standards.
- **Performance Management:** set and tracked store KPIs, conducted regular performance reviews, and built capability across the area team.

Earlier Career

Jun 2004 - Aug 2006

Azadea Group (Zara, Bijoux Ternier) - Lebanon

Sales and marketing role early in career covering retail activations, visual merchandising, and store-level commercial performance across Zara and Bijoux Ternier.

TOOLS AND PLATFORMS

Analytics and Ads: Google Analytics, Google Ads, Meta Business Suite, Meta Ads Manager, LinkedIn Ads

CRM and Automation: HubSpot, Salesforce, Odoo CRM, Make

Creative and Web: Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign), WordPress, Webflow

Project Management and AI: Asana, Monday.com, ChatGPT, Claude

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Business Administration - Saint Joseph University of Beirut, Lebanon (2003)

Certifications: Google Ads, Google Digital Marketing, HubSpot Inbound Marketing, HubSpot Sales, Meta (Facebook) Blueprint

Languages: English (Fluent), Arabic (Native), French (Fluent)

Markets Worked: UAE, KSA, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Oman | **Nationality:** Lebanese |

Visa Status: UAE Resident

References and Recommendations: LinkedIn recommendations from clients and team members available at [linkedin.com/in/najem-antonios](https://www.linkedin.com/in/najem-antonios)