

2025 MEPRA Executive Board Nominees





Jon Barber

Vice President Marketing
& Communications,
TECOM Group Dubai

Jon Barber is Vice Chair of MEPRA and Vice President of Marketing and Communications at TECOM Group. He is a Chartered Member of CIPR (Chartered Institute of Public Relations) and has been named in PR Week's Middle East Power Book of the top 100 PR Professionals in the past four years.

Mr. Barber has over 25 years of experience in the Middle East and Western Europe. A Broadcast Journalist graduate of Nottingham Trent University, he spent more than 10 years with the BBC as a news and sports journalist. For the past 15 years, he has worked in the UAE and KSA as a leading communicator for many notable brands including TECOM Group, ADNOC, Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, DAMAC Properties, Dubai World Trade Centre and ACWA Power.



Kate Midttun

Founder & CEO
Acorn Strategy

Kate Midttun is Chief Executive Officer at Acorn Strategy. She has 20 years of experience in strategic marketing consulting with a specialisation in destination marketing and a deep sector knowledge across the real estate, leisure and hospitality industries in Australia, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and other countries.

She has demonstrated success in creating impactful strategies with quantifiable business results for large global brands, including Mubadala, Miral Asset Management (Yas Island), Duracell, Oman Arab Bank, Hilton Worldwide, Viceroy Hotel Group, World Future Energy Summit, and National Central Cooling Company (Tabreed), amongst others, giving her a deep cultural understanding and adaptability to local and international markets.

Kate is strategically minded with a pragmatic approach, and it is under her vision and guidance that Acorn Strategy has tripled in size in less than three years, becoming an award-winning and internationally recognised powerhouse of integrated marketing and communications on three continents.

She has a bachelor's degree in Business with focus on Marketing and Public Relations from Queensland University of Technology, Australia, and a Master's Degree from Warwick Business School in Business Administration, with focus on Marketing and International Business Strategy. She is the Chair of the Middle East PR Association and holds a position on the Executive Board of The Marketing Society.

Areas of expertise:

- Research and analysis • Marketing operations • Destination strategy • Strategic planning
- Integrated communications • Strategic partnerships • Public relations management
- Crisis communications

Qualifications:

- Master's in Business Administration • Destination Marketing and International Marketing Strategy
- Bachelor's in Business (Marketing and Public Relations)

Length of service: 19 years



Margaret Flanagan

Co-Founder
Tales & Heads

Margaret has spent the last two decades working with brands, businesses, governments and individuals to build and protect their reputations and strengthen bonds with their audiences.

Before launching Tales & Heads, she was Executive Vice President of Strategy & Client Experience at a major WPP communications agency working across the Middle East. Here she developed communications strategies and provided counsel and thought leadership for global blue-chip companies including Ford, Nestlé and Lufthansa; government ministries and agencies; and some of the region's most successful businesses including Jumeriah Group, Art Dubai and Alshaya.

Prior to this, Margaret worked with one of the UK's leading independent agencies from launch at its London and UAE offices on consumer, corporate and public affairs briefs. Originally trained as a journalist, Margaret has developed messaging, media trained and written speeches for leaders in government and industry, from CEOs to Crown Princes. In 2019, she was awarded a Middle East Public Relations Association (MEPRA) Fellowship for her contribution to the industry and now sits on the association's strategy board. She was listed in the PRWeek Middle East Power Book in 2019 and 2020.



Mazar Masud

Senior Director Global
Corporate Communications,
M42

Mazar is UAE Managing Director, leading Edelman's office in the emirate on delivering excellence to clients, including some of the biggest financial and business institutions in the emirate. As well as partnering with clients, he works with regional and EMEA leadership on growth initiatives, developing talent in the UAE, and leading initiatives to achieve client, business and people objectives.

Prior to Edelman, Mazar was a Director at Kekst CNC spearheading the firm's growth in the Middle East as lead client advisor in the UAE and Saudi Arabia and on new business initiatives. He launched Kekst CNC RISE, a dedicated communications platform for the region's disruptive startups. Before Kekst CNC, Mazar was a Director at Powerscourt, one of the UK's leading strategic communications consultancy, where he built the firm's integrated communications business, and also worked at Brunswick for over five years on global mandates.

Mazar has worked in financial and corporate communications for over fifteen years and has extensive experience in capital markets, reputation management, creating and delivering integrated corporate communications campaigns. His passion lies in developing communications strategies to align with and support business objectives and help overcome critical communications challenges. He has advised on various capital markets transactions and corporate campaigns during his career across the Middle East, Africa, Europe and the UK.

Prior to a career in communications, Mazar worked as an auditor at PwC. He graduated with a First in BA (Hons) English from the University of Cambridge.



Mazen Nahawi

CEO CARMA &
SOCIALEYEZ

Mazen Nahawi is the Founder & CEO of CARMA, a global leader in communications and media intelligence dedicated to strengthening clients' communications across the digital and PR Industry. In addition, Nahawi is the Founder & CEO of SOCIALEYEZ, the region's largest independent social media marketing business in the Middle East and the Founder of Interactive Ltd., a software development company focused on eGovernment services. Born and based in the UAE, Mazen embarked on his career in the early days of the internet revolution when internet penetration was less than 50 percent. Recognizing a void in the market, he transitioned from traditional communications to focus on digital and PR media analytics. A pioneer in intelligence and analytics, Mazen was the first to introduce a next-generation portal for analysing and monitoring all forms of media, enabling stakeholders to make informed decisions and deliver measurable and successful ROI.

Under his visionary leadership, CARMA has flourished into a culturally diverse team of over 650 professionals, spanning 19 global offices, including prominent locations in Dubai, London, and Singapore. CARMA's impressive client roster now includes over 3,500 renowned brands and organizations worldwide, such as Aramco, Emirates, HSBC and Expo 2020.

In a remarkable testament to his outstanding career, Mazen was honoured with the prestigious Chairperson's Lifetime Achievement Award by the Middle East PR Association. This distinguished recognition, which was awarded to him during the splendid 2022 MEPRA Awards ceremony on December 8, 2022, celebrates his immense impact on data-driven PR and digital management. This award is a testament to Mazen's commitment to advancing best practices within the PR and communications industry and places him among an exclusive and influential group of individuals.

Furthermore, Mazen was also lauded for his remarkable achievements as he joined the esteemed PRWeek's Dashboard 25 Class of 2023. Dashboard 25 is a celebration of entrepreneurs and industry experts who are driving forward the PR industry. This honour acknowledges Mazen's role in propelling the industry with innovations in AI-powered platforms, media monitoring services, publishing tools, social media management, in-house client teams, and PR agencies.

Mazen Nahawi is not only a business leader but also a thought leader in the media, technology, and communications spheres. He has graced the stages of prominent industry conferences, including those hosted by the Institute for Public Relations (IPR), the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the European Association of Communications Directors (EACD), AMEC and FIBEP. His insights have also resonated with audiences at notable events held by governmental and private sector organizations worldwide, including the US Central Command and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI).

Mazen's impact extends to the MENA region, where he has shared his expertise at regional events organized by trade bodies like ICAEW and MEPRA, as well as academic institutions such as Zayed University, Murdoch University and the American University of Sharjah.

With a wealth of more than 25 years of startup, strategic, and managerial experience, Mazen Nahawi is a Member of the Board of Trustees at the GlobCom Project and serves as the President of News Group International. Additionally, his contributions to the global media analysis and measurement industry have earned him a lifetime fellowship from the International Association of Measurement & Evaluation Companies (AMEC).

Mazen Nahawi's journey began with a bachelor's degree in journalism from Northeastern University and he continues to be an influential figure at the crossroads of media, technology, and communications.



Souad AlSerkal

CEO, Comm-Cation

Souad AlSerkal is a dynamic thought leader and leading strategist with over 20 years of expertise in PR, communications, and government relations. As the visionary founder and CEO of CommCation Consultancy, she redefines client engagement with the motto "Working with us feels like a vacation!"—a refreshing approach that resonates deeply with her clients. In her role, Souad advises high net-worth individuals, offering guidance that seamlessly integrates their professional ambitions with personal aspirations, ensuring a holistic path to success.

In her capacity as co-founder and CEO of Meetswap, she has ingeniously transformed the concept of "connecting people" for the digital age through an innovative application that fosters enriching interactions and collaborations. Her strategic insights and ability to forge meaningful connections are invaluable assets in today's interconnected world.

Prior to her groundbreaking work with CommCation and Meetswap, Souad played a crucial role in spearheading strategic communications for various government and private sector organizations, significantly contributing to Abu Dhabi's emergence as a global investment powerhouse. Her exceptional track record stands as a testament to her remarkable talent for translating visionary ideas into impactful realities, making her a sought-after expert among educators and scholars alike.



Tala Abu Taha

PR Director, Viola
Communications

Currently, Tala is the Director of Public Relations at Viola Communications, heading the Public Relations division at the company, managing the PR team and providing strategic consultations to its many diversified clients in a range of different fields, including public affairs, corporate, consumer, public engagement and media relations across the UAE, MENA region and internationally.

Previously, she worked as the head of regional operation at ASDA'A BCW Global in the UAE, managing 13 offices around the MENA region, and working closely with the heads of all regional offices to manage growth, revenue, and achieve positive positioning for the entities and senior management.

Tala also worked as a Practice Director - Public Affairs at Ketchum-Raad in Dubai, leading Ketchum's team for Kuwait Airways in collaboration with the Kuwaiti government to manage its communications overall throughout its transformation strategy. Previous to this position, Tala was embedded with the Qatar Foundation in Doha as its Communication Director, a secondment arranged through the UK-based PR agency, BLJ Worldwide.

In previous roles, she has held the position of founder and Managing Director for almost 10 years of VARCC Communications and was the co-founder and Deputy Managing Director of TRACCS in Jordan in 2003.

In addition to her PR and communications experience, Tala is a respected and award-winning writer and journalist, having worked at Nox Magazine (Jordan) as Editor in Chief, and Jordanian newspapers Al Arab Al Yawm, Addustour, The Star Weekly, and Arabia.com Middle East.

Tala's skills in communications, public affairs consultation, strategic consultancy, creative solutions and business development are an integral quality that has been recognized by several organizations in Jordan, the Middle East and internationally. These include the John Smith Trust Fund Rule of Law (UK), MEPRA (UAE), Leaders for Democracy Fellowship, (Washington DC), Syracuse University (New York), International Professionals Jordan (IPJ); and many other regional and global organizations.

Taha's experience and knowledge of governmental institutions and social development programs has been finely tuned across the Middle East, having worked with Aktis Strategy UK, on the Integrated Community Security Program in the Middle East hosted in Turkey with regard to Syria. She worked with the USAID governmental institution on its SABEQ program in Jordan, in addition to Media and Capacity Building projects with MSI and Cofey - USA in Turkey for Syria. She has executed many projects within the Jordanian government's initiatives, including developing the Civil Society program and others. Tala was also part of the Japan Government International Cooperation Agency (JICA) project to build awareness and a Capacity Building program in the Baq'a refugee camp in Jordan.

Tala is an active member of MEPRA, the Jordan Forum for Business and Professional Women, and the Jordanian Press Association.

2025 MEPRA Strategy Board Nominees





Abdulqader Abdulbari

Public Relations Lecturer,
King Khalid University

Abdulqader Abdulbari is a public relations lecturer, consultant, and communication strategist with over a decade of experience in academia, industry, and leadership roles. Currently serving as a faculty member at King Khalid University, he specializes in strategic communication, crisis management, and international public relations. Abdulqader is passionate about bridging cultural and professional gaps, empowering emerging PR talents, and fostering innovation in the communication industry.

His professional achievements include leading "Towards Global Excellence", a royal-patronage event, managing high-profile international delegations, and contributing to transformative public relations campaigns.

Abdulqader holds a master's degree in Public Relations from Emerson College and a professional master's in Education from the University of Jeddah. He actively contributes to global discussions through memberships in MEPRA, PRSA, and IPRA, driving collaboration and thought leadership across the communication field.



Adel Maymoon

Corporate Communications
Director, Emirates Steel
Arkan

As a senior Corporate Communications Professional with 15 years of experience in various organisations, including government and private companies, as well as agencies, Adel Maymoon has a wealth of expertise to offer.

He currently serves as the Senior Corporate Communications Manager for Al-Futtaim Group, a diversified and progressive regional family business headquartered in Dubai, UAE, where he is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the company's communications, public relations, and media relations efforts.

Additionally, Adel is an active thought leader in the field, regularly sharing his insights and experience through daily posts on his LinkedIn profile, covering topics such as corporate communications, public relations, marketing, and social media.

Throughout his career, Adel has successfully delivered over 60 corporate communications projects, ranging from strategy formation to execution and activation across all platforms. He has hands-on experience in managing teams, working with CEOs, boards, and other stakeholders, and is a native Arabic speaker and fluent in English, both in writing and speaking.

With a track record of delivering results in the UAE and GCC, Adel is a valuable asset to any organisation looking to enhance their communication and marketing efforts.

Adel is also a member of the Media Department External Advisory Committee at UOWD.



Ananda Shakespeare is a former journalist turned PR practitioner, and a lifelong environmentalist and vegan advocate. She founded two environmental charities in the UK, and currently runs two non-profit groups, one for the vegan community and 'vegan curious', another for the media community, both based in Dubai, UAE. She spent several years as head of content for a telecoms firm, before founding her own PR firm, Shakespeare Communications, which works with clients which have at least one of the following touchpoints: vegan, vegetarian, organic, sustainable, ethical or innovative.

Ananda Shakespeare

Founder & CEO,
Shakespeare
Communications



Bonny Lawrie

Consultant, Strategic
Marketing and
Communications

Previously worked at ADIO, Her team and agency partners have the fantastic job of promoting Abu Dhabi globally as a place to invest, work and live. In the three years she has been with ADIO, her focus has been growing a team of in-house and agency members who feel empowered to think and create outside the typical government communications box.

Before ADIO, Bonny spent nine years working across the Edelman network in the UAE, Middle East, North Africa, India, Australia, and Asia. During her time at Edelman, she led the integrated marketing work for clients including Microsoft, BlackBerry (back in the day when we all had one), LinkedIn, Telstra (Australia's Etisalat equivalent), Shell, Starbucks and lots of other fun ones.

Bonny started her career in radio and has a Bachelor of Arts in Media & Communication from Swinburne University in Melbourne, Australia. Craziest career highlight – working on the launch of Slovenia's Next Top Model.



Budoor Al Yousuf

Director, Burson

Budoor is an Emirati PR and Marketing professional with more than 15 years experience in the field. Her experience includes working in major government entities in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, today Budoor's role is focused on bringing her government and client-side experience to Burson. She is also supporting Burson in their Emirati Graduate Trainee program.

Budoor comes with intensive knowledge and experience in the UAE government sector and supports Burson across all its practices by adding depth and insight to their clients, some of these clients include ADNOC, Masdar, Mubadala, NAFIS and EGA. She also leads Burson's Emirati Graduate Programme in support of the vision of the UAE, offering young and ambitious Emirati graduates the opportunity to train and grow at the agency.

Prior to joining Burson, Budoor worked in several industries such as Manufacturing, Media, Philanthropy, Youth Development, Art and Culture. Her specialties range across the marketing mix including brand launches, large scale events, government communications, international advertising campaigns, social media management, crisis counsel and community outreach, and she has executed these disciplines in marketing and communication roles with organizations including twofour54, Emirates Foundation for Youth Development and the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi.

Budoor is a member of the MEPRA Strategy Board and holds a Masters degree in Innovation and Entrepreneurship which allows her to have a different insight and approach to her thought process and how she supports and manages projects. She is also certified in Crisis Management and International Protocol and Etiquette.



Dahlia Mahmoud

Professor of Visual &
Experience Design, MA
Program, University of Europe

A Higher Education senior strategist with a direct focus on Institutional Advancement in the Cultural and Creative industries. Leveraging media, PR and outreach to produce demonstrable success in developing Creative Professional Programs. Her career centers on implementing innovative R&D, design experience strategies and entrepreneurial initiatives. Professor Mahmoud, an executive communicator, teaches creative approaches to digital storytelling within the MENA & GCC academic structures. Bringing interdisciplinary pedagogy with future forward professional practice programs. This is enhanced by her working knowledge of regional ministry standards, local and international accreditation bodies, for current and newly applied programs. Her research is predominantly focused on the practice-based and applied learning in her realm. Championing DEI and tolerance across academic and non academic projects alike. Over the past two decades, creative enterprises mentored have promoted UNSDG and specifically women and youth empowerment. In the UAE her government projects include launching applied innovative solution-based creative practice projects for the PMO, and the Executive Office of Dubai. Working on Design and Technology curricula, executive design development programs and the Masterpieces initiative for the Ministry of Education. Leading R&D on the Future Forecast study 2071 as well as lead expertise on Higher Education Institutions for the Ministry of Culture and Youth CCI sector. Consulting for international firms and serving on executive boards, with the local context in mind, continues to inspire new directions for her commitment to life long learning.



Denise Yammine Chouity

Director of Operations,
Grey Doha

Denise Yammine currently leads on Grey Doha's daily agency operation.

As Director of Operations, she has been influential in setting the agency's long-term goals and realizing operational objectives while upholding the organization's ethos and standards of excellence.

She has been a key player in accelerating the transformation of the client servicing approach from a department led method to an integrated model that helped both clients and agency team speak 'communications' while covering all what it entails; Creative, PR, Social Media, Digital, Production and Technology.

In her current endeavor, Denise ensures the agency team is business driven while pushing creativity to serve yearly KPIs. She also works closely with the agency leadership exploring growth plans, talent development schemes, and awards submissions.

While holding her previous title as Head of PR and Social Media, she bagged several prestigious PR and Social Media wins at MEPRA, PRWEEK Global, CIPR, Lisbon International Advertising Festival and STEVIE Awards Middle East. Her success stems from her diversity of expertise built from over 2 decades of experience in Communication & Journalism in the Middle East region.

Denise is fluent in Arabic, English and French and holds a master's degree in Media and Communication from the Lebanese University, Beirut.



Elena Gramatica

Founding Partner and CEO,
SEC Newgate Middle East

Founding Partner and CEO of SEC Newgate Middle East www.secnewgate.ae.

With a degree in Arabic at Ca' Foscari University, Elena began her professional activities in communications and marketing management at Il Sole 24 ORE group in Milan, where she worked for ten years.

After moving to Dubai with her family in 2010 she became Account Director for the Luxury and Consumer sector at MS&L (Leo Burnett Group)

In 2013 she met Twister's partners and founded Twister Middle East. In 2021 SEC Newgate acquired a 70 per cent stake in Twister Middle East and the Dubai-based agency was renamed SEC Newgate Middle East.

Elena leads an international team of specialists, personally overseeing professional work for clients and making a rich wealth of competences and experience available to them. Recognized by PR Week's Global Power Book as one of the most influential communications strategist in the Middle East

<https://www.prweek.com/power-book/middleeast/2022/elena-gramatica/77b8be6d-dc8d-g6eb-dae1-d79c6fbe1fe7>.



Gareth Wynn

Chief Communications
Officer, TAQA

Gareth Wynn serves as TAQA's Chief Communications Officer, a position he has held since January 2021. In this role, he oversees branding, external and internal communications, government advocacy, stakeholder relations and corporate social responsibility for the Group.

Mr. Wynn has three decades of experience as a senior communications leader in international energy organisations. He most recently served as Stakeholder and Communications Director for Offshore Energies UK, the leading representative organization for the UK offshore energy industry. He has also held key senior management positions at EDF Energy and FTI Consulting.

Mr. Wynn holds a Bachelor of Science in Microbiology and Microbial Technology with honors from the University of Warwick.



Ghaleb Zeidan

Regional Managing Director
for UAE, Culture, Learning &
Development, and
Partnership, Weber
Shandwick MENAT

With over 17 years' experience in media and public relations, Ghaleb heads up Weber Shandwick UAE. He joined the agency in 2010 and brings expertise in consumer, corporate, financial and government communications, as well as employee engagement, speaker training and issues and crisis management. His sector expertise includes aviation, education, energy, finance, healthcare and tourism.

Client experience includes the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi, Qasr Al Watan, the World Health Organization (WHO) and Yas Island, in addition to several NGOs. He provided senior counsel to numerous mergers in the region.

Currently, Ghaleb provides counsel to a range of local and federal government clients, including TikTok, Uber, Gulf Business Machines, UBF, FAB, SCAD, and the UAE Ministry of Finance (MoF).

Before joining the agency, Ghaleb managed a client portfolio that included Air Arabia, Aramex, Dubai Bank, Dubai Financial Market, Dubai Islamic Bank and SEDDCO.

Ghaleb holds a Diploma in Diplomatic and International Relations from the Beirut Arab University and a BA in Political and Administrative Science from the Lebanese University in Beirut. He is fluent in Arabic and English. Ghaleb was named 'PR Leader of the Year' at the 2019 PRCA MENA Awards.



Heba Fatani

Director General, RAK
Government Media Office

In her role as Director General of Ras Al Khaimah Government Media Office (RAKGMO), Ms. Heba Fatani oversees the media and communications strategy for the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah.

RAKGMO's comprehensive remit entails managing the media affairs of His Highness Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah, in addition to highlighting Ras Al Khaimah's numerous achievements, objectively reporting its news and activities, promoting its advantages as a place to live and work, and formulating communication policies that support its development goals. The Office manages relationships and coordination between the Government of Ras Al Khaimah and local, regional and international media, and also directs any crisis communications in line with the Emirate's reputation management strategy. Providing astute leadership, Ms. Fatani ensures that RAKGMO fulfills its mandate to improve Ras Al Khaimah's positioning regionally and globally, and that its successes are accurately and clearly communicated to a wide audience, taking into consideration the Emirate's strategic vision and goals to attract investment, livability, and tourism. Ms. Fatani brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise in high-level government and corporate communications to RAKGMO. Prior to taking up her position, she was Senior Executive Manager of Corporate Communications for Kingdom Holding Company (Saudi Arabia) – one of the world's largest and most diversified public investment companies. Here, she directed communications for both the company and its founder, His Royal Highness Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal bin Abdulaziz; investor, philanthropist, member of the Saudi royal family, and previously reported by Time magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world. Ms. Fatani moves easily between the business worlds of East and West, participating in numerous global events with a view to highlighting Ras Al Khaimah's many achievements, and placing special emphasis on the inspirational role that His Highness Sheikh Saud plays in the United Arab Emirates and increasingly, around the world.



Ibrahim Al Mutawaa

Managing Director, Jummar
PR Communications

Ibrahim Al-Mutawa is the co-founder and Managing Director of the Riyadh-based Jummar PR, providing communication consultancy for organizations, entities, and companies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

At the heart of the Journalism and PR business for over two decades, Al-Mutawa has been leading Jummar since 2021 and has supervised expanding the company portfolio to include prominent clients in different disciplines, including SRMG, flynas, Muslim World League, Almajdiah Residence, and Burgerizzr IPO.

Prior to joining Jummar, Al-Mutawa had a three-year stint with BCW, leading their Saudi operations as a Vice President.

Throughout his journalism career, Al-Mutawa worked with several leading business news titles. He was a treasury correspondent for Reuters Bureau in Riyadh and, earlier, a KSA correspondent for Forbes Arabia. Before that, he started his career with SRMG's publications.

Al-Mutawa holds a Certificate in public administration and has completed several specialized courses in financial journalism and marketing communications both inside and outside Saudi Arabia.



Joe Lipscombe

Partner, Head of MENA
The Romans

Joe Lipscombe is leading the transformation of The Romans in the UAE. Here, he brings his hands-on, unconventional leadership skills to solving complex business problems across the MENA region, championing new and innovative ways of creating disproportionate value for clients and agency.

He's spent 12 years learning the cultural and contextual nuances of the Middle East, covering 12 countries, spending ample time working in eight.

He focuses on driving excellence and growth through capacity building, working with government, semi-government, and private sector clients, introducing them to new and unconventional ways of problem solving. For this, he utilizes neuroscience, behavioral science, and experimentation, ensuring clients are applying both vertical and lateral thinking when addressing unique market challenges.

Joe is a cited author on published scientific research on the neuroscience of storytelling and has delivered major keynotes on the same, including at the UN's Global Goals Week. He is the market's voice for illogical approaches to illogical challenges — combining science, observation, data, and instinct to create creative solutions that work.

He is a two-time Cannes Lion winner, was Mematic Ogilvy PR's youngest ever member of The One Club for Creativity, and has won a bucket load of awards for transformative campaigns and projects.

Across the region, he has advised major clients and entities, including, Expo 2020 Dubai, Royal Commission for Riyadh City, The Egyptian Ministry of Finance, Arab Bank, Qatar Foundation, the Public Investment Fund, Coca-Cola, Google, JLR, Turkish Airlines, Majid Al Futtaim, GEMS Education, The Abu Dhabi Department of Culture & Tourism, and many more. He is a member of The One Club for Creativity and a Cannes Gold Lion winner in PR. He was previously the region's first Executive Creative & Strategy Director for Ogilvy PR.

A British-trained journalist, Joe has reported for Sky News, Bloomberg Businessweek, Forbes, multiple national newspapers and several other television stations. He has covered regional politics, policy, conflict, health, technology, lifestyle, economics, and more. He is a two-time published author, including the extended essay, The Art and Science of Better Storytelling.



Khaled Al Shehhi

Executive Director
Marketing and
Communications, UAE
Government Media Office

Khaled AlShehhi revolutionizes marketing communication in the MENA region as the visionary leader at the UAE Government Media Office. His innovative, human-centric strategies have significantly shaped the global perception of governmental messaging, making it more engaging and impactful. In the 2022 Effie Index rankings, the UAE Government Media Office was ranked fourth among the most effective brands globally.

Khaled's distinguished achievements include the 2022 World Media Group Award for Content Leadership & Innovation, the title of Advertising Person of the Year at Dubai Lynx 2023, the 2022 Effie MENA Honorary Award, and the 2023 Loeries Marketing Leadership and Innovation Award, marking him as the first Middle Eastern recipient in its 45-year history. He has received over 220 awards from some of the most prestigious creative and marketing shows globally. Additionally, Khaled was featured in Arabian Business' 2021 Power List of individuals shaping the future of the Middle East. He also holds leadership and board member roles in various organizations, reflecting his significant influence and expertise in the industry.

These recognitions highlight his profound impact and dedication to advancing marketing practices in the MENA region. A beacon of creativity and leadership, Khaled inspires with his belief in the power of creativity to enact positive change, making him not only a marketing luminary but also a visionary shaping the discourse of communication worldwide.



Kiera Purdue

Managing Partner,
StickyGinger

Kiera Purdue is Managing Partner of StickyGinger – a creative communications agency with 3 divisions: PR, Social and Creative Studio – headquartered in Dubai with team based across UAE, KSA, London and Egypt. Studying English Language and Literature at Manchester University led her into the field of advertising, as part of the Graduate Placement scheme at McCann Erickson Manchester where she worked in Client Servicing for 2 years. Moving as an Account Manager to BJL, an independent advertising agency in Manchester, Kiera spent 3 years working on flagship accounts across industries before moving to Dubai in 2006.

Kiera's one and only agency role in Dubai was as Account Director at Saatchi & Saatchi working on accounts such as Marriott and Majid Al Futtaim, before setting up StickyGinger in 2008, with her business partner, Lucy Freeman. Kiera's role as both partner and New Business Development has allowed her to expand her experience both as an owner, as well as a communications specialist – now leading a team of 44 across PR, Social, Digital, Insights and Creative, producing award-winning, globally recognised work for the MENA region.



Kirsty O'Connor

Regional Director of
Innovation, Burson

Kirsty leads the day-to-day operations of Burson's Innovation + Creative Hub, cascading transformation and innovation across its Middle East, Turkey, India and Africa offices. She specialises in digital and data technology, sitting across Burson's sector teams to optimise client work and support the continuous evolution of communications.

During her six years at H+K and in the Middle East, she has driven digital strategies for global brands including adidas, Meta, Dubai Holding and P&G and data strategies for tourism bodies including the Royal Commission of AlUla and DCT.



Lisa King

Co-Founder, Tales & Heads

Lisa has helped brands tell their stories for nearly 20 years in London and Dubai – both with global agencies and client side. Before co-founding Tales & Heads, she led the consumer practice at one of WPP's largest agencies based in the UAE and covering the Middle East and North Africa.

Lisa is passionate about creative, content and popular culture and works across disciplines and geographies to deliver integrated campaigns that change perceptions and influence behaviour.

She has developed strategies, driven innovation and handled reputational challenges for major brands across EMEA including IHG, P&G, B&Q, TUI Group, Britvic, Jumeirah Group, Dubai Tourism and Lufthansa.

She has negotiated and activated brand partnerships with high profile talent and events across film & television, sport, fashion and music for many of her clients including Holiday Inn's sponsorship of the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Lisa has a degree in English Literature and a post-graduate diploma in public & media relations.



Lynn Al Khatib

Group Head of
Communication,
Chalhoub Group

Lynn Al Khatib is Group Head of Communication at Chalhoub Group, the largest retailer and distributor of luxury brands in the Middle East and North Africa. She brings over 15 years of corporate and brand communication experience to her current role, which includes building the Group's corporate brand and communication strategy, managing social media channels, keeping team members informed through internal communications, crisis management, as well as managing external communications and stakeholder relationships.

Lynn joined Chalhoub Group in 2021 after more than two years as the Global Nutrition, Health, and Wellness Communication Manager at Nestlé S.A, where she worked from the world's leading food and beverage company's headquarters in Switzerland on bridging corporate, scientific, and consumer information. She particularly led the development of an on-pack modular system that allows brands to communicate their purpose and impact in society.

She had first joined Nestlé as a Corporate Nutritionist at the Company's Middle East headquarters in Dubai in 2007, leading regional campaigns to bring nutritional science to consumers, the media, and stakeholders in the region. Later, Lynn established the regional corporate communications strategy at Nestlé Middle East and contributed to building trust in the Company through consistent and credible online and traditional communication.

In her role as Media Relations and Internal Communications Manager between 2013-2019, she operated as the Company's spokesperson, led crisis communication, established governance within her departments, and trained senior leaders. Her role also entailed building understanding and awareness of the notion of Creating Shared Value; and promoting public and private sector partnerships to generate societal, economic, and environmental impact. Lynn holds a Master-Degree in Nutrition and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nutrition and Dietetics from the American University of Beirut.

A proud working mother of two boys, Lynn's personal passion is to help people lead healthier and more active lives.



Mahmoud Fansa

Regional Communications
Director , GE Vernova

Mahmoud is a senior communications strategist with more than 20 years of experience working with diverse global teams and clients across multiple sectors, including government, infrastructure, transportation, manufacturing, technology, and sustainability. In his current role, he oversees strategy development and execution of both external and internal communications in the region to support GE Vernova's 12 businesses and accelerators across the energy value chain.

Previously, he held senior positions in leading organizations and global agencies such as the head of communications at TECOM Group supporting its portfolio of 10 sector-specific business districts and startup incubators, and the head of communications at UASC, a global shipping line that merged later with Hapag Lloyd, where he managed key global projects including the introduction of the world's first LNG-ready large container vessel fleet. Mahmoud also held senior positions at Hill & Knowlton and BCW. In addition to extensive UAE and Pan Arab experience managing clients and projects across MENA, Mahmoud's understanding of global geopolitical, economic and media developments has seen him lead communications projects and media trainings in Washington DC, London, Paris, Brussels, Kuala Lumpur and Riyadh.

Mahmoud holds a bachelor's degree in Journalism and Mass Communications from Yarmouk University – Jordan, and a master's degree in Strategic Marketing from the University of Wollongong.



Noura Al Sarraj

Deputy Managing Director,
Weber Shandwick Abu
Dhabi

With over 19 years of experience in strategic communications, reputation building and executive training, Noura heads the Abu Dhabi Weber Shandwick office. She holds specific expertise in consumer marcomms, corporate reputation, destination marketing, issues management & crisis communications, reputation management and senior executive coaching.

During her time at the agency, Noura has led strategic communications programmes for clients across a range of areas, including environment, healthcare, and entertainment, at MENA, European, and international levels.

Noura is an Advisory Board Member for the Mass Communication Program at the College of Arts & Sciences in Abu Dhabi University, and an active Strategy Board Member for the Middle East PR Association (MEPRA). She is also the Weber Shandwick representative for the Middle East Communications Network's (MCN) D, E & I Council which is helping drive the equality and inclusivity agenda across the group of companies in the region.



Oisín Commene

Head, Thought Leadership
and Programming ADSW,
Masdar

Oisín has a twenty-year record of accomplishment working in communications, B2B media and event. Since 2018 he has been Head of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week working in the Brand and Strategic Initiatives Division of Masdar.

He moved to the Middle East in 2007 to take up a role with MEED, the regional business information publisher and then worked for Streamline Marketing Group for seven years. Previous positions were with Terrapinn and Euromoney PLC in London.



Polly Williams

Managing Director, TishTash
Communications

Born and educated in the UK, having studied to Masters level at Goldsmiths University London, Polly Williams has spent the last 20 years working with some of the biggest beauty and wellness brands around the globe.

Having originally started her career in PR in London for luxury fashion brands, Polly has since gone on to work in roles across the marketing mix, enabling her to provide effective 360-degree marketing and communications solutions for clients.

Before moving to Dubai in 2015, Polly spent four years in Asia working with P&G and LVMH and in leading agencies such as MediaCom and ZenithOptimedia.

Polly joined independent award winning agency TishTash Communications in 2015 as Group Account Director working across accounts including Johnson & Johnson Group, before being appointed as Managing Director in 2019, overseeing all new business, client teams and the TishTash Tots family and mum focused division. Polly is also responsible for launching new divisions under the TishTash umbrella which currently include Ten by TishTash their new corporate division, as well as TishTash performance, the data focused digital arm of TishTash.

Polly is a passionate advocate for flexible working for all, as well as a champion for working mothers.



Radwa Allabban

Founder & Managing
Director, Place
Communications

Radwa Allabban is an experienced, international brand management and communications professional with 20 years of experience in Corporate, B2B, and not-for-profit sectors. Radwa's career has seen her work across multiple geographies and diverse cultures. She has intimate knowledge of both the UK and MENA markets and is bilingual in English and Arabic.

In 1999, Radwa started a career in marketing communications and was part of the team behind the launch of Egypt's first mobile communications network. As one of the youngest executives in the strategic marketing team, her learning curve was steep and in four years Radwa was ready to take on a bigger challenge as a Senior Liaison Officer with the Xceed, one of the largest outsourcing services providers in the Middle East and Africa. This role introduced her to the world of public affairs and government relations and afforded her the opportunity to work with ministries of telecommunications across the region, regulatory authorities, and NGOs. It was also during this time that Radwa built a strong corporate and B2B communications experience.

In the following years, Radwa lived and worked in Manama, Bahrain and London where she was a member in the corporate communications practices of Ogilvy PR Worldwide, Burson- Marsteller UK and Good Relations, working on some of the world's most recognised brands such as, American Express, Shell and HP. Radwa also worked for Dyson UK as an International PR Manager looking after B2B, B2C communications and product launches in 10 across markets in EMEA, Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

An Abu Dhabi resident since 2011, Radwa joined M&N Place during the same year as General Manager and acquired the business in 2015, rebranding it Place Communications. Under her leadership, the agency diversified its client portfolio and currently manages projects for several high-profile clients, including UN Women, Special Olympics UAE, ADNOC, Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi, twofour54 and Image Nation Abu Dhabi.



Rasha Ghanem

Director, Public Affairs &
Communications, Ford
Middle East

As Communications Director for the Middle East, Rasha Ghanem oversees all integrated communications around the Ford and Lincoln brands across the region. Rasha has more than 16 years' experience as a comms leader across various automotive, retail, F&B, art and culture and technology brands, both in-house and through roles at some of the region's most renowned PR and comms agencies.

Similar to other leaders across the business, Rasha is committed to living by the values championed by the Ford+ vision, which seeks to help the company turn around automotive operations, disrupt itself, compete like a challenger, and treat customers like family.

In Rasha's three years leading the comms team, Ford Middle East successfully established and communicated the Distributor Center of Excellence, which brings together more than 80 distributor markets across the Middle East, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia Pacific regions.

She also oversaw the successful launch of Ford Bronco, Taurus, Territory and Ranger Raptor in the Middle East, with highly effective campaigns through social and traditional media capitalizing on the triumphant return of one of Ford's most iconic models.

Prior to this, over Rasha's seven-year tenure as Team Lead at ASDA'A BCW, her team delivered several innovative campaigns, including the award-winning 'Welcome to the Driver Seat', which celebrated Saudi women driving, and the reveal of Ford's Mustang on top of Burj Khalifa in 2014.

Ford is not the only automotive brand Rasha has worked with. She has previously served as Products Communications Manager at General Motors (GM) Middle East Operations, later becoming Social Media Manager for GM in the Middle East. Prior to joining GM, she managed Volvo as a client at Ogilvy & Mather.

While Rasha has managed a diverse portfolio of non-automotive brands over the course of her career – including Nestlé, Beiersdorf, Samsung, Huawei, UNHCR, Bridgestone and Art Dubai – her true passion lies with cars. She is known by her colleagues as a 'passionate servant leader'.

Rasha likes to spend her free time with her two children, traveling, catching up with friends and scoping out the latest trends on social media.



Rishi Talwalker

Director – Strategy & Growth, HAVAS Red ME

Rishi is a seasoned marketing and communications professional, having managed complex relationships in agency and in-house roles since 2005. He has worked with holding companies and multinational organisations across a width of sectors including corporate, retail, real estate, travel, aviation, food & beverage and hospitality.

A specialist in strategic communications, Rishi employs a creative approach combining tools across traditional and digital platforms to deliver impactful campaigns for clients.

He is experienced in diverse disciplines such as corporate communications, corporate responsibility, social media, marketing collaborations, communications for activations, influencer management and crisis management.



Samir Hammad

Founder, Columna Agency

Samir Hammad is a highly respected figure in the communications industry, with over two decades of experience spanning journalism, in-house communications, and consultancy. His career has been defined by leadership in executive profiling, strategic counsel, and thought leadership development.

Samir is the Founder and CEO of Columna Media Consultancy, a strategic Communications Firm Established in Abu Dhabi, 2024, where he is focused on leading the strategic narratives, media training, and Communications operations for his clients portfolio.

As an Executive Board Member of the Middle East Public Relations Association (MEPRA) since 2022, and the Vice Chairman of the Public Relations and Digital Media Working Group at Abu Dhabi Chamber since 2024, Samir has been instrumental in advancing communication standards across the region. His strategic insights and leadership have influenced both corporate and government sectors in the UAE.

Previously and for almost a decade, Samir served as the Chief Executive at Four Agency Worldwide (2015 – 2024) in the MENA region, where he significantly expanded the agency's portfolio and achieved remarkable growth. Before this role, Samir was the Head of Social Communications at the Federal Authority for Identity & Citizenship (2011 – 2015), where he led communications for the UAE Population Registration campaign for the Emirates ID system. He also held the position of Regional Public Relations & Events Manager at Mashreq Bank (2010 – 2011), providing strategic counsel to H.E. Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair, the former CEO of Mashreq Bank and Speaker of the UAE Federal National Council.

Samir holds a B.A. in Journalism & Mass Communications from An-Najah National University and began his career in journalism, focusing on financial markets and economic reporting for prominent media outlets such as Al Bayan and Al Ittihad (2002 – 2010).



Sarah Nahawi

HR Director, CARMA

Sarah has been with the company for over 20 years. Sarah created and built up the Client Success department at CARMA. This department handles over 1,000 client accounts, servicing commercial and government accounts both regionally and globally. Currently Sarah holds the position of HR Director, Strategic Partnerships MENA. Dubai has been home to Sarah and her family for 27 years and counting.



Teri O'donnell

Founding Partner,
Manara Global

Teri is a leading reputation management specialist with over twenty years' global experience. Teri co-founded Manara Global in March 2019 with Robin Gordon-Farleigh, a veteran of the UK Government who worked at Number 10 Downing Street advising two UK Prime Ministers.

Throughout Teri's career she has had the pleasure of working in a strategic advisory capacity for range of clients across the full spectrum of 'purpose-led' marketing and communications – insight and planning, executive positioning and training, narrative development and messaging, brand identity and architecture, culture and values consultancy, communications strategy and infrastructure development.

Previously, as partner at Freuds London, Teri counseled founders and boards belonging to some of the world's biggest and most established businesses and brands – both public and private, across a range of industries; professional services, oil and gas, technology, energy, food and beverage, health and well-being. Teri worked with leaders who have had the ambition and commitment to make a positive difference on the world around us and she has successfully counseled and partnered with some of the world's leading CEOs, founders, High Net Worth Individuals and Family Offices in personal reputation building.

With a career spanning the globe from New Zealand to London, to the Middle East via the USA, Teri's broad worldview, optimism and dedication is the key to her ability to always expand the possibilities for her clients, and deliver beyond their expectations.

Most recently Teri has been Managing Director in the Middle East for a global communications agency, working on business and government clients. Teri is on the Middle East Public Relations Association (MEPRA) strategy board, is on the board of Global Women in Public Relations (GWPW) MENA and is a committed professional mentor.

Teri very much believes that reputation is driven by great leadership and is representative of what a group of individuals do rather than what they say.