



FRANCHISE FORUM

MAGAZINE

september 2025

AT THE HEART OF THE FRANCHISE AND
ORGANIZED RETAIL INDUSTRY IN
AFRICA

SPECIAL EDITION



AHMED EL SAADANY
CO-FOUNDER, F&B; PILLARS / ORGANIZER OF AFEX 2025

« AFRICA FRANCHISE EXPO 2025:
CATALYZING FRANCHISE EXPANSION
IN AFRICA FROM EGYPT »

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FRANCHISING IN AFRICA: A COLLECTIVE MOMENTUM FOR SHARED GROWTH.

Dear readers,

As the African continent accelerates its economic transformation, franchising is emerging as a powerful driver of innovation, entrepreneurship, and regional integration. It is within this dynamic context that the Africa Franchise Expo 2025 (AFEX 2025) will be held in Cairo, Egypt — one of the most anticipated business events of the year and a flagship gathering for Africa's franchising ecosystem.

Cairo, chosen as host city, is no mere backdrop. As a strategic crossroads between Africa, the Middle East, and global markets, it embodies the very ambitions that franchising seeks to realize across the continent: inclusive growth, job creation, economic diversification, and international reach.

AFEX 2025 is more than an exhibition — it is a platform of opportunity. A launchpad for international brands looking to enter African markets, as well as for local enterprises aiming to franchise, scale, and expand beyond borders.

Through high-impact exhibitions in sectors such as food & beverage, retail, education, healthcare, and services, alongside expert-led workshops and panels on franchise development, legal frameworks, and sustainable growth strategies, the event offers a comprehensive space for learning, collaboration, and innovation.



Naki Bernard ZOBO

Editorial Director

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General Manager of FRANCHISES AGREGATOR

Moreover, AFEX 2025 is a call to unity — an invitation extended to all stakeholders across the franchising ecosystem: franchisors, franchisees, investors, government institutions, legal and financial advisors, business consultants, and aspiring entrepreneurs.

The strength of franchising in Africa lies not only in proven business models, but in our collective ability to come together around a shared vision: a structured, sustainable, and globally connected entrepreneurship ecosystem.

That is why we urge every player, pioneer, and visionary in the franchising world to unite behind AFEX 2025. By participating, you are not only growing your business — you are helping build a stronger, more inclusive, and more dynamic franchising landscape across Africa.

The future of African franchising is being shaped here, now, together.

Let us be present. Let us be united. Let us be AFEX 2025.

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AHMED EL SAADANY

CO-FOUNDER, F&B; PILLARS / ORGANIZER OF
AFEX 2025

«AFEX 2025: CATALYZING FRANCHISE EXPANSION IN AFRICA FROM EGYPT»

On the eve of AFEX 2025, a major event dedicated to the development of franchising in Africa, we had the pleasure of speaking with Ahmed El Saadany, co-founder of F&B Pillars and lead organizer of AFEX 2025.

A passionate advocate for entrepreneurial growth across the African continent, Mr. El Saadany embodies a new generation of leaders positioning Africa as a strategic destination for international franchise expansion.

In this interview, he shares his ambitious vision, discusses the challenges and opportunities of the African market, and highlights the pivotal role AFEX plays in helping global brands and investors establish a sustainable presence in this dynamic and promising region.

Discover the story behind an event set to place Cairo—and Africa—at the heart of the global franchising ecosystem.

Mr. Ahmed, could you introduce yourself and tell us what drives your work in franchising?

I am Ahmed El Saadany, Co-Founder of F&B; Pillars and part of the organizing team behind AFEX 2025.

My journey in franchising started with a belief that Africa holds enormous untapped potential.

What drives me every day is helping entrepreneurs and international brands find real, sustainable pathways to grow in markets that are fast-developing but often misunderstood.

What is the vision behind AFEX 2025?

Our vision is clear: to position Egypt and Africa as global hubs for franchise expansion and long-term investment. AFEX 2025 is designed as more than an exhibition.

It is a gateway where investors, franchisors, and entrepreneurs can connect, exchange knowledge, and form partnerships that will shape the next decade of growth.

Why did you choose Cairo as the host city?

Cairo is a natural choice. Egypt is not only a country with a growing middle class and dynamic market, but also a geographic and cultural bridge between Africa, the Middle East, and Europe.

Hosting AFEX 2025 here highlights Egypt's strategic role and demonstrates its readiness to welcome global partnerships.

How does AFEX 2025 make it easier for brands and investors to enter African markets?

Many international players see Africa as fragmented or complex. AFEX simplifies that.

Through curated matchmaking sessions, leadership summits, and networking platforms, we bring together the right stakeholders under one roof. Instead of searching alone, brands can find vetted investors, consultants, and government support in one place. That accelerates entry and reduces risk.

What can exhibitors and attendees expect as key highlights of AFEX 2025?

They can expect: - 100+ brands from 20+ countries showcasing opportunities. - A Leadership Summit with practical strategies and operational insights. - The AFEX Awards & Gala Dinner, recognizing outstanding brands and boosting credibility. - One-on-one investor meetings, media exposure, and a platform that continues even after the two-day event. It's not just about visibility; it's about creating deals and lasting partnerships.

Which sectors hold the most promise in Africa for franchising?

Food & Beverage is leading — with demand for trusted brands and modern dining experiences growing rapidly. But we also see strong momentum in retail, healthcare, education, wellness, and IT services. Africa's young population and urbanization create opportunities across multiple industries.

What challenges do you see for brands entering Africa, and how can they overcome them?

The main challenges are lack of local knowledge, fragmented regulations, and finding reliable partners. The way to overcome these is collaboration — working with advisors, consultants, and local stakeholders who understand the market. That's exactly the role

F&B; Pillars and AFEX are designed to play.

What is your long-term vision for AFEX?

In the next five years, I see AFEX becoming the premier franchise platform for Africa, recognized globally like Paris or London franchise shows. Cairo 2025 is just the beginning—the goal is to create an annual institution that puts Africa firmly on the franchising world map.

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Shaping the Future of Franchising in Africa

Africa is on the rise — and with it comes an unprecedented wave of opportunities in business, entrepreneurship, and investment. On September 22–23, 2025, the Africa Franchise Expo (AFEX) will take place at the prestigious Gewan Hotel in Cairo, Egypt, bringing together the brightest minds, most ambitious investors, and world-class franchise brands under one roof.

AFEX 2025 is more than just an expo—it is a movement designed to unlock Africa's vast potential by introducing global brands, nurturing local concepts, and empowering entrepreneurs to scale across borders.

This premier event serves as a powerful business platform where franchisors, investors, and aspiring franchisees can explore meaningful partnerships and engage in high-potential ventures.



Our Mission and Vision

Mission

To connect franchisees, investors, and industry leaders through a dynamic platform that promotes business development, strategic partnerships, and knowledge exchange across the world.



Vision

To position Africa and Egypt in particular — as premier global hubs for franchise expansion and long-term investment in the world's fastest-growing markets.



With Africa's rapidly growing consumer base, urbanization, and youthful demographic, the franchise industry is poised for exponential growth. AFEX provides the strategic bridge between opportunity and execution.



What Awaits You at AFEX 2025

Conference & Leadership Summit

- A two-day knowledge-packed summit led by global thought leaders, franchise experts, and seasoned entrepreneurs. Expect insightful discussions, case studies, and strategies on everything from scaling franchise operations to navigating investment climates across Africa.

AFEX Awards & Gala Dinner

- Celebrating excellence in franchising, the AFEX Awards will honor trailblazers, innovators, and industry leaders making remarkable contributions to the franchise sector. The gala dinner doubles as an exclusive networking event where connections are deepened over fine dining.

Meet and Connect!

- The true power of AFEX lies in its ability to foster meaningful connections. Whether you are an investor seeking high-growth brands, a franchisor looking for the right partner, or a professional offering support services—AFEX creates the space for collaboration that lasts beyond the event.

Exhibitor Categories



From established international brands to homegrown African business concepts, the expo highlights the richness of opportunities awaiting investors and entrepreneurs.

Behind the Brilliant Minds of Africa Franchise Expo



Khaled Al Maeena

Arab Business Media Group
Chairman



Dr. M.A. Babu

Arab Business Media Group
Director



Mohammed Allhyan

F&B Pillars President & Co-founder



Ahmed Elsaadany

F&B Pillars CEO & Co-founder



Bea Bagac

F&B Pillars Franchise Manager
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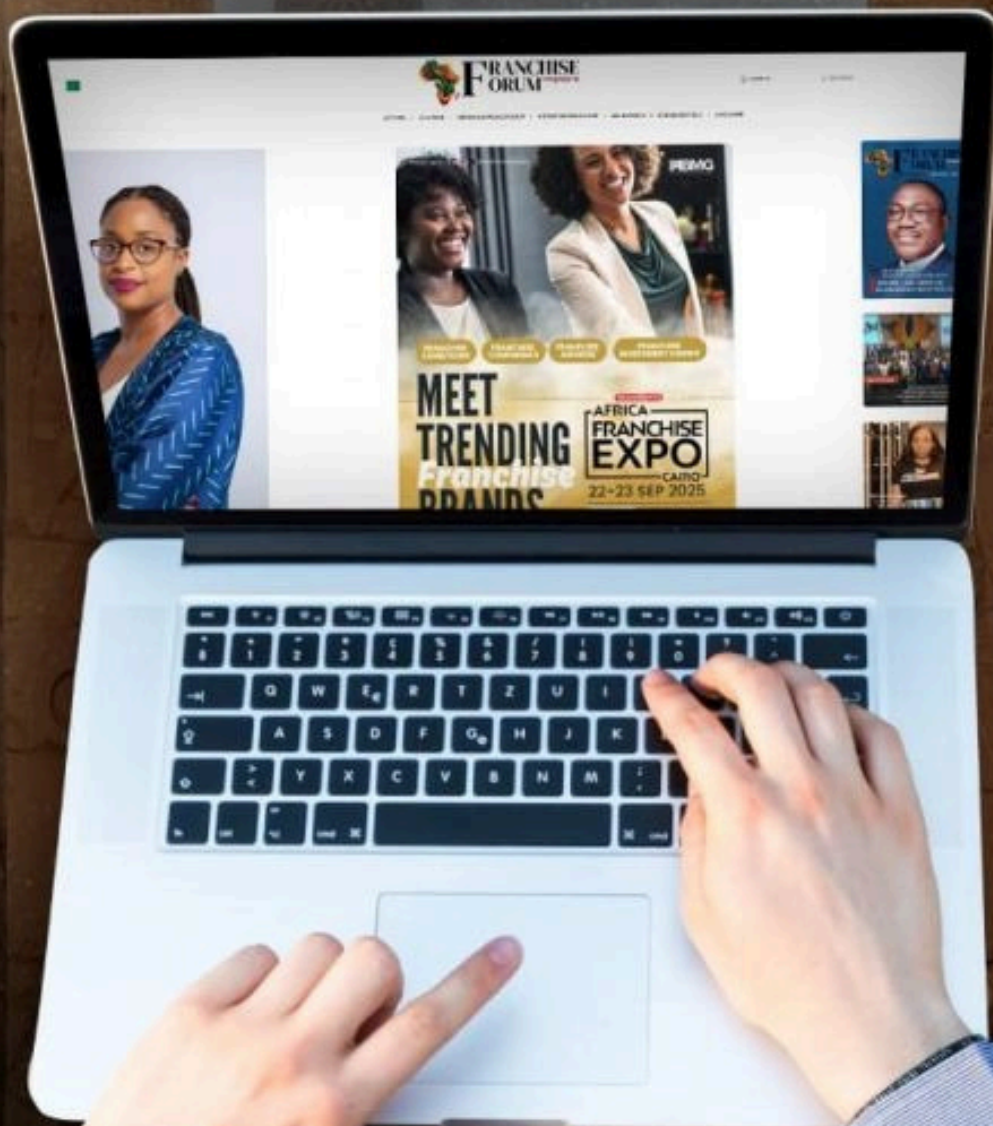
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PROFILE



F&B; Pillars

Empowering Franchise Growth Across MENA & Africa



As the official organizer of AFEX 2025, UAE-based F&B; Pillars has become a cornerstone in the region's franchise ecosystem. Specializing in food and beverage concepts, the firm provides end-to-end consulting—helping brands expand, scale, and succeed through franchising.



From franchise development and legal structuring to brand identity, menu engineering, and site selection, F&B; Pillars offers fully integrated solutions tailored to each stage of the franchising journey.

By leading regional and global expos—from Paris to Cairo F&B; Pillars not only supports entrepreneurs and franchisors, but also connects them with investors and high-potential markets across Africa and the Middle East.

Their mission is clear: to build sustainable, scalable franchises and shape the future of business across emerging markets.



The collage displays four covers of the 'FRANCHISE FORUM' magazine, which is published by 'L'Espresso Africa'. The top cover is the 'ACCUEIL' (Welcome) issue, featuring portraits of Mokhtar Tarrat and Sarah-Alexandra D'Amico. The middle cover is the 'MÉTIER DE FRANCHISEUR' (Franchisor's Job) issue, featuring Dr. Paul Arinze. The bottom-left cover is the 'MÉTIER D'AFRICAIN' (African's Job) issue, featuring a map of Africa made of photos. The bottom-right cover is the 'MÉTIER D'AFRICAIN' issue, featuring three men in suits.



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