

COSMOPOLITAN

MIDDLE EAST

98 LOOKS TO LOVE

*Swimwear,
Bags, Denim
& More!*

The Workout
Everyone Is
Talking About

**KAYLA ITSINES SHARES
HER BODY PLAN**

**HEY THERE,
FRENCH FRIES!**

**The Case
for Carbs**

**KALEY
CUOCO**
Back With a Bang

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**SKINCARE
SAVERS
BEAUTY
EDITORS
SWEAR BY**

INSTA-LIKES
What
He Really
Wants
to See

Get Ahead
Tips from
Women at
the Top

GET HOW I BECAME... THAT

Five women in five very different careers share their make-it-to-the-top secrets

LIFE



“...A TV PRESENTER”

If **Aishwarya Ajit Gordon**'s face seems familiar, it's probably because it is. The 29-year-old used to host Dubai One's *Studio One*, and is now the main presenter of *Body and Mind*, which airs on Colors TV, and *101 Great Places To Eat Out*, on Star World. She's also a beauty vlogger and the founder of Lockstress Hair, her own range of hair extensions.

“I have faced a lot of rejection and am sure I will face more. Although I was raised in Dubai I got my first break in TV in India, where I hosted a dance reality show. When I moved back to Dubai in 2009, I auditioned for Dubai One, but didn't get selected. It was very disappointing, so I took up a regular 9 to 5 job at an ad agency and decided to temporarily shelf my dream of being a TV presenter.

It wasn't until a year later that I was contacted by the channel for another round of casting. For me, this was my last chance to pursue my dream. I went in guns blazing, gave it everything I had, and this time hit the grand slam.

Typically a day of filming starts with 1 to 2 hours of glamming up, which involves hair, make-up and choosing an outfit previously agreed on with my stylist. While getting my hair done, I research topics that I will be covering on the show that day. Upon arriving on set, I chat with the guests to make them feel comfortable, break the ice and prep them for the interview. While the crew is setting up the shoot, I usually use the time to memorise my lines and sometimes make tweaks to add my own spin and personality to the script.

Once I finish filming, I put on my business woman hat and attend to my hair extensions business which typically involves sending out hair orders, replying to customer enquiries and updating social media content.

Working in TV, I learn something new every day and get to meet people from all walks of life – from celebrities, athletes and musicians, to Michelin-starred chefs and regular people who contribute to society in inspiring ways.

It is very important to stay committed and push through everything life throws your way. Passion, hard-work and persistence have kept me going and I feel lucky to be able to make a living out of what I love.”



“...AN ENTREPRENEUR”

Loulou Khazen Baz, 34, is the founder and CEO of Nabbesh.com, a virtual skills marketplace that helps people find freelance work.

“After working in Dubai for 9 years across various roles including project management, marketing and venture capital, I decided

that it was time for me to give myself a shot at building a business. In early 2011, I took the leap from the job stability and immersed myself into finding the next big idea! In 2012, the first version of Nabbesh.com came to life and since then, I've learnt from mistakes and celebrated successes. Being a CEO of a growing tech business is quite stressful. We have a bold vision to “own freelance” in the world's emerging markets and the pressure is on to grow. There are two tasks that I don't enjoy about my job: managing conflict among stakeholders and spending time on client contracts, hiring and other administrative tasks that are a drag on my time.

One of the perks and curses of an entrepreneur is that no day is an average day. Some days my work is highly strategic, other days my sleeves are rolled and I am immersed in execution. I tend to focus on four main activities: team updates and meetings, business development or strategic partnership meetings, attending events, speaking opportunities and PR related activities and lastly overseeing the general tasks for the company (legal, admin and the like).

The start-up world is a man's world. All I can say is use it to your advantage and stay professional - everyone respects a hardworking, strong and visionary woman. There are many times that you'll feel like you'll never get to where you want to be, but you just have to suck it up and keep moving.

If you believe in something then stick to it, work hard and lookout for opportunities. Things may or may not work out, but at least you can say you tried.”



“...AN eFASHION MANAGER”

Fadeelah Al Horaibi, 28, is the business development manager for fashion app Shedd and the founder and director of fashion label NOORA.

“I used to read stories of young, successful women and think ‘I should have done this differently’ or ‘I wish I had studied design at University’. I made my career change at 27, which although it isn’t old by any means, is still daunting after 5 years spent as a teacher. But it’s been the best decision I’ve ever made. Don’t follow the path society tells you to take; always allow your own intuition to inspire you.

I launched my online fashion store NOORA, but began to miss being part of a team and felt I was losing out on other opportunities within the UAE’s fast-progressing fashion scene, so I applied for a job at Shedd.

In my interview I was very honest about my previous experience and the areas I wasn’t experienced in, but Alex (my boss) could tell how much I believed in the app and how I felt it was a game-changer in how people buy and sell fashion. I’m grateful he valued this passion above certain skillsets and qualifications.

Being a generalist can be frustrating, but I’ve read quite a few interesting articles, and it turns out that it isn’t so bad after all! Jonathan Rosenberg, Google’s former SVP of Products, once said during an interview on why Google hires generalists: ‘When you’re in a dynamic industry where the conditions are changing so fast... things like experience and the way you’ve done a role before isn’t nearly as important as your ability to think.’

It might sound cliché, but every day at work is truly different! One day I may spend seven hours styling, photographing and editing Instagram shots, and on another day I could find myself reviewing new app screen designs or hosting focus groups with users of our app to get to know what they love and what we could improve. We’ve seen user figures grow from five users on day one to over 40,000 registered users today, and that I consider to be my biggest personal achievement.”

“...AN ENTERTAINMENT MARKETING GURU”

As managing partner of Maven Marketing & Events, **Sarah Omolewu**, 37, is the person you call if you need a big name to boost your brand, having brought everyone from Zendaya and Nicole Ritchie, to Usher and Alessandra Ambrosio to the UAE.

“I started my career in 2001 with an urban radio station in the US. This was where I gained an understanding into the business of entertainment marketing. Working on music festivals, expos and other events organised annually by the station created opportunities for relationship building with celebrity management. I then realised there was a huge market need in Dubai for people who can effectively book and manage celebrities to strategically and creatively market client brands, so I partnered with another entertainment guru four years ago to launch Maven Marketing & Events to do just that. The rest as they say, is history.

The idea of ‘being your own boss’ sounds so glamorous, but in essence it means your boss is always with you, 24/7 – you don’t just get to clock out, especially in the first few years. You have to be disciplined enough to go hard when the demand is there, yet take a guilt-free vacation to recharge your body and mind when you need to.

The one constant of my days is that I start off with meditation so I’m centred and focussed. Then it’s anything from team briefings on upcoming events and celebrity appearances in the office, to client meetings, site inspections, and development of the entertainment marketing strategies for client initiatives. When I get home late in the evening, the USA starts waking up, so I typically have conference calls with people based there to negotiate contract details and finalise upcoming events. It’s a long day, but I really love what I do, and I’ve always been a firm believer that when you enjoy what you do it doesn’t necessarily seem like work.

I actually believe that women entrepreneurs have the advantage in this market. Since we are strong at building relationships and are good communicators, we excel more.”





“...AN ARCHITECT”

Preeti Mogali Sandhu, 28, is a design architect at the Dubai office of RTKL, a global architecture, planning and design firm.

“Architects need to unify and coordinate information from our clients, consultants and regulators to deliver an efficient and aesthetically-pleasing project. To fully achieve this, we need to be a ‘jack of all trades,’ and what I enjoy most is that I am constantly learning something new every day.

At the moment, for example, I’m designing the external façade for a retail project in Saudi Arabia. This means working on what the building will look like and how parts of it will be installed and maintained, as well as sourcing materials – exactly what will be used, down to the colour

and finish. I’ve also completed sunlight studies to determine what the building will look like at different times of the day.

Technology is a big part of my job. For the 2015 Cityscape Global in Dubai, a team of us developed an Augmented Reality (AR) app, which created an interactive interface to showcase our client’s projects. Being able to view a 3D virtual building model through their smartphone or tablet meant people were able to understand the design far better than seeing it on a piece of paper. The potential for AR in our industry is limitless, and when coupled with virtual reality, it could really influence the way we present to our clients, and collaborate across disciplines.

I am always being challenged, and I have found that my job never gets monotonous. I love that the creativity in our field is unlimited and I’m lucky that the RTKL design studio promotes this and pushes the boundaries of architecture in the Middle East.

I completed 7 years of study to get where I am – a Bachelors of Architecture at American University of Sharjah, after which I lived in London for 2 years, doing my Masters in Sustainable Environmental design at the Architectural Association School of Architecture. And just as it takes time to qualify as an architect, our work takes time, too. There is no instant gratification in this field; it might take years to see what you design become a reality, but if you enjoy the process of getting there then this is the career for you.”