LEON ERASMUS RHEEDER

RESTAURANT OPERATIONS & BRAND DEVELOPMENT

Target roles: Operations Director | Director of Restaurant Brand Development

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Available immediately | Self-sponsored Bahrain resident | Open to relocation | Driving licence

COMMERCIAL IMPACT

$20M+ annual portfolio | 11 restaurants | 450+ staff | 8 openings across 5 countries

2× projected flagship opening revenue | 32% food cost / 20% labour cost sustained for 3 years

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Restaurant operations and concept-development leader with 30+ years across the GCC and Africa, progressing from dishwasher to Division Head of Operations and Acting Operations Director. Combines portfolio P&L control with concept design, menu development, market entry, central-kitchen launches and franchise execution. Builds the SOPs, management pipelines and audit routines that protect margins, reduce site-to-site variation and turn a launch into a repeatable operation. Delivered 35% annual F&B sales growth, four-year staff retention of 97.5% at IHOP, and a Bahrain flagship opening at twice projected revenue.

DIRECTOR-LEVEL CAPABILITIES

Portfolio operations: Multi-unit leadership; P&L management; budgeting and forecasting; KPI reporting; food and labour cost control; inventory, procurement and supplier management; HACCP; franchise audits.

Brand development: Concept design; operating-model development; market entry; pre-opening; menu engineering; beverage programmes; delivery channels; central-kitchen setup; brand standards and SOPs.

People and execution: Recruitment; management development; succession planning; training frameworks; guest experience; cross-cultural leadership; AI workflow and administrative automation.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Operations Consultant, Concept Design & AI Integration

GionCorp Enterprises | Bahrain | Freelance | Jun 2024–Present; previously Apr 2022–Nov 2023

- Equipped QSR, casual and premium dining clients with ready-to-run operating models by developing SOP libraries, training frameworks and P&L tools.
- Created concept-to-service assets through concept design, menu development and food photography, linking the customer offer to practical restaurant execution.
- Added forecasting and administrative automation capability by integrating AI workflows into established operating processes.

Division Head of Operations

Al Zain Hospitality | Crazy Pizza franchise | Bahrain | Dec 2023–Jun 2024

- Delivered opening revenue at 2× projection, with full bookings and early-month waiting lists, by taking the flagship from first hire to opening in 3.5 months after an inherited six-month construction delay.
- Achieved 100% audit compliance from opening and gross margin above 70% by establishing SOPs, quality controls and international franchise standards.
- Made approximately 45 employees launch-ready by building recruitment, onboarding and service-training pipelines alongside head-office accounting and procurement functions.

General Restaurant Manager / Brand Operations

Noor Enterprises Holding | Sash Café | Riffa, Bahrain | Apr 2019–Mar 2022

- Grew annual F&B sales 35% and reduced expenses 13%, with 92% guest satisfaction, by resetting service standards, commercial routines and cost controls; the café won Best Café 2021, Riffa Culinary Excellence Award.

- Increased overall sales 10% during the pandemic by shifting approximately 80% of sales to delivery and takeout and redesigning menus, channels and fulfilment.
- Lifted Talabat sales 22%, beverage revenue 10% and service metrics 45% through targeted offers, delivery execution and floor accountability.
- Created a seasonal revenue stream with Ramadan gathering boxes by taking the offer from glassware sourcing through pricing and execution.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE — CONTINUED

Head of Operations / Acting Operations Director

Mandela Group | Café Java's & The Food Hub | Uganda & Kenya | Aug 2018–Jan 2019 | Six-month contract

Appointed Head of Operations; assumed Acting Operations Director duties in week one. Group scale: 16 stores, 650+ employees and approximately $33M annual revenue.

- Delivered operating costs approximately 25% below projection by introducing SOPs, recipe cards and franchise-compliance controls across two countries.
- Completed two store openings and the group's first Kenyan central kitchen within six months by coordinating launch execution and imports from South Africa, the UAE and other African markets.
- Built an internal leadership pipeline with 60% of trainees promoted by implementing structured training and progression.

Multi-Country Area Manager

Alshaya Group | IHOP | Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain & Lebanon | Oct 2014–Jul 2018

- Sustained 32% food cost and 20% labour cost for three years across 11 restaurants, 450+ employees and $20M+ annual revenue by enforcing forecasting, purchasing, inventory and scheduling routines.
- Retained 97.5% of the team over four years and promoted 26 employees into senior management by developing Store Managers and succession plans.
- Delivered four new restaurants across Bahrain, Kuwait and Lebanon, including entry into the Lebanese market, through pre-opening planning, recruitment and franchise readiness.
- Grew beverage revenue 8.5% by launching a beverage and smoothie programme.
- Passed regional franchise audits for three consecutive years by standardising HACCP, food-safety and corrective-action routines.

Patrão / General Restaurant Manager

Nando's | Long Street flagship | Cape Town, South Africa | Jan 2014–Sep 2014

- Passed financial, food-safety and brand audits through peak trading by leading a high-volume flagship team of 40+ employees.

Field Operations Manager

Role Advisors / Role Hospitality | Western & Eastern Cape, South Africa | Mar 2010–Dec 2013

- Reduced operating variation among Nando's, Spur, Cape Town Fish Market, Dros and Steers franchise sites by introducing central audit frameworks and compliance protocols.
- Delivered retail store audits and visual-merchandising roll-outs for Edgars Group and Joshua Doore through field visits and execution checks.

General Manager

Cape Town Fish Market | Cresta, then Southdowns Irene | South Africa | May 2007–Feb 2010

- Earned Franchisee of the Year recognition for two consecutive years while tightening supply-chain controls, reducing waste and protecting profit.

Restaurant General Manager

KFC / Yum! Brands | Gauteng, South Africa | May 2004–Apr 2007

- Applied consistent CHAMPS operating standards in successive single-site management roles across Germiston, Grayson Drive, Sandton and Fourways.

Earlier Career — Restaurant & Bar Leadership

Barney's Pub & Grill; Stones Entertainment | Bloemfontein, South Africa | Feb 1996–Apr 2004

- Progressed from dishwasher to Manager, then Senior Bar Manager and acting AGM, building hands-on experience in bar P&L, events, procurement, maintenance, menus and SOPs.

SYSTEMS, EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

Systems: Micros POS, SevenRooms, Pilot, Gulp, Surve, Gumnut, Gold, Microsoft 365 / Excel, Talabat and AI workflow automation.

Education: Senior Certificate, President Steyn High School, Bloemfontein, South Africa (1998).

Professional development: 51 LinkedIn Learning certificates (2021–2026), including Lean Six Sigma Foundations, Operational Excellence Foundations, Operations Strategy for Business, Quality Management for Operational Excellence and Applying Generative AI as a Business Professional. Full list: leonrheeder.com.

Languages: English and Afrikaans (fluent); Dutch (basic).