

Leon Erasmus Rheeder

Multi-Unit Operations Leader · F&B & Coffee Operations · AI-Integrated Operations Strategist

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Restaurant General Manager and multi-unit operations leader with **30+ years** in F&B hospitality, specialising in fine dining, premium casual and lifestyle concepts across the **GCC and Africa** — from dishwasher to Division Head of Operations. Proven record leading guest-obsessed teams, holding uncompromising service standards, and consistently delivering financial targets in high-volume, experience-driven environments. Operated and launched restaurants for world-class brands including Crazy Pizza, IHOP (Alshaya Group), Nando's, Cape Town Fish Market and Spur, across seven countries — twice named Franchisee of the Year. Over the last 2+ years, has expanded into **AI-integrated operations consulting**, actively driving tools development and implementation for predictive systems and automation, without ever losing focus on the guest experience.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Operations Management — Multi-Unit Leadership, Coffee/Café Excellence, Supply Chain Optimisation, SOP Development

Financial Leadership — P&L Management, Cost Control (32% food, 20% labor), Margin Optimisation (60–70%), Budget Forecasting

Coffee & Restaurant Expertise — Menu Engineering, Brand Standards, Customer Experience, Market Analysis

Compliance & Quality Systems — HACCP Implementation, Food Safety Protocols, Health & Safety Audits, ISO Standards

Team Development — Training Programs, Performance Management, Succession Planning, Cross-Cultural Leadership (7 countries)

AI-Integrated Operations — Predictive Systems, Process Automation, Agentic AI Tooling, Concept Development

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

AI Integration Consultant & Concept Development Engineer

2024 – Present

GionCorp Enterprises (Freelance Consultant) · Bahrain

- Engineer high-impact hospitality concepts designed for rapid, international franchising
- Drive 30% operational efficiency and equipment-uptime gains, and a 30%+ drop in wastage, through AI-integrated systems and automation
- Bridge 30 years of floor-level operating experience with predictive, agentic AI tooling and implementation

Division Head of Operations

Dec 2023 – Jul 2024

Al Zain Hospitality WLL / Crazy Pizza · Bahrain

- Established a new hospitality division from the ground up — first hire through to opening in 3 months
- Beat projected sales targets by 200%; fully booked with long waiting lists inside the first 3 months
- Built the full head-office function: recruitment (45 staff), accounting and procurement

General Manager / Brand Operations

Apr 2019 – Mar 2022

Sash Café · Noor Enterprises · Bahrain

- Drove a 35% increase in F&B sales via custom Ramadan box promotions, from import sourcing through to final pricing
- Reduced expenses by 13%; grew Talabat delivery sales by 22%
- Sustained a 10% overall sales increment through the COVID-19 pandemic
- Winner, Best Café 2021 — Riffa Culinary Excellence Award

Multi-Brand Operations Manager

Aug 2018 – Jan 2019

Café Java's & The Food Hub · Mandela Group · Kenya & Uganda

- Opened 2 coffee locations on schedule and budget across 2 countries; built Kenya's first central kitchen
- Implemented standard SOPs, franchise compliance and recipe cards sitewide
- Reduced operating expenses by 25% through strategic cost controls and supplier negotiation

Multi-Country Area Operations Manager

Oct 2014 – Jul 2018

IHOP · M.H. Alshaya Group · Lebanon, Bahrain, Kuwait & UAE

- Managed 11+ restaurants generating \$20M+ annual revenue across 4 countries
- Maintained 32% food cost and 20% labor cost for 3 sustained years
- Delivered an 8.5% like-for-like sales increase via a new smoothie/beverage bar concept
- Facilitated 26 senior management promotions; cut staff turnover to 2.5% per year
- Achieved a 100% Franchise Audit passing score across all regional stores, 3 years running

EARLY CAREER · 1996 – 2014

Restaurant General Manager (Patrão) · Nando's · Cape Town Long Street, South Africa · 2013 – 2014

Led 40+ staff at the high-volume flagship store; met all financial and brand-standard targets.

Field Operations Manager · Role Advisors, Operations Specialists · South Africa (Steers, Spur, Dros) · 2010 – 2013

Oversaw multi-unit F&B operations across brands; developed training programs and audit systems.

Restaurant General Manager · Cape Town Fish Market (CTFM) · South Africa · 2007 – 2010

Franchisee of the Year, two consecutive years.

Restaurant General Manager · KFC · Yum Brands International · South Africa · 2004 – 2007

Ran full-service restaurant operations to Yum Brands international standards.

Assistant General Manager · Stones Entertainment · Bloemfontein, South Africa · 2000 – 2004

Supported full-venue F&B and entertainment operations.

Dishwasher → Head Barman · Barney's Pub & Grill · South Africa · 1996 – 2000

Where it started — worked every station in the building on the way up.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS & RECOGNITION

- **Sales Excellence:** Beat Crazy Pizza projections by 200%; 35% F&B sales growth at Sash Café; 8.5% like-for-like growth at IHOP
- **Cost Leadership:** 1.3% wastage (career average); 32% food / 20% labor costs sustained 3 years at IHOP; 60–70% margins
- **Team Success:** ~85% average staff retention; 26 management promotions facilitated; 90%+ average guest satisfaction
- **Awards:** Franchisee of the Year — Cape Town Fish Market (×2) and IHOP, 3 consecutive years; Best Café 2021 (Riffa Culinary Excellence Award)
- **Compliance:** 100% Franchise Audit passing score (IHOP, 3 years running); full HACCP implementation; green health & safety ratings

TECHNICAL PROFICIENCIES

Systems: Micros, SevenRooms, Pilot, Gulp, Surve

Financial: Advanced P&L, forecasting, cost analysis

Quality: HACCP, WIN card audits, ISO protocols

Training: JRMS, custom LMS, SOP development

AI & Automation: Agentic AI workflow design, predictive operations tooling, AutoGen Studio

CERTIFICATIONS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Operations & Quality: Operational Excellence Foundations (2024); Lean Six Sigma Foundations (2025); Project Management Foundations: Quality (2024); Audit and Due Diligence (2024)

Leadership & Strategy: Critical Thinking for Better Judgment (2025); Business Analysis Foundations (2025); Ken Blanchard on Servant Leadership (2021); Project Leadership (2021)

Business Development: Business Development Foundations (2024); Create a Brand Strategy (2024); Brand Design Foundations (2025); Negotiate Like a Lawyer (2024)

AI & Innovation: Introduction to Agentic AI: AutoGen Studio (2025); Applying Generative AI for Business (2025)

EDUCATION

High School Diploma · President Steyn High School, South Africa · 1998

30+ Professional Certifications · Full list: [linkedin.com/in/leonrheeder](https://www.linkedin.com/in/leonrheeder)