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Abstract

This case study illustrates the birth of an entrepreneurial business concept, named Edmini, which was initiated by two Emirati citizens. The main idea behind Edmini lies in the creation of an online store to provide male consumers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) convenient means to acquire customized high-end slippers. Bringing out subtly the culture and tradition of the local UAE population, the case offers relevant insights into various processes and steps that were put in place to establish the Edmini brand between 2009 and 2010. By showcasing different experiences that revolve around identifying the market need, developing optimal branding schemes and allocating required resources for footwear manufacturing, this case provides the opportunity to grasp a thorough understanding of the challenges that a start-up could face.

Keywords

Entrepreneurial venture, business concept, market analysis, launching a brand, online store, product customization, UAE

On an afternoon of September 2010, Abdulnasser was on his way to the Edmini office in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (UAE). Having completed his day's work at the Sharjah Islamic Bank, Abdulnasser was looking forward to reaching his office to discuss with Rashid the problems they were encountering with foreign suppliers and decide on an immediate action plan. Earlier in the day, Rashid had informed him that the first samples of slipper moulds had finally arrived from the factory in the developing country Y, much later than they had initially expected. Moreover, the leather cutting and sewing machines, which had to be delivered a long time ago by the vendor in the developing country X, were nowhere to be seen. 'I am confident that Edmini was a great idea! So far, we could take care of everything—the concept, the brand, the online store. Now, the supplies that are needed for the local product manufacturing have to be

This case was written by Abdulnasser Alshaali and Associate Professor Virginia Bodolica (virginia.bodolica@hec.ca) at the American University of Sharjah to serve as basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of an administrative situation. This material may not be quoted, photocopied or reproduced in any form without the prior written consent of the Lahore University of Management Sciences. The authors would like to thank Aishwarya Ramakrishnan for her assistance during some of the final stages of this project, Ayesha Khan for her continuous support, and the anonymous reviewers of the journal for their constructive suggestions on the previous versions of this case study. Case B will be published in AJMC Volume 10 Issue 2.

taken care of,' thought Abdulnasser, as he approached the front door. 'I am still determined to start the production of Edmini slippers prior to the upcoming Eid celebration of October 2010. Yet, we need to make important decisions right away if we are to make it!' was the first thing he said when he saw his business partner.

The Birth of an Entrepreneurial Idea

In his second year of the Bachelor of Business Administration programme at the American University of Sharjah (AUS), Abdulnasser Jamal Hussain Alshaali already had a bundle of ideas for a business concept he wanted to launch in his native UAE. Keeping in mind his favourite quote *whenever there is a need, there is an opportunity to succeed* that he had heard in one of his university courses, he uncovered the need for his entrepreneurial concept on the occasion of the Eid festivities. There were two Eids that were celebrated each year across the UAE: Eid al-Fitr marked the breaking of fast at the end of the holy month of Ramadan, while Eid al-Adha occurred after the Hajj when Muslims worldwide completed their annual pilgrimage to Mecca. Being the most important religious holidays in the UAE, this was the time when locals had many social gatherings where they greeted each other and made merry. This was also when people noticed what everyone else was wearing for Eid. Thus, shopping for new items, garments and shoes prior to Eid celebrations was given a lot of importance.

Slippers were one of the main items of clothing that were of fashionable interest amongst the Arab male crowd in the UAE. In particular, when men gathered in the Majlis (an area with special seating), they noticed each others slippers and could easily tell whether the shoe was of a good make or not. It was in August of 2008 when Abdulnasser was doing some last-minute Eid shopping in search of slippers that were sleek in design, good in quality and comfortable to wear that he screened both local and foreign designer brands, only to discover that the slippers lacked at least one of his expectations: when the design was good, the shoes hurt his toes; when the slipper was comfortable, the design was very ordinary. Moreover, foreign designer brands had very few models to choose from and the best of those few were not good enough for his taste. He started by visiting different shops next to Khalid Lake in Sharjah before heading to Deira City Centre to end up at the Emirates Mall at about 1 a.m. There was only one foreign designer store that was still open, but as its register was already closed, he had to pay the AED 1,750 in cash and return for receipt the next day. By the end of his long day of shopping, he realized that there was a need in the UAE market, for traditional Emirati footwear of exceptional quality, design and comfort that could be quickly and conveniently purchased at any time and from any location. And, Abdulnasser decided to bring this whole footwear concept to the market.

Being an Emirati himself, he knew how his idea would cater to a clientele of its own. He was aware that with faith, determination and right guidance, he would be able to launch a unique and exclusive slippers brand in the UAE. He approached the members of his extended family with his model and sought their opinion. His father, who pioneered in the development of the region's first boat and yacht manufacturing plant under the initiative of his grandfather, who was an entrepreneur in the emirate of Ajman operating several real estate and aluminium and glass manufacturing firms, was very appreciative of his son's business plan. Nine of his uncles who had already proven successful in managing their entrepreneurial ventures in the fields of general trading, car repairs and manufacturing of trailers, boats, yachts and furniture, also

gave him ideas on how to run his future business. They all felt that he needed to spend the first few years establishing the brand name and executing all the required operations himself. Yet, Abdunasser felt that he needed to build business relationships with various external parties and split the workload in such a way that would allow him to make maximum profits with minimum time investment on his behalf.

Launching the Brand Name

Abdunasser's first major concern was raising capital for launching his business. His parents had allowed him to use the money they had saved for his wedding as starting capital, but this amount was still not enough. Abdunasser knew that he needed a partner. He went around the university to explain his idea, which was very simple in the first place. Basically, there would be a website which male customers could log into, design their own slippers and order them so that a courier could handle the delivery process. Despite the idea's appeal to many of his acquaintances, he still could not find someone who would be interested enough to invest in the business. In the summer of 2009, he had finally touched base with one of his friends, Rashid Khalid Abdullah Shuhail, who was studying Urban Planning at a university in New Zealand. Rashid was not only homesick, but also had the kind of money that Abdunasser was looking for. He was convinced by Abdunasser's concept and was looking forward to returning to the UAE and starting the company with Abdunasser. With the partnership established, they decided to set the initial launch of their online store by November 2009, four months prior to the Eid festival, which seemed reasonable at that time.

The partners immediately began to focus on finding an appropriate name for their traditional footwear brand. They started to search for different names that would best describe their product and bring out the elegance of the brand. After many repeated attempts at finding names that linked the Arabic cultural heritage to slippers, they were unable to narrow the search down to a word that served their purpose. They continued by cross linking different words and eventually came up with the word 'Edmini' which was derived from two Arabic words, namely 'dem' meaning 'blood' and 'edmina' meaning 'colour'. Putting these two derivations together, Edmini translate into 'dark red' or 'blood-like red'. The name of Edmini was retained since red was the primary colour of slippers that would be sold by the store. It could also be associated with a high-end range of products that would not be affordable for everyone but would be deemed as appealing to customers who admire fashion. To make this name legally theirs, Abdunasser and Rashid went to register it at the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry. After several investigations into the name, which actually did not carry a proper meaning in the Arabic language, the authorities approved the name of Al Demini. Although Al Demini became the official name that appeared on the trade licence, yet the partners decided to preserve Edmini for their brand name.

It was now the right moment to start looking for a branding company that would help them develop the brand image for Edmini in a way that would differentiate it from other products in the market that satisfied the same need. As there were not many branding firms in the UAE, the search took longer than expected. After a lot of hunting, one day Abdunasser accidentally walked into Mojo, an advertising company that specialized in logo designing, website building and other branding-related activities. Relying on Google to make a background check on this company, Abdunasser and Rashid found out that Mojo was responsible for developing and promoting well-established brands such as BMW and Range Rover. It seemed to be a good choice. Thus, they gave the specialists at Mojo the name, explained them

what they wanted and Mojo took it from there. Within a month's time, Mojo came up with five different logo designs, each option with a different font and pattern and a key element that made it stand out. The Edmini partners decided to select the best element of each logo and combine them to create a new design for their brand that retained dark red, light red, off-white and grey colours. This process of brand establishment also served as a means for marketing the products and identifying new potential business ideas, as many female employees at Mojo expressed their interest in Edmini and enquired whether they sold women's handbags and other accessories.

The Edmini Concept

Edmini was conceived as a luxury brand that targeted high-end male consumers, particularly during the major shopping festivals such as Eid. As the entire Edmini concept revolved around Emirati traditional footwear, the products were to be addressed mainly to the locals of the UAE and not to other Muslims among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries who might prefer other slipper features and adaptations that would better fit their own cultural traditions. The main emphasis of the brand was on quality, convenience, variety and special designs. Quality was to be achieved by carefully selecting the raw materials that were put together in the slipper-building process and referred primarily to leather and shoe sole. The online Edmini store was to offer a more convenient way for people to buy their footwear and avoid the typical shopping chaos before Eid. Since the reputation of a brand lies in the product design, this aspect was to be given a critical importance by providing online customization opportunities from a pre-established range of options supplemented by a variety of leather types to create special slipper designs to suit individual tastes and preferences.

To position the Edmini brand better, Abdulnasser and Rashid scanned the UAE market to identify the various types of leather that different outlets offered along with their prices. They discovered that there were three main local brands (i.e., Mandoos, Fares and Nawras) and two foreign designer brands (i.e., a.testoni and Berluti) that dominated the sales of traditional Arabic footwear in the country (see Appendix). Mandoos offered their products in deer and ostrich leather with price ranges between AED 1,200 and AED 2,300. Fares and Nawras both sold calf and ostrich leather slippers at price range of AED 1,500–2,300 and AED 600–2,200, respectively. Although both foreign brands provided mainly calf leather-based slippers, their prices varied significantly starting from AED 1,400–2,000 for a.testoni and going as high as AED 3,300–3,800 for Berluti. These price differentials were reflective of the quality of raw materials, type of leather used, place of manufacturing and additional options to enhance the product. For instance, some local brands had their manufacturing facilities located in the UAE, while other local brands and all foreign brands produced their slippers abroad. In fact, local manufacturing could decrease the cost by 50 per cent. Nawras enabled its consumers to opt for customized slippers made from ostrich leather in exchange of a premium price that exceeded AED 2,500. Those orders typically took between 30 to 45 days to deliver as they were sent to Italy to be manufactured and processed. As far as Berluti is concerned, it used silicon in the slipper sole for increased comfort and offered an option to change the slipper colour twice free of charge.

These brands seemed to be well established in the UAE market and each of them had their local customers who embraced different characteristics. Some of them were price sensitive so that they focused on purchasing lower end original footwear. The instances when people sacrificed quality for cheaper price were also common, as instead of paying AED 1,400 for designer slippers they would opt for an

imitation priced at AED 400. Although, the choices of other male customers were not price oriented, especially when it came to enhanced quality, yet they were not very knowledgeable about the product and key ingredients that determined its quality. People easily changed from one brand to another and acquired more expensive models because of a presumed better quality which they measured by the level of comfort when wearing slippers and walking with them, rather than by the type of leather and other material that went into the slipper and its sole. Abdalnasser and Rashid had further noticed that quality-sensitive customers would not necessarily stick to the same brand when offered with a larger variety of choices and that was exactly the aspect they were betting on in the development of their own brand.

The Edmini partners decided to emphasize top quality materials and provide a broad range of customization options in terms of design and type of leather, going beyond calf and ostrich to include snake and crocodile leather. They worked out the price of different Edmini slippers that would be affordable for the middle and, particularly, high-class Emirati clients. Ostrich and calf leather slippers would be sold at AED 1,000–2,000, which benchmarked well with other brands, snake leather slippers would be more expensive than AED 2,500 and slippers made of crocodile leather would be priced at about AED 3,500. This value would be exceeded for limited editions of slippers that would cater to the needs of exclusive customers and be made of the scarcest kind of leather originating from special sea creatures and rare snakes. The raw materials that went into Edmini slippers would be sourced internationally, while the slippers themselves would be manufactured locally to optimize the speed of their delivery to consumers.

The different slipper designs that Edmini sought to offer needed to speak for the brand itself. People should be able to recognize the make by just looking at the product design. With these ideas in mind, Abdalnasser asked a friend who was studying interior design management at AUS to help him come up with various elegant and fashionable slipper styles that were not readily available in the local market. These designs were to be marketed through the online store and were aimed to generate an attraction for buyers to make online purchases. Abdalnasser and Rashid wanted to provide their designer with a sufficient monetary incentive for working hard and constantly creating new styles. They decided to pay him a fixed amount per slipper sold, which implied that during the busy Eid period he would be getting the maximum salary, whereas during the rest of the year, his income would be lower. However, this also implied that if slipper designs were creative enough then it could significantly boost Edmini revenues, resulting in an overall increase in the designer's pay. Although he was not ready to accept this offer at first, after careful consideration, he agreed to these compensation terms and conditions.

The Online Store

Since it was the online store that customers were going to view for customizing their slippers and placing their orders, it had to look really good. After contacting several reputable web design firms such as Canada Tech and WSI, the Edmini partners finally selected Blue Beetle—a company located in Studio City next to Dubai Land. Blue Beetle offered creative and innovative online media solutions at very competitive prices, which represented only 30 per cent of the amount that was requested by other firms. The permanent Edmini website was going to be turned into a social interactive tool that included many appealing features, allowing the customer to easily play around with the type of sole, kind of leather and choice of slipper design. By providing a 360 degree rotatable image of the slipper, the website was going to enable the buyers to completely envision the product they were ordering. Another advantage of

relying on picture-based slipper displays rather than short movies or videos was that the website would not slow down when multiple users were navigating the online store. Apart from just selecting from a range of pre-established templates, consumers were also going to have the opportunity to provide rough sketches of how they wanted their unique slippers to look like, which the Edmini designer could refine into a fashionable slipper design.

Additional online options were to be developed to enhance website attractiveness and usability. A special webpage was to be reserved for displaying different models of slippers that viewers could vote for as their favourite, helping Abdulnasser and Rashid identify what specific design their customers liked the most. To handle urgent orders better, a timeline feature was to be introduced allowing people to request for an expedited delivery of their slippers but in exchange for extra cost. The website was going to accept online payments through the '2Checkout' online payment processing service which was considered as one of the most secure in the field of credit card details' protection. Yet, for customers who were not comfortable paying via online systems, payments were to be settled in cash when the delivery was made. Finally, all slipper orders were to be delivered by DHL or FedEx given that these companies had a robust delivery system in the UAE and had a strong reputation for executing their work with precision and on time.

With all these webstore requirements identified, it was agreed to wait until the local manufacturing of slippers would be under way to allow for taking pictures of various models before proceeding with the launch of the permanent website. In the meantime, a temporary webpage was built to include a brief description of different slipper customization steps and a registration option for customers to earn a 20 per cent discount and receive news about limited editions and special promotions. The whole process of web construction was not without challenges. Initially, the temporary website was developed in a way that carried out a funky and loud connotation which contradicted the elite and high-end image that Edmini was trying to project. Although these observations were carefully integrated into a new website version appearing on www.edmini.ae, the Edmini partners also necessitated for their updates and suggestions to be promptly incorporated online. These specific requirements pushed them to hunt for a permanent web designer who would be in charge of creating and constantly updating the online store. Out of the 200 designers who applied for this position, fifteen were shortlisted but they were not interviewed as Abdulnasser and Rashid had decided to consider this option in the future of their company when the need arose. Finally, the fact that the website domain was '.ae' and not '.com', which was already purchased by another firm, could generate potential problems if in the future Edmini considered penetrating other markets and gaining popularity at a regional and global scale.

The Hunt for Suppliers

The Edmini team was aware that in order to kick-start the local manufacturing of footwear, they needed to expedite their search for suppliers. The main ingredients that went into making a slipper were the leather and the sole. Due to the lack of original leather market in the UAE, the rare types of leather, which also required the right type of leatherscutting and sewing machinery, had to be imported from abroad. In August of 2009, Abdulnasser and Rashid travelled to the developing country X and browsed the market for high quality leather and related machinery. Unaware of the local lingo in the region, they hired an interpreter who was supposed to help them better communicate with foreign vendors.

The search was focused on genuine calf, ostrich, snake and crocodile leather, as they needed quality inputs for their high-end product. Contrary to PU leather, which has a layer of polyurethane applied to the surface, genuine leather has a special glow effect that is not artificially generated, contributing to a neat finish. As Abdunnasser observed, some slipper providers in the UAE relied on a heating technique to create circles in the foot bed of the sole in order to support the poor quality leather employed in slipper manufacturing. Initially mistaken for designer's special signature on the shoes, the circles were actually intended to disguise the multiple wrinkles that appeared on the very thin leather of the slippers after their repeated usage. Abdunnasser wanted to eliminate such issues by purchasing high quality original leather, which was its own natural lines, had stronger and provided better durability. Owing to the longer lifespan of Edmini slippers, he was convinced that customers would not mind paying a slightly higher price. Several days after their arrival, the Edmini partners had already succeeded in ordering small samples of different types of leather and larger quantities of rare crocodile leather to make sure not to run out of stock in the first month of operation.

Once this task was completed, they headed towards a factory, located four hours away from the capital city, which sold machinery for cutting leather. Rashid had found this factory online and asked the interpreter to accompany them to the destination. They found the right type of machine, but since it was too large, they had to request the vendor to make a smaller leather-cutting machine that could be customized to their needs. Yet, the vendor had asked for an unreasonably high price and a whole year to complete this order, terms that were not affordable for Edmini partners. They tried to negotiate further with the vendor, but they were unsuccessful at that time and returned to their hotel very disappointed. The next day Abdunnasser and Rashid started screening the market for alternative suppliers, but luck was not on their side.

Reflecting back on those days' events, Abdunnasser felt that their interpreter was not very cooperative and effective. He would translate the information from the vendors into very few Arabic words, probably not giving them full details of what they were saying. Moreover, he would deploy little effort to assist them in finding appropriate business alternatives when requested. He had also misinformed them about the eating habits in the country, which caused them serious indigestion problems. Luckily, the interpreter did not omit to call them a few days later to inform that the initial vendor had reconsidered their offer by agreeing to reduce the price of the smaller leather cutting machine by 20 per cent and deliver it within a three-month period. Even more, the vendor had also accepted to sell a sewing machine at similar convenient terms and conditions. This deal was worth signing as the newly offered prices could be paid in full with the bank loan that they had processed through Rashid's father. With all these arrangements finalized by the month of September 2009, the Edmini partners realized that they would have to push their product launch by a whole year and open their online store for the Eid of 2010.

Searching for a 'Sole' Mate

With the additional time that they now had, Abdunnasser and Rashid decided to focus on the most important part of the slipper-making process, namely the sole and the accompanying moulds that would allow them to offer slippers of different sizes and shapes. The challenging part in manufacturing the slipper sole was that it involved the making of rubber, which needed an already established factory with a proven capacity for mass production. As a start-up, Edmini did not have this capacity as yet and due to

limited financial resources, the search for suppliers of footwear soles and moulds had to go international again. Prior to that, however, Abdulnasser and Rashid sought to clearly understand the mechanics behind the sole-making process. They purchased four brand-new pairs of slippers from different stores, brought them to a workshop in Ajman and asked the workers to dissect the sole of each. Three pairs of slippers had important weaknesses which were identified as the main reason for them not providing the best comfort to the person who wore them. The quality of the sponge was poor and the thin leather that lined the footbed wore off very easily and created many wrinkles, giving the slipper a dirty and dissatisfying appearance. However, the remaining pair of slippers was particularly resistant and comfortable to wear and differed from others since it used silicon in the shoe sole.

With the magic of slipper sole thus uncovered, it was decided to employ only high quality sponge to ensure the everlasting comfort of Edmini slippers. Instead of the commonly used heat impost technique for eliminating wrinkles in the leather of the footbed, superior type of leather, which had its natural lines, would be used to maintain the classic appearance of the slipper for the longest period of time. To further contribute to the image and popularity of the brand, it was agreed to develop special moulds that would carry the Edmini trademark allowing the slippers to print a clear Edmini pattern on sand. The sole-manufacturing process would also rely on a secret technique to offer an option of height to customers who could choose to elevate their slippers at different heights. Additionally, to ensure that the leather in the footbed could never be damaged and did not carry an unwanted smell, Edmini would provide a small powder box along with a Vaseline bottle as free of charge complements.

With these ideas of the sole in mind, in January 2010, the Edmini partners headed out to the developing country Y to look for a big factory that specialized in the manufacturing of footwear moulds. As Abdulnasser's father was already there for a business trip, he helped them with some contacts he had in the country. The search soon resulted in the identification of a factory which had the required capacity for mass production. Once Abdulnasser and Rashid explained to the factory vendors how they envisioned the soles of Edmini slippers to look like, a mutually beneficial contract for manufacturing of soles was signed. The factory representatives committed to develop several sole samples within a month's time and send them to the UAE for verification if they matched with the agreed in advance criteria. Subsequently, they were going to wait for comments for improvement, implement the requested corrections and obtain the final approval prior to starting the production in bulk. For an extra fee, the factory managers also agreed to assist the Edmini partners with the selection and training of the workers who would be sent to the UAE to handle the slippers' production process. After finalizing all these terms of the deal with the sole manufacturer, Abdulnasser had some spare time to spend in the country where he came across few vendors who sold rare types of snake and crocodile leather. He immediately noted their contact details and prices with the purpose of using them as potential emergency suppliers of leather in the future.

Promoting the Edmini Brand

In preparation for the local manufacturing of the footwear with imported soles and leather, the Edmini partners applied for a trading licence in Sharjah. As Rashid's father had offered them a free workplace in Sharjah Industrial Area during the first two years of operations, they focused on renovating and furnishing their office space. In the meantime, Abdulnasser also sought to create a hype for Edmini slippers so that

the business could be fully operational after his graduation from the university in the summer of 2010. In March of that year, he rented a booth at the Emirati Stall during the AUS Global Day celebrations and began advertising the Edmini brand. Two large pull-up posters and many small plasticized cards were used to provide information about Edmini and links to the company website. A catchy *others sell, we customize* tagline was displayed at the stall to attract many visitors and stimulate their interest in the brand. Additional plans were also made to advertise using local radio stations and other forms of media.

This initial marketing campaign attracted a prime customer, who was a prince of the royal family in one of the seven emirates in the UAE. He enquired about the estimated launch date of Edmini store with the purpose of making bulk purchases of slippers that he could offer as gifts to family and friends. A large potential order from a royal family member could further contribute to the promotion of the Edmini brand name as more and more people would start viewing the slippers and get interested in purchasing directly from the store. This interaction with the prince nurtured further ideas concerning brand advertising through influential figures of the UAE society. Soon, a decision was made to order exclusive prototypes of Edmini slippers and distribute them amongst Sheiks, senior managers in governmental institutions as well as opinion leaders across the Emirates.

Satisfied with the popularity that Edmini was gaining, Abdunnasser decided to focus on completing his summer internship, which was a university requirement for graduation. In anticipation of supplies to reach the UAE, he launched his professional career by joining different companies and gathering more practical knowledge and experience. He initially worked as a financial manager for his father in one of the family businesses and, in September, accepted a job offer from Sharjah Islamic Bank where he served as a management trainee. It was at that time that the first samples of slipper moulds had finally arrived from the factory in the developing country Y, while there was no news from the vendor in the developing country X who was supposed to deliver the leather cutting and sewing machines a long time ago. Although things were moving slowly, Abdunnasser was still determined to kick-start the production of Edmini slippers during the Eid celebration that was to take place in October of 2010. Yet, the supplies needed for the local manufacturing of slippers required special attention. Given the delays they had already encountered, was the current moulds-making factory a reliable long-term partner? Did it make sense to continue dealing with the vendor from the country X or search for alternative suppliers of machinery? Was it reasonable to continue contracting with foreign manufacturers rather than start looking for suppliers in the local market? These were important decisions that the Edmini partners had to make immediately if they wanted to take advantage of the upcoming Eid season.

Appendix

Additional Information on Slipper Producers and Retailers

a.testoni was launched by Amedeo Testoni who opened his first workshop in 1929 after having learnt the shoe manufacturing secrets of Bolognese craftsmen. To fulfil his dream of creating the most beautiful shoes in the world, he sought to continuously improve the Bolognese method of production by carrying the real essence of Italian craftsmanship to luxury footwear markets around the globe. The company's philosophy relies on traditional methodologies, unique competences, rigorous materials selection,

search for quality without compromises and technical and esthetical tension towards new and original solutions.

Berluti was founded in 1895 by an Italian, Alessandro Berluti, and is currently managed by his descendant, Olga Berluti. The LVMH Group acquired Berluti in 1993. The company produces and retails a very exclusive luxury brand of male shoes and boots and is also known for its unique leather finishing that is used in manufacturing of a variety of leather-based products such as belts, bags and wallets. Based in Paris, the brand has a very limited distribution network in the US where it can only be found at the Berluti store in New York and five selected Barneys New York locations, while in Europe it is limited to eight Berluti boutiques.

Mandoos was established in the 1990s as a retail trading company in the UAE which sells mass-produced cosmetics, toiletries, toys and garments. It is also one of the largest retail stores that distribute Emirati slippers, which are manufactured externally and sold locally.

Nawras is a large local company which produces Emirati slippers externally and sells them in the UAE through physical stores.

Fares was opened in the 1990s as a Slippers and Sandals Trading company in the UAE.