

Fadi Bargouti

Curl Stone Studios



“ I saw an opportunity to create Jordan's first superhero with my animation studio. ”

COUNTRY	Jordan
INDUSTRY	Consumer
EMPLOYEES	38
YEAR SELECTED	2012
PARTNER	Majdy Abo Mathkooor
WEBSITE	www.curlstone.com

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

Jordan had never had a superhero—until Curl Stone Studios created Nashmi Man. Even as it grows as a hub for animation studios, the Middle East has been largely ignored in the pop culture staple of cartoons. Fadi Bargouti and Majdy Abo Mathkooor hope to fill that void with Curl Stone, their Jordan-based animation studio dedicated to generating high-quality 2D and 3D animation with a cultural focus. Curl Stone creates original Arabic short films and animated series for a variety of platforms, including mobile, web and television. With 125 million television viewers, a media and entertainment market worth US\$4 billion, and one of the youngest-skewing populations in the world, the Middle East is the perfect place for a company like Curl Stone to get its start. Not satisfied by staying in the region, however, Curl Stone also has offices in the Phillipines and the US.

Fadi and Majdy were brought together by a shared passion for animation. Fadi graduated from the Applied Science University (ASU) in Amman, Jordan, in 2002 with a bachelor's degree in Computer Science. In 2004, Fadi joined Rubicon Animation Studios, a diversified entertainment company with a major presence in the region, as a visual effects director. It was at Rubicon that Fadi met and trained Majdy, who had also graduated from ASU with a Computer Science degree and joined the company in 2005. In 2007, Fadi left Rubicon to join the SAE Institute, where he became the head of the Animation Department. Fadi built the animation team at the institute and took a major part in developing its curriculum. Majdy also left Rubicon in 2007 to join the animation team at Nassons Entertainment Studios as the visual effects director.

Throughout their careers in the animation industry, the entrepreneurs noticed the dissatisfaction of TV channels, telecom companies, advertising agencies, and others with the standard of Arabic content and quality. This drove Fadi and Majdy to jointly establish Curl Stone in 2010. Starting with no more than US\$700 to its name, Curl Stone went on to raise funding and had momentum straight out the gate: in its first few months, Curl Stone created digital content that got the attention of global regional broadcasters like Cartoon Network, Nickelodeon, and MBC Group; telecom companies such as Zain and Umniah; and enterprise customers like the Nuqul Group.

Curl Stone offers unique narrative-based animations that reflect Middle Eastern heritage through the development of positive role models who embody universally shared values. Curl Stone creates these characters and narratives as products to be licensed to TV networks, telecom companies, web portals, and other media channels. The most successful of these concepts has been the Nashmi Man, which Curl Stone first released in 2011 on Ro'ya TV, a leading Jordanian channel. Less than one week later, the episode had received more than 15,000 views on YouTube.

In the crowded animation industry, the entrepreneurs are counting on their commitment to creating role models embedded in Middle Eastern heritage to separate them from the rest of the pack.
