Yasmine Shihata

Enigma Magazine

“ I saw an opportunity to create a leading media lifestyle company in Egypt and the Middle East ”

COUNTRY	Egypt
INDUSTRY	Consumer
EMPLOYEES	36
YEAR SELECTED	2012
WEBSITE	www.enigma-mag.com

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

To Yasmine Shihata, the lack of high-quality lifestyle magazine content in Egypt had always been an enigma. Recognizing an opportunity, in 2000 she launched Enigma, an English-language magazine focusing on fashion, culture, travel, and key personalities in business, politics and entertainment for a globally oriented reader. Today, Enigma is the region's preeminent lifestyle magazine, with 45,000 digital and print copies distributed each month throughout Egypt, the Middle East, and the UK, and an estimated readership of 250,000. The magazine's strong brand and readership has attracted such advertising clients as BMW, Bulgari, and The Four Seasons Hotels. Though Enigma's revenues, like those of many other Egyptian businesses, took a hit as a result of the Egyptian revolution, Yasmine is hopeful that with the right growth strategy, she will be able to leverage the sustained success of the Enigma brand to create other media products and become the leading media lifestyle company in the Middle East.

Yasmine had a passion for fashion from an early age and yearned to enter the lifestyle magazine industry. After attending international schools in Austria and Washington, D.C, she earned a degree in International Relations from the London School of Economics in 1995. After graduation, Yasmine interned at Vogue and Marie Claire magazines in London. She then joined Vogue in New York as the senior assistant to the Editor-in-Chief, Anna Wintour–an experience that taught her how to manage relationships with advertisers and gave her insight into the intricacies of magazine layout and editing. In 1997, Yasmine returned to Egypt to apply the skills she had garnered abroad.

Determined to realize her vision of creating a sophisticated lifestyle magazine for the Middle East, Yasmine launched Enigma in 2000. Whereas Cleo was female-oriented and fashion-focused, Yasmine sought to reach a broader audience through Enigma. Enigma was the first lifestyle magazine in Egypt to target both men and women and, like Cleo, incorporate society into its content. Yasmine chose the name "Enigma" because she feels it reflects the mysterious and unique nature of both the magazine and the Middle East. The original eight-person team published the first issue, titled "The Ten People Shaping the Future," in January 2000. By the time Enigma celebrated its fifth anniversary at the foot of the Pyramids, the magazine had expanded its distribution throughout the Middle East and to London, greatly enhancing its value as a regional marketing tool for advertisers.

Enigma magazine offers English readers in Egypt and the Middle East exclusive lifestyle content, including feature interviews, international fashion brands, luxury global travel destinations, and the best Egyptian and regional products and services. Enigma magazine is available both in print and online in Egypt, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, UAE, and the UK. . For consumer, luxury fashion, and high-end hospitality brands, advertising with Enigma offers exposure to the niche English-speaking Arab audience with high purchasing power.

Enigma has established itself as a top-quality magazine in terms of content and advertising. The magazine has proved its resilience, surviving a drop in advertising revenues at the start of the Iraq War and during the Egyptian revolution. Yasmine's team has demonstrated commitment, publishing Enigma throughout the revolution.