

# SAHAR ELMI

*Creative Director · Brand Strategist · Copywriter · GTM Architect*  
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## SUMMARY

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Creative Director and Brand Strategist with 10+ years building brand systems that earn trust before they ask for it. Worked across iGaming infrastructure, Big Pharma market research, First Nations institutional governance, Nike-partnered wellness, and luxury hospitality — industries where the audience's default position is skepticism, exclusion, or compliance fatigue, and where generic positioning fails on contact. Operates from research through execution without handoff: primary stakeholder research, strategic framework, narrative architecture, and the copy that activates it. Bilingual in English and Farsi, culturally fluent across markets, and precise in regulated environments where language carries legal and institutional weight.

## EXPERIENCE

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### **Head of Marketing & Strategy** · *FlashKings Digital — B2B iGaming Infrastructure*

Remote | Sep 2025 – Present

- Own full brand architecture for a B2B iGaming platform operating across 6+ jurisdictions: strategic positioning, messaging framework, website architecture and copy, campaign concepts, OOH, launch materials, and lifecycle copy. No agency intermediary. One strategist, end to end.
- Delivered complete visual and verbal brand identity for a sports betting client: brand workshops covering archetypes, narrative positioning, typography, logo, and tone system, resulting in a launch-ready identity package.
- Leading a 5-phase strategic platform build for a hockey tech startup, beginning with ecosystem intelligence synthesis and competitive universe mapping across 20+ digital platforms and tools, then moving into primary stakeholder research across 9 audience archetypes with custom discussion guides tailored to each archetype's specific drivers and barriers, thematic clustering, system conditions analysis, and hypothesis validation — including hypotheses disproved, because that is what rigorous research produces.
- Producing Phase 3.2 current-state brief covering association governance shifts, commission reporting, ethics conduct cases reshaping institutional trust in sport, and downstream implications for platform positioning and partnership strategy. Phase 3.3 will synthesize all findings into sequenced platform features, a partnership architecture, and a market entry framework built around non-competitive value creation.
- Rebuilt FlashKings' own brand: full narrative and positioning overhaul, SEO-optimized site architecture and copy across all pages, and a mythologically-anchored brand story — Zeus as the governing metaphor — that gave a compliance-heavy B2B platform a distinctive, memorable identity.
- Led complete brand strategy and website copy system for the Six Nations Gaming Commission (SNGC), Canada's largest First Nations gaming regulator: 20+ stakeholder interviews across board members, commissioners, tourism directors, and community leadership; an Areas of Opportunity workshop narrowing findings into 3 governing brand pillars; and a full site map with multi-page copy navigating First Nations cultural protocols, Canadian regulatory requirements, and sovereign governance framing for four distinct audiences simultaneously — community members, operators, licensees, and peer regulators.
- Extending SNGC engagement into content operations: news articles, social media strategy, and market research infrastructure supporting long-term brand positioning ahead of a planned land-based casino and gaming expansion.
- Building FlashKings' thought leadership platform — whitepapers, case studies, and editorial articles — that establishes the company as a creative technologist: a firm that holds brand strategy and technical infrastructure in the same hand.
- Developing proprietary brand strategy workshops and frameworks that incorporate behavioral economics and neuroeconomics principles, producing repeatable methodology for brand identity work that no conventional creative agency offers.

### **Corporate Brand Director** · *Babes of Wellness (Nike Partner Studio)*

Los Angeles, CA | Dec 2023 – Present

- Joined as the brand's first strategic hire with no brief, no identity system, and no existing framework. Began with ethnographic research — sitting with the women who came to class, listening to what surfaced before and after — and built the entire brand architecture from that foundation through trademark, merch line, partnerships, and grant funding.
- Developed the brand's core positioning around decolonizing wellness: a research-grounded framework that reframed the studio's Compton community not as an underserved market, but as the rightful heirs to wellness practices the mainstream industry had appropriated, stripped of origin, and repriced out of reach. That conviction became the North Star for every downstream asset.
- **\$30K+ in merchandise sales.** Launched a merch line built from that strategic conviction — slogans and visual identity rooted in reclamation, not aspiration.
- **\$45K in grant funding.** Proposals written in the same register as the brand strategy: health equity framed as structural correction, not charity.
- **\$30K+ in partnership revenue.** Co-brand strategy and launch messaging securing Nike LA, Propel, LMNT, Tadin Tea, EZCO Coconut Water, Airbnb, and Element.
- Drove 60% site traffic growth through SEO strategy, content calendar development, and editorial direction aligned to brand mission and community search behavior.
- Produced trademark tagline, full copy system, logo, brand guidelines, and inclusive design assets creating a cohesive identity across digital, physical, and partnership touchpoints.

### **Director of Brand & Strategic Communications** · *OptiBrand Rx (Healthcare Market Research Firm)*

Montclair, NJ | Jul 2021 – Mar 2025

*Promoted from Director of Brand Engagement*

- Rebuilt the company's entire content and messaging infrastructure — channel by channel, audience by audience — driving 57% website traffic growth, 150% LinkedIn engagement lift, and 64% user engagement increase. Not a campaign. A system: every piece written to a specific audience at a specific moment in their decision cycle, which is why it converted into client acquisition.
- Lifted client retention 58% by redesigning campaign strategy to move complex research insights out of reports and into language decision-makers could act on.
- Developed global GTM campaign strategies for pharma product launches, aligning Creative, Marketing, Digital, Sales, and Research teams across parallel workstreams.
- Built KPI dashboards and campaign analytics infrastructure that improved ROI visibility and enabled rapid strategic pivots; drove a 46% additional lift in site traffic through behavioral data-informed content optimization.
- Managed national partnerships with the NFL and NCAA, coordinating multiregional marketing strategy and producing all brand and co-marketing language for both relationships.
- Authored pitch decks, branded proposals, and executive presentations that moved complex research into persuasive narrative, securing accounts at the C-suite level.

### **Director of Market Research** · *FlashField — An OptiBrand Rx Company*

Montclair, NJ | Jul 2022 – Nov 2023

- Led a 15-person team of analysts and creatives delivering primary research for Big Pharma clients: designed mixed-methodology research programs combining behavioral and attitudinal data to surface audience insights that syndicated sources could not produce.
- Translated findings into decision-ready strategic narrative — not reports that described what happened, but briefs that told a leadership team what the data required them to do next.

### **Managing Director & Creative Director** · *Esse Collective (formerly Crux)*

Boston, MA | Jul 2019 – Present

- Founded Esse Collective in 2019 and ran it as an active consultancy alongside director-level corporate roles. The consultancy was the laboratory: where methodologies were tested before being institutionalized, where client range expanded across wellness, healthcare, and consumer goods, and where the work that got noticed got me recruited onto executive teams.
- Drove a 30% lift in brand engagement for OptiBrand Rx through a design-led marketing initiative. They retained the consultancy, then offered me their executive team.

## **Brand Development Specialist** · *Alison Chi & Company (formerly Tzelan House)*

New York, NY | Jul 2019 – Jul 2021

- Produced brand identity systems, narrative positioning, and launch assets for luxury hospitality clients including The Newbury Hotel — high-end pitch decks, mood boards, and identity systems that secured top-tier hospitality partnerships.
- Built multi-sensory brand experiences grounded in cultural heritage and customer insight, aligning architectural design, narrative tone, and digital and on-property touchpoints into unified expressions for high-net-worth global audiences.

## **CORE COMPETENCIES**

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Creative Direction · Copywriting · Brand Narrative & Voice Systems · Content Marketing · Copy Strategy · Integrated Marketing · Go-to-Market Architecture · Campaign Management · Creative Briefs & Brand Guidelines · Content Strategy · UX Writing · SEO · Stakeholder Messaging · Market Research & Consumer Insights · Audience Segmentation · Primary Research Design · Partnership & Co-Brand Messaging · KPI Reporting & Analytics · Team Leadership · Regulated Market Communications · Behavioral Economics · Executive Presentations & Pitch Decks

**Tools:** Adobe Creative Suite · Canva · Google Analytics · HubSpot · Salesforce · SEMrush · Notion · Asana · Microsoft Office · Google Workspace

## **EDUCATION**

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**University of Massachusetts, Boston** Post-Baccalaureate, Communications

**Suffolk University** B.A., Political Science

## **LANGUAGES**

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**Languages:** English (fluent) · Farsi (fluent) · Spanish (working)