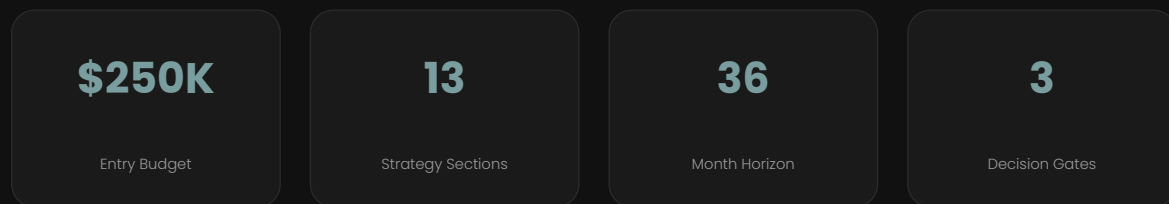


The Market Entry Strategy

A comprehensive go-to-market plan for an Indian D2C brand entering the Gulf.
Every dollar of \$250K mapped and accounted for.

WHY I CHOSE TO SHARE THIS STORY

I chose this story because it shows that research and strategy, done properly, are not abstract overhead. They are the foundation that prevents expensive mistakes. This company came to me with ambition and a budget. What they needed was a clear path forward so that every dollar of their \$250K would be spent with purpose. I provided that path: systems, positioning, supply chain, pricing, channels, and decision gates. Someone who knows the Dubai market holding their hand through the complexity.



- + Market sizing (TAM/SAM/SOM)
- + Competitive war-gaming
- + Channel strategy (ecom first)
- + Supply chain design
- + Risk matrix (12 risks)
- + Decision gates (Go/Pause/Exit)
- + Consumer segmentation
- + Regulatory framework
- + Brand localisation plan
- + 3-year financial model
- + Implementation roadmap
- + Price architecture

No execution. Just the strategy.

The kind of clarity that makes \$250K go further.

MY APPROACH

How I Approached This

Market entry strategy is not about enthusiasm. It is about making sure every dollar has a purpose, every risk has a mitigation, and every decision has a trigger.

1

Understood Their Ambition

Sat with the founding team to understand what they were trying to achieve, what they had already done, and where their blind spots were. The ambition was real. The planning had gaps.

2

Corrected the Market Sizing

Stripped out categories the client did not compete in. This single correction reduced the perceived opportunity by a third and changed every revenue projection that followed.

3

Mapped the Regulatory Landscape

Identified Saudi Arabia's approval process as the single biggest risk to the timeline. Recommended starting regulatory work immediately rather than after the UAE launch.

4

Designed a Phased Channel Strategy

Recommended ecommerce-first to test demand cheaply, with retail partnerships developing in parallel. This protected capital while building market intelligence.

5

Built a Realistic Financial Model

Replaced optimistic projections with an honest 3-year P&L; across four scenarios. Showed exactly where money would go and what returns to expect at each stage.

6

Created Decision Gates

Defined explicit Go/Pause/Exit criteria at Months 12, 18, and 24. The board would never have to guess whether to continue investing.

7

War-Gamed the Competition

Anticipated how three competitor archetypes would respond to the market entry and designed specific counter-strategies for each scenario.

01 The Brief

A well-funded Indian D2C beauty company approached me for help expanding into the Gulf. They had strong domestic traction: multiple brands, solid revenue, a growing reputation, and the ambition to take their products international. UAE and Dubai were the priority. Saudi Arabia was on the horizon.

They had \$250,000 allocated for the first phase of Gulf market entry. They had done some preliminary work, had conversations with potential distributors, and had a rough plan. What they needed was someone who knows the Dubai market to turn that rough plan into a real one.

When I sat down with the team, the ambition was genuine and the product was strong. But there were gaps that, left unaddressed, would have turned \$250K into expensive trial and error.

Their market sizing included categories they did not compete in. Their channel strategy lacked specificity about platform economics. They had not mapped Saudi Arabia's regulatory timeline. And they had no framework for deciding when to accelerate, pause, or stop.

My job was to provide the clarity and structure that would turn \$250K of budget into \$250K of strategic investment. Every dollar accounted for. Every decision mapped to a trigger.

02 What I Delivered

I produced a comprehensive 13-section strategy document. Not a market research report. A working document where every section moved toward a specific recommendation backed by data, experience, and judgment.

KEY STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

MARKET SIZING

Stripped out categories the client did not compete in. Reduced the perceived market to segments they could actually serve. This correction changed every number that followed.

ECOM-FIRST STRATEGY

Recommended launching entirely through ecommerce before investing in retail. Lower cost, faster feedback, ability to test before committing to shelf space.

RETAIL PARTNERSHIPS

Mapped how to begin retail conversations early. Which chains, what terms, how to convert relationships into shelf space by late Year 1.

REGULATORY ROADMAP

Full registration process for UAE and Saudi. Identified Saudi approvals as the single biggest risk. Recommended starting regulatory work immediately.

PRICING IN THE GAP

Identified a specific price gap between mass and premium brands. Positioned the client's products in that gap with SKU-level guidance.

SUPPLY CHAIN

Designed logistics: manufacture in India, hub through JAFZA, distribute across UAE and Saudi with local partners. Mapped landed cost per SKU.

03 The Judgment Calls

The data could have been assembled by anyone with access to market reports. What could not have been assembled is the judgment layer. Here are some of the calls I made based on experience in the Dubai market.

1. Choosing the entry wedge

Start with the segment that already knows you. Lower acquisition costs, faster reviews, social proof that bridges into the broader market. This is sequencing, not data.

2. Pricing through local knowledge

Identified a gap between mass (AED 15-29) and premium clean (AED 120+). The sweet spot came from shelf audits and consumer behaviour, not a formula.

3. Anticipating competitive response

Designed counter-strategies for three scenarios: mass brands defending shelf space, K-beauty accelerating halal, and Indian competitors undercutting on price.

4. Building exit criteria

Explicit walk-away thresholds at Month 12. The \$250K budget was framed as a ceiling, not a commitment to spend.

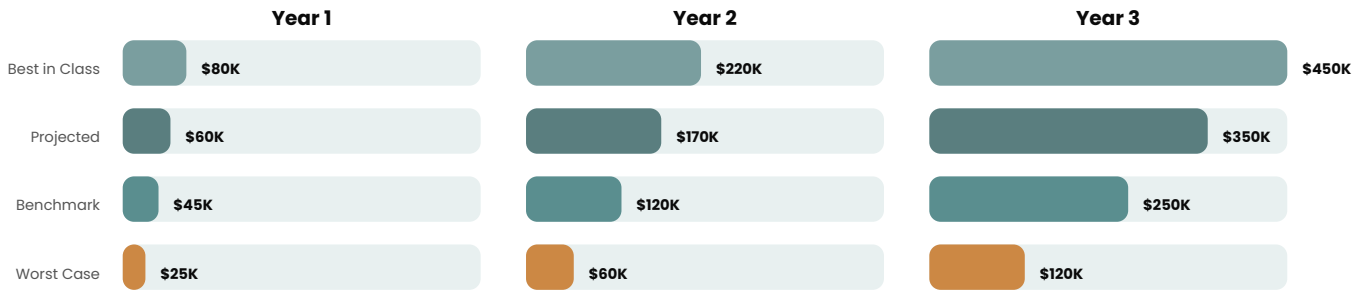
5. Ground-level Dubai knowledge

Regulatory delays, distributor dynamics, platform economics that look different in practice than on paper. The kind of knowledge that only comes from being in the market.

04 Revenue Scenarios

I built four revenue scenarios. Each maps to specific assumptions about regulatory timelines, channel traction, and marketing efficiency.

3-YEAR PROJECTIONS BY SCENARIO (USD THOUSANDS)



SCENARIO ASSUMPTIONS

Best in Class	Saudi on time. Strong retail. Hero SKUs outperform.
Projected	Saudi delays 2-3 months. Steady retail build. Budget plan baseline.
Benchmark	Slower traction. Single-channel dependency. Higher promo costs.
Worst Case	Significant delays. Weak resonance. Decision gates trigger review.

05 Decision Gates

A strategy without decision gates is a wish list. I built explicit Go/Pause/Exit criteria at three points so the board would never have to guess.

GATE 1: MONTH 12

UAE revenue run-rate	Go: On track Pause: Below Exit: Far below
Key SKU velocity	Go: Reorders Pause: Slow Exit: No traction
Saudi regulatory	Go: Approved Pause: In progress Exit: Blocked

GATE 2: MONTH 18

Combined revenue	Accelerate: Above plan Consolidate: Below
Retail engagement	Accelerate: Multiple chains Consolidate: None
Marketing efficiency	Accelerate: CAC improving Consolidate: CAC rising

GATE 3: MONTH 24

Revenue trajectory	Full scale: On track Review: Below target
Profitability	Full scale: Positive Review: Still negative

The budget is a ceiling, not a commitment to spend.
The exit criteria exist to protect capital, not to signal pessimism.

06 What This Shows

This engagement had no execution component. No ads were run. No campaigns launched. The entire deliverable was a strategy document.

And that document was worth every dirham. Because without it, a company was about to deploy \$250,000 based on incomplete market understanding, optimistic projections, and no criteria for knowing when to change course.

What I provided was not just a plan. It was a holding hand in a market the client had never operated in. Someone who knows how Dubai actually works, who has been in the rooms where these deals happen, and who can translate that knowledge into a structure the client can execute with confidence.

WHAT THIS STORY DEMONSTRATES

That the thinking done before a single dollar is spent determines whether the dollars that follow are invested or wasted.

That knowing a market from the inside is what separates a useful strategy from a generic report.

That the most valuable part of this document was not the data. It was the judgment calls: which market to enter first, how to price, when to stop, and what competitors would do in response.

That a clear strategy with decision gates turns \$250K from a gamble into a structured investment.

Want to talk strategy?

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