



Nejdeh Hovanessian Նժդէհ Հովհաննիսյան نژده هوانسيان

nationality Armenia and Iran

family status married | two daughters

contacts nejdeh@designpreneurship.com | nhovanessian@aua.am

+374 94 11 46 15

summary *My educational and career paths completely revolutionized my initial ideology as a classic design professional, making me more business-centric and guiding me towards the realms of entrepreneurship, strategy, marketing, branding, and communications.*

Moving from graphic design to industrial/product design, brand design and finally strategic design and design thinking, I found the 'designpreneur' inside myself. I coined the term during my Master's dissertation to define the interface between design and entrepreneurship.

After that revelation and returning from London, I concentrated my professional career mainly on the creative industry; i.e., marketing, branding, and communications. As a brand strategist, I played the role of business development consultant for my clients. I helped them in defining (or redefining) their business strategy and marketing plan to articulate their brands. That is why I prefer to introduce myself as a 'catalyst'. During this period, I have worked with numerous local and international companies and startups from different fields such as, banking, manufacturing, FMCG, food, service, IT, and education.

I realized my portion of entrepreneurial experience by cofounding and strategically leading bama.ir; Iran's No. 1 auto-trading online platform, and darz.art; the global Iranian fine arts online platform.

Another side of my career in recent years that invaluablely invigorates my professional character is education, sharing my knowledge and experience with the next generations. It has been more than a decade that I have been keeping myself professionally fit and updated through teaching and instruction.

It has been almost twelve years since I have focused on 'Design Thinking' (DT) and its role as a catalyst for change. I have organized and led over 60 workshops on DT for business managers, entrepreneurs, designers, educators, and students in Iran and Armenia. Throughout these years, I have been in contact with and received direct support and guidance from different key players in the field, such as Tim Brown of IDEO/Stanford d.school, Marty Neumeier of Liquid Agency, Tim Ogilvie of Peer Insight, Roger Martin of Rotman School of Management, and Design Management Institute of Boston.

Learn more about my career path and read the recommendations through:
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/designpreneur>.



current January 2022 - present | Yerevan
occupations **Adjunct Lecturer**
Manoogian Simone College of Business and Economics | American University of Armenia
www.cbe.aua.am

I teach the 'Introduction to Innovation and Entrepreneurship' course at the BA in Business program.

- March 2021 - present | Yerevan
Assistant Director
Entrepreneurship and Product Innovation Center (EPIC) | American University of Armenia
www.epic.aua.am

I supervise the EPIC pre-incubation (STRIVE) and the EPIC incubation programs and am in charge of designing and planning the center's future programs.

- March 2021 - Present | Yerevan
National Coordinator
Entrepreneurship World Cup Armenia (EWC) | EPIC at AUA
www.entrepreneurshipworldcup.com

For the second year in a row, I am in charge of the initiation and management of the EWC Armenia National Organizer team and the National Leadership Committee; also organization of the national competitions to choose the country's representatives in the EWC Global Finals.

- September 2020 - present | Yerevan
Adjunct Lecturer
Akian College of Science and Engineering | American University of Armenia
www.cse.aua.am

I teach the 'Startup Culture' undergraduate course at the General Education program.

- July 2016 - present | Tehran
Co-founder and Chief Strategist
darz.art | Iranian global fine arts online platform
www.darz.art

darz.art is the most complete and up-to-date online database and showcase for Iranian fine artists who work in Iran or outside the country.

- February 2009 - present | Tehran
Co-founder and Chief Strategist
bama.ir | auto-trading online vertical platform
www.bama.ir

bama.ir is one of the top 10 successful digital businesses in Iran, with over 3k daily new ads and 3.5M active users per month.



- April 2008 - present | Tehran and Yerevan
Design Thinking Researcher, Practitioner and Educator
Designpreneurship
<https://t.me/designpreneursdiary>

I introduced DT to the Iranian professional audience in 2009. During the last 13 years, I have organized and led more than 60 workshops on DT for business managers, entrepreneurs, designers, educators, and students in Iran and Armenia.

- recent experiences** October 2019 - August 2021 | Yerevan
Entrepreneur-in-Residence
Entrepreneurship and Product Innovation Center (EPIC) | American University of Armenia
www.epic.aua.am

I acted as a catalyst for bridging the gap between entrepreneurship theory and practice, connecting beginner entrepreneurs with solid, international entrepreneurial experience, networks, and hacks, while stimulating their enthusiasm and passion as future small business leaders. [more details](#)

- recent short-term experiences** February 2022 | Yerevan
Organizer and Lead
Design Thinking Introductory Workshop | Tourism Innovation Academy, Impact Hub Yerevan

A half-day introductory workshop on DT for startups and SMEs from the tourism industry.

- September 2021 - February 2022 | Yerevan
Mentor
Green AgriTech Incubator V4 | Nation in Action & ANAU

I mentored two startup teams.

- March 2020 and March-April 2021 | Yerevan
Organizer and Lead
Design Thinking Bootcamp | Startup Armenia Foundation

A 5 days intensive practical course immerses participants in a full end-to-end experience of the DT process and explores the transformative power it can bring to their work.

- July 2020 | Yerevan
Trainer
AgriTech Accelerator | Foundation for Armenian Science and Technology (FAST)

I was in charge of the DT unit of the program.



- April 2020 | Yerevan

Trainer

InVent Entrepreneurial Program | Foundation for Armenian Science and Technology (FAST) and British Council's Creative Spark Program

I was in charge of the DT unit of the program.

- November 2019 | Yerevan

Organizer and Lead

Design Thinking Workshop | Foundation for Armenian Science and Technology (FAST)

A well-rounded 3 days immersive course that gives an insight into the core principles of DT.

**previous
experiences**

September 2018 - August 2020 | Tehran

Strategic Brand Development and Marketing Communications Consultant

TAPSI | the smartest online taxi platform in Iran

www.tapsi.ir

I was in charge of facilitating the redefinition process of this successful digital brand and the management of its marketing communications.

- August 2008 - March 2019 | Tehran

Course/Workshop Planner and Instructor

Vije School | school of visual communications

www.vijeschool.com

I have collaborated with this private school for more than 10 years as the planner and instructor of the 'Corporate Identity and Brand Communications' unit in the 'Marketing Communications and Advertising' one-year professional course. During this period, I have also organized and led more than 30 workshops on DT, strategic thinking, brainstorming, presentation skills and teamwork in that school.

- October 2015 - July 2018 | Tehran

Founder and Managing Director

Articulate, branding, strategy and design | branding agency

www.articulatebranding.com

I led over 40 strategic branding projects and consultation jobs for different clients, including digital businesses (startups, incubators, accelerators and VCs), fast food chains, banking and FMCG brands, with a team of 12 young professionals (strategists, visual and verbal designers).



- Oct 2013 - Oct 2015 | Tehran
CEO and Strategic Brand Builder
Vahid Think Futurity | branding agency
www.vahidthinkfuturity.com

I led over 20 strategic branding projects and consultation jobs for different clients, including digital businesses, banking and FMCG brands, with a team of 9 young professionals (strategists and visual designers).

- July 2011 - Oct 2015 | Tehran
Branding and Design Consultant
System Group | business management software manufacturer
www.systemgroup.net

I repositioned and restructured the brand architecture of this largest software manufacturer in Iran with the help of the company's internal design department.

- February 2012 - June 2015 | Tehran
Adjunct Lecturer for BA and MA Academic Courses
University of Tehran | Faculty of Fine Arts, Industrial Design Group
www.ut.ac.ir

I transformed the out-of-the-date program for the units to introduce 'marketing' and the newly shaped directions in the design profession (like design management, service design, etc.) to students. This fresh approach created outstanding results.

- November 2014 - February 2015 | Tehran
Design Thinking Workshop Organizer and Lead
IBS | business and management school
www.ibs.ir

I organized and led two-day practical workshops for CEOs and senior managers of a few reputable companies.

- April 2013 - July 2014 | Tehran
Branding Consultant
Rosha Centre | high-end department store
www.roshacenter.com

I defined the strategic platform of this department store brand which was the first of its kind in Iran.



- Sep 2008 - June 2013 | Tehran
Manager of Strategic Planning Entity and Director of Brand Solutions Business Unit Eshareh Marcom | marketing communications agency
www.eshareh.com

Firstly I initiated and managed the strategic planning entity of Eshareh; one of the most successful Marcom agencies in Iran. With a team of 3 people, we strategically planned and guided more than 30 advertising campaigns for international and local brands.

Then, I created and led the agency's Brand Solutions SBU. With a team of just 5 people and the help of the agency's internal creative resources, we realized over 20 branding projects for different types of clients, including service and FMCG brands. Our strategic rebranding project done for Saman Bank (www.sb24.com) is still being considered as a reference point in the Iranian branding market.

- May 2004 - May 2006 | Yerevan
Director of Marketing and Sales Elite Hygiene | sanitary products manufacturer
www.elitehygiene.com

I created the identity (including product, packaging and POS designs) and managed the marketing, communications and sales of this local brand across Armenia.

- May 2001 - May 2004 | Yerevan
Director of Design Department Grand Candy (Grand Holding) | confectionery manufacturer
www.grandcandy.am

By the invitation of the late founder of GC, I initiated the design department of the company, which gradually became the design department of the Grand Holding, including Grand Tobacco, Masis Tabak, etc. With a team of just 4 young professionals, we redefined the whole identity of GC throughout its touchpoints, from products to packagings, from cars to the famous 'Ponchikanots'.

- volunteer experiences** September 2021 | Dilijan
Speaker & Adviser Buissup Global Forum | Armenian Businessmen Association

I had a talk on 'Introduction to Design Thinking' and advised a dozen of participant teams.

- May 2020 | Yerevan
Expert Trainer Generation Unlimited Youth Challenge | UNDP and Ayb Foundation

I was in charge of the 'Ideate' phase of the challenge.



- October 2017 | Yerevan
Speaker
Granshan Yerevan Conference 2017 | TUMO

I represented Iran with a presentation titled "Why sometimes it doesn't feel like 'Persian'?"

- November 2015 | Tehran
Speaker
TEDx University of Tehran

The title of my presentation was: 'designpreneur; the [legitimate] offspring of the relationship between design and entrepreneurship, or how a designer finds his fraternal twin'.

<https://youtu.be/mXl0vBzbj6U>

- November 2012 | Yerevan
Organizer and Lead
Ayb School | private high school

I organized and led two-day DT workshop for the 10th grade students.

- October 2011 | Yerevan
Member of Professional Jury for 'Marketing Campaigns' Category
2nd POPOK International Advertising Festival

I represented the Iranian advertising community and organized a masterclass titled 'Building brands, by design'.

- September 2010 | Yerevan
Speaker
1st Pan-Armenian Fine Art Forum, National Academy of Sciences of Armenia

I represented Iran's Armenian community with a presentation titled 'Design; the 21st Century's Key to Innovation'.

- September 2006 - November 2007 | London
Student Representative
Brunel University, School of Engineering and Design

education 2006 - 2008 | London
Master of Design Strategy and Innovation
Brunel University, School of Engineering and Design
distinction certificate

I won 'Brunel International Student Ambassador Scholarship' for 2006-2007. For the dissertation, I worked on 'Integrating Design into SMEs through Entrepreneurship' under the supervision of Dr. Brigitte Borja de Mozota.



- 2007 | London
Bright Future: Entrepreneurial Skills Programme
Kingston University

- 1991- 1995 | Tehran
Bachelor of Industrial Design
Art University, Faculty of Applied Arts
distinction certificate

For the final project, I worked on 'The Question of Cultural Identity in Industrial Design' (research project) and 'Designing the Model Iranian Kitchen for the Next Decade' (design project).

language proficiency **Armenian** | mother tongue

Persian | native/bilingual proficiency

English | full professional proficiency

French | limited working proficiency

Russian | limited working proficiency

Arabic | elementary proficiency

publications July 2018 | Tehran
book | catalyst and professional supervisor for the translation into Persian
Designing for Growth by Jeanne Liedtka and Tim Ogilvie
Aryana Ghalam Publication

- February 2010 | Tehran
book | translation into Persian
Design Management by Brigitte Borja De Mozota
Vije Negar Publication

- April 2008 | Paris
article | co-authored with Brigitte Borja Di Mozota
Design Co-Entrepreneurship; Deploying the Interface between Design and Entrepreneurship for Nurturing Innovation in SMEs
International DMI Education Conference Design Thinking

membership since 2017
Iran Management Consultants Association | Tehran
professional member

- since 2007
Design Management Institute | Boston
initially academic and then professional member