

LUCA GELSI

Global Business Development Director

20+ Years | Emerging Markets | Compliance Architecture | Revenue Scaling

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

International Business Leader with 20+ years' experience scaling revenues and building compliant operations across EMEA and APAC markets. Recognized for strategic market entry acumen, cross-cultural negotiation expertise, and delivering complex compliance- driven projects in highly regulated environments (pet import, F&B, automotive, hospitality). Proven track record of launching ventures across borders, optimizing P&L through distributor networks, and implementing digital workflow solutions that accelerate operational efficiency by 30-40%.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- €1.5M sales growth in GCC markets through structured distributor expansion strategy
 - 100% regulatory compliance rate for 500+ international animal transfers across CITES/USDA/EU frameworks
 - Launched 2 cross-border ventures with full regulatory clearance from concept to market entry
 - 40% faster permit processing via digital workflow optimization and automation Multi-
 - market leadership: Successfully scaled operations across Dubai, Malaysia, Italy, and emerging MENA region
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Co-Owner & Business Strategist

Pets Caboodle (Remote) | Global Ethical Pet Importer | Mar 2023 – Present

- Designed and implemented comprehensive ethical import framework, ensuring 100% regulatory compliance across 4 jurisdictions (CITES, USDA, EU standards) Led
- B2B partnership development, successfully onboarding 3 major distributors within 12 months, generating new revenue streams
- Established compliance protocols and digital documentation systems, reducing permit processing time by 40%
- Built cross-functional teams across time zones (EMEA/APAC) for seamless international operations

Co-Owner & Operations Lead

Lia's Gastronomy SDN BHD | Premium F&B Brand, Penang (Malaysia) | Dec 2022 – Present

- Co-founded and operationalized premium F&B concept with focus on healthy, original positioning in competitive Malaysian market
- Established operational workflows, supplier networks, and compliance frameworks for food import/distribution
- Managed end-to-end P&L optimization; scaled concept to multi-location readiness

General Manager - Middle East Expansion

PETS HABITAT LLC | \$5M-Revenue Pet Importer, Dubai | Dec 2016 – Dec 2023

- Led comprehensive market transformation initiative, repositioning Dubai operations as regional hub for ethical pet retail
- Scaled revenue by €1.5M through strategic distributor network expansion across GCC markets
- Achieved 100% compliance rate for 500+ international animal transfers by architecting proprietary regulatory framework
- Reduced permit processing time by 40% through digital workflow implementation and stakeholder coordination
- Negotiated partnerships with government agencies, port authorities, and logistics providers across 4+ countries

Business Development Manager - GCC Region

Lainox, ALI Group Italia | Commercial Kitchen Equipment | Oct 2015 – Dec 2016

- Identified and penetrated GCC market for premium commercial kitchen solutions; established initial distributor partnerships
- Developed market entry strategy tailored to regulatory requirements and cultural business practices in UAE/Saudi Arabia
- Generated €250K in qualified pipeline through strategic account management and trade show presence

Sales Manager (Northern Italy)

Lainox, ALI Group Italia | Jun 2015 – Oct 2015

- Managed regional sales territory covering Northern Italy; achieved 15% YoY revenue growth
- Established key accounts in hospitality and institutional food service sectors

Regional Sales Manager (Trentino-Südtirol)

Rational Italia SRL | Premium Kitchen Solutions | Mar 2013 – Jun 2015

- Drove sales growth across alpine region through consultative selling and account management
- Built strong relationships with hospitality and institutional clients; managed €1.2M regional portfolio

Hotel Director

Falkensteiner Hotels & Residences | 4-Star Luxury Hospitality | Jun 2008 – Feb 2013

- Directed P&L and operations for 4-star luxury property; managed 100+ team members
- Improved profitability by 18% through operational efficiency and revenue optimization initiatives
- Oversaw guest relations, staff development, and compliance with international hospitality standards

Area Manager

Volkswagen Group Italy | Automotive Retail | Jun 2005 – May 2008

- Managed sales operations across regional automotive dealership network Achieved
- consistent sales targets and customer satisfaction metrics in competitive market

Hospitality Manager

Various Premium Properties | Trentino-Alto Adige Region | Dec 2001 – May 2005

- Managed operations and guest services in high-end hospitality venues Developed
- operational protocols and staff training programs

Military Service - Carabiniere

Arma dei Carabinieri (Italian Military Police) | Nov 2000 – Nov 2001

- Completed military service with focus on discipline, compliance, and organizational excellence

Head Chef

Various Michelin-Guided Restaurants | Jun 1995 – Sep 2000

- Executed fine dining culinary programs in Michelin-recognized establishments
- Demonstrated excellence in quality control, team leadership, and operational precision

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Regulatory & Compliance

- CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) •
- USDA/FDA Import Documentation & Requirements
- EU Regulatory Frameworks (customs, food safety, animal welfare) •
- Ethical Sourcing & Supply Chain Compliance
- Import/Export Documentation & Clearance

Business Development & Sales

- Market Entry Strategy & Feasibility Analysis

- Distributor Network Development & Management •
- B2B Partnership Development & Negotiation
- P&L Optimization & Revenue Growth Strategies •
- Pricing Model Optimization
- Trade Show & Event Management

Operations & Leadership

- Cross-Functional Team Building & Development •
- Digital Workflow Design & Automation
- Stakeholder Management (government, logistics, partners) •
- International Project Management
- Operations & Process Optimization Technical

Platforms

- Salesforce CRM (sales pipeline management, forecasting) Amadeus
 - Travel & Logistics Tools
 - Microsoft Office Suite (Excel, PowerPoint, Access)
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LEADERSHIP & SOFT SKILLS

- Multilingual Negotiation & Communication – Fluent Italian, English, German; conversational Spanish
 - Cross-Cultural Business Acumen – 15+ years operating in diverse regulatory and cultural environments (MENA, APAC, EMEA)
 - Strategic Problem-Solving – Architected compliance frameworks and digital solutions for complex international operations
 - Stakeholder Management – Successfully navigated negotiations with government agencies, regulatory bodies, and multi-national partners
 - Entrepreneurial Mindset – Co-founded and scaled ventures across different industries and geographies
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EDUCATION & CREDENTIALS

Bachelor's Degree in Economics & Management
Università di Verona, Italy | 2006

ENASARCO Sales Accreditation

Italian Professional Sales Certification | Placed in Top 10% of cohort; recognized credential for advanced B2B sales and regulatory compliance expertise

Sommelier Certification

Italian Wine Academy (AIS) | Wine knowledge for hospitality and F&B context

NOTABLE PROJECTS

1. Ethical Pet Import Framework Architecture

Pets Caboodle | 2023–Present

- Developed comprehensive compliance-driven import framework ensuring seamless regulatory approvals across 4 jurisdictions
- Implemented digital documentation system, reducing permit processing by 40% and enabling scalable operations across distributors

2. GCC Market Transformation Initiative

PETS HABITAT LLC, Dubai | 2018–2019

- Led repositioning of Dubai operations from basic retail to regional ethical-sourcing hub
- Structured distributor partnerships, established compliance protocols, and scaled revenue by €1.5M

3. Premium F&B Concept Launch

Lia's Gastronomy, Penang (Malaysia) | 2022–Present

- Co-founded and operationalized healthy-focused F&B concept; established supply chain, compliance, and multi-location scalability framework

LANGUAGES

Italian – Native Fluency (C2)

English – Professional Fluency (C1) | Business correspondence, presentations, negotiations

German – Professional Fluency (C1) | Technical documentation, business communication

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: lucagelsi.my@gmail.com

Phone (Italy): +39 334 6134552

Phone (Malaysia): +60 11 7257 6114

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/luca-gelsi

Current Location: Batu Ferringhi, Penang, MALAYSIA & Bolzano, ITALY

Available for: International relocation | Remote opportunities | Business development leadership roles