Sam Istambouli

Founder & CEO · Technology Executive · 4x Founder, 2 Exits

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Technology executive and four-time founder with 19 years building, scaling and selling software companies across the Middle East and North America. Co-founded and led technology for two venture-scale consumer platforms that were acquired, one of which reached 600K active users and profitability within two years. Led engineering for a San Francisco firm serving venture-backed startups, including Andrew Ng's Landing AI. Currently Founder & CEO of Looops.ai, an AI-native website platform, and co-founder of Lemontree.studio in Montreal.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Founded four companies; two acquired by competitors (At7addak, 2014; BidZeed, 2017).
- Scaled At7addak to 600K active users, 8M monthly page views and profitability, sponsored by EA, Activision Blizzard, AMD, Logitech, SteelSeries and Red Bull.
- Ran engineering and client relationships for a US software firm serving seed to Series B startups for 3.5 years.
- IEEE-published computer engineer (MSc); co-founded an Awwwards-nominated design studio.

EXPERIENCE

Founder & CEO · Looops.ai — 2026 – Present · Montreal, Canada

AI-native website platform competing with Wix, Framer and Webflow. Launched in 2025 as Nodetree, rebranded to Looops in 2026.

- Founded and lead the company; own strategy, product, engineering, pricing and go-to-market.
- Took the platform from concept to public launch in under a year, self-funded, with a three-tier subscription model in market.
- Secured partnerships with AWS, Google and Cloudflare; set the technical and commercial direction on frontier AI infrastructure, including per-customer unit economics.

Co-Founder & Technical Director · Lemontree.studio — 2023 – Present · Montreal, Canada

Design and development studio. Awwwards Nominee (2025). Listed on DesignRush.

- Co-founded a partner-led studio with designer Samira Baroudi: she leads design, I lead development and delivery.
- Manage all development and client engagements across Canada, the MENA region and Europe, spanning branding, web and mobile products, SEO and AI automation.

Engineering Manager · Akadenia — Jan 2019 – May 2022 · Remote, United States

San Francisco founded software firm operating as an outsourced CTO and engineering team for seed to Series B startups. AWS Select Tier Partner.

- Led the engineering organization: a five-engineer team delivering web and mobile products for venture-backed clients.
- Owned client relationships end to end: scoping, budgets, delivery, reporting and escalations.
- Delivered platforms for Landing AI (Andrew Ng's computer vision company), Perimeter (public safety platform serving 280+ agencies) and RageOn (custom apparel marketplace).

Independent Software Consultant — 2017 – 2018 · Lebanon

- Advised and built for startups and agencies; co-authored IEEE research with the University of Balamand (see Publication).

Co-Founder & CTO · BidZeed 2014 – 2017 · Beirut, Lebanon

One of the first auction e-commerce platforms in the GCC. Acquired by a regional competitor.

- Co-founded the company and owned technology, infrastructure, brand and paid acquisition.
- Scaled to 100K+ verified users, 5K auctions and 1.6M bids; brought the platform to market in under three months.

Co-Founder & CTO · At7addak 2011 – 2014 · Beirut, Lebanon

First e-sports platform in the Middle East. Acquired by a competing gaming company.

- Co-founded with Brahms Chouity and HRH Prince Abdulaziz Bin Turki Al Faisal; owned the entire technology organization from launch to exit.
- Scaled to 600K active users, 8M monthly page views and a 500-writer contributor network; reached profitability in 2013.
- Secured EA, Activision Blizzard, AMD, Logitech, SteelSeries and Red Bull as sponsors; ran the region's largest online tournaments, including the EA-backed SAR 1M Battlefield 3 tournament with 100K+ participants.
- Wamda Readers' Choice Startup 2011; Executive Magazine Recognition Award 2012.

Software Engineer · Polysoft 2007 – 2010 · Tripoli, Lebanon

- Enterprise web and Windows applications on the Microsoft stack.

PUBLICATION

Ayoubi R., Istambouli S., Abbas A.-W., Akkad G. "Hardware Architecture for a Shift-Based Parallel Odd-Even Transposition Sorting Network." *IEEE International Conference on Advances in Computational Tools for Engineering Applications (ACTEA)*, Beirut, July 2019. DOI 10.1109/ACTEA.2019.8851099.

EDUCATION

MSc, Computer Engineering 2009

University of Balamand, Lebanon. Thesis on FPGA sorting hardware, basis of the IEEE publication above.

BSc, Computer Engineering 2007

University of Balamand, Lebanon.

LANGUAGES

English, Arabic, French.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Company building	Founding, scaling, exits, founder operations
Product strategy	Positioning, pricing, go-to-market, SaaS unit economics
AI products	LLM-based product development, frontier model infrastructure, AI cost control
Engineering leadership	Team building, delivery management, technical architecture, cloud (AWS)
Client and partner relations	Enterprise and startup clients, sponsors, stakeholder management