



ABE KARAR

Dubai, UAE
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| +971 545 778899
| www.abekarar.com



EXECUTIVE | TECHNOLOGY EVANGELIST | OPEN BANKING EXPERT | FINTECH INNOVATOR | DIGITAL STRATEGIST

Accomplished, high-integrity, bilingual executive with over 18 years of experience in Financial Services and subject matter expertise in Open Banking/Finance, Digital Transformation, Digital Strategy, Customer Experience, Business Process Digitization and Data Analytics; Deep knowledge of global Open API standards and regulatory frameworks (e.g. OBIE, BOBF, KSAOB, etc.); Track record of successful design and implementation of Open Banking/Finance Compliance and Aggregation API platforms and use cases, from POC to MVP; Solid understanding of the Open Banking landscape in Bahrain, KSA, and UAE; Supported some of the world's largest financial institutions, including Bank of America, JP Morgan Chase, Bank of Montreal and First Abu Dhabi Bank; Led large-scale transformation initiatives, established Centers of Excellence and implemented enterprise Agile practices; Well-rounded knowledge of latest technology trend, including Generative AI, Blockchain/DLT, Robotic Process Automation (RPA), Cloud, Advanced Analytics, etc.; Known for exceptional leadership skills and commitment to maintaining high ethical standards; Inspires and empowers teams to consistently deliver outstanding results, fostering a collaborative and high-performance culture.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Open Banking/Finance
- Innovation Labs
- FinTech Partnerships
- Business Development
- Relationship Management
- Agile Delivery
- Product Management
- Performance Management
- Operational Excellence
- PMO/Project Delivery
- Digital Transformation
- eKYC/Customer Onboarding
- Customer Experience
- Business Process Digitization
- Business Analytics & Reporting

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE



FINTECH GALAXY

UAE

2020/03 - 2023/06

Chief Strategy/Innovation/Product Officer

- Spearheaded both Product and Technology domains across the entire product lifecycle spectrum, successfully orchestrating the implementation of FINX, an Open API platform for Open Finance, skilfully addressing compliance and aggregation use cases to optimize operational efficiency and regulatory adherence.
- Developed onboarding processes, including eKYC, name screening and AML monitoring as per Bahrain's regulatory requirements.
- Led the design and implementation of FinHub973, a state-of-the-art national Digital Innovation Lab for Bahrain, a Central Bank initiative, bringing together the power of an Open Banking Technical Sandbox, a Regulatory Sandbox, an Innovation Center, and a global FinTech marketplace.
- Implemented Agile Delivery framework across both Product and Technology, promoting faster product development, improving project visibility, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability.
- Acted as the trusted advisor for Financial Institutions and Central Banks/Regulators across the region, providing strategic guidance on Open Banking activation, effective use case implementation, national financial market infrastructure/governance, and design/deployment of FinTech initiatives for enhanced regulatory compliance and operational efficiency.
- Led the Innovation team responsible for all innovation programs for Financial Institutions, including Hackathons, Innovation Challenges, Accelerators, etc., fostering the development and implementation of pioneering solutions to drive product evolution and business growth.
- Led the strategy development for Open Banking/Finance, Innovation, and Digital Transformation for the company and clients, resulting in focused delivery, enhanced operations, and customer excellence.



UNIVERSITY OF BAHRAIN

BAHRAIN

2021/02 - Present

Industry Expert/Mentor, Masters in Fintech Program

- Collaborated with the University of Bahrain and the Central Bank of Bahrain to provide industry expertise to establish Bahrain as a FinTech Innovation Hub.
- Mentored and supported students during their Capstone project, equipping them with the practical skills and knowledge required to excel in the fast-paced world of FinTech.
- Conducted weekly office hours to coach the students on real-world fintech case studies and introduced guest speakers from a network of esteemed fintech professionals.



ALCHEMY DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

CANADA/UAE

2016/08 - Present

Founder/CEO, Digital Transformation Expert

- Steered transformational initiatives by utilizing an extensive understanding of evolving digital trends to provide strategic consultation for prominent Financial Institutions. Successfully directed transformative strategies that aligned digital advancements with business objectives, fostering an environment of innovation and sustained growth.
- Established robust Centers of Excellence and Innovation Labs, setting up innovation processes, governance, operations, and collaboration platforms to foster a culture of continuous innovation in alignment with organizational goals.
- Implemented ground-breaking digital capabilities, driving improvements in customer/employee experience, operational efficiency, and regulatory compliance.
- Delivered expert-led workshops and seminars, nurturing a deep understanding of Digital Transformation, Agile Delivery, and FinTech within the organizations.
- Consulted and led key transformational initiatives by developing digital strategies with a clear roadmap of digital capabilities, dependencies, sustainment, and expected ROI.
- Designed Technology and Business Architecture with high reusability and enterprise scalability.



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D **DELOITTE MIDDLE EAST** **UAE** **2019/06 – 2019/12**
Senior Manager, Financial Services


- Rendered top-tier management consulting services, specializing in Open Banking, Digital Transformation, and FinTech to streamline operations and boost customer satisfaction.
- Played a pivotal role in launching Deloitte's Digital Delivery Center in Riyadh, improving regional service delivery and business performance.
- Conducted interactive seminars and workshops, stimulating the growth of the Digital and FinTech ecosystem.
- Supported all aspects of sales operations, effectively finalizing significant transactions, fostering relationships with essential clients, and amplifying revenue generation.

af **FINZO, ARAB FINANCIAL SERVICES (AFS)** **BAHRAIN** **2019/01 – 2019/06**
Head of Digital Banking

- Led the Digital Banking/FinTech business, implementing a robust growth plan and strategic initiatives to drive profitability and organizational growth.
- Negotiated and maintained fruitful vendor and client relationships, solidifying the organization's standing in the market.
- Supported the development of the Fintech ecosystem landscape in the region.
- Developed comprehensive business plans and adoption strategies for the Digital Banking agenda, catering to various target markets in the region, leading to a significant increase in customer base.

FAB **FIRST ABU DHABI BANK** **UAE** **2017/12 – 2018/12**
AVP, Transformation Lead / Digital Banking Platform Owner

- Orchestrated the strategy and roadmap for FAB's Digital Banking platform, leading to the successful delivery of FAB's first true digital offering in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- Initiated and facilitated cross-functional workshops, ensuring comprehensive involvement in the launch of the bank's first digital offering in the KSA.
- Developed onboarding processes, including eKYC, name screening, and AML monitoring as per SAMA regulations.
- Implemented Service-Design principles, creating best-in-class user experiences and customer journeys across digital channels, resulting in heightened user engagement.
- Formed strategic partnerships in the FinTech ecosystem, facilitating the introduction of innovative digital solutions that differentiated the bank in a highly competitive market.
- Managed the tracking and reporting of KPIs for digital channel effectiveness.

 **UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA** **CANADA** **2014/06 – 2017/12**
Seasonal Instructor, Master of Business Administration – Professional Program

- Taught graduate-level lectures and seminars, providing students with a deep understanding of Corporate Performance Management, Economics, Business Analytics, and Leadership.
- Employed innovative pedagogical techniques, fostering an engaging learning environment and facilitating students' application of theoretical concepts to real-life business challenges.

 **BMO BANK OF MONTREAL** **CANADA** **2013/12 – 2017/06**
Director, Business Process and Digitization, Personal & Commercial Banking

- Led enterprise Digital Transformation initiatives (e.g., eForms/eSignature, eKYC, workflow automation, enterprise business services, etc.), driving customer/employee experience improvements, promoting operational efficiency and regulatory compliance, and supporting the organization's evolution to a leading digital bank.
- Implemented Agile practices, accelerating the development lifecycle, promoting adaptability, and enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of project outcomes.
- Developed and managed business case analysis and project reports for enterprise-wide digitization program (+\$200MM), leading to cost savings and improved productivity.
- Led Business Process excellence focused on simplifying processes/procedures and enhancing control frameworks.
- Directed Change Management and Training activities, ensuring a smooth transition during the rollout of new business processes and technology tools.
- Established/led an Enterprise Center of Excellence (ECOE), fostering best practice sharing, knowledge transfer, and continuous learning across the organization.
- Managed the training of operational functions in the rollout of banking support activities.

 **JPMORGAN CHASE BANK** **CANADA** **2010/09 – 2013/12**
Business Analysis Manager

- Provided strategic direction through complex business analysis, planning, forecasting, and key performance reporting, resulting in optimized resources, reduced operational costs, mitigated risk, and enhanced customer experience across sites.
- Supervised strategic and operational reporting/analytics functions, providing key insights to guide decision-making across Chase Card Services.
- Developed and deployed robust performance management, process improvement, and risk control frameworks, significantly reducing operational risks and enhancing business performance.



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 **BANK OF AMERICA, MBNA** **CANADA** **2005/02 – 2010/09**
AVP, Head (Operations / Customer Experience / Risk Analytics / KYC/AML)

- Revamped KYC and AML processes, based on a deep understanding of compliance standards and regulations, to alleviate operational challenges, streamline customer experience and reduce irregularities.
- Designed and deployed enhanced performance scorecards with descriptive and predictive analytics to drive business outcomes.
- Developed risk models for heightened credit risk strategies, delivering high-impact value based on micro-segmentation of the customer portfolio.
- Drove Customer Experience initiatives, centring on enhancing First-Contact-Resolution (FCR), improved employee/client engagement, increased Net Promoter Scores (NPS), heightened customer loyalty, and fortified client retention rates.

EDUCATION AND ACCREDITATIONS

▪ Digital Disruption: Digital Transformation Strategies Judge Business School, Cambridge University	United Kingdom	2021
▪ Yellow Belt Lean Six Sigma Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa	Canada	2015
▪ Investment Funds in Canada – Banking and Financial Services Canadian Securities Institute	Canada	2015
▪ Master of Business Administration (MBA) Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa NEOMA Business School Exchange Program	Canada France	2014
▪ Bachelor of Science, Mathematics – Applied Analysis Carleton University	Canada	2011

LANGUAGES

- **English** Native
- **Arabic** Proficient

TESTIMONIALS

- www.linkedin.com/in/abekarar/details/recommendations
- www.abekarar.com/testimonials