ALLIOTT HADI SHAHID · CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS & CONSULTANCY

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The Legacy Biography
Fifty Years in Chartered Accountancy

Founder & Managing Partner
Alliott Hadi Shahid Chartered Accountants & Consultancy
Abu Dhabi · Dubai · Sharjah · Al Ain

“In trust we audit, in truth we advise.”

AUTHORISED LONG-FORM EDITION · DRHADISHAHID.COM

THE BOOK

Contents

Twenty leaves covering the making of a chartered accountant, the founding of a firm, and the half-century of practice, service and succession that followed.

A NOTE ON THIS EDITION

This biography is assembled from the documented public record: the professional registers of ICAP, the Alliott Global Alliance directory, chamber and council listings, the firm's published history, and the material held at drhadishahid.com. Where the record is silent — the years before the firm, family detail, exact dates of qualification and arrival — this edition says so plainly rather than inventing them. Those gaps are listed on the final leaf, for the family archive to close.

CHAPTER ONE

Before the Firm — *The Making of a Chartered Accountant*

Every practice begins twice: once when the door opens, and once, years earlier, when a young man decides what kind of work he is willing to put his name to.

The public story of Dr. A. Hadi Shahid begins in 1976, the year the firm that carries his name first opened its doors to clients. But a chartered accountant does not arrive at a founding fully formed. Behind that year sits an apprenticeship — the long, unglamorous training that the chartered route demands and that no shortcut has ever replaced.

The overall arc of his working life spans **fifty years**, of which **forty-plus have been in practice** as a chartered accountant across the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The difference between those two numbers is the apprenticeship. Within it sit **four years as an area in-charge for one of the Big Four** international accounting firms — the formative decade in which a trainee becomes a professional who can be left alone in a client's ledger.

That Big Four period deserves more weight than a single line in a curriculum vitae usually gives it. An *area in-charge* is not a junior. It is the person who owns a portfolio of engagements: who plans the fieldwork, who allocates a team, who faces the finance director when a figure will not reconcile, and who carries the file when it goes to review. It is the first position in an accountant's life where the buck genuinely stops, and it is where professional judgement — as distinct from professional knowledge — is manufactured.

It also gave him something else: the working standards of a global firm, absorbed young. Methodology, documentation discipline, the habit of writing down not just the conclusion but the reason for the conclusion. Those are the habits that a founder either carries into his own practice or does not, and the ones he carries become, twenty years later, the culture of the firm.

The Pakistani chartered tradition

His professional home institution is the **Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan**, of which he is a **Fellow member (FCA)**. ICAP is not a soft qualification. It is a training-contract institute in the British tradition: articles served under a practising member, examinations of famously high attrition, and a code of ethics enforced by a disciplinary directorate. Fellowship — as distinct from associate membership — is conferred for years of continuous good standing in practice. It is the professional body's way of saying that a member has not merely passed, but lasted.

The ICAP tradition matters to the rest of this story in a way that is easy to miss. It produced, over the second half of the twentieth century, a generation of accountants who were professionally portable — trained to a British-derived standard, working in English, and therefore able to practise credibly in the Gulf, in East Africa, in the United Kingdom and across South Asia. Dr. Shahid is one of that generation. The firm he founded, and the international alliance he later joined, are what that portability looks like when it is exercised for fifty years in one place.

WHAT THE RECORD ESTABLISHES

— Fifty years of overall professional experience; forty-plus of them in practice.

— Four years as area in-charge with one of the Big Four accounting firms.

— Fellow member (FCA) of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan.

— Practice conducted across three countries: the UAE, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The public record does not document his year of birth, birthplace, schooling, or the precise year of his ICAP qualification. This edition declines to estimate them. See Open Questions for the Family Archive, leaf 20.

CHAPTER TWO

1976 — *Founding a Firm in a Young Federation*

The United Arab Emirates was five years old. The firm has now outlived the country's entire first half-century.

To understand what it meant to open a chartered accountancy practice in the UAE in **1976**, it helps to remember what the UAE was in 1976. The federation had been declared on 2 December 1971. It was, in its fifth year, a country still assembling its institutions: a young central bank, a commercial companies law still being drafted into modern form, a customs and licensing architecture being built emirate by emirate, and an economy about to be transformed by the oil revenues of the 1970s.

Into that environment came a professional service that the country would shortly need in enormous quantity: independent audit. Every company that would be formed in the coming boom would need books, and every set of books would need a signature from someone qualified to give it. The firms that established themselves in that window — before the licensing regime hardened, before the multinationals arrived in force — became the professional infrastructure of the private sector that followed.

Alliott Hadi Shahid Chartered Accountants & Consultancy has been serving clients since **1976**. That single date is the load-bearing fact of this biography. It means the firm predates the UAE's modern commercial companies legislation, the introduction of VAT in 2018, the corporate tax regime of 2023, and every generation of client it now serves. A practice founded in 1976 has audited through the oil boom of the late seventies, the regional turbulence of the eighties, the Gulf War, the Asian financial crisis, the construction boom of the 2000s, the 2008 crash and the property correction that followed it, the pandemic, and the tax reforms of the last decade.

What founding actually required

A founding of this kind was not, in the mid-seventies, a matter of registering a company and printing letterhead. It required a professional licence in an emirate where the regulatory framework for auditors was itself young; it required clients willing to hand their books to a new name; and it required, above all, that the founder be personally present in every engagement, because in the first years of a practice the founder *is* the practice.

The distinguishing decision of those early years was to build a *total business management and consultancy service package* rather than a narrow audit shop. The firm positioned itself from the start as a house that could take a client from company formation through bookkeeping, audit, advisory and tax — the full life-cycle of a business — rather than appearing once a year to sign a set of accounts. That breadth is why the client relationships in this firm are measured in decades rather than engagements.

> *A practice founded in 1976 has audited through every boom and every correction the United Arab Emirates has known. Longevity of that kind is not a marketing claim. It is a survival record.*

The founder's name on the door

There is a particular exposure that comes with putting your own name on a professional firm. A numbered company can fail quietly; a firm called *Hadi Shahid* cannot. Every audit opinion issued for fifty years has carried a personal reputational guarantee, and every partner subsequently admitted has been admitted into a name that already had something to lose. That structural fact — personal name, personal liability, personal standard — runs underneath everything in the chapters that follow, and it is the reason succession later became not a business topic for him but a moral one.

CHAPTER THREE

Four Emirates — *Building the Practice*

Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Al Ain. A national footprint assembled one office at a time, each with a different economy to serve.

Alliott Hadi Shahid grew into one of the leading firms of chartered accountants, auditors and business advisors in the United Arab Emirates, operating through offices in **Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah and Al Ain**. Read quickly, that is a list of cities. Read properly, it is a description of four distinct client economies and a deliberate strategy for serving all of them.

Abu Dhabi — the institutional capital

Abu Dhabi is the seat of federal government, of the sovereign wealth institutions, and of the energy sector. Practising there means practising in the environment of government-related entities, large contracting groups, and the compliance expectations that come with public money. It is also where his institutional service later concentrated: it was in Abu Dhabi that he served as **Coordinator of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan**, and in Abu Dhabi that he was a founding member and later Vice President of the Pakistan Business & Professional Council.

Dubai — the trading floor

Dubai is the trade, logistics, retail and re-export economy — a city of thousands of owner-managed trading houses, free-zone entities and family businesses, each needing audit, structuring and, in the later years, VAT and corporate tax advice. The firm's Dubai office sits at **04A, Dubai Creek Towers, Baniyas Road, Deira** — an address that is itself a piece of the story. Deira and the Creek are the historic commercial heart of Dubai, the quarter where the trading families built the merchant economy long before the skyline moved south. A fifty-year practice keeps its Dubai office on the Creek for a reason.

Sharjah and Al Ain — the industrial and the inland

Sharjah carries much of the country's manufacturing, light industry and the SME base that supplies the larger emirates. Al Ain, inland at the Omani border, is agriculture, education, government services and long-established family holdings. Neither is served well by a firm that only understands the towers. Maintaining offices in both is a statement that the practice intended to serve the whole federation, not only its two glass capitals.

THE FIRM AT A GLANCE

— **Established:** serving clients since 1976.

— **Offices:** Abu Dhabi · Dubai · Sharjah · Al Ain.

— **Service model:** total business management and consultancy — formation, accounting, audit, advisory, tax.

— **International reach:** through membership of Alliott Global Alliance.

— **Registered with:** the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and other international organisations.

The development-bank registrations

That last line is easy to skim and should not be. Registration with the **World Bank**, the **Asian Development Bank** and the **Islamic Development Bank** is a vetting outcome, not a subscription. Multilateral development institutions maintain rosters of firms eligible to audit or review projects financed with their funds, and admission to those rosters requires demonstrated methodology, independence and quality control. For a UAE national practice — not a Big Four branch office — to hold those registrations is a statement about the standard of the working papers behind the signature.

CHAPTER FOUR

Audit & Assurance — *The Discipline of the Signature*

The core craft. Fifty years of deciding what a set of accounts is entitled to claim.

Of all the specialisms listed against his name — audit, commercial law, business and tax advisory, forensic accounting, arbitration, succession management — **audit** is listed first, and correctly. Everything else in the practice grew out of it.

Audit is popularly misunderstood as arithmetic checking. It is not. It is the professional act of forming an opinion, on the basis of evidence gathered under a defined standard, as to whether a set of financial statements presents fairly the position of an enterprise. The auditor is not the company's advocate and not its adversary. He is the person the rest of the economy relies upon to say what is actually there.

The weight of that role is structural. A bank extends credit on audited accounts. A partner buys into a business on audited accounts. A regulator licenses on audited accounts. A family divides an estate on audited accounts. When the opinion is sound, none of those parties ever think about the auditor. When it is not, the damage travels outward through every one of them. Fifty years of signing without that failure is the quiet centre of this biography.

Auditing across a half-century of changing rules

The technical ground under the profession has moved repeatedly during his career. The UAE's commercial companies legislation has been rewritten and amended; international standards have converged on IFRS; auditing standards have been progressively codified and tightened; independence rules have been formalised; and in the last decade the country has introduced **VAT (2018)** and **federal corporate tax (2023)**, each pulling the audit function into direct contact with a tax authority for the first time in the country's history.

A practitioner who began before any of that and is still advising after all of it has done something specific: he has re-learned his own profession several times without changing what the signature means. That is the difference between an accountant who is current and an accountant who is merely experienced.

The sectors

Across four emirates and five decades, the engagement base has necessarily spanned the breadth of the UAE private sector — trading and general commerce, contracting and construction, manufacturing and industry, real estate, professional services, retail and hospitality, and the family-owned holding structures that sit behind so much of Gulf business. Each carries its own audit risk profile: revenue recognition in contracting, inventory and cut-off in trading, related-party exposure in family groups. Breadth of that kind is only acquired one engagement at a time.

> *In trust we audit, in truth we advise.*
>
> THE FIRM'S MOTTO — AND THE DIVISION OF DUTIES IN A SINGLE LINE

The motto repays a moment's attention, because it encodes a professional distinction that clients frequently blur. *Audit* is an office of trust: the auditor is placed in a position of reliance by parties who are not in the room. *Advice* is an office of truth: the adviser sits beside the client and owes him candour, including the candour he did not want. Holding both roles for fifty years without letting either contaminate the other is the whole ethical problem of the profession, compressed into six words.

CHAPTER FIVE

Forensic Accounting — *Reading the Books Backwards*

The Certified Fraud Examiner credential, and the discipline of assuming that someone meant it.

A statutory auditor is required to plan for the possibility of fraud. A **forensic accountant** is engaged because it has already happened. The two are related crafts with opposite postures, and relatively few practitioners hold both to a high standard. Dr. Shahid holds the **Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE)** designation from the United States alongside his chartered fellowship — the combination that makes forensic work defensible.

The CFE credential, awarded by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, is built around a specific body of knowledge: the fraud examination methodology, financial transactions and fraud schemes, investigation technique, and the law of fraud. It exists because ordinary accounting training does not teach a professional how to conduct an investigation that will survive contact with a court, a board, or an insurer.

What forensic engagements actually involve

Forensic accounting work in a commercial environment typically arrives in one of a few recognisable shapes: an owner who suspects that a trusted manager has been diverting funds; a partnership dissolving in dispute over what was taken out of the business and when; an insurance claim whose quantum is contested; a group discovering that a subsidiary's reported margins were never real; an inheritance in which the assets on paper do not match the assets in fact.

Each requires the same discipline: secure the records before they move; establish what the books say; establish what the books *should* say; reconstruct the difference transaction by transaction; and document the reconstruction so completely that a third party — a judge, an arbitrator, a board committee — can follow it without taking the examiner's word for anything. The work product is not an accusation. It is an evidenced narrative of what the money did.

> WHY THE COMBINATION MATTERS
>
> An auditor who is not a fraud examiner may identify that something is wrong but produce findings that cannot carry an investigation. A fraud examiner who is not a chartered accountant may investigate ably but lack standing when the financial statements themselves are in issue. Holding **FCA** and **CFE** together means the same practitioner can audit the accounts, investigate the loss, quantify it, and then — as an arbitrator or expert — sit in the proceeding where it is resolved.

The family-business dimension

In the Gulf, a great deal of forensic work is family work. Businesses built by one generation and staffed by relatives operate for years on trust rather than controls, and the reckoning tends to arrive at a transition — a death, a retirement, a division of assets between brothers or cousins. The forensic accountant who is called into that situation is doing something more delicate than tracing entries; he is establishing an agreed factual record that a family can live with afterwards.

It is not accidental that the same practitioner whose specialism list includes forensic accounting also lists **succession management**. He has spent decades seeing what happens when a business changes hands without a plan — and the forensic file is frequently the bill for that omission.

CHAPTER SIX

Commercial Law, Arbitration & *the Settling of Disputes*

From the ledger to the tribunal — the accountant as the person who determines the number the parties will be bound by.

Two entries in his specialism list sit outside what most accountants ever touch: **commercial law** and **arbitration**. Both are the natural extension of a long audit career in a jurisdiction where commercial disputes are frequently resolved privately rather than in open court.

Commercial law as an accountant's competence

A practitioner advising UAE businesses across fifty years necessarily operates inside a body of law: the commercial companies legislation governing corporate form, shareholding and the duties of managers; agency and distributorship law, which in the Gulf has particular force; contract and commercial transactions law; insolvency and bankruptcy provisions; free-zone regimes with their own rules; and latterly the tax statutes. He is not a lawyer, and the distinction is one careful professionals maintain. But an adviser who cannot read the legal architecture of a client's structure cannot advise on the structure at all — and a great deal of what businesses actually need sits precisely at the seam where accounting meets law: shareholding and profit-sharing arrangements, partner admission and exit, valuation clauses, related-party transactions, group restructuring.

Arbitration

Arbitration is the preferred forum for commercial disputes across the Gulf: private, faster than litigation, conducted before decision-makers chosen for their expertise, and enforceable internationally. In arbitrations that turn on financial questions — and a large share do — the accounting profession supplies two roles. The *expert* is instructed by a party or the tribunal to determine a financial question: what the business was worth, what the loss was, what the accounts should have shown. The *arbitrator* sits on the tribunal itself and decides.

Both roles demand a quality that is not the same as technical skill: the capacity to hold a position under sustained, well-resourced pressure from parties with a great deal of money at stake, and to be seen to be neutral by the side that loses. That is a reputational qualification as much as a technical one, and it is conferred by decades of visible conduct rather than by any examination.

THE DISPUTE CHAIN, IN ONE PRACTITIONER

— **Audit** — establishes what the accounts said.

— **Forensic examination** — establishes what actually happened.

— **Valuation** — establishes what it was worth.

— **Expert determination** — presents that finding to a tribunal.

— **Arbitration** — decides the matter between the parties.

Very few professionals in the region can operate at every link. The specialism list attached to his name covers all five.

Tax advisory in a newly taxed country

His **business and tax advisory** specialism took on an entirely new character in the last decade of his practice. For most of the firm's life the UAE was, for practical purposes, an untaxed jurisdiction. **VAT arrived in 2018**; **federal corporate tax in 2023**. Overnight, a generation of businesses that had never filed a return needed registration, compliance systems, transfer-pricing awareness and structuring advice. A firm founded in 1976 had to absorb, in its fifth decade, a discipline that had not previously existed in its market — and did.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Across Borders — *Pakistan and Afghanistan*

Three countries of practice. The middle one is the one that explains the character.

His practice as a chartered accountant is documented across **three countries: the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan and Afghanistan**. The UAE is the home jurisdiction; Pakistan is the professional homeland and the site of his philanthropic work; Afghanistan is the entry that stops readers of the curriculum vitae short.

Pakistan

Pakistan is where his institutional membership lives. ICAP fellowship carries obligations as well as standing, and his connection to the country's professional body has been active rather than nominal across decades — as the Institute's coordinator in Abu Dhabi, and later as a member of its **Digital Assurance and Accounting Board**. Practice in Pakistan also means practice in a very different regulatory environment from the Gulf: a full income-tax and sales-tax regime, a securities regulator, a corporate registry with statutory filing requirements, and a legal system with its own commercial jurisprudence. Maintaining competence in two such different systems simultaneously is not a common accomplishment.

Afghanistan

Professional practice in Afghanistan places an accountant in one of the most demanding operating environments in the world. It is a market characterised by donor-funded and development-financed programmes, international agencies and reconstruction projects, limited local financial infrastructure, and compliance requirements imposed from outside by the funding institutions rather than grown from within.

This is the context in which the firm's registrations with the **World Bank**, the **Asian Development Bank** and the **Islamic Development Bank** stop being a credential line and become an operational description. Development-financed work requires auditors who can apply international standards in places where local record-keeping does not, and who can produce assurance that a lender in Washington, Manila or Jeddah will accept. That is a distinct professional skill, and it is not learned in a comfortable market.

> *A professional who has audited in Abu Dhabi, Karachi and Kabul has met three entirely different definitions of what a "complete set of records" looks like — and has had to reach a defensible opinion in all three.*

What the three-country practice produced

The composite effect of practising across the Gulf, South Asia and Central Asia is a particular kind of professional judgement: one calibrated to the substance of a transaction rather than the tidiness of its paperwork. An auditor formed only in a mature, heavily documented market learns to audit documents. An auditor formed across these three learns to audit reality and then establish what documentation can honestly support.

It also produced the network. Fifty years of cross-border work in this triangle means five decades of relationships with regulators, bankers, development institutions, chambers and business families in three countries — the kind of accumulated standing that cannot be acquired by any firm at any price, only earned over time by one person and then, if he is careful, handed on.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Alliott Years — *A Local Firm Goes Global*

How a national practice acquired an international reach without surrendering its independence.

There is a decision every successful independent firm eventually faces. Clients grow international. They acquire a subsidiary in Singapore, a distributor in Germany, a holding company in London — and they ask their trusted auditor to handle it. At that point the founder has three options: refuse the work, sell the firm to a network that will absorb it, or join an alliance of independent firms that provides the reach without taking the ownership.

Dr. Shahid took the third road. The firm became **Alliott Hadi Shahid**, a member of **Alliott Global Alliance** — the sixth-largest multi-disciplinary alliance of chartered accountants, lawyers and specialist consultancies, represented by more than **210 member firms** operating **230+ offices across 95 countries**. The alliance name sits ahead of his own on the door, which is itself a piece of characteristic humility: the client is told first what network stands behind the work, and second whose name guarantees it.

What an alliance membership actually delivers

Alliance membership is often misunderstood as a referral arrangement. It is considerably more. A member firm gains a vetted counterpart in every major jurisdiction, so that a client's cross-border transaction is handled by professionals who are themselves accountable to the same alliance standards. It gains access to shared technical resources and to the peer network in which practice problems are discussed candidly among people who are not competitors. And it submits to admission and review criteria — alliances of standing do not admit firms that would embarrass their members.

Critically, it preserves independence. The firm remains owned by its partners, governed by its partners, and answerable for its own opinions. For a founder who put his own name on the door in 1976, that distinction is not a technicality.

> ALLIOTT GLOBAL ALLIANCE — THE NETWORK BEHIND THE NAME
>
> — 210+ independent member firms.
>
> — 230+ offices.
>
> — Presence across 95 countries.
>
> — Accounting, law and consulting disciplines.
>
> — Dr. A. Hadi Shahid: **Member of the Advisory Board — EMEA region**.

A seat on the Advisory Board

His long-standing service as a **Member of the Advisory Board of Alliott Global Alliance — EMEA region** is one of the most significant lines in the record, and among the least noticed. Membership of an alliance is a commercial arrangement available to any qualifying firm. A seat on its advisory board is not: it is conferred by the alliance's leadership on member principals whose judgement it wants in the room when questions of strategy, admission standards and network direction are decided.

It meant that a chartered accountant practising from Abu Dhabi and Deira was helping to shape the direction of a global professional network — that the traffic of influence ran outward from the Gulf, not only inward to it. For the generation of South Asian and Gulf professionals who watched it, that mattered.

The bilateral effect

The alliance relationship also changed what the firm could offer at home. A UAE family group considering an acquisition in Europe, a foreign investor establishing in the Emirates, a development-financed project with reporting obligations in three jurisdictions — all of these became engagements a firm of this size could accept with confidence. The alliance is the mechanism by which a practice of four UAE offices operates, for the client's purposes, as a firm of sixty-five countries.

CHAPTER NINE

The Quality Doctrine — *A First in the United Arab Emirates*

In 2003 the firm became the first auditing and accounting practice registered in the UAE to hold ISO 9001 certification.

Among all the entries in the firm's record, one is a documented national first: **Alliott Hadi Shahid was the first auditing and accounting firm registered in the UAE to receive ISO 9001 certification, held since 2003**.

Its significance is easy to underrate, so it is worth stating plainly what the decision involved. ISO 9001 is the international standard for quality management systems. Certification requires an organisation to document its processes, define responsibility and authority at every step, establish records and controls, submit to independent external audit of the whole system, and then be re-audited on a continuing basis. It is demanding for a manufacturer. For a professional services firm it is harder still, because the "product" is judgement, and judgement resists proceduralisation.

The auditor submits to audit

There is a quiet moral logic in an audit firm choosing to be audited. The profession spends its working life telling clients that documented systems, defined controls and independent verification are what make an organisation trustworthy. The firm that then submits its own operations to precisely that treatment is doing something more than acquiring a certificate. It is declining to exempt itself from its own advice.

Being *first* compounds the point. In 2003 there was no competitive pressure in the UAE market forcing an accounting firm to seek ISO 9001; no client was demanding it, because no peer had it. The certification was pursued because the founder believed the discipline was correct, and the cost was borne years before the market rewarded it.

> *The profession earns its licence by insisting that others document what they do. The first firm in the country to accept that standard for itself was making an argument, not a marketing claim.*

What it produced internally

Quality certification in a professional firm produces effects that outlast any certificate. It forces engagement methodology to be written down rather than carried in the head of the senior partner. It defines how files are reviewed, how work is allocated, how client complaints are handled, how records are retained. It makes the firm legible to a newcomer — which is to say, it makes the firm teachable.

That is the hinge between this chapter and the last part of this book. A practice whose methods exist only inside its founder cannot be handed on; it can only be inherited as a client list and re-invented. A practice that documented itself in 2003 had already, twenty years before the question became urgent, begun the work of making itself survivable. The **succession management** specialism that now heads his consulting practice was not a late-career interest. It was a policy the firm had been executing on itself for two decades.

INSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS HELD BY THE FIRM

— **ISO 9001** quality management certification — first UAE-registered audit/accounting firm to hold it, since 2003.

— Registered with the **World Bank**, **Asian Development Bank**, **Islamic Development Bank** and other international organisations.

— Member firm of **Alliott Global Alliance**, subject to its admission and review standards.

CHAPTER TEN

The Scholar — *The Doctorate and the Letters*

A practitioner who kept qualifying long after he had nothing left to prove.

Most successful practitioners stop collecting credentials once the practice is established; the letters after the name have done their commercial work. Dr. Shahid did the opposite. He accumulated, across a lifetime, one of the broadest credential sets held by any practitioner in the region — and he did it in a specific pattern that repays reading.

The doctorate

He holds a **Doctorate in accounting**. A Ph.D. is not a practising qualification; it confers no additional right to sign an audit report and wins no engagement that fellowship would not. It is, straightforwardly, the mark of someone who wanted to understand his own discipline at the level of theory as well as application — and who was willing to submit to years of academic supervision to do it, while running a national firm.

The combination of doctorate and practice is rarer than it sounds. Academics who have never signed an opinion and practitioners who have never engaged with the literature are both common. The practitioner-scholar — able to conduct an engagement and to reason about why the standards governing it are framed as they are — is not. It is the profile that makes a professional useful on standard-setting and advisory boards, which is precisely where he was later placed.

The full credential roster

CREDENTIAL	BODY / JURISDICTION
Doctorate (Ph.D.) in Accounting	Academic
Fellow Chartered Accountant (FCA)	Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan
Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE)	United States
Fellow	Institute of Financial Accountants
Fellow Member	British Institute of Management
Affiliate Member	Association of International Accountants
Member	Institute of Islamic Banking & Insurance, UK
Member	Institute of Internal Auditors — UAE Chapter
Chartered Business Consultant	Canada
Chartered Financial Consultant	Canada
Member	Accountants & Auditors Association, UAE

Reading the pattern

The list is not a collection of trophies; it maps onto the practice with precision. The **CFE** underwrites the forensic work. The **Institute of Internal Auditors** membership covers controls and governance advisory. The **Institute of Islamic Banking & Insurance** membership reflects a career practised where Shari'ah-compliant finance is mainstream rather than niche — murabaha, ijara and sukuk are ordinary commercial instruments to a Gulf adviser. The **British Institute of Management** fellowship and the two **Canadian designations** cover management advisory; the **Accountants & Auditors Association, UAE** membership is the local professional citizenship a fifty-year UAE practice requires.

Taken together they describe a professional who declined to specialise narrowly — who took the view that a client's problem does not arrive labelled with the discipline that will solve it, and who therefore qualified himself, jurisdiction by jurisdiction, to answer whatever came through the door.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Service to the Institution — *ICAP and the Profession*

The unpaid work: representing an institute abroad, and sitting on the board that decides where the profession goes next.

A professional body is not sustained by the members who pass its examinations. It is sustained by the small proportion who, having qualified, then give years back to it without fee. Dr. Shahid's record with the **Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan** is a record of that second kind of membership.

Coordinator, ICAP Abu Dhabi

He served as **Coordinator of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan in Abu Dhabi**. ICAP maintains overseas chapters and coordination arrangements in the countries where significant numbers of its members practise, and the UAE is among the largest of those populations. The coordinator is the Institute's presence in the country: the point of contact for members, the organiser of continuing professional development, the person who represents the Institute to local regulators and to other professional bodies, and — not least — the first port of call for a newly arrived member trying to establish himself in an unfamiliar market.

It is a role of standing rather than authority. An institute appoints as its representative abroad someone whose conduct it is content to be judged by. Doing it in Abu Dhabi, the federal capital, meant carrying the Institute's name in front of UAE ministries, regulators and the diplomatic community.

The Digital Assurance and Accounting Board

His later institutional service moved to the technical frontier. He sits as a member of ICAP's **Digital Assurance and Accounting Board (DAAB)** — the board through which the Institute addresses the transformation of the profession by technology: digital audit methodology, data analytics in assurance, automation of accounting processes, the assurance implications of new financial technologies, and the digital skills the next generation of chartered accountants will be required to hold.

The DAAB is composed of leading technology and domain experts. That a practitioner whose career began in the era of manual ledgers and hand-cast trial balances sits on the board governing the profession's digital future is the single most eloquent fact in this biography. It would have been entirely available to him, at that stage of a career, to regard the subject as someone else's problem. He instead put himself in the room where it is decided.

> *Fifty years apart: trained on paper ledgers, seated on the board that governs digital assurance. The through-line is not the technology. It is the refusal to be finished.*

PROFESSIONAL-BODY SERVICE ON THE RECORD

— **Former Coordinator**, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan — Abu Dhabi.

— **Board Member**, ICAP Digital Assurance and Accounting Board (DAAB).

— **Member, Advisory Board — EMEA region**, Alliott Global Alliance.

— **Member**, Accountants & Auditors Association, UAE.

— **Member**, Institute of Internal Auditors — UAE Chapter.

— Board member and trustee of numerous professional organisations in the UAE, Pakistan and internationally.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Chambers and Councils — *The Business Community*

Founding a council in Abu Dhabi, holding senior standing in Dubai, and being thanked in public for it.

Beyond the profession sits the business community, and here too the record is one of building institutions rather than merely joining them.

Pakistan Business & Professional Council, Abu Dhabi

He was a **Founding Member** and later **Vice President** of the **Pakistan Business & Professional Council in Abu Dhabi**. The word that carries the weight is *founding*. A council of this kind exists to give a large expatriate professional and commercial community a formal interface with its host country — a body that can speak to the chamber of commerce, the embassy, ministries and other national councils on behalf of its members. Somebody has to constitute it: draft the objects, recruit the first members, and establish the credibility that makes officials take its calls. Doing that in the federal capital put him at the centre of how a whole professional community was represented in the UAE.

Pakistan Business Council, Dubai

In Dubai he holds standing as a **Senior Member of the Pakistan Business Council** — the counterpart body in the commercial capital, and one of the long-established national business councils operating under the Dubai Chamber of Commerce umbrella. In October 2023 he was publicly presented with an **award of appreciation** in that setting, recorded alongside the Dubai Chamber of Commerce — a community formally thanking a member for service rendered over decades.

The chambers

The firm's memberships extend across the international chamber network in the Emirates — among them the **British Chamber of Commerce Dubai**, the **Swiss Business Council UAE**, and the **American Chamber of Commerce Abu Dhabi**, which maintains his biography among its member profiles. For a professional services firm, chamber membership is not decoration: chambers are where foreign investors first ask who they can trust, and being the accountant on that list, across four decades and multiple national chambers, is how a practice acquires the international client base that an alliance membership then supports.

COMMUNITY AND CHAMBER RECORD

— **Founding Member** and **former Vice President** — Pakistan Business & Professional Council, Abu Dhabi.

— **Senior Member** — Pakistan Business Council, Dubai.

— Award of appreciation presented in the Dubai business-council setting, October 2023.

— Firm membership across the British, Swiss and American chambers in the UAE.

What these roles have in common is that none of them pays. Each consumed evenings and weekends that a managing partner running four offices did not obviously have. The pattern is consistent enough across fifty years to be read as a settled disposition rather than a series of favours: the view that a professional owes something to the community that gave him a licence to practise in it.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Hospitals and Schools — *The Philanthropic Record*

Trusteeships, presidencies, and a medal from abroad for service rendered at home.

The philanthropic record is stated in the professional registers in a single compressed sentence: he is a **Member of the Board of Directors and Trustee with many Professional, Social and Charitable Organisations in the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan and internationally**, and a **former President of charitable hospitals and schools in Pakistan**.

Unpacked, that sentence describes decades of governance work in the two sectors where charitable failure does the most human damage.

Why an accountant on a charity board is not incidental

Charitable hospitals and schools in Pakistan operate under conditions that make governance genuinely difficult: donation-funded revenue that is unpredictable; costs that are not; treatment or tuition offered free or below cost to those who cannot pay; and donors, frequently overseas, who are entitled to know that their money reached the ward or the classroom. The institutions that survive are the ones whose accounts are real.

Placing a chartered accountant of fellowship standing in the chair of such an institution is therefore not a courtesy appointment. It is the appointment of the person best equipped to ensure the books are honest, the audit is clean, the donors are properly reported to, and the trustees are discharging their fiduciary duty. The **presidency** of such bodies — as distinct from a seat on the board — means carrying final responsibility for that.

> *A charitable hospital's accounts are not a compliance document. They are the mechanism by which a donor in Dubai can believe that a patient in Pakistan was actually treated.*

Trusteeship as a lifetime obligation

Trusteeship is the most demanding form of unpaid service in the charitable sector, because a trustee is personally responsible for the proper application of assets he does not own on behalf of beneficiaries who cannot supervise him. Holding trusteeships across **three jurisdictions** — the UAE, Pakistan and internationally — multiplies that duty across different legal regimes and reporting regimes, each with its own requirements.

The American Biography Institute medal

For this body of work he was awarded a **Medal for community services by the American Biography Institute**. The detail worth noting is its direction of travel: recognition arriving from an institution outside the region for service performed within it. Community work of this kind is done in board meetings and audit committees, not in public, and is very rarely visible far enough away to be honoured from abroad.

The connective thread

There is an internal consistency between this chapter and every other one in this book. The professional life is built on the proposition that money should be accounted for truthfully to the people entitled to know. The charitable life applies exactly the same proposition where the stakes are a hospital bed and a school place rather than a dividend. It is the same man doing the same thing in two settings.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Bench — *Building Partners, Not Employees*

The real output of fifty years is not a client list. It is a group of people who can sign in his place.

Ask what a professional firm produces and the honest answer is: opinions, and people. The opinions expire with the financial year. The people are the firm.

The partner bench that now carries Alliott Hadi Shahid is the tangible result of that view. **Dr. Syed Qaiser Anis** holds the position of Managing Partner. **Mr. Zaheer Kaiser Anis**, who joined the firm in early 2009, is a Partner. **Mr. Imran Ahmed**, a member of the Institute of Financial Accountants in the United Kingdom, brings more than fifteen years of experience across Big Four firms and Alliott Hadi Shahid. **Mr. Samir Ahmed Shahid**, a business graduate of the International University of Missouri in the United States, specialises in the management of consultancy engagements, company formation, VAT advisory, auditing and due diligence.

What a bench like that represents

Read the list again with an eye to what it took to assemble. It contains professionals trained in the Big Four and retained; a specialist qualified in the United Kingdom; a graduate of an American university; a partner recruited in 2009 who has now given the firm the better part of two decades. These are people with options. Every one of them could have gone to a multinational firm or set up alone. They are on this bench because a founder spent years making the firm somewhere worth staying — which means client work worth doing, standards worth being associated with, and, critically, a path to partnership that was genuinely open.

The firm's own biography site presents these partners by portrait, deliberately: the practice is shown as a group of named professionals rather than a corporate identity. That is a founder's choice, and it tells you where he thinks the value sits.

The transfer of a name

The most consequential single act in this chapter is the appointment of a **Managing Partner other than the founder**. In an owner-founded professional firm, that is the hardest step there is. It requires the founder to accept that engagements will be run in ways he would not have chosen, that clients he personally won will be served by someone else, and that his name — his actual name, on the door — is now being signed under by another practitioner.

> *Anyone can build a firm around themselves. The test is whether it still stands when they step back from the centre of it — and that test is only passed by founders who begin arranging it early enough.*

The mentoring habit

Behind the four named partners sit the associates, managers and articled trainees of five decades. A firm that has been an approved training organisation in the chartered tradition takes in young people who know nothing and returns them to the profession qualified. Multiply that across fifty years and the diaspora of professionals who did some part of their formation inside this practice is a larger legacy than any single engagement in the file room — and the reason a mentorship practice was the natural work of his later years.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Succession Management — *The Doctrine of the Orderly Handover*

The specialism that only a founder who has actually done it is entitled to teach.

Among his listed specialisms, **succession management** is the one he did not simply study or sell. He executed it on his own firm, in public, over years — and that is the difference between a consultant with a framework and a practitioner with a result.

The problem it addresses is close to universal in the Gulf and in South Asia. An enormous proportion of regional commerce sits in businesses built by one founder — a trading house, a contracting group, a professional practice, a family holding. Those founders are now reaching the point of transition, and the statistical record of what happens next is unforgiving. Businesses that pass to a second generation without a plan tend to lose value, direction and key people; a substantial share do not reach a third generation intact.

The four transfers

His framework treats succession not as a single event but as four distinct transfers, each of which can fail independently:

1. **Ownership.** Who holds the equity, on what terms, at what valuation, with what mechanism for admission and exit. This is the transfer that lawyers and valuers handle, and the only one most businesses actually plan.
2. **Leadership.** Who decides. A share certificate does not confer the authority to run a business; that has to be built in the eyes of staff, clients and bankers before the founder steps back, not after.
3. **Knowledge.** What the founder knows that is written down nowhere — why a client is handled a particular way, which supplier relationship rests on a personal history, where the exposures are buried. This is the transfer that documentation and quality systems address, which is why the ISO 9001 decision of 2003 was a succession decision before anyone called it one.
4. **Relationships.** Trust is personal and does not transfer by announcement. It transfers by a deliberate handover conducted over years, in which the successor is introduced, then accompanied, then trusted alone.

Applied to a professional practice

In an accounting or law firm the problem is sharper still, because the asset is the licence, the reputation and the judgement of the partners — none of which appears on a balance sheet. Succession there means a partner-admission policy that is real, an equity and exit arrangement that is defined before it is needed, a leadership pipeline that is developed years in advance, and a client handover that is managed engagement by engagement.

Applied to a family business

In a family business the framework must additionally survive the family. It requires governance that separates the roles of owner, director and employee — so that a relative who owns shares is not automatically entitled to run a division. It requires a decision about which family members will work in the business and on what terms. It requires the next generation to be genuinely prepared rather than merely appointed. And, in the Gulf context, it requires the arrangement to be coherent with inheritance obligations, which is where the accountant and the lawyer must work together.

THE ENGAGEMENT, IN PRACTICE

— Leadership pipeline and next-generation readiness.

— Partner admission, equity and exit planning.

— Family-business continuity and governance.

— Knowledge transfer, documentation and client handover.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Mentor — *The Practice of the Later Years*

Fifty years of judgement, made available one conversation at a time.

The final professional chapter of the story is, characteristically, not a retirement. Having built the firm, trained the bench and installed the succession, Dr. Shahid turned the accumulated judgement of five decades into a distinct practice: **one-to-one mentorship and structured succession management**, offered directly to professionals, founders and family-owned firms.

The proposition is stated on his own pages with unusual directness. A firm survives its founder only when knowledge, judgement and relationships are deliberately handed over. He has spent fifty years doing the work, and has built and transitioned a leadership bench to prove it. The consultations make that experience available without requiring the client to spend another fifty years acquiring it.

The mentorship track

For individual professionals, the work covers the ground that no examination teaches: career and qualification pathways through the chartered route; the building of credibility, ethics and professional judgement; partner-track and practice-leadership coaching; and the management of regulators, difficult clients and engagements that have gone wrong. Every one of those subjects is a place where a young professional's instinct is inadequate and where a bad decision is expensive — and where an hour with someone who has seen the situation forty times is worth more than any amount of reading.

The consulting areas

The published practice areas map the whole career: leadership mentorship; succession and continuity; audit and assurance; forensic accounting and fraud; UAE corporate tax and VAT; arbitration and dispute resolution; business valuation and due diligence; and governance and senior advisory counsel. Each is an area he has practised rather than studied.

Two to four, by appointment

The mechanics deserve a line of their own, because they are revealing. Consultations are held **by appointment only, between 2:00 and 4:00 PM Gulf Standard Time**, in half-hour slots requested through his office. A named window, a scheduled slot, an office that confirms it.

That is not the arrangement of a man maximising volume. It is the arrangement of a practitioner who has decided how much of this work he will do, at what hours, and at what standard of attention — and who would rather see fewer people properly than more people partially. It is the same instinct that runs through the audit chapters of this book, applied to his own diary.

> *A career worth passing on.*
>
> THE PREMISE OF THE MENTORSHIP PRACTICE, IN FIVE WORDS

WHO THE LATER PRACTICE SERVES

— Founders planning an exit or the next chapter of leadership.

— Family-owned firms preparing a second or third generation.

— Accounting and audit professionals on the partner track.

— Managing partners designing a succession framework.

— Finance leaders facing a complex audit, dispute or investigation.

— Young chartered accountants seeking a mentor with five decades of judgement.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Character and Creed

What fifty years of consistent conduct adds up to, and the six words that summarise it.

A biography of a chartered accountant risks becoming a list of registrations. What holds this record together is not the credentials but a small number of dispositions, visible in the same form at every stage of the fifty years.

He never stopped qualifying

The pattern is unmistakable. Fellowship, then a doctorate. A doctorate, then a fraud-examiner credential from another continent. Consulting designations from Canada. Islamic-finance membership in the United Kingdom. And, at the end of a career begun on paper ledgers, a seat on the board governing digital assurance. At no point in fifty years is there a stretch where he decided he had learned enough.

He submitted himself to the standards he sold

The 2003 ISO 9001 certification is the cleanest evidence of character in the entire record. It cost money, imposed discipline, and conferred no competitive advantage at the time because no competitor had it. It was done because the firm that tells clients to document their controls should be able to show its own.

He built institutions rather than only joining them

Founding member of a business council. Coordinator of an institute abroad. Advisory board member of a global alliance. President of charitable hospitals and schools. Trustee across three jurisdictions. Each of those is unpaid work taken on by someone already fully occupied — and taken on repeatedly, across five decades, which is the only way to distinguish a disposition from a gesture.

He built people and then let them lead

The appointment of a Managing Partner other than himself, the naming of partners on the firm's own pages, the trainees returned to the profession qualified across fifty years, and finally a mentorship practice built around handing the judgement on. A founder who genuinely believes the firm should outlive him behaves in exactly this sequence.

> *In trust we audit, in truth we advise.*
>
> ALLIOTT HADI SHAHID CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS & CONSULTANCY

The motto is the creed, and it is worth ending on. It divides a professional life into its two duties and refuses to collapse them. *Trust* is what the auditor is given by people who are not in the room and cannot check his work — the bank, the minority shareholder, the regulator, the donor to the charitable hospital. *Truth* is what the adviser owes the client sitting across the desk, particularly on the days the client would prefer something else.

Most professional careers end up sacrificing one for the other: the auditor who becomes too close to the client loses the trust; the adviser who tells clients what they want to hear loses the truth. The claim implicit in fifty years, four offices, a global advisory board seat, a national quality first, a bench of partners and a medal for community service is that both were held at once, for a very long time, by one person who put his own name on the door and never took the chance to hide behind anything larger.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Chronology, Credentials & Sources

The documented record, the office of address, and what this edition could not establish.

Chronology of the documented record

PERIOD	MILESTONE
Pre-1976	Chartered accountancy training; ICAP qualification; four years as area in-charge with a Big Four firm.
1976	**Founding of the practice** — the firm begins serving clients in the UAE, five years after federation.
1976–2000s	Expansion to four offices — Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Al Ain — and practice across the UAE, Pakistan and Afghanistan; the partner bench progressively built (Mr. Zaheer Kaiser Anis joins in 2009).
2003	**ISO 9001 certification** — the first auditing / accounting firm registered in the UAE to receive it.
Through career	Member firm of Alliott Global Alliance, with Dr. Shahid on its Advisory Board; registrations with the World Bank, ADB and IDB. Coordinator of ICAP Abu Dhabi; founding member and Vice President, Pakistan Business & Professional Council, Abu Dhabi; Senior Member, Pakistan Business Council, Dubai. Presidencies of charitable hospitals and schools in Pakistan; trusteeships in three jurisdictions; Medal for community services, American Biography Institute.
2018 / 2023	UAE introduces VAT, then federal corporate tax; the firm builds both practices in its fifth decade. Award of appreciation presented in the Dubai business-council setting, October 2023.
Current	Member, ICAP Digital Assurance and Accounting Board; Dr. Syed Qaiser Anis serves as Managing Partner; his practice centres on mentorship and succession management.

Office of record

Dr. A. Hadi Shahid — Ph.D. · FCA · ICAP · CFE — Founder & Managing Partner, Alliott Hadi Shahid Chartered Accountants & Consultancy

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Open questions for the family archive

This edition is built on the documented public record; nothing below is established in it, and none of it has been estimated. A later edition can close these from family papers: year and place of birth; family background; schooling and university; year of ICAP qualification and the firm where articles were served; the Big Four firm and the years of the area in-charge role; the year of arrival in the UAE; the years of the Afghanistan engagements; the institution, year and subject of the doctorate; the hospitals and schools presided over; the year of the ABI medal; marriage and children; and the dates of each board and trustee appointment.

Sources

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Alliott Global Alliance — member directory and firm profile. alliottglobal.com

Alliott Hadi Shahid Chartered Accountants — firm history, offices, ISO 9001, development-bank registrations, partner profiles. alliottuae.com · alliott.com.pk · **drhadishahid.com** — The Legacy Journey; mentorship, succession and consultation pages.

Chamber and council listings — British Chamber of Commerce Dubai; Swiss Business Council UAE; Pakistan Business Council, Dubai; Pakistan Business & Professional Council, Abu Dhabi.

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