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Top Skills

Data Management

Portfolio Management

React.js

Languages

English (Full Professional)

Marathi (Native or Bilingual)

Hindi (Full Professional)

Certifications

The Unspoken Rules of High Performers and High Potentials

Skills to Build Stronger Work Relationships

Sales: Analytics-Driven Storytelling

Abhinandan Shah

Building an AI-native Abu Dhabi Department of Finance

Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi Emirate, United Arab Emirates

Summary

I'm a proud "generalist". I love solving problems at the intersection of intuitive design, data and cutting edge technology. To this end, I've held various leadership positions, including roles such as Head of AI, Machine Learning, Analytics and most recently as Head of Data and AI. Previously, I've spent over 6 years, owning multi-million P&Ls, as head of product at Barclays UK, and at Vodafone Group commercial, London. I have an executive MBA from Bayes Business School, London. I'm also AWS Certified for Architecture, Machine Learning Specialty, Azure Certified for AI engineering, and Google Certified for Digital Cloud.

In late 2023, I moved to pursue a career in a regional bank in Dubai. In my circa 2 year stint, I rebuilt talent, technology and processes and delivered, data, analytics and AI to a progressive organisation. I have put in place an amazing team, that has launched some "firsts" including a customer facing gen AI application, a number of AI based colleague facing apps that make knowledge and insights pervasive throughout the company.

Late 2025, I responded to a calling to pursue something different and moved to work in the government of Abu Dhabi with a strong trust in its leadership and a keen desire to contribute to its inspiring vision of becoming an AI native government

Experience

Department of Finance - Abu Dhabi

Head of Data & AI

June 2025 - Present (8 months)

Abu Dhabi

- Formalised an ambitious and progressive AI strategy for DoF with a clear North Star, strategic action pillars and measurable outcomes

- Delivered a unique multi-modal AI for AI tool to execute the AI strategy at scale
- Delivered a robust AI governance framework in line with Abu Dhabi digital strategy 2025-27 and UAE national AI strategy 2031
- Built on the Data Strategy and delivered a comprehensive data governance framework to enable AI powered excellence in public finance
- Delivered a number of AI initiatives in production and under the guidance of visionary leadership, driving multi-generational AI transformation

RAKBANK

Head of Strategic Analytics & AI Capabilities

October 2023 - June 2025 (1 year 9 months)

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

As a Head of the Department for Strategic Analytics, I looked after various data and analytics functions and a talent pool of circa 50 people. I also setup and led the core AI capability and held joint ownership of Rakbank's AI Lab.

- Scaled & specialised the talent. Grew the analytics workforce from 43 to 55 (incl. a new offshore hub) and spun up a cross-functional CX AI Squad.
- Delivered Industrial grade MLOps; rationalised the model estate from 45 to 30 while automating 100% of ML lifecycle (DataRobot pipelines, MRDs, generative & traditional AI governance).
- Revenue & retention engine; 30 models in production now fuel hundreds of millions AED incremental revenue, +6 % active-customer base, -15% churn, +11 % FX income.
- First in the UAE GenAI banking feature, launched the bank's inaugural in-app generative search & knowledge bot, already scaling toward 500 k users and making 120+ services fully conversational. At least 5 applications in production using Gen AI.
- Ramped BTL/value-pool campaigns from 130 to 180 (+30 %) in 2024, boosting conversion +2 pp and adding AED 170 m in value with no extra contact load for customers
- Fraud & compliance analytics built from scratch, contributed deep analytics to an effort slashed card fraud double-digits, cut STR false-positives and case-handling time, and freed up FTE capacity.
- Instituted "Information Design" as a discipline; published new dashboard data interaction and AI design standards; released 25+ first-ever dashboards across fraud, revenue, channel digitisation, finance OPEX & many more.

Barclays

6 years 7 months

Director, Head of Voice, Chat and AI Technology India and Head of Customer Care Technology, India

May 2023 - November 2023 (7 months)

Pune, Maharashtra, India

In this role, I was responsible for customer care technology function based in India, a circa 600 people organisation. We were focused on delivering consistently excellent outcomes in customer care with the help of latest in technology.

Scope included the technology used in branches, and other physical and virtual servicing centres. It also included customer-colleague contact platforms.

Voice, Chat and AI Technologies are cornerstone of any digital customer servicing. This was my core focus area. I worked with my partners in the UK, leverage cutting edge technology and helped deliver transformational experiences.

Director, Head of FICC Risk and Pricing Technology, India

October 2021 - April 2023 (1 year 7 months)

Pune, Maharashtra, India

- I led a 370+ Investment banking risk technology and data function, the scope included our enterprise risk and pricing engines, Petabyte scale data products and trader facing apps and analytics. In year 2022, I was recognised by our BX Technology leadership, for building and fostering strong teams as part of our "mindset in action" awards. The efforts were visible with YoY 10% increase in "speaking-up", 13% increase in "listening", 10% increase in inclusion, and 8% increase in Engagement.

- Apart from leading engineering teams in India, I drove Data Fabric Instrumentation such as discoverability, observability and control analytics on our risk data.

- Co-chair for the gender employee resource group (ERG) in Pune, India for over 14k colleagues. Programs I lead include "Blossom", an upskilling platform that enables significant career impact for women e.g. executive presence, dealing with career breaks, etc.

Director, Head of Machine Learning, Barclays UK Technology India

May 2020 - October 2021 (1 year 6 months)

Pune, Maharashtra

- Built from scratch a multi-disciplinary, high performing team that delivers scalable AI for the enterprise.
- My team and I implemented a rewards recommender system with over 1.7x conversion uplift. We rolled out intelligent campaigns using machine learning, we implemented an intelligent document management system with custom OCR and NLP for smart information retrieval with a case load of 24m documents. We launched information retrieval and classification systems with over 94% accuracy. We also developed a natural language understanding (NLU) system that ingests 10m calls and 2m text artefacts per quarter to produce business insights across 50 customer journeys. We also created a complaints propensity model that predicts the likelihood of customers complaining this was fully integrated in our customer servicing suite.
- My role was to partner with business, establish success criteria and execute actionable insights via custom build AI models deployed on our in-house data platforms (mainly Hadoop).

Senior Product Manager, Machine Learning, Head of Barclays Ventures, India

May 2017 - May 2020 (3 years 1 month)

Pune Area, India

- Built an enriched customer data product for Barclays UK 24m x 100s of privacy friendly data attributes mastered cross business lines Enabled default adoption by linking with strategic initiatives such as credit risk, marketing etc. Exceeded key revenue objectives.
- I then built and led BUK machine learning team based in Pune. key purpose to grow the business and better serve our customers through engineering, and building product based ML solutions
- I also built and led Barclays Ventures team in Pune; this team helped Barclays ventures with data, analytics and propositioning (applying data science to building new revenue driving products).

Vodafone

Group Senior Product & Commercial Manager, My Vodafone

September 2016 - May 2017 (9 months)

London, United Kingdom

- Based at Paddington HQ headed up commercial and customer experience KPIs of My Vodafone app across 21 operating companies globally
- I also owned the app's technical performance metrics such as average response times.
- The campaigns we developed in partnership with opcos grew the base from circa 33m to 45m

- In addition, I was also the commercial product owner for Vodafone Netperform. A device analytics product with circa 10 million users. I drove roadmap and adoption of Netperform personalised in many markets. This enabled highly personalised commercial campaigns e.g. replacing devices based on charging performance of the device etc.
- I worked with the senior executives to set adoption targets for My Vodafone app across 20 operating companies and drove performance. I created adoption blueprints and best practices.
- I made a personal decision to move back to India and leave a wonderful team behind, but I am extremely grateful to Vodafone for an amazing and fulfilling time

Barclays

8 years 1 month

Product Head, Data Products

September 2014 - September 2016 (2 years 1 month)

London, United Kingdom

- I led a portfolio of new information driven digital products and services for our customers
- I was responsible for Strategy, development, execution and iteration of new business models
- I was also accountable for product roadmap, commercials and strategic partnerships
- I led a team of product managers and led the early stage development of some award winning and pioneering data products for SMEs and large corporates. I also led commercial development. Signing multiple strategic partnerships in key sectors some of which revenue generating. I also led early stage development of a ground breaking machine learning driven product
- Path to innovation is always strewn with failures, and our team had its share, but we had our successes too and I am very proud to have been a part of this journey

Product Manager, Data Products

December 2011 - September 2014 (2 years 10 months)

london, united kingdom

- Led Product Management for Information based digital products. Maintained roadmap, managed engineering and delivery.
- Helped create incubator, a vehicle that enables innovative new propositions within our digital estate e.g. online banking and mobile banking.

- Delivered app analytics for mobile apps such as “Barclays Pingit” as part of the "Big Data Hopper"
- Delivered Business Intelligence initiatives under Barclaycard Information Management
- delivered multiple iOS based BI apps, Near Real Time Information systems for our banking and payment apps

Technical Lead, Data Products

September 2008 - November 2011 (3 years 3 months)

Pune Area, India

- One of the team leads in Business Intelligence Centre of Excellence, designing, implementing various Business Intelligence solutions across Barclays PLC group
- Technical design and implementation of large Data Warehousing solutions including various infrastructure initiatives
- BI Product Evangelising, leading various new bank BI implementations and training user bases in Emerging markets e.g. Africa, SE Asia
- Setting up and Managing new technical delivery teams

HSBC

Software Engineer

July 2005 - September 2008 (3 years 3 months)

Pune Area, India

- Started as a Trainee; designing, developing and maintaining HSBC group’s flagship high-value payments gateway called “Group Messaging Gateway”
- Designed and developed key messaging interfaces, business intelligence modules and batch processes
- Co-ordinated implementations and product maintenance in HSBC North America in a mission critical and high pressure environment; trained on various banking and technology platforms

Education

Bayes Business School

Executive MBA, Strategy, Business Models · (2012 - 2014)

University of Pune

Bachelor of Engineering (B.E.), Computer Engineering · (2001 - 2005)