

ALASTAIR BEDDOW
MANAGING DIRECTOR, MERIDIAN WEST

Alastair is the managing director of Meridian West and a respected commentator and adviser on the strategic and commercial issues impacting professional and financial services firms and their client relationships. He is the co-author of *Professional Services Leadership Handbook* (Kogan Page, 2017) and his views are regularly in demand from publications such as *The Times*, *PM Magazine* and *PSMG Magazine*.

He provides strategic advice, research and training to professional firms to help them better understand their opportunities for growth, strengthen their client relationships and make changes to their systems and processes to become more client-focused.

Most recently Alastair has worked with firms including Allen & Overy, PwC, BDO, Farrer & Co, Grant Thornton, Canada Life, BNP Paribas Real Estate and Addleshaw Goddard. He has also been seconded to one of the UK's top 10 law firms advising them on a strategy refresh for their corporate division.

Alastair is an experienced executive-level interviewer and copywriter. He is frequently asked to undertake interviews with C-suite at FTSE 350 organisations, leading private companies and wealthy individuals, and to write thought leadership content for firms including PwC, KPMG, Buzzacott, Allen & Overy and Cushman & Wakefield.

JOSEPH RACZYNSKI
THOMSON REUTERS, TECHNOLOGY CONSULTANT

Born in Washington DC, Joseph grew up in Bethesda, MD and graduated from Providence College with a double major in Economics and Sociology. He worked for CoStar Group managing two successful teams of researchers and writers for the number one provider of commercial real estate information across the US.

Inspired by the previous startup, Joseph founded his own consulting firm working with companies in web and wireless development, creating a nonprofit to help open wireless WiFi access points across Washington and beyond, educating people about wireless security.

Joseph has been with Thomson Reuters since 2006, serving as a Senior Technology Consultant and Applications Integrator for the top 50 law firms in the world, customising legal technology solutions and integrating products and services. Joseph also worked in the Fraud Prevention and Investigation (FP&I) division, assisting companies with public and proprietary data on individuals and businesses.

Currently Joseph manages a team of Technical Account Managers for both the Large Law and Government segments and has recently completed my MS in eCommerce and an MBA from Maryland.

SADIQ JAFAR
MANAGING PARTNER, HADEF & PARTNERS

Sadiq is Managing Partner of the Dubai office of Hadeef & Partners. He has extensive corporate and commercial law experience, particularly in respect of inward investment, joint ventures, banking and finance, energy and infrastructure, and mergers and acquisitions. In addition to advising multinationals, Sadiq works closely with regional groups in the Middle East in relation to corporate strategy and succession planning. Sadiq holds an LLB from the London School of Economics, London University.

Sadiq qualified as a Barrister of Gray's Inn, London in 1987 and later transferred to the Roll of Solicitors of the Senior Courts of England and Wales. Previous experience includes Associate at Clifford Chance from 1987 to 1993; and General Counsel of Crescent Petroleum until 1996. Other positions include: member of the Legal Practice Division Council of the International Bar Association; Vice-Chair of the International Bar Association's Law Firm Management Committee; member of the Wealth Management Working Group of the Dubai International Financial Centre. Previous posts include Chairman of the Arab Regional Forum, a division of the International Bar Association; Vice-Chair of the Law Practice Management Forum of the American Bar Association's International Section; and Deputy Secretary-General of the International Bar Association.

DEIRDRE WALKER
HEAD OF MIDDLE EAST, NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT

Deirdre Walker is a dispute resolution lawyer based in Dubai where she is Head of Middle East.

Deirdre has experience in all forms of dispute resolution including litigation, mediation and arbitration as well as general commercial dispute resolution with a particular specialism in commercial fraud and interlocutory applications. She has extensive experience of urgent applications for freezing injunctions and ancillary relief and in the recovery of assets.

Deirdre was called to the Bar in 1986 and following a period of 18 months at the Department of Trade & Industry she joined the corporate department of the London practice in 1989. In 1991 she transferred to the dispute resolution department and in 1997 she became a partner.

Deirdre is recommended in The Legal 500 for her expertise in fraud matters and in Chambers & Partners as a leading litigator; she is also an accredited CEDR Mediator.

ROBIN ABRAHAM
MANAGING PARTNER, CLIFFORD CHANCE

Robin Abraham is the Managing Partner of Clifford Chance's Middle East Region and specialises in banking and project finance.

Robin's areas of practice include project finance, restructuring, Islamic finance and secured and unsecured lending. He has acted on a number of high profile banking and project finance deals in the Middle East.

Joined Clifford Chance 1995. Qualified 1997. Partner since 2005. London office until 2004 (including short secondment to Amsterdam office). Dubai office since 2004.