**Career Advice #51 | Syed Tabrez Ahmed\_Finance (UAE)**

**5 March 2019**

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Career Advice #51 was provided to Syed Tabrez Ahmed on 5 March 2019. Syed’s profile on LinkedIn lists him as an assistant manager with an automotive dealer in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Syed took the initiative to reach out and connect with me on LinkedIn and indicated he was searching for help in his job search.

Repeat Performance

Similar to the guidance I provided to Athif Ahmed Mehboob (Career Advice #47), Manfred Wilfred (#48) and Ganesan Thiyagarajan (#49), I provided Syed with the 7 steps to reaching out to potential contacts in Dubai. I modified the suggestions to make it relevant to Syed;s experience:

Step 1: Send personalised invitations to all of the individuals that you seek to reach out to on LinkedOn. Specifically, you need to directly contact the HR managers of all of the auto dealer companies in Dubai, AD, RAK, Sharjah, Fujairah, etc. Using the LinkedIn search function, type in “Car dealerships” and set the location to “Dubai ” and see what comes up. Repeat this exercise for each of the 7 Emirates.

Step 2: Make a detailed list in excel of each of the names for each location. This should include auto body workshops, auto service centers, car parts, spare parts, tire repair stations, etc

Step 3: For each company, search for the HR managers, HR directors within that company. Make sure you have a minimum of 2 per company and up to a maximum of 5 for the larger companies.

Step 4: Create your own 300 character “personalized introduction” that you will use for each of the people you have collected their names. All you need to do is change the name and company. This is an example of what I used for myself

Sandeep. While CFO of Qatar Solar I took a deep dive into emerging technologies. Current adviser to 3 tech startups and MECA CFO Academy. Add 2 decades energy sector & 9 yrs MENA w/ 33mths construction. Keen to chat CFO roles with XYZ Recruiting: Best in class finance w/ new school approach.

Step 5: It is very important that you put in a personal note when you click the “connect” button. I suggest that at a minimum you reach out to at least 100 people. This will be hard at first and you may feel a little uncomfortable. Forget about it. It is more uncomfortable not working and besides, you have nothing to lose.

Step 6: Once they accept your connection request, immediately reply and thank them for accepting your connection request. Now, instead of immediately sending your CV, you will give them a little comment on their company and why you think there is common ground for you to work for them. For example, provide an example of a problem you solved. You will then say “...and with your permission, I would pleased to send you my CV”. This is important so that they are forced to respond (or not) but it keeps the control in your hands.

Step 7: While you are waiting for these people to get back to you, you seek to pivot and learn some new skills while you are looking for work

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Seeking an Extension

Reflecting back on these recommendations, it is clear that I could easily provide Syed with additional tools relevant to his experience and industry focus. According to his LinkedIn profile, Syed has been at the Assistant Manager level with Al Ghandi Auto for the past 6 years, most likely in the accounting department. In my view, this expanded advice could include:

* UAE innovation
* Angel List
* Accounting Innovation
* Automotive innovation

The following message was sent to Syed earlier today:

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ENHANCED RECOMMENDATIONS

Hi Syed,

I just looked at the advice / guidance I provided you back in March this year and I realise now that I only focused on job search and your outreach on LinkedIn. One thing that is missing (and I have outlined in great detail in guidance and recommendations I provided to others over the past few months is technology innovation relevant to your current and past experience. I draw your attention the following overview:

* UAE / Middle East innovation
* Angel List
* Accounting Innovation
* Automotive innovation

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UAE/Middle East Innovation

Uber buying Careem and tech-focused startups like Yallacompare, Lunch:On, Bloovo & Property Finder all rely upon tech innovation for their success.

The following articles are a good indication that MENA tech startups and venture capital firms will increase in the coming years:

Entrepreneur ME: http://bit.ly/2HAYujT

Wamda: http://bit.ly/2HHdf5O

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Angel List |https://angel.co

Startups list tech & non-tech roles here. Quick search revealed:

29,100+ startups globally have opened roles listed on this site

11,900+ in the USA

9,100+ in India

2,000+ in UK

157 in UAE

121 in Dubai

You may want to consider setting up your profile in order to fully access the site. Startups on Angel List may not always use typical sites for recruiting staff. Your senior finance experience could be beneficial to a startup.

In fact, when I typed in “Automotive” under key words, the results revealed a total of 5 (five) Dubai startups with listed roles:

YallaParking | <https://yallaparking.com>

Arcab | <https://arcab.ae/>

4Tuners Inc | <https://www.4tuners.com>

eZhire | <http://www.ezhire.life/>

Gears Guru | <http://www.gears.guru/>

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Accounting innovation

For the past 18 months or so, I have followed technology investments announced in various tech news feeds: StrictlyVC newsletter (Connie Loizos), Crunchbase News, Techcrunch, VentureBeat, UKTN and FinSME’s Inc.

One thing that is unique about StrictlyVC & FinSME is the focus on investments in SaaS verticals, AI, ML, augmented reality, robotic process automation & robotics in virtually all sectors: real estate, retail, hospitality, healthcare, construction, fintech, insurance, education, farming, manufacturing, ridesharing, food delivery, autonomous vehicles – and virtually all disciplines -- HR, accounting, logistics, digital marketing, cybersecurity, big data management.

The funding announcements included the following selection of Accounting SaaS (there are likely more available on the market):

**Pleo |** automates bookkeeping tasks as it integrates directly with accounting software providers | <https://www.pleo.io/en/en/>

**TeamPay** | software requests, approves, and tracks company spending in real-time | <https://www.teampay.co/>

**FreshBooks** | Toronto–based small business accounting software provider, with paying customers in 160 countries | [www.freshbooks.com](http://www.freshbooks.com/)

**Suralink** | workflow management software for the accounting industry | <https://www.suralink.com/>

**SCALE Factor |** automated accounting, bookkeeping and payroll platform **|** <https://scalefactor.com/>

**Khatabook** | Bengaluru, India-based startup that is an accounting service provider for SMEs in India | **https://khatabook.in**

**Divvy** | business expense and budgeting platform | <https://getdivvy.com/>

**Roger.ai** | accounting automation tool runs on top of accounting software to automate various processes | [www.roger.ai](https://www.roger.ai/)

**Botkeeper** | maker of automated bookkeeping software | <https://www.botkeeper.com/>

**Pilot.co**m | bookkeeping services for startups and small businesses | <https://pilot.com/>

**Back Office** | automated bookkeeping platform for small businesses | www.backoffice.co

[**Bill.com**](http://Bill.com) | a business payments and software platform | https://www.bill.com

**MineralTree** | maker of accounts payable and payment automation software | [www.mineraltree.com](http://www.mineraltree.com)

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Automotive Innovation

I am sure you have heard about autonomous vehicles. Ride-sharing companies like Uber and Talabat are well known.. The examples below are a selection of the funding announcements I have seen. There are likely many similar nvestments in this sector across the globe

**ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EV)**

[Rimac](https://www.crunchbase.com/organization/rimac-automobili) | Croatian electric car and component manufacturer most famous for its supercars | http://www.rimac-automobili.com

**Rivian** | US-based startup that aspires to be the first car maker to the U.S. market with an electric pickup | http://rivian.com/

**Byton** | Nanjing, China-based electric vehicle company that designs cars as a fully connected smart device on wheels | https://www.byton.com

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**AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES**

**Starship Technologies**, a San Francisco-based maker of last-mile delivery robots | [www.starship.xyz/](https://www.starship.xyz/)

**PlusAI**, a three-year-old, Cupertino, Ca.-based self-driving truck startup | https://plus.ai

**Argo AI**,  the three-year-old, Pittsburgh, Pa.-based autonomous vehicle startup that received $1 billion in backing from **Ford |** [**www.argo.ai**](https://www.argo.ai/)

**Ghost** | Mountain View, Ca.-based startup that's designing and developing core self-driving tech to retrofit existing cars or enhance new ones | https://www.gh.st/

**Cruise |** SF-based maker of self-driving, all-electric vehicles, received a $1.15 billion equity investmen**t |** <https://getcruise.com/>

**Wunder Mobility** | German startup that provides a range of mobility services, from carpooling to electric scooter rentals | <https://www.wundermobility.com/>

**ThinCI** | AI processors for automonomous and connected vehicles | <https://thinci.com/>

**Carmera** | NYC mapping and data analytics startup for autonomous vehicles / self-driving cars | https://www.carmera.com

**Kodiak Robotics** |Palo Alto, Ca.-based self-driving truck startup | https://kodiak.ai

**Voyage** | self driving taxi | http://voyage.auto/

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**RideSharing companies**

**Wheely**, a London, UK-based luxury ride hailing startup | <https://wheely.com/en>

**Yulu** | Bengaluru-based ride-sharing bikes and microlight EVs | http://www.yulu.bike/

**Heetch** |Paris-based ride-hailing startup that's focused on France and French-speaking Africa | <http://www.heetch.com/>

**Getaround** | SF-based peer-to-peer car rental startup | www.getaround.com

Didi Chuxing | China ride-sharing | <https://www.didiglobal.com/#/>

Gett |  Israel-based ride-hail company that's focused primarily on the business market in Israel, the U.K., Russia and New York | <https://gett.com/uk/>

Ola | India ride sharing | www.olacabs.com

GoJek | Indonesia ride-sharing | https://www.go-jek.com/

Cargo Systems | US ridesharing company | https://getcargo.today/

ShoHoz | Bangladesh ride-sharing | <https://www.shohoz.com/>

**FlexClub** | a South Africa-based startup connecting car owners with gig economy workers who need them | <https://www.flex.club/>

Blablacar (France) | long distance ridesharing| http://www.blablacar.com/

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SaaS learning

SaaS can be learned WITHOUT attending classes. WITHOUT getting an IT degree. SaaS have moved from the “IT Department” to “Operations” teams running the business. Most SaaS companies have free demos to download. You can subscribe to the company newsletter or other news releases. You can also follow them on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram

SaaS Applicability

You may be thinking: “How can these Accounting SaaS help get me find a new job?” In the short term, no SaaS will help. In the long term, the more you can learn about SaaS applicable to your functional area, the more readily you will be able to identify potential gaps and can suggest affordable and effective solutions to companies that you speak with; solutions that did not exist 10 years ago.

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Have fun researching!! Feel free to message me with any questions.

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