

Chinmai Talwalkar · Chief Profit Partner, Emplify

Who I am, and how I help IT firm owners grow profit.

You asked what I do, so here it is in four pages: 23 years inside the kind of firm you run, and on the client side of the table you sell to.



\$0 → \$12M

data & analytics practice I built at KPMG Lower Gulf

\$6M → \$15M

data & digital practice I grew at Protiviti Middle East

100+

enterprise clients across 20+ countries

23 yrs

in data, AI and automation: US · UK · India · ASEAN · Middle East · Africa

I've been a techie all my life

I started at IBM, working on business, data and digital transformations for major telecom operators and a national airline. For the last ten years and more, nearly all of my work has been transformation work with C-suite leaders. I've run a P&L. I've led presales, RFP responses and commercials. I've hired teams, lost good people to better offers, and lived with bench time, pilots that never converted and clients who paid late.

The boutique firms I coach today are the firms I used to compete against when I was at the big brands. That's exactly why I picked them.

"I always came across boutique consulting companies who would compete with us, and those are the founders I'm targeting, because I know exactly what their problems are."

Why I only coach founders of technology services firms

In a large company, data and AI, cyber security, automation and IT services are departments under one umbrella. I ran those departments. In a small or mid-sized company, each one is a business with a founder carrying it.

Data, analytics & AI consultancies

Including specialists in banking analytics, PropTech, education, HR, healthcare and hospitality

Cyber security service providers

Consultancies and managed security firms

Automation providers

RPA, intelligent process automation and agentic AI

IT & technology services

ERP, core banking, CRM and digital transformation programmes

Why I left a very well-paid job to do this

I left corporate life in April 2026 because I wanted more fulfilment back. Coaching founders is my full-time work, not a side project. I've always been a people person. The best part of my career was never the technology. It was watching a team, and a business, change.

A data, AI and automation practice, from \$0 to \$12 million.

KPMG Lower Gulf, 2017 to 2023. I set up and led the Data & Analytics and Intelligent Automation practices. Over six years revenue grew from zero to \$12 million, and the team from three people to more than fifty.

The starting point

When I joined in 2017 there was no data and analytics practice in the region. No team, no clients, no offerings. We were up against firms with established practices and long client relationships. Inside a big firm, a new practice has to fight for attention and investment like any startup. It has to prove it can win work and make money, fast. That's the position your firm was in once, and in some ways still is.

How I built it

- 1 **Started with what clients would buy now.** I set up an Intelligent Automation practice first. Automation offered quick, visible savings, which made the first clients easier to win and proved there was demand. Year one was the team, the offer and the first wins.
- 2 **Won a flagship client that led to the next.** We delivered one of the region's first big data analytics engagements, a full customer view for the retail arm of one of the largest banks in the UAE. Then one of our most complex data transformations, for a securities organisation, where I advised the Chief Data Officer on building a data function. That work gave us the credibility to win the next ones.
- 3 **Turned expertise into repeatable offerings.** Instead of selling a custom project every time, I designed packaged Data Strategy and Data Governance offerings the team could sell and deliver again and again.
- 4 **Grew through partners, not just our own sales.** With fellow directors we built joint solutions with Security and Privacy, Technology, Cloud, Finance and Human Capital. Every partner became a route to new clients.
- 5 **Hired with the revenue.** We grew the team as demand grew, so the practice stayed profitable the whole way.
- 6 **Moved with the market.** When client demand shifted from automation to data, we shifted our offerings too, so we kept growing instead of being left behind.

Then I did it again

For the last three years I developed and grew the Data & Digital practice at Protiviti Middle East. The business grew about 30% a year across six GCC countries, from \$6 million to \$15 million, and the team from 20 to 75. I was responsible for winning new business in Qatar and Saudi Arabia in 2025 and 2026.

Why this matters to you

I've faced the same challenges you face: winning the first clients, turning custom work into offerings you can sell repeatedly, hiring ahead of revenue without breaking your margin, finding partners who bring you deals, and staying relevant while the technology keeps changing. I didn't learn this from a book. I built it, twice, and that's the experience I bring to your business.

The problems I solved for large clients are the ones your firm has now.

For most of my career I advised leadership teams on one question: where are we really making money, and what do we do about it?

A global commercial-finance lender

US · 2 years

Advised the Group Head of Finance

The problem. Lending and leasing was growing across many countries and products, but leadership couldn't see where it really made money. Data sat in separate systems, every unit measured performance differently, and pricing was based on revenue and volume, not profit.

What changed. One trusted view of margin, yield and risk across all units, then profitability reporting by product, segment, region and client. Unprofitable business was repriced or dropped, investment moved to the best segments, and rising late payments were caught early.

Why it matters to you: revenue growing, but no clear view of which clients and services actually make money. Most tech and consulting firms have the same problem, and the fix is the same too.

A leading UK commercial bank

UK · 2 years

Advised the Head of Commercial Banking

The problem. Thousands of business clients, but no clear view of which relationships were profitable. Reporting was built by hand, arrived late and was argued over. Relationship managers were judged on loans written, not on what each client was worth.

What changed. One set of measures for client income, profit and risk, with automated reporting. Leadership saw each client's full value for the first time. Relationship managers' time moved to the best clients, and lending was priced on the whole relationship.

Why it matters to you: when you see the full value of each client, you know where to focus, how to price, and where to pull back.

A pan-African mobile operator

Africa · 1.5 years

Data-driven marketing adviser to the CMO and the heads of prepaid and postpaid

The problem. Too many prepaid customers leaving at no cost to switch, and postpaid customers buying only one service. Campaigns went to everyone, so money was spent on people who were never going to leave or never going to buy more.

What changed. Customers grouped by behaviour and value, early warning signs of leaving identified, and targeted campaigns for retention, cross-sell and upsell. Fewer customers left, revenue per customer rose, and budget moved to what worked.

Why it matters to you: keeping and growing a client costs far less than winning a new one. I help founders spot clients at risk early and find the next service each client is ready to buy.

A global fertiliser producer

UAE · 3 years

Adviser to the CDO, Group CFO and Group COO · led a 20-person delivery team

The problem. Margins depend on energy costs, plant efficiency and volatile global prices. Data was scattered across plants and reached decision-makers too late. Data and AI projects were requested from every direction, with no view of which would save money.

What changed. A Data, AI and Automation office with live plant data on one platform, and one rule: no project without a business case showing the savings or margin gain. Lower operating costs, less waste, better margins, and budget only for work that paid off.

Why it matters to you: many data and AI founders sell to companies like this. I've sat on the buyer's side and know how leadership decides what gets funded: business value, not technology.

One of Qatar's largest banks

Qatar · 6 months

Banking and AI adviser to the Board, Head of Data, and heads of retail and commercial banking

The problem. Digital-first competitors raising the bar, slow paper-heavy credit decisions, and AI ideas from every direction. New central bank rules made the Board directly accountable for how AI is used.

What changed. Ideation with 12+ business functions, prioritised into an 18-month roadmap by value and risk, with the AI governance model and risk framework. A plan tied to revenue, faster and safer delivery, and a Board confident to approve AI spend.

Why it matters to you: if you sell AI or data services to banks, this is the buyer you face. I can help you shape your offer, your pitch and your delivery to win in regulated industries.

What I know that a generalist coach doesn't

Profit runs on utilisation, not revenue.

Margin disappears into bench time, unbilled presales and scope creep. A generalist looks at sales. I look at where the hours go.

Everyone says they do AI.

Buyers can't tell firms apart, so firms without sharp positioning end up competing on price.

Talent is the real constraint.

Specialists are expensive and get poached. Growth plans that ignore this fail at delivery.

Free work is part of the sale.

Proofs of concept and pilots given away to win deals. Many AI firms are stuck with lots of pilots and few paid projects.

Partners giveth, and partners taketh away.

Microsoft, AWS, Salesforce and UiPath bring leads, but they set the rules and can change them overnight.

Staffing firms and IP firms are valued very differently.

In a market full of buyers, that difference shows up directly in your exit price.

Diagnose. Devise. Deliver.

01

Diagnose

An assessment across 30+ parameters and six pillars, starting with your P&L: margin by client and project, utilisation, pipeline, pricing, and how much depends on you.

02

Devise

One measurable goal, and a 12-month plan built on five levers of growth. From 50+ strategies, we pick only the two or three that fit your business.

03

Deliver

Two hours every week, ending with actions and owners. A one-page dashboard monthly and a goal review every quarter. What doesn't move the numbers, we drop.

Why small changes add up: the five levers multiply each other, so modest gains in each one compound into a large change in profit. In 15 minutes I can show you which five, using your own numbers.

One goal, agreed at the start

Every engagement starts with one clear, measurable goal that you choose, such as a margin or profit target. Everything we do is measured against it, every month. Your part: turn up, complete the actions we agree, and share your numbers.

What I refuse to do

- ✗ Take a fee without agreeing a measurable goal
- ✗ Do the work for you. Then the business just depends on me instead
- ✗ Coach without seeing the numbers
- ✗ Tell you what you want to hear

Who this is for

- ✓ Founders who sign the cheques and want to be coached
- ✓ Firms doing about \$1M–\$5M a year, consistently, for three years
- ✓ Past the survival stage, not running at a loss
- ✓ Ready to put in 2–4 hours a week on the actions we agree

"Someone who has been coaching for ten years can tell you about their track record. I'm putting my fee behind the result instead."

Chinmai Talwalkar

Chief Profit Partner, Emplify · Certified business coach (Phenom Business Coaching) · INSEAD Global Board Programme, 2026 · Amazon bestselling author, *One-Person Leadership* · Former Big 4 director (KPMG), led Data & Digital at Protiviti Middle East · [linkedin.com/in/tchinmai](https://www.linkedin.com/in/tchinmai)