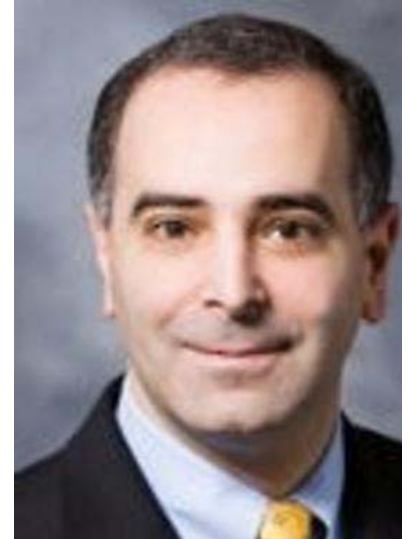


Philip Farah

Director Financial Services Practice

Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group



Farah grew up in Lebanon during that country's 15-year civil war. In this environment, he learned how to deal with uncertainty and bring clarity to unstructured situations. Thriving in uncharted territory has become a defining characteristic and a passion, whether applied to new, innovative business models or to operating in different cultures and geographies. Farah reflects back on this period as a time when friendships were created despite disparities in education, income, and other societal barriers—an approach that he cherishes to this day.

Later on, he pursued an engineering degree in computers and electronics in France. Farah took preparatory classes at Collège Stanislas in Paris, followed by three years at École pour les Études et la Recherche en Informatique et Électronique in Nîmes. (Farah is trilingual, equally fluent in English, French, and Arabic.)

After college, Farah launched his own company, 3F Technologies, in Beirut, Lebanon, providing turnkey solutions (including software, networking, and desktops), to small- and mid-sized businesses and civil engineering practices. Later, Farah joined a Lebanese bank, Banque de l'Industrie et du Travail, S.A.L., as head of IT. Farah was brought on board to transform the bank's technology organization and enable the company to compete in a modern environment as the industry was being rebuilt after many years of conflict. Within three years, the bank possessed one of the most advanced IT infrastructures in the region, and Farah became one of the bank's youngest directors at the age of 27.

Farah decided to complement his technical expertise with a Masters degree in Business Administration, at the University of Texas at Austin. During his MBA studies, he interned at McKinsey & Co., and joined McKinsey's Stamford, CT office upon graduation, where he advised leading financial services companies within the Retail Banking and Insurance Practice on a wide-scope of topics including growth, turnarounds, acquisitions, and integration strategies.



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“The work at McKinsey was intellectually stimulating and quite formative,” Farah says, “and the network of colleagues and friends gained from that experience is an invaluable asset.”

Subsequently, Farah joined other former McKinsey colleagues at Capital One Financial, where he headed a strategy group that developed new products and services for the company’s Collections and Recoveries unit. Leading a group of 25 analysts and statisticians, Farah analyzed the characteristics and needs of customers who were at risk of defaulting, and developed options to reduce losses to the firm. The work consisted of a mix of high-level strategy, rooted in data-intensive analytics, as well as creative operational approaches to get new strategies to market in record times.

Following Capital One, Farah moved back to Texas, where he and his wife had developed a network of friends during their graduate studies days. He settled in Houston, where he worked as a freelance consultant for a short time before joining the Financial Services Practice of the Cisco® Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG).

“I was intrigued by the intellectual stimulus of trying to anticipate what the future could look like, and how it would impact the financial services industry and the ability of different players to compete,” he says. “As I have done throughout my life, I enjoy analyzing uncharted environments, modeling them, and learning how we and our clients can thrive in them.”

“Besides,” he continues, “rarely do you find such a smart, visionary group of people who are also fun to work with!”

In his current role, Farah is the consulting lead on several Fortune 50 global financial services clients. In addition to his U.S. responsibilities, Farah also provides U.S. guidance and oversight to Cisco’s financial services consulting initiatives in the Emerging Markets Practice.

Farah’s areas of expertise include retail financial services, wealth management, and insurance, and he has led and contributed to the development of several pieces of thought leadership on the future of these key areas.

His customer engagements include the development of innovative e-wholesaling strategies through a network of distribution intermediaries for insurance and asset-management clients, as well as next-generation wealth management and retirement-planning strategies and value propositions for leading retail banking clients.

Farah continues to reside in Houston with his wife, son, and daughter. With family and friends all around the globe, his personal time is often devoted to family trips abroad. His latest personal passion is Tai Chi, which he practices to develop inner balance and strength.