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Executive of the Month: Shahin of DSH Design Group leaves success behind: Architect achieves success in his new country

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Davood Shahin saw the writing on the wall. The young architect emigrated from his native Iran (the modern name for ancient Persia) not long after earning his master's degree in Architecture and Urban Planning from a prestigious university in the capital of Tehran. It was 1977, just two years before the long-reigning Shah was deposed during the Iranian Revolution.

He had already gained valuable experience and an excellent reputation working with some of the country's leading architects. Shahin was on team that collaborated on modernization of a 225,000 s/f terminal at Tehran International Airport. He was chosen to work alongside American architects and contractors in Iran on one of the government's dream projects, a new mini satellite city - Ekbatan - 16,000 luxury condominiums for the capital's growing population. But unrest was growing and the ambitious architect sought new opportunities in America.

Despite political pressure and a negative public perception, Shahin has never wavered, accomplishing his dream in his new country. He brought his experience, skills and professional passion to two prominent architectural firms in Boston, Sumner Schein, and Carter and Burgess. He served as senior associate for these highly-respected firms for 22 years. Then in 2001 he branched out on his own, and founded DSH Design Group Architects and Engineers based in Newton, Mass. (www.dshdesigngroup.com).

"I started DSH Design Group because I felt the corporate environment was not adapting to new challenges posed by changes in the social and economic fabric of the 21st century. There was no room to think outside the box. I love my work. My passion is for achieving project goals and client satisfaction while seeking great designs beyond the ordinary, meeting practical needs with designs of lasting distinction. Clients appreciate our collaborative team approach at every stage. From the start, we actively engage the client, the contractor, local officials and stakeholders, and other consultants so the project moves smoothly, without surprises."

In Westborough, Mass., building commissioner Tin Htway says he enjoyed working with Shahin on the \$2 million repositioning of the 200,000 s/f Westmeadow Plaza. Htway says the new design resurrected a tired plaza and has had a ripple effect in the area. Htway said engaging the town from the start helped expedite the permitting process.

Under Shahin's leadership, DSH Design Group has earned a solid reputation, especially in retail design, where the firm turns projects around high-quality work on a fast track process. Among DSH Design Group's latest work:

* Westmeadow Plaza - Westborough, Mass. - 200,000 s/f, \$2 million renovation and repositioning of retail plaza; Client: GPB Real Estate Holdings

* Northshore Mall, Peabody, Mass. - \$1 million new entrance and mall concourse. Client: Simon

- * Atlas Neighborhood Center, Holyoke, Mass. - 220,000 s/f Retail Plaza - Design phase / site permitting. Client: O'Connell Development Group
- * Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) Dept. of Health & Human Resources, Commonwealth of Mass. - 30,000 s/f office space planning. Client: KS Partners.
- * High-end vacation home in Hawaii - 5,000 s/f glass house. Conceptual / budget drawings. Client: Private.

Andrew Crystal, VP of O'Connell Development of Holyoke, Mass., said, "We have worked with DSH for over 10 years. DSH has been able to balance competing interests of quality, exceptional design and budget constraints."

The firm's new motto to mark Shahin's 35th anniversary is: "We listen more than we talk, we perform more than we claim, and we deliver more than you expect."

"Our designs are Distinctive, Simple and in Harmony, which fits with our name, DSH." Shahin said.

"We are highly motivated to take on new challenging projects and new clients. Give us a call."

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