

How **Venator** Changed the Executive Search Game in India



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Deepraditya Datta,
Founder, Venator Search Partners

Rahul Mehra

The executive search industry in India has changed a lot over the past two decades and has become an important part of business growth. Venator Search Partners, led by Managing Director Deepraditya Datta, has played a key role in this change. The firm specializes in finding the right leaders for sectors like financial services, infrastructure, and industry, helping companies

bring in leaders who can drive their success.

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market.

Venator was founded with a clear goal: to provide high-quality executive search services while focusing on a few key sectors, mainly financial services, infrastructure, and industrial sectors. This focus allowed the firm to understand these industries in-depth and offer specialized expertise, which helped them build strong, long-term relationships with clients. By concentrating on these sectors,

Venator was able to deliver value consistently over the years.

A turning point for the company came when Venator decided to acquire ZMG, which led to a rebranding. The firm adopted the name Venator, inspired by the Latin word for “hunter.” This change symbolized their mission to find the best talent for their clients. It also came during a difficult period after the global financial crisis of 2008, when many companies were shifting their focus from international expansion to strengthening their domestic markets. Despite the challenges, this move proved to be a wise decision, and it set the stage for Venator’s growth in India’s private sector.

Venator’s focus on financial services and infrastructure played a key role in its success. These sectors were going through major changes following the global financial crisis. Businesses in these industries needed strong leaders who could face new challenges and identify growth opportunities. Venator’s deep knowledge of these sectors helped them understand not only the technical skills needed but also the leadership qualities that would help these companies thrive in a changing market.

One of the key lessons Venator learned over the years is the importance of cultural fit when hiring for senior roles. While technical skills are important, they are not enough. A leader must also be able to align with the company’s values and culture.

This is especially important for organizations going through major changes or looking to innovate. Venator’s ability to match candidates based on both skills and cultural fit has helped the firm stand out from other search firms.

A great example of Venator’s expertise was when they helped a small finance bank (SFB) find a leader who could thrive in the private sector. The client had initially preferred candidates from public sector banks, but Venator recognized that the right fit was someone with experience in private-sector organizations. They found a candidate who had worked in the life insurance subsidiary of the same group, which had a more private-sector approach. This success highlighted the importance of understanding a company’s culture and leadership needs in order to make the right match.

The executive search industry in India has come a long way since Venator’s founding. When the firm started, many businesses didn’t fully appreciate the value of executive search. Over time, more companies have realized the importance of finding the right leadership for key roles. However, there is still room for growth, especially in areas like functional expertise and understanding specific industries. In countries like the U.S., executive search has been a well-established practice for years, while in India, it is still growing. Venator has been able to adapt to these changes and stay ahead of the competition by focusing on its clients’ evolving needs.

In particular, the BFSI (banking, financial services, and insurance) sector has seen major changes recently, with the rise of fintech and digital transformation. Leaders in this sector need both traditional banking experience and knowledge of new technologies. Venator has adjusted its approach to executive search by focusing on finding leaders who are not only skilled in banking but also comfortable with emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, data analytics, and digital platforms. These skills are in high demand as companies in the BFSI sector modernize and adapt to the digital age.

Venator’s attendance at the 2024 Global Fintech Fest in Mumbai was an important moment for the company. It provided valuable insights into how the fintech industry is evolving and how digital leadership is becoming a priority. As the demand for digital skills in leadership roles grows, Venator has adapted its strategies to ensure they place leaders who are ready to drive digital change in companies.

Looking ahead, Venator is focused on expanding its reach within India’s private sector. The firm plans to continue building its reputation as a trusted partner for businesses in financial services, infrastructure, and industry. As India’s economy grows and attracts more global investment, the need for skilled leaders will only increase, providing Venator with more opportunities to help businesses find the right leadership.