



BUSINESS PLAN · INDIA

Executive Search Firm

Retained, research-led leadership & specialist hiring for India

HR-TECH

AISEVAK.IN · BY ABL DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

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This document is confidential and prepared for planning purposes. All financial figures are illustrative model assumptions for an Indian MSME context and must be validated against live quotes, local rates and professional advice before any investment or borrowing decision.

1. Executive Summary

This plan sets out an **Executive Search Firm** in India — a specialist that recruits leadership and hard-to-find senior/specialist talent (CXO, VP, director and niche experts) for employers through a retained, research-led search process. Revenue comes from retained search fees (typically a percentage of the role's annual compensation, billed in stages) plus leadership-advisory services.

As companies scale and compete for leadership talent, the stakes of senior hires rise — and so does the value of expert, discreet, research-driven search. Executive search commands premium fees, deep client relationships and high repeat business, making it a high-value, reputation-led professional-services firm.

The promoter — a search/leadership-hiring professional — seeks total funding of **₹5.0 lakh** (₹2.0 lakh promoter + ₹3.0 lakh term loan, eligible under PMMY-Mudra / CGTMSE), targeting **₹30 lakh** revenue in Year 1 and **₹78 lakh** by Year 3.

2. Business Description, Vision & Legal Structure

Concept: A leadership-search partner that finds, assesses and secures the right senior talent through rigorous research and discreet, consultative engagement.

Vision: To be a trusted executive-search firm for leadership hiring in chosen sectors.

Mission: Deliver exceptional leadership hires through deep research, careful assessment and a first-class client and candidate experience.

Legal structure options

- **LLP** — recommended: credibility for senior engagements and limited liability.
- **Private Limited** — for scaling and partnership build-out.
- **Proprietorship** — acceptable for a solo start.

Positioning: executive search is a retained (not contingent) model — the firm is engaged and paid in stages to conduct a thorough search, aligning incentives for quality over speed. Confidentiality, research depth and assessment rigour define the practice.

3. Promoter & Ownership

Led by a promoter with executive-search or senior-hiring experience and leadership networks. Delivery uses research associates and consultants under the lead's oversight, with sector/function focus. Year-one ownership rests with the founder(s); ownership and profit-sharing are editable inputs.

4. Market Analysis — India

India's growth, professionalisation and competition for leadership talent drive strong demand for executive search. Startups scaling to maturity, family businesses professionalising, MNCs and PE/VC-backed firms all need senior hires and value discreet, research-led search over contingent recruiting. Sector specialisation deepens credibility and pricing power.

Demand drivers

- **Leadership-talent competition** and scarcity.
- **Company growth & professionalisation** needing senior hires.
- **PE/VC portfolios** building leadership teams.
- **Family-business succession** and professional management.
- **Niche/specialist scarcity** in emerging fields.

Market sizing (illustrative framing)

Layer	Definition	Indicative scale
TAM	Leadership/senior hiring demand in India	Large (premium)
SAM	Reachable employers in the firm's sectors/region	Focused
SOM (Yr 1-3)	Retained searches completed	15 → 40

Target segments

- Growth companies & startups hiring leadership.
- PE/VC-backed firms building teams.
- MNCs and mid-large corporates for senior roles.
- Family businesses professionalising management.

5. Competition & Competitive Advantage

Landscape: global/large search firms, boutiques, and contingent recruiters moving upmarket. The firm competes on research depth, sector expertise, assessment quality, discretion and senior client engagement.

The firm's edge

- **Research-led, rigorous search.**
- **Sector/function specialisation.**
- **Assessment & leadership judgement.**
- **Discretion & senior relationships.**
- **Consultative, high-touch service.**

6. Services & Pricing (retained)

Service	Model	Indicative fee
Retained executive search	% of annual compensation, staged	25-33% of comp
Senior/specialist search	Retained / fixed	Engagement
Leadership assessment	Project	Per assessment
Succession & org advisory	Project/retainer	Engagement
Market mapping / talent intelligence	Project	Project
Onboarding / integration support	Add-on	Engagement

Retained search fees (a share of compensation, billed in stages) are the premium core; assessment, advisory and mapping add complementary revenue.

7. Go-to-Market — Marketing & Sales

- **Senior relationships & referrals** — the primary channel in search.
- **PE/VC & board networks** for portfolio mandates.
- **Sector reputation & thought leadership.**
- **Track record** of successful placements.
- **Discreet, consultative business development.**

Sales approach

Relationship- and reputation-led. Deliver excellent searches → earn repeat mandates and referrals → deepen sector franchises. Long, high-value relationships drive the business.

8. Operations Plan

- **Location:** a professional office suitable for senior client/candidate meetings.
- **Process:** engagement & brief → research & mapping → sourcing & approach → assessment & shortlist → client interviews → references & offer → onboarding follow-up.
- **Technology:** research/database tools, assessment frameworks, and a mandate/candidate CRM.
- **Quality & discretion:** rigorous research, strong assessment, confidentiality, and off-limits/ethics adherence.
- **Capacity:** the lead plus research associates run parallel retained searches; scale with consultants and sectors.

Search process

Stage	Activity	Output
Brief	Role & profile	Search strategy
Research	Market mapping	Long list
Approach	Engage candidates	Interest
Assess	Evaluate fit	Shortlist
Close	Offer & onboard	Placement

9. Regulatory, Licences & Compliance (India)

- **Business registration:** LLP/Pvt Ltd (preferred) or proprietorship; PAN/TAN; GST (fees attract GST); professional tax and Shops & Establishments as applicable.
- **Conduct:** confidentiality, off-limits/ethics, and honest representation.
- **Contracts:** clear retained-fee terms, stages, and guarantees.
- **Data protection** aligned to the DPDP Act; secure handling of candidate/client data.

10. Organisation & Manpower Plan

Role	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Founder / Lead Consultant	1	1	1
Search Consultant	1	2	3
Research Associate	1	3	4
Admin / BD	0	1	2
Total	3	7	10

11. Implementation Timeline & Milestones

Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Setup	Month 0-1	Entity, tools, network, first mandates
Launch	Month 1-4	First retained searches; process set
Traction	Month 4-9	Repeat mandates & referrals; break-even nears
Scale	Year 2	Sector franchises; second consultant
Growth	Year 3	40 searches; strong repeat/referral flow

12. Financial Plan (Illustrative)

All figures are illustrative model assumptions for an Indian context, shown so the promoter can replace them with live rates. They are not projections of guaranteed results.

12.1 Project cost & means of finance

Capital requirement	₹
Office & fit-out	1,00,000
Computers & IT (3)	1,40,000
Research/database & assessment tools	75,000
Branding, website & BD	55,000
Deposits & pre-operative	40,000
Working-capital buffer	90,000
Total project cost	5,00,000
Promoter contribution	2,00,000
Term loan (Mudra / CGTMSE)	3,00,000

12.2 Projected Profit & Loss (3 years)

Particulars	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Retained search fees	24,00,000	44,00,000	58,00,000
Assessment & advisory	4,00,000	8,00,000	12,00,000
Market mapping & other	2,00,000	5,00,000	8,00,000
Total revenue	30,00,000	57,00,000	78,00,000
Salaries & team	14,40,000	27,00,000	36,00,000
Rent & utilities	1,80,000	2,20,000	2,60,000
Research tools & data	1,60,000	2,40,000	3,00,000
Marketing & BD	1,80,000	2,60,000	3,20,000
Admin, travel & misc	2,20,000	3,20,000	4,20,000
Interest on term loan	33,000	24,000	13,000
Total expenses	22,13,000	37,64,000	49,13,000
Net profit (before tax)	7,87,000	19,36,000	28,87,000
Net margin	26.2%	34.0%	37.0%

12.3 Unit economics & break-even

- **Per search:** retained fee = a share of senior compensation — high value per mandate.
- **Research leverage:** associates support the lead, enabling parallel searches.
- **Break-even:** a modest number of retained searches — reached around month 8–10.

12.4 Projected Cash Flow — Year 1 (quarterly, illustrative)

Particulars (₹)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Opening balance	90,000	70,000	1,25,000	2,30,000
Collections (staged fees)	5,00,000	7,00,000	8,60,000	9,40,000
Operating outflows	5,00,000	6,25,000	7,35,000	8,05,000
Loan EMI	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Closing balance	70,000	1,25,000	2,30,000	3,45,000

Staged retained fees (engagement, shortlist, completion) smooth cash across each search; the buffer covers the ramp to a full mandate load.

12.5 Key Performance Indicators to Monitor

- **Mandates:** retained searches; completion rate; time-to-fill.
- **Quality:** placement success; candidate retention; client satisfaction.
- **Value:** fee per search; sector mix; repeat rate.

- **Leverage:** searches per consultant; research productivity.

13. Funding Requirement & Bankability

Total ask: **₹3.0 lakh term loan** against ₹2.0 lakh promoter contribution — eligible under **PMMY (Mudra)** and coverable under **CGTMSE**. Year-1 net profit ~₹7.87 lakh against annual debt service of ~₹0.8 lakh gives a **DSCR above 3.0** — comfortably bankable, with premium margins.

13.1 Funding utilisation

Use of funds	₹	% of total
IT, research/database & assessment tools	2,15,000	43%
Office setup & deposits	1,40,000	28%
Branding & business development	55,000	11%
Working-capital buffer	90,000	18%
Total	5,00,000	100%

14. Risk Analysis & Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
Mandate lumpiness	Multiple retained searches; repeat clients; advisory work
Search failure / re-do	Rigorous process; guarantees; realistic briefs
Key-person dependence	Build consultants; document research methods
Hiring-market cycles	Sector diversification; advisory & mapping revenue
Confidentiality / ethics	Off-limits discipline; secure handling; DPDP alignment

15. SWOT Analysis

Strengths Premium retained fees; high margins; repeat & referral-rich; sector franchises.	Weaknesses Mandate lumpiness; key-person dependence; long cycles.
Opportunities Leadership-talent demand; PE/VC portfolios; succession; niche specialisation.	Threats Global/boutique competition; market cycles; fee pressure.

16. Recommended AiSevak Tools for This Business

This firm would use AiSevak's HR-Tech vertical tools in delivery:

- **Search & assessment:** role-profile, competency-mapping, interview-kit and leadership-assessment tools.

- **Client & advisory:** succession-planning and org-design tools; engagement templates.
- **Practice:** Business Plan, Break-even and Unit-Economics tools to model the firm.

17. Key Assumptions & Notes

- ~15 retained searches in Year 1 growing to ~40 by Year 3, plus assessment/advisory.
- Retained fee = a share of annual compensation, billed in stages — adjust to role mix.
- Term-loan interest ~11% p.a., 5-year tenure; adjust to sanctioned terms.
- Figures exclude GST on fees (pass-through) and promoter remuneration (editable input).

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