

Aspiring to be One Among the Top 10 Global Search Firms

Athena Executive Search and Consulting, a leading consulting firm, is trying to assist clients on issues pertaining to talent acquisition as it remains one of the biggest challenges to Indian firms. Launched in 2010, the company has its headquarters in Gurgaon but operates in United Kingdom through alliance partner Bretherton Day Limited, London.

The founder, Bhavishya Kumar, a Bachelors in Technology from IIT Delhi, has worked with leading Indian and global search firms in capacity of P&L head/geography head and leading challenging mandate likes 'India Launch', 'Turnaround & Restructuring' & 'Redefining business processes and professional guidelines' for some of the leading names in the executive search industry in India. Kumar founded Athena Executive Search & Consulting at the age of 29. In addition to this, he is also an exclusive M&A advisor to a large and diversified Media & Technology firms headquartered in Singapore and an appointed business advisor to a UK based process consulting firm with operations across 22 countries.

Kumar feels that says he anticipates Indian executive search market to be \$5+ Billion industry by 2020 and the company aspires to be one of the significant market share holder of this pie. The company is gearing up its operations across 10-12 strategic international

locations and 2-3 locations within India. The firm works across different sectors like TMT(Telecom, Media & Technology), Consulting & Professional Services, Pharma & Healthcare, Industrial, Manufacturing, Infrastructure, Energy, Engineering etc.



Excerpts of the interview with **Bhavishya Kumar, Founder of Athena Executive Search and Consulting**

How did the idea of setting up Athena Executive Search & Consulting come up? Tell us about the beginnings of the company?

The idea came from the very fact when I was driving search businesses in India for multinational searches. While working with them I realized the gap in solutions and service orientation, where a boutique firm with progressive and new age solution would bring substantial value addition to a client. Therefore with this concept the foundations for Athena Executive Search & Consulting were laid with a vision to bring the global best practices in search and consulting in a boutique and agile set up. Right from the beginning we started to visualize a law of unique and new solution in the market. The fact that we are the only boutique search firm in India with credentials in setting up Board level advisory, MNA, due diligence in the testimony of our solution orientation.

What kind of services does Athena Executive Search & Consulting provide? What is the USP of the company vis-à-vis other firms in the market?

We provide one stop solution to all our clients. The services that we render are

- India Entry advisory services
- Board advisory services
- Persona due diligence
- PE VC Advisory
- Executive Search

The USP is that we are working extremely close with business promoters and the leadership management for clients ranging from multibillion enterprises to extremely young and dynamic startups. This bouquet of services offers holistic value adds to the client as compared to the other services offered by other firms. Despite being the only Indian firm offering certified global best practices, we continue to work to very cost effective model.

Tell us about your work stints. How did your stints in various jobs help in setting up your venture?

Majority of the stints were very entrepreneurial in nature, where I was creating practices and heading the PNC independently. It helped me to identify my capabilities in being the problem solver and creating new and progressive ways to help the clients. Also, working with both Indian and multi-national search firms helped me to identify the strengths and weaknesses in these two extremely different business scenario. Today, Athena Executive Search & Consulting is leveraging its position by combining strengths and addressing the weaknesses in both the models.

What is your view on the current market size for consulting in the talent industry in the country?

The overall size of talent acquisition industry is Rs 20,000 crores in India. Pure key consulting and retained search has a small minority share in this pie. However, we see this part of the business to grow consistently

and exponentially as this industry moves ahead on the maturity curve.

What are the future plans of the company? Are there any plans to hire more people or bring in more services under its ambit in future?

We are working on aggressive expansion plans. We are presently searching for young dynamic leaders in five international locations who would expand the footprints of the company in the International arena. At the same time, we will continue to expand in India with our next expansion plans for Mumbai & Bangalore. On services front, we have continued to evolve in the last four years by adding some extremely unique and new services under the Athena umbrella. We are gearing to launch our transaction advisory services which will have a unique value to our clients who are currently expanding through organic matters.

Any advice you would like to give to budding entrepreneurs?

Most strong advice would be to start a venture which you are really passionate about continuing and invest in it with patience and always build an eco system of strong advisory and secondary boards.

- Viraj Desai

