

When a portfolio company should call me.

Executive search for growth-stage, investor-backed companies. Worth a call when a portfolio company faces a leadership transition, a role with no precedent, a request for an "AI-native" leader, an executive hire that is not working, a new executive's first 90 days, or a cross-border hire.

When to call

01 The leader who built the company may not be the one for what comes next.

Many growth-stage companies were built for a different operating environment than the one they face now. Before a company replaces a leader, adds one above them or restructures the function, I work with the CEO and board to define what the next stage requires. That work decides whether the answer is a search, and if it is, what the search is for.

02 A company wants to hire an "AI-native" leader.

Call before the job description is written. The label usually stands in for a more specific need: someone who can redesign how a function operates and bring the existing team along. I define that need in operating terms and assess for it directly, including what candidates have built themselves.

03 The role has no precedent.

A function is being rebuilt to produce more with fewer people, or a leader will run a team of people and automated workflows together. There is no playbook and no obvious candidate pool. I map the market from the problem the role has to solve rather than from matching titles.

04 A recent executive hire is not working.

Before running the same search again, find out why the first hire failed. The cause is often the organization the person walked into rather than the person. I diagnose that first so the second search does not repeat the mistake.

05 A new executive is about to start.

The first 90 days decide whether the existing team follows the new leader. I build a 30-60-90 plan with the CEO and the incoming executive, with named owners for each item. It is included in every search I run, and I also do it for executives hired without me.

06 The hire crosses borders.

A company is hiring its first leader for a new market, or a leader who will run teams in several countries. Candidates are often assessed through the lens of the home market. A leader who looks right on paper can fail because the team they inherit works on different norms. I led go-to-market expansion across six markets (Canada, the UK, France, Thailand, India and Brazil) and assess for the operating context the leader will actually face.

How I work

I run every search myself, from the first call to the offer. There is no one to hand you off to.

Every search starts with the business problem, not the job description.

First slate of vetted candidates about two weeks after kickoff.

Guarantee of nine months, extended to twelve when we build the executive's onboarding plan together.

I built my firm's tech stack myself: self-hosted workflow automation, local language models, and one database that connects every stage of a search. There is no manual data entry, so my time goes to judgment and to the client.

When the answer is more than a search

I am a member of Bearington Alliance, an operating group of former operating partners, executives, consultants and founders who work alongside private investors on their portfolio companies. When a situation needs more than a hire, I can bring in Bearington for:

Interim or fractional leadership

While a permanent search runs, so the seat is not empty during the transition.

Leadership assessment and development

Across one company or a whole portfolio: which existing leaders can step up to how the business needs to operate now.

Operational advisory

On a specific value-creation problem, such as redesigning how a function works before adding headcount.

Full team deployments

For turnarounds, rollups and carveouts.

Bearington works as one coordinated team, and is open to performance-based fees, co-investment and equity arrangements where they fit. When I bring Bearington in, I stay your point of contact.

Background

Past clients include portfolio companies of LightBay, Insight Partners, Apax, Bain Capital Tech Opportunities, Sequoia, Khosla and Accel.

Before search, I worked at McKinsey, led go-to-market expansion at Facebook across six international markets, and worked at Insight Partners, Lehman Brothers and Walmart. MBA from Chicago Booth, MPP from the University of Chicago Harris School.

When one of these comes up

The fastest route is a 30-minute call. You can also email me at sandya@scalar-ops.com.

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