

ESOP MARKET BENCHMARK DATA

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Standard Equity Grants for C-Suite Hires in Indian Startups (Seed to Series A)

1. The "Golden Range" (Equity vs. Cash)

Use these ranges to negotiate with senior hires.

Role	Seed Stage (0-₹5Cr ARR)	Series A (₹10Cr+ ARR)	Vesting Standard
Co-Founder (Late)	5.0% – 10.0%	2.0% – 5.0%	4 Years (1 Yr Cliff)
CTO / Tech Head	1.0% – 3.0%	0.5% – 1.5%	4 Years (1 Yr Cliff)
Head of Sales/CRO	1.0% – 2.5%	0.5% – 1.2%	Performance Linked
Marketing Head	0.5% – 1.5%	0.3% – 0.8%	4 Years (1 Yr Cliff)
VP / Senior Ops	0.5% – 1.0%	0.2% – 0.5%	4 Years (1 Yr Cliff)

2. Structuring "Performance" Vesting (The Trend)

For Sales/Revenue Heads, move away from 100% Time-Based Vesting.

- **Model:** 50% Time Based (Retention) + 50% Milestone Based (Revenue Targets).
- **Benefit:** Protects the Cap Table if the hire doesn't deliver numbers.

3. Common Founders' Mistakes

1. **Granting on Face Value:** Creates a massive tax burden for the employee at exercise. Always check if you can use the "Discounted FMV" method responsibly.
2. **No Clawback:** Ensure your Grant Letter allows you to recover unvested options if the employee joins a competitor.

Need to Structure a Specific Offer?

I can help you design the Vesting Logic for a specific candidate to ensure they sign.

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