

CMO TODAY

## New York Times CTO Rajiv Pant Joins Digital Media Startup Some Spider

By LUKAS I. ALPERT

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Digital media startup Some Spider is just getting off the ground, but it is already landing some high-profile talent that has been instrumental in helping the traditional print world transition to digital.

The company has nabbed its second top executive from the New York Times in recent months, hiring away its well-respected Chief Technology Officer Rajiv Pant. Mr. Pant, whose departure from the Times was announced earlier this week, will also oversee technology, product and design at the New York-based startup. He will join the Times' former general manager for core digital products, Paul Smurl, who signed on as Some Spider's chief operating officer in March.



RAJIV PANT

"I have been approached by startups before, but in Some Spider, I feel there is an opportunity to build products where technology is as much a part of life as is the journalism," said the 40-year-old Mr. Pant.

Some Spider is the brainchild of Vinit Bharara, who made his name creating e-commerce startup Quidsi Inc. – the parent company of Diapers.com and Soap.com – and then selling it to Amazon.com Inc. in 2010 for about \$550 million.

Last fall he launched Some Spider, which is designed to own a network of news sites

based off of the blogging platform Cafe.com. Cafe.com was shut down and is being re-imagined around a new site called The Mid, which will focus on issues facing 35- to 45-year-olds as they go through mid-life. Earlier this year, the company acquired the parenting blog Scary Mommy.

“We are really looking to be a fusion between an online publisher and an identity-focused social network,” said Mr. Bharara, whose brother, Preet Bharara, is the U.S. Attorney for the southern district of New York.

Mr. Pant worked at the Times for four years, during which he helped oversee the newsroom’s transformation to a digital subscription model and to a news institution driven by data analytics and engineering.

“He was vitally important to the transition to the mobile and video experience,” said Mr. Smurl. “He joined just when we switched the digital subscription model, during which it grew from zero to a \$200 million-a-year business.”

Mr. Pant said he plans to pledge 20% of his equity in Some Spider to the charity Doctors Without Borders.

“I believe this startup is going to be hugely successful and my commitment will help me fulfill my lifelong dream of giving a significant amount of money to organizations that help those most in need, often putting their own lives at risk,” he said.

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