



Zensurance | Toronto, ON | Founded: 2016 | Employees: 18 | <https://www.zensurance.com/>

PHONE: 1 (888) 654 6030

Ryerson DMZ: [https://dmz.ryerson.ca/success\\_stories/zensurance/](https://dmz.ryerson.ca/success_stories/zensurance/)

BLOOMBERG: <https://www.bloomberg.com/research/stocks/private/snapshot.asp?privcapId=411449671>

LINKEDIN: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/zensurance/?originalSubdomain=ca>

## COMPANY OVERVIEW

Zensurance is a Toronto, Ontario based digital insurance brokerage that combines data analytics with user disclosed information to assess risk and recommend personalized insurance portfolios. In partnering with over 40 of the world's largest insurance providers, the company allows its customers to bypass historically lengthy insurance surveys and inefficient face-to-face sales channels common to the industry. The online platform provides its users with multiple quotes and the ability to purchase and manage their insurance without ever having to call or email a person.

### SENIOR MANAGEMENT

**Danish Yusuf:** Co-Founder, CEO (2016-Present). Previously: Associate, Digital Financial Services, McKinsey & Co. (2009-2015); Global Strategist, Samsung (2008); Solutions Designer & Software Developer, IBM (2002-2005). Education: MBA (2007-2009), Harvard Business School; BASc, Engineering (1999-2004), University of Toronto.

**Sultan Mehrabi:** Co-Founder, CTO (2016-Present). Previously: Head of Strategy, Kijiji (2015-2016); Director, Ryerson Futures (2013-2014); Senior Consultant, KPMG (2011-2013); Co-Founder, PooledIN (2007-2008); Associate, MK Capital (2008); Software Engineer, Cisco (2002-2007). Education: MBA, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University (2007-2009); MSc, Information Technology, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (n.d.); BSc, Computer Science, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (n.d.).

**Bennet McBride:** Chief Insurance Officer (2016-Present). Previously: Sales & Marketing Manager, G.R.McBride & Co Limited (2015-2016); Account Manager, G.R.McBride & Co Limited (2011-2015). Education: Canadian Accredited Insurance Broker (2012-2015); Bachelor's Degree, Health Sciences, Western University (2006-2010).

### HISTORY

As a consultant within the Digital Financial Services sector, Danish Yusuf gained exposure to the insurance industry and was shocked at the lack of innovation that had occurred over the last 50 years. He noted that purchasing insurance was a slow process involving in person meetings and lengthy approval times. Danish attributed this to a complex value chain involving several intermediaries between brokers and the actual insurance providers. He partnered with his friend Sultan Mehrabi who had experience in developing online businesses to create a platform that could cut out inefficient middle players, supplying customers with quotes directly from insurance providers.

### FUNDING

Zensurance has raised around \$17.5 million in funding to date. Most recently, The Travelers Company, the third largest corporate insurance underwriter in the U.S., purchased a 60% stake in Zensurance for \$16 million (August 2018)<sup>1</sup>. Prior to the acquisition, the startup received \$1 million in seed financing from a consortium of venture capital firms led by Ferst Capital Partners (2016) as well as an undisclosed second round of seed financing from the Plug and Playtech Center (2017)<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, the company received \$25,000 in financing from the Ryerson DMZ incubator for winning their Next Big Idea in Fintech competition (2016)<sup>3</sup>.

### KEY CORPORATE DEVELOPMENTS

**Company News:** <https://www.zensurance.com/press>

**October 19, 2016:** [Zensurance wins \\$25,000 prize at the DMZ Next Big Idea in Fintech Competition](https://www.zensurance.com/press)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.insurancebusinessmag.com/ca/news/group-benefits/travelers-takes-majority-stake-in-zensurance-109161.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.marketwired.com/press-release/digital-insurance-startup-zensurance-secures-1-million-seed-round-2179117.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <https://betakit.com/zensurance-wins-25000-prize-at-the-next-big-idea-fintech-competition/>

**November 29, 2016:** [Zensurance receives \\$1 million in seed funding from consortium of VC funds](#)  
**March 6, 2018:** [Zensurance partners with the Retail Council of Canada](#)  
**August 15, 2018:** [Zensurance sells 60% stake to The Travelers Company](#)

## BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS

### STRATEGY

Zensurance leverages data analytics to assess risk and streamline the process for purchasing and selling insurance:

- **Customers** – Zensurance’s 24hr online platform targets small businesses that struggle to accommodate inefficient face-to-face interaction with branch-style insurance brokers. The company has partnered with the Retail Council of Canada (RCC) to receive direct access to over 45,000 retailers in Canada<sup>4</sup>.
- **Insurance Providers** – Zensurance has partnered with over 40 insurance providers to establish a standardized list of criteria that such providers need to price their products<sup>5</sup>. This enables providers to price and approve their products at a much faster rate resulting in higher customer satisfaction.

### PRODUCTS / PRICING

Zensurance operates in the commercial space, selling to companies rather than individuals. The company has developed questionnaires to assess risk and provide pricing for the following products: general liability insurance, errors and omissions insurance, professional liability insurance, directors and officers insurance, cyber liability insurance, contents and property insurance, commercial vehicle insurance. Pricing of these products is largely determined by individual insurance providers based on the risk figures provided from Zensurance’s questionnaires. However, Zensurance’s low costs branchless structure and favorable purchasing agreements with insurance providers has enabled them to provide products that are 30% cheaper than traditional brokerages. Zensurance makes money by charging a commission on the products that it helps to sell.

### TECHNOLOGY

Zensurance leverages data analytic technology to assess the risk of its users based on their responses to a questionnaire. These questionnaires, developed with the help of Zensurance’s partners, serve as a replacement to traditional insurance forms. The company communicates the results to insurance providers in exchange for pricing information. Once purchased, users can manage their insurance online through Zensurance’s platform.

### DISTRIBUTION / LOGISTICS

Zensurance services primarily Canadian small businesses (over 2,500 to date). The company offers products from its network of over 40 partnered insurance providers. To gain direct access to Canadian small businesses, Zensurance has also partnered with the RCC, an organization representing over 45,000 Canadian retailers. Recently, Zensurance sold a 60% stake of the company to the Travelers Company, the third largest insurance provider in the U.S., providing an opportunity to scale the business beyond Canada in the future.

### MARKETING

Zensurance has received support from Plug and Playtech Center, an online catalogue of tech startups which strives to connect featured companies with the world’s largest corporations. Additionally, the company has direct access to small businesses through the Travelers Company (owns 60%) and its existing partnership with the RCC.

## COMPETITORS

To date, Zensurance is the only digital insurance brokerage selling directly to commercial businesses in Canada. However, there are a few indirect competitors in the U.S. that sell insurance online to individuals (home, auto, etc.):

1. **Goji** – (Boston, MA) Goji is the largest online insurance brokerage in the U.S. selling auto and home insurance to individuals. Goji connects customers with an online agent which recommends products.
2. **Panda Insurance** – (New York, NY) Panda insurance specializes in selling auto insurance through its online platform. Like Zensurance, Panda Insurance requires no interaction with an agent.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/zensurance-and-retail-council-of-canada-announce-partnership-to-help-retailers-manage-their-insurance-needs-300608657.html>

<sup>5</sup> [https://dmz.ryerson.ca/success\\_stories/zensurance/](https://dmz.ryerson.ca/success_stories/zensurance/)