



Executive Search: President of Matterlab Studio

Location: Austin, Texas // **Start Date:** January 2022

// ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION //

The Matterlab Group is a creative consultancy that exists to help transform life outcomes for young people across America. We do that by helping leaders in the education and education-adjacent sectors achieve greater impact. Our team is made up of creative strategists whose professional experiences prior to Matterlab include being classroom educators, marketing and communications experts, and social impact consultants. We came together out of a shared belief in the potential of all young people and a shared passion for positive impact through advancing equity.

Matterlab: 2017-2021

Matterlab was founded in 2017 by [Searcy Morgan](#), whose career in high-profile nonprofit communications had revealed specific challenges that inspired her pursuit of a new type of creative agency for social impact:

- Leaders who struggled to convey a compelling story about their organization failed to attract the requisite and/or recurring resources to survive and thrive.
- Leaders who struggled to nail down crisp strategic thinking about their organization's goals failed to visioncast effectively to their teams and thus their incredible talent was not focused on the right, or same, outcomes.
- Leaders who chose not to allocate resources to marketing and communications or relegated those functions to being a seasonal and on-demand deliverable-factory failed to leverage the impact available to them through consistent voice and visuals that directly drive organizational goals.

Matterlab began by supporting charter school management organizations (CMOs), Teach For America regions, education technology startups, and education-focused foundation nationally and has since expanded its client roster to include a variety of social impact organizations within the education and education-adjacent sectors, all of which are driving toward stronger opportunities and outcomes for young people. This includes nonprofits, traditional school districts, foundations not exclusively focused on education, children's museums, citywide poverty reduction initiatives, and more.

The Matterlab Group: 2021 and Beyond

In mid-2021 we established Matterlab's *By and Beyond 2025* strategic plan, the launch of which included our expansion from Matterlab to The Matterlab Group, now consisting of Matterlab Studio, which houses the creative consultancy work we have always done, and Matterlab Ventures, our new venture studio.

- **Matterlab Studio** helps leaders clarify, communicate, and expand their impact through creative communications strategies that launch new organizations, brands, identities, and initiatives that drive organizational goals. Across all launches, we utilize our strategic and creative skills in identity development, branding, executive communications, digital strategy, and storytelling. The driving force and intended outcome across all partnerships is to lead organizations to increasingly reliable revenue, empowering leaders to create compounding impact supported by organizational sustainability. The Matterlab team and partner list have more than doubled each year since founding. Together with our partners, we impact more than 10 million children nationwide. Currently, the Matterlab Studio team consists of 11 full-time employees, 1 full-time equivalent, and numerous trusted consultants.

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- **Matterlab Ventures** supports education entrepreneurs with building businesses poised to unlock learning and opportunity accessible to all. Typically, we identify the opportunity and conduct an initial pilot; and if promising, then found, fund, find a leader for, and take a majority equity stake in the newly established business that becomes a portfolio company. Matterlab Ventures currently supports two ed tech ventures and is increasingly a focus area for our founder. Searcy Morgan is acting President of Matterlab Ventures.

This search is for the President of Matterlab Studio, specifically.

// ABOUT THE ROLE //

Matterlab Studio is hiring its first President to lead the organization through the next phase of growth. The President will oversee all aspects of business operations and manage implementation of Matterlab's new *By and Beyond 2025* strategic plan, which calls for considerable growth in both size and impact in the years ahead. This entails working side-by-side with the CEO to make the vision a reality — through growing talented teams, creating strong operational and financial practices, overseeing the launch of excellent creative campaigns, and developing the systems and structures to make it all possible.

We are bold in our imagination of what the future of this agency can be, and we are looking for a leader who is eager to work in ways that are both expansive and disciplined. The strategic plan is anchored in the pursuit of economic empowerment — for our client organizations, for the young people they serve, for Matterlab team members, and, as a new part of our servicing model, for freelance talent teams we assemble who are mission-aligned, proximate, alumni, and/or geographically local to client organizations. The President will also oversee each core business function for Matterlab Studio: human resources, marketing, sales, finance, and operations. Primarily, this is a growth role. The President will work to grow revenue, margin, the team (in terms of talent and headcount, currently 11), and reputation.

Hiring Philosophy

Diversity across our team as well as inclusive hiring and management practices are a priority at Matterlab. Diversity and inclusion benefit all of us — our clients, our team members, our business, and the communities in which we work and live. In our pursuit of ever-greater diversity and stronger inclusion, we specifically encourage applications from individuals who identify as women, people of color, members of the LGBTQ+ community, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. We encourage you not to let any stated qualification below keep you from applying for this role if you know you would excel at the responsibilities.

Vital Criteria

We believe these are the most important criteria for Matterlab Studio's President:

- **Proximity:** Being proximate to the leaders who Matterlab Studio supports and the communities those leaders serve, whether through shared experience, identities, and/or geographic community. Matterlab supports primarily leaders of color who support primarily communities of color. Of particular importance to us is diversifying the racial makeup of our leadership team (currently made up of our founder and two VPs), which is all-female and all-white.
- **Executive Leadership:** Experience with managing a P&L, hiring/staffing capacity for projects, and overseeing quality of work product in a service-based business
- **Team & Culture:** Curiosity about and interest in our incredible team of people, as individuals and as a team; relatedly, wanting to become a part of our team culture *and* expand and enhance it, without displacing or overtaking it

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Candidate Profile

Agency Leadership

You are not new to agency life. You understand and operate comfortably within business development scoping processes, capacity planning and resource allocation, outsourcing strategy, creative workflows, project management, and more. You are effective at motivating and mobilizing your team to keep projects on-scope and on-budget. You operate with company capacity and financials on your mind, and you optimize for overall margin.

Strategic Oversight

You have developed, enacted, maintained, and iterated standard operating procedures to move a business toward its objectives. You are comfortable setting and pursuing company-wide strategy — as well as weighing in on a singular, granular client strategy to support your team. You do not create client deliverables as an individual contributor but are able to set the bar and manage toward excellence for everything that “ships.”

Emotional Navigation

You lead with people first — managing, developing, and growing a team with equity and inclusion at the core of your operational values. You know how to get the very best work out of your team — from setting Objectives & Key Results (OKRs), to meaningful whole-group interactions and individualized approaches with specific employees. You celebrate your team for their tremendous success. You always listen *first*. You enjoy being the boots-on-the-ground balance to a visionary founder’s dreams for innovation. You understand that lasting, impactful client relationships are built on the trust that comes from the transparency of clear and open communication — internally and externally.

Growth Focus

You are excited by the prospect of stepping into this leadership role with a team of fewer than twenty full-time employees and transforming the future of the agency.

Relevant Experience

Matterlab Studio’s future President has:

- Demonstrated a clear commitment to social impact — whether in a professional or volunteer capacity
- Successfully built and/or grown a service-based company or division/practice within a company, including:
 - Direct experience in or strong connection to account management
 - Managing teams, clients, and vendors to accomplish goals, ideally in an agency-like setting
- Successfully managed or directly serviced the core functions of a business: human resources, finance, operations, sales, and marketing
- Built high-quality, lasting relationships with team members and partners

Responsibilities

You will be responsible for enabling Matterlab Studio to grow into its next phase, creating opportunities for impact across the education and education-adjacent sectors. This work will include:

1. **Strategic Direction:** Actualize the strategic plan, including but not limited to establishing OKRs (annual objectives and quarterly key results) in collaboration with CEO and managing team to results.
2. **People Management:** Oversee personnel and hiring processes from identification through onboarding. Work with the Studio Leadership Team (currently: CEO and two VPs) to codify and strengthen Matterlab’s internal people management practices (culture) and external client servicing approach (The Matterlab Method).
3. **Operational Excellence:** Ensure the organization’s systems and processes for human resources, finances, operations, legal, and other business practices are creating the conditions for growth and impact. This includes managing the Business Manager, who oversees the Matterlab office in Austin, TX, technology, and other resource management.

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4. **Financial Management:** Establish more sophisticated financial management tools and practices that support the path to growth in both revenue and profitability.
5. **Marketing and Sales:** Oversee The Matterlab Group's brand and external presence through marketing and business development strategies and activities in collaboration with the CEO and head of creative.
6. **Impact and Innovation:** Establish Matterlab's impact reporting approach both to evaluate new business opportunities vis a vis potential impact and to assess actual impact of/through completed projects. Oversee new product development, at the intersection of market desirability (problem to solve), business feasibility (our expertise), and economic feasibility (the value of the solution and our ability to make a margin).
7. **Matterlab Ventures Liaison:** As a member of The Matterlab Group Leadership Team, support sourcing, developing, piloting, and servicing new ventures. Act as the primary point person between Studio and Ventures, ensuring effective collaboration across the businesses and teams.

Reporting Structures

- The President will report to the founder & CEO. In turn, the President role will allow the CEO to spend more time than previously possible on team culture and alignment on mission and vision; business development prospect cultivation; thought leadership (writing); Matterlab Ventures; and financial management of The Matterlab Group as a whole.
- The President will manage two VPs (tenure: 4 years and 2 years) and a Business Manager (tenure: >1 year), and the President will have decision-making authority over those and other reporting structures moving forward.

Working at Matterlab

All Team Members:

- A college degree is not required.
- Living in Austin is not required.
- Unlimited vacation policy with requirement that all team members take at least 2 weeks of paid vacation
- Employee health, dental, vision, and family leave benefits available
- 401k with matching contribution up to 2%
- Paid 12-week sabbatical after five years of service

This Role:

- **Austin-based:** Matterlab's headquarters are in Austin, TX, and team members currently live in Austin, New York City, Dallas, Chicago, Atlanta, and Orlando. We will continue to hire a geographically distributed team, but are requiring that the President be located in Austin for effective leadership and collaboration with the CEO and others. A relocation stipend will be provided to anyone not already located in Austin.
- **Office Presence:** A regular presence at the South Congress office space, especially for but not limited to days with meetings with the CEO and team meetings
- **Travel:** There are no specific travel requirements for this role. Potential travel includes: team retreats (if/when not located in Austin); traveling to team members in other cities if/when necessary/helpful; on-site workshops or partner work, potentially (in an advisory capacity alongside team members who are directly servicing the client); on-site pitches as a part of business development (this is not a standard practice for Matterlab, to date); and/or conferences for business development.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** CEO will establish with the President a clear breakdown of decision areas where the President will have authority vs. advising.
- **Year 1 OTE (On-Target Earnings)** = Base Salary + Incentive-based pay based on growth (no cap): \$250,000

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// ABOUT THE SEARCH PROCESS //

Thank you for considering engaging in this search process! We appreciate your interest and want to be transparent about the process and the potential time investment. The time estimates listed below are for the specific actions or events listed but do not take into account the time you may spend thinking about the opportunity, discussing it with others, or preparing for these interactions, all of which we recognize and appreciate.

- **Timeline:** Matterlab is conducting the President search throughout Q4 of 2021 on a rolling/ongoing basis. Please note that an in-person interview — whether in Austin, Texas, or in the candidate’s location (CEO will travel) — is a requirement of the interview process. We aim for the new President of Matterlab Studio to be in his/her/their role at the beginning of 2022.
- **Step 1 — [Express Interest or Nominate](#) [Online / Estimated Time Commitment 10 minutes]:** The process begins with expressing your own interest or nominating a candidate using [this simple form](#), which asks for a name, LinkedIn profile link, and short statement of potential alignment to Matterlab and this opportunity. We aim to respond to submissions within 24 hours. From there, advancing looks like:
- **Step 2 — Informational Interview by Invitation Only [Phone / Estimated Time Commitment 30-45 minutes]:** An informational interview with the CEO during which time candidates can get to know Matterlab and learn more about whether the President role might be a fit, and vice versa. Advancing looks like:
- **Step 3 — Interview [Zoom / Estimated Time Commitment 60 minutes]:** If both parties would like to *double opt-in* to continuing the process after the Informational Interview, an interview will be conducted on Zoom by the Matterlab Studio VPs and CEO. From there, advancing looks like:
- **Step 4 — Two-Way Interview [In Person / Estimated Time Commitment 2-3 hours]:** Spend a half-day with the CEO and potentially additional team members. Prior to the interview, Matterlab will share several non-confidential resource materials for review such as comprehensive team bios, a sampling of proposals, and current scopes of work. We refer to this as a “two-way” interview because we believe candidates should interview the CEO as much as she is interviewing them. The mutual fit is crucial. This Two-Way Interview is in person, either in Austin at the Matterlab office or in your location, with the CEO traveling to you. From there, advancing looks like:
- **Step 5 — Digging Deeper / Estimated Time Commitment Varies:** Company resources such as the strategic plan, P&L, org chart, team breakdown of self-report demographic data, and more will be shared with a candidate who emerges as a top contender from the Two-Way Interview, in order to support their objective evaluation of this opportunity. The candidate and the CEO will meet at their discretion to discuss the resources. From there, advancing looks like:
- **Step 6 — Team Roundtable [Zoom / Estimated Time Commitment 1 hour]:** By invitation only, a finalist at this stage may be invited to an all-team roundtable Zoom meeting during which time Matterlab team members will ask questions and get to know the candidate as a potential future President of the business. Team members will be encouraged to share feedback with the CEO on the roundtable experience in order to inform final decision-making on an offer. From there, advancing looks like:
- **Step 7 — Offer:** A verbal offer will be made, followed by the written offer.

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