

# Chief Executive Officer

January 2023

POSITION PROFILE



Since the founding of Forum One 27 years ago, my colleagues and I have been motivated by our quest to apply digital technologies and strategies to address societal problems of importance. We've made a lot of progress, completing thousands of projects with many of the planet's most influential organizations.

But ours is clearly a work in progress. The technology landscape evolves quickly, and the global problems we address with our clients are ever more complex. Our motivations haven't changed since our founding, but the work has only increased in challenge and importance.

As we do our work, we also recognize that as a consulting firm, our staff comes first. We try to craft a workplace that is supportive, professional, fun, low-drama, and invigorating. We seek for our staff to thrive at Forum One for many years.

With all of this as a backdrop, I couldn't be more excited to be seeking a new CEO to help guide the path forward. I believe the position offers a truly unique opportunity to build on a solid foundation forged over decades of hard work and to create a firm of global consequence.



**Jim Cashel**  
Board Chair of Forum One

For the past 27 years, Forum One has been turning ideas into impact. We're a digital agency that works to extend the influence of our clients on important issues in health, education, the environment, and more. Every day, our team of more than 120 digital strategists, engineers, designers, and creators help leading nonprofit organizations and government agencies make an impact in the world. We're a company that treats our team with respect, advances their careers, and is actively working to be a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible organization. This is your opportunity to join a company helping those doing good in the world – do more, reach more, and achieve more!



## OUR MISSION

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Forum One was founded in 1996 by Jim Cashel and Dave Witzel and joined in year two by Chris Wolz. They were inspired by the opportunities they saw to use the internet to help organizations working on important global issues.

Today, Forum One exists to create a more equitable, inspiring, and healthy world. We do this by accelerating the impact of organizations working to solve the planet's most significant problems with leading edge strategy, communications, design, data, and technology. Over the past 27 years, we've worked with over 1,000 organizations on over 3,000 projects advancing solutions in health, education, human rights, the environment, and more.

We are an impact-first company that challenges the status quo and measures our success in our ability to effect change at scale. And as an employee-owned company, we seek to create fulfillment and prosperity at work for our fellow co-owners.

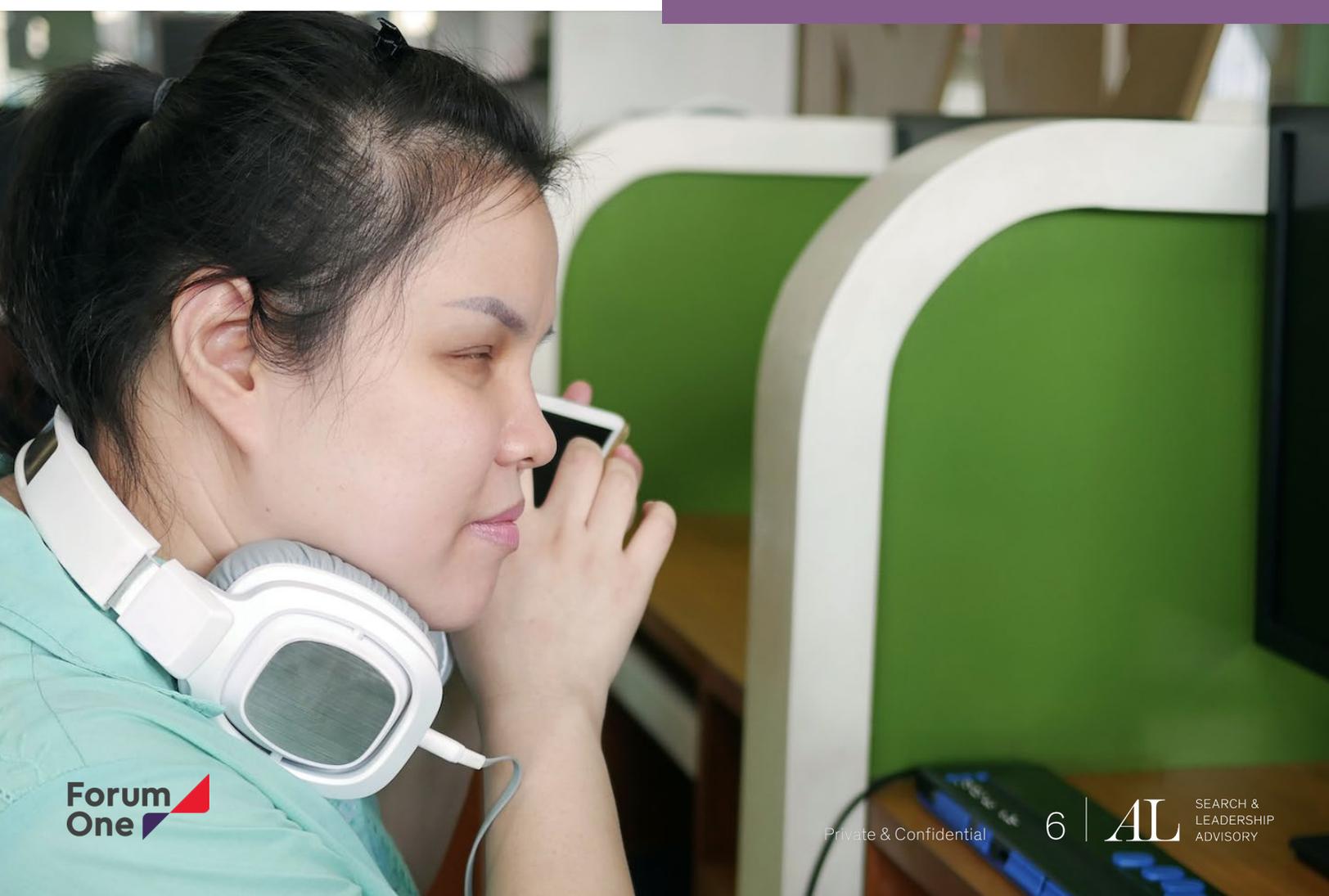
# 2028 Strategic Pillars



As we enter 2023, we're focused on becoming a more valuable advisor to our clients, and an ever-better employer for our fellow co-owners in the next five years. We'll be guided through to 2028 by these five strategic pillars:

- **We have an impact.** We do work that improves lives and the planet. We're very selective in the clients we take on, we build our capabilities to drive real change, and we track the impact we and our clients have in achieving their missions. None of this is easy - and we're a work in progress - but this is a north star for us.
- **We are a learning and evolving organization.** We are continually refining our areas of expertise to help solve complex problems for our clients in new and innovative ways. We strategically apply proven solutions and emerging trends to further our clients' missions, and we share learnings across the organization so that team members and clients grow from our collective experience. We seek to be a convener in our sector, encouraging and driving innovation in how we work.

- **We are a world class team.** We attract and retain a team driven by our mission and the opportunity to advance their careers in important ways. We know that top performers seek opportunities for autonomy, mastery, and purpose, and we weave that into how we run Forum One. We prioritize career growth and development.
- **We are committed to DEIA.** We are a force for positive social change in how we build and manage our organization, and in our daily work. The main focus of this is our ongoing commitment to cultivating a culture where all individuals can thrive. We strive to lead with empathy through a lens of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) that inspires innovation and positive change, and we believe that our work is continually stronger because of this.
- **We are employee owned and financially successful.** We are a financially successful company with an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) - allowing us to invest in our people's skills and career development, grow our service offerings, and increase our impact. We operate the business in a financially responsible manner, and our financial success benefits our employee-owners through the wealth creation of the ESOP.



# Forum One Today

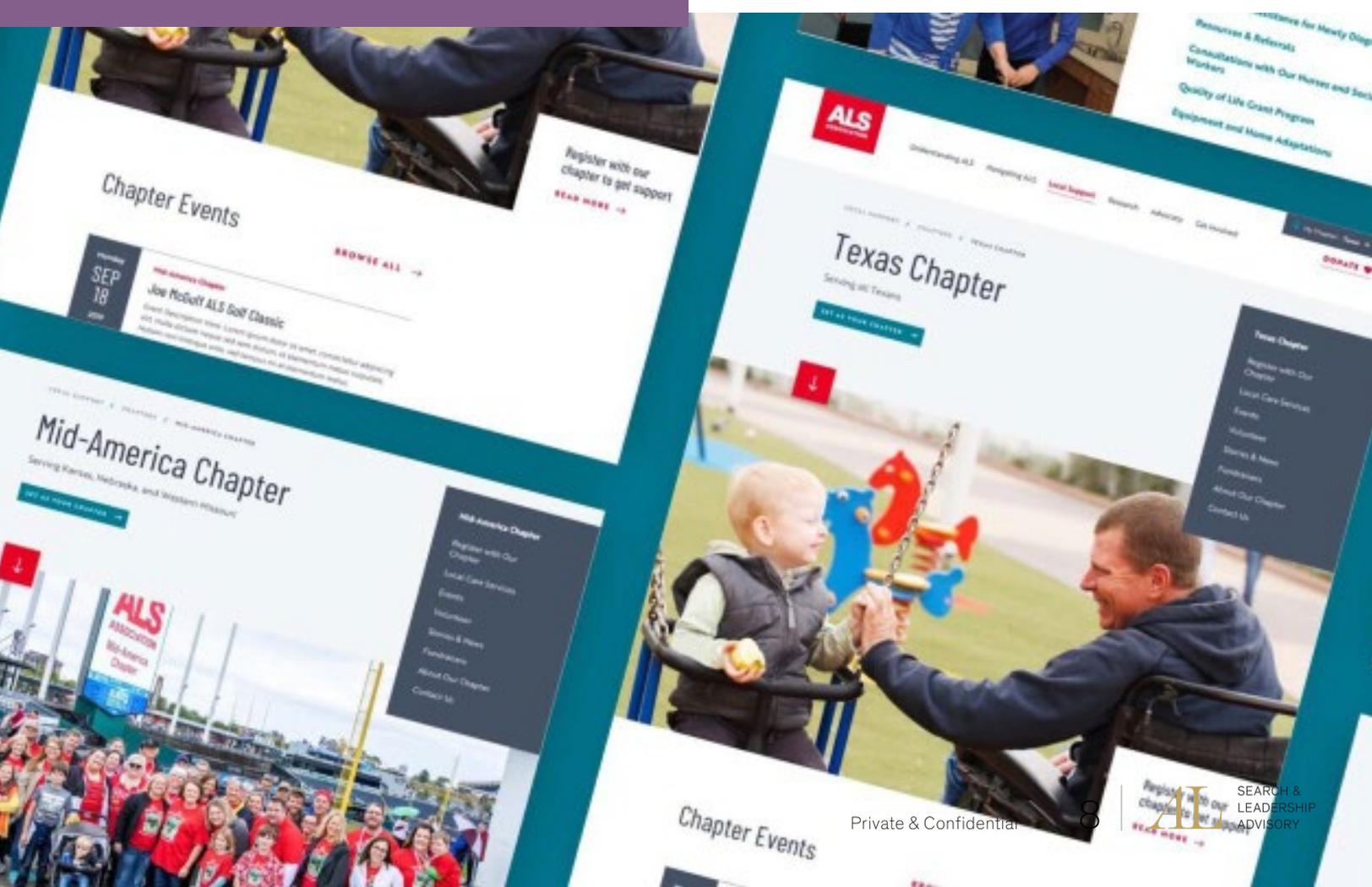


We are a team of more than 120 technical, creative, and strategic professionals, including top developers in the open source community, award-winning designers, and experts in understanding audience needs and crafting compelling digital communications. We serve clients all over the world from our offices in Arlington, Virginia (HQ) and Seattle, Washington – and with about half of our employee-owners located elsewhere across the United States. Our consulting team breakdown is about 35% technology engineers, 25% project and account managers, 15% strategy and communications professionals, 15% interactive designers, and 10% support services team.

## Our core services include:

- **Digital Strategy and Transformation:** We go beyond websites to take a holistic look at our clients' digital ecosystems - from marketing channels to business intelligence to brand expression - to develop integrated digital communications strategies, technical platforms, and engagement campaigns.
- **Creative & Design:** Our award-winning designers craft meaningful and engaging digital and brand experiences that move target audiences. We offer visual design, user experience design, and content strategy and development spanning responsive web design, video production and animation, multimedia collateral, and brand systems and messaging.

- **Technology:** We have 27 years of experience architecting and building integrated, user-centered, and accessible websites and applications with leading-edge open source tools and platforms like WordPress, Drupal, and emerging technologies. We specialize in enterprise-scale technical solution planning, implementation, and enhancement.
- **Data, Analytics & Business Intelligence:** We take the power of data and transform it into an essential tool for communication, management, and decision-making. We help organizations understand, manage, visualize, communicate, and share their data, from entry-level analytics setup to advanced business intelligence and data visualization.
- **Support:** Our ongoing support services are designed to drive consistent long-term partnerships and progress toward our clients' goals. Our dedicated team offers cloud hosting management, technical support and security updates, and ongoing enhancements across our full scope of digital services



Our clients are about a 50/50 mix of nonprofit organizations and government agencies, and on average they work with us for five years or longer. Some of our key sectors and current/recent clients include:

### Education

- National Assessment of Educational Progress, U.S. Department of Education
- Council for Advancement and Support of Education
- Fairfax County Public Schools
- Georgetown University
- Johns Hopkins University
- Howard Hughes Medical Institute
- Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation

### International Development, Research, and Policy

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- USAID
- Peace Corps
- Mercy Corps
- United Way Worldwide
- Peterson Institute for International Economics
- Urban Institute
- U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)
- World Bank Group

### Health

- U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- ALS Association
- March of Dimes
- Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
- County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute
- City Health Dashboard, New York University Langone Health
- AARP Livability Index
- Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

### Museums & Cultural Institution

- Smithsonian Institution
  - National Museum of African American History and Culture
  - National Museum of Natural History
  - National Museum of American History
  - National Museum of the American Indian
  - National Air and Space Museum
- National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)
- National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)
- American Jazz Museum
- Seattle Center
- Pacific Science Center
- Frist Art Museum
- Vilcek Foundation

### Environment

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)
- Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
- USAID Climatelinks
- U.S. Global Change Research Program
- EPA EnergyStar



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## We are an “Employee Stock Ownership Plan” Company!

As of 2022, we were 72% employee-owned, through our Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). We set up our ESOP in 2012 as a way to transition ownership from the founders to employees, to ensure the company could continue in its mission focus, to promote employee growth, and to create wealth for employees and their families. Since 2012, the Corporation has annually contributed to our ESOP fund and will continue those contributions towards 100% employee ownership in the coming years.

## CEO SUCCESS FACTORS 2028

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The next CEO should steer the company to accomplish these key outcomes by 2028:

- **Growth: Drive the company to multi-million dollar revenue**

The CEO will drive continuing company growth by steering the services we offer, providing career growth opportunities for our team, and offering more value for our clients. The CEO will expand the range and value of our services, increase the size of our engagements, and be actively engaged in expanding our clientele across our NGO and government sectors, as well as with mission-driven commercial clients and others.

- **Profitability: Increase consistent profitability**

The CEO will ensure consistent profitability through the services we provide, our pricing strategy, and cost management.

- **Federal Market: Navigate growth to and beyond GSA small business graduation**

The CEO will guide us through defining and executing a “graduation strategy” for our Federal GSA Schedule, so we continue to grow after we’ve passed from being a Small Business. Our Federal business is about half our revenue and a key way we work on important and high-impact issues. We currently receive an advantage with our Small Business classification under our GSA Schedule, and our steady growth means we will exceed the Small Business ceiling.

- **Employee-ownership: Increase ESOP control to over 90%**

The CEO will steer the continued growth in the share of the company owned by our ESOP. The primary factor for this is ensuring consistent and rising profitability, which supports company valuation and our continued contributions to ESOP growth. We’ve been an ESOP company since 2012, annually contributing to the ESOP to purchase more company stock.

- **Impact: Increase societal impact for good**

The CEO will steer Forum One in making a social impact in all aspects of our business operation. This starts with how we build and manage our team as a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible organization. This includes the clients we chose to serve and the services we deliver for them. This also includes how we track, utilize, and measure the impact our work has for our clients. And this includes how we leverage our business activities, engagement with business partners, and participation in business networks to be a force for positive social change.

## WHAT'S ATTRACTIVE TO THE RIGHT CANDIDATE

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The CEO role at Forum One offers the right candidate:

- **Responsibility:** As CEO, you are the critical seat at the table working with the Board and coordinating the senior leadership in directing the company toward growth, improvement, and impact.
- **A Solid Foundation:** You will be joining a 27-year-old firm that is well-established, well-regarded, and financially stable. We have a solid reputation as a trusted advisor to our clients and a great place to work. You will be joining a highly committed and high-performing group of colleagues, especially our leadership team.
- **Opportunity for Impact:** You'll be motivated by the opportunity to make positive social change through how we operate our business and the work we do for our clients.
- **Ability to Advance DEIA:** You will be a key part of how we advance Forum One as a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible firm - in all aspects of our operation. This spans the work we do for clients, whom we chose to serve, the team we build, and how we conduct ourselves to allow all of our team members to thrive.
- **ESOP/Employee Ownership Advantages:** You will be joining a firm that is 72% employee-owned through our ESOP, and rising. This gives us distinct advantages in terms of strong employee engagement and retention, and the financial advantage of not paying taxes on the earnings attributed to the ESOP's stock.
- **Challenge/Opportunity:** While we have a solid foundation, we are in a fast-changing and competitive sector. We need to be "on our game" each day and constantly sharpen our market position. A key opportunity for us is to successfully punch through the Small Business threshold for GSA work and continue to compete and grow our government business as a mid-tier entity. Another opportunity is to help us grow profitability to benefit our ESOP and employee-owners. We also have the opportunity to steer the firm to more deeply engage our whole team in how we become more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible.



# The CEO Responsibilities at Forum One

The role/responsibilities of the CEO at Forum One are:

## DEFINE THE STRATEGY

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Set the business strategy for Forum One - our near and long-term goals, how we compete in the marketplace, the solutions we deliver, the clientele we target, the impact we generate for our clients, the way we make a profit, and how we build, manage, and develop our team. The strategy should define “success” for the business in line with the Board’s definition of the company mission, vision, and broad goals. The CEO needs to define our market positioning, plan how to advance and improve in competitiveness, and steer and monitor the team.

- **Position:** Track client needs, competitors, market and social trends to guide company positioning. Maintain close relationships with clients, partners, competitors, and other sector collaborators. Use these insights to define competitive advantages - target services, sectors, clientele, differentiators, and impact.
- **Plan:** Lead annual review and set corporate objectives and priorities, including departmental plans, budgets, and staffing needs. Update and implement plans on a quarterly sprint cadence.
- **Financials:** Track and manage company financial performance to ensure growth in line with targets.
- **Monitor:** Track and monitor indicators of performance to gauge success quarterly and annually, and iterate to improve success for quarterly “sprints.”
- **Grow:** Ensure the plan leads to growth in the value of the business as indicated by share price.

## BUILD AND LEAD THE TEAM

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Build and steer the leadership team needed to successfully execute the strategy. Company-wide, ensure that we set the needed organizational structure, recruiting approach, staff development and management approach, and leadership development.

- **Structure:** Define the organizational structure and management approach to build the team needed to execute the business plan - meeting client needs, operations and management, marketing and business development, etc.
- **“On the Bus”:** Ensure we have the approach to recruit the people we need to meet our business strategy, across marketing, sourcing, internships, interviewing, hiring, and appropriate total rewards.

- **“Right Seats”:** Define the talent development approach to get people into the “right seats,” to develop their abilities, manage and coach them at a high level, ensure we provide them autonomy, purpose, and mastery; and keep annual retention at 85%+.
- **Leadership:** Develop the leadership of the entire employee team by providing opportunities for growth and development within and across departments - ad hoc committees, DEIA team, Leadership Deputies team, Staff Management team, etc.
- **Senior Leaders:** Oversee the performance of the Vice Presidents in executing the company strategy, from annual planning to bi-weekly 1:1 meetings about the status of quarterly priorities, building a leadership team ethos of collaboration, support, accountability, and good cheer.

## DRIVE THE CULTURE AND VALUES

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Define and model the organization’s culture, through our current Core Values and Behaviors - serving as an example of what we expect, and what we value, from our team members. Ensure we have defined, and that we embed the core values, through recruiting, staff management, leadership, and business decisions.

- **Culture and Values:** Ensure we clearly define our culture and values - how we work and what we value, which represent the long-standing (and unchanging) values of the founders, and also reflect current business goals as a mission-driven organization. Model the core values and behaviors through day-to-day examples, and ensure we have a strong approach to communicate and reinforce them with staff.
- **DEIA:** Define how the company will advance in becoming more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible, spanning recruiting, equitable staff development and compensation, clientele that does not conflict with our values, service offerings that extend DEIA values, partner strategies to support our goals, and our engagement in communities to drive progress in DEIA across our spheres of influence. Ensure we take an approach of ongoing learning, iteration, and advancement. Track staff perceptions and evolve management.
- **ESOP Engagement:** Increase staff awareness and engagement in Forum One’s ESOP as a way to enhance staff financial futures and drive the business value of Forum One. Ensure we have a proactive staff communication and engagement approach, and associated monitoring and management.

## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

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The CEO is the primary leader responsible for on-target financial performance. The CEO needs to ensure that targets are set, plans align to meet them, roles and expectations are well-set, and that we’re proactively tracking performance indicators.

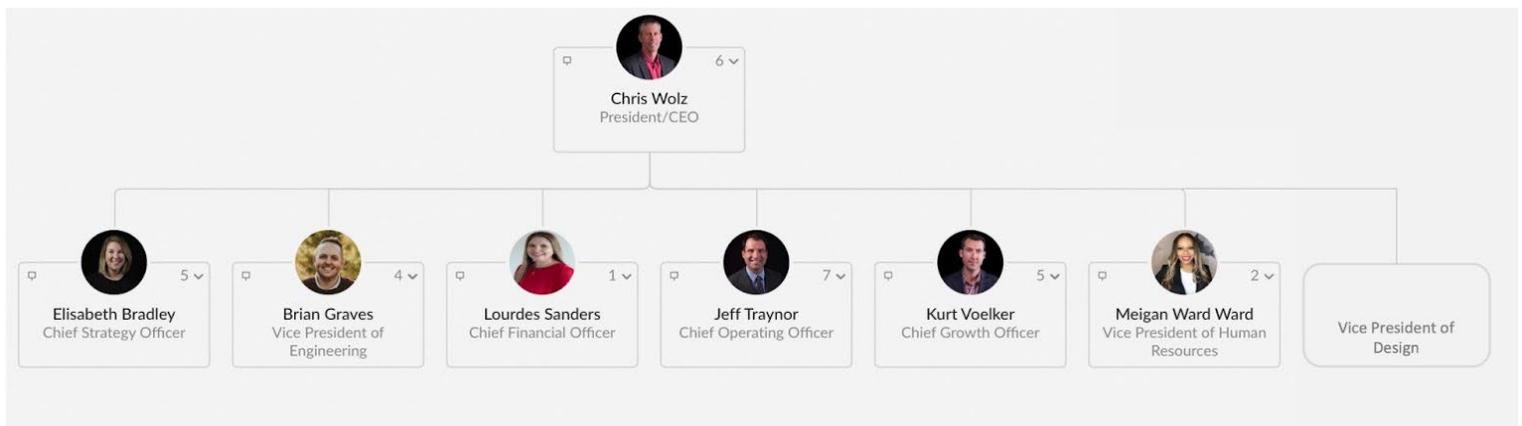
- **Financials:** Ensure that company finances are sufficient to support the goals of the business strategy, through active planning of cash flow and liquidity needs. Ensure relationships with vendors, banks, and financial advisors to support financial needs. Ensure clear definition of key performance indicators (KPIs) and proactive monitoring and management.
- **Staffing:** Ensure planning, management, and alignment of staffing resources to meet business strategy, across recruiting, staff development, contracting, team management, service definition, project approach, and pricing.
- **Investments:** Identify and decide on investments to support long-term growth possibilities.
- **Resource Alignment:** Ensure resources are aligned to accomplish strategic goals

## GOVERNANCE

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Ensure compliance with all rules and requirements applicable to the management, success, and continuity of the corporation. These include financial, corporate, labor, contracting, ESOP, tax, government contracting, and other obligations. Lead strong engagement and communication with the Board of Directors.

- **Responsibility:** Ensure clear definition of applicable requirements and rules, who is responsible - generally among the VP team, and associated deadlines.
- **Monitoring:** Track performance to comply with contract and business rules and regulations.
- **Point of Contact:** Serve as principal contact between the Board of Directors and the company, and as the company point of contact with our independent ESOP Trustee.



# CEO Qualifications

## MUST-HAVE QUALIFICATIONS

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- **Business Leadership Experience:** Proven ability to set a vision, form an operational plan, and drive an organization to its goal.
- **Interpersonal Skills:** Proven ability to communicate, inspire, create a culture of accountability, and lead by example with empathy, personal humility, and mentoring and growing individuals.
- **Business & Financial Acumen:** Must have a growth mindset and proven success in managing an organization to meet financial goals.
- **Relevant Sector Experience:** Serving government agencies, nonprofits, associations, foundations, higher education institutions, advocacy groups, think tanks, cultural institutions/museums, or related organizations.
- **Passion for Societal Issues of Importance:** Must have career experience either in the health sector, education, the environment, or other social issues.
- **Professional Services Experience:** Must have experience in consulting for clients and the operations of a consulting organization, delivering communications, interactive design, digital strategy, or digital technology – or ideally some combination of those.
- **Experience Leading an Organization in Advancing in DEIA:** Experience Leading an Organization in Advancing in DEIA: Demonstrated success leading organizational DEIA initiatives, spanning hiring and team-building, talent development, client selection, project delivery, and impact measurement. Must bring experience in helping organizations plan and improve in its diversity, equity, inclusiveness, and accessibility
- **Thought Leadership and Public Speaking:** Proven experience in writing and speaking on sector trends and innovations to establish reputation and visibility. Proven experience preparing reports, proposals, and speeches. Proven track record in building and maintaining high-level relationships across professional peers, clients, Board members, and other thought leaders.
- **Strong Leadership Competencies:** Self-directed, decisive, problem-solver, diplomatic, able to prioritize, advanced cross-cultural sensitivity and communication skills, assessment and evaluation skills, strong relational and human resource skills, commitment to team, skilled in training and group facilitation.
- **Location:** It will be highly beneficial for the new CEO to be located in the greater Washington D.C. metropolitan area, where a majority of our clients, and many of our staff and leadership team, are located.

## NICE-TO-HAVE QUALIFICATIONS

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- Strong professional reputation in a relevant client or business sector
- Experience in growing a firm to \$50m+ in revenue
- Business development/growth success with government or non-commercial groups
- Deep subject matter expertise in core services we deliver
- Deep technology experience in tools we use
- Experience with Federal GSA Small Business status graduation
- Experience with ESOPs
- Likely to be in the role for 8-10 years



# Expressing Interest

August Leadership, a global firm with a leading Social Impact/Non-profit practice, has been exclusively retained for this engagement. Leading the search is Nicole Kamaleson, Partner, Social Impact (Global) in the firm. She will be supported by a team of consultants and researchers.

To make recommendations or to express your interest, please email at [ForumOne@augustleadership.com](mailto:ForumOne@augustleadership.com) - all inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

August Leadership and Forum One are equal opportunity, affirmative action employers and are firmly committed to a policy against discrimination based on age, sex, race, religious creed, sexual orientation, disability or ethnic or national origin.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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If you are interested in exploring this exciting opportunity, please contact us at:

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