



**VISIBLE HANDS**

# Annual Report 2021



Visible Hands is a venture capital firm on a mission to highlight and invest in the limitless potential of overlooked founders.

*Above: Our inaugural cohort and the Visible Hands team launching off the 2021 Fellowship program in Tulsa, Oklahoma*

At the earliest stages of company-building, we provide meaningful funding, personalized support, and access to amazing networks through our fellowship program, helping our founders build exceptional technology startups.



visiblehands.vc



@visiblehandsvc



@visiblehands

To our community:

Starting in the Summer of 2020, the three of us—Daniel, Justin, Yasmin—founded Visible Hands knowing that there is something structurally wrong when 70% of the U.S. population receives less than 10% of U.S. VC funding. We saw an enormous missed market opportunity, and wanted to be a part of catalyzing that change. Instead of relying on unseen market forces, we decided to take matters into our own hands.

Visible Hands was built to provide meaningful funding, personalized company-building support, and access to amazing networks to hundreds of underrepresented founders and overlooked talent in the early-stage venture ecosystem.

2021 was a momentous year for us. We officially hired our team, started raising our first fund, launched our unique pre-seed funding and fellowship model, and executed our inaugural 14-week fellowship program with 50 founders who we call “Visionaries.” We worked with founders across diverse industries, locales, and stages of company-building, from pre-idea to prototype. We asked our founders to put their trust in us as we supported them through one of the most vulnerable journeys anyone could ever undertake—starting a company.

We are proud. We learned a great deal on how to become even better in the next year. We gained even more confidence in our team and in our model. Now, we feel even more equipped to help launch the next generation of enduring technology companies that just so happen to be founded by underrepresented founders.

We value looking back and sharing our key learnings as well as our many accomplishments with you, our community, who helped make this all possible.

In this annual report, we will cover key aspects of our model, fellowship program, ecosystem initiatives, partnerships, and portfolio highlights. As we continue to grow over time, we deeply appreciate your support of our mission and vision.



**Daniel Acheampong**  
Co-Founder and General Partner



**Yasmin Cruz Ferrine**  
Co-Founder and General Partner



**Justin Kang**  
Co-Founder and General Partner

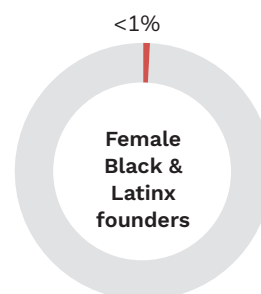
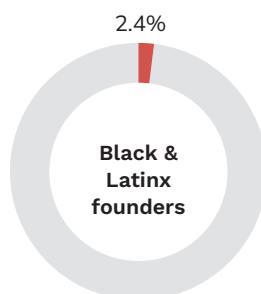
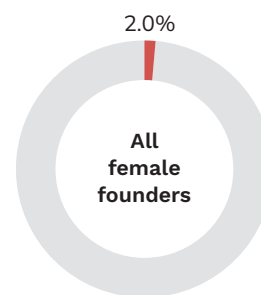
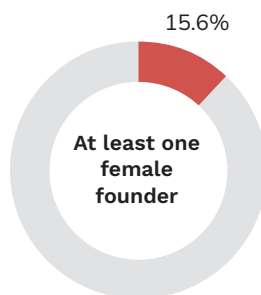
# Our Vision

We envision a world where talent and execution—not race or gender—are the key predictors for success.

## Where does VC funding currently go in the U.S.?

People of color and women represent a majority of the U.S. population but receive a mere fraction of VC funding. Our \$10m pre-seed fund exclusively invests in these communities.

Sources: *US VC Female Founders Dashboard 2021 (PitchBook); 2020 Crunchbase Diversity Spotlight Report*



## Our Approach

We increase the deal flow of diverse founders by investing at the earliest stage where institutional funding opportunities are lacking most.



### Social Capital

We provide access to our Ecosystem of potential advisors, mentors, early hires, investors, and customers and facilitate strategic introductions for our fellows. Our cohort model builds an inclusive community of fellows supporting fellows.



### Financial Capital

We are first check funders — the early capital that founders need to get started. We provide a \$25k upfront investment to each fellow and the opportunity to apply for additional investment of up to \$150k following the program.



### Inspiration Capital

By intentionally challenging the traditional stereotypes of who can be an entrepreneur, we aim to instill confidence in aspiring and early-stage founders to go forth and build high-growth, high-impact startups.



# 911

Applications Submitted



# 45

Investments Made in 2021



# 21

Companies received six-figure investments from Visible Hands

Some investors in our portfolio companies

**upfront**

**pillar**

**P** **PRECURSOR**  
VENTURES

**FEMALE**  
**FOUNDERS**  
**FUND**

**serena**



## 2021 Fellowship Cohort

After a rigorous application cycle that spanned four evaluation stages, leveraged over 100 volunteer reviewers, and processed nearly a thousand submissions, our team finalized our inaugural cohort for the 2021 Visible Hands Fellowship.

We expected our founders to find the most value from the cohort itself. We were right. Bringing together these 50 founders — all exceptionally talented in different ways — was our greatest advantage.

All of our founders come from underrepresented backgrounds in

tech and entrepreneurship. Some started the fellowship during their concept-planning stages while others came in with revenue-generating products. Some had started companies before while others were first-time founders. Regardless, all founders joined Visible Hands with a full-time commitment to building their startups.

Notably, one hundred percent of our founders continue to work on their companies following the conclusion of our fellowship — even those who started our fellowship without a specific business idea in mind.

**50**

Fellows

**45**

Companies

**5.6%**

Admission Rate

## Our Fellows

### Ashton Keys

Co-Founder & CEO,  
Athlytic

### Michelle Dalzon

Founder, theBOM

### Adriana Delor

Founder, CUE

### Alifya Valiji

Founder & CEO,  
Closed Round

### Alterrell Mills

Founder, LDR

### Alyse Dunn

Founder & CEO,  
CareCopilot

### Amirah Raveneau-Bey

Co-Founder & CEO, The  
Home Dispatch

### Annalece Mark

Founder, Neptune

### Auja Little

Founder & CEO,  
Beautyocracy

### Bea Alessio

Founder, OMA

### Brooke Hill

Founder, Braid Café

### Chudi Iregbulem

Founder & CEO,  
Beatmatch

### Clare Hecceg

Founder & CEO,  
Let's Get Set

### Courtney Cardin

Co-Founder, Aura  
Finance

### Emiola Banwo

Founder, Monuments

### Evelyn Hartz

Co-Founder, Meru

### Felix Gonda

Founder, Allumique

### Irene Li

Co-Founder, PrepShift

### Isabel Plana

Founder & CEO, Nia

### Ifueko Igbinedion

Co-Founder & CTO,  
Hairtelligence

### Isoken Igbinedion

Co-Founder & CEO,  
Hairtelligence

### Jahde Eve

Co-Founder & CEO, GEN

### Jessica Mong

Founder, Uloh

### Jessica Chao

Co-Founder & CEO,  
LingoHealth

### Joanna Linton

Founder & CEO,  
Rae's Roots

### Juan Young

Founder & CEO,  
Melanance

### Juliana Cardona

Founder, Street Collectiv

### Kaitlyn Carter

Founder

### Kelsey Willock

Co-Founder & CEO,  
Aura Finance

### Luis Suarez

Founder, Sanarai

### Marcus Collins

Founder, Nested Funds

### Mariam Braimah

Founder & CEO, Kimoyo  
Insights

### Marlyse Reeves

Co-Founder & COO,  
Hairtelligence

### Mei-Lin Ng

Co-founder, & CEO,  
Hearth Display

### Noelle Acosta

Founder & CEO, Noura  
Health

### Pico Velasquez

Founder & CEO,  
VIIRA

### Sandy Lin

Founder, ReMak

### Savina Hawkins

Founder, Altis

### Sean Echevarria

Founder & CEO, rees

### Shannan Clarke

Founder & CEO,  
Queen and Baby

### Simone Kendle

Co-Founder & CMO,  
Hairtelligence

### Son Ca Vu

Co-Founder & CEO,  
Alta

### Starlitt Miller

Founder, Transit

### Steven Moyo

Founder & CEO,  
Welfie

### Su Sanni

Founder, Dollaride

### Tamika Francis

Founder, DutchPot

### Tanisha Bassan

Founder, Satsang  
Homes

### Tony Morales

Founder, Mytho

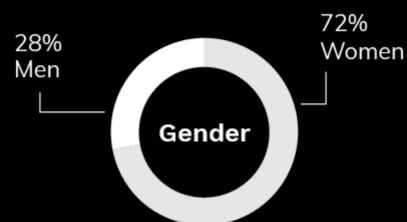
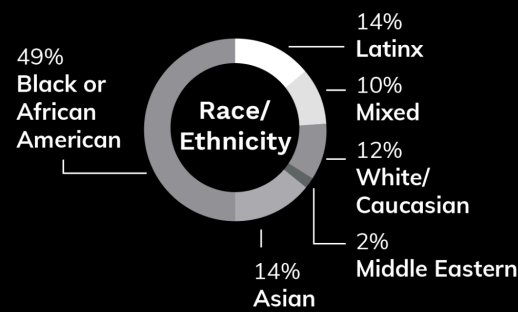
### Wadood Daoud

Co-Founder,  
Candoor

### Yaritza Vargas

Co-Founder & COO,  
LingoHealth

## Cohort Statistics



# The Program

Our 14-week, virtual-first fellowship program ran from September 13 to December 17, 2021.

Each Fellow received an investment of \$25k at the start of the fellowship. Fellows could request additional investment from Visible Hands on a rolling basis following the completion of our program.

The program was predicated on the philosophy that our Fellows did not need a rigid schedule of classes to succeed. Instead, they would work best if given a platform where they could fully focus on building their companies.

## Personalization

Every Fellow met with the Visible Hands team before the start of the program to map out their needs and develop a custom engagement plan for their three and a half month fellowship.

From there, every Fellow worked closely with a designated Visible Hands team member who acted as an extension of their startup team, checking in weekly, providing advice, and helping them get the most out of their fellowship experience.



## Cohort Building

To kick-off our fellowship program, we brought our cohort together to celebrate one another and prove that entrepreneurship does not need to be a lonely pursuit. We gathered in Tulsa, Oklahoma exactly 100 years after the destruction of Black Wall Street by a racist mob. The centennial provided us with important historical context relevant to our mission. The work we do is inspired to defy these tragedies and to remake a society that is more equitable for everyone.

This orientation week (made possible by our incredible partners Atento Capital and Build in Tulsa) set the foundation for deep camaraderie amongst our cohort for the rest of the fellowship and beyond.

Through Mastermind Groups, Zoom 'coffee chats,' or in-person get-togethers, these founders shared their time and knowledge generously, finding connection in the shared experience of starting something new.

## Programming

 **104 Events Hosted**

We hosted over a hundred events for our founders across 14 weeks: fireside chats, workshops, office hours, and everything in between.

We also organized pitch feedback sessions for our Fellows in collaboration with over 30 VCs and investors, leading to 169 pitch sessions completed in just four days.

## Project Support

 **120 Projects Completed**

We wanted to ensure that we were delivering tangible business value to our founders, so we adopted an agency-like, venture studio model. Throughout the fellowship, our team accomplished 120 projects for our cohort, ranging from design (social media ads, digital prototypes, brand guidelines) to strategy (competitive analyses, market sizing, value proposition workshops). We even did some recruiting.

*(RIGHT) Screenshots of a mobile app prototype we designed for our fellow Noelle Acosta, Founder and CEO of Noula Health. Along with this prototype, we also created brand guidelines and packaging design to support her in fundraising and production.*

## Early Results

Our companies are already raising meaningful dollars from other institutional investors. And they are doing it at a fast pace.

Since the start of the fellowship, nine have already closed their pre-seed or seed funding rounds — with most being oversubscribed. Eight of our companies are currently raising capital.

## Featured Events



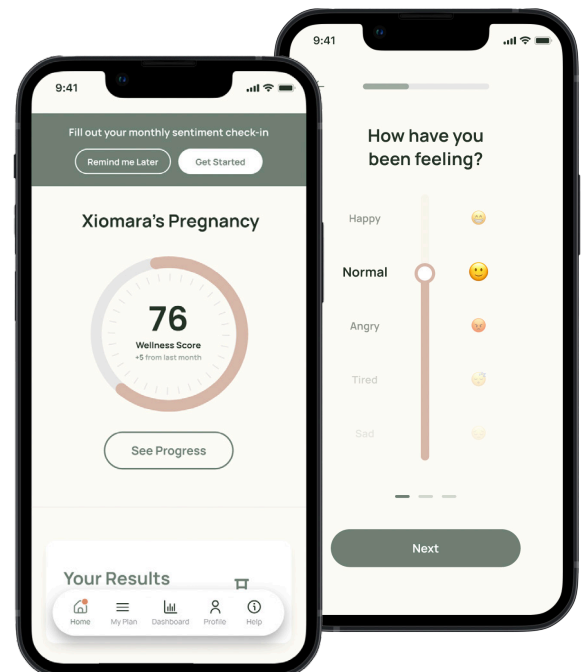
Early-stage Venture  
**Charles Hudson**  
Managing Partner at Precursor VC



Building Investor Relationships  
**Sarah Hodges**  
Partner at Pillar VC



Early-Stage Fundraising  
**Henri Pierre-Jacques**  
Managing Partner at Harlem Capital



## From Our Founders

**To have a community of other founders who look like me, have similar backgrounds, and totally get it without me having to sit here and explain my entire journey is such a big game-changer.**



**Alifya Valiji**

Founder & CEO at The Closed Round

**People were truly authentic, almost immediately, and continue to be collaborative and giving in a way that I have not experienced in any other program.**



**Clare Herceg**

CEO & Founder at Let's Get Set

**The step-by-step personalized structure of 'let's solve a concrete problem in your business,' 'let's work with you and get the right people around you,' and 'let's quickly move through the next phase of business' was the reason why Visible Hands is special and just totally different.**



**Amirah Raveneau-Bey**

CEO & Co-Founder at The Home Dispatch

**I've never felt so naturally part of a community this fast. The caliber of talent that Visible Hands has been able to bring together has been crazy. I'm blown away by who I'm working with and talking with on an almost daily basis.**



**Sean Echevarria**

Founder & CEO, rees

**I've been blown away by the talent in this cohort and I've just been really impressed by the support we've gotten from the Visible Hands team.**



**Evelyn Hartz**

Co-Founder, Meru

**I've learned so much from the people around me and I'm always in awe of what we can teach each other. No matter what stage we're at, there is a massive amount of knowledge and expertise that every individual holds in their own domain.**



**Auja Little**

Founder & CEO, Beautyocracy

# Visible Designers & Engineers

Long-term, we plan to create adjacent talent communities for our founders. To do so, we are operating professional development programs for up-and-coming talent with identities historically underrepresented in the technology sector.

This fall, we piloted the Visible Designers and Visible Engineers program. We accepted 32 designers and engineers out of a pool of 90 applications. Across seven weeks, we hosted 15 events that included speed-dating sessions with our founders and fireside chats with leading Product Design and Engineering Leaders in tech. We received positive feedback and look forward to expanding this program next year.



**32**

Members



**15**

Events

## Co-Chairs



**Alyssa So**

Software Engineer,  
Android at Zillow



**Lindsey Redd**

Software Engineer  
at Stripe



**Memie Huang**

Staff Product Designer  
at Quizlet



**Peter Edouard**

Senior Product Designer  
at Filtered.ai



I enjoyed meeting with various leaders within the tech industry and making meaningful connections with my fellow designers. I know that this cohort is a group that I can lean on. It's inspiring to know that we will be making an impact wherever we go.



**Natalie Cantave**

Associate Director, Marketing and Design  
at Electives



Visible Engineers helped me to think more as an engineer and an entrepreneur. The cohort of Fellows was accessible and willing to share their knowledge and expertise.



**Desmend Jetton**

Software Engineer at Nordstrom

## Press & Media Mentions

At Visible Hands, we recognize the power of storytelling. We celebrate narratives that uplift and highlight the hard work of VC firms and founders coming from underrepresented backgrounds.

We were thrilled to be mentioned by these esteemed publications in our inaugural year:



### The Boston Globe

#### This new Boston VC firm wants to level the playing field by focusing on women and entrepreneurs of color

This Boston venture capital firm focuses on women and entrepreneurs of color

By Shirley Leung Globe Columnist, Updated August 23, 2021, 6:53 p.m.



# Institutional Fund Investors



## Our Organizational Partners



“ Furthering our deep commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, we are eager to leverage our resources to make the early-stage startup ecosystem more equitable and accessible for underrepresented founders. We look forward to supporting the inaugural cohort as they begin their journey.



**Julie Haase**

Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer, Global Retail Markets at Liberty Mutual

“ Building a diverse pipeline of innovative founders of color and women founders is key to fostering an inclusive economy. Visible Hands' inaugural fellowship program gives more people a fair shot at opportunity, strengthening the communities where we do business. We're excited to see what these entrepreneurs accomplish after completing the fellowship.



**Cate Costa**

Vice President, Global Small Business Philanthropy at JPMorgan Chase

# Advisory Committees

## Fellowship

### Gina Gotthilf

BOARD DIRECTOR  
Co-founder at Latitud

### Dave Cotter

BOARD OBSERVER  
Chief Product Officer, Leafly

### Alex Roetter

BOARD OBSERVER  
General Partner at Moxxie Ventures

### Amira Valliani

Founder & CEO at Glow

### Brad McNamara

Co-founder at Freight Farms

### Cait Brumme

Senior Vice President at  
MassChallenge Early Stage

### Cara Lynn Kleid

Principal Product Designer at  
98point6

### Caroline Fay

Product Marketing Manager at  
Lattice

### Daniel Rodriguez

Chief Marketing Officer at Simplr

### Derek Bugley

Head of Growth at Filtered.ai

### Gilad Rosenzweig

Executive Director at MITdesignX

### Grace Zimmerman

Professor of Marketing at Brandeis  
International Business School

### Jess Brown

Head of Design at Clutter

### Justin McLeod

Founder of Surthrive

### Katie Nulty

Client Director at Red Antler

### Kaylita Johnson

Senior Product Manager at Cruise

### Keenan Corrigan

Senior Program Manager, Path  
Ahead Ventures at REI

### Lara Zimmerman

Project Manager at GAN

### Mike Haylon

Enterprise Sales Leader at Asana

### Rosedelle Davies-Adewebi

Innovation Program Head at  
Morgan Stanley

### Spencer Scott

EVP of North American Revenue  
at CarGurus

### Victoria Kennedy

Product at CompStak

## Portfolio

### Jessica Patton

BOARD DIRECTOR  
Co-Founder and Principal at 5th  
Century Partners

### Michael Kumin

BOARD OBSERVER  
Managing Director at Great Hill  
Partners

### Jason Allen

Vice President - Investments at  
MassVentures

### Bob Mason

Managing Partner at Argon  
Ventures

### Jay Lundy

VP, Investments & New Ventures  
at Combs Enterprises

### Eva-Maria Olbers

Platform and Operations Lead, at  
Point72 Ventures

### Ashraf Hebela

Head of SVB Startup Banking

### Kofi Asante

VP of Strategy & Business  
Development at Elroy Air

### Sarah Millar

Principal at City Light Capital

### Brian Sykes

Principal at Raine Ventures

### Neeraj Agrawal

General Partner at Battery  
Ventures

### Brandon Greer

Senior Manager, Corporate  
Development at HubSpot

### Hinal Shah

Investor and Advisor

### Trevor Nelson

Special Projects, Rock Ventures  
LLC

### Adrianna Samaniego

Investor at Female Founders Fund

### Charles Hudson

Managing Partner at Precursor  
Ventures

### Nancy Torres

Principal at Ulu Ventures

### Julisa Salas

VP, Chief of Staff at Toast

### Jeff Bussgang

General Partner and Co-Founder,  
Flybridge Capital Partners

### Kimberly Foster

Associate, Asset Management  
Division - Growth Equity, Launch  
With GS

### Jay Leopold

Head, N.A. Investment Risk  
Management at Columbia  
Threadneedle Investments

### John Harthorne

Founder and Managing Director at  
Two Lanterns Venture Partners

### Abyah Wynn

Co-founder and Managing  
Director at Twenty65 Fund

### Adam Kiki-Charles

Investor at The Equity Alliance

### Carlton Charles

Senior Vice President, Treasury  
and Risk Management at Hearst

### Shashi Srikantan

Investor at Level Up Ventures

### Javaughn Lawrence

EIR at Eniac Ventures

### Robyn Glaser

Senior Vice President at The Kraft  
Group

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## Ecosystem

### Devin Nash

BOARD DIRECTOR  
Head of Marketing at Underscore

### Jesus Gerena

BOARD OBSERVER  
CEO at UPTogether

### Carmen Arce-Bowen

COO at The Partnership

### Danielle Bailey

Multi-Asset Community Manager  
at We Work

### Tanea Foglia

Director of Tech Equity Hub  
Accelerator at Project W

### Ronethea Williams

Strategic Partnerships,  
Communities at Facebook

### La Mer Walker

Co-Founder and Chief Creative  
Officer at Valence Community

### Peter Lebedev

Senior Director of Engineering at  
Jobcase

### Erika Locke

President at Blackstone Charitable  
Foundation

### Jonathan Greeley

Manager, Economic Development  
and Public Policy at Amazon

### Rachel Pohl

Senior Partnerships & Giving  
Manager, Social Impact at Unity  
Technologies

## Selection

### Greg Gottesman

BOARD OBSERVER  
Managing Director at Pioneer  
Square Labs

### Samantha Simmons

BOARD DIRECTOR  
Director, Special Projects at  
HubSpot

### Adam Gibbs

Co-founder of The Shade Store

### Ananth Kasturiraman

Sr. Director, Global Product  
Commercialization at Indeed.com

### Cate Costa

Vice President at JPMorgan Chase  
& Co.

### Debbie Bial

President and Founder of The  
Posse Foundation

### Desiree Wrigley

Executive Director of TechRise by  
P33 Chicago

### Devin Nash

Head of Marketing at Underscore

### Jason Price

Strategic Partnerships at  
Salesforce

### John Mulliken

Senior Vice President International  
Retail and Global Merchandising  
at Wayfair

### Karen Kaplan

Chairman and CEO at Hill Holliday

### Marcia Chong Rosado

Future of Finance Practice Lead at  
Village Capital

### Matthew Au

Corporate Strategy Analyst at PTC

### Peter Nelson

Executive Vice President, Sports  
at HBO

### Terrance Orr

Competitive Intelligence at Dell  
EMC

### Zamawa Arenas

Founder & CEO at Flowetik

## Our Team



**Yasmin Cruz Ferrine**  
General Partner



**Daniel Acheampong**  
General Partner



**Justin Kang**  
General Partner



**Mike Omenazu**  
Vice President



**Sumia Shaikh**  
Vice President



**Tia Thomson**  
Vice President



**Jackie Byun**  
Associate



**Javier Correa**  
Associate



**Darrel Frater**  
Associate



**Lokilani Hunt**  
Senior Analyst



**Jenny Li**  
Senior Analyst

## 2021 Co-ops



**Camryn McAllister**



**Richa Shah**



**Oriana Dominguez**



**Sarina Regehr**



**Cali Simmons**

# Visible Hands Manifesto

Our world is changing. Our communities are changing — they are becoming stronger and more vibrant in their diversity, and face fresh possibilities and challenges as a new generation looks increasingly different from the last. We believe that as new opportunities arise, anyone should have the chance to seize them. The best solutions come from those closest to the problem — as our problems evolve, so should the problem-solvers.

We believe that investing in women, people of color, and other underrepresented groups is key to creating a more prosperous and equitable future for everyone.

We celebrate the bold, the curious, and the irrational. We applaud those with big dreams, and who choose the harder, riskier path in relentless pursuit of pushing forward what is possible. We also acknowledge that being a risk-taker often comes from a position of privilege — opportunity and wealth gaps persist along racial and gender lines, and access to financial and social capital too often determines which ideas are nurtured to grow. We believe that we must first acknowledge that the playing field was built to be unequal in order to change it. We know that we must change it.

High-growth entrepreneurship should not be reserved for the

privileged few. We need to shine a light inwards on our collective blindspots, and cast out a wider and more inclusive net to find and support existing talent. Instead of relying on unseen market forces, we're taking matters into our own hands. No one should have to look a certain way to be deemed deserving; great entrepreneurs are all around us but we must choose to see them.

**High-growth  
entrepreneurship  
should not be reserved  
for the privileged few.**

By sharing our privileges with those not born into it and manufacturing fairness where it doesn't yet exist, we can fundamentally change access to wealth and opportunity in this generation.

This is our open call for anyone who feels stuck on the outside looking in: We see you. We value you. We need you. Your perspective is unique, your lived experience is invaluable, and your potential is limitless. Never doubt that your voice matters and that you deserve to be heard, even if it can feel like it doesn't. We believe that good ideas, regardless of who or where they come from, should rise to the top, and we will fight alongside you to get them there.