



CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Motivation

Race and educational inequity have been intertwined throughout our nation's history. On May 17, 1954, in the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, the Supreme Court observed "*...it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.*" However, oppression, inequity, and violence still obstruct the path to self-determination and a life full of choices for young people from historically marginalized identities.

Promise54 was formed in fall 2017 by Xiomara Padamsee, Monisha Lozier, and team members from Bellwether Education Partners' former Talent Advising practice to enable organizations to deliver on the promise implied in the Supreme Court's ruling. We envision a day when organizations committed to educational equity have maximum impact because they have the right people excelling in right roles, their teams reflect the communities served, their cultures are inclusive, and their internal structures are equitable. Promise54 helps adults to thrive so that they can do their best work for students.

Organization

With our vision and mission held closely, we are a small but strong and growing team of nearly a dozen passionate and experienced consultants. We work to ensure that clients have the systems, culture, capacity, and the talent itself, to cultivate diverse teams of leaders who can transform the lives of students. The focus of our partnerships balances investments in people and the organizational systems around them, spanning topics such as recruitment systems, competency modeling, diversity, equity and inclusion, compensation, performance management, change management, board development, management capacity building / leadership development, and more. We conduct all of our work with a particular focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, based on our belief that creating a thriving, sustainable workplace for a diverse team will both generate greater impact for students as well as more durable relationships with the communities these organizations serve.

Our aim is to shape the field's understanding of what it means to build an organization where talent can truly thrive so that these organizations generate unprecedented results for children. In that spirit, we have committed to specific goals by 2023: first, we envision shifting the conversation with 1000 education organization leaders about the role of talent health in achieving strong outcomes with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); second, we will support 100 organizations to material progress on diversifying their teams, increasing staff performance and strengthening retention without gaps by seniority or identity. Promise54 provides services to support these goals at three levels: to the education field, to organizations, and to teams and individuals.

- For the field, we produce research and thought pieces to generate insights focused on the connection between DEI and accelerated impact. These products include high-quality diagnostics/analytics, field reports – such as 2017's [Unrealized Impact](#) – and convenings.
- For client organizations, we focus on supporting and enhancing organizational effectiveness, inclusive culture, and equitable systems. We do this through group leadership development training and executive search.
- Finally, for individuals, Promise54 focuses on supporting and developing people and experiences that enable diverse teams to thrive. We do this through long-term partnerships for implementation support, 1:1 executive coaching, and cohort-based workshops and institutes.

In service of this work, our team is committed to the following **core values**:

- **Champion Justice:** We acknowledge the impact of historical inequities and are committed to pursuing justice. We will do this by reshaping mindsets, behaviors, and structures one organization and one leader at a time, while examining ourselves in the process. We believe all young people, especially those of color and those growing up in low income communities, deserve to have adults acting boldly on their behalf – challenging the status quo, spotting and addressing inequities, sharing power and, perhaps most importantly, making room for silenced voices to be heard.
- **Pursue Impact:** We are committed to helping adults live out their fullest potential, so they can offer their very best to the young people they serve. This means we relentlessly pursue the best outcomes with our partners and, in the process, we always choose courage over comfort. We strive to consistently deliver excellent work and an unparalleled client experience to inspire effective action, advance equity, and help our partners realize their missions.
- **Embrace Possibility:** We approach our work/h with a sense of possibility, adaptability, and optimism. We invest time in new ideas, engage in thoughtful problem solving, and explore innovative ways to team with each other and partner with our clients.
- **Be Well:** We know that to do our best work, we must accept and support each other in all of our humanity. We have fun, laugh out loud, celebrate each other's life milestones, and live unapologetically in our own skin. We practice flexibility related to where and how we get our work done, respecting each other's professional preferences and life priorities. We carve out time to relax, recharge, and refuel individually and as a team.
- **Be Humble:** We don't have all of the answers, so we listen closely to our colleagues, our partners, our schools, and our communities, as they tell us what's working and what's not. We embrace those who push our thinking while helping us make progress. This learning makes us and our work better.

Position

Promise54's first quarter of operations has been auspicious; client demand for our services exceeds our capacity, we have gained the support of several national funders, and in January, 2018 we brought together 200+ leaders from 54 organizations across the field working to enhance equity within their organizations with ~20 diversity, equity, and inclusion specialists for our first DEI Accelerator convening. Still, we have room for improvement: we have ambitious plans about building out our Research division and corresponding offerings; we seek to enhance and diversify our philanthropic funding base and therefore aim to expand our development efforts; and, of course, like any start-up, we are making critical internal operational decisions in real time while serving clients, developing our team, and building our brand.

To accomplish all of this and live up to our aspirations, the CEO – Xiomara Padamsee – and the Chief Operating Officer (COO) will work closely and collaboratively. The COO will play a key role in implementing our vision and growth strategy, manage core operations that support our mission, oversee day-to-day management of the organization, drive our \$3M operating budget, and serve as a critical thought partner and member of the senior leadership team. For a humble and highly-motivated, entrepreneurial, strategic operator with these talents, this role is an ideal opportunity to help shape the future of a growing organization impacting hundreds of mission-driven leaders, organizations, and the students they serve.

Duties and Responsibilities

In collaboration with the CEO, the COO is responsible for the execution of Promise54's overall mission. Specifically, the COO will drive and ensure best practices in operations/internal systems, finance, board support, fundraising, and knowledge management, but the COO's responsibilities will evolve and become more focused over time as Promise54 grows.

Additionally, the COO will focus on the following:

- **Building sustainable, scalable operations and infrastructure for systems** such as: data management, performance evaluation, and knowledge management; and playing a key leadership role in **optimizing and managing these internal processes** in support of organizational objectives, growth, and Promise54's overall vision and strategy;
- In collaboration with the CEO and Board, **contributing to annual strategic planning and budgeting processes**, and ensuring that strategic and budget priorities are aligned and translated into rigorous, executable plans;
- Constantly **monitoring the status of organization across various internal metrics** for success and preparing related reports on a monthly basis;
- Assisting the CEO in **planning, organizing, and implementing fundraising initiatives**. This includes: supporting the external prospecting process; coordinating meetings with key and potential supporters; owning a set of funder relationships, managing the preparation of grant proposals designed to secure funding; and tracking and reporting related metrics and measurement reporting to funders;
- **Contributing to and enhancing a healthy organizational culture**, one that values high performance, continuous improvement, spotting for and dismantling counterproductive white-dominant cultural norms and, above all, commitment to Promise54's core values;
- Assisting the CEO in **supporting Promise54's emerging Board of Directors**, including partnering with the CEO to build the Board of Directors, overseeing the development of agendas, co-facilitating board meetings and retreats, and producing Board-level reports and materials;
- Working closely with the CEO, Partner team, and Board to **strengthen existing relationships and develop innovative new partnerships** nationally;
- **Manage and oversee all financial and business planning activities**, including: overseeing the development of financial systems and architecture; providing overall financial oversight and monitoring, as well as sophisticated financial analysis and modeling to support good decision-making by the CEO, senior management team and the Board of Directors; preparation of the annual budget and ongoing refining of the budgeting and accounting processes.
- **Serving as the representative of the CEO** in all operational and strategic initiatives externally and internally, including chairing weekly staff meetings if the CEO is unable to attend.

Requisite Experience, Skills, and Personal Characteristics

First and foremost, the Chief Operating Officer must share Promise54's conviction that organizations committed to educational equity will be best positioned to maximize their impact when they have the right people excelling in the right roles, their teams reflect the communities served, their cultures are inclusive, and their internal structures are equitable.

Additionally, we are seeking the following **professional experience**:

- a minimum of 10 years of professional experience, including at least five years of executive or senior management experience is required; a track record of success in a senior operations or chief of staff role is especially desirable;
- experience building and scaling operations in startup environments, particularly by developing and implementing systems and processes to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of a growing organization;
- an understanding of – or better: a deep familiarity with – the national education sector in the U.S. and past efforts to reform its systems and practices, particularly those related to the challenges facing young people from historically marginalized identities;
- experience working directly with – and, ideally, helping to build – a Board; and
- a Bachelor's degree is required. An MBA or other advanced certification or relevant Master's degree, as well as experience in an educational organization and the nonprofit sector is a plus.

Candidates must also have the following **skills**:

- propensity to be productive in a characteristically fast-paced, evolving, and ambitious startup;
- systems fluency: demonstrated ability to lead teams in designing, revising, and implementing

- strong systems, processes and tools required to support them;
- financial fluency: demonstrated ability to specify the financial analyses required to support strategic decision-making and use financial indicators to manage organizational performance;
- the capacity to develop, manage, and inspire a highly proficient team;
- strategic, tactical, and data-driven problem-solving orientation and ability;
- the ability, willingness, and—ideally—comfort with working virtually;
- exceptional written, oral, interpersonal, and presentation skills that support the ability to effectively interface with constituencies at all levels, contribute to a collegial working environment, and craft persuasive, compelling arguments in support of Promise54's aims; and
- advanced skills in Excel and PowerPoint

Finally, candidates should demonstrate the following **personal characteristics**:

- unwavering commitment to Promise54, its mission, and its core values;
- sound judgment and discretion with respect to critical information and decisions;
- attention to detail, and ownership of results;
- initiative and comfort working autonomously, and willingness to take direction as needed;
- confidence, patience, and listening skills required to be an effective thought-partner to the CEO;
- the maturity and wisdom required to optimize Board members and funders; and
- instincts sharp enough to spot hurdles in advance and navigate the complexity of issues related to education equity;

Reporting Relationships

The COO reports directly to the CEO, and oversees Promise54's central team.

Compensation

Promise54 provides competitive compensation and an attractive benefits package including a performance-based bonus based on individual and firm success, full health care coverage, and access to 401(k) accounts with a matching contribution policy.

Location

Our work is national in scope, and our team is virtual (though concentrated primarily in the Northeast, Chicago, and Atlanta). The location for this role is flexible, though the COO should possess the willingness and availability to travel approximately 20% of the time for team retreats, national conferences, and other critical in-person meetings.

Start Date

As soon as possible.

To Apply

The review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position(s) is filled, although submission by March 9th is strongly encouraged. Inquiries or applications (consisting of a letter of interest and a current resume) should be directed to Monisha Lozier, Managing Partner, via: monisha@promise54.org

Finally, Promise54 is deeply committed to providing equal opportunities. We serve diverse organizations, we are a diverse organization, and we are committed to non-discrimination. It is our policy to ensure that all individuals with whom we are in contact are treated equally without regard to age, color, ability, gender, marital status, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, expression, gender identity or veteran's status.