

Taking matters into one's own hands.

So, you might ask yourself "what's the matter"? The answer to that is multi-layered. It is not only about who "the matter" are, but also why you should care - why it does actually matter. But let's start with who we are, what we can and what we can't, what we believe and what we don't.

- [A new micro-network with Eastern European focus](#)
- [Does TM really make a difference?](#)
- [Key people](#)
- [What we offer](#)
- [Why does it matter again?](#)

A new micro-network with Eastern European focus

“the matter” (TM) is an internationally operating communications agency. It’s not “advertising” we do - it’s any form of communication that lets brands talk to people. We do strategy, ideas, communication concepts, and we organise the realisation of these concepts into tangible pieces of communication.

Looking at it from an organisational perspective, TM is a new micro-network with its headquarters in Riga, Latvia: A city conveniently located between the Eastern and Western markets where TM operates. Additionally, TM has an office in London, and is also represented in Central Asia. An excellent network of partners, suppliers, and friends completes the wide coverage and range of services that TM is able to offer.

Our focus is on Eastern Europe, the Baltic States, and the CIS. These are markets where “things are happening” right now, and where we are at our best, due to plentiful first-hand experience all across this region. Key markets for TM include Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and other countries in the region - of which many are not sufficiently covered by international network agencies, or handled from outside, despite of big cultural differences.

The people at the headquarters are specialised in ideas and conception, but all necessary partners are in place for execution, media, PR, events, adaptation, and so on.

Does TM really make a difference?

“the matter” differs from most traditional advertising agencies in many ways: Some of which are tangible and have a direct effect on the results and the bottom line; while others are differences you rather feel than see.

Most of what distinguishes us lies, naturally, in TM’s structure which is completely different from what you’re used to find in most agencies. Rather than having a number of specialised departments, we use a core team with various specialisations that works collaboratively on a task. Out of this structure, there are a few central advantages that are TM’s points of differentiation:

1. **We’re accessible.** Every project is assigned to one member of the core team who is fully responsible for it. Rather than talking to an “account manager”, clients speak directly with the person ultimately in charge. No information is lost, and it’s safe to say that the core team understands needs, requirements, and markets better than most account managers you could find.

2. **We’re genuinely international.** Our experience, skill set, and contact network allow us to operate in all the Baltic States and the CIS region by ourselves - and in most other regions together with trusted partners. For a client this means that one contact point is enough to handle any project, no matter where it happens. And should you prefer local contact points in other markets - we’re able to arrange them, too.

And beyond the international structure, we ourselves are “internationalists with local understanding”: It’s our daily business and our daily life to communicate in many languages, with people from many places, and to move naturally in different cultural settings. It’s our daily reality, and that reflects in our work abilities. Among the key markets for TM are the Baltic States, Ukraine, Russia, as well as other FSU countries like Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and others. In some of these markets, international networks are either not present, or have only small offices with little access to the network’s resources. TM has first-hand experience and cultural knowledge in all of these places, and access to strong local teams - this allows us to combine international knowledge and experience with local understanding.

3. **We’re flexible.** No useless hierarchy layers are involved, no time is wasted, and no resources are spent in vain. TM concentrates on what’s essential for a project to succeed: Thorough strategy and the creative work to match.

Because of our lean structure, we are able to handle projects of any size efficiently. Assignments “too small” for most classic advertising agencies, such as single TVC concepts or a simple event idea, can be exciting for us, and be handled fast and cost-effectively. At the same time, projects that require plenty of additional resources can easily be carried out by TM, too - we’re ready to involve or even hire additional people from our network when appropriate. And if it’s a long-term cooperation a client is looking for, we can make that happen as well. To say it in one sentence: Rather than making a project suit our procedures and organisation, we adapt ourselves to a particular project’s requirements.

4. **We’re integrated, and integrating.** Different people with different backgrounds are working collaboratively on strategy and conception. Different skills and knowledge come together, and the results are therefore well-integrated from the start. Rather than having different specialised individuals or small teams working separately and then trying to reassemble the single pieces, we never separate these disciplines in the first place. Apart from our core team, this also involves (where appropriate) partners dealing with PR, media, events, or other communication areas.
5. **We’re cost-effective.** All these differentiators lead to one final advantage that isn’t entirely unimportant, too: We don’t waste our clients’ money. We are directly accessible, don’t lose time, work integrated from the start, and retain a high degree of flexibility. This makes us a comparatively well-priced player in the Baltic markets. And that means that we are a very cost-effective partner across Eastern Europe and the CIS markets, not to mention Western markets. And more than that: Our wide network of trusted partners and long-term suppliers usually allows saving some cost on the production and execution side as well.

And besides all that, two more points:

- We actually do care about what we’re doing. If you decide to work with us, and we decide to work with you, it’s because both sides want to work together. We believe that this is the best basis of cooperation that there can be. And so far, it has always proven to work great.
- We’re not here for the show. We’re not the kind of people who walk into your office with cool sunglasses on, and for whom selling a project means delivering a show (we have sunglasses, though). We are who we are: We are ready to listen, and will also speak up if we think we have a reason to do so. This normally leads to trust, and to a good partnership.

Key people

Let's have a look at who is the core team of "the matter". We are a small group of people who decided to take matters into our own hands, to stop complaining about the inefficient agency structures in most markets, and to do something about it by changing the way we work.

TM's core is a senior team that has vast international experience (in over 20 markets) as well as local understanding and local partners all around the place. It's a team that works well together (18 years of shared work experience), and who know what they are doing (a total of 65 creative and efficiency awards won at festivals in the Baltic States, Russia, Eastern Europe, the UK, and the US).



There is **Edgars Makens (31)**, in the communications industry for 9 years. He has mainly worked as an Art Director and Conceptualist in the Baltic States for a number of agencies, including Saachi&Saachi, Bates/Red Cell, and Taivas Ogilvy. His client portfolio features well known names, such as Audi, Carlsberg Nordic, Enterprise Estonia, Ford, Honda, Lacplesis, Lattelecom, Parex Banka, Peugeot, Rietumu Banka, Saliena, Spilva, Tetra Pak and Toxic. Edgars holds a degree in Public Relations, is a passionate musician and ice hockey player.

Second in the first-name-order is **Fabienne Felder (28)**, who has worked in a number of creative, and less creative, companies since 8.5 years. She started as a Project Manager and Conceptualist in the Swiss idea factory BrainStore and went on to leading the creative department there. Later, while studying Business at the Cass Business School London, she worked as a Copywriter for Textapeal and Researcher for Cision. Before TM came to life, she was second Creative Directrice at Taivas Ogilvy Latvia. Her client list includes Aldaris, Carlsberg Nordic, Bern Mobil (public transport), Dienas Bizness, Ford, Latvijas Balzams, Mercure Hotels, Parex Banka, Saliena, Sony, Swisscom, Tetra Pak, Toxic and many more. If she feels like it, she plays Basketball and Playstation.





The third in the team is **Janis Grivins (28)**, in the industry since 9 years, as a Strategic Planner, Client Service Director and Creative Director. He has worked across the Baltic states for a number of big agencies, including Bates/Red Cell and Taivas Ogilvy. His most important clients have been Aldaris, Carlsberg Nordic, Dienas Bizness, Enterprise Estonia, Lacplecis, Lattelecom, Latvijas Balzams, Parex Banka, Rietumu Banka, Salienu, Spilva, Tetra Pak, and Toxic. Janis studied music and used to be a rugby player. Now he is a do-it-yourself specialist and constantly improving his home.

Last but not least we have **Rene Fischer (31)**, who has 14 years of industry experience and worked for companies such as BrainStore in Switzerland, TANK in Estonia, Bates/Red Cell in Latvia, and McCann Erickson in the CIS region. He also worked as a consultant, and is a frequent lecturer at festivals and universities in numerous countries. A Creative Director by trade, he gradually moved into Strategic Planning. His clients feature Carlsberg Nordic (in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Uzbekistan), Coca-Cola (CIS), Enterprise Estonia, Felix (EE/LV), Georgia, Kronenbourg (CH), Lattelecom, MTV Europe, Nestlé international, Rietumu Banka, Swisscom, and UBS. Rene is into Liverpool F.C. and politics, and is a frequent traveller.



What we offer

1. **Strategic planning and/or creative conception:**

As a stand-alone agency, or as a supporting team of consultants. In one or many markets (Baltic States, CIS, Eastern Europe, Germany, Switzerland, UK). Project-based, or in form of an ongoing cooperation.

2. **Implementation/execution:**

Handling and supervising implementation of communication concepts (design, photography, film, etc.).

3. **Quick support:**

We are ready to support advertising agencies and clients in ongoing projects, for example in fine-tuning or adapting work for a particular market, in transcreating concepts, in strategic planning for particular markets, in conception and creative work.

This can be useful for example if you temporarily lack resources; if you feel insecure about a solution; if you lack the experience in a particular market; or if you simply want a second opinion.

4. **Strategy & creative trainings resp. workshops:**

In-depth workshops/trainings for strategic planning and creative conception, for both clients and/or creative agencies. These events are targeted trainings for staff, and can at the same time be used to work on a particular case or project.

More information is available in a separate document. To obtain a copy, please contact rene@thematter.co.uk or call +372 53 294 375.

5. **Art Buying:**

Our extensive network of suppliers and partners all across Europe and the CIS region can work for you, even if a project is not handled by us. Based on a concrete brief, we can help finding the most suitable photographers, film production houses, or other suppliers; and if required even arrange tenders among these suppliers and help evaluating the proposals. Depending on the client's country of origin, significant cost savings can be achieved by looking for suppliers beyond the national borders - without compromising on the quality.

Why does it matter again?

It matters, because we know what we are doing, we care about what we do and we give our very best to make a difference. When working with TM, you get a senior team for strategy and creative conception. In us, you have a flexible and cost-effective partner due to our lean structure and our wide network. And from all this you can benefit in various forms: be it on a project-basis, in an on-going cooperation, or in a creative workshop or training.

So let's talk. To arrange a personal meeting, a phone conversation, or a Skype chat, contact us:

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