Spotlight: Aaron Morris on Building PostEra, the Future of AI-Driven Medicine

By: Stephanie Rasmuson

CEO Aaron Morris is building PostEra with a sense of urgency that goes beyond technology trends or market timing.

Founded in 2019, the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based company is an AI-first biotech business.

Morris defines its purpose plainly.

“We really want to be the world’s leading AI-first biotech to develop better cures for patients,” he told NewBostonPost.

It’s a mission that has stayed remarkably consistent since PostEra’s earliest days, even as the company itself has grown more ambitious in how it intends to fulfill it.

For Morris, the story of PostEra is not just about artificial intelligence: it’s about ownership, ethics, and rethinking how medicines are made.

In the company’s early years, PostEra faced a familiar startup crossroads.

“The question wasn’t whether the AI was good,” he said. “It was what we should do with it. We had to decide whether to sell software to others or actually use it to make the drugs up ourselves.”

Morris said the difference comes down to horizontal integration, offering the technology to others, and vertical integration, doing it yourself.

“The road that we’ve chosen to take is the latter,” Morris said.

Rather than positioning PostEra as a toolmaker, the company committed to becoming a drug developer, with all the risk and responsibility that entails.

That sense of responsibility carries through to how Morris thinks about ethics in AI-driven healthcare. When it comes to data use, PostEra occupies a distinct position.

“Our AI models do not need any real human data,” he explains, noting that the company trains its systems on experimental data generated in labs and animal studies.

Still, Morris draws a firm line.

“We will never, ever want to improve our AI on real human data unless patients are happy and consent for us to do so,” he said.

Morris calls consent a “redline,” emphasizing that ethical guardrails are not optional add-ons but core principles.

Access to medicine is where Morris becomes most passionate. He speaks with pride about PostEra’s commitment to open science, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The reason I came to the US in the first place was because PostEra helped launch the world’s largest nonprofit initiative to find a cure for COVID,” he said, referring to COVID Moonshot, a nonprofit, open-source effort launched in March 2020 to accelerate COVID drug development.

“One thing that I'm very proud of in the company is that we have done a lot of open science and open source work… The drugs themselves will never be patented, and we will never try and make a profit from them,” Morris explained.

For him, this approach matters most for people in less developed countries, where access to lifesaving medicines is often limited.

“That is why a lot of the open science work that we have done is and continues to be really important to us,” he said.

Morris’s path to biotech leadership was far from linear. Before founding PostEra, he spent years at Goldman Sachs working on early machine learning models.

“When people talk about AI, 99% of the time they’re talking about machine learning,” he said.

Morris said that work centered on a single question: “How can we make more profit?”

While he doesn’t dismiss the value of that work, he felt drawn to something more tangible.

Morris asked himself, “What if I took the same set of skills and was able to use that to develop medicines and treatments for patients rather than making money on the stock market?”

For Morris, biotech represented what he calls “an incredibly beautiful, powerful mission.”

There was also a personal motivation. Morris had become deeply specialized early in his career.

“I was the math and coding nerd,” he says, and while the role was lucrative, Morris explains how it felt constraining.

“I wanted to stretch myself from being the math kid to being able to be very good at a leadership position,” he said.

“As a Christian, I believe God speaks,” he added. “I believe that God’s plans and guidance for our life is so much better than the things that we could come up with.”

That faith played a decisive role in his decisions. Leaving Goldman wasn’t just a career move; it was an act of trust.

“I really felt like this was actually an opportunity that God was presenting,” he said.

That perspective continues to shape how he leads his team, grounding long-term vision in humility rather than certainty.

Running a science-driven startup has taught Morris lessons he didn't anticipate. One of the most striking is how closely a company reflects its founder.

"Your startup is always a mirror," he says. "It reflects your own strengths and weaknesses."

When PostEra performs well, he sees his natural tendencies at work. When it struggles, he looks inward.

"If I'm not happy with the culture of the company, it usually means I have to take a hard look at myself," he says, calling the process both humbling and necessary.

Another hard-earned lesson is the importance of focus.

"Most of the hard part about my job is figuring out what doesn't matter," Morris says.

In an industry full of opportunities with new diseases, new partners, and new ideas, discipline becomes a competitive advantage.

"It's actually sticking to the old things really, really well," he explains, rather than constantly chasing novelty.

For Morris, leadership is less about discovering new priorities and more about protecting the ones that matter most.

That clarity has guided PostEra's decision to focus heavily on women's health, including conditions like PCOS (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome) and endometriosis. Both are common but underdiagnosed conditions that impact millions of women worldwide.

Morris is blunt about the industry's failures here.

"Women are not little versions of men," he says. "That is exactly how medicine treats the female body."

He points to decades of exclusion from clinical trials and the resulting gaps in understanding.

"Most of what medicine and science knows about the human body is actually what we know about the male body," he says.

PostEra's work in women's health is both strategic and corrective, aligned with cultural shifts and growing demand for better care.

Looking ahead, Morris is clear-eyed about what a modern biotech should be.

Morris says traditional companies often bet everything on a single drug. PostEra is building something different: a repeatable pipeline powered by a core technology.

"What we're trying to do is build a recurring flywheel over and over again for the next 20, 30, 40 years, so we can continue to produce really high-quality cures, or at least treatments, for diseases," he says.

To Morris, in producing treatments across multiple diseases for decades to come, he envisions scientists and engineers working side by side, without hierarchy.

“At PostEra, we've tried to level that playing field where the opinion of the chemist and the scientist is as important as the opinion of the AI researcher and the engineer, and vice versa,” he says, arguing that this balance is essential as computational approaches become standard.

In an industry crowded with bold claims, Morris insists on proof.

“All they want is a drug that works,” he says. “They don't particularly care how it's done, whether it's highly caffeinated monkeys, or whether it is this really cool AI that most [of us] got.”

When discussing the company’s selection process with partners Pfizer and Amgen, Morris distills it down to one idea.

“I think a lot of what convinced our partners is, we try and focus on case studies… here's a disease that people tried to treat, and they couldn't do it, and here is how we did it, and it happens to involve AI, which is really cool," he said.

Rather than selling AI itself, PostEra focuses on case studies and outcomes: real molecules, real data, real progress.

“When we went to our partners, we had all this data on the internet and available. Therefore, it was deemed to be authentic and compelling, as opposed to being cherry-picked by another company whose data is all private,” he says.

Morris says it’s a philosophy that has helped the company rise above the competition.

The milestone Morris is most excited about is imminent: PostEra’s first human clinical trials—starting with PCOS.

“There’s never been an approved drug for this disease,” he says, noting that it affects up to 15 percent of women worldwide.

For Morris, it’s a defining moment.

“This AI has produced actual pills that patients are going to take,” he says. “That is just a beautiful line in the sand for us as a company.”

As PostEra moves toward AI systems that act more independently, Morris sees the future coming into focus: not as a promise, but as something already taking shape.