

J. Cornelius

Product Owner specializing in billing, payments, and operational platforms

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SUMMARY

Product owner and platform builder with 30 years of experience translating complex business needs into clear requirements and shipped software. At Nine Labs, managed stakeholders from product teams to C-suite across Fortune 500 clients including UPS and Fiserv, delivering 40-plus products across finance, logistics, and operations. Built and instrumented payment and ordering infrastructure firsthand — including Stripe-integrated billing flows and Square POS-connected throughput systems — with a discipline for defining success metrics before building and measuring them after every release. Brings a direct, data-driven approach to roadmap prioritization and cross-functional alignment across engineering, finance, and operations.

EXPERIENCE

Founder and President | Nine Labs

May 2012 - September 2025 · Atlanta Metro

- Owned product roadmap and delivery across 40-plus client engagements, translating complex business requirements into prioritized backlogs and clear engineering specs for cross-functional teams
- Managed stakeholders from product teams to C-suite at UPS, Fiserv, Delta Air Lines, IHG, and Circle K / Couche-Tard, building alignment across technical and non-technical functions on every engagement
- Simplified back-office and financial platforms for global banking clients, reducing manual workflow overhead and improving operational accuracy
- Built and led a 20-person cross-functional team across design, engineering, and strategy in four countries, maintaining delivery cadence across time zones and client verticals
- Codified the firm's product methodology into Loops, a published five-step framework covering discovery, validation, and building at speed, used across all client engagements

Founder | Empty Nest Holdings

2025 - Present · Remote

- Own the roadmap, backlog, and end-to-end delivery for a portfolio of AI-enabled software products — Donna, Winote, PizzaCart, and Socializer — each built to solve a specific operational problem at low headcount
- Built Stripe-integrated billing flows with modular pricing across three product tiers for Donna, handling payment processing, subscription management, and reporting from scratch
- Designed and shipped Square POS-connected ordering infrastructure for PizzaCart, including kitchen capacity throttling and real-time throughput dashboards that operators use to manage order flow during peak periods
- Defined instrumentation and reporting for each platform at launch, tracking conversion, throughput, and billing accuracy to inform prioritization decisions

Owner and Operator | Lucky Hare Bar and Grill / Night Train Pizza

January 2024 - Present · Big Canoe (Marble Hill), GA

- Designed and ran a structured guest research program generating 169 responses and an NPS of 53, converting findings into a 90-day operational action plan addressing throughput, consistency, and value perception
- Built POS-integrated reporting from scratch to track financial performance and operational metrics across both concepts
- Translated operational experience directly into the product roadmap for Donna, an AI restaurant management platform built to solve problems encountered firsthand

VP Operations | CoffeeCup Software, Inc.

February 1998 - 2012 · Atlanta, GA

- Led operations for a consumer software company with 50 million-plus users, managing product development, QA, and customer success across a distributed team through 14 years of platform evolution from desktop to web

to mobile

- Managed the full product lifecycle across major releases, coordinating engineering, QA, and support to maintain delivery consistency at scale

President | Bluedomino Web Hosting

November 2000 - July 2005 · Remote

- Grew Bluedomino from concept to 20,000-plus customers globally in under a year, overseeing billing, operations, and platform scaling through successful acquisition by Endurance International Group in 2005

Fractional Product Strategy Advisor | Independent (jcornelius.com)

October 2025 - Present · Remote

- Partner with founders and product leaders on product strategy, backlog prioritization, and requirements definition for restaurant and hospitality tech, SMB SaaS, and consumer digital products

SKILLS

Product Ownership and Management — Roadmap ownership and backlog prioritization, User story and requirements writing for engineering teams, Agile and iterative delivery across 40-plus products, Metrics definition and instrumentation, Stakeholder alignment across technical and non-technical teams, Jira-compatible sprint and backlog management workflows

Billing, Payments, and Operational Platforms — Stripe API integration and subscription billing architecture, Square POS API integration and payment sync, Modular pricing design across multiple product tiers, POS-integrated reporting and financial performance tracking, Kitchen throughput modeling and capacity management systems, Operational workflow instrumentation and billing accuracy monitoring

Data Analysis and Research — NPS measurement and guest research programs, Survey design and quantitative data analysis, Hypothesis grid design and validation loops, Conversion tracking and funnel analysis, PostgreSQL and relational data modeling

Stakeholder Management and Communication — Cross-functional collaboration across finance, engineering, and operations, Fortune 500 client and executive stakeholder management, Written-first, async communication, Vendor and partner relationship management

ADVISORY, BOARDS & COMMUNITY

- Strategic Advisor, Shadow Ventures -- innovation in architecture, engineering, and construction (2017-2019)
- Mentor, Founder Institute -- product strategy and UX for early- and growth-stage companies (2015-2024)
- Branding and UX Mentor, Georgia Tech ATDC -- co-taught Customer Discovery workshops (2011-2014)

PUBLISHING & SPEAKING

- Loops: Building Products with Clarity and Confidence, Lioncrest Publishing, 2019 -- Amazon best seller, five-step product methodology covering discovery, validation, and building at speed

EDUCATION & CREDENTIALS

- The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania -- Executive Education, Business Administration, Management and Operations, 2016-2018
- Wine and Spirit Education Trust Level 3 (WSET Level 3) -- Certified Sommelier