

J. Cornelius

Fractional Product Manager — AI Transformation and 0-to-1 Product Delivery

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SUMMARY

Builds working AI-native software from ambiguous starting points, typically from idea to deployed MVP in hours rather than sprints, directing LLMs and AI coding agents rather than writing code by hand. Has shipped multiple simultaneous products under a single holding company — an AI restaurant management platform, a trade wine knowledge tool, an online ordering system, and an AI social post generator — while also operating the restaurants those products were built for. Founded and led a 20-person product strategy and design consultancy for 13 years, serving Fortune 500 clients and VC-backed startups across more than 40 shipped products. Comfortable working directly with a founder or CEO in high-ambiguity environments where the playbook does not yet exist and the output has to be real.

EXPERIENCE

Founder — AI-Enabled Software Ventures | Empty Nest Holdings

2025 - Present · Remote

- Manages a portfolio of four simultaneous AI-native products — Donna, Winote, PizzaCart, and Socializer — each targeting a distinct user segment with independent roadmaps and commercial goals
- Directs the full product lifecycle end-to-end across all ventures: discovery, problem framing, spec authoring, LLM-directed build, testing, and deployment, with zero full-time engineering headcount
- Ships functional prototypes in hours using a repeatable AI build workflow: define the problem and success criteria, draft a brief and spec with Claude, hand off to Claude Code for execution, test locally, and deploy via Cloudflare tunnel
- Designed multi-agent architecture for Donna using OpenClaw local orchestration, Square POS API integration, and kitchen-capacity throughput modeling — built to solve problems experienced firsthand as a restaurant operator

Founder — Donna (DonnaSays.com) | Donna Says / Empty Nest Holdings

October 2025 - Present · Remote

- Built an AI restaurant management platform for independent operators from scratch, grounded in firsthand operational experience running two restaurant concepts
- Architected a multi-agent prospecting module (Agency) on local OpenClaw, with modular pricing across three tiers serving both direct sales and consulting lead generation
- Integrated Square POS API with kitchen-capacity modeling to solve real throughput and ordering constraints identified through operating Lucky Hare Bar and Grill and Night Train Pizza
- Restructured the product after hitting NLP payload limits in an earlier Rails and Gemini version — iterated architecture based on direct validation signals, not assumption

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

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

- Designed and ran a structured guest research program across both restaurant concepts — 169 responses, NPS 53 — and translated findings into a 90-day operational action plan addressing throughput, consistency, and value perception
- Built brand identity, marketing systems, wine program, and POS-integrated reporting from the ground up for both concepts
- Used direct operational experience to define the product roadmap for Donna, ensuring AI transformation ideas mapped to real internal processes and operator constraints

Founder & President | Nine Labs

May 2012 - September 2025 · Atlanta Metro

- Founded and led a product strategy and design consultancy for 13 years, building a 20-person team across the US, Spain, Russia, and India and shipping more than 40 products for Fortune 500 clients including Delta Air Lines, InterContinental Hotels Group, Fiserv, and UPS
- Embedded directly with non-technical client organizations to map internal processes, uncover product opportunities, and convert high-level ambiguity into concrete roadmaps and shipped software
- Codified the firm's product methodology into Loops, a published Amazon-bestselling framework covering discovery, hypothesis design, validation loops, and building at speed
- Led simultaneous multi-client engagements across varied industries — financial services, hospitality, logistics, and convenience retail — balancing conflicting priorities and distinct user segments without a playbook

Fractional Product Strategy Advisor | Independent (jcornelius.com)

October 2025 - Present · Remote

- Partners with founders and CEOs on product strategy, positioning, and go-to-market planning for restaurant and hospitality tech, SMB SaaS, and consumer digital products
- Operates under a structured engagement model — Assessment, Engagement, Partnership — that mirrors the embedded, discovery-first approach this role requires

President | Bluedomino Web Hosting

November 2000 - July 2005 · Remote

- Grew Bluedomino from concept to 20,000 or more customers globally in under a year and led the company through a successful acquisition by Endurance International Group

SKILLS

AI Product Development — LLM-directed rapid prototyping (Claude API, Claude Code), Multi-agent system design and orchestration (OpenClaw), AI-native product architecture, Prompt engineering and agent workflow design, OpenRouter, Conductor.build, Anthropic ecosystem, Applied prototyping with foundation models

Product Strategy and Execution — 0-to-1 product development and product-market fit, Multi-product portfolio management, Discovery, roadmap synthesis, and prioritization, Go-to-market strategy and positioning, Loops methodology (own published framework), Jobs-to-be-done and human-centered design facilitation

Client Integration and Research — Embedding with non-technical organizations to map internal processes, Qualitative and quantitative UX research, NPS measurement and structured guest research programs, Translating operational ambiguity into concrete product roadmaps, Hypothesis design and validation loops

Build Workflow and Tools — Claude Code for AI-directed code execution, Supabase / PostgreSQL, Node.js, Ruby on Rails, Square POS API, Stripe, SendGrid, Cloudflare (DNS, tunnels, R2), FastAPI, Tailwind CSS, Buffer GraphQL API, GitHub, self-hosted deployment

ADVISORY, BOARDS & COMMUNITY

- Shadow Ventures — Strategic Advisor and Board Member, focus on innovation in the AEC industry (December 2017 - December 2019)
- Founder Institute — Mentor, brand strategy, product strategy, and UX for early- and growth-stage companies (July 2015 - January 2024)
- Georgia Tech ATDC — Branding and UX Mentor, co-taught Customer Discovery workshops (June 2011 - 2014)

PUBLISHING & SPEAKING

- Loops: Building Products with Clarity and Confidence — Amazon best seller, Lioncrest Publishing, 2019 (loopsbook.com)
- Speaker at Chicago Camps and other venues on product strategy, human-centered design, and methodology

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