

Chris Carnell

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

15 years experience in high-pressure, ambiguous environments. I've co-founded and helped scale numerous products & ventures. I've led strategy, discovery, product, and operations. Recognized as a national thought leader in startup- & tech-based economic dev., I now work on user-focused AI-driven strategies to ensure responsible data use, taking a multi-disciplinary, cross-functional approach to creating positive societal impact.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Co-founder & Strategic Product Lead | Codefi & Codefi Labs

August 2014 - December 2024

Notable Product Strategy & Commercializations

- Grew technical team, led product & operational strategies and managed implementation:
 - From co-founding to ~40 (FTE/PTE's); Generated \$12MM rev; managed 50+ custom software projects
 - Incorporated continuous innovation: tech stack, management, comms, and customer-focused tools. Worked towards designing a non-traditional custom software development management methodology
 - Commercialized products and startup founders mentored on strategy and solutions:
 - Raised \$30MM follow-on; Generated \$40MM+ in rev; Software utilized by millions of users
- Worked directly with founder of Sho.ai (AI design system) and PubGen.ai (AI for journalism) team with 10+ years experience in ML/AI | Utilizes Anthropic's API (+other top multimodal AI API's)
 - Helped founder raise over \$1.2 million; currently closing on another \$2 million round
- Led technical team and mentored PumpTrakr founder, IoT industrial ag irrigation automation:
Angular, Rails, React Native, PostgreSQL, Heroku & Vercel, Twilio SMS comms with AWS TCP proxy
 - Completed customer discovery with founder: MVP to commercialization and on (5k+ IoT devices sold)
 - Wrote Request for Proposal application that won a competitive \$1.5 million USDA contract.
 - Built data room and digital assets working directly with investors for upcoming \$500k round
 - Worked with founder and researcher designing AI-engine for irrigation automation controlled via remote sensor technology, estimating dry-down rates for water levels
- Conceptualized & led ongoing strategy, product design & dev for Code Labs and Youth Coding League:
Next.js, Node.js, PostgreSQL, Heroku & Vercel
 - Collaborated with PM's, UI/UX, and developers to build two custom LMS's. Worked with YCL coordinator on super admin features; eliminated >1,000 hours of yearly tasks
 - Worked with backend engineers, PM's, and funding agencies to architect relational databases that provides intuitive integration for analytics tools
 - Created a custom scoring and ranking system for hundreds of teams and thousands of students, and incorporated agile and real-time analytics into learning curriculum for adult trainees

AI Integration & Strategic Innovation

- Introduced AI-driven processes for Codefi's startup programs team:
 - Utilized discovery tools from customer interviews for startup founders with sentiment analysis and pattern recognition to identify segments, pain points, and jobs-to-be-done
 - Automated lean canvas, iterative business & revenue model, and user-story tools and frameworks to seamlessly transition from discovery to user stories to design & development teams
 - Rapid prototyping solutions and automated integrations allowed the startup team to increase capacity of early-stage founders supported by 3x in the first year of implementation
- Hired CTO and began increasing AI-focused software development tools:
 - Organized and collaborated with entire team to test Claude, Copilot, ChatGPT, and Gemini
 - Began exploring Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) and Agentic AI's for the technical team to collaborate organization-wide to implement updated AI-tools, frameworks, and processes

Operational Scaling & Processes

- Directed strategic growth initiatives, led ecosystem-building efforts—generated \$100MM in regional economic impact as concluded by third-party research partner
- Designed Code Labs, an adult computer programming workforce development training:
 - Grew from \$100k pilot to multi-state, multi-million dollar program
 - Worked directly with thousands of stakeholders: funders, participants, developers, Code Coaches, employers, universities, and state & federal agencies
 - Led internal & external efforts to transition multi-year budgets to an updated curriculum and enhanced operational efforts that focused on AI technologies
- Founded the Youth Coding League, a program introducing youth to computer programming:
 - Raised \$1 million to provide program to low-income communities for free
 - Created and introduced revenue model and grew to 14 states

Data-Driven Decision-Making

- Owned multi-year P&L's, cash pro formas, budgets, and reporting for two entities and 5 major divisions: prepared for ownership, presented to board of directors, and reported to 20+ grant-funded projects
- For Code Labs, completed correlation analysis of onboarding success, re-allocating resources saving 250 yearly man-hours while doubling applications from 400 to 1,000 per year
- Integrated business intelligence systems and created data visualization dashboards, from real-time user metrics to multi-year research analysis

CORE COMPETENCIES

Ambiguity ; Purpose: research/discovery and problem-solution/product-market fit tools and frameworks

Building & Scaling: products, processes, operations, & organizations, from single workflows to ecosystems

Cross-functional comms: simplifying tech-jargon, group buy-in, priority alignment

Strategy & Problem-Solving: decision frameworks, context-switching, inquiry/analytics => action

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Began working with seasoned AI-professionals to fast-track learning and deepen expertise:

- Started with prompt engineering, meta prompting, and working with multimodal AI's
- Studying advanced AI methodologies via Anthropic's research into Mechanistic Interpretability, Alignment and Constitutional AI, and Societal Impacts and Red Teaming.
- Showcased learning: chrisbuildswithclaude.com; Pursuing SQL/advanced analytics certs next

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS & RECOGNITION

- Principal Investigator, secured \$15M+ in highly competitive federal and state grants (90% success rate compared to 30% industry average)
- Recognized national thought leader in startup- & tech-based economic development via keynote speaking, podcasts, case studies, as a reviewer and research: Brookings Institution, Center on Rural Innovation, Delta Regional Authority, National Science Foundation
- Governor-appointed Missouri Department of Education's K-12 Computer Science Advisory Council

PERSONAL INTERESTS

- Top 1% World of Warcraft PvE and PvP player.
- questioningrural.com (writing); chrisbuildswithclaude.com (Updates on technical- & AI learning)