

JESSE JAMES GARRETT

AI Transformation Strategist | Executive Leadership Consultant

San Francisco Bay Area, CA | jjg@intentionalassociates.com | +1-415-602-1936

jessejamesgarrett.com/hireme/ | linkedin.com/in/jessejamesgarrett

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

AI transformation strategist who helps organizations respond when technology moves faster than they can — combining strengths that rarely coexist in one leader: a founder's instinct for building a business, a strategist's analytical discipline, an operator's skill at standing up new functions at enterprise scale, a coach's feel for how leaders actually change, and the reach of someone whose ideas have shaped a field. Across a 25-year career, repeatedly moved into new territory ahead of the market — from naming and defining Ajax in 2005 to evaluating LLM platforms today — while engaging executives as a peer. Co-founded and led strategy consultancy Adaptive Path, acquired by Capital One, and built enterprise capabilities there including a Responsible AI group. Direct AI leadership now spans more than five years across three roles — founding Capital One's Responsible AI team and advising its Eno assistant (2014–2019), coaching leaders inside AI tooling companies (2020–present), and running a dedicated AI transformation practice (2024–present) — building on more than a decade actively tracking the technology before the generative AI boom. When the CEOs and executives I advised began formalizing AI adoption programs, they asked me to lead those programs as their trusted advisor — work that draws on every part of that background at once.

CORE SKILLS

Innovation Consulting | Strategy & Management Consulting | AI Transformation Strategy | Executive AI Leadership | Generative AI & LLM Strategy | AI Adoption Roadmaps | Responsible AI & AI Governance | AI Tooling Evaluation & Investment Guidance | Use Case & Workflow Analysis | Operating Model & Organization Design | Trusted Executive Advisor | Fractional & Embedded Leadership | Change Management Strategy | Executive Coaching | Stakeholder Alignment & Facilitation | Executive & Board Communication | Account Executive | Systems Thinking & Journey Mapping | Service Design & Information Architecture | UX Design Leadership

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Founder and Principal, AI Transformation Strategy Consultant

Intentional Associates, San Francisco Bay Area, CA — 2024 – Present

- Launched a dedicated AI transformation practice as long-advised CEOs and executives moved from informal experimentation to formal adoption programs — extending direct AI leadership dating back to founding Capital One's Responsible AI team in 2018. Clients include Cloudflare, Amazon, and Verizon.
- Conducted internal discovery across client organizations, from executives to individual contributors; mapped how AI is actually used and reconciled divergent executive perspectives into a shared planning baseline.
- Designed team structures, roles, and processes for transformation initiatives; analyzed workflows to identify the highest-value generative AI use cases.
- Evaluated AI platforms, LLMs, and technical stacks for fit with team needs — grounded in daily hands-on work with Claude, ChatGPT, and Gemini — and advised on investment, build-versus-buy, and roadmap decisions.
- Served as embedded fractional executive and the leadership team's primary counterpart on AI, running strategy, communications, research, and governance workstreams.

Founder and Principal, Strategic Leadership Advisor and Coach

Intentional Associates, San Francisco Bay Area, CA — 2020 – Present

- Built a private coaching practice to create more leverage for impact: strengthening individual leaders raises the capability of the entire organizations they lead. Paired broad hands-on client experience with equally extensive formal training in coaching and counseling methodology.
- Coached dozens of leaders worldwide — focused primarily on C-suite and VP-level executives — on all aspects of their leadership challenges, including setting strategic direction for their teams, negotiating with partners and executives, managing downstream leaders, building effective teams, and elevating their value delivery.
- Advised leaders inside AI tooling companies as well as leaders developing AI transformation strategies, gaining an early, ground-level read on the shift toward generative AI before it reached the mainstream.
- Co-hosted Finding Our Way, a design leadership podcast spanning 75+ episodes over more than five years, featuring interviews with leaders from a global range of organizations.

Senior Director, Digital Design

Capital One (via acquisition of Adaptive Path), San Francisco, CA — 2014 – 2019

- Served on the senior leadership team of a design organization scaling to a 500+ person enterprise team, built on Adaptive Path's methods and culture; contributed to organization-wide strategy decisions in areas such as production operations, design system governance, capabilities development, and knowledge sharing.
- Identified where a widely distributed organization needed new centralized functions, stood those teams up personally, and handed them off to permanent leadership.
- Advised the product and design teams behind Eno, Capital One's consumer-facing AI assistant.
- Founded and led the Responsible AI team, developing policy and governance approaches and aligning cross-functional stakeholders on guidelines for ethical AI in consumer financial services.
- Built events and publishing teams in San Francisco and Washington, D.C. that delivered dozens of internal and public conferences and workshops, including Humanity.AI, a recurring series on people-first AI.

Co-Founder, President and Chief Creative Officer

Adaptive Path, San Francisco, CA — 2001 – 2014

- Co-founded and led one of the world's most influential digital consultancies (\$10M+ annual revenue), credited with defining practices that shaped how digital products get made; engaged as a founder across every dimension from leases and cash flow to client pitches and team development. Executive oversight of the firm's sales and marketing teams, plus brand identity and communications contract resources.
- Owned client relationships end to end as account executive — from first contact through qualification, scoping, negotiation, and closing — on \$1M+ relationships with clients including Disney, Apple, CNN, Allstate, and Nike, among dozens of others. Led cross-functional delivery teams of strategists, designers, researchers, and engineers across multi-year, multi-engagement client relationships.
- Led the development of the firm's strategy practice, bringing structure to ambiguous, rapidly changing environments. Based practice methods on rigorous, business-grounded analysis — work that ran on financial models and user metrics rather than visual craft — and paired that rigor with delivery, so engagements ended in shipped products and changed operations rather than recommendations.
- Applied systems thinking to define organizational strategies for clients: mapped processes and journeys to surface high-value opportunities, blueprinted future states, and translated strategy into consequences for budgets, staffing, governance, and technology. Articulated strategies for C-suite and board audiences, making complex ideas accessible to non-experts and bridging divergent stakeholder agendas.
- Built and ran the firm's events business as a standalone line (\$1M+ annual revenue) — a conference and workshop program that convened more than 10,000 attendees internationally — and personally chaired and hosted its flagship, UX Week (2002–2016).

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS, TALKS, AND RECOGNITION

- Author, *The Elements of User Experience* (New Riders, 2002; 2nd ed. 2011) — its five-plane model is used by tens of thousands of designers worldwide, appears in numerous translations, and serves as a standard design-program textbook.
- Named and defined the dynamic web application pattern "Ajax" in a 2005 essay that reshaped web development and set the stage for today's JavaScript frameworks. Received Wired Rave Award for Technology (2006); PC World "50 Most Important People on the Web" (2007).
- Co-founder, Information Architecture Institute; created the Visual Vocabulary notation for information architecture, a de facto industry standard.
- Keynote speaker at dozens of conferences worldwide; recent talks cover organizational strategy, cross-functional collaboration, and AI transformation in digital product development.
- Recent AI talks include "The Elements of UX in the Age of AI" (2025) and "AI Transformation for Digital Design Teams" (2026).

EDUCATION

Journalism — University of Florida (1990-1994); Leadership Coaching — Co-Active Training Institute (2020)