



Matthew Kochmann

STRATEGY & INNOVATION EXECUTIVE
SPECIAL SITUATIONS • NEW VENTURES

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Cornell University

B.S. Landscape Architecture & Social Entrepreneurship

Operator and systems architect who thrives on recognizing patterns early and generating forward momentum across uncharted paths. My career arc reflects a consistent through-line: step into complexity, cut through the noise, and establish coherence, all while crafting approaches that feel innovative, inevitable, and implementable.

From launching the New York City market for **Uber (employee #7)**, to shaping a **\$4B waterfront redevelopment** in San Francisco, to **pioneering Tree Burial™** as an ecological alternative to conventional deathcare, I've repeatedly led zero-to-one initiatives across sensitive, tightly regulated new markets. Now, true to form, I find myself drawn toward organizations leveraging frontier technologies, regenerative thinking, and inspired design to create more deeply human experiences — and generate long-horizon value at scale.

Career Highlights & Advisory Work

I specialize in turning consequential problems into refined, durable systems where capital, culture, and conscience meet. As a seasoned public speaker with deep media experience, I fluently **translate high-stakes ambiguity** into clear mental models that move people, influence institutions, and mobilize action.

EARLY ARCHITECT OF RIDE-SHARING

Uber's 7th employee; launched NYC and established the operational and regulatory blueprint for global expansion.

29-ACRE POWER STATION TRANSFORMATION

First hire on \$4B waterfront redevelopment, delivering the fastest master plan approval in San Francisco history.

TREE-BURIAL CATEGORY CREATION

Introduced Tree Burial™, a regenerative model converting burial demand into perpetually protected forests.

PHILANTHROPIC CAPITAL INCENTIVE REDESIGN

Authored Catalytic Pledge, a framework to redirect \$2T in dormant philanthropic assets toward venture-scale impact.

FRONTIER AI STRATEGY & ORCHESTRATION

Established Symphonara, an applied AI studio translating emerging tools into tangible operational leverage.

Founder & CEO | Transcend

2021 – PRESENT | BROOKLYN, NY

- Created Tree Burial™, a carbon-negative alternative to conventional deathcare that **plants people as trees when they die**, converting burial demand into perpetually protected forests.
 - Raised \$2.7M from mission-aligned investors and assembled a 12-person team that established a new category at the intersection of cultural memorialization, climate infrastructure, and land conservation.
 - Oversaw the Future Tree pilot program that **planted 45,000+ trees and generated \$2.4M in early-adopter value**, validating demand, scalability, and long-term customer commitment.
 - Built a nationally trusted brand and cultural narrative that **generated 1B+ media impressions**, normalizing an entirely new, climate-forward approach to death and legacy.
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Special Situations Director | Fifth Space *(formerly Associate Capital)*

2016 – 2021 | SAN FRANCISCO, CA

- First hire and strategic advisor to the Managing Partner on the **\$4B Dogpatch Power Station redevelopment**, transforming 29 acres of San Francisco's industrial waterfront into a mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhood.
 - Played a central role in securing approvals for approximately 2,600 residential units, 1.5M sq ft of office/life science, 100K sq ft of retail, 7 acres of parks, and a 250-key hotel in under four years: the **fastest-entitled master plan in San Francisco history**.
 - Owned high-trust special projects throughout the entitlement process, most notably the adaptive reuse of the historic power station into a **boutique waterfront hotel** and the creation of a new water transit pilot program for San Francisco Bay.
 - Designed and executed a community engagement strategy, spanning 170+ public events and workshops, that converted public opposition into durable trust, establishing a stakeholder-alignment model later adopted by other large-scale developers.
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Founder & CEO | Buster

2012 – 2016 | BROOKLYN, NY

- Scaled a nationwide digital marketplace connecting thousands of transportation providers with enterprise and retail clients.
 - Raised **\$3.7M from General Catalyst and Allen & Company**; negotiated strategic merger with Global Charter Services, Inc.
 - Recruited and **led a 20-person cross-functional team** spanning product, engineering, design, and go-to-market execution.
 - Defined creative direction, brand identity, and product vision that consolidated a fragmented transportation ecosystem into a cohesive, consumer-facing technology platform that's **still processing ~\$35M in annual transaction volume**.
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Managing Director | Scarlet Fire *(consultancy)*

2011 – 2012 | BROOKLYN, NY

- **Advised Veolia/TransDev, a \$3.9B transportation operator**, on innovation strategy, system modernization, and market positioning.
 - Authored, lobbied for, and secured the **winning NYC E-hail RFP** for Hailo, a British mobility startup backed by Accel and USV, navigating significant political resistance and policy complexity.
 - Partnered with private equity and venture capital firms, advising on global mobility and ride-hailing industry structure, competitive positioning, and capital deployment.
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NYC General Manager | Uber *(employee #7)*

2010 – 2011 | NEW YORK, NY

- **Launched Uber's New York City operations**, establishing foundational infrastructure and regulatory approval with the NYC Taxi & Limousine Commission in one of the country's most politically complex transportation landscapes.
 - Built and led the founding NYC team, onboarding 400+ drivers and scaling to a **\$4M run rate within three months**.
 - Developed the launch playbook that became the foundational framework for Uber's global, city-by-city expansion.
 - Shaped early product-market fit, rider trust, and brand narrative during Uber's high-ambiguity period of expansion before handing off operations to build new ventures across adjacent industries.
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