



# Matthew Kochmann

HEAD OF STRATEGY & INNOVATION  
ZERO-TO-ONE EXECUTIVE

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**Cornell University**

B.S. Landscape Architecture & Social Entrepreneurship

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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 deeply immersed in **frontier AI and agentic orchestration** – seeking strategy and innovation leadership roles inside organizations with the ambition and horsepower to turn these tools into lasting competitive advantage.

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## Career Highlights & Advisory Work

I specialize in turning consequential problems into elegant, 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 agency closing the gap between AI possibilities and how teams actually harness them.

## 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-horizon customer commitment.
  - Built a nationally trusted brand and cultural narrative that **generated 1B+ media impressions**, normalizing an entirely new, climate-forward approach; now stewarding IP and conservation assets while exploring executive roles with institutional scale.
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## Special Situations Director | Fifth Space (*formerly Associate Capital*)

2016 – 2021 | SAN FRANCISCO, CA

- First hire and right hand 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 that converted public opposition into durable trust, a 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 consumer clients.
  - Raised **\$3.7M from General Catalyst and Allen & Company**; negotiated merger with strategic industry partner.
  - 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 annually**.
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## Managing Director | Scarlet Fire (*consultancy*)

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 regulatory 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*)

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 reaching 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 successfully handing off operations to build new ventures across adjacent industries.
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