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System synthesist - commercial, product & operational architecture

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Executive Summary

I'm a system synthesist. In any room, in any organisation, I instinctively see:

- Disconnected business capabilities
- Disconnected data
- Disconnected teams
- Disconnected products
- Disconnected legal entities
- Disconnected workflows
- Disconnected incentives

And then I construct a coherent system around them.

Twelve years of doing that in practice has produced a working thesis I call the 30/70: meaningful transformation is roughly 30% technology and 70% everything else - operations, culture, governance, legacy reality, and the lived behaviour of the people who actually run the business day to day. Most transformations fail because they get the ratio backwards.

I don't only design to this ratio - I argue it in the room. In client meetings with VP- and head-of-operations–level stakeholders I frame the work in exactly these terms: the digital layer is the 30%, and the operational reality, governance, and human behaviour behind it are the 70% that decides whether any of it works.

I'm best deployed where a business has the right ambition but the wrong shape - where the systems, teams, products, and contracts have grown faster than the architecture holding them together. My work is to read what's actually there, design what coherence looks like, and build the path to it without breaking what already works.

What I Currently Do

The formal title is Head of Business Development and Digital. What that actually covers, after twelve years of scope expanding into whatever the business needed and nobody else was holding, is the following. Each is linked to the evidence.

I own a customer engagement platform and the products built on it. Six live instances across two countries for global OEM brands, plus the leads-management and queue-management systems that grew out of it. I hold the architecture across every instance rather than letting each client pull the product into a bespoke fork - because a platform that forks stops being a platform and becomes six maintenance problems. Every enhancement one client pays for is designed so the others can inherit it. *(@ref sec:operating-scope, cs:1)*

I negotiate and redline the group's commercial agreements, and I am the first draft, first reviewer and last line before signature. Master agreements, framework agreements, data intermediary agreements, NDAs - including with a BNM-regulated financial institution and with OEM principals whose templates arrive drafted entirely in their favour. My value here is not legal expertise; it is that I am the only person in the room who holds the commercial intent, the operational reality, the partnership dynamics and the legal exposure at the same time. I work each clause for what it does to the business rather than what it says, translate it into plain language for the people who actually hold signatory authority, and take the position to Group Legal for proper vetting. The people who sign are not the people who understand the deal; my job is to close that gap before they sign. *(@ref cs:7, cs:10)*

I design and hold the commercial governance layer. Pricing structures, discount authority, content and service policies, the terms that get attached to every order the company issues. Most of it exists because I watched the same disputes recur and concluded the problem was not the clients but the absence of a written position. Codifying it converted years of case-by-case argument into a policy that now travels with every agreement - and, just as importantly, told my own team which fights were worth having. *(@ref cs:14)*

I run revenue operations - the commercial ledger underneath the deals. Invoicing instructions, utilisation tracking, tax treatment, credit notes, the reconciliation between what was sold and what was actually delivered and billed. Unglamorous, and the place where a company quietly loses money it never notices. I automated the mechanical parts and deliberately kept the verification human, because the check is the control, not the bottleneck. *(@ref cs:13)*

I hold data protection and governance for systems handling hundreds of thousands of customer records. Consent architecture, retention, the question of who is actually the controller when a global principal, a national sales company and a local partner all touch the same data. I have written policy artefacts adopted by clients into their own internal governance, and I have argued positions with principals' data protection officers on their own agreements, in their interest. *(@ref cs:10)*

I run the commercial layer of a media and advertising network. Rate structures, packaging, inventory, the relationship between editorial independence and commercial appetite - which is a governance problem before it is a sales problem. *(@ref cs:12)*

I built and run an AI operating model across all of the above. Not as a tool bolted onto the work, but as a structured operating layer: documentation first, purpose-built assistant personas loaded with our actual policies and context, independent review threads whose only job is to find the holes, and judgment held firmly human at every decision point. It is how one person carries the working volume of a function. *(@ref sec:current-build)*

And I grow the people who will hold it after me. The measure I actually care about is what keeps running when I am not in the room, and who is running it. *(@ref sec:operating-scope)*

I have grown as far as this container allows, and I am ready to do considerably more.

Operating Scope

Across twelve years at the Company, I have operated simultaneously across the following domains. None of these are claimed - each is backed by case studies in the following section.

Trusted Advisory & Stakeholder Trust. The relationship is the architecture. On the flagship OEM account I operate as a peer-level counterpart to the client's IT director, managing directors, marketing, and data-protection functions - the contact the principals reach for when the question is *what is the right call here*, not *can you build this*. The advisory extends past contracted scope: redlining the client's own agreements in their interest, proposing improvements to their internal data-handling governance, and being treated as a subject-matter partner rather than a supplier. Mentees and counterparts have stayed in close professional relationship years after the engagement; anchor clients have renewed across half-decades without renegotiating down. Trust is the delivery mechanism, not a by-product of it. Across my tenure I've worked at decision-maker level with more than ten OEM principals and major insurers - the OEM group, the premium brand, a volume brand, a performance brand, the OEM, the conglomerate, the parent group, a global insurer, a global insurer, Liberty, a major insurer, a takaful operator, and others. The advisory extends into authoring policy artefacts on the client's own side - a Data Retention Policy Proposal covering seven live storage locations across application databases, backups, cloud storage, editorial systems, telemetry, and app stores, grounded in PDPA and contractual obligations, with an operational disposal register and quarterly SOP for enforcement. Produced ahead of a client's internal audit at no additional cost.

Standing Built From Zero, In An Unfamiliar Market. Three years ago I flew to Singapore alone to open a relationship with a national sales company where nobody knew me, where our market leadership in Malaysia carried no weight whatsoever, and where I entered as an external vendor with no institutional authority of any kind. What followed was built entirely on the work: a customer platform ecosystem, then a leads-management system whose managing directors mandated it as the single source of record for all sales and marketing activity, then a queue-management product now specified for build, scheduled for showcase to the group's global principal and mandated for rollout in Malaysia. Whatever transfers about how I work, it is not the brand behind me or the relationships I already had. Neither existed there.

Decision Authority in Practice. My title carries no formal signing authority, and I am not a director. In daily operation I nonetheless hold and exercise commercial decision rights that are simply not routed upward. Granting a client an extension on a six-figure annual commitment because the relationship and the forward buy justify it. Converting a client's accidental double payment into an advance against an imminent renewal rather than putting them through a months-long group refund cycle - solving their problem, protecting the cash, and closing the matter in one reply. Directing how a campaign is cross-charged between two brand wallets inside a conglomerate client's group allocation. Catching, before an order goes out, that two entities are signing and the document therefore needs either two stamps or two signing blocks. Adding an order-of-precedence clause to an order so a client's standard purchase terms cannot silently override the addendum we negotiated. The same authority governs escalation: I decide what goes to Legal, when, and with what brief - and when a position I have negotiated is challenged internally, I defend it with the commercial reasoning behind it, concede immediately where the drafting point is simply better, and accept the outcome either way. These are made in minutes, in the flow of work, verified with Finance where the treatment warrants it - and across twelve years neither Co-CEO has countermanded one. The authority was never formally granted. It accumulated, because the calls were sound, because the people affected accepted them, and because the alternative was that nobody made them at all.

Commercial Architecture. Pricing policy, discount governance, retainer structures, proposal sign-off, deal reshaping mid-flight, and the bridge between group legal and business reality. I write the first draft of most commercial agreements before legal sees them. When a client's IT function requested a platform-wide move to Windows infrastructure, I reframed the request from a migration into what it actually was - a full rebuild of four live production systems - quantified the continuity and cost risk, and proposed the Azure-on-Linux path that met the real centralisation goal without it. Pushback delivered as client protection, with the stakeholder handed the internal case to make. The commercial-governance layer is not improvised per deal - it is a documented, reusable instrument set I authored and maintain: the standard Master Service Agreement, rate cards and commitment-discount tiers, editorial and value-added-service content policies, a non-negotiables register tied to operational rationale, and counterparty-pushback decision trees. These now template the rest of the publisher business. Among these, the Premium & VAS Content Policies - the boundary between paid content and complimentary editorial that protects the publication's independence - were recently attached as Schedule 3 to the e-wallet operator framework agreement, becoming contractually binding on the counterparty. Operational mastery of Malaysian SST (Group G and Group I distinctions, inter-industry exemptions, foreign-services treatment), GST (pre-2018), and digital and withholding tax for cross-border digital services - self-taught through GST training and twelve years of operational tax handling, carried alongside the commercial work rather than handed off to accountants.

Product Architecture. Six live SaaS instances in production across two countries, on a shared platform I designed, serving over 600,000 registered users - over 100,000 of whom are active across more than 200,000 vehicles under management. The leads-management system, the queue-management system, and the dealer trade-in platform as adjacent products on the same architectural logic. Currently architecting a graph-native data core in parallel with a modular consumer product on top of it. The commercial logic underneath the architecture: a B2B SaaS book of recurring subscription revenue across multiple independent instances, with custom capability built for one client modularised into the shared core and resold as base capability to others. The IP compounds; the codebase doesn't fork.

Governance and Compliance. PDPA, data privacy, retainer scope governance, data integrity through investor diligence cycles, audit-readiness for enterprise procurement. Designed the consent and data-governance model for a live CRM under Singapore PDPA - a three-state consent architecture (consented / not consented / not recorded) feeding a blocked list, chosen over a single compulsory checkbox, with consent-capture language deliberately worded for evidentiary defensibility rather than tick-box compliance. Self-taught through operational necessity; I work alongside qualified counsel, not in place of them.

Analytics & Data Integrity. I run the analytics layer across the Company's publisher business and the SaaS platform - Google Analytics (UA-era certified, GA4 transition managed), event tracking architecture across the vehicle-database platform, the classifieds site and the app ecosystem, and the Looker Studio reporting infrastructure that abstracts platform changes from internal and client stakeholders. Monthly reports - internal to the Company leadership and external to OEM clients - run on dashboards I designed; they survived the UA to GA4 transition without breaking the reader experience because the integration layer absorbs the methodology shift underneath. When measurement discrepancies surface - including a the flagship publication methodology question raised during a group investor diligence cycle - the defence is structured, cross-validated against independent data sources, and auditable.

Operations and SOP. Company-wide SOP architecture covering commercial, product, and operational workflows - the operational source of truth across the business, including internal policies, approvals, risk controls, QC standards, and escalation frameworks. The commercial-document ecosystem underneath the agreements - Quotations, Inventory Orders, Master IOs, Campaign IOs, in variants for direct clients, agency bookings, and advertising-wallet draws - was authored and codified by me across a decade of practice. The sales enablement layer above them - company profile deck, the Company's automotive ad network profile and rate card decks, the base decks the sales team now derives every client proposal from - is also mine. The pattern extends into the operational layer: HR onboarding workflows, office equipment and software request processes, procurement scaffolding. Most of these emerged because they weren't being built by anyone else and the operation needed them. Over time, "the person who codifies the way we do this" became a role I ended up holding by default across the company, whether or not it was named.

Digital Advertising and Ad Operations. I run the digital advertising business that pays for the rest of the Company - pricing architecture, package design, ad operations, traffic and reporting integrity, and the codified policies the team and clients work to. The business serves an automotive publisher network reaching 4–5 million unique users monthly (the flagship publication as the anchor, plus the vehicle-database platform, the classifieds site, and Tintnow.my). When I took over ad sales and operations from a third-party agency in 2014, I had no prior experience with digital advertising; the system that now runs the business - packaging logic, contextual targeting on the flagship publication, frequency capping, package-over-SOV pricing, the editorial and Value-Added-Service content policies, the agreements framework - is what I built from that starting point. Self-taught end to end.

People Architecture. Lead a digital and product team of seven (four developers, two designers, and the QC and project executive working under me) and a business development team of three sales managers and an ad operations executive, alongside the company's senior data analyst. When multi-region expansion threatened to bottleneck around my own capacity, I restructured the digital division into distinct Run and Build tracks - isolating legacy maintenance to junior developers to protect the technical lead's architecture time, pivoting support staff into dedicated client-facing operational roles, and hiring specifically for meticulous quality-control apprentices to offload logic-checking and QA burdens from the lead and from me. Built a succession bench: a senior project executive emerged as de facto deputy across digital and ops, a second executive in deliberate training toward a parallel lead role, and a technical lead operating as a trusted execution partner converting business logic into system architecture. The stated team goal is self-sufficiency: the operation should not depend on any single person being in the room. I build teams that protect the architecture so the architecture can protect the business.

Current Build

I'm currently running a deliberate architectural experiment in parallel with my full-time role.

The core. A graph-native, modular data architecture framework I'm building from scratch. Eight primitives, full mechanism set, comprehensive test suite. Two hard rules: the core never imports a product, and the core never uses `new`. Built to solve the framework drift problem most product suites suffer from - three years in, you're maintaining four codebases pretending to be one.

The product. A modular consumer product for business operators, built as the first real consumer of the core. The product isn't a demonstration of the core - it's the proof. If the framework can't carry a real product to production, it isn't a framework.

The methodology. I don't use AI as a productivity tool. I run it as a distributed engineering organisation - one stream for planning and specification, another for hole-poking and quality control, a third for test-as-spec - with myself as architect, reviewer, and integrator at the centre. Every member of that organisation has perfect recall, zero ego, and no architectural opinion of its own. The architect at the centre still owns every call.

This is not "AI built it." Two real framework bugs caught by the test suite so far. None by the AI. Both by the discipline. Even at the build level, the ratio holds: the AI is the 30%; the architecture, the discipline, and the judgment of what to ship and what to throw away - that's still the 70%, and that part is still mine.

How it started. The catalyst was a project delivered under political fire. In 2025 a client faced a forced choice: after an unauthorised third-party leads system created a compliance mess, they could adopt their global IT provider's ageing solution - and, one system at a time, surrender the digital autonomy we had spent years building together - or I could build them something better, fast. I read the stakes for what they were, agreed, and made a decision I had never made before: a deliberately compressed discovery, made transparently - my team knew the politics, knew why, and knew I would be available at any hour to close in conversation the gaps a fuller brief would have closed on paper. The system shipped and succeeded: the client's MDs have benchmarked it above the global provider's own solution, mandated it as the single source of record for all marketing and sales activity - "if it is not recorded there, it did not happen" - scheduled it for showcase to the visiting global principal in October 2026, and mandated its Malaysian rollout for Q1 2027. But the delivery friction taught me what the accolades did not: my ceiling as an architect was the fidelity with which what was in my head could be transferred. Things I had specified in full were still sometimes missed; things I compressed cost my team dearly. I wanted to know whether the losses in translation were a communication problem or a medium problem. So I ran the experiment properly - build a product end to end with AI as the development team, and be involved in every layer. Not to become a programmer, but to know enough, from data model to infrastructure, to push back.

The graph moment. The experiment produced the most consequential technical correction of my career. Describing a data model I had specified five years earlier for my first platform - entities carrying any number of tags, tags carrying properties and values, everything connectable to everything - an AI gave me the name I had never had for it: a graph data model. I verified the answer independently across multiple models, established that it could be implemented on standard MySQL at costs acceptable at every scale my instances actually reach, and confirmed it had been feasible all along. Then I rebuilt my product roadmap around it. The vision had been right for five years; what had been missing was the vocabulary. I do not intend to be missing vocabulary again.

The documentation. The corpus behind this is not described; it exists. The framework is specified in primitive-by-primitive documents in which every architectural choice is recorded as a decision block - what was decided, why, and what it supersedes. Independent hole-poker review rounds produced locked decisions marked as locked; open questions are listed as open. The first product carries a formal alignment document reconciling its design against the framework version it was authored against. The product specifications that preceded it - including the queue-management system now in client hands - separate deployment-specific configuration from core product behaviour marker by marker, because the difference between a project and a product is knowing which is which. The documentation itself runs on a living-documentation platform I built for the purpose, rendering one source of truth through four personas: an executive summary view, full developer depth, an operational how-to, and a verification view. Architecture documentation is available to hiring teams on request.

The operating arm. The same pattern - structure first, then work; judgment stays human - runs the operating business daily. Weekly invoice orders that once took hours of transcription take minutes, with tax-handling rules encoded and one step deliberately kept manual as the verification layer. The conglomerate group buy runs on per-unit utilisation tracking, differentiated invoicing modes, a forward-utilisation mechanism I designed, and renewal allocation models built from utilisation history. Legal governance runs through two purpose-built assistant personas - every clause interpreted, tested against policy, redlined by my own hand with AI never touching the document, every returned version checked for untracked changes (caught one) - a methodology disclosed to Group Legal from the start and validated by them as a legitimate first layer of defence - most recently in writing, after the Head of Legal reviewed a framework agreement I had negotiated end to end and cleared my positions on every substantive clause she had queried. Tribal knowledge from three chat working groups was extracted, cross-analysed, and codified into the content policies now attached to every insertion order. And one unused platform capability became a billed service run end to end by one person with AI (case study above). None of this replaced anyone. It let one person carry the working volume of a function while every decision stayed human. That is the 30/70 applied to AI itself: the model is the 30.

Career Arc

The conventional record, for the file.

The Company (the parent group) · 2014–present

Head of Digital & Business Development (2016–present) · Business Development Manager (2014–2016)

Joined initially as product manager for the classifieds site and BDM for the wider network. Scope expanded organically into commercial governance, SaaS product, legal and contracts, ad operations, and company-wide SOP. Title formalised in November 2018; operating scope had already substantially exceeded the BDM role for years prior, and has continued to expand into territory typically held at Chief Operating or Chief Digital Officer level - internal policy and discount authority, invoicing and outgoing-document sign-off, senior client and vendor escalation, and ultimate authority on operational policy and commercial risk.

Motionworks Sdn Bhd · 2009–2011

Interactive Producer (2011) · Operations Manager (2009–2011)

Operations, accounting, HR, administration, client servicing, project management. The years that taught me the difference between client interests and team interests and what happens when an organisation consistently sacrifices the latter for the former.

Earlier career

Web development and digital production roles in Kuala Lumpur from the early 2000s, including running a top-ten Malaysian web development company prior to joining the Company.

How I Would Approach Your Transformation

If you are considering hiring me for a transformation mandate, this is how it would actually work. It is written plainly on purpose. If it does not sit well, that is information for both of us.

Before day one. I don't want to start on day one. I want a conversation first - ideally several - before you have decided to hire me and before I have decided to be hired. I need to understand the entity: its shape, its people, its goals, the best shape it hopes to become, and - be straight with me - where the boundaries and limitations really are. I cannot help you go where you hope to go if I don't know what I might need to know. And I might not be what you need. If I'm not, I will tell you so, plainly, and save us both the year.

The long discovery. The way I have built every system that works began with what I call the long discovery, and I fully intend to bring it to your company. Give me access. Give me freedom. I learnt early that I cannot design from what management tells me alone; the truths that decide whether anything flows live in the day-to-day that never makes it into reports. So I will likely end up talking to everyone - possibly every single person, including maintenance, including your customers. I will sit in the lobby and in operations. I will take people to lunch and have dinner with them. The people are what make things happen; a workflow depends on people to, well, flow. And I will be looking for your hidden dragons - the people who are exceptional at what they do and invisible where they are. Every corporation has them: ideas offered and half-adopted, talent neglected by the current shape of the organisation. Some of my best design insight will come from them - and some of the transformation's future owners are already on your payroll. I will not tell you in advance whether we start with a division, a workflow, or the whole enterprise - deciding that before discovery would create false expectations, or false limits. What I can tell you is that when I propose, I will usually propose something small first, because small, real, and working beats large, planned, and imaginary.

What you will get - and what you won't. Don't ask me for updates or early ideas. If I tell you I am not ready, it is because I have ideas and they need more information than I have. What you will not get from me is theatre. What you will get, mostly, is questions - a great many of them. You will also get, within reason, what I am discovering: early and easy fixes where things can simply be changed now; the general shape of directions as they form; and my honest read on where your own idea will and won't work - please be receptive to that. Within weeks, you will likely get the first of the concrete lists: data-protection exposure, governance gaps, leakage, inefficiencies - reported as a checklist to be fixed, fortnightly or monthly, whichever we agree. One thing I will not be: a reporter or a hall monitor on the people I am discovering things from. I need to work on trust, and trust does not survive surveillance. Within reason - always within reason - what people tell me in the lobby stays in service of the design, not the disciplinary file.

The direction may surprise you. Do not be surprised if I ask you to go somewhere that was not in your initial vision. I will do my best to incorporate what you hoped for. But if I am part of your corporation, my goal is the best shape it can possibly become - and that best shape may be something you have not considered. It may not include something you love. One of the most consistent things I have seen sink companies is clinging to a legacy thing that is no longer what they really are - held onto long after it stopped serving them. If you are not comfortable with that - don't hire me.

The plans, and the people. When the plans come, they will not arrive as a deck to be endured. They will be interactive - built to be walked through, questioned, and understood by the people who must live inside them. They will incorporate your current workflows, because workflows imposed arbitrarily do not flow. Expect me to defend some of your people's shortcuts, too - people make shortcuts because a shortcut is often the most efficient path, and that is intelligence, not indiscipline. The ones that lose quality or skip validation get closed; the rest get designed into the system. They will be planned so the actual business keeps running - I will not overburden the very people who must make things happen. And they will be built for growth, day by day, step by step, toward where we agreed to go. Who executes depends on what discovery finds. Where a vendor is right, we use a vendor - I will justify it and make sure the right one is chosen; I have spent twelve years on the other side of that table. Where cost and efficiency justify building a team, I will propose it and tell you why. What I will need from the start is small: an EA and a trusted aide or two. I know that may be hard to grant on day one - which is exactly why granting it signals your commitment. And understand what I am not: I am not an executioner sent in to clear people out. I intend for the people already inside your business to grow, be empowered, and own what we build. Some people just need a second chance, a vision, and the right mentoring. The exception is gross incompetence paired with no will to improve - that, I will name.

On AI - a correction to what you might expect. I work with AI from day one; it is how I work now, and you will see it. What I am telling you not to expect is AI as the transformation. Most corporations today are not ready for AI - there is operational, systems, and data debt that must be dealt with first, and plugging AI into a broken workflow only breaks it faster. So: where it is feasible, I will build quick AI-assisted tools along the way - easy fixes, sometimes deliberate MVPs that teach us the shape of the real thing. But the debt comes first. That is not caution; that is sequence.

The commitment - and how this ends. Transformation - like with a person - takes time, is a process, and takes commitment. An overweight person must first decide to change, then hire a trainer, then commit, and then purposefully do the things that trim, build, and improve. I am the trainer. The decision and the commitment - the mandate, the budget within reason, the patience -

are yours. And I will be honest about the two ways this ends. If I have done all I can, proposed all I can, and you or your organisation are not willing to change - I will tender my resignation. And if I have done all I can for your company - and part of that means having built the people who can own the transformation and carry the trajectory without me - then I will also move on. Either way, you will hear it from me first, plainly. The measure of my work has never been how indispensable I become. It is what keeps running - and who is running it - after I step out of the room.

Outside Work

Based in Shah Alam with my wife (Financial Controller at a Malaysian GLC) and our six-year-old daughter. I do the school pickup daily. I run, row on a Concept2, cook seriously, and sort Lego pieces by type before building - the same pre-sort instinct I apply to frameworks and strategic problems.

I hold the 30/70 as a working thesis for transformation and I try to hold it honestly for my own life too. The work in this document is the 30 that others can see. The 70 is everything the work rests on and none of it is mine - health, family, a supportive spouse whose own career is secure, a settled child, parents who are well, a neighbourhood that has stayed safe, a mother-in-law who is kind, a daycare five minutes away, a team and a few trusted confidants at work who hold the fort so I can travel, focus, and do the work that needs doing, encounters that happened to be with the right people at the right time, and the many ways things could have gone wrong across twelve years and didn't. I've come to see that clearly enough to say it plainly - these are Godly blessings, and that is the 70% that everything else rests on.

Case Studies

Case Study 1 - A white-label customer engagement platform (2016–present)

The problem as it actually was. Automotive principals in Malaysia and Singapore needed owned engagement channels with their existing customers. They were renting attention through third-party publishers and had no relationship infrastructure of their own. The opportunity was real. The commercial model to deliver it didn't exist yet - bespoke development was too expensive for principals to commit to, and off-the-shelf platforms didn't fit the operational reality of regional automotive aftersales.

The architectural read. The conventional approach would have been bespoke development per client, paid upfront, with no shared architecture. I designed the opposite: a white-label modular platform where the core is shared across instances and the brand identity, content, and configuration are owned by the principal. Subscription model, no upfront development fees. The commercial structure wasn't a pricing decision - it was a trust and adoption decision. Principals would only commit to a customer engagement platform that could survive their internal procurement and risk processes, which meant the financial commitment had to be operational rather than capital.

What was built. A coordinated platform set on a shared core, deployed as six live instances:

- An aftersales-engagement instance (Malaysia) for the OEM
- A lifestyle-engagement instance (Singapore) for the OEM's national sales company
- A volume-brand instance (Singapore)
- A performance-brand instance (Singapore)
- A premium-brand instance (Malaysia) for the brand's official dealer group
- The parent group's aftersales-network instance (Malaysia)

Each instance is a full CRM and marketing-automation backend on the shared core: a single audience-targeting engine reused across banners, vouchers, and system messages; a trigger-driven lifecycle automation layer (birthday, registration, service-due, warranty); self-contained event-funnel mechanics; a fifteen-role access-control matrix; nightly back-office data integration; and system-wide audit trails - uniform across instances, with only brand identity, content, and master data varying. Six years of divergence across six instances, two countries, and multiple OEM brands, with zero codebase forks.

The leads-management system - a leads-management and sales-performance CRM built for the same principal, live on web and mobile across three dealerships, processing 4,000+ leads through a nine-view analytics surface with automated round-robin distribution and a three-state, audit-defensible consent model built for the principal's PDPA obligations. The principal's managing directors reviewed it directly and benchmarked it favourably against the OEM's official enterprise system - the inflection point for a multi-year contract.

The queue-management system - a seven-stage service-lane queue-management system on the same architectural logic, deployed across three branches, built as a unified, persona-gated component model (one detail component; editability role-gated across Call Centre, Reception, and Service Advisor), with redemption audit trails wired through to the platform.

The dealer trade-in platform - a used-car bidding and purchase workflow product built on the same shared architecture. Currently suspended pending client operational alignment and a V2.0 re-architecture. Covered in its own case study below.

Scale. Over 600,000 registered users across the platform, of whom over 100,000 are active. Over 200,000 vehicles under management across all instances. The largest instance is the premium-brand instance at over 95,000 registered users.

Outcome. Three-year renewals signed at flat pricing - clients valued the platform enough not to renegotiate down at contract end. The platform is currently scaling through the Singapore NSC as the central engagement infrastructure across multiple brands. The architectural decision to build modularly on a shared core has held up under six years of growth and divergence - none of the six instances has forked into a separate codebase.

Where this is heading. Positioned within the OEM principal's global IT governance such that the group's official infrastructure provider has moved from competitive threat to formally evaluating the platform for approved regional/global partner recognition - an enterprise-procurement audit the architecture was deliberately built to pass. The architecture was designed to survive hostile audits from global OEM IT functions: strict role separation, comprehensive audit logs, and modular data governance built into the foundation. It routinely passes compliance checks from principals' global IT functions who inherently prefer their own legacy stacks - it survives because replacing the localised integrated ecosystem with their fragmented global alternatives would break the client's ground operations. Currently driving toward first-ever external-partner integration access to the group's global customer database. Early-stage pathways into the UK and Ireland are being carried forward by relocating stakeholders from existing the Singapore NSC and the Malaysian NSC accounts - pre-initial contact only at this stage, not active engagements.

What this shows. Commercial architecture designed in service of operational reality. The product is the artifact; the business model is the architecture.

Case Study 2 - The vehicle database and the advertising business (2014–present)

The problem as it actually was. When I joined the Company in late 2013 as project manager for the classifieds site, the classifieds business had no clear commercial future. Mudah.my held the free-listings market, and Carlist.my had external funding from Carsales Australia and the marketing budget to match. Fighting that battle directly meant losing it slowly. Meanwhile, the Company's advertising business - the publisher revenue across the flagship publication - was being handled by a third-party agency (the incumbent ad agency), with all the dependency that arrangement implies.

The architectural read - the product side. Rather than play catch-up against entrenched market leaders, I proposed a category Malaysia didn't yet have online: a structured car buyer's guide. The vehicle-database platform was built on a proper taxonomy - body type, segment, A/B/C/D classification - that didn't exist anywhere else in the Malaysian automotive online market at the time. The classification logic was codified internally before launch.

The architectural read - the advertising side. When the vehicle-database platform went live, a founding director set up Google Ad Manager (then Doubleclick for Publishers), built the initial ad slots, and handed the operations to me. I had no prior experience with digital advertising. The signatory director introduced me to a global media agency, who handled the Honda account, and a global media agency became my trial by fire - I learned ad pricing, sales mechanics (CPM, placements), quotations, inventory orders, booking orders, traffic, creative setup, and campaign management end to end, running sales and operations simultaneously.

After a year, the conclusion was clear: we could run this ourselves. The Company's contract with the incumbent ad agency was ending. We took the ad sales and operations back in-house.

What was built.

The flagship publication was the harder problem. It was an ongoing publication of articles with no structural metadata to target against - the opposite of the vehicle-database platform's clean taxonomy. The conventional fix would have been to retroactively tag every article. I chose contextual targeting on the URL slug instead - extracting keywords from the post URL and applying Boolean logic (AND, OR, NOT) to construct targetable audiences without ever touching the article content. That decision is still how the flagship publication's contextual advertising runs today.

I then rebuilt the pricing and packaging:

- Replaced single-unit sales with packages - for example, the Contextual ROS package combines billboard, half-page, and MREC creative across desktop and mobile, with Google Ad Manager optimising which serves more based on performance.
- Applied frequency caps (3–5 impressions per user per day) to reduce ad blindness - protecting client performance rather than maximising delivery.
- Stopped selling SOV (share of voice).
- Refused to sell 100% SOV deals - they cost the client a lot and rarely justified the price in performance terms. Performance was what brought clients back.
- Retired the standard leaderboard (ignored by users) and replaced the MREC with a custom 360×300 XLREC sized for increasingly large mobile screens.
- Advised, not just transacted. When clients asked for "homepage," I'd propose contextual ROS if their objective was tactical conversion. I'd flag creative errors, animation issues, or formats unlikely to perform. This earned a reputation for constructive feedback that clients valued - and brought renewals.

Around 2018 I took over all pricing, discount, package, and product-naming decisions. From 2021 I began codifying the policies, guidelines, and terms - the same governance instruments now used across the publisher business.

Outcome. The advertising business is now a multi-million-ringgit annual book that funds the rest of the Company, run on packaging, pricing, and policy architecture I designed and codified from a zero-experience start. The flagship publication reaches 4–5 million unique users monthly. The contextual-targeting decision I made in 2015 still defines how the inventory is sold today.

What this shows. Walking into a domain with zero prior experience and ending up authoring the system that runs the business. The same pattern that recurs everywhere in this CV - self-taught, codified into reusable instruments, taught to a team, surviving the author.

Case Study 3 - The flagship publication and the GA4 transition - analytical defence during investor diligence (2024–2025)

The situation. Following Google's deprecation of Universal Analytics in mid-2023 and the forced migration to GA4, the flagship publication's reported unique visitors appeared to drop sharply - from 6–8 million monthly in late 2023 to 3–4 million post-transition. The numbers didn't reflect a real traffic decline. They reflected a methodology change. But the discrepancy surfaced during a group investor diligence cycle, when the analyst preparing documentation for investors raised the question: the Looker Studio dashboard showed 9.4 million monthly visits for March; GA4's native interface showed 1.7 million. The answer needed to be technically correct, methodologically defensible, and clear enough that a finance-trained reviewer could absorb it.

The technical read. Universal Analytics counted every device as a separate visitor. GA4 introduced identity stitching across devices - a single reader using a phone, laptop, and tablet now consolidates into one user. For most websites this rebalancing is minor. For the flagship publication, where the readership is habitual and a significant portion read across multiple devices daily, the unique visitor figure took a disproportionate hit relative to retail or listing sites. The reported drop wasn't traffic loss. It was the platform's measurement model catching up to a publication's reader behaviour.

Cross-validation. I cross-checked against Realtime, the WordPress-native tracker that integrates at server level rather than relying on JavaScript tags or GA4 methodology. Realtime showed no traffic cliff during the period GA4 was reporting the drop. I also cross-checked against Google Ad Manager's available impressions - if the readership had genuinely declined by the magnitude GA4 was reporting, ad inventory would have dropped proportionally. It didn't. A third check: the vehicle-database platform, which derives roughly half its traffic from the flagship publication referrals, actually grew over the same period. A genuine drop on the flagship publication would have shown up there. It didn't.

The methodological decision. Rather than display the apparent decline, I rebuilt the flagship publication Looker Studio dashboard using GA4's Pageviews metric (which post-transition more closely tracked Realtime's visit measurement) relabelled as Visits, and GA4 Sessions (which more closely tracked unique visitor counts) relabelled as Visitors. The vehicle-database platform and the classifieds site kept the standard GA4 labels because their browsing patterns matched GA4's session model. The decision was documented, the reasoning was structured, and the dashboards remain consistent with the underlying business reality - ad impressions, server-level tracking, and cross-site referral traffic - rather than the platform's measurement artefacts.

The investor diligence response. When the group analyst raised the discrepancy, I provided the full technical and methodological explanation in writing, cross-referenced against the independent data sources, preempted the SimilarWeb comparison question (SimilarWeb's panel-data model produces unreliable estimates for niche regional publishers without direct integration), and closed on the auditability principle: "we want to make sure we are clear in everything we do, and in things like this, it is always auditable and defensible." The explanation was accepted. The numbers held.

What this shows. Analytical depth combined with the operational instinct to anticipate where a measurement methodology will mislead its readers, and the discipline to engineer the reporting layer around the underlying business reality rather than the platform's defaults. The defence held under scrutiny because the methodology was documented before the question was asked.

Case Study 4 - Latin America - unsolicited international origination (Dec 2025–present, dormant)

The situation. A multi-brand distributor in Chile, part of the OEM's global retail organisation - managing seven automotive brands - became a prospective client through a former regional MD who had relocated from Singapore to Santiago. No RFP, no inbound enquiry, no international sales mandate, no travel budget. A country on the opposite side of the world, twelve time zones away, evaluating a platform built for Southeast Asian automotive aftersales.

What was done. A discovery questionnaire (Dec 2025) surfaced the anchor problem: roughly 70% of their customer database was outdated. The proposal was built as an "Initiation Playback" - structured to mirror their own discovery responses section by section - anchored on a "Claim My Car" self-verification flow to solve the database problem directly. Subscription model, USD $3,000/month, 36-month term, no upfront fee, with a pre-built Phase 2 menu (queue management, lead management, DMS integration, multi-brand) presented as optional future scope rather than included cost. A 45-minute live demonstration call followed on 30 March 2026; both decision-makers - the project lead and their IT/Technology Manager - had read the full proposal beforehand, and their questions were operational ("what happens when we do this") rather than evaluative.

Scoped conservatively, deliberately. Asked directly what was missing from the quote, I declined to upsell - "what you have now is good enough to start; I won't push more until you've worked with me." The Phase 2 paths were already written; keeping them out of base scope kept the commitment manageable and the delivery risk low.

Cross-border commercial structuring. The proposal carried its own operational layer underneath the headline pricing - Chilean cross-border tax treatment for digital services, USD billing to avoid both ringgit and Chilean peso exposure, arbitration jurisdiction, commercial model and billing cycle. None of this was escalated upward. The work sat with me because the combination of context required to do it correctly - the deal mechanics, the OEM's retail organisation governance environment, the platform's existing commercial structure, and the cross-border tax operational knowledge built over twelve years of handling Malaysian SST, foreign-services treatment, and digital tax - didn't exist anywhere else in the group.

The roadblock, stated plainly. The engagement is currently dormant, and not for reasons inside the deal. both national sales companies engaged us before the OEM's global retail organisation tightened its IT-vendor governance; Chile faces a stricter evaluation gate than the earlier accounts did, and the deal now sits inside their internal business-case and GM-approval process, with the OEM's retail organisation Brazil involved in the evaluation. I built a reference chain mapped to that approval structure - the Singapore IT director for governance credibility, a senior Malaysian operational figure for the business case - and was transparent with the Chile team about the friction the existing accounts had navigated, rather than presenting a frictionless reference.

What this shows. A platform built for one region drew unsolicited interest from another hemisphere on the strength of the proposal and the architecture alone. The constraint on this deal is external OEM-governance politics, not product fit or commercial structure - and the same global-governance dynamic that blocks it here is the one the engagement platform is being positioned to pass formally elsewhere.

Case Study 5 - Two OEM brand instances - renewal, advisory standing, live delivery (2024–present)

The situation. Two passenger-car brand instances on the engagement platform core, both contracts up for renewal in 2026, both wanting net-new capability mid-relationship. The brands sit under shared MDs who periodically play the Malaysian operation against the Singapore one. The lead carrying the new initiative upward was personally skeptical of it but politically committed - the work had to survive both a doubter and his management.

The commercial architecture. Renewed both instances for three years at flat pricing - flat monthly pricing across both instances - a mid-six-figure (RM) three-year commitment - and conceded payment terms from 7 to 30 days without moving price. The renewal addenda also replaced open-ended upgrade language with a governed allocation system I drafted: Intermediate and Minor upgrade slots banded by working-day estimate, Major work carved out to separate scoping and fees, inclusion at vendor discretion. That structure is a three-year dispute-prevention mechanism - it pre-resolves "is this included or chargeable" before it can become a relationship problem.

The advisory standing. The most senior operational figure on the Malaysian side below the MDs - the VP covering both the OEM and the premium brand relationships - routinely sources ideas and direction from me, directly and through his service-operations lead. In a single sitting that meant scoping the premium brand "digital butler" lifestyle positioning, the body-and-paint diagnostic extension, dealer differentiation through targeted in-app campaigns, the nudge programme, and the payment-gateway play - and being the point he routes the regional reference relationship (the Chilean business case) through for best-practice input rather than handling it himself. The same client lead has stated he is unwilling to look elsewhere for a partner because the relationship and the quality of ideas can't be replicated by a vendor working to spec.

The 30/70, in the room. I framed both the payment-gateway and the priority-customer work to the client in exactly these terms - the digital layer is the 30%; the operational definition, the dealer behaviour, the finance governance and the fulfilment are the 70% - and drew the line myself that the operational meaning of "priority" at the dealer counter stays with humans, not the platform. On the payment gateway I told the client's team that finance has to be inserted at the front of the build, not at the end, because it has stopped being an IT decision and become a finance one. A technologist who polices that boundary against his own product, and who pushes the client to get the non-technical 70% right, is the thesis rather than a description of it.

Live delivery under that standing. The new Priority Customer capability was scoped, prototyped, and approved inside a two-week window - a navigable React mock (~2,100 lines, four iterations) taken to client sign-off, with the data model designed so "add a priority flag" wouldn't break at the first scope expansion. One initiative produced two deliberately different artefacts: a client scoping document with no technical detail and no timeline, written so the client could lift the language straight into his own upward presentation; and a developer handoff with full per-module specification and build constraints surfaced on the relevant page. Artefact production ran through AI tooling; the architectural and boundary calls stayed mine.

The trade-off, recorded honestly. Three styled prototype iterations were redone because they were built against a sister product used as a behavioural reference before the live deployment target was opened - the live instance had its own design language. The discipline that came out of it: open the live target first, before any styling, even when a reference is named. The cost was paid before the rule was earned.

What this shows. Commercial governance, product architecture, and operational judgment executed at once inside a live account - at a standing where the client's most senior people pull direction from me rather than receive proposals.

Case Study 6 - A certified pre-owned dealer platform - governance system, adoption failure, honest reset (2021–present)

The situation. The Singapore NSC asked me in 2021 to design a digital governance system for the OEM's certified pre-owned programme, their used-car business. The stated brief was auditability. The used-car business, as the client put it, is a dirty one - transactions ran on phone and WhatsApp, and there were kickbacks and partiality in awarding bids. The system was meant to fix that.

The architectural read. I designed a three-part ecosystem: a Sales Consultant intake app, a Dealer bid app with invite-only access and filterable notification profiles, and a Purchaser dashboard with full audit trail, blind bidding, dealer identity masking until wholesale decision, minimum reserve enforcement, and quote-ranking signals (top three green, bottom three red). Draft-saving in the SC app to match how sales advisors actually work. Every override loggable. Every decision auditable. The system was built for governance, not tech for tech's sake.

The scraping request and the refusal. During implementation, the client team asked me to scrape vehicle PARF data from LTA's OneMotoring website - a common practice among Singapore automotive vendors. I refused. Scraping violated OneMotoring's Terms of Use, exposed the Company to compliance risk on a government-linked website, and would have required continual re-engineering as LTA changed its site to block the practice. I documented the refusal in email, cited the Terms of Use directly, checked with legal, ran a 100-attempt scraping test to validate that the technical approach was as unreliable as I suspected (30% of attempts blocked at submission, IPs banned progressively, incomplete data returned in a further third), and explored alternatives including third-party API services and a proposed direct sit-down with LTA. My position stayed the same across multiple pressure cycles: the Company as a Malaysian vendor could not be seen to violate a Singapore government website's terms of use, particularly one operated within a client's own principal ecosystem. The client eventually accepted the refusal.

The compromises that did happen. Over the course of the year, the client team requested a series of changes that eroded the governance layer of the system: removal of the minimum reserve; changing the top-three green signal to only the highest bid; disabling the notification to the winning dealer; removing the win visibility inside the dealer app so that off-platform WhatsApp bidders could be substituted in. I argued against each of these in real time, documented my objections in email, and implemented them only when the client insisted. Every compromise was owned by the client. The audit trail of the compromises themselves became part of the record.

The adoption failure. The dealers didn't move. They preferred the speed and familiarity of WhatsApp over downloading and checking a B2B app. The sales advisors found the data entry onerous. Off-platform WhatsApp bidding continued in parallel with the app, and the client team began accepting it. The system went live and stayed live but was worked around rather than used. By 2024 the platform existed as an artifact but the actual business had returned to manual processes.

The realignment (July 2025). When a new client team took over and asked for "small fixes that might help," I refused. I said the system had failed, I wasn't willing to keep charging them a modest four-figure monthly fee/month for something that wasn't working, and I laid out three honest paths: patch it (treat the symptom), restart it (redesign around what the failure taught), or sunset it responsibly. I recommended a strategic conversation about intent and enforcement before touching the tools.

The subscription suspension was mine to offer. The contract was live. The Company had the legal and commercial right to keep issuing invoices while the system sat dormant. I offered the suspension anyway, before the client asked, because the subscription was for a working system and the system wasn't working. The client accepted. The client-side leadership has referenced that conversation since; it clarified who I was operating as, and who they were dealing with.

The V2.0 proposal (2026, awaiting client readiness). The failure taught me something specific: forcing a behavioural shift creates friction the system can't survive. The V2.0 proposal - currently on hold pending client readiness - pivots on that insight. Instead of forcing dealers to use an app, WhatsApp becomes the frontend. A multimodal AI layer handles PARF screenshot OCR, voice-note parsing, and multilingual text extraction. The dealer never leaves WhatsApp. The audit trail runs through the AI intermediary, which also sanitises questions to prevent identification via slang. The governance layer moves from enforcement to invisible enablement. Total third-party operational cost, at 43 cars a month across 20 dealers: less than USD 15 monthly.

What this shows. Three things. First, the governance instinct - the system was designed correctly against the stated brief and I held the line on compliance under pressure. Second, the client-interest instinct - when the system failed, I refused to profit from patches, and I offered to suspend a live, contractually valid subscription before the client asked. That move cost the Company revenue in the short term and defined the relationship in the long term. Third, the architectural learning - the V2.0 design isn't a repeat of V1.0 with better UI. It's a fundamental re-architecture informed by what the failure actually taught about the 70% of this specific business. The technology was never the problem. The operational and cultural readiness of the client to enforce a new behaviour was. V2.0 designs around that reality instead of against it.

Case Study 7 - A regulated fintech × the publication - framework agreement under precedent pressure (June–July 2026)

The situation. A BNM-regulated e-money issuer - subsidiary of a major regional banking group - approached the Company for a digital media campaign on the flagship publication and adjacent properties. Deal value was a five-figure value. The Collaboration Agreement they sent was templated from a manufacturing/distribution engagement, and its substantive posture was heavily one-sided: exclusive perpetual worldwide licence to the e-wallet operator on all published content, invoicing conditional on subjective acceptance with no timeline, implicit editorial approval rights over both paid and value-added-service content, uncapped indemnity flowing FSA Section 133 obligations onto the Company as a non-financial institution, cross-border arbitration inappropriate for a Malaysia-Malaysia engagement.

The precedent read. The deal value was modest. The precedent value was not. Whatever terms the Company signed into this framework agreement would sit as reference for every subsequent the e-wallet operator buy, and - more importantly - would sit inside the Company's signed-agreement base as reference for other large regulated counterparties. Precedent value materially exceeded transaction value from the outset, which reshaped the negotiating posture entirely.

The architectural response. Rather than a clause-by-clause legal redline, I structured the response around six substantive principles: asset preservation (editorial independence, IP retention, and content corpus as the commercial asset); payment tied to objective delivery evidence, not client outcomes; VAS editorial independence as non-negotiable (the operational basis on which the flagship publication holds audience trust); IP treatment differentiated by work type; precedent value acknowledged explicitly in every position; and cordiality maintained as strategic discipline, not aesthetic. The redline addressed forty-plus clauses across the document, with margin notes making the reasoning visible to counterparty counsel. The intent was to make the substantive positions easy to internalise and defend upward, not hard.

The Clause 6.2 hold. The counterparty's counter-redline accepted most of the substantive rework - including the IP licence rewrite, the mutual indemnity framework, and the Schedule 3 attachment of the flagship publication's Premium & VAS Content Guidelines as contractually binding. They pushed back on four items. The most consequential was Clause 6.2 (payment triggering), which they reverted to subjective acceptance with no timeline. This was the position that would have created a precedent for indefinite payment deferral across every subsequent the e-wallet operator engagement and every large-counterparty framework thereafter.

The response was structured as a hard hold with process discipline. Internal alignment first - three functions (sales, editorial, ops/commercial) independently reaching the same conclusion before external response. Group oversight briefed on the record for awareness, not approval, so the position couldn't later be overridden without visibility of the second-order consequences. External response reframing the counterparty's "suggestion we are unable to accept" language as a substantive commercial position, not a negotiating opening. Firm on substance, warm on register, off-ramps left visible.

The counterparty softened within 48 hours through their Communications Associate Director, and a workable form was agreed - invoicing triggered by execution of the signed Inventory Order.

The second-attempt catch. The next counterparty revision reintroduced the same substance through more sophisticated drafting - four qualifications that individually looked reasonable but cumulatively recreated the subjective trigger. I named the reversion explicitly, accepted the counterparty's stated rationale as legitimate (they had a real concern about paying for defective deliverables), and rejected the drafting because it went beyond the stated rationale. The counterparty went internal, and returned with new drafting that landed exactly the position previously agreed - but relabelled with "written acceptance" language required by their Finance team's internal audit controls. I accepted the final wording verbatim. That was a deliberate choice - accepting verbatim preserved the counterparty's internal win, closed the deal, and deployed accumulated negotiation capital in the highest-value way. A single sentence in the accompanying email restated the shared understanding on the record.

The Legal review. Before signature I took the executed-ready draft to the Group Head of Legal for a final read, with a written brief setting out what had been negotiated, what had been conceded and why, the two clauses I most wanted checked, and full disclosure that Legal had been brought in late because the client's engagement was time-dependent. Her review returned six observations. Two were straightforward drafting improvements I accepted immediately and incorporated - a materiality qualifier on the termination trigger, and an assignment carve-out. On the other four I set out the commercial reasoning behind the positions as drafted: why the payment trigger held under our workflow where no campaign begins without a signed order, where the undefined term was in fact defined in the guidelines attached as a schedule, why I had scoped the regulatory secrecy obligation to information actually received rather than seeking a blanket undertaking, and why the portfolio-reference concession was acceptable on this deal shape though it would not be on a platform agreement. I invited her to reopen anything she still wanted reopened, while flagging honestly that reopening would cost the relationship and possibly the buy. Her reply cleared all four as drafted.

Outcome. Twenty-two days from original draft to final signature. Forty-plus substantive amendments through the initial redline. Six items subject to structured negotiation across three counter-redline rounds. All six landed at outcomes that preserved the substantive the Company position. The Agreement now governs both the specific SLFF campaign and the ongoing multi-year relationship. The precedent it sets across the Company's client portfolio is the Company-favourable: robust editorial independence, IP retention, decoupled payment structure, capped liability, mutual obligations, and Schedule 3 as binding operational reference. The counterparty's Communications Associate Director closed her final substantive email with: "*we're trying to land this as cleanly as possible... and we really appreciate your patience and understanding throughout the back-and-forth.*"

What this shows. Commercial architecture executed at precedent scale, in a live negotiation across three counter-redline rounds, against a counterparty fielding a CCO and two Associate Directors. The a five-figure value deal value is not the point. The framework it establishes across the next several years of large-counterparty engagement is.

Case Study 8 - A queue-management system - architecture as the deliverable (2025-2026)

The situation. A client's queue-management vendor was raising subscription pricing and forcing technical upgrades on them. They asked whether the capability could instead be built into the platform ecosystem I already ran for them. Replacing the vendor was the easy read; the harder question was whether an aftersales service lane - booking, check-in, reception, service advisers, workshop, parking, collection, each with its own operators, shortcuts and exceptions - could be modelled properly rather than merely digitised.

The long discovery. I walked the operation as a customer, then as each role: call centre, reception, service adviser, workshop, the parking vendor. What that surfaced was not features but exceptions - the key-drop customer who must be called to the counter before anything can proceed, the vehicle that arrives on a tow truck with no owner present, the car moved twice inside the workshop by technicians who are not the parking crew, the walk-in who joins a queue meant for a different department entirely and waits an hour for a number that was never coming.

What I built. A full working prototype - twenty-four modules, every role, every state - architected and built by me with AI, and behind it a documentation corpus of roughly 86,000 words across twenty-five documents. Its shape matters more than its size. Every module has a verify list written from the shipped build rather than from the spec, so the documentation describes what exists rather than what was intended. A reconciliation decisions log - the largest document in the corpus - records what was decided, why, and what it supersedes, and acts as the arbiter when two documents disagree. Superseded documents are not deleted but formally retired with the reasoning attached, because a stale plan written in the future tense is more dangerous than an obviously old one. And every behaviour is marked as either client-specific configuration or core product, so the deployment can be delivered without the product becoming bespoke to it.

The judgment calls. Several were governance rather than engineering. Vouchers: the client wanted staff able to redeem on a customer's behalf; I held that this destroys the customer's ability to dispute, then designed the middle path - redemption on behalf permitted, but reason-logged and notified to the customer with a route to report it. Consent: I raised that a consent recorded once and honoured forever is not consent, and that both withdrawal and the right to change one's mind need machinery. Retention: anonymise at two years of inactivity rather than delete, so operational history survives without the person in it. Every abnormal operator action - a queue bump, a reassignment, an override - requires a reason and is logged, because the point of an audit trail is the dispute you have not had yet. I also declined to generate a document the client's own system already produces, capturing its reference number instead: two sources of truth is worse than one inconvenience.

Outcome. Presented to the client's operational leadership and IT function, who described it as comprehensive and materially better suited to their business than the system it replaces. Feedback rounds are closed and the specification is signed off for build. The commercial position was structured deliberately: the core capability lands as an upgrade within the existing platform relationship at no additional cost, with the workshop-status extension scoped separately and priced as its own enhancement.

What this shows. The architecture, the discovery, the decisions and the handover artefacts were the deliverable - not the code. A system this size built solo, documented to the point where another team can pick it up cold, with the client-specific and productisable parts already separated. This is the clearest example I have of how I work: read the floor first, design for the exceptions, write down every decision and its reasoning, and leave behind something that does not depend on me being in the room.

Case Study 9 - An aftersales network - operational forensics and revenue reactivation (2025)

The problem as it actually was. Following a leadership transition at a joint-venture automotive aftersales network, monthly prepaid app-driven revenue collapsed by 93% - from six figures monthly to under RM10,000. The incoming operational team had concluded the app was a cost centre for distributing free vouchers and lacked the training to use its revenue features.

The architectural read. I bypassed the surface-level P&L complaints and ran a forensic audit on the database. The finding was that the technology hadn't failed - the operational execution had. Approximately 21,000 "ghost" users were sitting in the system, customers who had downloaded the app but been blocked from adding vehicles because the manual customer-service verification workflow that gated entry had broken down post-transition. The revenue wasn't lost. It was trapped behind a broken process.

What was resolved. A two-speed turnaround. On the technical side, I restructured the app entry architecture to allow Provisional Entry - removing the digital bottleneck and moving verification to the physical service counter where the staff and the customer were already meeting. On the operational side, I authored the strategic turnaround deck for the network's management, repositioning the app from a "loyalty tool" to the primary cash-flow engine the architecture was originally designed to be. I designed a geo-fenced traffic-control pilot, hard-coding employee-tier pricing to safely stress-test the service bays before opening the floodgates to the 21,000 dormant users.

What this shows. The 30/70 ratio in crisis mode. The 30% was changing the app's entry logic. The 70% was proving to a panicked executive team that their missing revenue was trapped behind their own broken processes - and giving them the exact operational roadmap to retrieve it.

Case Study 10 - Aftersales nudges - turning an unused capability into a billed service (2025–2026)

The situation. Every platform instance ships with full lifecycle-communication capability - push, in-app banners, inbox, email - on the operating premise that the client runs their own communications calendar. In practice, across every instance, clients and their agencies used it only for promotional and seasonal blasts, despite years of training sessions, strategy sessions and encouragement. The group's aftersales network's situation was sharper: a lean aftersales-focused team, with all marketing routed through a stretched group-wide function. The app had 20,000+ members and near-silence between promotions.

The read. An aftersales app is not a wallet or a social platform - installed, it is forgotten until the day it is needed, and on that day the customer is one search away from a competitor. What was missing was not campaigns but presence: the relational, top-of-mind register I call nudging. Nobody would resource it - so the gap was an opening.

What I did. I proposed running nudging end-to-end for one month, free: twice-weekly sends plus incidental occasions, covering the calendar, copy at four lengths, and all visuals to group CI - converting to a paid service at group rates if it worked. "We" was one person with AI. The system came first: a voice and tone rulebook built around a deliberate anti-hard-sell stance - weather, school holidays, petrol prices, how to read a worn tyre, what the dashboard lights mean - help first, the workshop visit left unsaid. Then a visual style book governing AI image generation. Calendar and copy ran through the content system; visuals through the style system; creative direction stayed human throughout, because AI proposes the predictable and the unexpected route is the human's job.

The outcome. Every nudge produced a visible same-day spike in app sessions - routinely three to five times the daily baseline, clearly distinguishable from the client's own seasonal campaign sends in the same period. The first management team reported that inbound calls tracked nudge topics before a team overhaul interrupted measurement continuity. The free month proved the model: from June 2025 the service billed at a modest monthly retainer and ran paid for thirteen months. I wound the engagement down in mid-2026 as the client's group budget priorities shifted - a commercial call, not a service one; the sessions data never stopped performing. The model is now productised: proposals to other instances at RM3,000–6,000 per month, with proposal mocks produced as real collateral through the same brief system, runnable by any one person with good creative judgment.

What this shows. Reading an organisational gap nobody owned, designing the register before the content, building the production system before producing - and converting a capability every client ignored into a revenue line. The 30/70 in miniature: the AI produced volume; the stance, the taste and the read of the customer's life were the 70 that made it land.

Case Study 11 - Data Intermediary Agreement - clause-level redline of an OEM-global agreement (2025)

The situation. The client's Data Intermediary Agreement descended from the OEM group's global data-governance guidelines. Rather than counter-sign, I reviewed it clause by clause and proposed amendments that strengthened it *for the client* while modernising it: a recognised-standards acknowledgment (ISO/IEC 27001, GDPR-aligned) mapped against local PDPA obligations; an approved-sub-processor framework - covering cloud, automation, and AI tooling - replacing a blanket sub-contracting prohibition that no modern digital stack could honour; secure deletion with a formal Certificate of Deletion in place of "returning" digital data (which only multiplies copies and risk); a partnership review mechanism for new data policies; a Data Processing Addendum; and balanced liability terms. The amendments were reviewed and accepted by the client - including their Data Protection Officer - and the client floated them as a template for its other vendors. In parallel I structured the commercial addendum to retain the Company's software ownership under a subscription model and to build in defined exit clauses.

Proactive advisory. Volunteered, beyond scope, a forward list of improvements to the client's own internal data-handling governance across the app ecosystem - access controls and download auditability on customer data - positioning the Company as the data-privacy subject-matter partner ahead of the client's third-party assessment cycle. Repeated the pattern in 2026 ahead of a subsequent internal PDPA audit, producing a structured multi-system briefing paper covering every system the Company provides to the client - per-system strengths and gaps, operational recommendations, and framing advice for the auditor - including flagging the Company's own access role as a control gap worth naming to the auditor. The client's data-protection function has treated the advisory relationship as continuous.

What this shows. Governance, legal, and commercial architecture executed live and in the client's interest - turning a compliance formality into a position of advisory authority, and protecting the Company's IP and exit position at the same time.

Case Study 12 - A conglomerate motor group - multi-year group media commitment (2020–present)

The architectural read. I took a single-entity commercial buy and rebuilt it into a direct group commitment, each operating unit holding its own sub-allocation against a single committed group wallet. I authored the mechanics that made it hold: fixed instalments against the commitment, a tiered commitment-discount structure anchored to net revenue, and consolidated group-level reporting.

The governance underneath it. The structure runs on infrastructure I authored: the rate cards, the standard Master Service Agreement, and the editorial and value-added-service content policies that govern what we will and won't do without compromising publication independence.

Outcome. A seven-figure annual commitment, renewed year on year since 2020, spanning up to ten operating units under one group structure.

Case Study 13 - The automotive ad network commercial layer (2014–present)

Scope. I run the commercial layer of the Company's publisher business - pricing policy, discount governance, proposal sign-off on what's being offered (not just the document but the deal structure), and first-draft commercial agreements alongside group legal where they need to meet business and relationship reality. I'm the escalation point when commercial policy is ambiguous or a deal needs reshaping mid-flight.

Anchor relationships. A global insurer was an anchor client across more than five years of renewals, dating from the first year after the vehicle-database platform launched. The relationship was close enough that the CEO, then a co-director, remarked on the unusual ease of my engagement with their senior team. Pre-the Company, during the initial detariffication of Malaysian motor insurance, I led an exploration with a partner brokerage and active engagement across the major motor insurers - a B2C lifestyle engagement layer for motor insurance, pre-AI, designed in 2018. The architectural thinking - service-first not product-first, education as the trust mechanism, modular extension into adjacent verticals - predates the current generative AI wave by six years.

What this shows. Commercial governance executed without a procurement function above me, without a deal desk, and without a CFO between me and the agreement. Everything held - pricing integrity, contract structure, renewal economics - because the architecture was right and the relationships were real.

Case Study 14 - Revenue operations - the commercial ledger under the deals (2014–present)

The situation. The publisher business runs with no finance-operations function between the sales team and issued revenue. For roughly nine years from when I joined, I personally generated every invoice the business issued - campaign IOs, SaaS subscriptions, project fees, renewals, and the seven-figure the conglomerate group reconciliation, all of it. By 2018, only two people in the company issued invoices: the CEO and me. Mine were recognisable from the layout alone - line items split by service type, IO and BO numbers carried into the line items themselves from the first invoice I issued, the structure designed for traceability under audit, dispute, or downstream reconciliation. The handoff of invoice issuance to a dedicated finance team member happened in 2024 when the system migrated to the group's ERP stack. The architecture, the reconciliation discipline, the tax treatment logic, and the handoff workflow itself remained mine.

The tax layer. Underneath the invoicing was the tax treatment that nobody else in the company carried operationally. I went for the GST training when it was first implemented in 2015, then carried the company through the SST transition in 2018 - the Group G versus Group I distinctions, the inter-industry exemptions (media-to-media no SST, media-to-client SST applies), the foreign-services exemptions for cross-border sales, the eventual digital tax and Facebook withholding tax additions. By the second year of SST, the CEO himself was asking me about treatment on specific deals. I built the calculators the team uses for Facebook boost pricing (inclusive of management fee, agency commission, 10% withholding tax citing Section 107A CP 37A, and 8% digital tax). I documented the scenarios - agencies, principals, photography services, events vendors - so the sales team could answer client questions without escalation. The tax mastery was self-taught through operational necessity and twelve years of cross-checking against accountants.

The system today. Each week, three sales managers submit pipeline lists. I reconcile them against a master invoicing jobsheet - monthly tabs, a fixed multi-field structure carrying every campaign from signed IO through to issued invoice reference, with tax treatment governed per transaction: 8% SST for direct clients, Group I Services exemption for qualifying agency bookings, and exported-service exemption for foreign clients. In parallel I run a forward pipeline that prorates retainer commitments across remaining contract months and tracks ad-hoc project revenue - a live month-by-month view of committed and forecast revenue across the whole book.

The handoff architecture. When invoice issuance moved to the finance manager in 2024, I designed the workflow that gates the handoff: a weekly Larksheet where I upload PO/BO and signed IO, the finance manager creates the invoice in the ERP and puts it back, and I send it out. The reason I held the issuance and dispatch step rather than passing the whole chain to sales-direct-to-the finance manager is structural - sales tends to take shortcuts (signed IOs not collected, cc loops missed), each invoice carries nuance the issuer needs to preserve, and the translation from IO to invoice is faster when someone with full context processes it first. Same logic applied to the digital side - monthly jobsheet updates that feed the finance manager's invoice creation.

The discipline. The work lives in the reconciliation: catching a single campaign booked under two different names across two managers' lists before it doubles an invoice; catching a transposed invoice reference pointing at an unrelated prior-year document; flagging an IO date error before it ships. The seven-figure the conglomerate group wallet is reconciled inside this same system - each operating unit's draws tracked against one committed group wallet, with overutilisation charges raised when an OU exceeds allocation.

What this shows. Commercial architecture, tax operations, and revenue integrity are the same job. The deal does not exist until the ledger says it does. The ledger only stays clean because someone is doing the reconciliation discipline weekly. The tax treatment only holds because someone has read the underlying regulations and translated them into operational rules. For nine years I was that someone for issuance and for tax. The handoff was designed to preserve the structure when I stopped doing the routine work.

Case Study 15 - The commercial governance system (2024–present)

The problem as it actually was. The Company runs a publisher business with no procurement function, no deal desk, and no CFO between the commercial lead and the signed agreement. The knowledge of how to hold non-negotiable lines lived almost entirely in my head - a single-point-of-failure that would have evaporated the day I left.

What was built. I codified the recurring patterns into a structured agreements-review framework: a non-negotiables register tied to operational rationale, counterparty-pushback decision trees, pre-built commercial counter-drafts, and an institutional case-study library. This created a reusable governance kit that the team - and increasingly an AI layer I run alongside it - can operate from.

What this shows. The same instinct as the product and people work, applied to commercial knowledge: take capability that lives in one person's head and give it a structure that outlives them.