

GEN DAWSON

CAREER PORTFOLIO

Fractional AI Enablement and Change Management Lead | Business Operations Lead

"I find where a team's lost the thread, and I rally them back around the goal."

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PROFESSIONAL NARRATIVE

Companies bring me in when there is a specific gap: a team adopting AI faster than they can absorb it, a leadership transition without a named successor, a team scaling faster than its systems can keep up with, or a function nobody has had time to build properly. I walk in, diagnose what is actually broken, and fix it without a long ramp-up.

But the system is only half the job. Across Microsoft's enterprise organization, I built frameworks, programs, and governance structures designed to be handed off and run by others, from an AI upskilling program that grew from one team to three organizations, to an OKR framework the team kept using after its tracking platform was retired, to a global administrative network grown from one person to 135. None of that happens without finding where people have lost the thread between each other or the goal and rallying them back around it so the work gets done together.

Nearly 20 of those years were spent in the executive suite, first as the operational partner behind one leader's full ascent from GM to EVP, then running enterprise programs from within the executive office. Once I commit to a scope of work, I see it through, whether the engagement runs six months or six years.

After over 20 years inside one organization, I am ready to bring that same approach to different industries, different problems, and different teams. I am available for fractional engagements in AI enablement and change management, non-technical program management, and business operations lead work: short-term and part-time, remote or hybrid.

This portfolio outlines the signature work behind that track record.

CURRENT PRACTICE

Founder | Strategy, Operations, and Executive Coaching Consultant

Genise Dawson LLC | Remote | December 2014 - Present

- Provide operations strategy, program design, and executive coaching consulting for growth-stage businesses and emerging leaders using a Build, Launch, Scale framework
- Serve clients across education, beauty, federal contracting, and real estate sectors
- Executive coaching clients include National Chairpersons of the Board for the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), supporting organization-wide board leadership

FRACTIONAL SERVICES

Short-term contracts and extended retainers for businesses that need to run with less oversight from the owner, without adding headcount.

- Non-technical Program Management: for work spread across people and tools with no one owning the whole picture. I set up the plan, owners, check-ins and reporting rhythm, then run it with your team. Time each week is set in the consult.
- AI Adoption & Enablement: for teams unsure where to start with AI and automation. Two-week project at about 8 to 12 hours a week, then optional support at 5 hours a month.
- Change Management: for a move, reorg or new system with skeptical or uninformed people. I use the ADKAR approach to build awareness, bring skeptics in early, and set up follow-up so the change sticks. Time each week is set in the consult.

FRACTIONAL OFFER: AI ADOPTION PACKAGE

A two-week engagement for small teams that know they should be using AI and automation and are not sure where to start. I find the repetitive or dropped work costing you time, match each gap to the right tool, and write a plan your team can follow.

- Gap assessment: review of current processes and feedback, with access to the people who run them
- Right-fit recommendations: each gap matched to an AI tool, automation, or process change, favoring fixes that avoid a new hire
- Written playbook: what happens and when, reviewed together before handoff
- Handoff: a walkthrough with your team, then the playbook is yours to run
- Investment: \$3,250 fixed fee for about two weeks, with an optional 3-month support retainer (5 hours a month)

SIGNATURE ACHIEVEMENTS

Scaling Microsoft's First AI Skills Accelerator

Business Program Manager / February 2025 - April 2026

Co-led Microsoft's first AI Skills Accelerator within the E+D organization, alongside the director of learning, who owned the curriculum. I owned the operational back end and wrote the operating playbook: promotions, communications, recruiting subject matter experts, office hours, the sign-up website, and community cultivation. I scheduled and templated the recurring work and used weekly feedback surveys to see what participants were retaining, so a new cohort could be run without rebuilding the structure each time.

- Scope: Started with a first cohort capped at about 100 people, then expanded to three organizations, including one of 60,000+ employees, with a global waitlist
- Participation: About 550 registered in the largest cohort (approximate)
- Completion: About 40% finished at least 75% of the course, ranging up to the mid-50s in some cohorts, against a 25 to 30% baseline for optional programs with no penalty for dropping out

- Engagement: Moved from one project post per cohort to scheduled prompts for every member; in one cohort of roughly 500, about 20 to 25% liked, commented, or joined conversations (approximate)
- Efficiency Gain: Weekly prep time cut from 8 hours to 3 through templating and scheduling

Building AI Agents for Early Talent Programs

Business Program Manager / Microsoft

Built AI agents in Microsoft Copilot Studio for the intern and early-in-career programs I ran, to help people find resources and get their questions answered.

Aligning Cross-Business Programs and Closing Onboarding Gaps

Business Program Manager / Microsoft

Built two structured tools that gave leadership a clear view across a nine-business-group organization: an inventory and overlap matrix that aligned competing intern-season program plans before they reached participants, and a gap-analysis heat map, built as execution partner on the organization's global onboarding playbook, that showed the executive office where to invest against a research-backed early-attrition risk. Both stories involve internal stakeholders rather than external customer accounts, and are framed that way.

- Cross-Business Alignment: Built an inventory and overlap matrix populated by a virtual team of program managers representing all nine business groups, used to decide which summer programs to scale, resize, or cut before the intern season timeline locked
- Onboarding Gap Analysis: Took inventory of onboarding programs and roadmaps across the organization and built a heat map showing the executive office exactly where to plug in missing programs or enhance legacy ones
- Framing: Execution partner and analysis owner on both initiatives, not the overall program owner

Leading Change Management for a \$100M Campus Renovation

Senior Executive Assistant / Global Operations Leader / 2015

Led change management, alongside Real Estate & Facilities, for a \$100 million, nine-month campus renovation in 2015 affecting roughly 1,700 employees, including 950-plus engineers across nine product groups, in an organization of just under 5,000. It was the first core engineering team introduced to this open-space model. I applied the ADKAR model on the job and built a change network, the work input team, from the most vocal skeptics and the most invested voices, along with Real Estate & Facilities, HR, Legal, and the CFO, rather than working around them. Skeptics visited renovated buildings and used the spaces themselves, so they could picture their own team in them. Input team members carried communications and feedback to their teams and prepared them for the move to swing space. After the move, we researched call-space solutions, handed out equipment, and gave people a 90-day window to adjust. I am currently pursuing Prosci certification.

- Approval Rating: 67% in a post-move survey run by Real Estate & Facilities about 90 days after completion, with roughly a 35% response rate (approximate), among a historically skeptical population
- Approach: Respected every stakeholder's position, and challenged it directly when fear or limiting beliefs, not facts, were driving resistance

Delivering a Government-Contract Datacenter and SCIF Build

Senior Executive Assistant / Global Operations Leader | 2010 - 2013

Served as the point of contact between the dedicated Service Engineer team and Real Estate & Facilities to plan and build a datacenter and SCIF required to meet the terms of a government contract. Owned the datacenter build end to end with a small team. On the SCIF, owned all planning up to the point requiring full security clearance: location selection, hardware and materials planning and ordering, room specs and requirements, seat allocation, budget tracking, and access list management. Held interim (tentative) clearance status, including required security training, to remain involved through that phase of the project.

- Scope: Datacenter (control center) at approximately 1,800 sq ft; SCIF at approximately 10,000 sq ft, both retrofitted space
- Purpose: Datacenter built to monitor Office 365 service delivery for dedicated and non-dedicated customers against a strict internal satisfaction requirement set by leadership
- Outcome: Delivered on time with 100% of approvals secured, coming in under budget by approximately 11% by repurposing space and materials already planned for another build-out
- Precision: Held seat allocation within headcount plan with a 2% buffer for churn and turnover

Leading Talent and Org Integration Across Multiple Acquisitions

Senior Executive Assistant / Global Operations Leader

Led integration of newly acquired companies into the organization, including Accompli, Sunrise, and Yammer. Decided where acquired roles fit within the existing org structure and which teams they moved into, assessed acquired admin talent to determine how their support would flow once integrated, and trained incoming staff on how the organization worked and its internal tools.

Owning Enterprise Event & Communications Infrastructure

Senior Executive Assistant through Business Program Manager

Produced All Hands Meetings and Town Halls across two organizational scales. As Senior Executive Assistant, ran smaller Town Halls for a roughly 3,000-person organization on a \$5,000 internal production budget. As the organization grew past 40,000 people, took on full All Hands Meeting production, budget scaling from \$400,000 to \$1.4 million alongside headcount. Ran two distinct formats: Town Halls, built around the executive's direct vision-setting and live Q&A, and Town Squares, product showcases, customer stories, and Fix Hack Learn results tied

to organizational initiatives. Also built the organization's full communications calendar, including cascading communication plans ("Tic Toks") mapping sender, audience, timing, and cascade owner down to the first-line senior leader.

- Separately: Sole producer of an enterprise-wide annual event for three consecutive years within a \$50,000 budget, achieving 112% attendance

Building the 7-Pillar OKR Framework

Business Program Manager / 2018 - 2026

Built a 7-pillar OKR framework with 3 to 5 KPIs per pillar, used for quarterly senior leadership reporting across nine business groups. The framework proved durable enough that the team continued the methodology manually after the underlying tracking platform was retired, without missing a reporting cycle.

Growing E+D Blacks at Microsoft (BAM) and Driving Product Impact

Co-Founder and Chair / August 2019 - June 2024

Co-founded E+D BAM with 19 founding members, growing membership to 550+ during a Chair tenure that achieved 98% OKR completion and 20% sustained engagement. Co-led the Big BAM Brainstorm (B3) initiative in 2020, organizing roughly 20 community-driven focus groups with 60-plus participants across Microsoft. B3 directly contributed to two shipped Microsoft product features: the emoji skin tone selector in Teams, and the name pronunciation recording feature in SharePoint, both used by hundreds of millions of people today.

- Mentor Ring Growth: Founded and scaled a mentorship program within BAM: 30 participants in Year 1 (2022), growing 167% to 80 in Year 2 (2023), then growing another 96% to 157 in Year 3 (2024)

Executive Partnership & Operations Leadership

Served as the operational partner behind one leader's full ascent from GM to EVP across four organizations, as the division scaled from approximately 300 to 40,000 employees. Owned scheduling strategy, pre-read preparation, and on-site executive handling for reviews reaching the CEO's office. Held full operating budget authority that scaled from \$500,000 to \$10 million as Senior Executive Assistant, allocated and tracked across approximately 8 to 9 teams; managed program budget separately as Business Program Manager, from \$100,000 down to \$50,000 following organization-wide budget cuts. Grew a global administrative network from 1 to 135 professionals over 9 years, with full hire-to-exit performance authority over 9 direct reports.

SPEAKING, MEDIA & COMMUNITY INFLUENCE

- Featured Interview, Bold Journey Magazine (February 2025): reflections on work ethic, authenticity, adaptability, and mentorship
- Co-Host, Chief and Assist Podcast (2023-Present, currently on hiatus): exploring the partnership between Chiefs of Staff and Executive Assistants, 12 episodes recorded, combined 40+ years of hosting experience

- Speaker, Ultimate Admin Conference (September 2025, Chandler, AZ): delivered a training session on Microsoft Copilot in the context of executive assistant and administrative professional roles, with attendees joining globally
- Represented Microsoft at the NSBE Regional Conference (Pittsburgh, 2019): assessed 40+ candidates, generating 26 fly-ins and 22 offers from a single event
- Represented E+D BAM at the NASDAQ Bell Ringing event

TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS

AI power user: Claude, Claude Design, Claude Cowork, ChatGPT/OpenAI, Gemini, Perplexity, Microsoft Copilot, Microsoft Copilot Studio.

Power user: Microsoft 365 (Copilot, Loop, Forms, SharePoint, Teams Live Events), Microsoft Project, Microsoft Planner, Power BI (10+ years, self-built dashboards), Power Automate.

Hands-on: iCIMS, SuccessFactors, Qualtrics, Google Workspace, Canva, MS Designer, Asana, Notion, HubSpot, Salesforce, Squarespace, Monday.com.

CERTIFICATIONS AND EDUCATION

- Chief of Staff Certified Professional - Chief of Staff Academy
- Certified Project Manager (CPM) - eCornell University
- AI for Business and Prompt Engineering - Quantum Leap Academy

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