

EDWARD J. LAURENT, PhD

Atlanta, GA · spatial.ed@gmail.com · (404) 661-4211 · [linkedin.com/in/spatialed](https://www.linkedin.com/in/spatialed)

SENIOR TECHNICAL PROGRAM MANAGER · ENTERPRISE AI ADOPTION · AI PRODUCT

PROFILE

I am the hub of generative AI adoption across a retail IT department serving seven national brands, and I administer the POS ecosystem across three of them on Toast, Aloha, Qu Beyond, and Olo. I work with subject matter experts to surface automation opportunities, refine the operational requirements that come back, and carry the cost and benefit case to leadership. Before this I deployed Toast across 16 stores in a single day and configured ERP across thousands of SKUs. I have also owned software end to end: Griffin Groups, a B2B collaboration platform delivered to 2,300 users across 800+ tickets and 30+ sprints, and WorkOutput, a generative AI decision-support product I took from concept to GPT to SaaS. The constant is not the team structure. It is that I shape what gets built and then make sure it ships, whether the work is mine or spread across organizations that share no chain of command.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Enterprise AI Adoption and AI Product: Use case identification and prioritization; AI enablement curriculum design and delivery; prompt engineering standards and decision hygiene; workflow automation with Claude and Claude Code; verification protocols and human decision rights; LLM product design, multi-agent architecture, and concept-to-alpha delivery.

Technical Program Management: Cross-functional and cross-organizational program delivery; Agile release planning and sprint execution across 800+ tickets and 30+ sprints; dependency mapping and status reporting cadence; stakeholder management and requirements intake where priorities conflict; multi-site rollout, UAT, and go-live; escalation management; full software development lifecycle ownership; consensus with no shared chain of command.

Product Management: 0-to-1 delivery from concept to launch; roadmap, PRDs, and OKRs; product narrative and executive buy-in; launch, iteration, and retirement.

Technical: APIs, connectors, and third-party integrations; store rollout and go-live; multi-brand data integrity; graph schema and taxonomy design; ERP (Microsoft Dynamics); Google Analytics; Jira, Figma, Airtable, Asana.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Retail Technology Administrator

GoTo Foods (Cinnabon, Auntie Anne's, Jamba, Carvel, McAlister's Deli, Schlotzsky's, Moe's) · Atlanta, GA | Jul 2023 – Present

- Administer a centralized POS and online ordering database serving seven national and international brands for a \$6B franchisor with thousands of franchised locations. Team lead for Schlotzsky's, prior administrator for Jamba, supporting administrator across the remaining brands.
- Administer the Toast, Aloha, Qu Beyond, and Olo platforms. Delivered 50+ store builds and 100+ menu builds.
- Resolved 1,000+ escalations involving pricing logic, data integrity, and third-party integrations.
- Asked by the Senior Director of Product to establish an AI knowledge baseline for the 20-person retail IT department. Authored the internal curriculum covering prompt engineering standards and AI decision hygiene, and now serve as the team's first call for automation ideas and build guidance.
- Work with subject matter experts to surface automation opportunities, apply Claude and Claude Code against them, refine the operational requirements that come back, and carry the cost and benefit case to leadership in terms the business acts on.
- Coordinate system strategy and menu architecture across marketing, brand, app, and loyalty teams, holding data integrity and a consistent guest experience where requirements conflict.
- Run biweekly brand alignment check-ins for the Schlotzsky's Deli brand teams, maintain per-ticket status updates, and route menu changes through brand UAT before release.
- Produced 20+ knowledge base articles that reduced repeat escalations across all brands.

Founder and Product Owner

WaleAI LLC · Atlanta, GA | 2025 – Present

- Took WorkOutput, a generative AI decision-support product, from concept to functioning SaaS alpha. Owned problem definition, product narrative, roadmap, and iteration.
- Shipped a first version to the GPT Store, then rebuilt on Claude to sustain state and governance across long-running workflows.
- Designed a multi-agent architecture with routing between agents and governance gates that enforce decision structure before output, addressing model drift and artifact overload. These are the failure modes that surface when generative AI moves from demo to production.
- Designed AI with Love, a twelve-session applied AI program covering prompting, workflow automation, verification protocols, and human decision rights. Curriculum complete, launch pending.

Project and Operations Manager

Arden's Garden · Atlanta, GA | May 2017 – Jul 2023

- Co-managed daily operations across two food manufacturing facilities and 18 retail locations.
- Deployed Toast POS across 16 stores in a single day with no downtime. Mapped dependencies across hardware procurement, configuration, staff training, and go-live sequencing to hold a single-day cutover.
- Led digital transformation for a fast-growing wholesale and retail food manufacturer: transitioned POS across the retail footprint, configured Microsoft Dynamics ERP across thousands of SKUs and vendor relationships, and replaced printed menu boards with a centrally managed digital menu architecture.
- Lead responder for three consecutive passed USDA and Georgia Department of Agriculture audits. HACCP and PCQI certified Food Safety Officer.

Executive Director and Product Owner

Connecting Conservation · Atlanta, GA | Nov 2012 – May 2017

- Delivered Griffin Groups, a B2B collaboration and knowledge platform, from concept to production for 2,300+ users across federal agencies, NGOs, and universities. Ran release planning and dependency tracking across 800+ Jira tickets and 30+ sprints.
- Secured buy-in across organizations with no common chain of command by translating competing requirements into a single shared roadmap.
- Owned requirements, user stories, and product direction, setting priority from user interviews, usage data, and co-authored needs assessments rather than feature count. Scoped and delivered 30+ platform plugins.
- Founded and led the organization, sustained by roughly \$200K per year in federal and state grants and contracts. Owned strategy, budget, hiring, and board reporting alongside product.

Beta Tester and Contract Schema Designer

Freebase · Metaweb Technologies, then Google · Remote | 2008 – 2013

- Five years testing the open structured knowledge base acquired by Google in 2010. Under paid contract, designed the graph database type and property models. Freebase supplied both the schema architecture and the seed data for the Google Knowledge Graph.

Science Coordinator

American Bird Conservancy · Atlanta, GA | Mar 2008 – Sep 2013

- Facilitated national technical working groups spanning federal agencies, state programs, and NGO partners to set shared monitoring priorities and reach consensus on data standards. No participant reported to any other.
- Project lead on national recommendations for standardizing sampling grids in avian monitoring, adopted by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative.
- Designed and managed the databases, GIS systems, and land cover mapping products supporting multi-agency coordination and species-habitat analysis.

Earlier Roles

NC State University · Michigan State · Purdue | 1998 – 2008

- Postdoctoral Wildlife Habitat Modeler, NC State (2005–2008): multi-state species distribution and land cover modeling from Landsat imagery. Taught a doctoral-level modeling course.

EARLIER PRODUCTS BUILT

- LitCentral (2005–2008): species-of-concern habitat-association citation database. Designed and built the full Microsoft Access application at NC State, including the data model, entry forms, and reporting views.
- HABICLASS (2000–2005): satellite image interpretation software applying cross-validation and statistical models to reduce classification bias. Published in Remote Sensing of Environment.

EDUCATION AND CREDENTIALS

Ph.D. Fisheries and Wildlife, Michigan State University · M.S. Biology, Purdue University · B.S. Biology, Virginia Tech

Google Project Management Certificate (152 hrs) · Introduction to Structured Decision Making, US FWS (36 hrs) · HACCP and PCQI Food Safety · 25+ peer-reviewed publications, 600+ citations, h-index 10 · NASA Earth System Science Fellowship