

Christopher Neels

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Summary

Chris is a strategist, technologist, entrepreneur, writer, and artist. Currently, Chris is an innovation strategist at Idea Couture—a global top-tier strategic innovation firm—where he helps Fortune 500 companies navigate emerging technologies, design human-centric offerings, and build new businesses. He brings six years of experience across a wide array of domains, working with global companies and organizations including FedEx, Ford, SAP, BlackBerry, Tyson, TELUS, J.M. Smucker, Vale, Petro-Canada, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Chris writes for MISC Magazine on topics pertaining to innovation, economics, technology, and design. He also serves as an advisor for Farmkart, Housing Matters, and ArtsPond. In his free time, Chris works on a variety of creative endeavours, most recently an art installation providing a critical lens on the proliferation of smartphones.

Expertise: Strategy (product innovation, foresight, business model design), Operations (process modeling, operating model design, financial modeling, lean/agile transformation planning), Analytics (advanced SQL, R, Python, BI tools)

Canadian citizen with ability to work in the United States.

Education

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (Sep 2009-May 2014) – Vancouver

- Honours Bachelor of Commerce (GPA 3.7/4.0), Business Technology Management and Accounting
- Received First Class Honours distinction during exchange at University of Manchester
- Awarded 10 scholarships totalling \$17,000, including the national Governor General's Bronze Medal

Professional Experience

INNOVATION STRATEGIST – IDEA COUTURE (Jun 2016-present) – Toronto

- Managed a cross-disciplinary team of designers, anthropologists, futurists, engineers, and analysts
- Developed a 10-15 year customer experience strategy for an integrated oil and gas producer
- Led creation of three blockchain prototypes for a global meat producer reinventing their end-to-end supply chain
- Outlined design opportunities for the 2020 Ford Mustang by working with an interdisciplinary team

COFOUNDER – POLIS FINANCE (Feb 2017-Nov 2017) – Toronto

- Built proof of concept, pitch deck, and investor materials for a shared equity solution for residential real estate
- Engaged Canadian financial regulators and law firms to determine constraints, features, and approach for product

CONSULTANT – DELOITTE CONSULTING (Sep 2014-May 2016) – Toronto

- Conducted due diligence and developed an operating model for a \$2B credit card issuer M&A deal
- Established the creation and operations of a \$600,000 internal incubation fund
- Liaised with executives and wrote user stories for Canada's first digital insurance solution
- Structured and analyzed operational and safety data of global mining company working with team of data scientists

PROJECT MANAGEMENT ANALYST – SAP (Jan 2013-Sep 2013) – Vancouver

- Invented and prepared patent application for scalable data visualization model for 20+ variables
- Drove transparency in development across four global development sites of \$1B portfolio by providing 15 analytics dashboards to project managers and the chief-operating officer of the business intelligence division

PROCESS COORDINATOR – BLACKBERRY (May 2012-Dec 2012) – Waterloo

- Nominated for 2012 Co-op of the Year Award for completing work of three full-time employees, and persuading management to adopt a roadmap of process compliance initiatives for global datacentre hardware

Advisory Work

- Advisor, Farmkart (2018-present): Supporting the strategy of a \$20MM Indian agritech startup
- Advisor, Housing Matters (2018-present): Guiding policy paper on densification for the Premier's Office of Ontario
- Board Member, ArtsPond (2017-present): Advisory on a social impact gentrification project designed for artists
- Associate Partner, Social Venture Partners (2015-2016): Led engagement with Every1Games, a non-profit that teaches video game development to teens and young adults on the autism spectrum