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THE COMPRESSION LAYER · MEMORY AS MOAT · FORWARD
DEPLOYED

Sydney · Australia

Nicholas Croft is the Fulfilment Architect: the operator who enters creative, enterprise, and commercial environments at the moment a new technological paradigm emerges, and operationalises it end-to-end.

Three times across thirty years the pattern has repeated at institutional scale. Desktop publishing into Sydney's top-tier agencies, and typographic lead on the winning Sydney 2000 Olympic Bid Books. Digital production as the youngest Regional CTO in Batey Ads Singapore's history, converting an \$800K operational deficit to \$2M profit in eighteen months. The Standard Operating Environment that scaled Batey Kazoo from \$6M to \$60M in billings, briefed directly to Sir Martin Sorrell at WPP.

AI is the fourth paradigm — not different in kind, different in magnitude. In an AI era, memory replaced the model as the moat: the model is rented and identical for everyone, while the working intelligence layered on top is proprietary and compounds. Nicholas is the founder who builds that layer. At Nude Dog he owns Dimension 10, Systems Architecture & Infrastructure, the substrate that lets five founders operate like fifty and turns internal leverage into the firm's most defensible asset.

The move now has an industry name. The **Forward Deployed Engineer**, the senior operator who embeds inside an organisation and ships production-grade capability against its real problems, is the fastest-growing role in enterprise technology, hired now at Anthropic, OpenAI, and Palantir. It is the exact move Nicholas has run since before it had a name, across three prior paradigms.

And it is not notional. A portfolio of engagements, some shipped this year, some held for two decades, evidences the compression layer operating now, from an ASX-listed group's cyber-resilience posture to a fine-art photographer's collector engine. All of it runs on one substrate: **AgenticOS**, the file-based agentic operating system Nicholas built to make the move repeatable.

I THE OPERATING MOVE

Scout. Filter. Translate. Codify. A single move, run four times across four paradigms.

Scout. A daily scan of the frontier, the MCP registry, Anthropic's release notes on a roughly ten-day cadence, community tooling that surfaced overnight, hunting the capability that was impossible forty-eight hours ago.

Filter. Ninety percent is demo-ware that collapses at the edge cases every real engagement hits by the second afternoon. Read the remaining ten percent against one question: what would this do for the team, on Tuesday.

Translate. Convert the answer into three deployable artifacts, a tool, a workflow, and a procedure, that land in Tuesday-afternoon work. One deployment a week is a strong pace. Two is exceptional.

Codify. Build the substrate the team never notices it is standing on: domain encoding, workflow calibration, behavioural relationship, and demonstrated capability, four layers of working intelligence that travel across employees, sessions, and model versions, and compound outside any one person's tabs.

The governing law is simple: chat is memory, files are truth. When a chat and a file disagree, the file wins, and the AI becomes a worker inside a system of record rather than a goldfish with a keyboard. Friction is the receipt. When a new hire's AI feels smarter on day one than the industry average, the substrate is working, and senior operators, freed from administrative recursion, return to the judgment and taste the firm hired them for. Attention returned, not minutes saved.

Per the Nude Dog Founding Team Coherence Analysis: Dimension 10 owner, Systems Architecture & Infrastructure.

II THE OPERATING SYSTEM

The compression layer is not a talent. It is a system, and the system is inspectable.

AgenticOS is a file-based agentic operating system for running an AI-native practice, a bootable machine whose substrate happens to be markdown. It is deployed, versioned, and running live client engagements now, and it is the proof the rest of this document rests on: the internal architecture, made external and openable.

The doctrine. Three canonical documents govern everything. A five-tier Filing Doctrine where indexes point but never hold content. A Swarm Worker Contract, one line load-bearing: the orchestrator holds all judgment, the worker holds thoroughness. A Living-Instruction Doctrine, where every instruction carries a supersede-me clause because a better reader may replace it.

The execution model. Judgment and labour are split. One strong model orchestrates and holds the plan; squads of cheaper models do the bulk work under a fixed contract; verification is always done by a fresh agent that never saw the plan. The paranoia is a feature, and it has already caught the orchestrator treating a superseded version as current.

The Engagement OS. A portable ten-stage client lifecycle, at v3.0, with forward and retrofit modes, an auditable done-when test at every stage, and a lessons ledger. It is how a one-person practice runs like a firm, and a five-person founding team runs like fifty.

The signature methods. The gift, a finished, deployed artifact delivered carrying zero ask. The cold-read audit, three fresh-eyes personas run over any work before it ships. The briefing entity, a single document that is simultaneously the pitch, the session engine, and its own knowledge base.

This is the operating system the engagement portfolio below runs on. It is portable across verticals, from an ASX-listed cloud estate to a fine-art collector base, and where Nicholas backs it hardest, he prices his own compensation on its results.

III CORE COMPETENCIES

Scout · Filter · Translate · Codify. Daily scan of Anthropic's roughly ten-day release cadence and the MCP ecosystem. Disciplined filtering against deployment-readiness, not novelty. Codification into compounding substrate: dynamic SOPs, skills libraries, and persistent-context architecture that travels across employees, sessions, and model versions.

Agentic systems architecture. Multi-agent orchestration with split judgment and labour and fresh-agent verification. File-based agentic operating systems. Named delivery pipelines: an eight-agent website-commission pipeline shipping at Lighthouse ≥ 95 , and a research-swarm dossier machine, one frontier orchestrator over ten extraction agents, producing a verified brief in under thirty minutes.

Institutional-scale systems transformation. End-to-end production infrastructure and Standard Operating Environment design. P&L-impacting operational transformation across multi-country, multi-phase engagements. Enterprise cloud migration and security-posture architecture on live, listed P&Ls. Longitudinal stewardship measured in decades, not quarters.

Creative-technical bilingualism. Typography, visual identity, and corporate-identity architecture at Macquarie, ANZ, and Transfield tier. Fluency across the full design-to-

infrastructure gradient. The origin of the pattern: desktop publishing into Sydney's top-tier agencies at nineteen.

IV THE EVIDENCE — ENGAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

The moat, made external and inspectable. Founder-grade counterparts, enterprise scale, live timelines. Each engagement is an instance of the same operating move at a different altitude, all running on one operating system.

#	Engagement	Arena	The proof
01	Gowings Bros	ASX-listed group, est. 1868	SHI's on-prem blade estate migrated to cloud; two security perimeters unified into one Zero-Trust posture across four jurisdictions
02	Rebel Playground	Events vendor to a big-four bank	Bank-grade privacy governance (APRA CPS 234 / Privacy Act) delivered to a business of one
03	The One Centre	Brand-strategy firm	20+ years of continuous systems stewardship across four platform generations
04	Unstress Health · Dr Ron Ehrlich	600-episode health-media business	18-automation pipeline; returns 8-12 hrs/week; stands in for a \$280-380K composite role
05	Leila Jeffreys	Internationally collected fine artist	Five-system collector engine on a performance fee, paid only on net-new revenue above baseline
06	AEIC	Nude Dog · with Chris Selth	End-to-end website and backend; first proof the co-founder pairing ships
07	Investability	Nude Dog flagship	A twenty-year investment edge captured as a Claude-native runtime, v3.0 — memory as moat
08	Belle Laide Events	Luxury-marque event	Turned every "no/unclear" into an evidenced "yes" at zero capex; recommended ~\$75/yr cert over a five-figure ISO audit
09	FarmBrain	Agentic ag-tech seed venture	Two-scale agentic architecture; containment enforced by code, not prompts
10	Nanuk Asset Management	Global-equities fund manager	Longitudinal systems trust at the compliance-sensitive end

01 — Gowings Bros · Information Security, Data Sovereignty & Cyber-Resilience Posture

2023 - 2026 · Fractional CTO · Surf Hardware International integration and group security posture

The friction. One of Australia's oldest continuously listed public companies, established 1868 (ASX: GOW), spanning retail, real estate, and global investment, had acquired a global surf-hardware manufacturer and was carrying two of everything: two identity stacks (Google Workspace and a separate Office 365 tenant), two security perimeters, and two drifting security papers that, in a post-loss attestation review, could void the very cyber-insurance claim they were written to support.

The architecture. Across an eighteen-month, multi-phase program, Nicholas transposed Surf Hardware International's entire on-premises HP blade-server estate to fully cloud-enabled services and backends, then consolidated roughly fifty people across four jurisdictions (Australia, US, Japan, France) onto a single, deliberately configured Microsoft 365 E5 tenant, collapsing two perimeters into one Zero-Trust control plane: Entra ID conditional access, 100% MFA with phishing-resistant keys for privileged accounts, Intune-gated endpoints, immutable air-gapped backup, and Sentinel-in-Defender monitoring. He then authored the group's unified Information Security, Data Sovereignty & Cyber-Resilience Posture, a single board-and-underwriter document built on one rule: describe only what is actually in place.

The shift. One estate, one identity, one control surface. A four-hour recovery objective on the productivity core, Essential Eight Maturity Level 2 met across all eight strategies on current evidence, ISO 27001:2022 alignment, and Australian data resident onshore with GDPR-aligned multi-geo for offshore staff. He also retired an inherited overclaim, a mis-asserted critical-infrastructure program, trading a comfortable fiction for a defensible disclosure. Delivered systems transformation and governance, not projected AI fluency, inside a multi-year fractional-CTO relationship.

Precedent · Batey Ads, Singapore, 1996 - 1998. The mandate extension from production studio to the full eighty-person agency; \$800K deficit to \$2M in eighteen months. The same operating move, at present-day enterprise infrastructure scale.

02 — Rebel Playground · Vendor-Assurance & Privacy Governance

2026 · Fractional CTO / information-security adviser

The friction. A boutique corporate-events firm supplying ASX-listed financial institutions had to clear a big-four Australian bank's vendor-assurance program: privacy and security standards written for enterprises, imposed on a micro-enterprise supplier that ran the controls in practice but had never written the governance down.

The architecture. A complete, right-sized privacy-and-security program. A four-tier data-classification model, a Privacy Impact Assessment regime with deliberately conservative triggers including AI-tools-on-sensitive-data, event-lifecycle retention keyed to pre-production, delivery, and wrap, and an integrated internal and external privacy policy set mapped to APRA CPS 234 and the Privacy Act 1988, packaged field by field for submission through the bank's vendor-assessment portal with a dual-register glossary so a non-specialist principal could defend every claim under audit.

The shift. Enterprise-grade compliance made proportionate: a business of one, presented truthfully as a supplier that meets the standards of a regulated financial institution. A "not applicable" turned into an evidenced "yes."

03 — The One Centre · Longitudinal Systems Stewardship

Early 2000s - Present · Fractional technology lead · Sydney brand-strategy firm

The friction. A Sydney brand-strategy firm, established 1999, running two decades of creative and client work across four platform generations, with no reason to carry a standing internal technology function.

The architecture. A fractional-CTO relationship held continuously since the early 2000s. Production and systems infrastructure maintained, migrated, and re-based across successive technology cycles rather than rebuilt each time.

The shift. Longitudinal proof, not project proof. Infrastructure stewarded across twenty-plus years for a brand-strategy practice: the toolchain changed four times, the operator did not.

04 — Unstress Health, Dr Ron Ehrlich · Total Business-Process Re-Engineering

2025 - Present

The friction. A 600-plus-episode podcast and health-media business where knowledge, corpus, and client engagement lived as ephemeral interactions across a dozen disconnected tools. A founding audit surfaced the defining fact: zero episode transcripts existed across roughly 600 episodes. The principal's named tension, wanting to do less management but feel more in control, fought itself inside every workflow.

The architecture. An eighteen-automation, three-tier, five-phase pipeline, governed by a consolidated voice model, three non-skippable trust checkpoints, and four compounding chains: content into corpus into coaching, and corporate into distribution. A guest-dossier machine, a frontier orchestrator over a ten-agent research swarm, produces a verified pre-interview brief in under thirty minutes against a 48-hours-before-record standard, its science layer verified live against PubMed. An eight-agent website-commission pipeline shipped to production at Lighthouse ≥ 95 . Retroactive transcription of the full roughly 450-episode archive was specified at under \$300 in machine cost and roughly nine hours of machine time, less than two weeks of comparable VA labour, permanently unlocking the archive as an indexed, citable corpus.

The shift. Each automation classified against a trust-cost matrix, not a throughput metric. Trust-critical surfaces, guest selection, show-notes voice, and outbound nurture, governed by non-skippable human checkpoints by design; the principal's ownership of his voice protected architecturally, not by policy. The architecture stands in for a composite Sydney operating role costed at \$280K-\$380K a year, and returns eight to twelve hours a week of the principal's own attention.

Precedent · Batey Kazoo, Sydney, 1999 - 2001. The Standard Operating Environment that let principals hold ten client relationships without dropping quality on any one. \$6M to \$60M in billings, rebuilt for a ten-day release cadence.

05 — Leila Jeffreys · The Collector Engine

2025 - Present · Performance-fee engagement

The friction. An internationally collected, gallery-represented fine-art photographer, with work held by Parliament House, Artbank, the Macquarie Group collection, and the Hermès collection of contemporary photographs, had a serious collector base but no systematised engine converting reputation into repeatable, attributable sales.

The architecture. A five-system sales-and-brand framework, the collector engine, built on the same operating system that runs the enterprise engagements and delivered on a performance basis: a fee earned only on net-new revenue attributed above an agreed baseline.

The shift. The operating system proven portable out of enterprise IT and into a fine-art practice, with the operator's own compensation staked on the result. Not advice billed by the hour, outcomes paid on the delta.

Precedent · the operating system as a revenue instrument, not a cost line: the same substrate that migrates a listed cloud estate, pointed at a collector base and paid on what it moves.

06 — AEIC · Website & Backend Build

2025 · Engagement with Co-Founder Chris Selth

The friction. Website and backend infrastructure for AEIC, a public holding page plus production architecture, a substrate engagement prior to and separate from the Investability module.

The architecture. End-to-end delivery on a modern stack with a clean hand-off, paired with Chris Selth as a first working iteration of the co-founder pairing.

The shift. Proof the pairing ships together across multiple distinct engagements, not a single one-off, the earlier collaboration point that de-risked the deeper Claude-native work that followed in 2026.

07 — Investability · Claude-Native Analytical Runtime, with Co-Founder Chris Selth

2026 · Nude Dog flagship analytical framework

The friction. Chris Selth's tier-1 investment-analysis methodology, twenty-plus years of compound pattern-recognition, lived in his head. It did not scale across Nude Dog practitioners or compound across sessions. Every analysis reset.

The architecture. An in-house Claude-native runtime, currently at v3.0: a 61-question consolidated register, a fourteen-module taxonomy, a five-tier evidence hierarchy with confidence-decay thresholds, a DuPont analytical skeleton mapped to nine target sheets, seven interaction modes, and a six-dimension deep-research engine, with silent depth-modulation across three user tiers, verbatim preservation of Chris's analytical vocabulary, and cumulative cross-session state.

The shift. The specification handed cleanly to the production engineering function for public-platform delivery, the mockup informing both the UI build and the intelligent-sequencing logic of the investor-facing version. This is what memory-as-moat looks like in practice: a founder's twenty-year edge captured as compounding infrastructure instead of resetting every session.

Precedent · Batey Ads, Singapore, 1998. The digital production environment that let designers stop being paste-up technicians and start being designers again. Same move, different substrate.

08 — Belle Laide Events · Luxury-Marque Security Gate & AI Pilot

2026 · *Fractional CTO / information-security adviser*

The friction. A boutique events client had to clear a global luxury-automotive marque's supplier-security assessment to win a single bespoke event, with a non-technical, cost-anxious principal who feared the gate implied building an enterprise security programme for one job.

The architecture. A proportionality-first response: the ISMS re-baselined from ISO 27001:2013 to :2022, six supporting standards authored from scratch, and every control mapped across the ACSC Essential Eight, the Australian Privacy Principles and Notifiable Data Breaches scheme, and SMB1001:2026, consolidated into a single posture document and an evidence-cited response. In parallel, a scoped AI pilot: three agentic pipelines specified on one reusable engine, a supplier-brief generator, a pitch and proposal builder, and a methodology-bound risk-assessment officer with a mandatory human sign-off gate, with a deployed resources site as the client-facing front door.

The shift. Every "no" or "unclear" on the questionnaire turned into a documented, honestly caveated "yes" at zero capex, with a costed path that recommended roughly \$75 a year of self-certification over a five-figure ISO audit. Proportionality, honestly argued, presented as its own credibility signal: a small firm reading as a larger, more mature operation than its size.

09 — FarmBrain · Agentic System Architecture & Investor Spec

2026 · *Croft Consulting · with the founding product team*

The friction. The 2026 agentic-AI wave proved autonomous agents could act, and proved just as fast that ungoverned autonomy leaks credentials and turns deceptive. A founder's brief for a voice-driven agricultural advisor for high-value tropical crops needed to become a system a team could actually build and an investor could actually trust.

The architecture. A two-scale, "fractal" agentic system whose specification and methodology Nicholas authored: a three-agent advisory council (Operations, Robotics, Red Team) emitting evidence-grounded decision tickets over a simulated-farm digital twin, built by an eight-agent development "Foundry," a PM orchestrator over seven specialist coding agents, governed by test-first CI gates, contract-mediated communication, graduated trust, and a two-person merge rule. Two JSON interface contracts form the load-bearing spine: stabilise the contract and every model, simulator, and voice layer becomes swappable.

The shift. Containment enforced by code, not by prompts, so the build process itself becomes the investor evidence, with a Known / Assumed / Unknown claim-tagging discipline applied to the business case behind a US\$1-2M seed thesis.

10 — Nanuk Asset Management · Longitudinal Systems Stewardship

Longitudinal · Fractional technology lead · global-equities investment manager

The friction. A regulated, data-sensitive investment manager running a global-equities environmental-sustainability strategy, where systems reliability and information discipline are table stakes, with no reason to carry a full-time technology function.

The architecture. A fractional-CTO relationship providing continuous systems and infrastructure stewardship as the manager scaled its flagship fund.

The shift. Institutional-grade systems trust held across the long term at the compliance-sensitive end of the spectrum, the trust bar set by the client's own regulator, not the vendor.

V CAREER PATTERN

Three paradigms precede the fourth, and the operating move has been the same each time. The substrate changes; the scout's work does not.

1987 - 1994. Sydney, age nineteen. Desktop publishing arrives in Australia as a half-recognised paradigm. Nicholas restructures production workflows inside The Campaign Palace, Lindley Mitchell, M&C Saatchi, and Isis Design, and builds corporate-identity systems for Macquarie Group, ANZ, and Transfield. The designers stay designers; the output gets faster, more precise, and capable of ambitions the old workflow could not sustain.

1992 - 1993. Typographic lead on the winning Sydney 2000 Olympic Bid Books, 1,500 pages across three volumes in eighteen months with a nine-person design team. Australia wins the Games.

1995 - 2001. Batey Ads, Singapore, then Sydney, the largest agency in South East Asia, with a client portfolio spanning Singapore Airlines, Mercedes-Benz, and TAG Heuer. Recruited at 23 as IT Manager; youngest Regional CTO in agency history by 26. An \$800,000 operational deficit converted to \$2,000,000 in profit in eighteen months; mandate extended to the full eighty-person agency; the digital-transformation framework delivered on regional roadshow to 22 Managing Directors of Batey's Asian satellite network. On return to Sydney, the Standard Operating Environment that scaled Batey Kazoo from \$6M to \$60M in billings, briefed directly to Sir Martin Sorrell at WPP.

2001 - Present. Fractional-CTO portfolio, concurrent client relationships averaging twenty-plus years: Nanuk Asset Management, The One Centre, Gowings Bros, Rebel Playground, Belle Laide Events. Longitudinal evidence of infrastructure that compounds rather than decays.

2024 - Present. Nude Dog. Co-Founder and Systems Architect. The fourth paradigm, the same operating move at AI-native scale, now with an industry name: Forward Deployed Engineer.

VI EDUCATION & PRACTICE-BASED CREDENTIALING

A thirty-year execution record is the credential: into Sydney's top-tier agency infrastructure at nineteen, Regional CTO of one of Asia's largest creative agencies by twenty-six, and continuous practice-based learning across four successive technological paradigms.

Present-practice focus on frontier-LLM tooling, agentic workflow design, multi-agent orchestration, AI-native SOP engineering, and working-intelligence infrastructure.

VII CLOSE

The capacity for AI fluency is now widely held. The capacity to operationalise a paradigm at institutional scale, through three prior cycles and the full texture of their failures, is not.

In an era where memory replaced the model as the moat, the founder who builds the memory infrastructure builds the moat. That is the seat Nicholas Croft holds at Nude Dog, and the portfolio above is the receipt.