

Jojo Palacio

Founder, Cheerzz · People, Technology, AI & Transformation Leader

Brought in to build, fix, and scale — then hand the keys over stronger.

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A multidisciplinary executive — 15 years **building and rebuilding the back office of high-change companies**: start-ups, turnarounds, and high-growth scaling. Founder of Cheerzz — human-led, agent-powered services for the 80 % of the economy enterprise tech overlooks.

CORE CAPABILITIES

People, Culture & Recruitment · Technology, IT & Security · AI Integration & Transformation · Business Operations · Brand, Growth & Communications

EXPERIENCE

Cheerzz May 2026 – Present
Founder Portland, OR

- Founded a **human-led, agent-powered services company** rebuilding the back office for SMBs and overlooked "boring businesses" — HR, IT, operations, finance, and AI integration delivered as one embedded team.
- Designing the operating model, service architecture, and human-plus-agent delivery system from the ground up; first clients in the Portland SMB community.

Vertosa May 2025 – May 2026
VP of People, Technology & Transformation *(Fractional)* Berkeley, CA

- Built the two-year people-and-technology strategy; mapped operational workflows for AI and migrated the company onto core HR, payroll, IT, and security systems built for scale.
- Ran a full compliance audit that surfaced **40+ infractions** and drove every one to resolution.
- Led **two organizational restructures** following executive terminations — improving efficiency across Operations and Research.

OHSU — Knight Cancer Institute Apr 2023 – Apr 2025
Senior HR, Recruitment & Culture Manager Portland, OR

- Built an **11-person HR, recruitment, and culture team** for an NCI-designated cancer institute inside a 22,000-employee academic health system.
- Launched a unified ticketing system in six months and authored a **50-page process standard** aligning the institute to parent-system practice.
- Led the 20-person Pride Festival committee — the only healthcare system providing health services at Oregon's statewide Pride.

Würk Oct 2020 – Apr 2023
VP of People, Systems & Strategy Denver, CO (Remote)

- Owned People Ops, Training, Payroll, IT, Analytics, and Business Applications for an 80-person platform; built the company-wide KPI and PMO discipline.
- Moved the company **from unprofitable to profitable** and lifted eNPS from -10 to +90 through a two-year people strategy.
- Audited 80+ business applications, retired 40, and captured **\$57K immediate and \$300K six-month savings**.

Cura Partners Jun 2018 – Apr 2020
Director of HR Operations & Total Rewards / HRBP Portland, OR

- Owned people operations, total rewards, IT, and systems integration across a multi-state, newly regulated industry.
- Scaled the workforce **from 200 to 800 across five new production sites in under six months** at sub-10% turnover.
- Led M&A integration into a 5,000+ employee combined company; the acquirer adopted his HR operations systems and processes.

Earlier experience — People, IT, and recruiting leadership across healthtech, AdTech, diagnostics, logistics, and international education: PatientPop, InSource Diagnostics, Epic Freight Solutions, Amobee, and Chief of Staff at Keystone Education (Hangzhou, China).

EDUCATION

M.S., Leadership & Management
University of La Verne
Concentration: Organizational Development

B.A., Psychology
University of California, Merced

CERTIFICATIONS

UC Berkeley — Agentic AI (2026)
SHRM-CP · Gallup StrengthsFinder Trainer · Google AI Professional Cert · Anthropic AI Training · MindGym Facilitator · Manager Foundation Accelerator