

NICOLA SLAVIN

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CHIEF OF STAFF | STRATEGY & OPERATIONS

Strategic Execution • Organizational Effectiveness • Enterprise Transformation

Strategic operator and Chief of Staff–style leader with 15+ years driving strategic execution and organizational effectiveness across complex technology and financial services organizations. Trusted partner to Chief Technology Officers, Global Heads, and senior engineering leaders across global engineering organizations spanning 2,000+ engineers, translating strategic priorities into operational execution through scalable operating rhythms, cross-functional alignment, and execution discipline.

Known for bringing clarity, structure, and operational rigor to ambiguous, fast-moving environments. Experienced in building the operational frameworks that enable leadership teams to execute effectively at scale, including governance models, planning cadences, executive communications, workforce strategy, and organizational transformation initiatives. Worked closely with senior technical leaders and Tech Fellows across enterprise architecture, engineering, and platform organizations supporting large-scale technology environments.

Comfortable operating both within founder-led environments and large, highly matrixed organizations—adapting quickly to different leadership styles, organizational maturity levels, and execution challenges. Combines strategic thinking with hands-on execution and a strong ability to connect leaders, teams, priorities, and operational outcomes across complex environments.

KEY PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Led technology integration for ~\$7.5B AUM acquisition:** Served as integration lead for Aladdin for a major BlackRock acquisition, spanning data onboarding, platform connectivity, and end-user enablement. Partnered with business, operations, and technology leadership to align integration priorities and manage enterprise-level dependencies, ensuring seamless Day-1 onboarding with zero disruption to client portfolios and investment operations.
- **Built enterprise-wide technical decision program for Aladdin (\$25T+ platform):** Designed and launched a Technical Design Review (TDR) framework supporting 2,000+ engineers, improving design quality, enabling more informed decision-making at scale and strengthening platform stability, resilience, and scalability—supporting growth objectives while reducing operational and reputational risk across the platform.
- **Championed enterprise capability mapping and domain-aligned system modeling (DDD) as a new discipline:** Drove firm-wide adoption of domains as the primary lens for enterprise prioritization and technical debt management. Improved visibility into dependencies and established DDD as the language for communicating technical debt and investment trade-offs at the leadership and board level.
- **Scaled and operationalized firm-wide Tech Fellow program:** Partnered with senior engineering leadership to define the operating model and evaluation framework for top technical talent. Led nomination, calibration, and executive reporting, helping scale the program into a firm-wide technical leadership capability.

CORE STRENGTHS

Strategic Execution & Operating Rhythms • Chief of Staff–Style Leadership • Enterprise Transformation • Cross-Functional Leadership • Organizational Planning • Governance & Operating Model Design • Executive Communications • Workforce Strategy • Stakeholder Alignment • Special Projects • Navigating Ambiguity & Organizational Complexity • AI-Augmented Operational Workflows

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Ailsa Advisory LLC | Bay Area CA | April 2026 – Present

Founder & Fractional Strategy & Operations Lead

Fractional strategy and operations leadership across fintech, AI, and AI-governance education-focused initiative, partnering with founders and leadership teams to improve organizational effectiveness, delivery execution, and operational scale.

- Partner with founders and leadership teams on strategic initiatives spanning operating models, delivery execution, AI-enabled workflows, and organizational planning

- Establish operating cadences, planning structures, and execution frameworks across fintech, AI, and AI-governance education-focused initiatives
- Translate ambiguous business and technology priorities into structured roadmaps, governance processes, and executive-ready communications

BlackRock — Aladdin & Technology | San Francisco, CA | January 2010 – July 2025

Director / Senior Program & Business Manager (Chief of Staff-Style Strategic Operations Roles)

Held progressive roles across the Aladdin & Technology COO (2010-2013), Investment Systems (2013-2020), and Enterprise Architecture organizations (2020-2025), partnering with senior technology and architecture leadership within a global engineering environment (2,000+ engineers). Led cross-functional initiatives spanning strategy execution, operating model design, governance, and organizational transformation.

- Owned multiple concurrent, cross-functional initiatives across engineering, product, and business teams, delivering high-quality outcomes in ambiguous, fast-moving environments (e.g., enterprise design governance, domain-aligned system modeling (DDD), LeanIX integration)
- Served as trusted strategic and operational partner to Chief Technology Officers, Global Heads, and senior engineering leadership, driving alignment, executive visibility, issue resolution, and execution coordination across complex organizational priorities.
- Introduced Agile operating practices within the Enterprise Architecture team, implementing quarterly PIs, OKRs, and weekly execution forums. Connected team delivery to platform priorities through the Aladdin monthly OKR leadership review, improving alignment and execution across interdependent initiatives
- Led workforce and financial planning for a 350+ person Investment Systems engineering organization, building scenario-based models to inform hiring, location strategy, and investment trade-offs
- Delivered executive reporting translating complex technical design and operational inputs into concise, decision-ready insights, including synthesizing technical design reviews into executive-level impact statements for ExCo and Enterprise Architecture Board materials; enabled faster identification of risks and timely corrective action
- Drove structured, high-stakes organizational processes (e.g., annual technology risk assessments, research and credit reviews, transfer pricing validations), coordinating cross-functional stakeholders and ensuring alignment across technology, finance, and corporate functions
- Managed and mentored Business Managers and early-career analysts, supporting performance, development, and career progression within a high-performing organization
- Influenced and implemented a shift in early-career analyst (ANL) program ownership from centralized (NY) to regional models, enabling local engineering leadership to drive candidate placement and improve alignment with team needs. Served as a core member of the SF ANL Working Group, refining program structure, onboarding, and placement processes to improve analyst quality and integration into engineering teams
- Partnered with leadership and HR to shape career frameworks and talent programs, including running the Investment Systems annual promotion process (Analyst through Director). Introduced more rigorous evaluation and calibration practices, including pre-interview assessments for VP–Director promotions—later adopted more broadly across Aladdin—and participated in senior-level promotion interviews, supporting consistent advancement decisions

EARLIER CAREER

Barclays Global Investors | Barclays Capital | Deutsche Bank | Prior to 2010

Principal / Program Management, Trading Operations & Front Office Technology Delivery

Delivered front-to-back trading platform and workflow transformation initiatives, including new product onboarding across asset classes—coordinating front office, operations, legal, compliance, risk, and technology stakeholders to ensure end-to-end readiness across systems, processes, and controls.

Operated in real-time, deadline-driven environments, improving trade processing accuracy and reducing manual intervention and operational risk.

EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Associate Degree (AD), Management: Durban University of Technology, South Africa

Certifications: CAPM (In Progress) | PMP (Planned)

Technology: Google Workspace / gSuite • AI Productivity Tools (ChatGPT, Claude) • Confluence/Wiki • Miro • Azure DevOps • Jira • Microsoft 365 • LeanIX • Aladdin