CHRISTOPHER VAN BLERK

Growth Systems & Revenue Operations — CRM, Automation, Data & Lifecycle

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Open to Cape Town / Winelands hybrid and remote roles · Available for UK, EU and US-East working hours

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

I build the revenue engine. For a national FMCG brand I own the CRM, the marketing automation, the lifecycle programmes, the sales-team operating rhythm and the reporting that shows what is actually working, across reseller, e-commerce, retail and partner channels. I came to growth from ten years in software development, so I architect the system rather than administer it: I design the pipelines, write the SQL, wire the integrations and build the dashboards myself, then use them to find where leads and revenue leak and fix the cause. Strongest in founder-led businesses that need one person to connect marketing, sales and the systems underneath, and that measure the work in response times, conversion and retention rather than activity.

SELECTED RESULTS

- Found and corrected a reporting error that had overstated active resellers by about a third and month-to-date revenue by nearly four times; traced 600+ admin-placed orders hiding the real customer behind them and fixed attribution at source. Surfaced a largely unattributed partner channel representing a significant share of annual revenue.
- Mapped the acquisition funnel end to end (site visits → booked calls → sign-ups), isolated three specific leaks (contactability, entry-price affordability, no follow-up on warm leads) and presented the fix to EXCo as a systems problem rather than a rep-performance problem.
- Within 90 days of joining, diagnosed a year-long decline in reseller activity that leadership had not quantified — active accounts down by more than half, roughly two-thirds of churn inside the first 30 days, day 60 as the decisive retention point — and redesigned onboarding and lifecycle communications around it.
- Built the company's Insights Dashboard from scratch (Node/TypeScript, PostgreSQL), unifying WooCommerce, Shopify and Metorik into one view of revenue, pipeline, reseller activity and cohort retention, replacing manual spreadsheet reporting.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- CRM architecture, pipeline & lifecycle-stage design
- Lead routing, nurture, onboarding & reactivation flows
- RevOps reporting: CPL, CAC, conversion, pipeline velocity
- Funnel diagnosis & conversion optimisation
- Cohort, churn & retention analytics
- Marketing automation & workflow engineering
- Integrations: APIs, webhooks, n8n, AI workflows
- SQL, data pipelines & executive dashboards
- Sales-team operating rhythm, KPIs & enablement
- Customer-journey & onboarding programme design

WORK EXPERIENCE

Growth Manager — Systems, Sales Ops & Marketing | Food Sock Meals, Strand, Western Cape Jun 2026 – present

Joined as Reseller Manager; scope expanded to Head-of-Sales responsibilities within three months and to full ownership of the growth function — CRM, automation, lifecycle, sales operations, marketing and channel strategy — in October 2026. Report to the COO; the sales team and Reseller Manager report to me. Food Sock is a South African FMCG brand selling affordable one-pot meals through a national independent reseller network (300+ accounts), direct e-commerce, retail and NGO channels.

Systems, data & reporting

- Architected and built the Insights Dashboard (Node/TypeScript, PostgreSQL on a VPS I rebuilt), pulling WooCommerce, Shopify and Metorik data into one model; own the Metorik → Sheets → Looker pipeline and the data-integrity rules behind it (deactivate-never-delete, attribution checks, admin-order handling).
- Ran the cohort, segmentation and revenue-concentration analysis on the reseller base (roughly half of accounts produce 80% of revenue; starter-pack size has no effect on success); produced a 12-month growth model with a do-nothing scenario and a hiring business case.
- Technical liaison to the external BI consultancy; scoped a headless reseller-portal proof of concept with a measurable success target.

CRM, automation & lifecycle

- Administer the CRM (GoHighLevel — HubSpot-equivalent pipelines, lifecycle stages, tagging and workflows) and the n8n automations around it; leading the migration to a new CRM platform with customer records intact across systems.
- Designed the lifecycle programme around the churn findings: First 90 Days onboarding (three-cohort model), monthly reseller newsletter, reactivation and offboarding flows with a stock-buyback tier, and lead capture at the first checkpoint of a five-module video course that replaced a 26-minute sales letter.
- Built the outreach programme for roughly 600 uncontacted CRM leads, including WhatsApp Business API compliance and call-tracking/VoIP tooling selection.

Sales operations & enablement

- Set up the sales team's operating rhythm: daily stand-ups, call logging and reporting, individual KPIs (one onboard per rep per day) and the review cadence that feeds the dashboard.
- Restructured starter-pack tiers with verified margin and profit calculations; authored the 15-chapter Reseller Playbook and the channel-conflict framework separating key-account retail from independent reseller territories.

Marketing & commercial

- Own campaign planning, Meta advertising, social strategy and the posting calendar; brought video and creative production in-house after the agency exit, replacing the retainer.
- Negotiate distributor and partnership deals (regional exclusivity, a 720-merchant federation, export enquiries, pharmacy and SPAR retail leads) and present commercialisation and findings decks to EXCo.

Founder & Technical Consultant (part-time) | Rolodex, Cape Town — Jan 2026 – present

- Build automation and reporting systems for small-business clients: n8n workflows calling the Anthropic and OpenAI APIs for document matching and supplier tracking, Google Sheets as the system of record, and WordPress/WooCommerce builds with integrated forms, CRM hand-offs and tracking.

Platform Specialist & Front-End Developer | Genius Platforms, California (remote) — Apr 2024 – Dec 2025

- Delivered client platforms in an Agile scrum team, translating requirements into tailored solutions and supporting stakeholders through Freshdesk, Rocketlane and Jira; produced documentation and training content to drive platform adoption.

Co-founder & Director | Bluelight Software, Cape Town — Feb 2022 – Mar 2024

- Co-founded and directed a software development company: strategy, financial planning, operations, client relationships and technical direction, while staying hands-on in delivery and legacy-system modernisation.

EARLIER EXPERIENCE

Front-End Developer (Junior → Senior) & Project Coordinator | Brainwave Projects, Cape Town — Jan 2015 – Jan 2022

Seven-year progression leading multiple concurrent client projects from planning to delivery; produced data analysis and reporting that informed strategic decisions.

Digital Content Manager & Technician | Brainwave Electrical, Cape Town — Jan 2014 – Dec 2015

Managed a team of electricians and the company's digital presence; the role that led into full-time software development.

TOOLS & TECHNOLOGY

CRM & automation: GoHighLevel (HubSpot-equivalent: pipelines, lifecycle stages, workflows, lead scoring), n8n, Zapier/Make-style workflow design, Anthropic and OpenAI APIs, webhooks and REST integrations, WhatsApp Business API, Twilio-style SMS, Calendly, Typeform. Data & reporting: SQL (PostgreSQL, MS SQL, MySQL), Google Sheets modelling, Looker Studio, Metorik. Commerce: WooCommerce, WordPress, Shopify. Marketing: Meta Ads Manager, Google Workspace, Slack. Engineering: Node.js, TypeScript, React, Git, Docker, Linux VPS administration.

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

- Diploma in Counselling and Communication Skills (NQF 6), major in Business Communication — South African College of Applied Psychology (SACAP), 2015
- Private Pilot Licence — Morningstar Flight Academy, 2021

INTERESTS

Brazilian jiu-jitsu coach (Groundworx). Private pilot. Builds hardware and IoT projects (Raspberry Pi, Arduino, 3D printing).