



A2 Achieve Professional Gap Analysis for Brooke Wenth

What I See When I Look at Your Career as a Whole

Brooke, when I look at your career as a whole, I do not see a finance professional trying to become an operations leader. I see someone who has been doing business operations work for most of her career, with finance becoming one of the tools you use to understand and run the business.

That distinction matters.

Your current title, Director of Client Finance, is narrower than the work you actually perform. Your responsibilities now cross financial operations, commercial contracts, cash and liquidity, enterprise systems, project economics, insurance, compliance, HR administration, client requirements, process improvement, and executive decision support. You report to the CFO, previously reported to the CEO, work with the COO, and have been part of the leadership team for years.

The biggest issue I see is not that you lack senior-level experience. The issue is getting an employer to understand the level and breadth of your experience quickly enough that the title “Director of Client Finance” does not define you before they get any further.

The follow-up work has also changed my assessment from the earlier gap analysis. We now have much more evidence of scale. We know considerably more about the size of the business you support, the financial volume, client and project load, contract activity, systems work, compliance footprint, people leadership, and the authority you actually have. Several things that previously looked like possible experience gaps were really information gaps.

Your job search is therefore less about trying to add credentials or manufacture new experience and more about accurately translating the career you already have.

Your Career Story

Your career makes more sense than it may appear at first glance.

I would not tell your story as photography, then finance, then operations. That makes it sound like a series of unrelated career changes.

The actual story is that you began working inside project-based creative businesses and moved very early toward the business side of those organizations.

At Stephen Lewis Studio, from 2002 to 2015, you were managing the business and operational side of a commercial photography studio. You were dealing with project finances, invoicing, purchasing, accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, expense tracking, production logistics, vendors, schedules, clients, and budgets.

At Vaughan Hannigan, from 2015 to 2016, you moved into a broader agency environment and continued doing financial and operational work while adding international production, client service, marketing, business development, and coordination across artists, clients, producers, studios, and freelance teams.

Then you moved to drive21 in 2016. The industry changed, but the business model was familiar: project-based work, demanding clients, vendors, contracts, production or delivery schedules, costs that have to be managed before cash arrives, complicated billing requirements, and a constant need to connect financial decisions to project execution.

That is the throughline.

You have spent more than two decades learning how project-based businesses actually work from the inside.

Your degree in photography is therefore not nearly as disconnected from your career as someone might assume when they first see it. You graduated from Savannah College of Art and Design with a BFA in Photography in 2002, but your professional career moved almost immediately into business and operations.

We should be able to explain that in about 30 seconds in an interview. We do not need to apologize for the degree or overexplain it.

Where You Are Trying to Go

You have identified Director or Vice President of Business Operations, Director or Vice President of Finance and Operations, COO in a growth-stage company, and Chief of Staff as possibilities. You have also been very clear that you do not want to go deeper into a narrow finance or accounting specialty. You want to work across the business, solve problems, build systems and structure, and partner with leadership.

That direction is realistic.

I do think we need to narrow it, though, because those four job families are not interchangeable. My strongest first target for you is senior business operations leadership.

I would look seriously at titles such as:

- Vice President of Business Operations
- Head of Business Operations
- Director or Senior Director of Business Operations
- Vice President of Finance & Operations
- Head of Finance & Operations
- Vice President of Commercial Operations
- Director or Vice President of Strategic Operations

The exact title should change with company size. A VP title in a smaller growth-stage business may represent very similar scope to a Director or Senior Director title in a much larger company. I do not

want us getting overly attached to title when scope, authority, reporting relationship, compensation, and actual work matter more.

I would make Business Operations the center of your search, with Finance & Operations as a strong second lane.

COO is absolutely worth considering, but selectively.

You have performed pieces of a COO role, and the fact that a COO position was discussed internally is meaningful. You own substantial functions and influence companywide decisions. You are not reaching for COO simply because it sounds like the next title.

At the same time, I would not market you as a universal COO candidate.

Your strongest COO opportunities are likely to be companies that want a hands-on operator who can move between finance, contracts, systems, HR, risk, clients, and operations rather than a large-company COO expected to lead multiple division presidents or a huge operating workforce.

Chief of Staff is also realistic, particularly in founder-led or growth-stage businesses, but I see it as a secondary path. You already own too much actual operating work for me to make Chief of Staff your default identity. Some Chief of Staff positions could use your full skill set; others would actually be a step away from the kind of ownership you enjoy.

Where Your Experience Is Stronger Than Your Title Suggests

There are several areas where your actual experience is substantially stronger than “Client Finance” suggests.

You are running significant portions of the financial operation. You lead monthly and annual close activities, manage the general ledger, oversee accounts payable and receivable, work with approximately \$14–18 million in annual receivables volume, prepare financial information, manage WIP and revenue forecasting, monitor liquidity, and provide financial information used by leadership to make operating decisions. The current Working Resume already captures the breadth of the finance and business-planning responsibility, but the follow-up gives us considerably more scale than the draft currently uses.

You also have real commercial authority. Reviewing approximately 150–250 contracts and related commercial documents a year is not administrative contract support. You negotiate directly with customers and other parties, review risk provisions, payment terms, insurance requirements, change orders, retainage, warranties, indemnification, liability, lien issues, sales tax, and project-specific requirements. You have authority to approve or reject terms.

The Tesla example is particularly useful because it is concrete: moving payment terms from Net 60 to due upon receipt directly affected how much cash the company had to fund while performing the work.

Your enterprise-systems experience is also much more substantial than “NetSuite user.” You participated in the 2021 implementation, worked through a four-month implementation cycle, helped

translate business requirements into system configurations, led internal testing, handled data migration responsibilities, became the internal subject-matter expert, trained users, and continued administering and improving the system after go-live. You then connected NetSuite with BILL, Emburse, and Avalara and continued building workflows and reporting around the business. The existing resume already points to this implementation and integration work.

That gives you a legitimate business transformation and systems story.

The estimate that the combined systems work saves roughly 10–20 employee hours per week is exactly the kind of impact we were missing before.

Your risk and compliance responsibility is also substantial. You manage a roughly \$500,000 insurance portfolio, have handled nine renewal/audit cycles, oversee approximately 30–40 licenses, registrations, annual reports, and renewals across a multi-state footprint, and manage client qualification and compliance platforms. That is operational infrastructure, not a side administrative task.

Your people responsibility is broader than the direct-report number alone suggests. You have managed up to four direct reports at once and approximately seven over your career, but you have also led cross-functional initiatives with teams of approximately 15 people, hired, interviewed, conducted performance reviews, made compensation recommendations, handled performance problems and terminations, worked with employment counsel, trained approximately 10 employees, and led people who did not report to you. Your current resume already documents meaningful people leadership and difficult employee-management responsibilities.

That last point matters because your leadership model is influence heavy. In a growing company, you have repeatedly been responsible for getting something accomplished without owning every person involved.

Organizational Growth Is One of Your Best Stories

The drive21 growth story needs to stay near the center of your positioning.

You joined when the company was very small and generating approximately \$4 million in annual revenue. Revenue reached approximately \$18 million by 2020, and current revenue is approximately \$15 million. The company expanded geographically, added affiliated entities, added a manufacturing operation, and became much more operationally complex.

You were not just present while that happened.

Your job expanded because the infrastructure of the company had to expand.

You built or helped build financial processes, reporting, cash management, enterprise systems, commercial controls, contracts, compliance practices, policies, HR administration, insurance, licensing, client processes, and operating procedures that allowed a small founder-led business to function at a larger scale.

The Working Resume already identifies growth and scalability as a major part of your story.

That is much more meaningful than simply saying you have “experience in fast-growing companies.”

There is one accuracy issue we need to resolve before we put numbers everywhere. Your materials contain both four and six employees as the company size when you joined. We need to determine which number is correct and whether one count excluded founders, contractors, or another group. That is a content-cleanup issue, not a career problem.

Your Major Client Experience Is Stronger Than We Were Using

The Amazon work is now one of your better executive interview stories.

You supported the account beginning in 2020 and assumed full responsibility in 2022 when the employee hired for Amazon expertise left. At its peak, you were managing an approximately \$2.1 million annual budget supporting work across more than 75 corporate offices.

You handled budgeting, contracts, purchase orders, billing, reporting, vendor requirements, procurement processes, payment tracking, compliance, added scope, and client-specific systems. You eventually hired and managed a Project Accountant specifically to support the invoicing volume. More importantly, you stepped into a complicated account with little transition and kept it operating.

That tells me more about your readiness for broader leadership than a generic statement about adaptability ever could.

We do need to reconcile one number before using this story publicly. The follow-up contains both approximately 50 and approximately 100 Amazon projects per year, with corresponding invoice estimates that also differ. We should settle on the most defensible number rather than choose whichever sounds larger.

You also have similar experience with other enterprise clients, including Google, Netflix, BNY, and Stripe. We should use named clients selectively and only where you are comfortable and permitted to do so. A few recognized names establish scale; we do not need a giant client list.

Experience Alignment With Your Target Roles

For Director of Business Operations, I see very little qualification concern. You clearly have the systems, process, cross-functional, financial, risk, commercial, and leadership experience. In some smaller organizations, Director could actually undersell your level.

For Vice President of Business Operations, I also see a realistic path. Your breadth and senior leadership involvement fit. The area we need to manage is scale. A company hiring a VP to lead several department heads and hundreds of employees is evaluating a different leadership profile from a 30-, 50-, or 100-person organization hiring a hands-on VP who will build the operating infrastructure. Your background is much closer to the second model.

For Director or Vice President of Finance & Operations, your experience is strong, particularly in project-based organizations. You have close, GL, AR/AP, cash planning, forecasting, WIP, project financial management, reporting, systems, contract economics, and executive decision support.

There is, however, a real distinction between what you have done and what some traditional finance leadership roles may require.

Your company does not maintain a formal annual operating budget, so you should not claim that you own one. You have done extensive revenue forecasting, cash forecasting, project financial planning, and scenario analysis, but formal annual budgeting is still a genuine experience gap if a specific position makes it central to the job.

That does not mean we need to fix it with a course. It means we should not target heavily budget-driven FP&A positions as though your background is identical.

Likewise, a Finance & Operations role requiring a CPA, an accounting degree, SEC reporting, highly technical GAAP work, or deep corporate FP&A would be a different target. You have explicitly said you do not want to be positioned as a narrow accounting professional anyway.

For COO positions, the biggest gap is not intelligence, breadth, or operating judgment. It is scale of formal organizational authority. You have not shown experience managing multiple senior department leaders or carrying final responsibility for the performance of a large organization. We also do not yet have evidence of final companywide P&L ownership.

We should not try to wordsmith around that.

Instead, target COO positions where the company needs exactly what you have spent years doing: building structure in an organization where functions overlap, infrastructure is still developing, and the COO is expected to stay close to finance, systems, contracts, people, customers, and day-to-day operating problems.

What Is Truly Missing

There are fewer true gaps than there appeared to be initially.

Formal annual budgeting is one, but only for roles where it matters.

Large-scale direct people leadership is another if you target larger-company VP or COO positions. Four direct reports is different from managing five vice presidents and a 200-person organization. Your cross-functional leadership helps, but it is not the same thing, and we should not pretend it is. Your M&A experience is useful but limited. You supported one seller-side due-diligence process that did not close. That gives you legitimate due-diligence experience, but I would not market you as an M&A leader.

Formal board exposure is limited based on what you have provided. You regularly communicate with executives, but you have not reported significant board presentations or external executive presentations. Some COO and Chief of Staff opportunities may expect that.

We also do not currently have formal education, certifications, or professional-development information beyond your BFA. The follow-up section on training and credentials is still unanswered. That is an information gap until we know whether you have completed relevant finance, NetSuite, HR, insurance, compliance, contract, leadership, or other training.

I do not recommend that you immediately go earn a certification simply because this section is blank.

First, we need to see the jobs.

If five strong target postings repeatedly ask for the same credential and it is materially affecting your candidacy, then we evaluate whether it is worth pursuing. Otherwise, your time is better spent getting your existing experience in front of the right employers.

The same applies to professional organizations, speaking engagements, community leadership, and awards. You do not need to go manufacture those things to make your resume look more senior.

What Is Not Actually a Problem

Your photography degree is not something I am worried about for business operations roles.

Your small-company experience is not inherently a weakness either. In the right company, it may be one of your best selling points because you have operated without enormous functional departments around you.

Your lack of a giant direct-report organization is also not automatically a problem. It simply changes which senior roles are realistic.

The fact that the acquisition did not close is not a problem. You participated in due diligence. You should describe what you did accurately and stop there.

I am also not concerned about a traditional employment-gap story. Your materials indicate continuity across your major positions.

And I would not spend energy worrying that you have worked in several creative or design-adjacent industries. Your actual work has been remarkably consistent: project economics, operations, clients, vendors, contracts, billing, delivery, systems, and business infrastructure.

Your Professional Positioning

I would position you first as a senior business operations leader with deep finance-and-operations experience.

The core message is:

- You help growing, project-based businesses build the financial, commercial, systems, risk, and operational infrastructure they need to become more organized and scalable.
- That is much more accurate than calling you a finance executive who also knows operations.
- Your finance background gives you financial judgment.
- Your commercial work gives you contract and client judgment.
- Your systems work gives you process and technology credibility.
- Your HR, insurance, compliance, and governance work shows that you understand the less glamorous infrastructure that can become a very big problem when a company grows without it.

And your career tells me that when something falls between departments, you are often the person who ends up figuring it out. Your Working Resume already reflects that cross-functional role.

That is the professional identity I want employers to see.

Accomplishments and Metrics

We have now uncovered enough metrics that the problem is no longer “Brooke doesn't have measurable accomplishments.”

The new problem is choosing the right ones.

Depending on the job, we can draw from:

- Approximately \$4 million to \$18 million in company revenue growth during the first four years of your tenure.
- Approximately \$14–18 million in annual financial and receivables volume.
- Approximately 150 clients and 350 projects annually.
- Individual project values exceeding \$10 million.
- Approximately 150–250 commercial contracts and related documents reviewed annually.
- Approximately 20–25 sales-tax issues identified or corrected annually.
- Approximately \$500,000 in annual insurance spend.
- Nine insurance/workers' compensation renewal and audit cycles.
- Approximately 30–40 licenses, registrations, filings, and renewals across a multi-state footprint.
- NetSuite implementation completed in approximately four months.
- Estimated 10–20 employee hours per week saved through systems centralization and integration.
- Approximately 25 purchase orders per month through the manufacturing PO process.
- An Amazon account with an approximately \$2.1 million annual budget at peak and work across more than 75 locations.
- HR, systems, policy, and administrative support extending across more than 80 employees at peak among three affiliated companies.
- A cross-functional team of approximately 15 on your largest project initiative.
- A performance bonus as high as \$30,000.

We will not cram all of that into one resume.

- A Business Operations resume should emphasize growth, systems, scalability, process, cross-functional leadership, commercial operations, and organizational infrastructure.
- A Finance & Operations version should pull forward financial volume, close, cash flow, forecasting, receivables, project economics, systems, and commercial terms.
- A COO-targeted version should focus more heavily on organizational scope, decision authority, growth, operating infrastructure, people, enterprise systems, risk, and executive partnership.

The evidence is finally there. Now we have to curate it.

Skills

Your strongest current skills are not simply software skills.

The most valuable combination is business operations + financial operations + commercial contracts + enterprise systems + project economics + risk and compliance.

That combination is unusual enough to be useful without us trying to label you as a specialist in all six things.

NetSuite is particularly marketable because you were involved in implementation, customization, testing, data migration, administration, training, integration, and continued development. The same distinction matters with BILL, Emburse, Avalara, and Google Workspace. Your existing resume includes an extensive technical stack, from NetSuite and QuickBooks through Microsoft, Google Workspace, Procore, Textura, Ariba, Coupa, Avetta, and other business systems.

I do not see an outdated-skills problem that needs immediate attention.

What I do see is a tendency for your technical capability to look like a long software list when the stronger story is what you built with the technology.

That is what we should market.

Resume

Your Working Resume is doing what a Working Resume is supposed to do: capture the breadth of your experience.

It should not be the document you send to every employer.

The biggest remaining content issue is that the current version still devotes almost all of its professional history to drive21 while presenting you as someone with 24+ years of experience. We now have the Stephen Lewis Studio and Vaughan Hannigan information, so that needs to be corrected.

Those earlier roles do not need four pages each. They do need enough space to establish that your operations and financial career began long before 2016.

There is another issue I want fixed before we finalize anything: your drive21 title history.

The materials currently refer to Director of Client Finance, but the follow-up also references Agency Manager, Director of Finance, and Executive Director of Client Finance at different points.

We need to establish exactly which were official titles, what dates each title applied, and which descriptions were simply shorthand for the function you performed.

If those were formal promotions or title changes, collapsing ten years into “Director of Client Finance, 2016–Present” is costing you a very important progression story.

If they were not official titles, we should not use them as though they were.

Your current functional descriptor under Director of Client Finance is useful because the formal title alone does not explain the role. The current draft already supplements it with Business Operations, Finance, Commercial Strategy, Enterprise Systems, and Executive Planning. That approach should continue.

The targeted resume does not need more generic leadership language. It needs more of the evidence we have now uncovered.

LinkedIn

I have your LinkedIn URL, but I do not have enough of the actual LinkedIn content to tell you whether it needs a complete rewrite or just alignment.

What I can tell you is that LinkedIn cannot leave a recruiter believing you are primarily a client-finance candidate.

Your headline and About section should lead with business operations.

Your drive21 experience should make the progression from finance into broader business leadership immediately understandable.

And your skills should reinforce the target: Business Operations, Finance & Operations, NetSuite, Process Improvement, Commercial Operations, Contract Negotiation, Financial Operations, Forecasting, Enterprise Systems, Change Management, Risk Management, and Cross-Functional Leadership where accurate.

We should also consider a small number of strong LinkedIn recommendations from people who can speak specifically to your judgment, operating range, or executive partnership. You already have evidence that executives, customers, and vendors have praised your work. A meaningful recommendation from the right person is more useful than collecting a dozen generic ones.

Job Market Alignment

We have not yet selected representative job descriptions, so I do not want to pretend we have completed a true posting-by-posting market comparison.

That needs to be one of our next moves.

We should pull three to five positions you would genuinely take and compare them against your experience.

I especially want to see where the market repeatedly draws the line between VP Business Operations, VP Finance & Operations, Chief of Staff, and COO.

That will tell us whether requirements such as formal budgeting, P&L ownership, CPA/MBA credentials, larger team leadership, board exposure, strategic planning, or specific industry experience are appearing often enough to matter.

A requirement appearing once is not a gap. A requirement appearing in nearly every attractive job deserves attention.

Networking

I do not yet have enough information about how you are currently finding jobs to tell you that you are relying too heavily on applications.

But for this level of search, I would not rely on applications alone.

Your network is potentially much stronger than a typical candidate's because you have spent years working across organizational boundaries.

The most useful warm pathways are not random networking events. They are people who have already seen how you work: former colleagues and owners, executives, accountants and tax professionals, NetSuite and systems consultants, insurance and benefits brokers, attorneys, PEO contacts, vendors, and client-side finance, procurement, or operations professionals where contact is appropriate.

You have also worked with people across major companies and project-based industries. We should think less about “asking them for a job” and more about letting the right people know the type of operating role you are pursuing and asking which companies or leaders they think could use someone with your background.

I would also target recruiters who actually work on senior operations, finance-and-operations, and middle-market leadership searches rather than sending your resume to every recruiter you can find.

Interview Readiness

You do not have an interview-example problem.

You have plenty of material.

Your job is going to be learning how to tell the stories without disappearing into the details.

The strongest stories I see include the growth of drive21, taking over Amazon, the NetSuite implementation, the manufacturing purchase-order process, negotiating better payment terms, managing a cash/liquidity problem, identifying commercial or tax risks before work began, leading through an employee/legal issue, and participating in acquisition due diligence.

For each one, you need to be able to answer four things clearly: What was happening? What were you responsible for? What did you actually do? What changed because you did it?

You also need a very clean answer for “Why are you leaving?”

It should not sound like you are escaping finance.

You are looking for a role whose title and scope finally match the broader operating work your career has grown into.

I would also prepare specifically for the question, “You have a BFA in Photography. How did you end up here?” That answer should feel completely normal because, once we look at the actual career history, it is.

And you need a confident explanation of the title mismatch. An interviewer should understand within a minute that Director of Client Finance became far broader than the title suggests.

Genuine Risks

Your biggest risk is being misunderstood, not being unqualified.

A recruiter scanning titles may put you into the finance pile before reading further.

A recruiter looking at your breadth may also wonder whether you are a generalist without a clear specialty. We solve that by giving the breadth one purpose: you build and connect the operating infrastructure of growing businesses.

There is also a company-size risk in both directions.

A small company may see your experience level and compensation expectations as too high for a Director position.

A large company may see your direct-report scale and company size as too small for a VP or COO position.

That is why company stage and scope matter so much in this search.

Finance-heavy roles may create another filter because of your BFA and lack of a traditional accounting credential. That is a manageable targeting issue, not something I would try to solve by automatically going back to school.

For larger COO positions, direct organizational leadership scale, formal P&L ownership, and formal strategic planning/board experience could become barriers.

For Business Operations roles, those concerns become much smaller.

Your broad geographic strategy is also unfinished. You have said you are open to relocation and interested in remote work as well as hybrid or onsite roles in New York City or Huntsville. We still need to clarify relocation timing, acceptable travel, whether other locations are realistic, and whether positions outside New York and Huntsville would need to be fully remote.

Finally, we have not established your compensation floor, target, and ideal range. That needs to happen before we get deep into recruiter conversations because it will help us decide which company sizes and title levels actually make sense.

A Few Things We Need to Reconcile

Before I consider the Working Resume completely accurate, I want to settle four factual issues.

First, the exact drive21 title progression: Agency Manager, Director of Finance, Director of Client Finance, and Executive Director of Client Finance need to be sorted into official titles versus functional descriptions.

Second, the employee count when you joined drive21: the materials currently contain both four and six.

Third, the Amazon project volume: the follow-up contains both approximately 50 and approximately 100 projects annually.

Fourth, the geographic footprint: some answers reference 13 states and others 14. That may be completely legitimate if the company operates in 13 but maintains registrations or compliance requirements in 14; we just need to say it accurately.

These are not career gaps. They are fact-checking items, and they matter because once we start using strong numbers, consistency becomes important.

Do Now

Choose the primary search lane. My recommendation is Senior/VP Business Operations first, with Finance & Operations as the second lane. Keep COO selective rather than making it the main search.

Reconcile the title and metric inconsistencies above.

Add Stephen Lewis Studio and Vaughan Hannigan to the master career history and establish the complete drive21 title timeline.

Select three to five real jobs you would seriously consider. That will let us finish the gap analysis against actual market requirements instead of hypothetical ones.

Then rebuild the targeted resume around the new evidence we have uncovered rather than simply adding more content to the existing draft.

Next 30 Days

Bring LinkedIn into alignment with the same business-operations identity.

Build a small set of interview stories around your strongest examples and practice explaining them at an executive level rather than giving every operational detail.

Identify the people in your existing professional world who can make useful introductions into growth-stage, project-based, professional-services, construction, design, specialty contracting, or similar businesses.

Begin applying within a deliberately chosen group of roles and track what happens: applications, recruiter responses, screening interviews, later-stage interviews, and compensation discussions. That data will tell us where the next gap actually is.

Next 30–90 Days

If Business Operations roles are producing stronger response than Finance & Operations, lean harder into that lane.

If COO opportunities appear, evaluate each one based on organizational size, actual authority, reporting structure, direct-report expectations, and P&L responsibility rather than title alone. If a specific qualification begins appearing repeatedly in good jobs and it is genuinely screening you out, then we can decide whether professional development is worth the investment.

I would not make that decision before the market gives us a reason.

Monitor

Watch company size and role scope closely. They are going to determine whether Director, VP, Head of Operations, or COO is the appropriate title more than your number of years alone. Watch compensation so we do not build a target list that works on paper but does not make sense financially.

And watch whether employers understand your story. If they consistently see “finance” when we want them to see “business operations,” that tells us we still have a positioning problem.

What I would not spend your time on right now is collecting certifications, joining organizations, adding volunteer work, pursuing another degree, or trying to fill every imaginable executive-resume box.

You already have enough career substance to begin this search.

The work now is deciding exactly which problems you want to be hired to solve, and making sure your resume, LinkedIn, networking, and interviews all tell the same story.