

Alison M. Yates

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I am an executive and technology leader with 15+ years of experience scaling organizations, launching products, and delivering measurable stakeholder value across startups and global engineering environments. At Structura, I lead algorithm development spanning AI/ML, OCR, and computer vision, building end-to-end systems that move from data ingestion and model experimentation to production deployment. My technical toolkit includes Python, Node.js, React, TensorFlow, and modern embedding workflows such as cosine similarity, retrieval/ranking, and vision foundation models like DINOv2. I pair rigorous analytical reasoning with pragmatic execution and empathetic leadership. I'm comfortable advising at the board level and executing at the operational level, with an Executive MBA, Women Board Directors Development Program experience, and governance/finance coursework that strengthens oversight, risk, and capital-allocation decisions.

Executive Leadership Experience

CEO, Structura Management, PLLC | Seattle, WA | 2025 – Present

Consulting firm providing specialized strategic asset management and project planning services for large-scale structural, scientific, transportation and energy-generation assets.

- **Strategic Leadership**
 - Provide strategic asset management and comprehensive project planning to maximize client return on investment.
 - Develop and execute business plans, focusing on firm growth and client acquisition within the energy and scientific sectors.
 - Lead financial management, client relationships, and engagement delivery, translating technical risk into actionable investment decisions.
 - Partner with engineering and operations stakeholders to define performance metrics, reporting, and governance for capital programs.
- **Selected Technical Impact**
 - Developed OCR + computer vision pipelines to extract structured data from documents/images, improving downstream search and analytics.
 - Implemented embedding-based retrieval and similarity scoring (cosine similarity) to support clustering, matching, and ranking workflows.
 - Evaluated and integrated vision foundation models (e.g., DINOv2) and TensorFlow-based approaches for feature extraction and classification tasks.

Cofounder & CEO, Quarky Labs LLC | Seattle, WA | 2018 – Present

Tech startup specializing in consumer mobile applications that simplify complex instructions through an intuitive UI.

- **Strategic Leadership**
 - Developed and executed comprehensive business plans and market strategies.
 - Conducted market sizing and user research to identify growth opportunities.
 - Oversaw product management and marketing strategy leading to planned product launch.
 - Dramatically grew company revenues with a CAGR of nearly 40% since launch.
- **Selected Technical Impact**
 - Managed all aspects of the business, including financials, content creation, backend automation and AI.
 - Delivered production-ready services and UIs using Python + Node.js APIs and React front ends, with emphasis on reliability, testing, and iteration speed.

Director of Product, Zemax LLC | Kirkland, WA | 2012 – 2018

Global leader in optical product design software, private-equity-owned. Successfully exited in 2018 at the sale of the company.

- **Business Growth**
 - **Doubled revenues within three years** and increased retention rates from 72% to 85%.
 - Expanded total addressable market from ~\$200M to over \$900M through new product roadmaps.
- **Leadership & Management**
 - Led a global, multidisciplinary team of 30 across six geographies.
 - Improved organizational commitment post-acquisition, boosting Glassdoor ratings from 2 to 4.9 stars.
 - Developed and implemented recruiting, onboarding, and performance management frameworks.

Senior Optical Engineer, Lockheed Martin (formerly Aculight) | Bothell, WA | 2005 – 2012

- Designed & built high-performance, one-of-a-kind lasers based on customer requirements in aerospace and defense sectors.

Research Scientist, Cornerstone Research Group | Dayton, OH | 1998 – 2005

- Awarded two patents for innovative optical polymers.
 - Secured over half of the company's funding.
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Education

- **Executive Master of Business Administration**, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
 - Focus on Corporate Governance, Strategic Management, and Financial Analysis.
 - **Master of Science in Physics**, University of Dayton, Dayton, OH
 - Recipient of the DAGSI full-tuition scholarship.
 - **Bachelor of Science in Physics**, Wright State University, Dayton, OH
 - Recipient of six scholarships.
 - First Place in statewide Calculus Competition.
 - High School Valedictorian.
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Professional Development

- **Women Board Directors Development Program**, UW Foster School of Business | 2018
 - **Leadership Development Program Graduate**, LEAP | 2017
 - **200-hour Yoga Teaching Certification**, Whole Life Yoga
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Key Skills and Expertise

- Strategic Planning, Market Research, and Financial Management & Valuations
 - Technical Expertise in Physics, Lasers, Optics, and Mobile Applications
 - Programming, AI/ML & algorithm development: OCR, computer vision, embedding workflows, cosine similarity, retrieval/ranking, model evaluation, feature extraction DINOv2, TensorFlow, Python, Node.js, React, API design, data pipelines, automation, experimentation, deployment handoff
 - International Business Experience in Europe, Japan, Taiwan, and China
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Awards and Honors

- **Two Patents** for new optical polymers.
 - **DAGSI Full-Tuition Scholarship** for engineering graduate degree.
 - **Numerous Scholarships** during undergraduate studies.
 - **First Place**, Statewide Calculus Competition in High School.
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Selected Publications & Presentations

- **Plenary Speaker**, Conference for Undergraduate Women in Physics (2019).
 - **Invited Speaker**, Conference for Undergraduate Women in Physics (2018).
 - **Invited Talk: Negotiating Your Salary**, Conference for Undergraduate Women in Physics (2018).
 - **Featured Interviewee**, "Zemax promotes gender equity in its work culture," SPIE Professional Magazine (2017).
 - Authored many papers on high-power fiber lasers and optical engineering.
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Professional Activities & Community Involvement

- **Volunteer Math Instructor**, University Beyond Bars at Monroe Correctional Complex | **2017**
 - **Mentor for Startups**, Seattle Startup Week | **2019 – 2020**
 - **Judge**, Foster School of Business (UW) MBA Business Plan Competition | **2022 – 2024**
 - **Judge**, Dempsey Startup Competition (UW) | **2022 – 2024**
 - **Judge**, Black Ambition Prize | **2023 – 2024**
 - **Speaker & Mentor**, Undergraduate Creating a Company class | **2023 – 2024**
 - **Partner & Fast Pitch Coach**, Social Venture Partners | **2018 – 2021**
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Testimonials

- **Mark Nicholson**, CEO of Zemax:
"Alison has done a great job of building out the European Engineering Services team... She communicates effectively with Board members and makes great contributions by stepping up to tasks that need to be done. Great year, Alison!"
- **Victor Bruno**, Teammate at Foster School of Business:
"Alison's strengths in quantitative, data-driven decision-making stand out. She actively seeks out opinions of other thought leaders and leverages their insights. She has a drive and passion for knowledge and success."
- **Betsy Goodwin**, Principal Optical Engineer:
"Her technical knowledge and communication skills make her the number one draft pick for any team. She leads by example and is a fantastic team player."