

JOE GUARINO

MIT Certified CTO | VP of AI & Innovation | Founder, G5 Labs

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Technology executive with 20+ years of progressive leadership—from hands-on infrastructure and DevOps to enterprise AI strategy and board-level advisory. I build IT organizations that operate as business drivers, not cost centers: scaling teams, modernizing systems, closing compliance gaps, and deploying emerging technology before competitors realize it matters. Currently VP of AI & Innovation at First Legal and founder of G5 Labs, a fractional CTO and AI strategy consultancy. MIT Certified CTO with credentials in Applied Generative AI and Machine Learning. Authoring an upcoming book on cascading AI across the enterprise. Based in Las Vegas, NV.

CORE COMPETENCIES

AI Strategy & Enterprise Deployment	IT Infrastructure & Cloud Architecture	Cybersecurity & Compliance Frameworks
Team Building & Organizational Scaling	Vendor Management & Contract Negotiation	Digital Transformation Leadership
Fractional CTO & Advisory Services	M&A IT Integration & Due Diligence	Product Roadmapping & BI Analytics

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

VP of AI & Innovation

First Legal — Henderson, NV | 2025 – Present

- Lead AI strategy and enterprise-wide digital transformation for one of the largest legal services companies in the U.S.—where court deadlines and chain-of-custody integrity make reliability non-negotiable.
- Design and deploy intelligent automation frameworks, predictive analytics pipelines, and AI governance policies that accelerate service delivery while satisfying regulatory requirements.
- Own vendor portfolio management, technology budget planning, and annual roadmap development in partnership with executive leadership and finance.
- Establish AI risk and governance frameworks covering model validation, data privacy, and compliance documentation across all business units.

Director of Information Technology

First Legal — Henderson, NV | 2018 – 2025

- Scaled the IT organization from 3 to 20 professionals across InfoSec, Support, DevOps, Infrastructure, and Product—building team structure, hiring pipelines, and operational standards from the ground up.
- Primary IT leader through a private equity acquisition—led technical due diligence, integration planning, and post-close systems consolidation under compressed timelines.
- Built InfoSec and compliance programs from scratch: policies, incident response playbooks, vendor risk assessments, and audit-ready controls aligned to regulated legal industry requirements.
- Directed enterprise networking overhaul and legacy system migrations across case management, ERP-adjacent platforms, and client portals—on time and within budget.
- Renegotiated vendor contracts and migrated critical workloads to AWS, improving resilience and reducing spend while enforcing SLA accountability.

Founder & Principal Consultant

G5 Labs LTD — Henderson, NV | Present

- Fractional CTO and AI strategy consultancy delivering enterprise-grade technology leadership to startups and growing businesses—spanning AI strategy, fractional CISO, DevOps, and talent sourcing.
- Manage a curated network of senior technology professionals deployed across engagements as needed, functioning as a full-spectrum partner, not just an advisor.
- Authoring *Cascading AI*—a forthcoming book on practical enterprise AI implementation drawn from 20+ years of leadership and MIT-credentialed research.

DevOps Manager

First Legal — Riverside, CA | 2012 – 2018

- Led cross-functional Agile delivery teams as Scrum Master and Product Manager across high-priority operational and infrastructure initiatives.
- Directed cloud migration and infrastructure modernization; introduced automation tooling that delivered a 30% reduction in legal order processing time.

IT Help Desk Manager | Operations & Management Roles

First Legal — Los Angeles, CA | 2006 – 2012

- Founded First Legal's first IT help desk from scratch—ticketing system, SLAs, escalation workflows, and training programs. Earlier operations roles built deep expertise in legal services workflows and compliance requirements that directly informed later IT strategy.

EDUCATION

Blended Professional Certificate — Chief Technology Officer

MIT Professional Education | Cambridge, MA | Completed March 2026

Executive program in technology strategy, innovation leadership, applied AI/ML, and enterprise-scale digital transformation.

CERTIFICATIONS

Applied Generative AI for Digital Transformation	MIT Professional Education	Dec 2025
Machine Learning: From Data to Decisions	MIT Professional Education	Sep 2025
Management of Technology: Strategy & Portfolio Analysis	MIT Professional Education	Jul 2025
Management of Technology: Roadmapping & Development	MIT Professional Education	May 2025
Leadership & Innovation	MIT Professional Education	Mar 2025
Bring Your Own AI: Balance Rewards & Risks	MIT Sloan Management Review	2025

LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY

- **Co-Founder & Program Director, AE UNLTD Jiu Jitsu** (2022–Present) — BJJ brown belt, head coach, 200+ students. We Defy Foundation ambassador supporting disabled combat veterans.
- **ILTA** (2024–Present) | **Global CTO Forum** (2023–Present) | **Water Street District Business Association** (2022–Present) | **Sons of the American Legion** (2016–Present)