

J.B. Herrera

Founder & CEO, Synergi AI · Author of *Collaborative Capitalism*



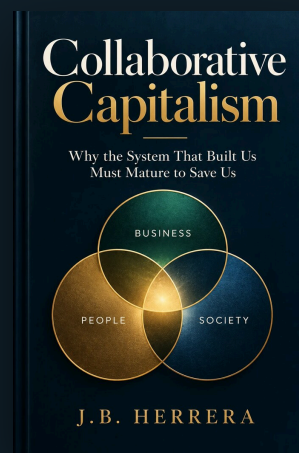
Building human-first AI ecosystems that help small and mid-sized businesses adopt AI without losing what makes them work — a mission he traces back to bussing tables in Sacramento at sixteen.

Human-First AI

AI Ecosystems

SMB Growth

Values-Driven Leadership



J.B. Herrera



Founder & CEO, Synergi AI. J.B. Herrera designs values-driven AI ecosystems for small and mid-sized businesses built on one rule: technology should augment human brilliance, never replace it. He's the author of *Collaborative Capitalism* and started out bussing tables in Sacramento before spending three decades advising entrepreneurs.

Talks about: Human-First AI · AI Ecosystems · SMB Growth · Values-Driven Leadership

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Bio — 1–2 sentences · [INTRO](#) / [SHOW NOTES](#)

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Short bio · ~70 WORDS

J.B. Herrera is Founder & CEO of Synergi AI and Insight Driven Business, designing AI ecosystems for small and mid-sized businesses built on one rule: technology should augment human brilliance, never replace it. He's the author of *Collaborative Capitalism* and hosts the monthly Global Speakers Talk Summit. JB started out bussing tables in Sacramento at sixteen and has spent three decades advising the businesses he now writes about.

Long bio · ~190 WORDS

J.B. Herrera is the Founder & CEO of Synergi AI and Insight Driven Business, where he designs AI ecosystems that put human judgment and values first — using frameworks like Insight 360 (Align → Strategy → Execute) and the SynergiNexus governance platform to help small and mid-sized businesses adopt AI without losing what makes them unique.

His path there runs through three decades across more than 20 industries: two stints at Apple during the Macintosh and iPhone eras, executive roles with Creative Labs and Arbitron/VNU, founding several companies — including EnterMedia Network, an interactive broadcast platform that negotiated content deals with MGM, Disney, and Lucasfilm — and leading a corporate turnaround that ended in a multimillion-dollar acquisition.

JB is the author of *Collaborative Capitalism: Why the System That Built Us Must Mature to Save Us*, and hosts the Global Speakers Talk Summit, a monthly forum for practitioners and change-makers. He holds a BA in Philosophy from Santa Clara University.

He started at sixteen bussing tables in Sacramento, where he still lives — the first in his family to go to college, and, by his own account, still guided by his father's rule: if you see a problem, fix it.

Four conversations worth having.

01 When Bigger Needs to Be Better

The quiet crisis in small business isn't lack of ambition — it's growth that outpaces the systems meant to hold it. Listeners leave knowing the four stages every business moves through, and the one pair of systems everything else depends on.

Contrarian angle: Most growth advice says add more tools, more layers, more sophistication as you scale. JB argues the opposite — most SMBs don't need more systems, they need to get one pair right before touching anything else.

Set-the-hook: “The Growth Trap Nobody Warns You About” · “Why Bigger Almost Always Breaks First”

02 Measuring What the Balance Sheet Misses

Financial statements tell you if a business made money — not if it's actually healthy. Listeners walk away with the Ecosystem Health Index: seven dimensions, seven separate metrics, deliberately never rolled into one score.

Contrarian angle: Every dashboard vendor wants to hand you a single “health score.” JB argues that's exactly the wrong move — collapsing seven distinct signals into one number is how leaders miss the thing that's actually breaking.

Set-the-hook: “The Health Score I Refuse to Build” · “Your P&L Is Lying to You (Politely)”

03 Values-Driven AI: Why SMBs Have More Power Than Hyperscalers

Small and mid-sized businesses assume they're outgunned in the AI race. Listeners walk away understanding why the opposite is true — and where their advantage actually lives.

Contrarian angle: The industry narrative says scale wins — bigger models, bigger data, bigger budgets. JB argues hyperscalers optimize for generalized power, while SMBs can align AI tightly to specific values and context — an advantage size can't buy.

Set-the-hook: “The AI Race Small Business Is Already Winning” · “Why Bigger Models Don't Beat Better Judgment”

04 Implementing Values-Driven AI: From Black Box to Glass Box

Most AI adoption advice stops at strategy. Listeners walk away with what actually happens next — designing and building agentic AI around the bright lines and guardrails a team defines for itself.

Contrarian angle: The default posture toward AI is “trust the black box because the results are good enough.” JB argues that's a liability waiting to surface — the goal isn't better output, it's a system that's transparent, accountable, and unmistakably yours.

Set-the-hook: “Why I Won't Deploy AI You Can't Explain” · “Turning Your Black-Box AI Into a Glass Box”

Ten questions to start with.

1. You talk about “the quiet crisis” in small business — what is it, and why don't most leaders see it coming?
2. You've said most companies don't need more systems, they need to get one pair right. Which two systems, and why those?
3. What's the Ecosystem Health Index, and why do you refuse to collapse it into a single score?
4. If a balance sheet can look healthy while a business is quietly breaking, what should leaders actually be watching?
5. You argue small businesses have more power than hyperscalers in the AI race. What's the case for that?
6. Where does an SMB's advantage in AI actually come from, if not budget or scale?
7. You call yourself a human intelligence amplifier. Where's the line between augmenting a team and replacing one?
8. What turns AI from a “black box” into what you call a “glass box”?
9. You tell a story about “the week the ceiling broke” — what changed the moment that CEO stopped asking “did anyone follow up?” and started asking “what's actually blocking progress?”
10. If a leader listening today can only do one thing this month to test these ideas, what should it be?

Frameworks

1 · EXPERIENCE → UNDERSTAND → JUDGE → DECIDE → ACT

Lonergan's model of human cognition, with one addition — Act. Without it, the framework is just a thought exercise.

2 · ALIGN → STRATEGIZE → EXECUTE → REVIEW

The operating loop behind every engagement — alignment first, so strategy and execution stay on mission.

3 · THE FOUR STAGES OF COMPANY GROWTH

Each stage carries its own responsibility. Skipping the responsibility, not the stage, is what breaks companies.

THE PROBLEM I SOLVE

I help SMB leaders and teams gain clarity, consistency, and measurable results by turning scattered work into safe, explainable, role-based AI workflows — without losing the human touch.

The ideas behind the conversation.

Talking points

- Alignment creates direction; without it, you drift — and every degree of drift lowers your odds of fulfilling your purpose.
- AI isn't smart, doesn't know what's “right,” and can't replace human judgment — it's a tool, not a conscience.
- Confidence doesn't come from having all the answers — it comes from having a roadmap you trust.
- Technology should serve humanity, not the other way around.
- Responsibility scales with power: individuals answer for their actions, companies answer for the ecosystems their market dominance shapes.

BACKGROUND FOR QUESTION 3 · PODCAST VERSION

The Ecosystem Health Index

Every company already reports its financial health. A balance sheet, an income statement, audited numbers you can compare across firms and across years. What nobody reports is the company's health toward everything around it. Its suppliers. Its partners. The startups trying to build on top of it. The workers and communities it touches.

The Ecosystem Health Index is my proposal to fix that. It measures a firm on seven dimensions:

1. **Partner viability** — are your suppliers and partners getting healthier or sicker by working with you?
2. **Ecosystem spawn rate** — do new companies form around you, or stop forming?
3. **Switching-cost transparency** — can customers see what it costs to leave before they're locked in?
4. **Innovation diffusion** — does your innovation spread, or do you fence it off?
5. **Wage and equity distribution** — who shares in the value created?
6. **Civic and information commons posture** — do you strengthen or drain the shared resources you draw on, like open source?
7. **Stage-appropriate behavior** — are you acting like the size you actually are?

Two design choices matter. First, it's never one composite score. That's the mistake ESG made — one number that hides everything and invites gaming. The EHI is seven scores, side by side. Second, it's stage-aware. A ten-person startup and a trillion-dollar platform aren't held to the same bar. Responsibility scales with market power.

And this isn't theory. In 2024 the FTC did exactly this kind of measurement for the pharmacy benefit manager industry — concentration, partner squeeze, switching costs — with hard data. They proved it's operational. The EHI takes that same rigor and applies it across the economy, governed by a standards board modeled on FASB, the body that made financial reporting consistent in the first place.

The point isn't to force anyone's hand. It's to give investors, customers, employees, and policymakers information they've never had. Behavior follows information. It always has.

Track record.

20,093

LinkedIn followers

20%

Revenue increase in 60 days

35%

Cost savings from AI implementation in 30 days — zero headcount loss

Brands & companies: Apple Inc. · Creative Technology · Disney · VNU/Arbitron

What clients & colleagues say

“JB took my business to well over 7 figures in the year I coached with him... I would not do business without this man.”

— Deb Oxman, Founder, Savor Culinary Services

“JB's breadth of knowledge and commitment to business owners and achieving their goals... has made me a smarter business owner.”

— Dana C. Arnett, Founder & CEO, Wicked Bionic

“His greatest assets are his vision, passion, and ability to inspire others to excel... one of the most professionally generous individuals you will ever meet.”

— Deb McManus Greengrass, Global Communications Executive & Strategist

“JB is a gifted, strategic marketing visionary who is also a pragmatic, results-oriented implementer.”

— Dan Corcoran, CSO, TrustWrx

Recent publications

JUN 8, 2026	The Veto Power: When Humans Must Override the Algorithm
JUN 1, 2026	Ethics as Code: Embedding Values in AI Architecture
APR 27, 2026	The Hidden Cost of Misalignment: Why Integrity Is the Foundation of Sustainable SME Growth
APR 20, 2026	Five Warning Signs Your AI Is Drifting From Your Values
MAR 2, 2026	AI in Service of Humanity: Returning Technology to Its Proper Place
FEB 23, 2026	The Alignment Audit: 10 Questions Every CEO Should Ask
JAN 19, 2026	Wisdom vs. Intelligence: Why SMBs Need Both
JAN 12, 2026	The Judgment Gap: What AI Cannot Replace

Call to action & booking.

LISTENER CALL TO ACTION

Curious where your team actually stands with AI? Talk to Higgins — my personal AI — for a free readiness assessment. Start at synergiai.io/ai-assessment.

Alternate listener CTAs

Alternate 1. Before you buy another tool, get a clear read on your AI readiness. Higgins will walk you through it — free, no pitch. synergiai.io/ai-assessment

Alternate 2. Not sure if you're ready for AI, or where to start? Ask Higgins. It's a five-minute conversation that tells you exactly where you stand. synergiai.io/ai-assessment

Podcast-friendly one-liner. “If this conversation got you thinking about AI readiness, go talk to Higgins — my AI — at synergiai.io/ai-assessment. It's free, it's fast, and it'll tell you exactly where to start.”

Visual assets

Full-resolution files are on the media kit page at jbherrera.com/media-kit.



Headshot



Wide shot



Front cover



Back cover



J. B. HERRERA

J.B. Herrera mark



Synergi AI logo



Synergi Press logo

Book J.B. directly

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[Schedule a time](#)

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