



BUSTER FRANKEN

Founder & AI Executive

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SUMMARY

With my past startup FruitPunch AI we crowdsourced €45M in AI engineering for impact organizations. Through our platform >4500 AI engineers built AI solutions for: Stanford, ESA, Greenpeace, WWF, Philips, NXP, Huawei, etc. to mitigate climate change, protect biodiversity and detect diseases. FruitPunch AI was acquired by Zindi.

I've held advisory board positions at the Dutch government on the ethical use of AI, and I teach the occasional course in AI and impact entrepreneurship at my old university as a lecturer. I'm a passionate startup community builder, part of which is running a non profit coworking space for impact startups and organizing events to help impact founders.

Before FruitPunch AI I helped build the AI research institute at my university (EAISI @ TU/e) and researched brain computer interfacing. Before that I've been a professional (teen) actor, teacher, security guard & software developer.

WORK EXPERIENCE

⇒ VP of Partnerships (post exit), Zindi

May 2025 — Oct 2025
Delaware, United States

After my startup FruitPunch AI was acquired by Zindi I took on the role VP of Partnerships to ensure a smooth transition. In these 6 months I focussed on transferring the partnerships and community members from to their new home.

⇒ Founder & CEO, FruitPunch AI

Sep 2018 — May 2025
The Netherlands

FruitPunch AI was the platform for AI engineers to train their skills by crowdsourcing solutions for impact organizations. It started as an NGO and turned into a startup after raising VC funds at the end of 2020. After growing to a global AI community and collaborating with giants like Stanford, ESA, and Greenpeace, we were acquired by Zindi.

- €45M in AI engineering crowdsourced for impact organizations
- €1M in VC funding raised
- >4500 AI engineers worked on our projects

⇒ AI Program Manager, Eindhoven University of Technology

May 2019 — Dec 2022
Eindhoven, The Netherlands

Founding team member of the AI institute of the Technical University of Eindhoven. I built and managed a team with which we built an experience room with 6 physical demos of AI research at the TU/e and recruited AI professors.

⇒ Software Developer, Webholders

March 2018 — March 2019

Webholders was a web development agency I founded to sustain myself while building FruitPunch AI as an NGO.

VOLUNTEER & BOARD EXPERIENCE

⇒ Board Member, Open Edge HPC Initiative (OEHI)

Jun 2023 — Oct 2025

The Netherlands

The goal of OEHI is to foster the development of an open and feature-rich ecosystem for Arm® and RISC-V® based technologies. To this end we built a consortia of tech companies and universities, among which: Arm, Huawei & Fraunhofer.

⇒ Co-Founder, Founder Space Utrecht

Apr 2024 — Oct 2025

The community-first coworking space for impact startup founders in Utrecht. We hosted 10 startups. Sold to one of our member companies October 2025 for a small profit.

⇒ Board Member, Nationale Coalitie Duurzame Digitalisering

Jul 2024 — May 2025

As a Strategic Board member I help shape the goals and activities of the Dutch Coalition for Sustainable Digitization.

⇒ Executive, Sigma Squared Society

Oct 2022 — March 2024

Sigma Squared is a global community of the most impactful founders under 26, who collectively raised €2.5B. Next to being a member, I lead the Dutch chapter as executive. Community building, organizing events, helping impact founders & building partnerships. I assured 50% of applicants were female founders and organized 14 events with people from all over the world attending.

⇒ AI Advisory Board Member, Provincie Noord-Brabant

Sep 2022 — Apr 2024

I advised the Dutch government, region Brabant on their policy & actions around stimulating AI in business & research.

EDUCATION

⇒ Eindhoven University of Technology

2014 — 2018

Bachelor of Science: Mechanical Engineering, Neuroscience & Data Science

I received a 10/10 for my research on Brain Computer Interfacing where I showed that functioning tertiary human brain organoids can be grown on a chip. My research was adopted by Guillem Monsó to create a wetware-computer under guidance of my thesis advisor Prof. Regina Luttge. I extended my studies to add 60 ECTS in Data Science courses.

SKILLS

Sales & Partnership Building — Community Building
Fundraising — Operations — Speaking & Marketing

LANGUAGES

English and Dutch with native proficiency.
German B2 proficiency.

VOUCHES

Prompt: What does Buster score in the top 0.1% of the world in?

“Getting people excited for collaboration and new endeavors, from founders to senior leaders.”

– Sako Arts, Cofounder & CTO of FruitPunch AI

“Buster has the strong ability to translate high-level ideas into testable experiments. Using the data and analysis gathered to build a plan grounded in truth.”

– Dorian Groen, Challenge Manager of FruitPunch AI

“Galvanizing AI engineers to apply their skills towards global challenges and the greater good.”

– Arjé Cahn, investor in FruitPunch AI (Shamrock Ventures)