



Neil West

BUSINESS LEADER

Most large organisations talk about simplicity and ship complexity. Product roadmaps grow, customer journeys fragment, internal processes accumulate, and the original argument for the business gets lost. The problem is rarely a shortage of ideas. It is the absence of a discipline for removing the wrong ones.

Neil West spent 16 years inside Apple's services business and helps organisations turn simplicity into an operating discipline that customers can feel.

Neil West's 2026 Biography

AVAILABLE FOR

- Speaking

Why organisations work with Neil West

- First-hand operator perspective from inside Apple Music, the App Store, Apple TV+ and iTunes during the period the company shifted a billion-dollar services business across Europe.
- A specific thesis on simplicity as competitive advantage, set out in *It Just Works* (Macmillan Business, 2026) and structured as nine rules leaders can apply to their own products and teams.
- Useful for the meeting after the strategy offsite: he speaks to the practical work of cutting features, killing projects, and protecting customer experience from internal politics.
- Co-founded the iTunes Festival and curated Apple's relationship with artists from Beyonce to Bono, which gives the talks the texture of a content business, not a generic technology keynote.
- Translates Steve Jobs era principles into language that lands with commercial and product leaders who have to ship, not theorise.

NEIL'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Business Strategy & Growth
- Change Management
- Customer Experience & Marketing
- Digital Transformation
- Innovation & Disruption
- Team Leadership

Biography highlights

- Head of Services, Apple Southern Europe, with responsibility for App Store, Apple Music, Apple TV+, iCloud, Books, Podcasts, Arcade and Fitness+ across the region.
- Head of Music, Apple UK and Europe, for ten years, including the period iTunes became the world's largest music retailer.
- Co-founder and curator of the iTunes Festival.
- Author of *It Just Works: The Nine Simple Rules of Apple's Success*, Macmillan Business, September 2026.
- TEDx speaker on The Beatles, Steve Jobs, and Team Management.
- Earlier career: European Editor-in-Chief at Rhapsody, the first music streaming subscription service, Creative Director at Garageband.com (founded with Jerry Harrison of Talking Heads and Sir George Martin), and Editor-in-Chief of NEXT Generation magazine.

LANGUAGES: English

Biography

iTunes was a record store before it was a streaming service, and the App Store was a developer experiment before it was a platform. The hard part of running those businesses across Europe was not adding features. It was deciding what not to build, what to pull, and which artist or partner relationship was worth defending against internal pressure to standardise.

West did that work for sixteen years. As Head of Music for Apple in the UK and Europe, he led the team through the period iTunes became the world's biggest music retailer, and co-founded the iTunes Festival as a way of binding the catalogue to a live cultural moment. He then ran Services for Apple Southern Europe, a billion-dollar portfolio covering App Store, Apple Music, TV+, iCloud, Books, Podcasts, Arcade and Fitness+, through the shift from downloads to subscription.

His argument now, set out in *It Just Works* (Macmillan Business, 2026), is that Apple's edge has always been a discipline for removing complexity rather than a talent for adding features. The book offers nine rules drawn from inside the business, on simplifying products, reducing friction in customer journeys, and protecting focus when an organisation grows. His TEDx talk on The Beatles and Steve Jobs makes the team-design version of the same case.

For audiences in product, marketing, services and digital businesses, the value is the operator detail. He talks about specific decisions, named launches, and the politics of holding a line on customer experience when commercial pressure points the other way.

Key speaking topics

- Simplicity as commercial operating discipline
- Customer experience in subscription and platform businesses
- The shift from downloads to streaming and what it taught the wider content economy
- Product and service launches at scale
- Building and managing creative teams
- Lessons from inside Apple's services business

Ideal for

- Product, services and platform leaders running multi-product portfolios
- CMOs and customer experience leaders in subscription, media and consumer businesses
- Innovation and transformation directors looking for an operator voice rather than a consultant frame
- Leadership teams resetting after a period of feature accumulation or proposition drift

Audience outcomes

- A working definition of simplicity that can be applied to a roadmap, not just a brand line.
- Specific tests for deciding what to cut from a product, service or process.
- A view of Apple's services business from inside the European operation, including how artist and partner relationships were handled.
- Language for protecting customer experience against internal pressure to add complexity.

- A team-design lens drawn from how Apple, and before it The Beatles, structured small creative groups for output.

Meet Neil West

Neil West is a pioneer and key figure in the digital music and entertainment industry. With 25 years at the forefront of digital content business transformation, West has been a driving force in changing how we consume music and online content. His work at Apple, both in the UK and Europe, has positioned him as an influential leader in the field, particularly during his tenure as Head of Music and later as Head of Apple Services.

Neil West's career is remarkable, highlighted by his leadership at Apple, where he led the music team in Europe as iTunes rose to become the world's largest music retailer and through the launch of Apple Music. He was a co-founder and curator of the iTunes Festival. He led Apple's Services businesses (App Store, Apple Music, Apple TV+, Apple Books, Apple Podcasts, Fitness+) in Southern and Eastern Europe. Prior to joining Apple he served as European Editor-in-Chief for Rhapsody, the world's first music streaming subscription service. West has also been the Creative Director of San Francisco startup GarageBand.com and Editor-in-Chief of NEXT Generation, the leading US videogames magazine. His #4 position in The Guardian's Music Power 100 in 2011 is a testament to his influence in the industry.

Neil West's conferences are known for their innovative approach and ability to foresee future trends in the digital entertainment industry. Using an interactive and engaging style, West shares his experiences and insights on the evolution of the digital market, offering unique perspectives and valuable lessons to his audience. His ability to blend personal stories with trend analysis makes his presentations an educational and inspiring experience.

Neil West's 2026 talks & topics

Revolutionizing the Music Industry

A first-hand account of iTunes, the App Store and Apple Music as commercial businesses, told from inside Apple's European operation.

Key takeaways:

- How Apple's services portfolio was built and managed across multiple countries
- The commercial decisions behind the shift from downloads to subscription
- Behind the scenes from the iTunes Festival and major artist launches

Leading Customers Through Change: Lessons from Apple's App Store, iTunes, Apple Music

and Apple TV+

A practitioner view of how to move customers through a major product or business model change without losing them.

Key takeaways:

- Why most change programmes underweight the customer side of the transition
 - Tactics used inside Apple to manage messaging and sequencing during launches
 - How to hold the line on experience when internal pressure pushes for shortcuts
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Keep It Simple: Lessons from Steve Jobs

The argument from It Just Works, applied to product, service and team decisions outside Apple.

Key takeaways:

- Simplicity as a discipline for what to remove, not a design aesthetic
 - Nine rules drawn from Apple's operating practice
 - Where simplicity creates measurable commercial advantage
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The Beatles, Steve Jobs and Team Management (TEDx)

A team-design talk drawing on Steve Jobs's stated model that the management template for Apple was The Beatles.

Key takeaways:

- What small creative groups do that scaled functions struggle to replicate
- How Apple structured teams around output, not hierarchy
- Where the model breaks and where it holds in a corporate setting

Neil West's Videos

