

Ben Burke Principal Systems Architect & Technical Mentor

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY Systems Thinker. Educator. AI Researcher. A veteran technology leader approaching the summit of a 42+ year career. I offer a rare blend of executive-level strategic vision, foundational engineering capability, and cutting-edge technical currency.

My value proposition is unique: I bridge the gap between "ancient" legacy infrastructure and the emerging landscape of Generative AI. I am as comfortable debugging OpenVMS registers as I am orchestrating Large Language Model (LLM) workflows. I do not just maintain fossilized systems; I apply modern open-source intelligence to evolve them.

THE ENGAGEMENT MODEL Expertise without Politics. I work best as a force multiplier for your existing team. I have no interest in permanent management roles, building empires, or displacing current staff. I trade premium expertise, truth-telling, and rapid delivery for flexible working conditions.

COGNITIVE & LEADERSHIP PROFILE

- **Lectica Decision Making Assessment (Score: High 13s):** Ranked in the top percentile for complex decision-making. This indicates a proven capability for "Principled/Systems Thinking"—handling high levels of ambiguity without losing sight of the strategic outcome.
- **The Agenda Detector:** Decades of experience combined with recent AI research allow me to rapidly assess vendor claims. I know the difference between a genuine AI use-case and a marketing wrapper.
- **Public Speaker & Educator:** Former Principal Instructor for Digital Equipment Corp with a lifelong passion for mentoring engineering teams and sharing knowledge with the open-source community.

TECHNICAL FOCUS

- **Applied Generative AI (Current Focus):** Over the last 18 months, I have dedicated myself to the self-directed study and development of open-source tools utilizing LLMs (Gemini, ChatGPT) and search intelligence (Brave Search API). My focus is on practical, community-driven AI utility that dismantles outdated structural thinking.
- **The "Forever" Stack:** My modern development is pinned together by an always-present mastery of Operating System Engineering (Linux/Unix/VMS) and TCP/IP Networking. I do not get lost in abstraction layers because I understand the machine underneath.
- **Data Agnostic:** Seamless manipulation of data regardless of age or format—from legacy ISAM/VSAM structures to modern unstructured datasets required for AI training and RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation) implementations.

SELECTED CONSULTING HIGHLIGHTS

Open Source Community | Applied AI Research

- **The Focus:** Developing open-source integrations for Large Language Models to assist the broader community.
- **The Outcome:** Created practical implementations using Python to bridge the gap between search APIs and Generative pre-trained transformers, proving the viability of AI in displacing "fossilized" information architectures.

Tier 1 Retail Banking | Legacy Modernization & Migration

- **The Challenge:** A high-risk migration of critical core banking applications from OpenVMS to Red Hat Linux.
- **The Outcome:** Delivered strictly on time and within budget—a statistical rarity in retail banking.
- **The Role:** Acted as the technical bridge between the legacy VMS team and the modern Linux team, ensuring architectural integrity was maintained while leveraging modern scripting and OS features.

Wesfarmers Insurance | Infrastructure & Data Centre Consolidation

- **The Challenge:** Simultaneous migration of applications (Forte to J2EE), platforms (Solaris to AIX), and physical Data Centre construction.
- **The Outcome:** Successful consolidation of national infrastructure with zero business continuity failure.

Fishburners (Startup Ecosystem)

- **The Challenge:** Low cost IT support for a NFP Startup environment.
- **The Outcome:** Seven years of hands on, volunteer support for a tech startup community.

Digital Equipment Corp | Foundational Engineering & Education

- **The Role:** Principal Instructor and Systems Engineer.
- **The Foundation:** Established a deep understanding of memory management, crash dump analysis, and OS internals—skills that remain the "first principles" of all modern computing.

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

Director & Principal Consultant Freedmand PTY LTD | 2003 – Present

General Manager CRM Solutions | 2001 – 2003

Director Keypac Computing Services | 1993 – 2001

Consultant & Educator Digital Equipment Corp (DEC) | 1984 – 1993