Richard Priest

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Professional Summary

Battle-Tested IT Director Who Turns Tech Chaos into Profit Machines With 25+ years dodging bullets in high-stakes manufacturing, digital engineering, and design-heavy industries, I've led enterprise-wide digital overhauls that don't just survive—they thrive. We're talking ERP migrations that slashed costs by 15-25%, AI/ML integrations that boosted efficiency by 20-30%, and rock-solid systems hitting 98% uptime in environments where downtime means disaster. I've rescued operations from the brink, consolidated sprawling tech stacks, and bridged customer design to factory floor execution without the usual hand-holding. If your board is whispering, "We need someone who's been through the fire and emerged with blueprints for growth," I'm that guy—driving revenue spikes, crushing risks, and simplifying the mess so teams can focus on winning, not wrestling with outdated tech.

Key Skills

Technical Arsenal:

- **ERP Overhauls That Save Empires:** Mastered SAP/MS Dynamics migrations and consolidations, turning bloated systems into lean revenue generators.
- **Cyber Fortresses Built to Last:** ISO 27001/NIST/IEC 62443 compliance, with AWS/Azure/GCP cloud setups that laugh at threats.
- **AI/ML Magic for Real-World Wins:** From predictive algorithms to LLM-driven automation, I've deployed tech that spots issues before they explode, saving £250K+ in downtime.
- **Design-to-Manufacturing Lifelines:** PLM/SDLC workflows that connect customer visions to factory reality, plus SCADA/BI/big data analytics for zero-bottleneck operations.
- **Infrastructure Overlords:** TOGAF architecture, SQL/NoSQL databases, network security, and hardware tweaks for factories and warehouses that run like clockwork.

Leadership Firepower:

- **Global Team Wrangler:** Managed 30+ distributed squads across multi-sites, fostering DevOps cultures that deliver without excuses.
- **Boardroom Influencer:** Shaped C-suite decisions in manufacturing/digital engineering, turning tech visions into multimillion-pound realities.
- **Innovation Igniter:** Championed proactive digital shifts, coaching high-performers to outpace competitors.
- **Operational Edge:**
- **Transformation Maestro:** PRINCE2/PMP/Agile/Scrum for multi-phase projects that cut response times by 25% and fraud errors by 18%.
- **Budget Ninja:** Oversaw £multi-M spends, slashing costs 15-25% through vendor negotiations and ROI-driven investments.
- **Disaster-Proofing Pro:** DR/ISO 22301 continuity plans that kept operations humming through crises.

Financial/Commercial Savvy:

- **Cost-Cutting Hero:** Delivered 18-25% savings via strategic consolidations and supplier ecosystems.
- **ESG Compliance Guru:** ISO 14001/50001 integrations with AI for automated reporting, boosting audits by 22%.

Interpersonal Superpowers:

- **Cross-Functional Glue:** Thrived in fast-paced manufacturing, building relationships that turn silos into synergies.
- **Adaptive Survivor:** No hand-holding needed—I've navigated relocations, restructures, and rapid pivots with ease.

Professional Experience

Head of Technology, Armstrong Watson (16 Offices), Carlisle *Oct 2024 – May 2025 | Led 30+ National Team | £Multi-M Budget | Digital Strategy & Transformation in Multi-Site Operations*

- **Rescued Multi-Site Ops from Tech Overload:** Directed group-wide IT strategies for SLT/CEO, integrating software, systems, and digital tools that spiked compliance efficiency by 20% and unlocked new revenue streams—because who needs outdated processes dragging down profits?
- **Slashed Costs by 15% Without Breaking a Sweat:** Engineered multi-phase improvements and integrations akin to ERP rescues, saving big bucks and freeing up cash for growth initiatives.
- **Delivered 98% Uptime in Hostile Environments:** Oversaw full SDLC for digital products with big data oversight, banishing reliability nightmares and ensuring teams could sleep at night.
- **Outsmarted Suppliers and Threats:** Negotiated killer contracts, nailed AWS/Azure migrations, and fortified cybersecurity/hardware—plugging vulnerabilities that could have tanked operations.
- **AI/ML Automation That Crushed Inefficiencies:** Rolled out predictive analytics cutting response times by 25% and fraud errors by 18%, handing teams streamlined decisions and ditching overnight security headaches.

Head of IT (Business Partner), Nova Pangaea Technologies, Wilton *Sep 2023 – Sep 2024 | SLT Director-Level | Cleantech Manufacturing & Digital Engineering Focus*

- **Turbocharged Productivity by 25% in Manufacturing Mayhem:** Partnered with execs on roadmaps for software, infrastructure, and design-to-production tools, using Agile to blast through bottlenecks and amp up revenue potential.
- **Accelerated R&D Trials by 30% with SCADA/AI Firepower:** Led 15+ teams in integrations that cleared innovation jams, turning slow pipelines into speed demons.
- **Saved 18% on Ops Costs Amid £Multi-M Budgets:** Masterminded vendor alliances, cloud/DR setups, and analytics for compliance—directly pocketing savings without skimping on performance.
- **Prevented £250K Downtime Disasters:** Built AI predictive maintenance on SCADA data, averting breakdowns that would have halted production cold.
- **Automated ESG Nightmares with LLM Tools:** Consolidated sensor data for 22% better audit compliance, making regulatory headaches a thing of the past for stressed teams.

Head of IT & Digital Strategy (UK/France SLT), EDF Renewables UK/Ireland, London/Paris *Mar – Aug 2023 | Interim Director | Multinational Renewables Manufacturing & Engineering*

- **Boosted Infrastructure Efficiency by 10-15% Across Borders:** Managed full IT ops, from software to cybersecurity, optimizing design-to-manufacturing for energy yields that drove revenue growth.
- **Slashed Downtime by 8-10% in Global Grids:** Guided teams on roadmaps with network/hardware upgrades, exterminating chronic system failures.
- **Handled £Multi-M Budgets Like a Pro:** Oversaw SCADA cycles, cost reductions, and supplier wrangling for unbreakable operations.
- **Achieved 92% Accurate Forecasts with AI/ML:** Directed GCP ML initiatives for 12% yield boosts across sites, translating to real income gains.
- **Cut Compliance Reviews by 30% with NLP Models:** Simplified multilingual regs, erasing cross-border documentation woes for international crews.

IT Director, VetPartners Ltd, York *Mar – Sep 2022 | Associate SLT | Animal Health Sector with Design & Operational Tools*

- **Saved £600K Annually Through System Alignments:** Directed 30+ teams on IT roadmaps and infrastructure revamps, slashing costs and fueling innovation.
- **Upped Efficiencies by 5-10% with PLM/SDLC Rollouts:** Launched telemedicine and data platforms, easing ops burdens via expert change management.
- **Boosted Case Throughput by 15% with AI Diagnostics:** Deployed computer vision for imaging, speeding revenue cycles without extra staff.
- **Forecasted Health Trends to Smash Data Silos:** Used big data clustering integrated with EHRs, spotting risks early and unlocking proactive revenue plays.

IT Director, Bidwells, Cambridge *Jan 2020 – Mar 2022 | Led 15+ Team | Property Sector Growth with Design/Visualisation Software*

- **Drove Revenue with AI/ML/GIS Analytics:** Upgraded systems and hybrid setups, enhancing cross-dept design/engineering for profitable market predictions.
- **Resolved Integration Gaps Via DevOps Mastery:** Oversaw suppliers and hardware, aligning IT with explosive business growth.
- **Forecasted Valuations with 20% More Accuracy:** Built GIS-ML models enabling £multi-M deals and income surges.
- **Handled 40% of Queries with LLM Chatbots:** Freed advisors for high-value work, ditching response delays in client interactions.

Director of IT, Great Places Housing Group, Manchester *Mar 2017 – Dec 2019 | Led 32+ Team | 650+ Staff/25K Residents | Cloud & System Migrations*

- **Cut Downtime by 25% Pre-COVID:** Led O365 and AWS/Azure migrations for scalable savings in operational fulfilment.
- **Raised Satisfaction by 18% with Analytics:** Fortified cybersecurity, portals, and NLP/ML for sentiment analysis, boosting retention revenue.
- **Lowered Vacancies by 10% Via Azure ML:** Forecasted demand to solve occupancy puzzles.
- **Executed ERP-Like Consolidations Flawlessly:** Teamed with seniors to ditch outdated systems.

Director of IT, Claims Advisory Group (PPI FS), Manchester *Jun 2015 – Jan 2017 | Led 12+ Team | £500K Budget | System Enhancements & Migrations*

- **Spiked Claims Efficiency by 30% with AWS/CRM:** Aligned systems for faster revenue through processing.
- **Dropped Security Incidents by 40% Under GDPR:** Optimized threat detection and hardware, sealing risks.
- **Secured 15% Savings and 99.9% Uptime:** Nailed vendor deals and FCA compliance for stability.

Education & Certifications

- BSc Computer Science, University of Manchester
- CISSP | PMP | ITIL v3 Foundation | PRINCE2

Technical Proficiencies

Cloud/Infra/ERP: AWS/Azure/GCP/VMware/Kubernetes/Docker | Hardware/Networking/Factory Devices | SAP/MS Dynamics Migrations **Cyber:** Splunk/Palo Alto/Okta/SIEM **ITSM:** ServiceNow/Jira/ITIL **PLM/CRM:** Azure DevOps/Dynamics 365/Salesforce | SDLC for Design/Engineering Tools **Data/AI:** SQL/PostgreSQL/Power BI/Python/TensorFlow/Machine Learning/Big Data/SCADA **PM:** MS Project/Agile/Scrum **Collab:** Teams/SharePoint/DevOps