Alex Merkher

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Executive Leadership: Software Engineering, Information Technology, Operations

Goal-oriented, senior technology executive with more than 25 years of experience in leading technical teams in companies ranging from start-ups to global industry leaders. Emphasis on setting up structured technical cultures that promote best-in-class quality and productivity.

Summary

Executive Vice President for Internal Systems Development for a rapidly expanding Cloud VOIP and Unified Communications company. Responsible for leading all internal technology: ordering, provisioning, billing, accounting, CRM, IT and QA. Standardized development tools and processes, moved development into GCP, delivered several key new projects, and focused on business process optimization by automating all manual processes.

Vice President of Release Management for Cloud services for a leading Banking and Wealth Management Company: developed release, deployment, and testing processes for a one of the largest implementations of Salesforce.com CRM application for Financial Advisors. Through improving the efficiency and quality of the delivery team, and aligning release, testing and support processes to the Enterprise model, have significantly contributed to the improvements of the end-user experience, and a 20% increase in the adoption rate.

Director of Web Operations for a leading E-Learning company: oversaw the Web Delivery and Hosting operations for the SaaS learning platform. Selected, and managed the transition to a new Hosting provider. Implemented Content Delivery Network solution – improved performance by 30% and reduced hosting resources by 40%. Implemented Web Performance monitoring. Oversaw the deployment of the NetSuite CRM.

Engineering Manager (VP) for a leading Business Hosted VOIP provider: managed the Applications Development, Networking and Systems Administration groups. Managed two data centers - accountable for maintaining 99.999% systems uptime. Set the strategic direction, established priorities and led the development of the internal Ops Support Systems, customer facing applications development, and advanced solutions.

Director of Technology and Operations for an Expertise Management ASP company: developed, implemented and managed the company's operational infrastructure, consisting of multi-vendor hosting (two outsourced and one in-house data centers), blended in-house and outsourced (offshore) development, and two contact centers.

Professional Experience

Star2Star Communications, Sarasota, FL

2016 - Present

Executive Vice President – Internal Systems Development

As a channel-based Cloud VoIP and Unified Communications provider, Star2Star has been experiencing tremendous growth since its founding in 2006. Joining the company as an Executive Director in 2016, I led the transformation of the Internal Systems department into a well-organized, high performing team, with the responsibilities for development and maintenance of ordering (SAP CPQ), provisioning, accounting (MS Dynamics Great Plains), billing, and CRM (SugarCRM) systems. During the first year I have:

- implemented Agile development methodology across all development projects.
- standardized development tools and environments.
- put in place inter-system integrations to eliminate manual processes,
- designed and led the development of the new configuration and ordering system,
- implemented an online payment system

I continue to lead the optimization and standardization of software development tools and processes across the whole company, helping to adopt cloud-based development tools (Jira and BitBucket) and moving most of the development environments from a hosted data center into the Google Cloud Platform (GCP). After the company merged with an Irish VoIP company, Blueface, I was promoted to Executive Vice President, and also became responsible for the IT and QA departments. Among some of my other notable achievements are:

- helped define and implement company-wide online security policies,
- helped introduce QA processes for the Irish development group,
- automated asset and access tracking,
- implemented Automated Testing on selected projects,
- established cross-team design reviews to promote best practices and better communications
- led the design, development and deployment of the new Order Quoting system that replaced the 3rd party CPQ tool and all other legacy ordering systems oversaw the production roll-out with zero user issues.

VP/Release Management – GWIMT Cloud Services

BAC/ML Domestic Advisory has one of the largest and more complex implementations of Salesforce.com's cloud-based CRM solutions for Financial Advisors. As a VP of Release Management, I was responsible for:

- Developing, improving, implementing and managing the Release strategy, process, tools, and methodologies for deployment of internally developed modifications for the Salesforce CRM system.
- Planning CRMS Release deployment roadmap. Collaborating with internal teams and the vendor to reach
 consensus on the scheduling conflicts. Day-to-day management of the entire release cycle, from requirements
 through design, code drop and testing, to production deployment.
- Planning and coordinating all the testing processes for QA and UAT cycles, including schedules and resources.
- Working with development teams to schedule off-cycle products, improve pre code-drop process, and help coordinate test alignment with a number of internal BAC/ML systems, which interface with Salesforce.

Since joining the CRMS Platform and Delivery Service team, I have:

- Helped extend the planning horizon for the Release schedule from 4 months to a year.
- Improved the efficiency of the Release Management team by introducing weekly off-cycle releases, allowing CRMS to deliver a significantly larger number of products to business.
- Helped on-board a new QA testing team and trained them in CRMS functionality, environments and tools.
- Proposed and piloted Agile development methodology, successfully delivering 16 products within 2 months.
- Managed the development of the Data Warehouse of key compliance data.
- Received numerous awards and commendations, among them a BAC Global Recognition Platinum Award, and a
 personal recognition from CIO of Technology and Operations.

Achieve 3000, Lakewood, NJ

2007 - 2009

Director of Web Operations

Achieve3000 is a leader in web-based differentiated learning, serving K-12 Schools in over 30 states. While at Achieve 3000, I oversaw the Web Delivery and Hosting operations of its SaaS learning platform (LAMP).

- Managed the day-to-day operations of our hosted data centers to ensure 100% availability during business hours.
- Oversaw the selection of a new hosting provider for our infrastructure and managed the transition of the environment. Designed and implemented infrastructure changes for scalability and redundancy requirements.
- Selected and deployed Akamai CDN solution for Web performance enhancement Improved end-user performance by 30% and reduced hosting bandwidth requirements and number of servers by 40%.
- Implemented Gomez Web Performance Monitoring and Analytics
 – received Gomez Web Performance
 management certification. Introduced a number of enhancements to performance resulting in 80% better web
 performance.
- Implemented a Release planning and deployment processes:
 - Hired QA Lead and implemented a QA process
 - Implemented Version Control tools and provided training to development team
 - Created short term and long term release schedules
- Designed and implemented several external utilities integrated with NetSuite (ODBC, Webservices via SuiteTalk,
 Net) to support company's unique requirements. Received NetSuite certification.
- Developed ETL for migrating of Salesforce.com scheduling and CRM data.
- Led the implementation of NetSuite CRM into the organizations. Assisted with designing NetSuite-based operational processes for all areas of the business – Sales, Implementation, Accounting, etc.
- Researched and proposed the next technology direction for supporting streamlined content publishing processes.

M5 Networks Inc., New York, NY

2006 - 2007

Engineering Manager/VP

M5 Networks Inc. is a leading Hosted VoIP company and a provider of "Voice as a Service" solutions. While reporting to CTO, managed the Engineering department, including operations, service delivery, network and systems infrastructure, monitoring and alarming, applications development, and support.

- Managed the day-to-day operations of two Data Centers: improved monitoring capabilities, power footprint, failover capabilities, and bandwidth utilization. Accountable for maintaining 99.999% systems uptime.
- Responsible for establishing strategic direction, prioritizing and delivering solutions for all support systems (sales, provisioning, technical support, billing and reporting), customer facing applications, and advanced solutions.
- Implemented a series of development lifecycle and release management process improvements: through
 establishing regular development schedule, integration testing and QA procedures, significantly reduced downtime
 of support systems and improved the quality of delivered applications.
- Managed the Engineering department, including hiring/firing and employee development.

XpertUniverse Inc., New York, NY

Director of Development/Director of Operations

XpertUniverse Inc. is an Application Service Provider that offers Internet-based, real-time expert location, collaboration and business intelligence solutions. As a member of the executive team of XpertUniverse:

- Participated in the initial planning stages of the business inception: product definition, marketing strategy, operational infrastructure, scalability plans, competitive analysis, etc.
- Conceived, designed and implemented the technical infrastructure of the organization to support the Application Service Provider (ASP) operational model, consisting of multi-vendor hosting (two outsourced and one in-house data centers), blended in-house and outsourced (offshore) development, and two contact centers.
- Developed and deployed: staffing plan, business requirements, development needs statement, Technical and Customer Support functions, Release Deployment processes and vendor relationship procedures. Established the operational processes for all business Operations functions: customer support, production support, provisioning and configuration, systems monitoring and alarming, etc.

Volunteer Experience

<u>Pine View Association, Osprey, Fl</u> Director of Technology

2013-Present

The Pine View Association is a non-profit organization of parents, teachers, staff, and friends of the Pine View School for the Gifted and Talented. The PVA strives to enhance and enrich the Pine View students' experience by supporting the school's academic, social, fine arts and technology objectives. As a member of the Board of Directors and the Technology Chair, I am responsible for the technology infrastructure of the PVA, and all the technical projects. Since taking on this role, I have identified, designed and implemented a long-term, secure hosting environment for the PVA website, an organizational Email infrastructure, a Salesforce CRM solution for a non-profit organization, and a database of members, with automated reports for Student and Business directory publications.

Previous Experience

SystemsLink, Cranbury, NJ
AT&T, Bridgewater, NJ
Federal Reserve Bank, New York, NY
Grumman Aerospace Corporation, Bethpage, NY

- Manager of Software Development
- Product Manager, Project Manager, Systems Engineer
- S/W Dev. Manager/Senior Systems Analyst
- Software Engineer

Educational Background

Stevens Institute of Technology Hoboken, NJ Brooklyn, NY BS Computer Engineering

MS Technology Management Brooklyn, NY

2001 - 2006