

David C. Thomas

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AI and Technology Leadership in Software Product Development

Aligning strategy across product, talent, and technology to build successful software organizations

Dave brings broad and deep expertise in technology product development, organizational leadership, and business process evolution. He is recognized for strategic vision, AI leadership, strong execution backed by quant metrics, team health, transparency, engaging writing & public speaking, and a hands-on approach. MBA, with honors, from The University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

Senior Functional Leadership:

Engineering (VP AI, CTO, SVP Eng, VP Product Development, VP Platform Development), Product management (CPO, SVP Products, VP Product Strategy, Director of Product)

Product Packaging:

Mobile apps, web components, analytics as a service, platform as a service, transactional data, mobile, private cloud SaaS, web applications, web services, embedded, appliances, enterprise software

Product Categories:

Retail, Human capital management, developer/devops tools & platforms, fintech, IT security, lead gen, media, financial risk management, mobile dev platforms, e-learning, online marketing, online auctions, network management, telepresence, analytics, multimedia, marketing analytics, content management

Employment

2/2023 - present: Vice President, Artificial Intelligence; Vice President, Engineering, Upside

Upside is a marketplace focused on driving value to all points of brick and mortar commerce.

Leader of transformation to generative AI from employee/dev enablement to operational tooling to product features. Leader of consumer product development. iOS and Android apps 4M MAU drive 10M+ transactions per month. 60 person team. App store stats: 4.6 stars, 30M+ downloads, 200K+ reviews. (python, pytorch, Snowflake, OpenAI API, embeddings, Pinecone, linear algebra)

4/2022 - 3/2023: Chief Technology Officer and Co-Founder, Upwage

Upwage helps people who earn low wages find higher paying jobs.

Clean sheet of paper to funding & in-market product in 4 months. Built labor market analytics, jobs & location data pipeline (python), architected and built v1 product (Typescript, Node, Express, React, Remix, Postgres, GIS), hired eng team.

11/2020 - 5/2022: SVP Engineering, Xpanse

Xpanse is a fintech startup developing platforms and products for the mortgage industry. Scale: 5M borrowers. Went from a clean sheet of paper & zero employees to \$50M funding, 25 employees, and a customer product launch in 7 months, in a tight labor market with no brand recognition. First customer is the #1 mortgage originator in the US in two mortgage product categories (\$18B volume). 50 person team.

8/2018 - 11/2020: Senior Engineering Manager, Facebook

Eng leader for a 45 person org which developed the user profile page & HR apps. Scale: 2.7B users. Platform/product strategy, org health, operational excellence, and two-sided platform economics.

5/2017 - 8/2018: Director of Product, Indeed

Indeed helps people get jobs. It is the #1 job search platform in the world. Scale: 200M job seekers.

Strategic and thought leader supporting product management for developer tools, engagement, and platforms. Org spanned Indeed sites in Seattle, Austin, and Tokyo.

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5/2016 - 5/2017: Chief Product Officer, Verb (acquired by Paycor)

Verb's employee engagement products help companies improve learning, leadership, and social impact.

First hire in product/eng. Leader of product strategy, PM, design/UX, and eng orgs for a pre-seed startup. Clean sheet of paper to first customer in 6 mo. Customers: Facebook, Whole Foods, Auth0...

5/2013 - 5/2016: University of Chicago Booth School of Business MBA student

Chicago Booth New Venture Challenge, a top-ranked seed accelerator for entrepreneurs

Founder & CEO, Big Crowd 2015 - 2016. Population movement analytics, based on AWS. Finalist.

2/2013 - 5/2016 MBA Job Rotation (approximately 1 year each):

VP, Product Strategy and **VP, Cloud Labs** at **SolarWinds**, IT software. Leader of PM & eng

VP of Product R&D, CompassLearning, L&D enterprise software. Engineering, strategy, UX

8/2012- 8/2014: VP Platform Dev, Advisory Board Member, Tsugi (acquired by Unity Technologies)

Led platforms, including strategy, product mgmt, design, dev, dev ops of this PaaS. Hands-on development of V1 product. Scale: 5M devs. Clean sheet of paper to first customer in 9 months.

1/2011 – 8/2012: Senior Vice President of Products, All Web Leads

All Web Leads is an online marketing company which harvests and auctions consumer leads in real time.

Leader of engineering, product management, UX, analytics, M&A integration, dev ops. 26 person org.

2/2007 – 1/2011: Vice President of Products & Engineering, Trustwave & Mirage Networks

Responsible for all engineering functions required to deliver managed security platform applications.

VP of Products, Mirage Networks (acquired by Trustwave). 24 person org.

11/2004 – 2/2007: Vice President of Engineering, NovusEdge

Led product dev, UX, support, QA, program mgmt, architecture, pubs, logistics. 30 person org.

1/1999 - 11/2004: Senior Director of Engineering Vignette Corporation (acquired by Open Text)

Responsible for the Vignette Content suite of products. Eng, QA, Pubs, PGM leader of a 120 person org.

Education

The University of Chicago Booth School of Business, MBA, with Honors

GPA: 3.7, 4.0 in Strategy; Honors: BFΣ academic honorary. Two-time GNVC venture finalist.

Syracuse University - BFA, *summa cum laude*, with Honors in Computer Graphics

Class Rank: 1, valedictorian. GPA: 3.84, 4.0 in major. Nominated *Class Marshal* by dean.

Tau Theta Upsilon: leadership honorary. Rhodes Scholarship finalist, University Scholar candidate.

Other Activities

AI: OpenAI-nominated ChatGPT Champion; **IP Patent Consultant** 2014 - 2022;

Fitness geek: Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (3rd degree black belt, 28 yrs experience), wrestling, running, snowboarding;

Coach: Carlson Gracie 1/2022 - 6/2023; Carlson Gracie 7/2017 - 1/2022;

Founder and Head Coach, Austin Jiu-Jitsu 4/2003 - 5/2017;

Writing on AI, leadership, and software strategy: [linkedin.com/in/dcthomas/recent-activity/articles](https://www.linkedin.com/in/dcthomas/recent-activity/articles);

Coder: I love to bend the machine to my creative will; **US Patents:** [6,687,793](#), [7,062,515](#), [7,590,665](#), [8,117,152](#), [8,452,728](#), [8,645,318](#), [2,006,017,908](#), [2,010,049,757](#), [2,012,009,622](#), [2,013,024,635](#), [2,014,010,833](#), [7,321,953](#), [7,647,453](#), [7,953,934](#), [2,004,014,844](#), [2,008,003,413](#), [2,010,015,365](#)