

# Steven Deobald

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Hello Avery, David(s), Brad, and the rest of the Tailscale team,

I have been doing community management, in one form or another, for the past 12 years. First at Nilenso, where I ran the company, defined the brand, and continuously engaged the developer community where our sales and hiring came from. Then at XTDB, where I managed open source communities, marketing, and product. Then at Endatabas, where I defined another brand — with a very narrow focus on early adoption and capital. These were all deeply cross-functional roles.

Tailscale, much like XTDB and Endatabas, is a part of the third wave of open source products. Understanding why people use tools like Tailscale is, in no small part, understanding what that means. Tailscale needs someone in this role who groks the history of free and open source software while appreciating what users (and customers) expect of commercial open source software in 2024.

I have been in the software industry for 20+ years where I've been a developer, tech lead, and engineering/project manager for most of that time. Not only do I have the cultural literacy you're looking for, I have an eye to cultural etymology. I try to understand how we got where we are, since that's the only way to anticipate where the industry is going.

Tailscale is already a product loved by everyone who uses it. It's well positioned to completely take over the VPN market while simultaneously defining a new category. "Building a new internet" is a high bar, but if Tailscale can remain profitable and loved by its users, it might just make it.

I like taking big swings. With Nilenso, India's first employee-owned software company, it was redefining what a consulting company could be. That worked, and Nilenso still exists. With Endatabas, it was positioning immutable data at the heart of the database. That didn't work — but I'll blame market conditions. I think Tailscale's mission is important and I'd love to be a part it.

I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best,



Steven Deobald