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Dear David, Ramya, and the Tailscale tech team,

Tailscale is the kind of company where I'd work for free, if I could afford it. I consider Tailscale to qualify as "third wave open source." What does that mean? The past 30 years of software are converging on something hopeful and important. That thing doesn't *really* have a name yet, but reliable, It-Just-Works, local-first, commercially-viable open source comes close. That's you folks.

Tailscale's commitments to an inclusive workplace and open source are foundational for me, but I think there's something special about writing the words *"privacy is a fundamental human right"* directly on your website. At a time when there's much money to be made by exploiting the privacy of individuals and organizations, the opportunity to work with a company that's doing the exact opposite is exceptional… even if we all wish it wasn't. I would like to work somewhere exceptional again.

From 2012 to 2018, I started and built Nilenso Software, India's first worker-owned technology company. I grew it to ₹15 Crore ARR, left to travel for two years, then from 2020 to 2024, worked on XTDB and Endatabas — two immutable, time-traveling database products. While building Nilenso, I mentored our small team in Ruby and Clojure… even though they all wound up writing Go anyway. 😉 Our team built and maintained large data-oriented backend and ML systems for companies like Staples and Gojek. We built a local-first syncing engine for the life-saving app at Simple.org. As Nilenso's founder, I'm proud of the part I played in building the teams that built those systems. At this stage in my career, I find I enjoy building teams even more than I enjoy building tools.

Prior to starting Nilenso, I worked at ThoughtWorks and DRW from 2005 to 2011. I was a tech lead for teams as large as 30 and as small as 2, teaching folks design, architecture, and continuous integration (in the original sense). I left high finance and moved to India. It's a long story I'm happy to share.

In a world of tech companies building throw-away AI chatbots and squeezing their customers due to ever-dwindling SaaS revenues, I want to do something that matters… and preferably something that will still matter in 50 years. Tailscale's vision of "building the new internet" is exactly that.

I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best,

Steven Deobald