Dave Sayles

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Education

Bachelor of Science, Computer Science and Digital Art
Union College, Schenectady, NY, 12308

Publications

J. Rieffel and D. Sayles. EvoFab: A Fully Embodied Evolutionary Fabricator.
In: 9th International Converence on Evolvable Systems, Sep 6 2010

Experience

Director - Internal Tools   2025 – Present
MongoDB, New York, NY

- Built a leadership pipeline by promoting senior engineers into engineering managers, tech leads, and staff engineers, and coaching them to independently own teams and roadmaps.

- Defined and rolled out a Tech Lead role that created a non-manager growth path for senior ICs and let teams scale without adding new engineering managers; the model was adopted across the wider department.

- Took a legacy Go-To-Market web app from a 12-engineer, fire-fighting team into true maintenance mode by aggressively burning down tech debt and simplifying ownership.

- Led collaboration with Product, Tech Leads, and Support to drive support volume from multiple engineering escalations per day down to roughly 1–3 per week by improving tooling, documentation, and workflows.

- Directly led a small cross-functional pod that delivered an agentic Atlas cluster sizing tool for sales, turning vague sales feedback into concrete, automatable recommendations.

- Balanced a 14-engineer org against department-wide priorities—routinely triaged and re-scoped work and staffing so teams stayed focused and rightsized on the highest-impact initiatives.

- Pushed AI usage by championing cursor usage, holding hackathons, and building tooling to use Claude Code to automate opening PRs from JIRA ticket descriptions.

- Drove team roadmaps, goals, sprints, and JIRA hygiene with Product and Tech Leads.

Senior Lead - Internal Tools   2022 – 2025
MongoDB, New York, NY

- Rescued a top-10 company-initiative web app from chronic failures and zero observability to a responsive, instrumented, and trusted system that shipped reliably enough to justify continued GTM investment.

- Replaced a painful weekly, manual QA release process with automated integration tests in the release pipeline, enabling safe on-demand deployments.

- Doubled team size and split engineers into focused pods, allowing parallel feature work without fragmenting ownership or lowering quality.

- Directly managed a team of 5 engineers, plus 1 team lead and a sub-team of 4, working with Product to define roadmap, instrumentation strategy, and execution model.

- Instituted a cadence of 6-week growth conversations and other feedback loops. Led to painless yearly reviews, where engineers were never surprised by wins or growth areas.

- Reworked agile ceremonies to maximize signal and minimize time: standups shrank from 30 minutes to 5, and sprint reset dropped from roughly an hour to about 15 minutes.

Staff Engineer - Internal Tools   2022 – 2022
MongoDB, New York, NY
- Brought agile and observability (Prometheus, alerting, dashboards, error collation) to teams that had neither; deployments moved from chronic failure to stable, debuggable, and alert-driven.
- Led as technical owner and product manager: built project roadmaps, spun up and drove alignment for team processes, set priorities, and ran sprint planning with explicit quarterly goals to improve tooling and developer experience.

Senior Engineer - Internal Tools   2020 – 2022
MongoDB, New York, NY
- Raised the bar on Operational Excellence by implementing and socializing Modern CI/CD and Git workflows, Idiomatic Python, and Integration Testing.
- Championed admin tooling that removed most direct human interaction with production databases, allowing more engineers to resolve customer issues without dangerous write access.
- Architected and implemented several web applications for GoToMarket segments and Access Management that are still in use today by the company.

Senior Engineer   2019 – 2020
Neverware, Inc, New York, NY
- Neverware was acquired by Google in 2020.
- Worked on CloudReady OS, a custom fork of Chrome OS; modified system services to improve compatibility across hardware types.

Director of Engineering   July 2014 - Present
Neverware, Inc, New York, NY
- Reported directly to the CEO during a major company pivot; staffed and organized the engineering team for CloudReady (a Chrome OS fork), ran the build-out, and shepherded the product through launch and multiple iteration cycles. CloudReady still exists today as FlexOS.
- Built and grew engineering team from 3 to 7 engineers, plus 2 QA engineers and a technical project manager.
- Spent about 30% of time working on engineering tasks.

Software Engineer   Feb 2014 - July 2014
Neverware, Inc, New York, NY
- Raised the bar on Operational Excellence by implementing and socializing Modern CI/CD and Git workflows, Idiomatic Python, code review, and automated testing.
- Stabilized opaquely failing product through debugging, admin tooling, and telemetry.
- Engineer on PCReady, a localized virtualization solution for education customers that delivered ephemeral VMs.

Software Engineer   Apr 2012 - Feb 2014
Makerbot Industries, Brooklyn, NY
- MakerBot was acquired by Stratasys in 2013.
- Primary developer on the *MakerWare* stack: architected *kaiten* (embedded Python server for Desktop 3D printers), backend *conveyor* (job dispatch to slicer and driver), and *s3g* printer driver.