Jason Leonard

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Profile

I am an entrepreneurial software engineer focused on delivering successful business outcomes and helping fellow humans. While my experience is primarily backend it also includes data, executive leadership, infrastructure, marketing, mobile development, network engineering, product and people management.

Experience

Staff Engineer, Pine Cabin — 2020-Present

As a senior engineering resource I focus on backend, coaching and developer productivity. My specialty is working with teams struggling to launch, educating while addressing process and architecture hurdles to ensure humans thrive and systems are reliable, scalable and maintainable.

- A VC-backed mobile video shopping startup was failing launch its promised public beta. The backend had been written by former large company engineers unfamiliar with working fast, production was plagued with hundreds of error types per hour & development would fail intermittently causing engineers to believe they'd broken something & waste cumulative hours troubleshooting. Half hour+ deploy/rollback times had created a culture of fear. Duplicate effort & work on stale projects were both major issues.
    - Rewrote backend, reducing size of codebase 70% and resolving 100% of ongoing errors
    - Designed activity feed algorithms and built feed backend
    - Reduced deploy/rollback times 80%+
    - Implemented planning and review meetings, eliminating duplicate effort and stale tickets
    - Drove successful effort to increase test coverage more than 500%
    - Helped formerly on-site team implement effective remote work processes
    - Coached first-time CEO on startup operations and leadership
    - Led team to successful product launch
- Designed a DBaaS product for a mobile database startup
- Developed an online ordering and logistics backend for a restaurant chain using Golang

Founder, Bunny Flat — 2017-2020

Bunny Flat was a paperwork automation and customer experience management app for mountain sports retailers, adventure guides and ski resorts.

- Developed partnerships with mountain sports organizations across northern California and Nevada
- Conceived and led development of ruggedized NFC equipment management system

co-Chief Executive Officer, Slide Rule Software/Glass Planner — 2015-2017

I had end-to-end ownership of everything from communications to design to engineering to managing our relationships with Apple and investors. Apple named Glass Planner a Best New App and featured it several times with large banners in the App Store's Productivity section.

- Directed all aspects of the company through explosive growth while leading backend development
- Developed syncing system to attach arbitrary data to third-party calendar objects
- Grew team from four to twelve, implemented async work paradigm and radical transparency
- Partnered with App Store editors to select and implement Apple showcase features prior to iOS releases
- Drove implementation of continuous delivery on backend, increasing release frequency 90%
- Led automation of release processes with Fastlane and custom tooling, dropping release time 80%

Staff Software Engineer, Geezeo — 2013-2014

I led initiatives to address scaling issues with legacy systems processing financial transactions for hundreds of banks and credit unions, as well as conceiving and leading development of a next-gen data processing pipeline.

- Developed novel key strategies to resolve scaling issues, reducing DynamoDB errors 90% & costs 20%
- Uncovered and resolved time zone defects in 20% of test suite, sped up test suite runs 400%+
- Partnered with Typesafe/Lightbend on migration from Rails to Scala and new data processing pipeline
- Authored Ruby gem for AWS Kinesis prior to release of official support from Amazon
- Won $1m/year contract on the strength of a data pipeline product I designed morning of the pitch
- Wrote moe library for working with DynamoDB at scale–compound keys, mirrors, time-series tables, etc

Principal, Abstract Ranch — 2011-2013
Abstract Ranch developed internal products and provided consulting services.

- Built microservice management tools for Fidelity Life, reducing deploy time and errors 99%
- Increased shopping cart speed by 80% and decreased CMS synchronization times 99% for LandCentral

Senior Software Engineer, Color Technology — 2010-2011
I built product licensing and wholesale catalog management apps for major brands. During my tenure I also led the migration of infrastructure from manual on-site management to a container-based hybrid IaaC model.

- Product lead for Boise Cascade, Brand Sense Partners, CBS, Fox, Jessica Simpson & MGM
- Implemented Rails engines and extracted shared code into Ruby gems to mitigate duplicate effort
- Rewrote CSV processing, improving performance 65% and resolving issues uploading very large files
- Designed pre-Docker/Kubernetes/Terraform container orchestration system, reducing infra costs 85%

Chief Technology Officer, FieldReport — 2008-2009
FieldReport was giving away the world's largest-ever cash prize for a single piece of writing. We were hailed as "The American Idol of Blogging" by the New York Times, National Public Radio and Time Magazine. I recruited and led an ace development team with ten reports. Using Ruby on Rails we leveraged EngineYard, GitHub, Lighthouse and Campfire to facilitate collaboration and eliminate the need to hire operations staff.

- Led development of FieldReport web application
- As Editor-in-Chief worked closely with major publishers & agencies like Condé Nast & William Morris
- Grew engineering team from three to ten, implemented agile processes and async work paradigm
- Reduced infrastructure costs 90%+ migrating to the cloud and leveraging SaaS-based IT products

Senior Storage Engineer, Kodak Gallery — 2007-2008
My team designed and managed the multi-petabyte, globally-distributed storage infrastructure of a large photography app. I initiated and led development of a next-generation monitoring and automated management infrastructure; the storage organization was subsequently acquired by Savvis.

- Built a web-fronted management, monitoring & self-healing system that eliminated 80% of manual effort
- Identified and exploited undocumented APIs to enable Linux management of Isilon clusters

Engineering Manager, Linguistic Data Consortium, University of Pennsylvania — 2003-2006
I was the manager and senior technical member of LDC's systems group. I drove the transition of all computing and network services, formerly outsourced to the School of Engineering, to an internally-sourced model in order to support petabyte-scale data collection and analysis. My work running large volumes on FreeBSD 5 helped establish its storage credibility and paved the way for Netflix OpenConnect and FreeNAS/TrueNAS.

- Built a self-service pre-AWS storage & compute cloud, reducing costs 70% and provisioning time 99%
- Donated surplus cloud capacity to other ML research organizations around the world
- Worked with the ML team to build a Hadoop-like system analogous to Google's contemporaneous work
- Wrote backup software 300%+ faster than any commercial product, wrote tape library drivers
- Implemented data center automation and 100% OOB management, enabling team to work remote
- Ran >12T volumes in 2T limit days, resolving OS, file system & driver issues at bleeding edge of scale
- Built a distributed filesystem with customizable views to support legacy ML tools with hardcoded paths
- Developed Hammer configuration management system, decreasing deployment times 99%+
- Built novel hard disk duplication system, upping capacity+throughput 800%+ over commercial solutions

Principal Engineer, Computer Support Associates — 2000-2001
I conceived and built a managed security services product before Bruce Schneier's entry into the space.

- Led development of managed firewall/IDS devices and built the security organization
- Partnered with BellSouth to provide value-add services to broadband customers

Senior Network Engineer, MCI WorldCom Advanced Networks/UUNET — 1999-2000
I served as a WAN backbone and IP protocol engineer on the world's largest network.

- Lead engineer on-site December 31, 1999 responsible for managing catastrophic Y2K scenarios
- Formed Router Operations Center team to consolidate network management from acquired companies
- Delivered nine-figure networking contract on time after implementation team had given up on deadline