GORDON PETER WILLS

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Introduction

I lead teams that get hard things done.

While I briefly ventured into TV production, technology has always been central to my career, from my time as an officer in the Royal Signals to my roles as a software engineer and engineering leader. However, it's not the technology itself that drives me; it's the satisfaction of guiding teams of humans to to accomplish challenging feats that no individual though they could do.

My foundational experience in the Army instilled in me a deep appreciation for commitment, loyalty, integrity, and professionalism, values I actively seek in others. For over 25 years, I've focused on cultivating business cultures where people feel a sense of safety and belonging. This involves building a platform of trust, fostering individual growth in skills and confidence, and creating cohesive teams that enjoy working and playing together.

As a lifelong learner, or perhaps "nerd adjacent", I love new things. I'm passionate about exploring new ideas across all fields, though primarily technology. We learn more things pushing boundaries than staying safely inside them. A key goal of mine, in any organisation, is to foster a learning-oriented mindset across all business functions. Over 25 years I have had my share of failed experiments, but these have led me to insights about myself and how to lead technology businesses effectively.

I am also a human, I enjoy long distance hiking, tackling a crossword and engaging with cerebral computer games. My wonderful partner inspires me everyday.

Skills

Business Skills

Leadership

- **Agile.** From Scrummaster of a single team to leading an engineering department of 5 Scrum teams, I have the experience to manage the processes that back up Agile. Focusing on quality, I work to empower the front line decision makers to do the right thing in a dynamic situation and ensure we deliver value. I then work to ensure that these decisions are backed across all business functions. I have worked with C-grade executives, sales and marketing teams and with professional services teams to help them understand how to be more Agile and how to get the most from working with an Agile engine room.

- **Coaching.** Line management can all too easily become a transactional interaction of setting tasks and approving leave; I coach my direct reports and others to facilitate better engagement and empowerment ultimately driving productivity and personal effectiveness. I use active listening methods to pursue an agenda of autonomy, mastery and purpose for those that I am coaching and seek to balance directive instruction with collaboration.

- **The Servant.** Servant leadership is fundamental to an Agile mindset and to great coaching. My wide range of experiences in the military, TV, software development and charity volunteering have given me the confidence to trust front line decision makers and the understanding to be able to facilitate the conditions for them to succeed. These behaviours are key to an engaged workforce and a sustainable productive environment.

- **Project Management.** From military procurement through documentary film making to software delivery, I have project management experience in many different contexts. I am familiar with PRINCE2, Gantt Chart, Balanced Scorecard, ITIL, Critical Path, and latterly Scrum and Kanban methodologies for managing projects.

Partnership and Relationship Building

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Business Planning and Budgeting

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Strategic and Operational Goal setting

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Recruitment

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Culture Creation

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Agile Thinking, Behaviour and Coaching

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Technical Skills

System Architecture

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Systems Integaration

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DevOps Patterns

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Site Reliability Engineering

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Software Engineering

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Infrastructure and Networking

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Work History

Overview
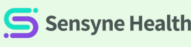
Details

Hd of Integration, IGS Ltd
Nov 2022 - Dec 2024

Hd of Software, IGS Ltd
Oct 2019 - Nov 2022

Software Team Architect, IGS Ltd
Jul 2019 - Oct 2019

Head of Software Engineering, Sensyne Health
Jul 2018 - Jul 2019

Sensyne Health is a health tech business that provides Digital health apps to the NHS in support of specific clinical conditions. Whilst helping individuals get better health care, we are ethically sourcing data across a patient population which we then analyse to improve patient population care and support new drug discovery in the pharmaceutical industry.

My role as Head of Software Engineering is to manage a team of 20+ engineers, testers, DevOps engineers and product owners in delivery of the digital health applications. As well as owning the architecture and development process, I code solutions and am heavily involved in the tooling, integration and deployment mechanisms for the team. I also work with my data engineering and systems medicine peers to ensure a smooth flow of data and requirements throughout the business model.

Chief Instructor, Team Rubicon UK
Oct 2017 - Mar 2018

Team Rubicon UK sends people to disaster zones shortly after the event in order to help people survive and re-establish normal routines. In the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, Team Rubicon UK sent over 100 volunteers to the caribbean islands to help. My role was to plan and conduct both pre and post deployment training packages to ensure volunteers were fully prepared. I was also responsible for updating and delivering an induction training package to the 100s of new volunteers that joined after these disasters.

Agile Coach/Engineer, Northface Ventures
Sep 2016 - Jul 2018

The Northface Ventures team were part of the crew who built and sold Workplace Systems after a three year journey of transformation from stale software house to vibrant product-driven company. Now Northface share what we learned.

My role was the engine room consultant. Working with engineering departments to build high performing teams delivering excellent product that satisfies market requirement. I assessed the engineering departments that I worked with to determine where to invest effort for improvement and where to cut out wasteful practice. I delivered coaching for engineers and engineering managers on agile concepts and implementation methodologies including Scrum and Kanban. Helping to implement modern engineering practices streamlining end to end delivery and foster a corporate culture of working together to deliver product.

Product Dev Mgr, Workplace Systems
Apr 2014 - Aug 2016

I led a team of 30+ software and QA engineers to deliver the flagship enterprise level application from Workplace Systems. This role coincided with a period of rapid growth after having repositioned ourselves in the market. Having started to implement Scrum in my previous role in the company, this role required that we scale that scrum effort, ultimately creating 5 scrum teams. Further, with a focus on quality, I also implemented a Scrumban team solely focused on customer tickets and performance. I also built on the kernel of a DevOps team to integrate infrastructure and engineering much more closely and adding more and more automation into build and deployment. Architecturally we moved the product to PHP5.6 (no easy feat) backed with a MySql move from 5.0 to 5.6. This allowed the scrum teams to set higher standards for code review and accelerated the refactor programme.

During this time I also worked with wider business to help the professional services department to convert to using agile project management. I also spent 2 months in Sydney working with our Australian office, primarily to integrate an engineering team based there in to our global team, but also working with business management, sales and services teams to foster our core culture and embrace Agile thinking. In the later months of this role, as the company was being sold to a US firm, I spent several weeks in the US sharing best practice and standards from the UK engineering team with a larger US team - ensuring common procedures and methodologies and helping them develop their nascent adoption of Scrum.

Software Delivery Mgr, Workplace Systems
Mar 2013 - Apr 2014

I was the scrummaster for 2 scrum teams while we worked out how to do scrum. Due to a change of senior management, this was a time of turnaround and transformation at Workplace Systems; we moved from being a services company with a software offering to being product

led. With that high level of change across all business functions, talent management was of the first importance - keeping the talent we had and attracting fresh thinkers. In addition to delivering user stories and being the sole deployment engineer, I set up a recruitment programme and trained new managers to share the load. I also started converting the deployment process from a largely manual process to a scripted process that ultimately went on to be a Jenkins job - this was the start of DevOps in the company. As a software delivery manager, my main focus for the product was to get us in to a position to upgrade to PHP5.3 (that's not a typo) and to bring an experimental zend based mobile offering to fruition.

The change of senior management was far from seamless, in fact all the C-Grades were let go in a single hit. Whilst the board chair stepped into the position of CEO, we were with out a CTO for 3 months. Being the senior tech leader, it fell to me to work with the new CEO to reassure our client base and our own employees; keeping the ship moving. I assisted with the appointment of our new CTO and helped with his initial integration with the team and business.

PHP Software Engineer, Workplace Systems
Sep 2011 - Mar 2013

As a PHP engineer my role was to enhance and maintain a procedural code base with a mix of PHP4 and PHP5 standards and over 500k lines in over 100k files. In addition to squashing bugs and delivering features, I spent a lot of time refactoring code to simplify it and make it ready for further refactor to OO at a later date. I also started to gather knowledge of our deployment processes from several remote workers (including in Australia) and consolidating our version control and ticketing systems.

Asst Producer/Location Mgr, Film and TV
Mar 2008 - Oct 2011

I worked mostly in documentary making and comedy shows. The short contract nature of the work, meant building teams very quickly to be able to deliver high quality from day 1. I worked for many production companies including Tiger Aspect and TwoFour. These roles were a great shake out after the military and allowed me to see the world from many different perspectives.

Self Employed Web Developer
Mar 2008 - Sep 2011

Taking small contracts between working in the TV industry I built simple browser apps from scratch and enhanced/fixed complex and well established brand websites. This included work for Oxford Outcomes on academically rigorous survey applications and website work for smartlogic.com, shirtworks.co.uk and anchorvans.co.uk.

British Army Officer
Aug 1998 - Mar 2008

Royal Signals Officers are the army's technical leaders, both commanding highly capable technical soldiers and shaping technology policy and procurement. Throughout my career as a Royal Signals Officer I completed duties in both sides of the role.

In command, I presided over units of upto 200 soldiers providing telephony and office services in the field and in barracks. I was a recruit training instructor for technical apprentices. I was deployed to various location worldwide including an exchange to the New Zealand Army.

In a technical capacity I procure urgently needed operational equipment for troops in Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. I managed a global reachback communications network connecting UK military HQs with governmental command and other NATO allies. I was appointed as the Army's competent authority on Electronic Warfare, supervising all Army projects, research and development and supporting our industry partners.

Education

Royal Military Academy Sandhurst
Aug 1998 - Jul 1999

University of Warwick, Dept of Computer Science
Sep 1995 - Jul 1998

Duke of York's Royal Military School
Sep 1988 - Jul 1995

Volunteering

REACT Disaster Response
Jun 2020 - Present

Team Rubicon unites the skills and experiences of military veterans with first responders to rapidly deploy emergency response teams in the UK and around the world. As a greyshirt member of the team I am a volunteer responder able to bring my full range of skills and experience to help people in the aftermath of a disaster.

Team Rubicon UK
Apr 2014 - Jun 2020

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Hobbies and Interests

Referees

- **Name.** David Farquhar FRGS

- **Context.** Friend and CEO at Intelligent Growth Solutions, Northface Ventures and Workplace Systems

- **Description.** David has been a serial entrepreneur for over 3 decades, focused on delivering shareholder value, most recently through driving the rapid growth of vertical farm manufacturer Intelligent Growth Solutions, from R&D start-up to global leader.

- **Contact Details.** Available on request.

- **Name.** Dr Vinca Russell
- **Context.** Product Manager and peer at Intelligent Growth Solutions
- **Description.** Vinca is an innovative and highly competent product manager with a background in science, mathematical modelling, and the maritime industry. Happiest when challenged by work, she loves to find out what makes people tick to get the most out of diverse multi-disciplinary teams.
- **Contact Details.** Available on request.

- **Name.** Greg Stevens
- **Context.** Architect and peer at Intelligent Growth Solutions
- **Description.** Greg has been a software engineer for 14 years, creating solutions in medtech and agritech. He is passionate about leading teams that deliver systems that work even when other things are failing.
- **Contact Details.** Available on request.