JAMES H. TOTAH

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Staff Technical Program Manager (TPM) with **10+ years** leading long-running, cross-functional programs across **data platforms, cloud infrastructure, and product** groups. Delivered **end-to-end execution** for high-stakes programs by **establishing operating models** (milestones architecture, charter governance, scrum/kanban), **decisions/risk/escalation reviews**, **dependency alignment** rituals, and prolific **communication**. Deep technical fluency in **platform engineering, distributed systems, and AI/ML tooling**. Actively leveraging automation and agent workflows to scale program management. Experienced aligning Directors/VPs and cross-functional stakeholders on strategy, priorities, and OKRs.

SKILLS & EXPERTISE

Portfolio & Program Management: SAFe, Scrum/Kanban, OKRs, roadmaps, risk/dependency/decision (DACI) frameworks, change management, annual & quarterly planning, SDLC
Data / Platforms / Infra: AWS, Kafka, Kinesis, Flink, Spark, Databricks, ETL, Lakehouse, GraphQL, APIs, observability, SLOs, cost optimization
AI / Tools / Automation: Codename Goose OSS, Claude Code, Databricks, Jira Admin, Confluence, Slack automation, SQL, Python
Leadership: Cross-functional leadership, stakeholder communication, agile coaching, team mentoring

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EXPERIENCE

Chainalysis — Remote
Staff Technical Program Manager, R&D Programs | Feb 2023 – Present

Lead multi-quarter programs across Compliance, Data Platform, and Infrastructure organizations, partnering with VP/Director leadership to align and drive execution for initiatives spanning 40+ engineering teams.

Program Leadership & Governance
- Established org-wide program practices including milestone frameworks, tiered escalation structure, and decision-making processes that **dramatically reduced program delays and risk across R&D**.
- Created Jira frameworks for risk/blocker/decision triage with tiered SLAs, improving transparency and **accelerating resolution by 40%** for the R&D organization.
- Partnered with leadership to implement quarterly/annual planning (SAFe) practice, **aligning 200+ engineers to company KRs and product vision and strategy**.

Data Cloud Platform — Enterprise Data Lakehouse
- Program manager for company-wide Databricks platform migration enabling **self-serve analytics, real-time streaming, and unified data governance**.
- Aligned teams on streaming **ingress/egress architecture decisions**, standardizing Kafka-to-Databricks and Databricks-to-Postgres data flows.
- Partnered with FinOps to implement a **cost attribution framework achieving 85% tagging coverage and 80% cost attribution**.

Agentic Compliance Oversight — Compliance Automation Platform
- Led **next-gen AI compliance control plane** product aiming to automate 80% of L1/L2 analyst reviews through deterministic workflows, AI-assisted triage and learning
- Drove alignment on three-layer system architecture: Trigger Layer (rule engine), Workflow Layer (automation), Analytical Layer (DS/SQL analytics).

Infrastructure & Reliability
- Led cloud cost optimization **reducing AWS + Databricks spend by $7.6M** over 3 quarters via rightsizing, scheduling, and storage tiering.
- Established **SLO/SLA governance**: error budgets, incident response rituals, blameless postmortems, and quarterly reliability reviews.
- Partner on Bedrock program for KYT reliability, driving infra-as-code adoption and CI/CD migration.

Product & Go-to-Market
- Led **cross-functional product launches w/ Product, Engineering, Design, Sales, Marketing** for Compliance and Private Sector products.
- Launched Sentinel (token-ecosystem risk) product based on Databricks medallion architecture (ETL → Postgres → REST → UI pipeline).

Atlassian — Mountain View, CA

Senior Technical Program Manager, Confluence | Mar 2021 – Feb 2023
- Led **enterprise-scale readiness program** driving multi-team load testing and identifying and resolving critical bottlenecks, improving throughput 3x for largest tenants (50K+ users).
- Built real-time dashboards for risk, status, and dependencies; **presented program status to 200+ stakeholders via newsletters and live presentations**.

Technical Program Manager, Platform | Feb 2019 – Mar 2021
- Established operating rituals for Data Platform group: quarterly planning, dependency mapping, escalation frameworks, and OKR tracking.
- Led **data replication initiative**: streaming sidecar service replicating operational data to Databricks for in-product analytics and enterprise BI integrations.
- Drove **Kafka streaming platform enablement**: producer/consumer onboarding, topic conventions, retention policies, and observability standards.
- Implemented change-control and data-classification workflows for regulated industry compliance (FedRAMP, SOC2).

Senior Program Manager, Recruiting Operations — Atlassian (2016–2019)
Technical Sourcer, Datacenter Network Infrastructure — Facebook (2015–2016)
Program Manager, People Team — Ericsson (2013–2015)

EDUCATION
B.S. Business Administration, Information Systems Management — University of California, Riverside

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INTERESTS
AI & emerging technology, economics, real estate, podcasts, cooking