

James Condron

Engineering Manager

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<https://github.com/jspc> <https://jspc.pw>

*The master version of this file is at <https://github.com/jspc/cv>
And this PDF may be found at <https://github.com/jspc/cv/releases/tag/v5.8.2>*

Specialities

- Technical Leadership
- Delivery Management
- golang
- Coaching
- Stakeholder Engagement
- python
- Agile Methodologies
- Solutions Architecture
- Reliability Engineering

About me

A Software Engineering specialist working across a spectrum of companies, industries, and teams, I have predominantly spent my career building SaaS platforms, both internally and client facing, with a focus on Developer Experience principles.

As an Engineering Manager I bring a wealth of experience in building and promoting a culture of engineering excellence through data-driven people management, actionable goal setting through meaningful 1-to-1s, and delivery and capacity management; all through the nurturing of talent through a DE&I lens.

I Specialise in:

- Building and scaling up teams
 - Introducing data-driven, rubric based recruitment processes
 - Building career ladders introducing clear, goal driven promotion paths
 - Ensuring engineers have clear professional goals, increasing engagement and reducing attrition and turnover
 - Continually assessing team culture, ensuring cultures grow, adapt, and reflect the values of the people within a team
- Hands-on technical leadership
 - Leading and enabling architecture/ whiteboard sessions
 - Code reviews and sense-checking when required
 - Incident management and troubleshooting, using skills gained from my time running NOCs in datacentres
 - Using my years as an engineer to bring credibility as an Engineering Manager
- Agile methodologies, delivery management
 - Over a decade working within Scrum
 - Applying Kanban methodologies into Platform teams, which typically eschew such oversight
 - Maintaining delivery and capacity plans

Programming

- Golang to a high level: <https://github.com/vinyl-linux/vin>
- Bash to a high level: <https://github.com/jspc/homedir>
- L^AT_EX to a high level: <https://github.com/jspc/cv>
- Python to a high level <https://github.com/jspc/article-classifier>
- Rust to a comfortable standard <https://github.com/jspc/SeoulOS>

Projects

2022 - 2023

Kaluza Gender Equality Community

Kaluza - a Green Energy PaaS

The Kaluza GEC exist within the wider Kaluza DE&I space to provide advocacy for people across the gender spectrum at Kaluza. Our accomplishments include getting parity between Paternity and Maternity leave, providing environmentally friendly period products, and launching Ask Ada - an anonymous service for colleagues to ask DE&I related questions and seek advice on matters, written in a mixture of go lang (for streams processing), python (for sentiment analysis), and node.js (for developer tooling)

Portfolio

2023-	Mint - Message Interface Format https://github.com/mint mint is a binary message format (similar to protobuf, thrift, etc.) designed to provide fast serialisation, a reasonably rich set of data types, and an easily extensible system of type validations. It exists to shift-left validations and transformations away from Data Warehouses and back to message producers, such as distributed systems producing mint messages into systems such as Kafka
2023	Ask Ada https://github.com/gender-equality-community Ask Ada is a system which bridges a WhatsApp chat bot with a slack based backend, passing messages over Redis Streams, and deployed to Kubernetes with a custom operator. It exists to provide anonymous answers and advice on DE&I questions without either party knowing who the other is
2021	SeoulOS https://github.com/jspc/seoulos SeoulOS is a micro-kernel research project written in rust. It aims to be a proof-of-concept for running standard workloads on clusters of commodity hardware
2020-	Vinyl Linux https://github.com/vinyl-linux Vinyl Linux is a Linux distribution centred around vin, a super-fast package manager written as a client/server pair in golang, and vinyl linux-utils, a busybox-alike set of standard tools, also written in golang. Vinyl Linux can parse and install apk packages from Alpine Linux
2016, 2019-2023	This CV https://github.com/jspc/cv My CV is written in \LaTeX , and is built and deployed via Github Actions and published to https://jspc.pw/cv.html
2018	go-lo https://github.com/go-lo/go-lo A distributed load-testing platform, written in golang. go-lo is designed to run consistent, low-overhead load-tests. These load-tests are self contained golang apps which expose a control plane over gRPC and output results to STDOUT which are then forwarded into the TICK stack.

Employment

November 2023 - October 2024

Domestic and General - an insurance company Engineering Manager

Sales and Registration: Line Management of two teams of typescript developers working in sales focused product teams, including performance management, careers coaching, and setting product roadmaps alongside partners in the Product Management team. Over my 11 months here I took teams from being heavily silo'd, with manual deployment processes and heavily bureaucratic change-management workflows to a fully continuous deployment workflow.

D&G Design System: Genesis of a cross-cutting, company-wide Design System team alongside the Design Lead. Technical leadership, hands-on architecture, and developer relations.

Infrastructure Project Team: Hands-on Tech Lead and Technical Product Owner for a hit-squad of engineers borrowed from other squads. Backlog setting, delivery roadmap ownership, typescript development of CDK modules, reusable GitHub actions workflows, and `np` tooling which cut deployments from ca. one day's worth of developer time per two-week sprint, to being fully automated and able to happen multiple times per day.

September 2023 - November 2023

Happening - an online gaming provider Engineering Manager

Observability: Inherited a team of three engineers working on Prometheus and Loki fed Grafana, all of whom had low morale, and felt dis-empowered from making long term decisions about their product. I introduced lightweight agile processes, epic leads, partnerships with other teams, and ran ideation sessions; all in order to give the engineers ownership of their own destiny. By the end of my time with this team, morale was markedly higher, engagement was up, delivery was more predictable, and our relationships with both stakeholders *and* users were better.

Resiliency Engineering: Genesis, ownership, and product management of a Resiliency Engineering team; including development and leadership of an organisation-wide improvement programme to improve engagement in Post-mortems, and post-incident ticket completion. During my time in this team I created the first set of product wide metrics and SLOs and implemented and delivered a programme of work to reduce both the number of incidents, and the impact of each incident through impact-driven SLOs and SLIs.

Interim Product Lead

Infrastructure Engineering: Product leadership and roadmap ownership of an infrastructure team, in order to refocus the team away from 'SRE building for SRE' and towards 'A product team building for our users'. This re-framing of priorities reduced the time spent on selling the new infrastructure platform to teams from several hours per week to next to nothing through focusing on needs and wants. Introduction of the Jobs To Be Done (JTBD) framework.

Employment, continued

March 2022 - May 2023

Kaluza - a Green Energy PaaS

Software Engineering Manager

Developer Experience: Inherited a team of three engineers with low engagement and poor morale. Built a product vision and strategy, including KPIs, walked the team through setting mission/vision (with 100% buy-in), and set clear progression paths. Through ownership of recruitment, I grew this team to eight people in six months without jeopardising culture, frequently topping the charts for engagement metrics in company-wide surveys. Initialised and lead an org-wide drive to using Backstage as an internal developer platform.

Analytics Platform: Genesis of a Data and Analytics Engineering Team, building out a Data Platform. Breaking silos between Data Engineers and Analysts to build T-shaped engineers, increasing a feeling of personal ownership among those engineers. Technical and architectural oversight of new features by facilitating workshops and whiteboard sessions, including Kafka ingestors and BigQuery design.

Data and Analytics Platform: Merge of the previous Analytics Platform with another (Data Warehousing) team, setting capacity and delivery plans and building programmes and processes to upskill Data Analysts to become Analytics Engineers competent in Scala. Management of the team through a re-architecture of the platform, while increasing the rate at which initiatives were delivered with no increase to budget or headcount. Ownership of external developer documentation for client Data Engineers.

Event Streaming Platform: Management of a small team of Scala engineers building high performance streaming software. Engagement on this team was low when I joined; most of the team hadn't seen a promotion for several years. By setting up a goal-framing framework and encouraging the team to join squad/ company level initiatives, all IC level engineers on the team had open promotion cases.

July 2021 - September 2021

Databank, a Korean Edtech Startup

Engineering Manager

Line management and architectural oversight of a team of developers in Seoul, until my work permit ran out. Migration away from a front-end/backend developer silo model into a more cohesive engineering team mentality. Expansion of agile methodologies within the team, including the adoption of kanban, tshirt sizing and BDD. Bridging the gap between engineering and Customer Support (CS) by hiring Application Support engineers. Delivered a monetisation strategy, *and* a new product all under schedule and budget through increased engagement and ownership. Developing features in Next.js on Vercel, and Python/ Django, while architecting and re-platforming the offering onto typescript, Kafka, and into a containerised infrastructure.

December 2019 - August 2020

Scratch Financial, a Fintech Startup

Consultant Cloud Architect

Ownership of internal platform services, leading the design, implementation, and training for the re-platforming of Scratchpay.com on GCP. First line 1-to-1s for operations team. Budgeting and cost optimisation of processes and tooling, with an emphasis on self-service platforms and open-source tooling. Development of python tooling and applications.

Employment, continued

October 2018 - August 2019	The Culture Trip, an Online Travel Startup Site Reliability Engineering Manager Leading engineers and squads, between a London team and a Tel Aviv team, towards thinking of Supportability first for products. Within this I spent roughly half of my time producing materials, with developer stakeholders, around training and policy for supporting products in production, and the other half developing vendor relationships. I trained, ran, and managed the Incident Management group with a focus on skilling-up team members. I doubled the size of the reliability team with both external recruitment, and by offering junior members of the team opportunities to train and learn on the job, all within two months.
February 2017 - October 2018	Beamly Ltd., a Marketing Startup Principal Engineer, Platform Lead Design, ownership, and management of the award-winning Beamly Fragrance Finder platform, an AI driven chatbot which mapped user-profiles, personality questions, and decades worth of customer knowledge to purchasing recommendations; this team was massively behind-deadline and close to being over-budget when I was brought on to manage it. Through aggressive hiring, stakeholder management, and a general re-architecture of the platform, I brought it in on-time, under-budget, and was able to work alongside the sales team to restore trust to the product. Grew the Platform Engineering team to 15 people, provided technical leadership through coaching, and running 1-to-1s, performance reviews, and promotions while supporting NodeJS, Scala, and Golang applications on a multi-cloud platform of AWS, GCP, and Azure. Automation, with Terraform, of Kafka topic and consumer management.
April 2016 - November 2016	Financial Times, one of the World's largest newspapers Contract Integration Engineer To architect, develop and rollout the FT's new flagship video platform, including custom config management tooling, container platform, consul backed routing and API driven monitoring based on shopify's <i>dashing</i> , with logs being shipped into Splunk, and deployment artefacts being stored in Nexus.
July 2015 - April 2016	Financial Times, one of the World's largest newspapers Contract Integration Engineer; API Technical Lead To build and maintain a large scale API gateway for internal customers and b2b targets, and the governance thereof; while developing new products, coaching permanent staff toward their personal development goals, and training offshore teams in the management of this gateway.
November 2013 - June 2015	Funding Circle, a Fintech Startup Devops Engineer Green field build out of deployment tooling and testing platform, re-architecture of platform and underlying databases; development of Devops practices and mentoring; editorship of the funding circle tech blog.
June 2013 - November 2013	Hogarth Worldwide, part of the WPP group Senior Devops Engineer Management of large video platform for multinational advertising house, developer of ops tooling and creation and management of API gateway for client; mentorship of junior colleagues. A white-paper I wrote with Microsoft staff was used to develop Azure's SQL Database offering.

Employment, continued

January 2012 - June 2013	Simply Business, a Fintech startup	Production Systems Administrator Development and management of jit tooling platform, ops assistance and tooling to QA teams, development and management of backup and disk management tooling; mentorship and training junior colleagues.
July 2010 - December 2012	Coreix Ltd., an ISP and Datacentre provider	Senior Technician/Lead Management of pen testing, integration testing of cloud platforms, helped take down k00bface worm; internal tools development and testing. Lead the development of the storage platform using python and vanilla JS.

Education

2017-	Open university	Bachelor of Engineering OU distance course
2009	University of Huddersfield	BA, Secure and Forensic Computing Two years credits to a degree, no longer being pursued