

Nicholas DeSteffen

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Versatile Software Engineering professional with over 20 years of hands-on experience designing, developing, and delivering innovative software solutions across diverse industries. Proven track record of leading and mentoring engineering teams to build cutting-edge applications and achieve business objectives.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

BenchPrep

Director of Engineering

Chicago, IL

Jan 2020–Present

- Directed the engineering department while maintaining hands-on contributions as a member of a sub-team.
- Defined and drove engineering team OKRs, leading the successful delivery of key initiatives, including:
 - Tenant onboarding enhancements, CI/CD optimization, Feature Flag management, Development Environment containerization, customer SSL auto-renewal, and platform-level caching tools.
- Collaborated directly with customers to support onboarding, expansion, and ongoing operations.
- Managed a diverse team, including Engineering Managers, Enterprise Architects, and Senior Engineers.
- Analyzed prospective customer requirements and provided detailed cost estimates for integrations and feature development.
- Partnered across organizational units to establish working agreements and implement process improvements.
- Aligned engineering goals and objectives with company OKRs
- Cultivated relationships with offshore and near-shore resource partners, establishing four additional engineering teams (three for application development, one for support).
- Implemented and monitored engineering KPIs to drive accountability and performance.
- Reduced annual engineering support costs by 115% through streamlined processes and platform improvements
- Delivered customer-facing incident reports and completed security questionnaires as needed.
- Managed vendor relationships to maintain alignment with engineering and business needs.
- Led annual penetration testing efforts, ensuring timely resolution of findings

Lead Software Engineer

Jan 2016–Jan 2020

- Participated in the successful transition of the BenchPrep platform from a B2C product to a fully white labeled B2B platform used by over 50 clients with over six million end users
- Expanded and led the engineering team, growing it from two to 18 highly skilled software engineers.
- Directly managed seven engineers across all skill levels, fostering professional development and performance excellence.
- Improved team processes, enhancing collaboration, efficiency, and delivery timelines.
- Led multiple infrastructure migrations, including transitions from VMs to OpenStack and subsequently to Kubernetes, optimizing scalability and reliability.
- Designed and implemented a system to streamline SSO integrations, successfully integrating with over 20 identity providers for clients and partners.

- Developed Ruby on Rails applications with a focus on maintainability and quality, achieving robust unit test coverage using RSpec.
- Built core web-based learning application utilizing Backbone.js and CoffeeScript.
- Led the successful migration of a custom email system to ExactTarget, integrating with their XML API.
- Mentored and guided Junior Developers, fostering skill development and team growth.
- Directed a seamless database migration from MySQL to PostgreSQL.
- Implemented a subscription-based payment system using Braintree Payment Solutions.
- Monitored and optimized database and application performance to improve efficiency and reliability.
- Authored API documentation to ensure consistent usage and collaboration across development teams.
- Contributed to a major project to refactor a Rails monolith into six modular applications using a Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA).

Eight Bit Studios

Chicago, IL

Senior Developer

Feb 2011–Feb 2012

- Served as Lead Developer for a Ruby on Rails application designed for creating and conducting market research surveys.
- Designed and implemented a dynamic, feature-rich GUI for survey creation using jQuery & jQuery UI.
- Developed a dynamic branching logic system to dynamically adjust survey flow at runtime.
- Integrated Zencoder, Carrierwave, and Uploadify to enable seamless video embedding within surveys.
- Mobile device optimizations, ensuring a responsive and user-friendly experience across platforms.

WisePatient (*Acquired by ShareCare Inc.*)

Chicago, IL

Co-Founder & Lead Developer

Jan 2010–Feb 2012

- Member of founding team that built WisePatient.com application and sold to ShareCare Inc. in February 2012
- Ruby on Rails / Systems Admin / jQuery / CSS / UI development
- Collaborate with partners to prioritize business needs and product features
- Developed API for synchronizing data with multiple 3rd party practice management systems
- Maintenance and support of WisePatient.com application post acquisition
- New UI development online patient scheduling component of Sharecare.com using Backbone.js

ActiveRadius LLC

Chicago, IL

Lead Developer

Feb 2010–Feb 2011

- Lead developer of core product - a personalized client perks portal
- Ruby on Rails / Systems Admin / jQuery / CSS / UI development
- Mentored one Junior Web Developer and one QA Developer
- Primary decision maker regarding vendors and technology used
- Built and maintained multiple application environments using AWS, Capistrano for deployments
- Introduced Agile development methodologies; Daily standups, TDD, story development, CI, rapid release cycle
- Performed TDD & BDD using RSpec and Cucumber, 90% code coverage
- Setup Hudson CI server for managing automated build process
- Integrated with Google, Yahoo, Facebook and Twitter
- Developed billing system using Authorize.net
- Developed ETL process to load data from affiliate marketing partners

My Health and Money LLC

Web Developer

Chicago, IL

May 2009–Feb 2010

- Member of core team that designed, built, and launched core product using Ruby on Rails
- TDD & BDD using RSpec & Cucumber - over 90% unit test coverage
- Developed an ETL process for loading monthly data feed from third party partners
- Extracted sorting logic into a Rails plugin for reuse
- Integrated application with Google Maps view into facility directory

CarePages Inc. (Acquired by Everyday Health)

Web Developer

Chicago, IL

May 2007–April 2009

- Member of team that rewrote core product under a 6 month deadline using Ruby on Rails - CarePages.com has 1.5 million unique visitors and 30 million page views per month.
- Practiced Agile development methodologies: TDD (RSpec), BDD (Cucumber), 2 week sprints, story writing sessions, and pair programming
- Maintained a high quality codebase with over 90% unit test coverage
- Directly collaborated with creative team, QA team, Data team, and Customer Support team
- Integrated 3rd party services - PayPal and DoubleClick
- Researched and implemented a CMS solution using OpenCms reducing the deployment frequency by 50%
- Participated in code reviews and team refactoring sessions
- Enhanced and Maintained legacy J2EE/Oracle web platform

eVentive LLC

Senior Consultant

Chicago, IL

Sept 2006–May 2007

- Developed reports from an Oracle database using Crystal Reports & Crystal Enterprise
- Integrated the business workflow engine, LogicBase Studio, with Microsoft SQL Server 2005

Fiserv Inc. (Acquired by United Healthcare)

Web Developer

Wausau, WI

Aug 2003–Sept 2006

- Performed maintenance and support of entire suite of public facing consumer applications
- Lead developer on 3 applications; Member of team that supported 13 applications
- Responsible for working with other business units to gather feature requirements
- Key contributor in the development of the main portal application built using Apache Jetspeed-1
- Integrated OpenCms content management system into main portal application
- Responsible for writing business reports using Microsoft Reporting Services and Crystal Reports

Stora Enso - North America

IT Intern

Stevens Point, WI

April 2002–Aug 2003

- Created and maintained critical information displays on local intranet using ASP and HTML
- Wrote reports from an Oracle database in Oracle Developer 2000 and Crystal Reports 8.5
- Performed programming tasks in VB6 and VBA for internal office applications
- Various technical support and helpdesk duties

EDUCATION**University Wisconsin - Stevens Point**

Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Systems

Stevens Point, WI

May 2003