Richard Parkins
Head of Architecture

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Personal Profile

Initially educated in Engineering, I gained 1st class degree at Loughborough but had a passion for computers and programing (ZX Spectrum!). I have moved from being a junior developer to now heading up the engineering and architecture division of Talent Consulting.

I have worked in many sectors including education, retail and insurance, in varied roles from Senior software engineer, Staff Engineer to head of Architecture. I have two passions which are building simple solutions to customer problems with a speciality being in the cloud (Azure or AWS).

In the past few years I have migrated in the management side of the business, focusing more on the team management side, helping in the recruitment and building teams at both CompareTheMarket and Talent Consulting.

Experience has given me a great understanding, that teams just don't build themselves, you need the right people with the right behaviours, alongside a good clear direction and career path to gain that ownership and community that successful companies foster

I am currently creating a permanent team at Talent Consulting, defining career paths for each of our permanent technical roles, whilst also setting out clear OKR's for our hiring team and making sure we have a good set of governance and standards that our technical team will work to.

Key Skills

- Successful team building and management
- Career and line management for individual developers
- Cloud architecture and development, PaaS, IaaS and SaaS
- Migrating to the Cloud
- Managing departmental architectural change
- Leadership and communication. Bringing the team along with your vision
- Micro-service architectures
- Github Automation - reports, cost savings
- Distributed messaging platforms, Kafka and RabbitMQ
- CI/CD: GoCD, Pulumi, Team city
- Monitoring: Splunk, Grafana, Prometheus, ELK
- NetCore, Net framework and nodeJS
- REST, Swagger and HATEOS
- Agile principles, Lean development, pairing and mobbing
- Data storage, NoSQL and SQL (Mongo Atlas)

Work Experience

Head of Architecture
Talent Consulting (2021 - present)

Brought in to create a permanent team at Talent to scale faster for our current and future projects, This encompasses building a team of people at all levels from .NET Developer, Cloud engineers, Sec-ops and all levels of architect, focusing on Security Architecture, Cloud and networking based in Azure. Responsible for over 200 contract developers currently placed in the public sector

Building an identity for Talent to bring in new skills and people, by updating our website, making sure it of the same standards as the standards we uphold in the public sector (GDS)

Generating career paths, ways of working and standards and governance documents that we as Talent adhere to and publishing these on our github repository, demonstrating to our tech community that we are a company that is inclusive, open and cares for our employees and their career path

Helping architect specific solutions for our clients at the DfE and ESFA, to move forward the huge digital transformation in the public sector across all departments

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Applications Architect
CompareTheMarket (2017 - 2021)

Technical product owner for our Pricing platform and Partner Risk Mapping service. These systems are the 1st class citizens of the business and hosted in AWS. Responsible for 3 tech leads and a developer team of around 20.

Responsible for the architectural vision for the new Pricing Platform at CompareTheMarket. Focused on developing scalability, stability and security for the system, keeping the customer at the centre of our business.

Moved the platform over to a micro-service architecture from on premise over a period of 2 years. Went from intra month deployments to daily real time deployments and better scalability under heavy load, thus reducing our costs by 25%

Architected and developed a new real-time quotability system allowing fast feedback of issues and problems at our providers. This reduced our time-to-fix from hours/days down to minutes.

Chair of Technical forum, and many working groups, including concepting and rolling out common initiatives across the department. Contract testing introduced reducing our incidents on deployment

Introduced the concept of having a service catalogue and giving teams the power to automate the population of the catalogue. This had an effect of driving generation of our documentation, allowing us to reduce the mean time to failure during incidents. Also allowed us to automate a lot of the immunisation reporting

Introduced automation of specific immunisation tasks hosted on our own AWS github action runner. Scheduled on cron timers each micro service repo can be scanned via sonarqube, checkmarx and owasp zap

Attended many tech leadership, speaking and influencing workshops where the lessons learned were implemented in real world to bring people along in the journey at CompareTheMarket.

Technical Lead Developer
CompareTheMarket (2016 - 2017)

Leading a team which concepted, developed and maintained the new Pricing Platform. Developed with security, scalability and diagnostic capability up front

Supporting up to 10 journey and retrieval transactions a second and hosted in AWS implementing EC2, Lambda, S3 and CodeDeploy

Swagger specifications defining REST endpoints to communicate with the system all secured by bearer token through OAuth

Mentoring and helping form the career paths of the developers in the team

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Consultant Lead developer
CompareTheMarket (Energy and Motor Journeys 2013 - 2016)

Architected and developed with the team the concept of taking a picture of you energy bill on an IOS app and getting a quote

MongoDB use for storage and hosted in AWS. AngularJS for front end

Administration site in bootstrap using AngularJS

Developed a re-buy portal for Customers to one-click for renewal

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Consultant
Easyjet (Seat purchase: Consultant (2012 - 2013)

Part of the team developing one of the first seat selection services by the airlines. MVC and knockoutJS solution hosted on Microsoft Azure

Developed Azure ServiceBus solution for 3rd party provider to access Restful API to pass pluscard data for real-time validation. Required to allow validation of card at booking time

Implemented PHP client for 3rd party to access windows Azure ServiceBus

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Consultant
Tesco Entertainment (2011 - 2012)

Part of a team developing new functionality on the www.tescoentertainment.com website and supporting applications. Using Agile (SCRUM) to plan and present on bi-weekly sprints

Developed concept Android application using Java supporting purchase and download of MP3 tracks within time and budget allowed. Picked this up as a project alongside the dot net development I was brought in to start

Maintained and developed new functionality on the Endeca search service used by the main entertainment site

Developed the price cross out (was/now/save) for all 400,000 products and saw successful implementation to live

Consultant

Cambridge University (OCR) (2008 - 2011)

Part of a team developing new functionality for the main OCR Examination portal for Cambridge University. A site that supports a base of 35,000 different centres across the world managing their candidate entries and results through one site. Developed under Agile (SCRUM) split into bi-weekly sprints and presentations using new MVC design pattern

Lead developer to upgrade existing disconnected entry sites into one site where users can manage their GCSE and Vocational Qualification data in one area saving users time when entering candidate entries

Responsible for bringing Code review and new unit testing methods into the department

Developing process of silent deploys removing site downtime in many cases

Director

TouchScreenData (Director 2004 - 2008)

Formed company developing online management systems predominately written in C# .NET 2.0/3.5 but small scale sites developed in LAMP

Tendering and presenting our solutions requiring good communication and the ability to describe technical solutions to a wide audience

Other

1994 - 2004

Thompson Reuters
Developer writing financial applications for the city. Merrlll Lynch WAP site developed in PHP and Windows based apps written in .NET 1.0. Implemented world cup SMS messaging service with Tib Rendezvous messaging platform

Maintained and developed new pager systems on the front and back ends using Java and websphere and apache tomcat to host

ICS Triplex
Safety Critical systems for the Oil and Nuclear industry. Embedded software development with external company audits

Emerson Liebert
Developing embedded software control systems for Unninterrutible Power supply units

Education

Loughborough University

1st Class Hons in Electrical & Electronic Engineering

4 years (3 years + 1 in industry)