# Richard Parkins
## Head of IT Engineering

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## Personal Profile

I studied Electronic & Electrical Engineering, gaining a 1st class honours degree, but was always drawn to the software side of the course content. On graduation I quickly moved into embedded programming as a junior developer and followed the trend in software that was the internet, and started to use java, c# and more lately nodejs. I gained more of an interest in building systems and became a solutions architect at CompareTheMarket and I still like to keep my development and architecture hats on.

I was given the opportunity by Talent Consulting to head up their IT team, balancing this with project work as an architect in the public sector, working predominately in Azure but have experience in AWS as well

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 focus on moving from on premise to cloud as well as green field cloud solutions

My current role is a mix of 70-30 hands on project work helping deliver solution and infrastructure projects in the cloud with 30% leading and building a permanent team and introducing community of practice, ways of working and best practices in the way we deliver solutions to our public sector clients

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.

## Key Skills

- Forming a well performing team, getting in the right people
- Keeping the people we have with good career and line management for individual developers, making sure their career goals are met
- Managing architectural change, on-premise to cloud
- Leadership and communication. Bringing the team along with your vision
- Cloud architecture and development, PaaS, IaaS and SaaS
- Micro-service architectures
- Distributed messaging platforms, Kafka, ServiceBus and RabbitMQ
- CI/CD: Github actions, ADO, Team city

- REST, Swagger/OpenAPI and HATEOS
- Agile principles, Lean development, pairing and mobbing
- Data storage, NoSQL and SQL (Mongo Atlas/SQL Server)
- Monitoring: Splunk, Grafana, Prometheus, ELK, Azure App insights, Log Analytics
- NetCore, nodeJS

# *Work*

## Head of IT Engineering

*Talent Consulting (2021 - present)*

Employed as head of engineering to help Talent build a permanent team allowing the business to retain the knowledge gained while our consultants work within our public sector contracts. The team has grown from just myself to a core team of 20 individuals in all team disciplines includes architects, developers, dev-ops and testing. The team also comprise of the business side including Delivery managers, Business Analysts and Product owners which I was core to building along side our head of Delivery.

I balance my team responsibilities at Talent with project work on client sites, and am engaged as an principal architect at the Department for Education (DfE) leading on multiple projects on the Vulnerable Children and Families portfolio, building cloud services on Azure. Regularly sitting in on DD level reviews and show and tells, I have a large responsibility for presenting progress, ideas and potential risks to the client on specific areas of discovery projects and have also been involved in every aspect of the GDS agile process for delivering services for government

As a member of the leadership team at Talent, I am engaged in winning new business, engaged in creating presentations, responses to tenders to navigate our way through the bid process on the technical development and delivery of solutions to public sector initiatives. To date I have helped the business win £30M of new business at the DfE, MOJ and ESFA

### Team management

Building a business plan for dept growth, including specific milestones which align to my key objectives defined by the board. Building in specific solutions for problems as we grow, for example, line management of people, collaboration sessions, ceremonies, employee well being and DE&I. Presented to the board and got sign off on the plan bringing in a permanent delivery manager to help deliver the plan.

Weekly collaboration meet-ups to touch base with progress on our core product offering with monthly Talent days where our engineering team come together to build our new product offering called the Talent Suite working in an agile process. This product will help us engage with customers generating weekly reports, help in bid management allow more transparency for our permanent staff on our client projects and opportunities for them across our portfolio. Azure platform subscription to allow our permanent people to test, play and learn alongside tools such as pluralsight, github co-pilot

Core leader and organiser in the quarterly meetups with the business to collaborate on how to grow Talent, focusing on clients, business and having some fun seeing people face to face.

**Architecture & Technical (Principal Architect)**
All services on Azure platforms within the DfE, following design guidelines and the architecture is secure, stable and scalable. Responsible for the whole technical architecture and making sure it is communicated to all parties in a clear message and peer reviewed by the DfE architecture review board. High & Low Level Documentation covering all functional and non functional requirements

Lead multiple teams on projects at the DfE on both integration projects in the cloud and solution architecture of new platforms engaged around the Families and Vulnerable children portfolio. The majority of the projects are hosted on Azure and all projects are subject to intense review, IT Health check and WACG AA testing from outside agencies

Conducted a review of the Identity and Access Management (security operating model) for public sector dept, focusing on 7 Azure cloud tenancies and their RBAC and access controls. Presented a roadmap for the department going forward in the next 3 years to move to a single tenancy, simplifying network, access control and providing savings of at least £1m per annum

Within Talent, I have lead our team on a core product offering to help us automate aspects of our business. Roadmap priorities project reporting which allows our leadership Team to receive reports on status of projects with RAG status, with any RED status' flagged to our SLT. Bid management as priority 2, implementing AI against our library of bid responses to help us formulate responses to tenders and reduce time spent forming response documentation.

## Applications Architect

*CompareTheMarket (2017 - 2021)*
Technical product owner and lead architect on the 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 development and business team of around 20 individuals

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.

Lead developer on the team migrating the pricing 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, reducing customer down time by 30% and improving our remediation times with better common monitoring dashboards.

Architected and developed a new real-time quotability system with grafana dashboards allowing fast feedback of issues and problems at our providers. This reduced our time-to-fix from hours/days down to minutes. This had an immediate affect of increasing our revenue month on month

Chair of Technical forum, and many working groups, including concepting and rolling out common initiatives across the department. Contract testing introduced department wide reducing our incidents on deployment by being able to test against a specific set of contract tests

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 / Architect

*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

## 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

# 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

# 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

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## 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)