Robert McCaffrey - Head of Engineering

Dublin, Ireland
Languages: English (Native), Italian (learning B1)

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Summary

Hands-on Head of Engineering with 8+ years of experience building and scaling high-growth fintech products in regulated environments. Progressed from early-stage individual contributor to engineering leader, currently owning product, engineering, security, infrastructure, and the design and operation of LLM-based AI agents at TaxZap. Launched and scaled the UK AI-driven tax agent platform, supported a €2.6M seed raise, and led ISO 27001 compliance across HMRC and FCA-regulated systems. Remained deeply technical as a senior individual contributor across frontend, backend architecture, and production cloud systems while leading teams of up to 15 engineers.

Experience

TaxZap.com - Head of Engineering and Information Security Officer
Dublin, Ireland
Typescript, Node.js, Terraform, AWS, MongoDB, React
January 2024 – Present

- Scaled and secured engineering, infrastructure, and security functions across the UK and Ireland, remaining hands-on as an individual contributor while architecting AWS infrastructure with Terraform and implementing CI/CD, observability, and DevSecOps practices.
- Led ISO 27001 certification from the ground up, delivering policies, training, vendor management, and ongoing compliance in a regulated environment.
- Designed and built AI agents for tax automation to 125k+ users and multi-million-euro revenue, combining OCR, enrichment, and open banking integrations with LLM-based agents for customer interaction, including prompt iteration, benchmarking, and hallucination controls in production environments; led a 15-person engineering team and supported a €2.6M seed raise.

Xelda.com (Sequoia Arc 22) - Founding Engineer
Dublin, Ireland
Python, Django, AWS, Postgres, React
September 2022 – November 2023

- First engineering hire at a Sequoia Arc startup; defined the end-to-end technical vision and built the product, platform, and infrastructure from zero to production.
- Designed and implemented complex payment initiation and automation workflows, integrating banks, banking-as-a-service providers, open banking APIs, and accountancy software into a unified platform.
- Built, hired, and led the initial engineering team (1 → 6), acted as the primary technical partner to founders and customers, translating ambiguous business needs into production systems and AI-powered automated payment workflows.

Inscribe.ai (YC-S18) - Staff Software Engineer
Dublin, Ireland
Python, Django, AWS, Postgres, Vue
June 2019 – September 2022

- Fourth engineering hire at a Y Combinator startup; built and owned Inscribe's enterprise partner API platform from the ground up, including external-facing APIs and documentation used by Stripe, Ramp, and Fortune 500 partners (e.g. HP), with contractual SLAs and internally defined SLOs for availability, latency, and reliability, directly enabling high-value commercial integrations.
- Scaled the fraud detection platform from inception to millions in ARR. Contributed to $11M Series A (team of 6) and $25M Series B fundraising rounds. Helped grow the team from 4 to 30+.

Toasttab.com / AOL (Yahoo)
Dublin, Ireland
Java, Android, Postgres
2017 – 2019

- Built and maintained Java/Spring backend microservices and REST APIs on PostgreSQL, contributing to Android features and serving as Scrum master in agile delivery.

Education

Trinity College Dublin
Dublin, Ireland
MSc Computer Science with Distinction
2016 – 2017

- Peer-reviewed Published: *Video-Based Piano Music Transcription* (IMVIP, 2017).

Trinity College Dublin
Dublin, Ireland
BA (Mod) Computer Science with First Class Honours
2012 – 2016

- Completed an exchange year at UNC Chapel Hill in the US (2014–2015).