

Yao Adzaku

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I've managed teams and products in startups and mature companies, including operating my own business; this includes building teams and day-to-day business management for performance and growth. I can operate in different contexts solving business problems, and building products. I'm an entrepreneur at heart and care deeply about how things are built and how people work.

I enjoy hiking, swimming, and exploring new cities when I can.

Experience

FOUNDER & MANAGING PARTNER, PINELOOP, 2019 - PRESENT

Advise early to mid-stage startups on product strategy/management, monetization, engineering and go-to-market strategy. Coordinating directly with sales and clients in organizations around the world.

- * Advising founders, CEOs, and product leaders; including writing product and strategy memos to support executive teams
- * Building in crypto and blockchain: Solidity, decentralized apps, Ethereum smart contracts. Did a year-long technical work with Upvest (series A) on the public-facing developer tooling in Go, Python, Erlang, JavaScript.

PROGRAMMER / STARTUPS, 2006 - 2018

Early-hire for this fast-growth startup (Saya Mobile) building instant messaging and SMS service for emerging markets. I helped design, build, operate and maintain a high availability messaging server using Erlang, Amazon Web Services, Redis and other technologies. The product was demoed at the 2013 TechCrunch Disrupt in San Francisco, and soon after exited through an acquisition.

Soon after, I ran a small consultancy doing web development and technology contracting. Primary development work involved a mix of Erlang and Elixir. We developed a payment system for the transfer of funds across major mobile networks and banking institutions in Ghana. Navigating a whole lot of ambiguity: complex payment architecture with cross-border acquiring + local/x-border payouts.

I joined UK-based Octopus Investments in the early stages of the firm's product incubation lab, Octopus Choice. Contributed to core engineering designs ranging from backend to customer-facing components on a lending product with £100m AUM. Technologies used include Google Cloud, Python, MySQL, Docker etc. I then took on the Technical Lead for the internal central notification service used for incoming and outgoing client communications. Left to start a restaurant delivery and logistics business in Lagos, Nigeria.

Education

Accra Academy – 2005 - 2008

Skills

- Product Design, Data Analysis, Team/Stakeholder Management, Product Management
- Familiar with most programming languages, web programming, and UNIX system administration.
- Tools: Sketch, Figma, Tableau, MySQL, Excel, Balsamiq Mockups and more as needed.