SAM SWANKE

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New York, NY

SUMMARY

Engineering leader with Amazon and startup CTO experience. At Amazon, delivered platforms enabling nine-figure insurance contracts and supporting hundreds of nonprofit partners processing tens of thousands of annual cases. As CTO, led a zero-downtime AWS migration while contributing significant code — dramatically improving API performance and operational stability. Deeply invested in growing engineers: coached multiple promotions at Amazon, developed a non-technical hire into an effective engineer, and retained the entire team through a demanding rebuild. Combines distributed systems depth with a leadership style that elevates people and ships results.

EXPERIENCE

HelloPrenup Chief Technology Officer   Dec 2024 – Present   New York, NY

Built and led the engineering team at an early-stage (20 person) legal technology company, owning hiring, architecture, and delivery of customer-facing distributed systems.

· Built the engineering organization from zero, hiring and onboarding 4 engineers; **retained 100%** of the team through a high-pressure 9-month platform rebuild.

· Owned the full hiring funnel, sourcing and screening from 300+ candidates across phone, technical, and onsite rounds hiring top talent within tight budget constraints.

· Coached a non-technical employee into an effective junior engineer on track to reach mid-level; created performance guidelines and calibrated each engineer against clear expectations.

· Reduced new-hire time-to-productivity to **2 weeks** through structured onboarding and comprehensive system documentation, even during a full platform rebuild.

· Led migration from a monolithic no-code platform to a stateless, horizontally scalable AWS architecture; executed **zero-downtime cutover** while maintaining uninterrupted customer service for 5-10k monthly active users.

· Delivered production launch handling **8M+ monthly requests** with 130ms average response times; contributed 30% of code changes while establishing durable architectural patterns.

· Reduced customer support tickets by **44%**, improved page load times by **61%**, and reduced API response times by **91%** through architectural and performance improvements.

Amazon Software Development Manager   May 2022 – Dec 2024   New York, NY

Led a team of 8 (5 direct-report SDEs, 1 Sr. SDE, 1 PM-T, 1 TPM) building large-scale, highly reliable internal platforms for Amazon Treasury's Global Risk Management & Claims organization, partnering with product, finance and claims teams.

· Took ownership of a mission-critical insurance request platform **4 weeks before launch** following external vendor (ProServe) handoff; drove cutover plan, reprioritized scope, and delivered a stable production launch.

· Led structured handover deep-dive: triaged 65 issues, delivered **47 launch-critical fixes**, including 33 bugs, 9 data-integrity gaps, and 5 configuration defects prior to go-live.

· Enabled procurement workflows supporting **nine-figure** insurance contracts by delivering a reliable, auditable system under aggressive deadlines.

- Designed and launched distributed case-management workflows supporting **over 750** nonprofit partners and **30,000** annual cases, using AWS-native services and event-driven orchestration.

- Improved engineering quality and operational readiness: raised unit test coverage from **5% → 40%**, introduced production readiness gates, and strengthened monitoring/alerting to reduce regressions.

- Reduced weekly on-call incidents by **50%** through improved test strategy, better operational processes, and targeted architectural simplification.

- Managed and mentored 5 engineers; coached **2** engineers through successful **L4→L5** promotions and expanded ownership across system areas.

- Navigated shifting org priorities (including deprioritization of a flagship product) while maintaining team morale, delivery predictability, and customer trust.

Amazon Software Development Engineer II   Aug 2021 – May 2022   New York, NY

- Led architecture and implementation of a greenfield distributed service using AWS-native infrastructure, designing scalable data models and workflows for complex business processes.

- Served as front-end technical lead and mentor, carved a pathway to promotion into engineering management.

Feather Senior Software Engineer   Dec 2019 – Jul 2021   New York, NY

- Led development of internal tools streamlining operational workflows and reducing manual overhead. Improved site performance through frontend optimizations, which reduced load times by **30%**.

CALA Software Engineer   Aug 2018 – Nov 2019   New York, NY

- Engineer #2 at a fashion technology startup; helped scale the engineering team and build core platform features supporting product design, production tracking, and fulfillment.

Dealer.com Software Engineer / Intern   May 2016 – Aug 2018   Burlington, VT

- Built data-processing libraries to canonicalize large-scale customer data and developed maintainable frontend applications in Java and Angular. Shared modern frontend best practices through internal technical talks.

Cosechando Felicidad Inc Front-End Engineer (Volunteer)   Aug 2015 – Present   Remote

- Sole developer for HarvestingHappiness.org, supporting a nonprofit serving vulnerable communities through long-term volunteer engagement.

EDUCATION

University of Vermont
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, Minor in Mathematics   May 2017

TECHNICAL STRENGTHS

- **Engineering Leadership:** Incident management, on-call operations, hiring and onboarding, performance management, delivery planning, architecture and design

- **Infrastructure:** AWS (compute, storage, messaging, observability), CI/CD, infrastructure as code

- **Languages:** TypeScript / JavaScript, Java, Python, C++

- **Systems & Frameworks:** React, Node.js, API design, distributed systems

- **Data:** PostgreSQL, MySQL, DynamoDB