Ajay Lakhani

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CTO / Director of Engineering / Head of Engineering

Accomplished engineering leader with 23 years driving complex initiatives and innovation across travel, supply chain, and biotech. Spearheaded high-performance teams to deliver transformative scalable platforms, leveraging expertise in agile methodologies, architecture, and web technologies to accelerate time-to-market and enhance customer experiences.

Passionate mentoring talent with empathy. Combine technical vision and business acumen to nurture excellence and catalyze positive change. Strategic digital transformation partner maximizing business impact through technology.

Key Skill

- Engineering Management
- People Leadership
- Employee Engagement
- Technology Strategy
- Talent Management, Mentoring and Coaching
- Agile Software Development
- Distributed & Scalable System Designs
- Micro-services Architecture
- Web Technologies
- Digital Marketing
- Platform Business Models

Career History

Congenica • Cambridge • Nov 2022 – Present

Congenica is a digital health company enabling genomic medicine with a Clinical Decision Support platform for rapid analysis and interpretation of genomic data.

Head of Engineering

Led 32 engineers delivering world-class genomic analytics platform enabling precision diagnosis. Reporting to executive team, drove major achievements:

- Spearheaded £3.5M infectious disease genomics partnership with UK Health Security Agency, including £1.5M development deal and £2M annual operations contract. Demonstrated technical leadership and large-scale delivery to win this milestone collaboration.
- Launched Early Access Program expanding Clinical Decision Support Platform into Oncology, pioneering European entry.
- Restructured and optimized engineering team through strategic resource planning. Bolstered leadership by hiring 3 experienced Engineering Managers, upleveling capabilities.
- Pioneered £1M two-year platform modernization initiative, securing executive approval. Leading strategic roadmap execution to scale performance, positioning firm as industry leader.
- Spearheaded seamless migration of Python from v3.6 to latest v3.10 and comprehensive PostgreSQL database upgrade from v11 to v14.5, ensuring continued compatibility and performance.

A.P Moller Maersk • London • Apr 2021 – Nov 2022

A.P. Moller - Maersk is an integrated container logistics company.

Director of Engineering

Built and led cross-functional 19-person organization across Denmark and India delivering transformative logistics technology for Maersk's warehousing and depots.

- Assembled cohesive team including engineers, SRE, QA, and 3 engineering managers to establish group from the ground up.
- Spearheaded organizational innovation through strategic initiatives:
- Successfully implemented Infor WMS in Poland and Belgium enabling seamless integration and operational efficiency.
- Pioneered robust Chassis Integration Platform to integrate various WMS including Manhattan and Körber, heightening efficiency, streamlining processes, and aligning with strategic goals.

- Formed elite Flutter UI team to develop groundbreaking mobile/web app integrating warehouses globally, resulting in seamless operations and technological innovation.

Expedia Group • London • Feb 2009 – Mar 2021
Expedia Group, Inc. is a world leading online travel shopping company.

Head of Engineering, Marketing Technology • Mar 2018 – Mar 2021
Managed 40+ person engineering team delivering $40M+ annualized returns (20x ROI) through Expedia's campaign and recommendations platforms.
- Launched personalized AI recommendations service leveraging machine learning to provide 50M+ monthly customers relevant deals across channels (SEO, email, app, storefront), driving $11M revenue.
- Scaled marketing campaign platform (flash sales, member promos, Black Friday/Cyber Monday) to +34% YOY traffic growth @1550 transactions-per-second, 45-450ms response times.
- Consolidated disparate teams into high-performing shared-backlog feature team supporting portfolio priorities.
- Championed technical excellence through thought leadership programs including RFCs, quality maturity modelling, tech forums, and office hours, enabling best practice sharing and collaboration.

Senior Engineering Manager, Retail • Mar 2016 – Mar 2018
Managed 5 global engineering teams (40+ engineers) and technology portfolio for 90-100 resources, delivering $50M+ in annual savings across retail growth areas: pricing, international expansion, customer experience, and merchandising. Self-ideated and built a popularity-based hotel/flight recommendation system with leadership buy-in. Consolidated a 20+ person merchandising team from disparate products by unifying structure and purpose, empowering technology ownership, garnering leadership backing, and celebrating wins.

Engineering Manager, Checkout • Feb 2014 – Mar 2016
Managed 2 engineering teams (16 engineers) to improve Expedia's checkout and booking conversion. Enhanced customer experience by adopting A/B & multivariate testing, running 60+ optimized experiments annually with 20%+ conversion lift. Delivered new seat assignment & booking flows for flights business. Built capability to book split-tickets on unaffiliated carriers, enabling new round-trip combinability.

Senior Technology Lead • Apr 2011 – Feb 2014
Led 9-person checkout engineering team to boost Expedia's booking conversion. Improved flight and package booking conversion 6% via checkout platform delivery. Hired, coached, and mentored all checkout team members. Facilitated Scrum adoption. Championed pair programming, test-driven development, and Agile methodologies across engineering.

Senior Software Engineer, Travel-Guide • Feb 2009 – Mar 2011
Lead developer migrating Expedia's legacy travel guides to Spring MVC platform, boosting booking conversion through enhanced customer experience. Migrated 100% of guides to new architecture. Independently delivered server-side caching, drastically improving page performance. Championed domain-driven design principles. Helped deploy trunk-based development and CI/CD pipelines. Drove agile practice adoption, modern web platform, and continuous delivery by engaging ThoughtWorks consultants.

Additional Relevant Experience
Novell Inc • Development Lead • Jul 2007 – Feb 2009
Cognizant Technology Solutions • Software Architect • Nov 2006 – Jun 2007
Aris Global Pvt Ltd Solutions • Principal Software Engineer • Jul 2004 – Sep 2005
Automated Workflow Pvt. Ltd. • Senior Software Engineer • Feb 2003 – Jul 2004
ITTI Pvt. Ltd. • Software Engineer • Aug 2000 – Sep 2002

Education & Certification
- MSc in Software Systems and Internet Technologies, The University of Sheffield, 2005-2006
- Generative Leadership; University of Oxford, Department of Continuing Education, 2017
- Managing the Company of the Future; by the London Business School on Coursera, 2018
- The Confident Communicator, Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, 2022