James Watling

Engineering Leader & Technical Innovation Expert

jameswatling.com | linkedin.com/in/team-lead | github

Executive Summary

Engineering leader with 12+ years of experience in startup growth and technical innovation. Track record of successful exits and fundraising rounds totaling $39M+. Expert in building high-performing remote teams and implementing AI solutions. Currently leading provider experience transformation at Wonderschool post-acquisition of EarlyDay, where as Founding CTO secured $4M+ in funding.

Core Competencies

- **Technical Leadership**: Remote team building, AI initiatives, platform architecture
- **Strategic Growth**: M&A experience, fundraising, technical due diligence, hiring
- **Preferred Technology**: Ruby on Rails, React, Typescript, Postgres, Next.js, GCP/AWS, AI/LLM Integration

Professional Experience

Wonderschool (Series B) | Senior Engineering Manager   *Feb 2024 – Present*

- Lead multiple engineering teams (14 engineers) across distributed tech stacks and projects
- Implemented new SDLC improving deployment frequency by 300% and reducing support tickets by 85%
- Established structured hiring process, successfully scaling team with 8 direct hires
- Drive technical strategy and platform consolidation post-acquisition

EarlyDay (Acquired by Wonderschool) | Founding CTO   *Feb 2022 – Feb 2024*

- Built product from scratch and scaled to processing 100,000s of job matches and recommendations
- Led growth from solo founder to team of 6 engineers with 100% retention through acquisition
- Pioneered AI implementation reducing approval time from 48 hours to <2 minutes
- Scaled platform to handle 1000s of new users monthly while maintaining performance
- Secured $4M+ in funding and led technical due diligence for successful acquisition

Hub | Senior Software Engineer   *Dec 2018 – Feb 2022*

- Key contributor to $20M token sale through technical leadership
- Architected core platform features and blockchain integration
- Collaborated with LinkedIn co-founder on trust protocol development

KarmaCheck ($15M Series A) | Senior Front End Developer   *Nov 2019 – Mar 2020*

- Early developer building MVP contributing to successful Series A
- Established product architecture and development practices
- Continued as board advisor after transition

GuavaPass (Acquired by ClassPass) | Team Lead   *Nov 2016 – Dec 2018*

- Led 5-person team through successful acquisition
- Improved deployment frequency by 300% through DevOps implementation
- Conducted technical due diligence and M&A documentation

Previous Experience

- **Roomorama** | Senior Ruby on Rails Developer   *2014 – 2015*
- **Catch Design** | Web Developer   *2013 – 2014*
- **Consilio** | Managing Director   *2013 – 2014*
- **Tendersave** | Technology Director   *2012 – 2014*

Leadership Philosophy & Impact

- Build high-trust environments emphasizing autonomy and rapid iteration

- Champion pragmatic technology choices and open-source solutions

- Focus on mentorship and career development of team members

- Drive engineering excellence through process optimization and automation