

Ian MacDowell

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Open to VP, Director, or Head of Engineering. Remote (US) or Austin, TX.

SUMMARY

Engineering leader with 20 years in software and a track record of building AI into products and into how engineering teams work. Director of Software Engineering at Unqork, where I lead two platform teams and run the company's AI programs, from the first production generative AI features for paying enterprise customers to internal agentic intelligence engines that now run org-wide as real-time business intelligence. I directly manage up to 17, oversee an organization of 53, and have led 127+ engineers collectively. Across my career I have taken 50+ projects end to end, discover through design through deliver, which is what eight years inside a design consultancy does to an engineer. I have built a practice from zero to 15, redesigned how an entire company ships software, and I still build agentic tooling on my own time.

EXPERIENCE

Director of Software Engineering | Unqork (Remote) | Mar 2024 - Present

- Run Unqork's AI programs end to end, Alpha through EAP with oversight into GA, and launched the company's first production generative AI features for paying enterprise accounts.
- Drove internal AI adoption across departments. Introduced Vertex-powered Claude for an AI-assisted SDLC spanning design, product, and technical writing into GitHub, and built internal intelligence engines for automated meeting tracking and reporting that rolled out org-wide as real-time business intelligence.
- Lead two platform teams, Core Platform and AI, for a multi-tenant enterprise SaaS platform. Up to 17 direct reports including team leads and senior ICs, organization of 53 overseen.
- Redesigned end-to-end release delivery from six-week rolling releases to a structured quarterly cadence, coordinating security, legal, compliance, finance, QA, release management, and engineering.
- Operate at VP scope: SDLC policy enforcement, vendor contracts, procurement, and cross-departmental program ownership. Authored the full SDLC documentation, commit to production.
- Partner with security, legal, and compliance to keep AI use inside policy. Release governance covers compliance validation, security review, and legal sign-off for customers in regulated industries.

Software Engineering Manager | Unqork | Aug 2022 - Mar 2024

- Managed 7 engineers on core platform delivery. Built the professional progression framework used for engineering career growth.
- Promoted to Director within 20 months.

Technology Director | argodesign, Austin, TX | Feb 2020 - Aug 2022

- Directed 15 senior engineers across concurrent client engagements, including DreamWorks Animation, Microsoft, IBM/Red Hat, Sam's Club, and United Rentals.
- DreamWorks came in asking for one application. Built the design language system first, then the app on top of it. The DLS was leveraged into four applications and adopted by DreamWorks as their own standard.
- P&L participation across the practice: project scoping, staffing, and delivery budgets.

Creative Technologist (Founding) | argodesign | Sep 2014 - Feb 2020

- Founding technologist. Built the technology practice from zero to 15 engineers over eight years, establishing hiring, processes, code standards, and delivery methodology.
- Shipped work for Samsung, Chrysler, and enterprise clients. Good Design Award and an Adobe case study.

Senior Open Standards Developer | R/GA, Austin, TX | Sep 2012 - Aug 2014

- Production work for Nike, Converse, MasterCard, L'Oreal, and LiveStrong. Responsive templates and applications for flagship brand accounts.
- SXSW Interactive 2014 workshop instructor, Building Better Web Apps with Angular.js.

Technical Lead, Interactive & Mobile Web | Burton Snowboards | Aug 2010 - Aug 2012

- Led the transition to responsive eCommerce across a cross-brand platform covering Burton, Analog, Gravis, and Channel Islands. Adobe case study.
- Three FWA awards, including Site of the Day and People's Choice.

Web Developer | Burton Snowboards | Apr 2009 - Aug 2010

- Web development for Burton's digital platform. Promoted to Technical Lead within 16 months.

Senior Developer (Flash) | Dealer.com | Jun 2007 - Apr 2009

- Built a scalable dynamic media system deployed to 7,000+ dealer websites across the US and Canada, on an enterprise automotive SaaS platform.
- Technical projects for Chrysler, Jeep, Acura, Subaru, and Sonic Automotive Group.

SIDE PROJECTS

- ContextCanvas.ai: visual agent-team compiler for Claude. Design agent teams on a canvas, validate relationships, and export deterministic configuration files.
- Unicorn Graveyard: AI-powered 3D printing brand running on a full agentic pipeline, from generative design through storefront. 1,000+ patrons and 35,000+ downloads.

SKILLS

AI: applied AI and generative AI, LLM integration, agent-based workflows with human review and escalation, AI-assisted engineering execution, planning, and observability, responsible AI (governance, transparency, monitoring, risk controls), prompt and context engineering, adoption and change management

Platform and SaaS: platform engineering, large-scale multi-tenant architecture, distributed systems, scalability and reliability, cloud-native delivery on AWS and Google Cloud

Delivery: SDLC design, workflow automation, CI/CD, release management, QA and observability, security and compliance coordination

Leadership: manager of managers across engineering managers and senior engineers, org design across cross-functional teams, hiring, engineering metrics, budgets, vendor and partner management, executive communication

EDUCATION

B.S. Computer Science (Web Development concentration), Champlain College, 2005-2007. Thesis: Artificial Intelligence, 2006.

A.S. Multimedia & Graphic Design, Champlain College, 1999-2001.

Adjunct Professor, Champlain College, 2011-2012. Developed and taught the 2D Digital Motion Graphics curriculum.

AWARDS & WRITING

Good Design Award (Technical Director, Blaize AI Studio). FWA Site of the Day, People's Choice, and SOTD Mobile (Burton). Adobe case studies (Burton, argodesign). Eagle Scout.

Published: Maximizing the Return on Time (LinkedIn, 2024). SXSW Interactive 2014 workshop instructor.