

Christopher (chris) Portka

Software Engineering Manager

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Professional Summary

Engineering leader with 15+ yrs building & scaling B2B SaaS teams (up to 20 engineers). Bay Area-based and comfortable remote or hybrid 2-3 days onsite. I love leading teams and projects from conception through deployment, optimizing performance, reducing cost, mentoring teams and fostering an empathetic culture of collaboration. Proven at attracting, coaching, and retaining top talent while shipping at startup speed. Core: React / TypeScript, Node, Python, AWS, Webhooks, Docker, K8s, CI/CD, OKRs / 1-on-1s / Hiring Loops

Professional Experience

Senior Tech Lead / Engineering Manager @ Verana Health

August 2023 – March 2025 | San Francisco, CA

- Managed & grew a 9-engineer full-stack team; sprint velocity up 35% while keeping attrition to 0%.
- Shipped HIPAA-grade analytics UI (React/Node) that lifted NPS from 60 to 99
- Designed and launched “Ask Verana,” a HIPAA-compliant, GPT-powered chatbot that lets clinicians query millions of de-identified ophthalmology records in natural language with a retrieval-augmented pipeline (Python, GraphQL, Elasticsearch) with strict PHI redaction and guard-rails; this new support channel cut insight-request tickets by 30%
- Containerized legacy services, deployed to AWS EKS, cutting infra costs 40%
- Implemented a suite of company-branded reusable components using technologies like Github Actions, Storybook, Jenkins, and Styled Components to improve codebase scalability & maintainability, and reduce duplicate code by 50%
- Mentored 7 junior engineers; set code-review standards adopted org-wide, led cross-functional teams including product management, design, and compliance

CTO, Co-Founder, Lead Engineer @ Drawstring.io

November 2021 – December 2022 | Remote

- Led a team of 6 engineers and collaborated with 20+ artists and musicians to launch the platform successfully with support for Ethereum, Tezos, and Near
- Architected, designed UI/UX, and built a Web3 wallet-connect to on-chain settlement (React, Near SDK, Ethers.js) enabling cross-chain NFT trades and ENS lookup
- Implemented secure smart contracts (Solidity, Rust) for financial transactions and asset management, including auditing and monitoring smart contracts & transactions to enhance fraud prevention and risk management.

Senior Lead Software Engineer & Architect @ NETSCOUT

November 2006 – July 2022 | Berkeley, CA

- Scaled org from 3 to 20 engineers, survived two acquisitions, grew SaaS revenue to \$40 M while maintaining > 90 % retention while creating SaaS applications for high speed processing + rendering real-time cell networks
- Modernization: Led frontend projects porting large C/C++ codebases to Javascript/React, significantly improving usability in low-cost, high-availability systems & applications for major telecom clients like AT&T, Verizon, & T-Mobile
- Full-Stack Development: Delivered full-stack features prioritizing front-end rendering performance and optimized custom databases to process real-time network events with billions of data points per second
- International Collaboration, Compliance, & Standards: Implemented internationalization support and addressed data locality challenges for global deployments, working with teams & companies across Europe, China, and India

Software Architecture & Consultant @ Exploring the Core

November 2015 – February 2019 | Los Angeles, California

- Designed and built an educational app from scratch for iOS and Android, supporting over 10,000 users—including students and educators—in mastering state-specific Common Core standards.
- Contributed to increasing standardized test scores by over 20% at participating schools through effective use of the app
- Utilized Java, Swift, Python, JavaScript, and mobile development frameworks for Android and iOS

Undergraduate Student Instructor @ UC Berkeley

August 2004 - August 2006 | Berkeley, CA

- CS164 (Languages & Compilers) and CS152 (Computer Architecture & Engineering)
- Assisted in course instruction, developed coursework, & mentored students on advanced computer science concepts

Education

B.S. Computer Science (Geography minor) 2004 @ University of California, Berkeley