Andrei Rafai

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Hands-on CTO who leads engineering turnarounds: rebuilding teams, modernising platforms, and bringing cost, delivery and security under control. At Disciple Media, rebuilt the engineering team and its ways of working, re-platformed the infrastructure, cut infrastructure cost by ~65% and led the technical workstream for ISO 27001 certification. Earlier: first engineering hire at a venture-backed startup, Principal Engineer at ClearScore, and a key engineer behind Schibsted's audience targeting product, now ~€40M a year.

What I Bring

- **Engineering turnarounds:** team rebuilds, hiring bar, delivery standards, platform modernisation and predictable release cadence.
- **Cost and infrastructure:** AWS and Kubernetes right-sizing, cloud spend management, provider negotiation.
- **Security and governance:** ISO 27001 from gap analysis to certification, change management, risk ownership.
- **Architecture and team assessment:** scalability, technical debt, build-vs-buy and team capability reviews.
- **Applied AI:** production LLM tools for sales and customer support, built hands-on.

Experience

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER - DISCIPLE MEDIA

London, UK · May 2023 – Present · white-label community platform, 700+ communities and 2M+ users

- Led a full engineering turnaround: restructured the team around a higher technical bar, reset hiring standards and delivery practices, and built a leaner organisation that ships faster and more predictably.
- Modernised the platform and delivery stack: Kubernetes (EKS) with autoscaling, infrastructure as code, GitOps deployments, centralised observability and a web application firewall, replacing legacy hand-managed infrastructure.
- Cut infrastructure cost by ~65% through Kubernetes optimisation, workload right-sizing, cloud spend management and provider renegotiation.
- Led the technical workstream for ISO 27001 certification: change management, vulnerability scanning, access control, supplier management and the risk register.
- Partnered with product and commercial leadership on roadmap, technical strategy and pricing, including a usage-based tiering model with overages.
- Designed and built production LLM systems: sales-call insight extraction, outbound sales automation and a customer-support chatbot.

VP OF ENGINEERING - TRUEALPHA

London, UK · Nov 2021 – Apr 2023 · KPI dashboarding and shareholder-management platform for startups and SMEs

- First engineering hire; built the engineering function, product architecture and technical foundation from scratch.
- Delivered the MVP, including accounting-system and CRM integrations, and took the product to paying customers. The company closed after an unsuccessful funding round.

PRINCIPAL ENGINEER - CLEARSCORE

London, UK · Jan 2020 – Nov 2021 · consumer credit-score and financial marketplace

- Designed and delivered daily and weekly credit-report updates, replacing the monthly cadence and contributing a 3–4% revenue uplift on a £50M+ business.
- Led backend squads through technical design, delivery planning and release; contributed to the personalisation engine, technical roadmap and OKRs.

SCHIBSTED MEDIA GROUP

London, UK · Aug 2015 – Oct 2019 · Software Engineer to Staff Software Engineer · ad-tech at media scale

- Key engineer on the Audience Targeting Engine from MVP to the advertising division's most commercially successful product (€25M+ annual revenue by 2019, ~€40M today). As Staff Engineer, led its expansion across product scope, architecture and delivery.
- Founding engineer on the data management platform serving 200M+ monthly users; designed a probabilistic-data-structure approach computing ad reach across tens of billions of events in milliseconds, at 1B+ events per day.
- Defined engineering career paths and mentored engineers across the team.

Earlier Roles

- **Software Developer - Eloquentix** · 2014 – 2015 · Scala; E.ON energy data platform.
- **Ruby & Java Developer - Colt Technology Services** · 2013 – 2014 · Technical lead for a Java-to-Ruby transition.
- **Java Developer - ISDC** · 2011 – 2013 · Java web applications for a Dutch asset manager.

Education

BSc Computer Science - Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca · 2008 – 2011