MICHAEL THOMSON

VP Engineering / Head of Engineering | AI-First SDLC, PE Scale-Up & M&A Integration

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

AI-First Engineering Leader with 12+ years of experience building, scaling, and exiting high-volume SaaS platforms across private equity-backed and enterprise environments. Proven track record of leading ~30-person engineering organisations through Team Leads and Principal Engineers, guiding teams from early-stage startup (5th hire at CloudTrade) through PE investment, a ~4x acquisition exit to Advanced, and post-merger integration. Most recently co-founded and scaled Cloud Connect Software to ~£600k ARR, pioneering a truly AI-native SDLC—building personally with Claude Code and Grok Build, designing CLI-first microservice architectures for autonomous agent testability, and replacing legacy Jira workflows with custom AI-integrated delivery tooling. Brings 10+ years of C# and Azure-first microservices expertise combined with the pace, commercial focus, and cultural leadership required to scale a 30-to-60 person department.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- **AI-First SDLC & Engineering:** Hands-On Agentic Development (Claude Code, Grok Build) • CLI-First Architecture for Agent Testability • Custom AI-Native Work Tracking & Documentation Tooling • Hybrid Agentic AI, LLM Rules Models & Deterministic Engines
- **Cloud & Technical Stack:** 10+ Years Azure-First Microservices & Containerised 100% SaaS • C# / .NET • Python • Prolog (Symbolic/Rules Logic) • JavaScript / HTML / CSS • High-Volume Data Pipelines • Enterprise ERP Integrations (SAP, Oracle, Sage, Dynamics)
- **Organisational Leadership & Scaling:** Scaling Teams (2 to ~30 Engineers) • Leading via Team Leads & Principal Engineers • Autonomous Squad Design (~5-Person Product Squads) • Project-to-Product Transformation • Extreme Programming (XP) & Mentoring
- **Private Equity, M&A & Governance:** PE Value Creation & Exit (~4x Return) • Technical Due Diligence (Sell-Side, CloudTrade Exit) • Post-Merger Integration (PMI) • ISO/IEC 27001 & Cyber Essentials Plus

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CTO & Co-Founder

Cloud Connect Software | March 2025 – Present

- Pioneered an End-to-End AI-First SDLC: Built personally and led the team using Claude Code and Grok Build, fundamentally redesigning how the engineering function writes, tests, and ships software in production.
- AI-Ready Codebase Architecture: Engineered the platform around AI-assisted development from day one, building CLI interfaces into every component and service to give coding agents direct, deterministic execution and automated testability across the stack.
- Replaced Legacy Agile Tooling: Moved the engineering organisation off Jira by building a bespoke, internal AI-driven web platform for work tracking and living documentation, embedding AI directly into specification, planning, and delivery workflows.
- Scaled Azure Microservices SaaS to ~£600k ARR: Architected a 100% containerised SaaS platform on Microsoft Azure (C#, Python, Prolog, JS), combining human-assisted agentic AI, LLM rules models, and deterministic extraction to process 900,000+ documents at character-level accuracy.
- Enterprise Scale & Security Compliance: Delivered bi-directional ERP integrations (SAP, Oracle, Sage, Microsoft Dynamics) for enterprise customers processing 50,000+ invoices annually, while leading the team to achieve ISO/IEC 27001 and Cyber Essentials Plus certifications.

Head of Engineering (CloudTrade Business Unit)

Advanced (OneAdvanced) | October 2021 – February 2025

- Scaled & Structured a ~30-Person Engineering Function: Directed the CloudTrade engineering department following its acquisition by PE-backed Advanced, growing the team from ~12 to ~30 developers managed through 2 Team Leads and 2 Principal Engineers.
- Organisational Redesign to Product-Led Squads: Restructured the department from two oversized legacy teams into nimble, autonomous product-led squads of ~5 engineers, significantly improving ownership, deployment velocity, and cross-functional alignment.
- Post-Merger Integration & Governance: Led the technical and operational integration onto Advanced's enterprise Azure technology stack, aligning 10+ years of Azure microservice architecture with corporate governance, security, and portfolio standards.

- Executive & PE Stakeholder Management: Played a key role in technical due diligence during the sale process and navigated private-equity ownership, leadership transitions, portfolio reviews, and eventual product wind-down while preserving delivery commitments and team cohesion.

Head of Engineering

CloudTrade Technologies | 2018 – October 2021

- PE Growth to ~4x Acquisition Exit: Formalised as Head of Engineering following the 2018 Calculus Capital PE investment, leading technical strategy and execution through rapid scale-up to a successful trade sale to Advanced (~4x investment return).
- Project-to-Product SaaS Evolution: Evolved the engineering function from early-stage bespoke customer implementations into a scalable, repeatable Azure microservice product organisation of ~12 developers.
- Patented High-Volume Extraction Platform: Owned the architecture and delivery of Gramatica, a patented deterministic rules-based extraction platform delivering near-100% accuracy on complex invoices, orders, and logistics documents into ERP and AP systems.
- Remote Operational Leadership: Directed the seamless transition to 100% remote engineering operations during COVID-19, maintaining mission-critical delivery under key-worker status for NHS and UK government document processing.

Software Engineer → Technical Lead

CloudTrade Technologies | July 2013 – 2018

- Foundational Platform Engineering: Joined as the 5th employee and one of two founding engineers, building the core Azure capture platform (C#, Prolog, Python, Web) converting unstructured PDFs into structured enterprise data.
- Patented Core IP: Co-developed the underlying document extraction technology that secured international patents across Europe, the US, and Australia.
- Technical Leadership & XP Culture: Progressed to Technical Lead, embedding Extreme Programming (XP) practices, automated testing, and continuous delivery while taking on people management and mentoring as the team expanded.

EDUCATION

- BSc Computer Science | Newcastle University | 2010 – 2013
- A-Levels: Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Biology | St Aidan’s RC

SPEAKING & MENTORING

- Featured Speaker: "Good Engineers Can Be Good Managers: Never Let Anyone Tell You Otherwise" — Talks with Tech Leaders (May 2025).
- Technical Mentor (Thursday Evenings): Mentor university students and family members in commercial software engineering practices (5–6 hours per week via tyneside.software).