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AI-Native SDLC | Agentic AI in Production | Regulated B2B SaaS | Player-Coach Engineering Leader

20+ years of engineering leadership across regulated B2B SaaS - GovTech, HealthTech, EdTech, and FinTech. Currently Senior Director of Engineering, AI & Automation at SteadyIQ, owning engineering execution and AI/automation strategy, partnering with the CPO on FY27 product strategy, and leading the platform rewrite onto a modern TypeScript/Node/Python stack - operationalizing agentic AI across the full SDLC with Claude Code, Copilot, and GPT-5.6, where pilots become production infrastructure, not demos. Player-coach who still writes code, partners with product at the C-suite, and prefers engineering teams sized for direct impact, where every hire and architectural decision matters.

Professional Experience

Senior Director of Engineering, AI & Automation, **SteadyIQ**, Atlanta, GA (remote) **06/2026 - Present**

SteadyIQ is an AI-based, cloud income verification platform. Its job is to take a person's raw financial data, figure out their real, recurring income, and produce a trustworthy verification report that governments can rely on - instead of asking applicants for paystubs and bank statements manually.

- **The core problem it solves**
  - Verifying someone's income is messy: paychecks show up in bank deposits, gig/payroll platforms report the same money differently, and raw transactions are noisy. SteadyIQ ingests that data and turns it into a clean, deduplicated, categorized picture of income.
- **I lead engineering execution and AI/automation strategy** across the team, overseeing both the existing application and the new platform we're building to feature parity on a modern stack. My focus is delivery, quality, and getting our team's AI workflows from individual experimentation to standardized agentic team practice.
- The new platform is a TypeScript/Node/Python monorepo: Next.js, React, and Tailwind on the frontend; tRPC, better-auth, and Supabase on the backend; Google Vertex AI Gemini for production AI with custom failover and circuit-breaker; Plaid and Argyle for financial and employment data verification.
- As part of the executive leadership team, I partner closely with product to turn strategy and customer needs into clear engineering plans.
- Partnered with the Data Science team to move from frontier LLMs to low-cost/no-cost models - we were using under 2% of what we paid 100% for. Designed and architected in-house document OCR with a vLLM (Qwen) fallback.
- Rolled out lightweight processes to raise visibility into delivery and sharpen team velocity.
- Bring operational accountability to our offshore contracting team so quality and delivery standards apply consistently across internal staff and contractors.

Senior Director of Software Engineering, **hc1**, Indianapolis, IN (remote) **11/2025 - 06/2026**

Cloud-based healthcare analytics platform converting clinical and operational data from labs, health systems, and payer networks into real-time intelligence.

- **Led the full SaaS engineering organization** across a multi-language platform portfolio (Java, C#, Python), ingestion pipelines, data lake, core platform services, M&A and post-merger integration, and two flagship FY26 initiatives anchored in agentic AI.
- **Operationalized an AI-native SDLC as production infrastructure**, not sandbox tooling. GitHub Actions, Claude Code, Copilot, and AWS Kiro now drive code generation, test synthesis, cloud architecture scaffolding, and documentation as first-class pipeline stages. Early indicators: 5x deploy frequency, 23% PR throughput gain.

- **Drove an org-wide shift from "AI-curious" to "AI-proficient"** in deliberate waves - engineering and data first, then DevOps, Integrations, Professional Services, Product, and HR. Built a multi-model strategy (Kiro, Claude, Copilot, Gemini, Snowflake Cortex) so teams develop fluency across platforms with no single-vendor dependency. Prompt throughput tracked as a leading indicator alongside delivery and quality metrics.
- **Organized hc1's first AI Hackathon** as a Q2 organizational rock - explicit permission for engineers to step off the sprint, attack a real problem, and stress-test the toolkit. Rolling Show & Tell sessions converted individual experiments into shared playbooks.
- **Building the foundation for AI governance in a regulated environment** - multi-model policies, prompt use frameworks, and code-assist tool boundaries across the SDLC while preserving HIPAA and SOC 2 posture.
- **Built a quality-ownership culture with no dedicated QA team.** Cross-trained Product on Playwright for smoke and release-regression tests; AI-assisted test generation lifted code coverage from under 10% to 40%, with Engineering, Product, and Services jointly accountable for release quality. SonarQube enforces project standards as part of CI/CD.
- **Cut new-engineer onboarding time 70%** through an AI-assisted documentation refresh and a lead-mentor program - measurable DevEx and time-to-first-commit improvement.
- **Partnered with the CPO on FY26 product strategy** including a SourceIQ gap analysis driving a three-phase roadmap. Both flagship SaaS initiatives have AI at the core:
    - **Source IQ** - greenfield agentic supply chain intelligence platform combining contract performance with utilization analytics across client networks. Python FastAPI on vLLM (Qwen3.6-27B), consolidated late-stage from hybrid Java + Python to remove a service hop. Production AI contract extraction and compliance scoring.
    - **Clinical IQ** - led the FY26 build of a .NET/C# clinical intelligence SaaS with direct Epic EMR integration via HL7/FHIR on HIPAA-compliant AWS. Surfaces AI-detected patterns and lab/test recommendations to close care gaps and support earlier intervention.
- **Leading the AWS partnership** for the Epic integration build (AWS contractor team) and an early-adopter design partner for AWS Kiro (Amazon Q replacement) - bringing external partner muscle and pre-GA tooling into the platform roadmap.
- **Drove post-merger integration** - portfolio rationalization and organizational alignment to scale the combined platform.
- **Shifted the org from reactive firefighting to proactive observability.** CloudWatch Canaries, PagerDuty, and custom Grafana dashboards delivered executive-level visibility into uptime and platform health for the first time.

Senior Director of Software Engineering, **GlobalMed**, Scottsdale, AZ (remote) **06/2024 - 10/2025**

Leading telehealth technology provider, powering the VA and White House Medical Unit.

- **Owned engineering for the SaaS portfolio**, including roadmap, budget, and delivery. 4 Senior Managers and 30 engineers across onshore and offshore teams.
- **Led the company-wide AI Taskforce** spanning Engineering, Product, QA, Operations, HR, and Finance. Identified high-ROI use cases and standardized the enterprise AI stack across business units.
- **Built an enterprise AI literacy program** with hands-on training in prompt engineering, AI capabilities, and limitations - making every employee "AI-capable" as a baseline competency.
- **Established a Confluence AI Knowledge Hub** with an internal Prompt Library and shared Wiki, capturing successful workflows and reusable patterns across departments.
- **Launched cross-functional Innovation Sprints** empowering employees to solve departmental friction points with AI, surfacing production-ready workflows from frontline staff.
- **Owned end-to-end AI product strategy** from build/buy/partner evaluation through vendor selection and responsible-AI launch of triage, symptom analysis, and ambient listening features for critical care workflows.

- **Pioneered Claude Code adoption (May 2025)** - authored guardrails, usage policies, and decision frameworks for AI coding assistants in regulated delivery. Added OpenAI Codex (June 2025) as a complementary tool and ran Tuesday Technical Talks codifying when to use which. Cut time-to-productive for new developers 35%.
- **Trained QA on SmartBear HaloAI** to accelerate test automation; introduced Postman alongside SmartBear, modernizing the API testing toolchain end-to-end.
- **Drove a .NET 8 platform rebuild** under an Agile hybrid delivery model that retired 65% of technical debt and lifted deployment frequency 25%.
- **Partnered with Sales, Marketing, and Product on technical pre-sales**, presenting roadmap and architecture to enterprise customers and federal stakeholders.
- **Closed 95% of critical vulnerabilities** with the vCISO; held HIPAA, SOC 2, and ISO 27001 posture and secured HL7/FHIR data exchange across the platform.

Senior Director of Software Engineering, Successware, Columbia, MD (remote) **03/2021 - 06/2024**

PE-backed B2B home-services SaaS providing the full back-office platform for home-services operators.

- **Owned the full SaaS engineering org through a PE growth phase**, replatforming a legacy monolith to an AWS-native architecture. Scaled the team from a smaller foundation to 175+ engineers across onshore, nearshore, and offshore (25+ Senior Managers/Directors reporting in) when the business needed that scale.
- **Delivered 99.95% SLA at sub-second response for 10k concurrent users** by re-architecting service orchestration and application routing.
- **Scaled engineering 80% in 9 months** through a deliberate global talent strategy and a culture of autonomy with accountability that materially improved retention.
- **Presented architecture and investment cases directly to PE advisors and the C-suite;** secured approval and offshore investment for a React Native mobile platform, delivered on schedule and within budget.
- **Built the platform's CI/CD foundation and Internal Developer Platform** - code-to-release cycle time down 40%, manual QA effort down 30%, regression coverage up 45%.
- **Drove FinTech revenue expansion** via GraphQL and AI-enabled APIs that accelerated merchant onboarding and unlocked new integration partnerships.
- **Pushed offshore partners to adopt generative AI** for DevOps automation, performance test generation, MVP scaffolding, and synthetic user creation - a measurable productivity multiplier across vendors.
- **Established Datadog and Splunk observability standards,** cutting MTTR 30% and unifying mobile, data, and backend telemetry.
- **Unified mobile, data, and backend teams** under a single delivery model to strengthen feature interoperability and reduce hand-off friction.

Head of Software Engineering, Ruffalo Noel Levitz, Cedar Rapids, IA (remote) **01/2019 - 03/2021**

HigherEd fundraising SaaS powering engagement and donor outreach for universities and nonprofits.

- **Owned the engineering org** for the company's mission-critical fundraising SaaS - 5 Senior Managers, 25+ engineers across distributed locations.
- **Lifted system throughput 25% and team velocity 30%** through outcome-driven roadmaps and disciplined backlog prioritization tied to customer value.
- **Cut incident frequency 40%** by investing in observability, environment parity, and release confidence - fewer fires, faster cycles.
- **Modernized the main platform** (Java backend, Bootstrap frontend) for responsiveness and broader browser support; UI support tickets dropped 85% and defect escape rate dropped 40%.
- **Replaced legacy telephony with a WebRTC infrastructure**, cutting communications cost 30% and broadening platform reach via integrated payments, messaging, and video.

Head of Software Engineering, Debt Pay Pro, Schaumburg, IL (hybrid) **01/2018 - 01/2019**

Bootstrapped FinTech startup providing debt settlement and financial services software.

- **Joined employee #38** to own engineering across the platform; 10+ direct reports.
- **Led a zero-downtime data center to AWS migration** (EC2, MariaDB) coordinating 30+ vendor, payment gateway, and finance integrations - no business disruption.
- **Unified product, support, implementation, and sales** around a product-focused operating model, replacing siloed delivery with end-to-end accountability.
- **Cut pull-request merge time 90%** and materially increased throughput by introducing modern branching, CI, and review practices.

Head of Accelerated Solutions Group (R&D), Follett School Solutions, McHenry, IL (hybrid) **06/2012 - 01/2018**

Education technology leader providing innovative solutions for K-12 schools and libraries.

- **Founded and ran an internal R&D startup** chartered to accelerate K-12 product innovation; 10+ direct reports across engineering, UX, and QA, overseeing 25+ staff.
- **Partnered directly with product teams and customers** to ship MVP solutions on compressed cycles, creating market-differentiating features that fed the broader portfolio.
- **Stood up the company's first true CI/CD practice** and ran multi-framework Agile execution (Scrum, Kanban, Lean, SAFe, Scrumban) tuned to team and product context.

Senior Software Engineering Manager, Follett Learning, McHenry, IL (hybrid) **04/2006 - 06/2012**

- **Provided technical leadership across 6 independent SaaS products** with a team of 25+ senior developers; grew the org 38% while establishing KPIs that drove alignment across platforms.
- **Led technical due diligence and post-close integration on multiple acquisitions** - strategy through execution - onboarding acquired teams and harmonizing engineering standards.

Education & Selected Engagements

Columbia College Chicago - Bachelor of Science, Computer Science
McHenry County College - Associate in Applied Science in Computer Information Systems

Industry Writing - Publish on AI-native engineering leadership, operationalizing AI across the engineering org, scaling engineering teams, and platform modernization, drawn from production practice at RJL.ai, RJL.guru and RJL.dev
DataCamp - Certifications on Artificial Intelligence Governance, Understanding AI,
Anthropic - Claude Agent Skills, Claude Subagents, Advanced Model Context Protocol, and Claude Integrations.