

Chad Norwood

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Summary

Engineering leader who codes with clarity, mentors with purpose, and builds systems and teams that scale.

20+ years of experience leading cross-functional engineering teams, modernizing platforms, and delivering critical systems across cloud infrastructure, AI, and full-stack web development. Known for balancing technical depth with people-first leadership, fostering collaboration, and building trust across disciplines. Skilled at navigating ambiguity, sustaining complex systems with lean teams, and aligning engineering culture with business objectives, product strategy, and cost-aware decision making.

Selected Impact Themes

- Scaled a \$2M+/yr SaaS platform with a 5-person engineering team in a lean 10-person cross-functional org
- Modernized high-scale ad infrastructure (1M+ QPS globally)
- Tied engineering decisions to product goals, delivery costs, and business outcomes
- Introduced org-wide agile rituals and cross-functional QA processes
- Trusted culture-builder and cross-team connector

Technical Leadership & Skills

Leadership Focus: Engineering management, team building, agile coaching, roadmap execution, cross-functional collaboration, hiring & mentoring

Strategy & Delivery: Org design, platform rearchitecture, MVP definition, data-driven planning, stakeholder alignment

Tech Stack Fluency: Python, JavaScript/TypeScript, React, Node.js, AWS, Redis, PostgreSQL, Docker, Langchain, OpenAI

Tooling: Jira, Confluence, Git, CI/CD pipelines, Parea.ai, Auth0, RabbitMQ, AI eval frameworks

Experience

Director of Engineering – EMX (Engine Media Group)

Chicago, IL — Sep 2020 – Jul 2022

- Partnered with SVP of Engineering to lead cross-org architecture modernization, process reboots, and platform stability investments.

- Led infrastructure upgrades for high-scale ad platform processing 1M+ QPS globally across AWS regions.
- Overhauled data pipeline: reduced latency from hours to minutes, improved observability, and removed scaling bottlenecks.
- Implemented canary release strategy, increasing deployment safety and issue isolation.
- Mentored senior ICs and tech leads; promoted shared technical ownership and distributed team alignment.
- Collaborated with product, sales, and customer teams to align roadmap and unblock delivery across units.

Director of Engineering – Baliho Platform (Acquired by EMX)

Chicago, IL — Nov 2017 – Sep 2020

- Directed engineering for Baliho, a \$2M+/yr SaaS product enabling local marketing automation for national brands and SMBs.
- Inherited platform from 20+ dev org; evolved it with a lean team of 2–5 engineers, stabilizing legacy code while adding new features and services.
- Managed \$6M/yr Adwords automation, executing 100k+ API calls/day via Google Ads API.
- Maintained < \$150k/yr AWS infra spend across 30+ services.
- Guided full transition to offshore team while maintaining uptime, SLAs, and roadmap momentum.

Software Engineering Manager – OpticsPlanet (Ecentria)

Chicago, IL — May 2013 – Apr 2017

- Managed two full-stack product teams (11–14 engineers); led hiring, mentoring, delivery, and performance cycles.
- Hired first QA engineers and defined Jira workflows across engineering, product, design, marketing, and BI.
- Built onboarding frameworks and internal tools to visualize workflows and support autonomy.

Senior Software Engineer – Arboreal AI

Berkeley, CA — Dec 2024 – Apr 2025

- Collaborated with founder on product direction and LLM strategy.
- Built core AI chatbot workflows using Streamlit and Python.
- Integrated LLM eval and regression testing using Parea.ai; implemented second-model summarization for AI trust/safety.

Technical Advisor & Platform Architect (Consulting)

Remote / Various Clients — 1999 – Present

- Led architecture and delivery of AI tools, backend platforms, and event systems.
- Shipped Langchain-based data pipelines, React event apps, and OAuth photo browser tools.
- Served as interim tech lead for multiple startups; defined MVPs, scoped roadmaps, and mentored engineers.

Senior Developer – Critical Mass

Chicago, IL — Mar 2010 – May 2012

Internet Engineer – Yahoo

Sunnyvale, CA — Aug 2003 – Apr 2006

Education

B.S. in Computer Engineering, Minor in Computer Science — Virginia Tech

AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner (2019) • GMAT 750 (98th percentile)

Community & Open Source

- Organizer of 20+ nonprofit events (1,000+ attendees, \$20k+ raised)
- Contributor to CPAN, NPM, SourceForge, Greasemonkey
- Passionate about community, mentorship, and cross-team collaboration
- Naturally social and approachable — connector across disciplines