

JAY BROWNLEE

Engineering Manager · Teams, Delivery & Platform Strategy

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SUMMARY

I've spent 20+ years building large-scale data and cloud platforms, most of them as a team lead or engineering manager, from Dell.com at billion-dollar scale to secure healthcare in the cloud. At ClearDATA I grew from senior engineer to Engineering Manager over eight years, founding the company's first Data Engineering team and owning the FinOps and data platforms behind a product that monitors millions of cloud resources across thousands of customer accounts for HIPAA, GDPR, HITRUST, and SOC 2 compliance. Over 3.5 years as a manager I led 18 engineers — up to 10 at a time across the core Data Team and my assigned "Feature Team" — serving as project manager and scrum master for both, and lead by setting clear goals and guardrails, coaching engineers toward independent technical ownership, and staying accountable for outcomes.

CORE COMPETENCIES

People Leadership: Team formation · hiring & interviewing · engineer development · coaching & mentorship · career frameworks & competency matrices · delegated decision ownership · design-review culture

Delivery & Strategy: Technical strategy & guardrails · project management (roadmaps, release plans, Jira) · agile delivery & scrum · cross-functional partnership · stakeholder communication · FinOps · regulated environments (HIPAA, GDPR, HITRUST, SOC 2)

Architecture & Technology: Distributed SaaS & data platforms · data warehousing (Redshift) & ETL pipelines · message-driven systems · Python · SQL · Go · Node.js/TypeScript · PostgreSQL · Terraform · AWS/GCP/Azure · Kubernetes · applied AI with LLMs

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Career Sabbatical & Independent AI Development

May 2025 – Present

Planned sabbatical, then since May 2026 designing, building, and shipping AI products end-to-end with agentic development workflows (Claude Code, Cursor, Codex): a multi-model LLM orchestration platform and an educational web application.

ClearDATA — Engineering Manager

Nov 2021 – Apr 2025

Promoted from lead engineer of the FinOps/Billing team to its manager, then made the case to expand it into the company's first Data Engineering team; also led the Blue full-stack feature team as engineering leader and project manager. Owned technical strategy, delivery, and project management for the data and FinOps platforms behind continuous HIPAA and GDPR compliance assessment across thousands of customer cloud accounts.

- Made the case for a dedicated Data Engineering function, wrote the job descriptions, and hired five of its engineers; managed 18 engineers over 3.5 years — employees and contractors across time zones — up to 10 at a time.
- Led the six-engineer Blue feature team alongside Data, serving as project manager and scrum master for both: roadmaps, release plans, Jira, sprint cadence, and stakeholder reporting.
- Co-authored the company's Engineering Competency Matrix — the promotion framework and skills matrix engineers use to navigate their careers — and used it for performance and growth conversations across both teams.
- Owned all data requirements for the migration pipeline (250+ AWS safeguards) behind the next-generation platform monitoring millions of customer cloud resources against HITRUST and SOC 2 requirements.
- Set the replatforming strategy for a failure-prone stack of ~20 repositories — core architecture and guardrails — and guided the team through a year-long migration onto the flagship-product backend.
- Result: ~70% less redundant code, standardized queue, database, and container patterns, higher database maturity across Redshift warehouses and application databases, and restored service for the largest enterprise accounts the prior architecture could not support.
- Coached engineers through design and architecture reviews and moved implementation ownership to the team so engineers grew into system designers.
- Established the data foundation ClearDATA's AI strategy runs on, enabling the company's first AI initiative and data-driven analytics, support, and product capabilities company-wide.
- Interviewed for other managers' teams and led both of my teams through a company reduction in force.

ClearDATA — Senior Software Engineer · Lead Engineer & Architect, FinOps/Billing*May 2017 – Nov 2021*

- Led company-wide investment in BI: designed, built, and managed the platform providing core metrics and insights for Product, Support, and Finance.
- As lead engineer and architect of the four-engineer FinOps/Billing team, designed and led the ground-up rewrite of the billing and financial reporting system processing \$2–3M in monthly customer cloud spend, consolidating ~10 repositories into 3 core services.
- Built the cloud-usage collection app (Python, Terraform) gathering usage data for millions of resources across thousands of customer AWS accounts; ran ETL chains from Salesforce pricing data across Redshift warehouses.
- Integrated billing with Salesforce as the system of record; partnered with Finance on data quality and rule management for automated daily imports.
- Cut processing costs 75% (~\$275K/year) and halved nightly job runtimes from 10 hours to 5 while significantly expanding the customer dataset.
- Eliminated chronic month-end failures in revenue processing, turning a high-incident system into a stable, “boringly reliable” platform.
- Established the consolidated architecture later forked as the backend foundation for the company’s flagship product.

Help.com — Senior Software Engineer*Mar 2016 – Feb 2017*

- Built Node.js microservices and a queue-worker architecture powering a live-chat platform (Node.js, Couchbase, PostgreSQL, Redis, NATS.io, React/Redux, Docker, Kubernetes on GCP).
- Led code and design reviews enforcing standards for style, async flow, error handling, and query optimization with 90%+ test coverage; mentored junior engineers.

Leaf Group — Senior Software Engineer*Aug 2008 – Mar 2015*

- Designed and built a suite of applications used by freelance communities to produce custom text, photo, and video content at scale; built machine-learning pipelines using Hadoop, SQL, and Python.

EARLIER CAREER

Topaz Technologies — Senior Software Developer*2007 – 2008*

Built an FDA-compliance reporting system (C#, JavaScript); helped lead the team’s transition from waterfall to agile with Scrum and Test-Driven Development.

The Home Depot — Lead Software Engineer*2006 – 2007*

Designed and built the J2EE application that replaced employee time tracking across all U.S. stores, including a distributed, fault-tolerant data-retrieval process.

XO Group (The Knot) — Lead Developer*2005 – 2006*

Led a full-stack re-architecture of the membership services application for theknot.com.

Dell — Lead Engineer & Architect*1997 – 2005*

- Led a team of three engineers as lead engineer and architect for Dell.com Membership Services as annual online revenue scaled past one billion dollars; architected globally redundant infrastructure holding unplanned downtime to a few hours per year.
- Internationalized the platform across 14 EMEA and Asia-Pacific countries; owned hardware, OS, and capacity-planning decisions.
- Led the team that earned Dell’s first online customer-profile patent (US 6,862,612): “express buy” purchasing profiles spanning multiple storefronts.

EDUCATION

Boise State University — Computer Information Systems