



Kevin Hughes

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Location

Ancoats, Manchester

Technical

I have the solid technical background to act effectively with confidence and to gain the respect of a technical team. Additionally, I've developed that into a broad base of knowledge to enable supporting the business in as many ways as possible.

I've spent the greater part of my career as a full stack web developer but I've always looked for opportunities to broaden my skills and experience. My aim was to become a true technology generalist; the payoff being I can communicate effectively with development, testing, data, platform engineering and product teams. I can also get hands-on in those roles if necessary.

Skills & Experience

Ruby: My strongest technical skill. I've built from scratch and refactored mature projects.

Elixir: I've developed scalable and fault-tolerant web applications, embracing the functional programming paradigm for efficiency and reliability.

TDD & BDD: I am a strong advocate for using BDD to ensure code quality and a seamless alignment between stakeholder requirements and delivered code.

Data Engineering: I've built multiple ETL data pipelines, data lakes and data warehouses transforming raw data into actionable business insights.

Platform Engineering: I've built and managed platform infrastructure across multiple cloud service providers and on owned hardware. I love to use tools like Ansible to define the entire platform as code which can be built or rebuilt with one command.

Leadership

In organisations of many shapes and sizes I've used my natural enthusiasm to motivate teams with a clear vision of the future.

Change is always happening in any organisation. I help the team ride that wave of change instead of, as so often happens, resisting it.

Relaxed, reflective and excited for the future, rather than try to mould people into my idea of their roles I will encourage them to find their own motivations and align them with the company goals.

I employ various strategies to achieve this. For example, I love retrospectives for facilitating collaboration on improving process and use regular 1:1s to build trust and drive professional development.

My Values

Collaboration: where everyone has the opportunity to contribute at any stage and will be listened to.

Transparency: where working in the open removes silos and fosters trust.

Adaptability: where change is embraced as an opportunity for growth.

Pioneering: where boldness meets innovation, not being afraid to try something out and always learning from failure.

Empathy: where understanding, compassion, and inclusivity drive meaningful interactions.

Strategic Planning

I've learned a lot about what works and what doesn't in my different roles but people work best when allowed to express their creativity. After taking the time to properly understand the company's values, goals and those of its people, I'll put the emphasis on finding innovative ways to take us where we want to go.

The hardest problems are the most valuable ones to solve so I'll attack those first. Always working collaboratively I'll build a clear technology strategy that becomes the North Star for everyone granting them the agency and freedom to confidently make decisions themselves. I'll help build the KPIs and metrics to help everyone monitor their successes and target improvements.

Execution

Understanding Goals: I will engage with stakeholders across the organisation, listen to their needs and take the time to properly understand the objectives of the organisation as well as the context we're working in.

Developing a Strategy: Building a network across the organisation I'll co-create a strategy aligned with the goals I uncovered. We'll have fun with workshops, brainstorming sessions and more on the way!

Measure Success: During execution we'll have a simple way of tracking our progression and the impact of our initiatives. As a team we can use these to target any adjustments as we go to keep everything on track.

Experience

Engineering Manager | Couchbase | 2022 to date

- Halted employee churn which was causing a leak of skill and domain knowledge.
- Refocused the team on customer needs whilst building an architectural strategy which will ensure a sustainable future.
- Leading a project to bring our technology platforms together with Patchwork Health, who are in the process of taking over L2P.
- Building agency for the developers by uncovering and exploring the business and product vision whilst involving everyone in improving our management and planning processes.
- I pitched and built a proof of concept for an AI-driven natural language interface to the most complex parts of our app using OpenAI.

Engineering Manager | Couchbase | 2022 to date

- Built up to managing fifteen developers across two teams across three timezones both in-office and remotely.
- Improved employee engagement scores by 47% over a 6 month period.
- Measured and then optimised deployment process for cloud SAAS product bringing time from code complete on development to production from two weeks down to less than 24 hours.
- Built a positive and motivated culture within a team of mixed ability engineers from fresh graduates to experienced principals allowing the team to inspect and improve their own processes using tools like regular retrospectives.
- Created a culture of constant professional development using regular 1:1s, SMART target setting and well-defined career progression ladders.

Chief Technology Officer / Senior Developer | BlueSky Education | 2019 to 2024

- Introduced a new ETL pipeline and reporting, exposing the leadership to brand new business insight. Used this to support direction setting by the Executive Leadership team and to track live progression towards goals using OKRs.
- Overhauled the process by which work was pitched, designed and specced for the development team, refocusing on an understanding of customer needs/
- Built BlueSky Learning: a brand new video CPD system for teachers using Elixir, Phoenix LiveView and Tailwind in front of an open-source learning management system.
- Developed new features and performed upgrades for the flagship product, BlueSky Education: an appraisal & performance management solution for education written in Ruby on Rails.
- Built a cross-functional product team using Scrum. Coached developers, a new product owner and across the company in iterative development.

Technical Lead | Perkbox | 2018 to 2019

- Within a new data team, built an ETL, data warehouse and front-end to enable reporting across tens of microservices, aggregating across multiple AWS regions.
- Added Elixir & Phoenix to my skill-set, working on a brand new version of Perkbox's customer loyalty reward engine. Integrated with Amazon for automated high volume delivery of voucher codes.
- Created plain Ruby microservice providing bespoke PDF versions of usage statistics delivered to Perkbox clients for dissemination within their companies.

Lead Developer | Coach in a Box / BTS | 2017 to 2019

- Was able to present my team's work on the Moodle open-source learning management system at MoodleMoot, the yearly UK conference for users and developers of the system
- Maintained and developed the in-house coaching booking system and fleet of apps which ran the business
- Migrated the whole system from Heroku to private cloud, defining the entire infrastructure with Ansible
- Implemented a modern agile project management process and continuous deployment pipeline.

Lead Developer | South Devon College | 2005 to 2015

- Created Leap, a cutting-edge Individual Learning Plan system, in Ruby on Rails, which not only became a daily part of staff and student life but was released under an open-source license and implemented the system in four other UK FE Colleges.
- Maintained and developed the open-source Moodle virtual learning environment used by up to 16,000 students a year. Integrated and automated the system so that account creation and course enrolments were happening in real time.
- Built a modern web development team finding opportunities for improvement right across the college. Brought the college technology infrastructure into the 21st century with open-source learning technologies.

BSc Computer Science | University of Exeter | 2002 to 2005

Modules included Artificial Intelligence, Enterprise Computing, and Computational Linguistics

Certificate in Professional Development | South Devon College | 2008 to 2009

Chartered Management Institute course on development of leadership style.