

Evan Richards

Staff Software Engineer, Frontend Architecture & Developer Experience

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SUMMARY

Principal engineer and tech lead, ten years across UX design, frontend architecture, and product analytics. I find the expensive problem nobody owns, and then I own it. Most recently I led my organization's move to AI-assisted development, building the review policies and guardrails that held quality steady while team throughput rose 138%. Before that, I took login success from 40% to 75% on a metric nobody had ever measured.

EXPERIENCE

Principal Software Engineer & Tech Lead — LegalShield (PPLSI) · Remote · Nov 2023 – Present

I own the member-facing web platform, authentication, and onboarding. I set architecture and AI-engineering practice across our engineering organization and tech-lead a team of four.

- Raised login success from 40% to 75%, a 58% cut in login failures. No ticket prompted it: I noticed the friction at an associate convention and took ownership of a metric nothing measured. I instrumented the funnel, shipped individually-validated UX fixes to reach 70%, then used that credibility to consolidate two divergent login flows into one routable architecture, which also made auth features roughly 40% faster to ship. The CTO named this one of five reasons the company returned to user growth in 2025.
- Led my organization's adoption of Claude Code, from nothing to standard practice across our engineering teams in a year. I built the agent tooling for our ticket-to-release lifecycle and published it to our internal marketplace so other squads adopt it on their own, then taught the practice through a guild session for 30 engineers, an internal playbook, and a self-serve setup. PRs per engineer per month rose 138%; my own output rose 190% with 70% shorter cycle times.
- Designed risk-tiered code review, enforced in CI through a schema-validated ownership manifest and tier-mapped CODEOWNERS. Second reviews were rarely catching issues while adding real wait time to every change, so I cut default approvals from two to one on low-risk paths and kept them on critical ones. When a plausible AI review suggestion caused a production incident, I made it an org standard that domain knowledge lives where agents can read it.
- Lead architect of our design-system monorepo, which I took from alpha to stable in one quarter while keeping backward compatibility for legacy consumers. It ships with agent tooling, so new components come out matching the design team's standards instead of engineers interpreting documentation. Retiring the framework it replaced cut the login bundle 40% and moved Lighthouse from 31 to 55 on mobile, 56 to 96 on desktop.
- Presented our agentic-engineering strategy to tech leads and executive leadership with five concrete asks, including funded AI literacy and a named enablement function. Separately, I wrote a build-vs-buy proposal for the auth platform that the CTO endorsed; when finance paused it, I partnered with our CSO to quantify the risk and strengthen the case.
- Changed what an engineer on my team owns: they now run whole epics rather than picking up individual tickets. I also mentored a Software Engineer I through her promotion to SE II by teaching her to carry a project end to end.
- Diagnosed a spike in failed membership activations that other engineers were chasing through backend systems. I started from the user's side, asking why anyone would activate an already-active membership, and found Google ranking the activation URL above the login page. Fixed the SEO fundamentals and the spike disappeared.
- Cut the end-to-end suite from 60 minutes to 11 with no loss of coverage, and CI wall-clock time by 48%.

Senior Software Engineer — LegalShield (PPLSI) · Remote · Jul 2021 – Nov 2023

- Led an onboarding redesign that took activation from under 30% to 90%. I mapped the user journey, redesigned the flow, and fixed the mobile experience end to end.
- Rebuilt the component library on Radix UI primitives after accessibility gaps pushed engineers to work around the old one. UI development time roughly halved. I won adoption by demoing at guild meetings and inviting collaboration rather than mandating it, and it became the base for our multi-brand UI kit.

- Took over the checkout V1-to-V2 migration a month behind schedule. I designed an abstraction layer that mapped both API versions onto one React data context, which let the migration ship incrementally. Delivered in a month, unblocking offers and discounts.
- Rebuilt mobile home-page navigation on my own initiative, with card links mirroring the desktop layout. Mobile clickthrough to key pages rose 50%, validated in GA4.

Full Stack Software Engineer — Owls Nest LLC · Dec 2019 – Jul 2021

- Shipped a React Native performance-evaluation app for Chick-fil-A restaurants, iterating on user feedback under tight client timelines.
- Built a custom ERP in Flutter for an Icelandic curtain-and-blinds startup, plus their customer-facing storefront in Next.js. I managed the product roadmap.

Software Engineer II — McKee Foods Corp. · May 2017 – Dec 2019

- Lead designer and frontend engineer for the iOS app distributors use to run their businesses: orders, sales, stores, and contacts. It processes roughly \$1.5B a year.
- I shadowed distributors through their in-store workflows and designed to iOS conventions, since many of them were new to smartphones. A 1,000-user survey settled details like menu-button placement for rapid order entry. The app was praised company-wide for its UX.
- Established the UX research practice for field-sales products and built a cross-project React Native component library.

Software Engineer I — McKee Foods Corp. · May 2016 – May 2017

- Built corporate sales applications (Angular, SQL, SSRS) and automated reporting pipelines. Before that, four years as a corporate IT intern: I supported 4,000+ devices, set a company record with 1,000+ hardware installs in one year, and cut workstation setup time nearly in half.

SKILLS

Frontend & design: TypeScript · React · Next.js · React Native · Figma · WCAG accessibility

Platform & DX: design systems (Radix, shadcn/ui, Storybook) · CI/CD & GitHub Actions · Playwright/Jest

AI engineering: Claude Code · agentic workflows · agent tooling & guardrails

Backend & data: Node.js · GraphQL/REST · OAuth/auth architecture

Analytics & experimentation: LaunchDarkly · GA4 · New Relic

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

B.S. Computer Systems Administration — Southern Adventist University

Certified ScrumMaster (Scrum Alliance) · Assumption Testing (Product Talk) · Spanish (elementary)

Interests: stand-up comedy, infrastructure mega-projects, skiing, world travel, and trivia.