Maxim (Max) Kitaygora

Software Engineering, Solution Architecture, Site Reliability Engineering , Professional Services

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As a seasoned software engineering leader with 25 years of experience, I aim to empower innovative organizations by architecting scalable solutions and mentoring teams to deliver and support transformative, customer-focused technologies.

SUMMARY

Accomplished engineering leader with a 20+ years record of scaling engineering teams and delivering scalable SaaS, AI, and IoT solutions for startups and global enterprises in telecom, fintech, and IoT sectors. Built and led high-performing SRE and SA teams. Experienced in managing Cloud transformation projects. Successfully stabilized critical projects and accounts, enabling significant improvements in system performance and customer satisfaction. Passionate about mentoring engineering talent and fostering customer-focused cultures to deliver high-impact solutions for innovative organizations.

WORK EXPERIENCE

GSM Outdoors | 10/2025 – Present | Fremont, CA
Director of Software Engineering

- Defined and executed technical roadmaps for mobile and backend features, aligning with product vision and business priorities; led mobile development teams across Android and iOS platforms, overseeing design, development, testing, implementation, support, and deployment of solutions using diverse full-stack tools and technologies to deliver high-impact capabilities (including onboarding and user management) with high craftsmanship, availability, resilience, and scalability.
- Championed Agile and DevOps practices, establishing robust CI/CD pipelines, enforcing quality metrics, and accelerating delivery velocity for both my team and cross-functional squads.
- Collaborated closely with product leaders, cross-functional teams, and engineering groups to translate user experience requirements, capabilities, and testing scenarios into actionable technical plans.
- Mentored engineers and emerging leaders, fostering professional growth while promoting innovation, cutting-edge technologies, inclusion, outside-of-the-box thinking, teamwork, self-organization, and diversity; stayed ahead of industry trends and encouraged experimentation to continuously elevate engineering practices.

InTone | 01/2025 – Present | Palo Alto, CA
Adviser, Engineering and Go-to-Market Strategy

- Advised a startup on leveraging generative AI-powered voice agents and AWS infrastructure (Amazon Bedrock, Lambda) to enhance sales operations, driving profitability and $1.2M+ ARR within 6 months through scalable, customer-focused solutions.

Valence AI | 02/2024 – 10/2025 | Palo Alto, CA
Adviser, Engineering and Go-to-Market Strategy

- Provided strategic guidance on developing an AWS-based solution (e.g., Amazon Bedrock, Lambda, Amazon Transcribe) for real-time emotion analysis and guided text outputs for contact center agents, driving $1M+ ARR and profitability within 18 months.

Vibranium VC | 07/2023 – 10/2025 | Palo Alto, CA
Technical Adviser

- Conducted in-depth due diligence for cloud-native SaaS platforms, evaluating technical architectures to ensure scalability and viability for portfolio investments.
- Advised portfolio startups on customer onboarding strategies and scalable cloud architectures, driving user adoption and operational efficiency for GenAI and SaaS solutions.

Orion Innovation | 10/2017 – 04/2025 | Palo Alto, CA
Director of Software Engineering and SRE
Accounts: VMware, Revel Systems, Echelon, Poynt, Treez, RingCentral, Ooma, Stack Sports
Led engineering teams for key accounts, partnering with VP- and C-level executives to deliver tailored, scalable solutions that enabled client success and strategic partnerships.

- Led a team of 124 software engineering and SRE associates for a late-stage startup to scale a high-traffic POS platform, migrating it to an AWS microservices architecture with Datadog monitoring. This enabled service delivery to over 20,000 restaurant locations, drove revenue growth from $100M in 2020 to $129M in 2023, and supported a $250M acquisition in 2024.
- Led a team of 59 software engineers to support development of an AI-powered SaaS contact center platform, with some engineers integrating real-time AI across over 20 digital channels and 120 third-party integrations, while others enhanced core functionality, improving customer sentiment by 29% and contributing to 9% year-over-year revenue growth to $2.4B in 2024.".
- Led a team of 19 engineers to develop and deliver a VMware Adapter, enabling integration of SAP LaMa with VMware SDDC to automate cloning, refresh, and migration, reducing provisioning time by 40% and supporting global scalability.
- Oversaw a 15-engineer software engineering team to deliver web and mobile apps for a sports technology provider, powering 10M+ annual registrations and 15M+ app users across 50M users in 35 countries by 2024, accelerating rollouts by 15% and contributing to revenue growth from $11.8M (2021) to $75M (2024).
- Stabilized a Smart City CMS project by leading a 12-engineer technical team to develop a scalable IoT SaaS platform for a late-stage startup, supporting 50,000+ sensors and 140M+ global devices, enhancing customer satisfaction and facilitating acquisitions in 2018 and 2020.
- Led a 3-engineer software engineering team for a fintech startup (acquired 2021) to upgrade a payment platform's Android OS (7 to 10), optimizing for 150,000+ terminals serving 30M customers, enabling 100,000+ merchant adoptions with $16B+ GMV and facilitating acquisition.

MERA (now Orion Innovation) | 06/2015 – 10/2017 | Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
Director of Software Engineering
Accounts: Revel Systems, Shift4

- Directed an 87-engineer software engineering team for a late-stage POS startup to develop an iPad-based POS platform, scaling a cloud-based solution post-$13.5M Series C (2015) and $35M private equity funding (2017), enabling 76% YoY growth in monthly hosting revenue by late 2017 and aligning with customer success KPIs.
- Led an 80+-agent Tier 2 Customer Support team for a POS startup, achieving a 99% customer satisfaction rating through optimized client engagement and support processes.
- Conducted technical due diligence for five M&A deals in the payment processing sector, ensuring products met client requirements and demonstrating expertise in fintech solutions.
- Mentored engineering teams to enhance technical expertise and align solutions with client objectives.

KiQ | 06/2015 – 11/2016 | Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
Co-Founder, CTO

- Raised $250,000 from angel investors to fund crowdfunding preparations and develop an innovative IoT personal assistant desk gadget (plush kitty form factor) using Wi-Fi, BLE, and cloud technologies for wireless phone connectivity, enabling notification tracking (texts, emails, calls, appointments) and personalized AI-driven humor delivery via a learning algorithm.
- Led a cross-functional engineering team in product management and delivery of software, firmware, and iOS app for device-cloud-social network integration, while managing hardware preproduction with Chinese vendors, driving innovation to enhance user engagement and position for a $50,000 Kickstarter launch to manufacture 1,000 units and expand cloud and AI capabilities.

Lintelus | 03/2013 – 06/2015 | Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
General Manager, Director of Software Engineering

- Led operations, directing a 12-engineer software engineering team, investor relations, and founder partnerships to enable startup growth and secure a $3M second seed round following a $1M initial investment.
- Guided product strategy and engineering for a cloud-based SaaS engagement platform, transforming an early-stage MVP into a commercial product while fostering client and stakeholder relationships.
- Led deployment of the SaaS platform at high-profile events like Oracle Open World and Cisco Live Milan, supporting 7,000 attendees with 4,000 simultaneous connections for slides, polls, and chats, enhancing client engagement and strategic partnerships.

MERA (now Orion Innovation) | 06/2009 – 03/2013 | Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
Director of Software Engineering
Accounts: Networks in Motion, Mitel, Plantronics, Synapsense, Ascom

- Scaled an engineering organization from 15 to 80 engineers pre-acquisition, contributing to a client's $107M ARR and a 10× valuation exit via acquisition in 2009, and expanded to 300+ professionals post-acquisition, while delivering large-scale backend and mobile applications for real-time automotive navigation, enabling a 32.7% annual revenue increase in the Wireless & Mobility unit.
- Led the transition of enterprise UM and UC solutions (IP/SIP-based platforms with messaging, collaboration, attendant, and contact center capabilities) from a telecom client to an in-house team; built and managed 50-engineer software engineering team, contributing to gross margin increase from 52.2% (2011) to 55.6% (2013) despite the revenue decline from $611.8M (2012) to $576.9M (2013).
- Directed cross-functional technical teams for Ascom and Plantronics accounts, delivering telecom solutions using Agile methodologies to enhance client satisfaction and delivery efficiency.

MERA (now Orion Innovation) | 04/2005 – 06/2009 | Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
Senior Manager, Software Engineering and Professional Services
Accounts: Nortel, Avaya, Synapsense

- Directed a team of over 150 software engineers to develop and support IP/SIP-based Unified Messaging and Contact Center solutions for an enterprise telephony provider customer with 35 to 50% market share, enabling seamless project transitions during a $915M acquisition in 2009.
- Led a Professional Services team of 7 engineers delivering deployments and customer support for a carrier-grade voice messaging system, contributing to growth in support services revenue and contributing to customer's 2008 year-over-year revenue increase.
- Built and led an 11-engineer software engineering team for an early-stage IIoT startup, delivering scalable IoT solutions for data center monitoring, enabling real-time environmental analytics across enterprise data centers and achieving up to 15% energy cost savings, supporting growth post-$15M funding rounds by 2008.

Previous Roles
- Served as Engineering Manager and Team Leader at MERA (2002–2005, Nortel account), as Software Engineer at Teleca (2000–2002, Motorola account) and Alcor (1996–2000), developing software for enterprise clients.

EDUCATION

Nizhny Novgorod State Technical University
Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
08/1992 – 07/1998
master's degree - Computer Systems and Networks

CERTIFICATIONS
- *Berkeley Venture Capital Executive Program (2023)*
- *Stanford Continuing Studies, Public Speaking: Romancing the Room (2025)*