Rik Nelson

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WWW: Bold Profile

Headline

Military Veteran | Chief Product Officer | Global Product Vision, Platform Strategy & AI-Driven Growth

Summary

Military Veteran and Chief Product Officer with 20+ years of experience leading enterprise **product vision**, platform strategy, and **AI-enabled growth** across SaaS, EdTech, FinTech, HealthTech, and GovTech industries. Proven track record scaling cloud-native platforms, aligning product portfolios to revenue and business outcomes, and partnering with executive leadership to drive durable, customer-centric **innovation** in highly regulated environments.

Areas of Expertise

- Enterprise Product & Platform Strategy
- Product Portfolio Governance & Monetization Models
- AI/ML-Enabled Product Innovation
- Cloud-Native Platforms & Scalable Architecture
- Product Lifecycle, Roadmaps & Operating Models
- Agile, Scrum & SAFe at Enterprise Scale
- Data Platforms, Analytics & AI Readiness (Snowflake, Big Data)
- Identity, Graph Technology & Trust Frameworks
- Cross-Functional Leadership, GTM & Executive Alignment
- Developer Experience (DX) & Platform Enablement

Experience

HEAD OF ENGINEERING (CONSULTANT) | 10/2025 – Present

InfoIMAGE – Dallas, USA

Engaged as a senior **transformation** advisor to the CTO to modernize enterprise platforms and **product delivery** for a financial communications and document composition organization serving regulated banking and enterprise clients. Brought deep **FinTech**, platform, and **AI modernization** experience to evolve operating models, technology foundations, and **product execution** at scale.

- Advise executive leadership on **product**, platform, and **engineering strategy** across a 60-person global engineering organization
- Evaluate team structures and delivery models; perform capability and gap analysis across **engineering**, data, and **product** functions
- Lead modernization of legacy document composition and financial communication platforms toward **cloud-native** architectures
- Define and establish **product roadmap** governance, portfolio management, and execution frameworks across the SDLC
- Enable **AI adoption** across platforms and development workflows, embedding AI throughout the SDLC to improve velocity, quality, and insight
- Establish **data management** and **analytics** strategy to support **product intelligence**, operational visibility, and AI readiness
- Develop multi-phase **roadmap** for infrastructure **migration to cloud** (AWS/Azure), balancing risk, compliance, and scalability
- Partner cross-functionally with **product**, operations, and business stakeholders to align technology investment with enterprise **growth** objectives

FOUNDER & HEAD OF PRODUCT INNOVATION | 12/2024 - Present

Heath ServiceConnect - Dallas, USA

Founded and lead an AI-enabled digital platform designed to simplify complex, fragmented health and benefits ecosystems for Veterans. Own end-to-end product vision, strategy, and lifecycle while validating scalable, data-driven solutions in a highly regulated environment.

- Defined enterprise **product vision** and long-term **roadmap** for an **AI-enabled** health and benefits platform serving Veterans
- Led **product discovery**, customer research, and validation to align platform capabilities with real-world user needs and market opportunity
- Established product **operating model** spanning MVP delivery, **roadmap** governance, prioritization, and lifecycle management
- Designed **AI-assisted workflows** for claims preparation, evidence structuring, and Veteran education, embedding automation and intelligence into core **product experiences**
- Architected initial SaaS platform, data model, and **AI integration strategy** with a focus on scalability, privacy, and compliance
- Oversaw **product design**, UX, and customer **journey mapping** to ensure a consistent, Veteran-centric experience
- Partnered with engineering and data teams to translate **product strategy** into execution while maintaining strategic oversight

VP OF ENGINEERING & PRODUCT STRATEGY | 01/2022 - 11/2024

CYPHER Learning - Dallas, TX

Executive leader for product and platform strategy at a global B2B SaaS, VC-backed EdTech company delivering AI-powered LMS platforms. Revenue: ~$30M | Headcount: 160 | Customers: 20K+ institutions globally.

- Led **enterprise product** and **platform strategy** for an **AI-enabled learning platform** serving millions of users globally
- Defined and executed **AI-driven roadmap** integrating **LLM technologies** (GPT, Claude, ElevenLabs) to power personalization, content automation, and analytics
- Scaled and **led global engineering** teams delivering adaptive learning, real-time insights, and platform reliability at scale
- Partnered with executive leadership to align **product vision**, customer experience, and **go-to-market strategy**, including Salesforce CRM and Marketing Cloud integration

VP OF PRODUCT & TECHNOLOGY | 11/2015 - 01/2022

Computershare - Chicago, IL

Senior **product and technology** leader at a global FinTech organization supporting over 125 million customer accounts across 21 countries, delivering secure, enterprise-scale platforms for capital markets and financial services.

- Led **product delivery** for regulated FinTech platforms including white-labeled mobile banking, automated account onboarding, and digital insurance solutions
- Defined and delivered OCR-enabled KYC and identity verification platforms integrating fraud detection and public-record validation
- Directed multi-region data integration and platform reliability initiatives supporting over 1 million users with high availability and compliance requirements

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF IT | 03/2014 - 10/2015

Drexel University - Philadelphia, PA

Senior leader responsible for enterprise **product**, **data**, and **technology strategy** at a private R1 research university focused on academic innovation and student success.

- Defined **predictive analytics** and CRM strategy, implementing Salesforce to improve student onboarding, engagement, and retention
- Led **product and technology architecture**, organizational design, staffing, and financial forecasting across enterprise systems
- Negotiated and rationalized vendor contracts to reduce costs while improving platform efficiency and service quality
- Established enterprise support and service delivery models for internal stakeholders and external partners

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE & CONSULTING ENGAGEMENTS

Miscellaneous

Held executive leadership and consulting roles advising enterprise organizations on product portfolio strategy, platform modernization, and cloud-native transformation across highly regulated, security-sensitive, and performance-intensive industries:

- **M&A and Platform Integration** (Cisco Systems): Directed post-merger technology and platform integration for multi-billion-dollar acquisitions, unifying API ecosystems, cloud architectures, and product roadmaps to enable interoperability and portfolio coherence
- **Global Platform Modernization** (Nortel Networks, VMware): Advised and led modernization of telecom-grade and SaaS platforms, improving reliability, DevOps velocity, observability, and multi-tenant scalability at global scale
- **Regulated Financial Platforms** (GE Capital, InfoIMAGE): Designed and delivered secure, compliant digital platforms supporting banking, payments, and financial communications, balancing regulatory requirements with monetization and customer experience
- **Public Sector & Critical Infrastructure** (CSC, PG&E): Led cloud, platform, and cybersecurity modernization for military, federal, and utility organizations, ensuring resilience, compliance, and lifecycle governance across enterprise systems
- **Healthcare & Defense Systems** (Tripler Army Medical Center, U.S. Army): Directed modernization of mission-critical healthcare and communications platforms, delivering secure, high-availability systems in highly regulated environments
- **U.S. Army** – Managed and modernized global communications platforms supporting high-availability operations in fast-paced, mission-critical environments. Developed leadership discipline and technical resilience foundational to platform-scale thinking.

Education

American Intercontinental University - Schaumburg, IL, USA | Master's
Information Technology - Data Security

American Intercontinental University - Schaumburg, IL, USA | Bachelor's
Information Technology

Websites, Portfolios, Profiles

- linkedin.com/in/rik-nelson

Technologies & Platforms

- **Data & Analytics Platforms:** Snowflake, BigQuery, Redshift
- **AI & Machine Learning:** Generative AI, NLP, ML Pipelines, LLM Integration
- **Graph & Identity Technologies:** Neo4j, GraphQL, Identity Graphs
- **Cloud & Platform Infrastructure:** AWS, Azure, GCP, Kubernetes, Docker
- **Product & Delivery Tooling:** Aha!, Jira, Confluence, Figma
- **DevOps & Platform Enablement:** GitHub Actions, Jenkins, Terraform
- **Security, Privacy & Compliance:** SOC 2, HIPAA, ISO 27001
- **Business Intelligence:** Power BI, Tableau, Looker
- **Languages (Strategic Fluency):** Python, Java, TypeScript, SQL
- **Commercial Models:** Capacity-Based & Usage-Driven Pricing