

# CHRIS BENSON

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION LEADER • PRODUCTIVE DISRUPTOR  
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE / MACHINE LEARNING EVANGELIST

CHRIS@LEADER.IO  
ATLANTA

Amazon Web Services Certified Solutions Architect (2015)

Machine Learning Certificate, Stanford University (2016)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I lead organizations through the streaming cascades of digital transformation to solve their business problems in the most cost-effective, efficient, and forward-thinking approach available. My career, spanning two decades, is built upon a deep passion for ever-evolving leading technologies, and the transformations they enable in the world around us. I am an experienced digital product strategist, specializing in the juxtaposition of technical ingenuity and entrepreneurial inspiration – an evangelist for the realization of a fresh brand vision through digital transformation and innovation.

I have a particular passion for 'deep learning', which is an approach to artificial intelligence and machine learning that draws heavily from our knowledge of the human brain, statistics, and applied mathematics. It enables computer systems to improve with experience and data. To raise the profile of 'deep learning' within the Atlanta business community, I founded and am the official Organizer of the Atlanta Deep Learning Meetup, hosted at the Georgia Tech Advanced Technology Development Center (ATDC), and my upcoming book is 'Deep Learning with Go'.

My expertise is sustained through relentless engineering with digital innovations. Creativity is intrinsic to my nature, whether expressed through Swift or JavaScript apps that embrace you in a perfect mobile user experience driven by augmented reality and conversational AI, or a microservices architecture for a 'deep learning' model using Google TensorFlow that is written in the Go programming language from Google, and deployed within a Docker container to a Kubernetes cluster in Amazon Web Services.

I build and lead cross-functional agile teams of talented professionals who transform imagination into digital products and services to revolutionize markets and delight customers. It all begins with inspired leadership and vision, thrives on ambitious strategy and transparent communications, and culminates in successful delivery.

Activision • AT&T • Bank of America • BP • Brown-Foreman • Citrix Systems  
Coca-Cola • CodeGuard • CommScope • CVS • Dunkin Brands • Express Oil  
FX Networks • GlaxoSmithKline • Harry & David • Hasbro • Lowe's Home Improvement  
Manhattan Associates • Mattel • McCormick • McKee Foods • Nationwide Insurance  
Nestle • Newell-Rubbermaid • Northside Hospital • Panama City Beach Tourism  
Piedmont Healthcare • Regions Bank • Schutt Sports • Southern Company  
Williamsburg Tourism

<http://cv.chrisbenson.com>

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Luckie &amp; Company

2015–Present

Chief Technology Officer

A human experience agency driven by data science.

- Clients I work with include GlaxoSmithKline / ViiV Healthcare, Regions Bank, McKee Foods, Brown–Foreman, Schutt Sports, Express Oil, Piedmont Healthcare, Northside Hospital, Alabama Power, Williamsburg Tourism, and Panama City Beach Tourism.
- Responsible for new client sales pitches, building existing client relationships, crafting technology strategy, driving operational effectiveness, hiring employees and contractors, and creating innovative strategic technology solutions for client brands.
- Blended capabilities of data science and digital development teams to create new capabilities, including artificial intelligence / machine learning / deep learning expertise.
- Founded and official Organizer of the Atlanta Deep Learning Meetup.
- Implemented new gigabit Internet connections at Atlanta and Birmingham offices.
- Migrated systems / data infrastructure from data center to Amazon Web Services.
- Upgraded organization from in–house managed Exchange Server to Office 365, and introduced Slack as our primary collaboration tool.
- Fully–automated our multi–stage deployment pipeline with GitHub, continuous integration / continuous deployment, and AWS.
- Introduced new technologies – Ember, Go, Hugo, AWS – into client engagements.
- Comprehensive process reengineering, in partnership with PMO.
- Created a modern CMS API framework for Schutt Sports using Go and Ember.
- Created a data integration services framework for GlaxoSmithKline using Go.

iOS / Swift • React • Ember • Go • Docker • MicroServices • AWS • Kubernetes

Aegis Ventures

2014–2016

Chief Technology Officer

A security startup focused on network security by intercepting encrypted packets, and analyzing them to prevent malevolent actors from compromising your systems and stealing your assets.

- Responsible for security and technology strategy. Leads implementation for all aspects of the technical architecture – cloud microservices, on–premise appliances, and mobile–first native and web apps for command & control and alerts.

iOS / Swift • Android • Ember • Go • Node • Docker • MicroServices • AWS

LEADER

2007–2015

Principal Consultant &amp; Strategist

A strategic technology consultancy that provides leadership services (e.g. *CTO, Product Strategist*, etc.), brand strategy, digital product strategy, and advanced technology services like machine learning, cyber-security, and real-time big data analytics.

- Chief Technology Officer of Nashville startup VideoBomb, which has strategic licensing partnerships with music industry powerhouses like Sony Music. The VideoBomb app enables users to pay a \$2 license fee per music video in order to use licensed content to create their own user-generated audio/video mashup content, and share it on social networks.

I facilitated the formulation of the product strategy, and developed the minimum viable product (MVP) to be used to court investor capital. Given the company's existing strategic licensing partnerships, and the fact that this product will be generating revenue immediately upon launch, my contribution to VideoBomb is expected to yield a first-year return of at least three orders of magnitude in sales.

iOS / Swift / AV Foundation • Ember • Go • Docker • MicroServices • AWS

- CodeGuard is a website backup service which tracks all of your changes daily. They partner with some of the biggest providers in the website hosting industry. Their core enterprise backup system is a large Ruby on Rails stack in AWS.

CodeGuard was experiencing performance issues in certain I/O-intensive operations, so I helped them extract those hotspots into ultra-performant microservices written in Go. These microservices are integrated into the Ruby on Rails stack through distributed message queues, and the resultant performance gains resolved all I/O-based performance issues.

Go • Ruby on Rails • MicroServices • AWS

- Engaged by digital agency Macquarium to lead a team of brand strategists and social media marketing strategists to create a brand-specific social engagement strategy for premium food and gift retailer Harry & David. The company had an older clientele that was very loyal, but needed to transform itself into a brand that appealed to a younger demographic. Its core business depended on this brand metamorphosis.

The strategy that we constructed proposed creating and leveraging a multi-channel social engagement & loyalty platform designed to engage a younger demographic – millennials – and develop those interactions into a long-term loyal relationship.

- The Partnership is a digital agency that contracted me as Chief Technology Officer to assist in pitching digital engagements to Colonial Properties and The Network. I also provided analysis for challenges in an existing engagement with Recall Corporation.
- Digital agency Macquarium selected me to lead a team of brand strategists to create a “global web strategy approach for branded customer engagement” for Stiefel Laboratories, the \$3.6 billion dermatology subsidiary of GlaxoSmithKline. This initiative was a high priority of executive management, because it was a requirement of the acquisition of Stiefel Laboratories by GlaxoSmithKline.

We interviewed employees from every department at Stiefel Laboratories to deeply understand the company's values, culture, marketing, operations, and customers. The product of this process was a strategy focused on driving branded customer engagements through rich user experiences and social media marketing.

- Entrusted by digital agency Macquarium to work directly for the vice president of lowes.com at Lowe's Home Improvement corporate headquarters. Our team was charged with improving the user experience for Lowe's next-generation ecommerce website, built on the IBM WebSphere Commerce platform. Prior to our arrival, the new ecommerce website under development was plagued with user experience defects.

I had three specific responsibilities. First, I investigated and validated the approach of Lowe's technical architects. Second, I represented the 'technical perspective' in planning sessions with the user experience team, where we identified the defects and provided a resolution path.. Third, I led a front-end development team to improve the user experience of the existing version of lowes.com.

Java • JQuery / JavaScript • IBM WebSphere Commerce • Endeca

- Already contracted as Chief Technology Officer for LBi (see below), and concurrently with Newell-Rubbermaid, I helped pitch Intercontinental Exchange to upgrade their website. We won the pitch, and I subsequently led the design for the upgraded technical architecture. To initiate this process, Intercontinental Exchange, requested that I provide a detailed comparison between Java and Ruby on Rails. Intercontinental Exchange selected Java to accommodate their existing development capability.
- Digital agency LBi (now DigitasLBi) contracted me as Chief Technology Officer to pitch Newell Rubbermaid for a **\$3 million engagement**. Newell-Rubbermaid intended to consolidate over 40 subsidiaries onto one global enterprise ecommerce platform. They had previously selected Microsoft as a strategic partner. We won the engagement, and my team was responsible for designing and implementing the enterprise architecture.

I subsequently managed a large team that executed the technical architecture design and platform implementation. Major components included brand management, content management, enterprise search, ecommerce operations, user management and personalization, SAP integration, and advanced analytics. Ultimately, all subsidiaries successfully migrated onto the new ecommerce platform.

.NET • C# • Commerce Server • SQL Server • BizTalk • SAP • Endeca • Flash

- McRae Communications was an agency that contracted me as Chief Technology Officer to provide technical leadership and expertise for digital client engagements. I designed the technical architectures, and led the website development teams, for GamePlan Financial Marketing and Bowen Family Homes. I also designed the technical architecture for the Pactiv GreenGuard website.

.NET Framework • C# • SQL Server • ASP.NET • Flash • Flex • ActionScript

Cogent Design 2012–2014

Software Developer

Practice management software vendor in the healthcare industry.

- Designed and developed JavaScript apps and MicroService APIs from my home office.

Go • Ember • Ruby on Rails • MicroServices • AWS • iOS / Swift / Objective C

Going Interactive 2010–2012

Chief Technology Officer

A digital agency focusing on branding, strategy, design, and digital marketing.

- Led an international technology organization distributed between Atlanta and India.
- Responsible for new client sales pitches, building existing client relationships, crafting technology strategy, driving operational effectiveness, hiring employees and contractors, and creating innovative strategic technology solutions for client brands.
- Managed Technology department's P&L, budget, and billable utilization.
- Responsible for project management, technical architecture, and development for Hasbro's CribLife, a **\$1.5 million engagement** to create a CribLife-branded digital gaming experience for little girls.

Flash • Flex • ActionScript • AWS • PHP • Ruby on Rails

MaxMedia 2009

Chief Technology Officer

A digital agency that specializes in digital branding.

- Responsible for new client sales pitches, building existing client relationships, crafting technology strategy, driving operational effectiveness, hiring employees and contractors, and creating innovative strategic technology solutions for client brands.
- Managed Technology organization's P&L, budget, and billable utilization.
- **\$2 million engagement** to unify all digital platforms within AT&T stores into a single rich digital experience. The resulting business solution combined in-store sales, ecommerce, and customer service into an advanced technology platform that could be deployed and supported in stores throughout the United States.

I was responsible for delivery, which included product management, program management, technical architecture and development.

.NET Framework • C# • SQL Server • WPF • WCF • XAML • ASP.NET

Studiocom (now VML, a WPP company)

2006–2007

Vice President of Technology

A digital agency that creates engaging brand experiences.

- Led a large, international, multicultural technology organization in Atlanta, Los Angeles, Boston, Bogotá, Colombia, Buenos Aires, Argentina, and India.
- Responsible for new client sales pitches, building existing client relationships, crafting technology strategy, driving operational effectiveness, hiring employees and contractors, and creating innovative strategic technology solutions for client brands.
- Implemented a high-speed network to provide voice, video, and data services between Studiocom's offices in Atlanta, Boston, Los Angeles, and Bogota, Colombia.
- Managed Technology organization's P&L, budget, and billable utilization.
- Expanded the agency's technical capabilities through a year of hyper-growth.
- Led the technical architecture and development for Coca-Cola's MyCokeRewards, the largest online consumer-loyalty marketing campaign in Coca-Cola's history. This **\$6 million engagement** included extensive vendor integrations with Fair Isaac for precision marketing services, and ePrize for campaign fulfillment.

Java • Apache • Flash • Flex • ActionScript • SOAP / XML Integration Services

- Led the a large team in the technical architecture and development of Mattel's BarbieGirls virtual world. This **\$4 million Barbie-branded engagement** created a massively-multiplayer digital interactive experience for over 15 million little girls.

Java • Apache • Galapagos Virtual World Platform • Flash • Flex • ActionScript

- Successfully pitched a **\$4 million engagement** with Dunkin Brands. I subsequently led a large team in the technical architecture and development of their new global enterprise ecommerce platform. We also created new branded websites for Dunkin Donuts ([dunkindonuts.com](http://dunkindonuts.com)) and Baskin Robbins ([baskinrobbins.com](http://baskinrobbins.com)) to enhance ecommerce and consumer marketing capabilities.

.NET • C# • Commerce Server • SQL Server • BizTalk • SharePoint • Flash

- Led project management and technical architecture and development for a branded social network for each of the original series on FX Networks, enabling fans of each series to interact with each other within the brand context of the series.

Java • Apache • JSP / JSF Portlets • Flash • Flex • ActionScript

- Led the technical architecture and development of Nestle's The Willy Wonka Candy Company website ([wonka.com](http://wonka.com)), based on the Willy Wonka character.

.NET Framework • C# • SQL Server • ASP.NET • Flash • Flex • ActionScript

- Led the technical architecture and development of the new McCormick branded website ([mccormick.com](http://mccormick.com)).

.NET Framework • C# • SQL Server • ASP.NET • Flash • Flex • ActionScript

- Led the development to refresh the HTML, CSS, and JavaScript for a CVS ([cvs.com](http://cvs.com)).

## Lane Company (now CFLane)

2002–2006

## Director of Information Technology

A full-service multi-family real estate group.

- Created a sustainable competitive advantage through strategic technology investments. Led Lane Company's transformation into a savvy technology leader within the multi-family industry, which contributed significantly to its growth to become the 46th largest private company in Atlanta [Atlanta Business Chronicle, April 29, 2005] with annual revenues of \$216.7 million. Lane Company became Atlanta's largest apartment and condominium developer, and second largest multi-family manager.
- The new cornerstone of Lane Company's upgraded technology capabilities was an enterprise integration system I conceived, designed, and developed called FastLane, which provided seamless integration with Great Plains ERP, two other accounting systems, a data warehouse, and the content management system for hundreds of branded marketing websites.
- Responsible for hiring IT employees and contractors, the IT P&L, strategic planning, budgeting, business process management, vendor selection and relationship management, performance measurement, and operational standards and procedures.
- Transformed IT into a service organization for its internal customers, including a new corporate website ([lanecompany.com](http://lanecompany.com)) and new employee intranet website.
- Built an off-site data center in a major carrier hotel / interconnect facility, and subsequently implemented a high-speed nationwide network to connect corporate headquarters with more than 100 real estate properties.
- Served as an active member of the Real Estate Transaction Standard working group, which defined the real estate industry's official integration specification.

.NET Framework • C# • SQL Server • ASP.NET • Flash

## CD Group

2001–2002

## Consultant / Java Team Leader

A full-service software and ERP consulting and managed services company.

- Led a team of Java developers who specialized in the IBM WebSphere Commerce platform, and integrations with JD Edwards ERP systems (since acquired by Oracle).
- Responsible for hiring employees and contractors, writing Java code and mentoring team members, and creating innovative technology solutions for clients.
- Led the technical architecture and development of a business-to-business ecommerce web application for BP with ERP integration.

Java • IBM WebSphere Commerce Suite • JD Edwards ERP • AS/400

- Led the technical architecture and development of an enterprise information portal for CommScope, with ERP integration, to serve customers and employees.

Java • IBM WebSphere Portal Server • JD Edwards ERP • AS/400

Intellinet 2000–2001

Consultant

A management consulting and Microsoft-centric technology services firm.

- Technical architecture and development for two Manhattan Associates supply chain enterprise products called PkMS and InfoLink.
- Technical architecture and development of a business-to-business ecommerce portal for Atlantic Envelope to service customers Bank of America and Nationwide Insurance.
- Business requirements and technical architecture for a workflow system for new home construction 'starts' at John Wieland Homes.
- Technical design for a content management system (CMS) in Java for RMC Industries.

AT&T 1997–2000

Internet Consultant / Project Manager / Software Developer

A digital agency that creates engaging brand experiences.

- Technical design and development of a project management system called Satori for high-speed global network provisioning. Still used at AT&T. Named after my dog.
- Business analysis and technical architecture of an alternative system called Customer Connect for high-speed global network provisioning and reporting.
- Project managed a very large and complex global network implementation for Citrix Systems, which spanned dozens of countries across four continents. It was used for voice, video, and data over TCP/IP over ATM and frame relay. It would also be used to move terabytes of data between data centers for disaster recovery.
- Project managed the upgrade of a frame relay network to ATM for KMC Telecom.
- Project managed a large SONET ring network implementation for Harbinger.
- Project managed a very large frame relay network implementation for Maxim Group.
- Project managed the implementation of an international frame relay network for Concur Technologies.
- Advised nearly 200 AT&T small business customers regarding ecommerce and digital marketing strategy.

Essential Self-Defense 1993–1997

Owner / Chief Instructor

A self-defense school in the Buckhead neighborhood of Atlanta.

Cryolife 1991–1993

Orthopaedic Technician

A biomedical company that specializes in harvesting and cryopreserving human tissue.



## VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Georgia Pet Coalition 2011–present

Member, Founding Team

A legislative and political lobbying animal welfare organization.

Georgia Department of Agriculture 2011–2013

Chairman, Companion Animal Advisory Board

Advised Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black on animal welfare issues.

Cobb County Animal Advocates 2010–2012

Founder / Chief Strategist

Grassroots organization formed to transform Cobb County, Georgia into a No-Kill community.

Carroll County Humane Society 2010–2011

Member, Board of Directors

Georgia Voters For Animal Welfare 2010–2011

Member, Leadership Team

A legislative and political lobbying animal welfare organization.

- Successfully passed Grace's Law (Georgia House Bill 788, 2010), which made it illegal in Georgia to use carbon monoxide gas chambers to kill shelter animals.

Our Pal's Place (Animal Rescue) 2010

Member, Board of Directors

## EDUCATION

Georgia State University 1995

Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance

- Spent an additional year studying Finance in graduate school.
- Also studied Accounting, Economics, Mathematics, Physics, Biology, and Chemistry.

Member of Mensa (top 2%).

<http://cv.chrisbenson.com>