Ben Ricker

An experienced Engineering leader who is passionate about people and products.

📍 Beverly, MA

✉ Email   ⬤ Github
in LinkedIn   ⬤ Website

I am a seasoned Engineering Leader with nearly a decade of experience in software development and engineering management. Specializing in scaling teams, optimizing complex technical systems, and driving cultural initiatives, I have a proven track record of building high-performing engineering teams and enhancing organizational culture. My expertise lies in leading cross-functional collaboration, mentoring engineers, and delivering impactful outcomes through strategic leadership and technical excellence. I am passionate about empowering teams to achieve their full potential and am excited to contribute my skills to an innovative organization where I can drive both technical and cultural success.

▦ Work Experience

Rocket Insights / DEPT
Associate Director of Engineering

2022 - Present

- Leadership & Team Building: Managed and mentored a team of 11 talented engineers and QA specialists, achieving one of the highest employee satisfaction scores in the organization with a Peakon score of 9.8/10 (company benchmark: 8.1). Recognized by senior leadership as having management as a "superpower," maintaining zero team turnover through effective hiring and mentorship.

- Strategic Initiatives: Played a key role in shaping engineering strategies, policies, and cross-functional initiatives across the USA. Developed USA-wide engineering policies and fostered a strong engineering culture.

- Project Management: Oversaw client relationships, managed Statements of Work (SoWs), negotiations, and budgeting for projects ranging from $10k to $2 million. Ensured successful project delivery by aligning technical solutions with business objectives.

- Quality Assurance & Process Improvement: Implemented best practices that enhanced team efficiency and product quality. Took over the entire US-based QA team, fostering a sense of ownership and pride among team members. Developed efficient internal tools for employee management, time logging, staffing allocation, and GitHub security.

- Cultural Initiatives: Initiated and hosted various cultural events and programs to enhance team engagement and foster a positive work environment. Led events like "Show and Tells," company-wide meetings with 300+ participants, lunch-and-learn sessions, and DEPT® Cares events, significantly enhancing team camaraderie and engagement.

Rocket Insights / DEPT
Principal Software Engineer

2021 - 2022

- Technical Leadership: Directed backend development initiatives, focusing on server performance optimization and architecture design. Specialized in Ruby on Rails, transaction performance, APIs, and databases.

- Technical Excellence: Led critical projects, including AI architecture and implementations, resulting in improved system performance and client satisfaction. Achieved a 60% reduction in server working time for a key client (UPPAbaby) within a week through advanced optimization techniques.

- Mentorship: Mentored engineers and promoted best coding practices, contributing to team skill development and high performance.

- Rapid Prototyping: Developed rapid prototypes during sprints, enhancing client satisfaction and project success through innovative solutions.

Rocket Insights / DEPT
Senior Software Engineer

2018 - 2021

- Software Development: Contributed to a wide range of projects, delivering high-quality software solutions for clients across various industries.

- Cross-functional Collaboration: Worked closely with product managers, designers, and stakeholders to deliver complex projects efficiently.

- Cultural Contributions: Actively participated in cultural initiatives, fostering a positive and engaging work environment.

The Firehose Project
Software Engineer II

- **Educational Leadership:** Mentored students online and in person in Ruby on Rails and web development, guiding them through real-world projects and enhancing their practical skills.

- **Instructional Expertise:** Provided one-on-one support, code reviews, and feedback, helping students develop the skills necessary to launch their careers in tech.

Liaison International
Software Engineer II
2015 - 2018

- **Product Development:** Contributed to developing admissions management and enrollment marketing solutions for higher education institutions.

- **Feature Implementation:** Collaborated with cross-functional teams to implement new features that enhanced user experience and system efficiency.

✍️ Technical Skills

Technical Leadership

With a proven ability to build and lead high-performing engineering teams, I focus on mentorship, strategic planning, and fostering a collaborative culture. My experience in efficiently scaling teams while maintaining high levels of productivity and morale has resulted in zero team turnover, achieved through effective hiring practices and nurturing team development. Recognized for guiding teams through complex technical challenges to successful outcomes, I consistently implement engineering best practices and promote a culture of continuous improvement.

Software Development & Architecture

As an expert in Ruby on Rails, backend development, server performance optimization, and architecture design, I deliver scalable and efficient solutions that meet complex business needs. My extensive experience includes designing and implementing distributed systems and cloud architectures, particularly with AWS services. Skilled in performance engineering, I have achieved significant improvements in system efficiency and reliability, such as reducing server response times by 60% for key clients.

Cross-functional Collaboration

Skilled in working with diverse teams from interns to Directors to clients. I excel at achieving common goals through effective collaboration. As a skilled communicator, I facilitate clear and open dialogue between technical and non-technical team members, bridging gaps and fostering understanding.

Project Management

Proficient in Agile and Scrum methodologies, I lead teams through iterative development cycles, ensuring projects are delivered on time and within budget. My experience encompasses end-to-end project management, from defining technical strategies and aligning project goals to overseeing execution and delivery. Adept at managing Statements of Work (SoWs), negotiations, and budgeting for projects.

🎓 Education

The Firehose Project
Coding Bootcamp
2015

Web Engineering apprenticeship and bootcamp through Ruby on Rails framework. I graduated leading my team's group project and was selected to be a mentor for the bootcamp after graduating. I helped teach Harvard Business students coding on campus over the weekend with the bootcamp.

Salem State University
Bachelor of Science: Geography
2006-2011

I graduated with a degree in Geography, really, and loved it. I was the President of the Salem Geographical Society, the captain of our Geography Bowl team, lead tutor, and our GIS Lab's lead student aid.