

Jack Chu

CTO / VP Engineering · 0-1 through 30+ · E-commerce, health, physical retail
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

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SUMMARY

Most of my career has been in startups, going 0-1 and doing more with less. I build engineering organizations, and usually product and design alongside them. Eighteen years as an engineer and architect, the last twelve on the leadership team reporting to the CEO. I still code: most recently an AI gifting product at Fête, and running the engineering org on Claude and ChatGPT. Mostly e-commerce, more recently health and wellness, and mostly businesses with physical stores or clinics as well as a website.

EXPERIENCE

November 2025 - May 2026
(7 months)

New York City Metropolitan Area

Fête Early-stage gifting startup Chief Technology Officer

Reported to the CEO, later the President · Executive leadership team

Team of 6: in-house VP of Product, consultant design lead, offshore product/project manager, 3 offshore engineers

Role ended when the company pivoted from building custom product to an off-the-shelf e-commerce platform

- Built an AI gifting recommendation product. Not a chatbot, but a wizard that collects your budget, who's giving, who's receiving, and the relationship between them, then returns products from across the internet with the reasoning, ideas for how to present the gift, and a draft gift note. Ran it through an LLM gateway so we could swap prompts and models as we tested
- Built a custom headless Shopify stack: React/TanStack/Mantine front end, Nest.js with Sanity, Drizzle, Postgres and Redis behind it, multiplexing Shopify and CMS data. Most of it written with Claude Opus and GPT-5 through OpenCode/OpenChamber
- Set architecture and roadmaps across three business models as the company moved from B2B gifting to B2C gifting to a tech-forward e-commerce magazine
- Hired the product, design, and engineering group. Sourced a Manhattan MSP to take over the IT setup I'd stood up, and trained an associate to run the day-to-day

January 2024 - June 2025
(1 year 6 months)

New York City Metropolitan Area

Legacy At-home fertility, sperm testing and freezing, ~20 people VP of Technology

Reported to the CEO, later the President · Executive leadership team

4 in-house engineers and a consultant · \$2M+ budget across comp, software and services

- Cut a low six figures out of the annual technology budget by consolidating platforms, renegotiating with vendors, and pulling resource usage out of the code and CI/CD
- Replaced a home-grown checkout and payments system with Vendure. The goals were HIPAA compliance and scalability rather than a conversion play, and it moved us onto a much richer feature set
- Drove an org-wide architecture roadmap to connect systems that had grown up separately: marketing site, product quiz, client dashboard, clinical front and back ends, e-commerce, and data

- Stood up BI (Metabase, Equals), pipelines (Segment), and product analytics (PostHog) so we could answer revenue and product questions and read A/B results without guessing
- Moved the marketing site off WordPress onto Remix/React Router and Payload, page by page, so design could optimize each one as it went

September 2021 - December 2022
(1 year 4 months)
New York, New York, United States

Modern Age Longevity and aging wellness, NYC clinics, 30+ people

Chief Technology Officer

Reported to the CEO · Leadership team

Built Product, Engineering, Design and IT from zero to 21, including 4 consultants · **\$5M+ budget across comp, software and services**

- Joined pre-launch and launched the brand in six months. We didn't finalize what we were building until month three, so the whole thing was executed in the back half
- Designed and built the platform end to end: consumer site, backend APIs, third-party integrations, analytics pipelines, and OTC/Rx purchase and fulfillment
- Launched the Subjective Age Assessment (an AI questionnaire that gave you your subjective age against your biological age, and what to do to close the gap) and the Aging Wellness Assessment (clinical labs plus a breakdown of skin, hair, metabolic, and bone health as it pertains to aging)
- Led EHR selection and integration, and built the clinical workflows around it
- Worked with Studio Operations on the in-clinic technology: iPads, digital displays, multimedia, and check-in/check-out for two NYC clinics

October 2018 - March 2021
(2 years 6 months)
New York, NY

Away DTC luggage brand, ~170 people

VP of Engineering

Reported to the CEO (two of them across the period) · Leadership team

Inherited 3 consultant engineers plus e-commerce, project and product management; **built it past 30** by adding engineering, data, retail tech and ERP · **\$9M+ budget across comp, software and services**

- Started the company's first experimentation program. 20-30 tests over the period, worth single-digit millions in incremental revenue across funnel engagement, add-to-cart, checkout conversion, and AOV
- Built the data platform end to end, moving payments, supply chain, marketing, the site and POS into the warehouse, plus the analytics and BI on top of it
- Re-architected the storefront and web service API layer for performance, international expansion with localization, and peak sales traffic
- Stood up an Information Systems team to deploy ERP and POS across omnichannel retail, fulfillment, finance, and back office
- Built the frameworks that let product, UX, engineering and e-commerce ship together: new products, PDPs, landing pages, checkout flows, infrastructure work

3 years 10 months

March 2018 - October 2018
(8 months)
Greater New York City Area

Bonobos (Walmart) ~\$150M men's apparel brand, acquired by Walmart 2017

Director of Engineering

Reported to the CEO · **17 in-house engineers** across 2 product engineering teams and a 3-person SRE team, plus 2 offshore QA

- Led the engineering side of the Walmart migration: compliance and security work, run books for breaches, and the infrastructure move
- Completed PCI Level 1 compliance on the engineering side of the DSS with an external auditor

August 2016 - March 2018
(1 year 8 months)
Greater New York City Area

Engineering Manager

Team of 5 engineers, partnering with a UX designer and a product manager

- Re-architected the storefront on Node with hybrid client/server rendering (Next.js, React, Redux) and an HTTP caching layer that kept the site up when the API layer was slow or down
- Cut load times 30-40% with lazy loading below the fold, image compression and format negotiation by browser, and viewport-aware sizing
- Completed site-wide ADA AA compliance and taught the other teams how to hold it
- Built the size, fit and option education experience, with a backend admin that previewed it live

January 2015 - August 2016
(1 year 8 months)
New York, NY

Principal Engineer II

- Replaced the single-page JavaScript storefront with a hybrid client/server-rendered Rails 4 app, targeting response times and Speed Index
- Built a Node/webpack/Babel asset pipeline to replace Sprockets, whose dependency management was too primitive and upfront; npm access was a big bonus on top of that
- Rewrote checkout in Nuclear.js and React, off Backbone, and moved EC2, Redis ElastiCache and the app structure to Heroku

EARLIER

Ruby and Rails, Java/Spring, Groovy on Grails, and ColdFusion, across e-commerce, publishing and social platforms. Detail available on request.

2014	Mash+Studio · Senior Developer
2012 - 2013	CropUp · Tech Lead
2011 - 2012	Big Fuel Communications · Software Engineer
2009	International Masters Publishers · Software Engineer
2006 - 2009	SourceMedia · Software Engineer
2000 - 2006	Central Park Media · Web Developer

EDUCATION

City University of New York-Baruch College - Zicklin School of Business
BBA, Computer Information Systems · (2004 - 2007)

New York University - Polytechnic School of Engineering
Computer Science · (1997 - 1999)