

James Gifford

Tech Lead and Software Engineer

Product minded Software Engineer and Tech Lead.

Phone: 216-206-9338
Website: armyofminions.com
Email: james@armyofminions.com

SKILLS

Ruby on Rails, Ubuntu, Ruby, Web Development, Amazon Elastic Beanstalk, Amazon SQS, Amazon Linux, Amazon Elastic Load Balancers, Amazon EC2, Amazon S3, Amazon Redshift, Amazon Web Services (AWS), Docker, Containers, MySQL, PostgreSQL, Agile, Leadership, Kubernetes, Continuous Integration/Continuous Deployment, Feature Flags and Feature Toggles, Elasticsearch, Kibana

EXPERIENCE

January 2017 -
Present

RVshare Tech Lead

My job as tech lead is to continue to write code (Ruby on Rails, Elasticsearch, PHP, MySQL, Angular and React), but with the added responsibilities of representing the team to management (I report directly to the VP of Engineering), vetting our plans for feature delivery, dealing with many of the details of our project management process, as well as assisting with the department's technical roadmap. These include things such as:

- Establishing common technical vision for the projects and applications
- Coordinating with product stakeholders on scope
- Coordinating with QA leadership and teams to help ensure quality of work
- Assisting product owners with technical product requirements
- Technical architecture and design
- Working with knowledge experts on the technical details of features
- Leading daily stand ups and weekly sprint planning
- Representing the team to management from a technical perspective as well as representing management to the team from a business perspective

Projects led:

- Building smarter algorithms for listing search.
 - Previously, it was pure chance what listings would show up on the first page. Now, it's smarter and takes things like location, good behavior metrics and similarity to listings that have booked into account.
 - Technologies worked with include dynamic scripting and calculations inside Elasticsearch queries, Segment event tracking and AWS Redshift data warehousing.
- Switching payment gateways and processors. This was a multi-quarter initiative that involved:
 - Extracting existing payment processing code from legacy code (PHP) into a new, modern test covered code base (Ruby).
 - Working with product to understand and make changes to the customer onboarding experience.
 - Working with finance to understand the finance and accounting process changes required to make the transition.
 - Leading and participating in technical design discussions with multidisciplinary teams.

July 2014 to January
2017

Hotcards Lead Developer & DevOps Engineer

Lead Developer:

Lead the development of a custom-built ecommerce platform for the commercial printing industry.

Stack:

- Ruby on Rails
- PostgreSQL
- Sidekiq
- Elasticsearch

Projects:

- Refactoring complex logic to be thread safe
- Creating automated deployment tool chain (deploys were by hand previously)
- Leading rewrite of application to be mobile-friendly and improve performance 5x.

Responsibilities include:

- Writing code to solve business problems
- Ensuring code quality via code review
- Finding and managing contractors
- Selecting vendors and technologies that suit our needs
- Business requirement gathering for features
- Coordinating with other departments internally for prioritizing features and bug fixes
- Leading an Agile team using a variant of Kanban

DevOps:

Tools used include:

- Ubuntu Server
- Configuration Managment (Ansible)
- Monitoring and Alerting Toolchain (Splunk, AppSignal, Errbit, Graphite/StatsD)
- Amazon Web Services (S3, EC2, RDS, VPC)

Projects include:

- Implementing backups
- Implementing and testing disaster recovery
- Bringing platform uptime to 99.99%
- Bringing infrastructure under configuration management (Ansible)

2013 - November
2016

LaunchHouse

Director of Special Projects/Technical Due Diligence

Technical Due Diligence team lead for LaunchHouse, a startup incubator in Cleveland Ohio.

August 2013 to July
2014

Dragon Intelinet, LLC

Software Developer

Junior Software Developer for a Biomedical company. Along the way assisted with a full-stack (C#/Windows, Django/Linux) software development project which has been deployed at several major Cleveland Universities, and managed a proof-of-concept in Rails for a customer.

HONORS

September 2014

Eagle Scout

Boy Scouts of America

VOLUNTEERING

December 2014 to
Present

Boy Scouts of America: Lake Erie Council

Assistant Scoutmaster for a local Boy Scout of America troop. Responsibilities include:

- Mentoring senior youth leadership as they grow and mature as leaders.
- Teaching vital life and scouting skills,as outlined in the Boy Scout Handbook and Fieldbook.

July 2011 to July
2018

Cleveland Givecamp

Assisting a local non-profit create a website in a weekend,as part of Cleveland Givecamp. Several years as Team Y,as a technical floater who assists and coaches projects that are at-risk of not completing over the course of the weekend.

October 2016 -
October 2016

Seattle Givecamp

Assisting a local non-profit create a website in a weekend,as part of Seattle Givecamp.