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Personal Profile

I am an experienced ecommerce leader, with a proven track record of innovation. I've led teams to help busy websites achieve substantial year-on-year growth, both as a leader in ecommerce and consultant, and previously as a senior DevOps engineer.

I have extensive experience in all the important functional areas involved in high-volume online retail: team building, traffic acquisition, conversion rate optimisation, usability, web analytics, web content, project management, process analysis, data mining, web development, sys admin, designing and copywriting.

I bring a strong technical background in to the business areas of ecommerce. Retail is detail; this is even more the case with high volume websites, where the smallest of improvements can generate significant return on investment.

I value achieving success through the team; I have no more important role than developing the team to be world-class problem solvers, whether that be my own team, or within a client.

Skills and Achievements

Some of my most valuable skills are as an innovator and disruptive thinker and helping others become the same; there's nothing I enjoy more than working with a team to come up with a better solution to a difficult problem, challenging them to set the bar even higher. I'm also a great individual contributor, I understand what makes great websites tick. I get the detail.

Technical Skills. I have strong HTML skills, understanding the benefits and implementation of semantic markup for accessibility, SEO, performance and ease of maintenance. I crafted my website by hand using validated HTML, with 100% Lighthouse scores.

While it may be a number of years since I have self-identified as a lead developer, I'm experienced in PHP, MySQL and I'm comfortable in Linux command line.

While these might not seem essential skills for an ecommerce leader, I have found them to be invaluable. The ability to talk to development teams and quickly get on the same page can save a lot of time and effort. I understand the steps involved in them solving whatever challenges they have. If you can talk the talk, then you should be able to walk the walk.

- As a senior consultant, I have worked with a major global consumer electronics brand to establish their direct-to-consumer go-to-market strategy, including all the major technology touchpoints, data environment, customer experience and marketing.
 - I am a significant contributor to the sales process, helping the sales team outline the “bigger picture” for the client, thinking holistically about opportunities available for digital growth.
 - I have led business reviews of a number of clients, identifying new opportunities for growth, either through analysis of their data or heuristic evaluation of their current user experience.
 - I continue to evangelise web performance, bringing new insights to clients about the site speed issues and opportunities and encouraging them to improve the user experience.
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- In my time at Tiso, I have completely overhauled the team structure to better facilitate ecommerce growth, introducing new roles and KPIs. This has taken what was previously a mediocre user experience to one that the business is proud of, and that customers find easy and enjoyable to shop.
 - It has been a pleasure to develop the team at Tiso. A number of people I have brought in to the business have been able to progress upwards in other roles internally since joining, and part of my team fully implemented a new sustainability strategy for the entire business.
 - The improved customer journey at Tiso has resulted in 2x improvement in site conversion rate and a 3x improvement in profitability.
 - The pandemic brought considerable disruption to the business, I ensured we were “match fit” to capitalise on the opportunities brought by the substantial growth in outdoor pursuits combined with closure of physical stores combined with supply chain disruption.
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- While at Schuh, I was the owner of a rebuild of the website platform, my vision was to take a number of disparate websites and centralise them in a way that supported even greater growth. The platform was ready for a record Black Friday and performed as planned.
 - At Schuh I lead a team to redevelop the customer-facing aspects of the Click & Collect offer, which has seen >10x improvement in the online purchase of store stock
 - I was the driving force behind Schuh’s responsive website; it was my idea and I oversaw the project from the initial concept right down to some of the smaller detail of implementation. The site, by any reasonable definition, has been an outstanding success; for example, it was one of the fastest ecommerce sites in the UK;
 - More broadly speaking, at Schuh I drove a mobile-first strategy that has delivered massive conversion growth, far ahead of the industry average;
 - While at Schuh I pursued a data-driven and test-driven agenda, our analytics implementation is at a very high standard and we punched significantly above our weight with split testing;
 - In the past I have presented at a number of national and international ecommerce events on subjects such as responsive design, testing, big data, site speed and ecommerce best practice. I was also a part of the steering group of two conferences, one is the UK’s leading conversion rate optimisation conference, the other the UK’s leading mobile ecommerce conference. Due to Covid-19 I’ve had a hiatus at presenting.
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- In my time at Allsaints, I established a new in-house web development team, interviewing most of the new team. I was also responsible for training the new team, consisting of 10

developers plus testers and analysts; we implemented chosen areas of Agile. I integrated JIRA in to our project management workflow, using it to control the development lifecycle, from specification, through development and testing to the release process;

- Assisting in the migration of the site from the existing vendor to the new web team at AllSaints, establishing a defect/improvement schedule of work to be carried out by the new team;
- I was responsible for vast improvements in site stability and performance at AllSaints, page load times were among the fastest in the industry. I was also responsible for bringing the release lifecycle down from five weeks to one week, reducing time-to-live for new features, reducing risk of releases and increasing release stability; including the introduction of automated testing and areas of test driven development; and
- At AllSaints I worked closely with the order fulfilment operation, improving their performance by 300%, greatly reducing the cost associated with dispatching orders, as well as improving customer satisfaction.

Work History

Senior Strategy Consultant, Astound Commerce, October 2022 to Present.

As part of the small UK-based consulting team, I work with a number of clients and prospects to help them identify their best opportunities for growth. This varies from running on-site workshops, to writing analysis of their customer experience and presenting findings. I have created effective working relationships with client and internal stakeholders, further increasing the trust that the client has in Astound to deliver a best-in-class digital experience.

I have also provided technical problem solving in the areas of analytics, tag management, site speed, accessibility and SEO.

I've learned a lot so far at Astound, but one thing remains true: delivering the best possible customer (and user) experience has never been more important. It is the most reliable path to growth.

Head of Multichannel, Tiso Group, August 2019 to September 2022.

P&L responsibility for the ecommerce website as well as the end-to-end digital customer journey. I lead a team of six to deliver a customer experience which matches the outstanding experience in our stores. I work closely with colleagues across the business to ensure that the website delivers for the stores as well as for my own P&L.

I am also responsible for the customer service team for the entire business.

Head of Ecommerce (optimisation), Schuh, February 2019 to August 2019

Responsibilities as below, but with greater focus on UX and the strategic roadmap. The Digital Design function also reported in to me.

Deputy Head of Ecommerce, Schuh, August 2012 to January 2019

Responsible for the day-to-day ecommerce operation, including digital marketing, on-site editorial, web analytics, site development and testing as part of a team of 35. In this role I needed to ensure that we are fit to trade *today* as well as providing more strategic guidance as to the direction of travel. I was the backstop that ensures that every project is as good as it can be in the time available.

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My contribution helped make Schuh one of the UK's leading multichannel ecommerce websites, which regularly benchmarks well.

Ecommerce Operations Manager, AllSaints Retail, December 2011 to August 2012

Expanding my role within the company, I moved more in to a business focused role, although still very much involved in the technical day-to-day running of the website:

- Responsible for a test team of three;
- Responsible for all hosting infrastructure for the site;
- Responsible for increasing efficiency within ecommerce, including:
 - Customer Service;
 - Order Fulfilment;
 - Merchandising and content creation; and
- Leading a continuing user experience project.

Senior Developer, AllSaints Retail, January 2010 to December 2011

- Responsible for the support team, responding to unscheduled demand as well as planned improvements;
- Responsible for the quality and stability of all the releases to the live site;
- Gathering requirements from the business and planning development work, setting expectations within the business. Many of the improvements were thought of by me, I then championed these within the business, which then allowed me to have these developed;
- Analysing existing processes within the business to identify and implement improvements; I was involved in new features, usability improvements, SEO enhancements as well as driving a number of key process improvements with the order lifecycle;
- Data mining for various stakeholders, including customer database segmentation for marketing purposes as well as proposing strategies for the usage of the data; and
- Dealing with various third parties, from affiliates, to couriers, to fraud prevention specialists and payment gateways.

Senior Developer, DriveBusiness Ltd, March 2008 – January 2010

Drivebusiness was one of the UK's largest web development agencies. I was the senior developer in the largest of the development groups within DriveBusiness, overseeing 12 developers working for the largest client, AllSaints. My main responsibilities included:

- Engaging with clients to develop ideas on enhancing their sites;
- Gathering client requirements and analysing how best to develop the solution;
- Cost estimation and allocation of work between developers;
- Day-to-day support of client websites; and
- I was involved in all aspects of the AllSaints website, rolling out the site in 5 languages, major improvements to the order fulfilment process, launch of the US operation, vast improvements to the CMS as well as improvements in site stability and performance.

Information Systems Manager, Lab901, December 2006 – March 2008

Lab901 is an innovator in the field of DNA analysis. I was hired to produce an intranet solution to gather data from their production facility for quality control and traceability purposes:

- Process analysis;
- Systems development; and
- IT support.

Shop Manager/IT Development, Aktive8, August 2001 – December 2006

Aktive8 was a small outdoor retailer in Edinburgh. I was jointly responsible for the shop and ecommerce website. At one point the company had five shops, for which I developed a real-time stock and sales system. The system provided an in-depth suite of sales analysis tools.

External links

- Conversions@Google, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7sYuxs69Ds>
- Interview at IRX, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjIT3I_AfYI
- Contribution to a Retail Week post, 2018: <https://www.retail-week.com/retail-voice/why-web-performance-is-key-to-your-retail-offer/7030611.article?authent=1>
- Highest rated speaker at Digital Transformation Scotland 2019: <https://www.digifutures.co.uk/>
- Presenting in 2019 on site speed: <https://perfnw.nl/speakers> and <https://digitalgrowthunleashed.co.uk/agenda>

Other interests

As well as cycling and running, I enjoy downhill and ski touring and mountaineering, having climbed rock and ice in Scottish mountains, the Alps and Norway. I am also learning the skill of woodworking and enjoy gardening. I aspire to play the fiddle.