

# DEAN CASALENA

DEAN.CASA   LINKEDIN/CASALENA   SAN FRANCISCO

**HELLO.** I am a product-minded software engineering player-coach.

Effective software development is powered by many things, some new like AI Agents, some timeless like finding alignment and retaining a talented team. I demonstrate and foster curiosity, continual retooling, collaboration, a culture that values excellence, and unwavering focus on outcomes within fast changing environments.

Read on for specific impacts, awards, patents and press.

## FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS

SAN FRANCISCO. Advisor to some of the largest deals in FinTech including Finicity's 1B sale to Mastercard, Bilt Rewards' 200M financing, and Revolut's 1.25B raise.

### VP of Engineering

MAR 2021 - PRESENT

### Engineering Manager

DEC 2019 - MAR 2021

- Led a lean team to create FT Base, an enterprise-grade proprietary CRM, data pipeline, and deal management platform. Overhauled, systemized and centralized every department's operations into the application and database. Eliminated all the firm's data silos, making it unique in its class. Eliminated Salesforce in 2024.
- Introduced LLM-enabled AI features in 2023 such as RAG search functionality on our home grown email and calendar crawler's data.
- Supercharged the application with AI Agents to source and structure data. Created a sophisticated permission-based AI MCP layer, allowing employees to interact with FT Base data through Claude and ChatGPT. This directly enabled:
  1. Analysts reallocating time spent on note taking, data collection and reports.
  2. Business Development managing a significantly widened pipeline.
  3. Deal teams leveraging unprecedented intelligence about investors and FinTech companies.
- Hired, retained and motivated a talented engineering team. Set up a complete engineering process including product roadmap, sprints, reviews, CI/CD, tests and observability. Re-tooled continuously, and focused the engineering team on emerging AI workflows.
- Guided the firm broadly in its AI adoption. Enabled and assisted non-technical employees in safely developing prototypes and outputs using Claude Code.
- Untangled and replaced massive legacy systems - Salesforce APEX and PHP, allowing them to be fully shut down. Our stack was ultimately Python, Django, Django Rest Framework, Gunicorn, React, Vite, TypeScript, PostgreSQL, Celery, AWS, and more.

## PRIOR EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

- Fast-moving Bay Area startups.
- Led up to 13 engineers, including ICs and leads with their own reports.
- Design-focused, product-focused, and infrastructure-focused companies.
- Won some awards and been listed on some software patents.
- B.Sc Mathematics.

## QUIP

NEW YORK. A direct-to-consumer dental subscription product (not the other quip) with a proprietary web store, configurator and recurring subscriptions and billing.

**Director of Engineering**  
**Senior Software Engineer**

APR 2019 - AUG 2019  
MAY 2018 - APR 2019

- Doubled sales funnel conversion rate year-over-year on initially small team of 4 engineers, by reducing friction from the checkout flow to help the company reach over 1 million active subscribers
- Helped define our engineering hiring process and scale from 4 to 13 engineers
- Harnessed A/B tests frequently to make data-driven design decisions based on user behavior, steering users toward profitable product purchases and upsells
- Refined onboarding, trained and mentored engineers, and facilitated internal mobility and career development
- Led a team of engineers in overhauling the web app's 200+ application and marketing pages, and content management back-end; refactoring everything into concise re-usable modules leveraging coding standards I developed for the company based on industry best-practices
- Led accessibility (ADA compliance) audit and overhaul of the site

## M/H

SAN FRANCISCO & NEW YORK. A creative and digital agency. Small Agency of the Year in 2014, sold to VCCP Group in 2016. Aka MUH-TAY-ZIK HOF-FER.

**Director of Technology**

AUG 2014 - APR 2018

- Led engineers and vendors in creating highly robust and monitored campaign websites for clients including Netflix, HP, and AAA
- Owned the executive function of engineering thought leadership and ambassadorship. Circulated a technology newsletter internally
- Earned awards for the agency including a Silver Pencil (The One Show) for Netflix's "Spoil Yourself" campaign microsite (one I built personally) which achieved instant virality, reddit front page and over 1 million views in the first 24 hours (without a hitch)

## THISMOMENT

SAN FRANCISCO. A content management platform for brands with a focus on tools for collecting user-generated content from tagging their social posts, or direct submission.

**Director of Engineering, Production**  
**Senior Custom Solutions Developer**

MAY 2013 - AUG 2014  
NOV 2012 - MAY 2013

- Led a team of 13 engineers to build custom applications for a large number of premium brands on our content platform
- Provided hands-on development in some of the more high-profile executions for brands including Procter & Gamble, Coca-cola and Hilton
- Assisted in developing Doritos' 2014 Crash the Super Bowl contest, where thousands submitted commercials for a \$1M prize

## XDN

SAN MATEO, CA. A content delivery network (CDN) that allowed clients to re-sell their off-peak capacity. Acquired in 2012. Aka 3Crowd Technologies.

**Senior Software Engineer**

DEC 2009 - NOV 2012

- Built a video analytics prototype that helped secure \$6.6M in funding
- Provided extensive full-stack development as a founding employee
- Played a central role in product development, hired and managed a UI designer
- Contributed to the conception of proprietary load-balancing algorithms

## BITGRAVITY

BURLINGAME, CA. One of the first to bring HD live video streaming to the web. Vimeo and Bloomberg were customers. Acquired by Tata Communications in 2010.

**Software Engineer**

OCT 2007 - DEC 2009

- Co-invented technologies relating to video streaming. Listed on 3 patent applications, one granted: US9754627B2: Dynamically adjusting stream quality level. This was licensed to Sling Media, a company that sold for \$380M
- As an early employee, wrote the entirety of the frontend tooling provided to video publishers, including a feature-rich Flash video player, a configuration wizard (before Adobe and JW Player had one), and a video metadata analyzer

**B.Sc Mathematics**

University of Cape Town, South Africa

University of California: Berkeley, CA, USA