



Sarah Gruneisen

Engineering Leader

Building trusted teams and sustainable delivery

ENGINEERING LEADERSHIP • ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION • TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY

Engineering and transformation leader with 25+ years in technology and 15+ years leading teams, managers, and organizations. Connects business priorities, technical judgment, and people-centered leadership to reduce complexity, strengthen ownership, and create reliable, sustainable delivery across distributed and regulated environments.

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

I build engineering organizations where people can make sound decisions, own outcomes, and deliver with confidence. My background spans software engineering, architecture, fintech, payments, retail, SaaS, telecom, and consulting. I am strongest where technology, operating models, leadership, and organizational change must evolve together.

EDUCATION

BSc, Computer Science and Engineering
University of California, Davis, USA

Continuous development in engineering leadership, organizational design, facilitation, coaching, and emerging technology.

AUTHOR & LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

Author of Breath of the Dragon, Mazes of Meaning, and The Leadership Leap. Alongside executive roles, develops engineering leaders through coaching, workshops, and practical leadership programs used by hundreds of people.

CONTACT

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CORE STRENGTHS

- Leadership of leaders
- Engineering strategy and operating models
- Organizational design and transformation
- Team topology and ownership
- Technology modernization and simplification
- Architecture judgment and systems thinking
- Developer experience and engineering standards
- Fintech, payments, and financial operations
- Governance, risk, and operational readiness
- Distributed teams and partner ecosystems
- Executive stakeholder alignment
- Facilitation, coaching, and leadership development

LEADERSHIP SCOPE

PEOPLE

PLATFORMS

DELIVERY

CHANGE

FINTECH

RELIABILITY

STRATEGY

DEVEX

GOVERNANCE

SELECTED IMPACT

- Built operational-readiness governance across 12 business and technology dimensions for an international transformation in a regulated environment.
- Converted 75+ fragmented inputs into clear constraints, risks, decisions, actions, and evidence-based readiness criteria.
- Led Customer Profile and Financial Operations across onshore, offshore, internal, and partner teams; created a roadmap to reduce technical and organizational coupling.
- Led two distributed teams responsible for business-critical store-replenishment capabilities operating around the clock.
- Redesigned leadership and decision structures in a global remote consultancy, reducing overhead and contributing to substantially stronger profitability.
- Reshaped four Payments and Collections teams around value streams and end-to-end ownership.
- Led an organization-wide Agile transformation spanning employees, partners, and customers.

TARGET SCOPE

Engineering Manager • Head of Engineering • Director of Engineering
High-leverage roles spanning teams, standards, platforms, and organizational change

Engineering Leadership Experience

Selected roles • Value created • One paragraph each

Xebia - Principal Consultant, Transformation

2026 - PRESENT

Helps leaders bring clarity and ownership to complex technology transformations. For a major international organization in a regulated environment, shaped operational readiness across 12 business and technology dimensions and consolidated 75+ inputs into clear constraints, risks, decisions, and actions. Within Xebia, facilitated sessions on trust, business value, influence, collaborative adaptability, and courageous conversations, and co-delivered a three-day AI Leadership & Strategy program.

Last Mile Solutions - Senior Software Development Manager

2025 - 2026

Led Customer Profile and Financial Operations across onshore and offshore teams, internal engineers, and external partners. Clarified ownership, mentored managers and senior engineers, assessed architectural coupling and maintainability, and created a decoupling roadmap, engineering standards, and developer-experience improvements that strengthened confidence in future scale.

Albert Heijn - Senior Engineering Manager

2024 - 2025

Led two distributed teams responsible for business-critical store-replenishment capabilities. Improved ownership, alignment, quality, and collaboration across internal engineers, external partners, product, and operational stakeholders, helping the teams deliver with greater predictability and trust without adding unnecessary layers of control.

Novoda - Director of Engineering

2022 - 2024

Shaped engineering strategy and leadership across a global, fully remote consulting organization. Redesigned the operating model around distributed authority and clear ownership, removed an unnecessary management layer, and helped consultants work more effectively with clients-reducing overhead, improving delivery, and contributing to substantially stronger profitability.

Bike Rental Manager - Fractional CTO

FEB 2026 - MAY 2026

Provided technology leadership during a period of growth and modernization, aligning product, engineering, and business priorities while strengthening delivery capability. Identified key technology risks, established clearer priorities, and created an AI strategy and governance approach to support responsible adoption, immediate stability, and longer-term growth.

Avagasso - Leadership Strategist & Executive Coach (Parallel)

2022 - PRESENT

Develops engineering leaders and senior individual contributors through coaching, workshops, books, and practical leadership programs used by hundreds of people. Connects trust, communication, motivation, and healthy boundaries with stronger decisions, team ownership, and sustainable delivery.

bol.com - Senior Engineering Manager, Payments & Collections

2021 - 2022

Led four teams across Payments and Collections, redesigning team boundaries around strengths, value streams, and end-to-end ownership. Coached engineers, Scrum Masters, and leaders, reduced dependencies, and influenced progression and onboarding practices-strengthening alignment, resilience, and scalability across the fintech domain.

Onetrail - R&D Team Lead & Agile Transformation Lead

2019 - 2020

Led an organization-wide Agile transformation while managing two multidisciplinary R&D teams. Trained and coached employees across the business as well as partners and customers, introduced collaborative ways of working, and improved supporting tools and processes-strengthening ownership, transparency, and cross-functional delivery.

Smarcom / DIMOCO - Head of Software Engineering

2009 - 2010

Led engineering, architecture, and delivery for connected-vending and mobile-payment products, creating the technical foundations for remotely coordinating, monitoring, updating, and servicing vending machines and turning an emerging concept into an operational platform.

LEADERSHIP DOMAINS

PEOPLE

Managers • Engineers • Distributed teams • Coaching

SYSTEMS

Architecture • Platforms • Cloud • Reliability • DevEx

BUSINESS

Strategy • Product • Value • Partners • Stakeholders

CHANGE

Operating models • Agility • Readiness • Adoption

RISK

Governance • Compliance • Security • Operational decisions

EARLIER TECHNICAL FOUNDATION

Mission-critical engineering at Schuberg Philis; cloud and event-driven platforms at WoodWing; consulting and architecture through Avagasso GmbH and MondayCoffee; telecom product lifecycle and engineering at Sunrise and Alcatel; early web and software engineering roles from 1998 onward.

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Trust • Reliability • Autonomy
Authenticity • Appreciation
Human-centered transformation