

Terry Brown

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Pronouns: he/him

I'm an experienced, empathetic, people-focussed engineering leader, driven by growing high performing teams, providing purpose, and improving organisational culture. I have over 25 years of practical experience gained whilst working in engineering, product management, team management, and advisory roles. I coach on management, leadership, culture and software development across various organisations and sectors to both support others, and maximise my growth and knowledge.

I am motivated by business impact and customer outcomes, and believe that employees in the right environments maximise on delivery of those things. I drive towards a psychologically safe culture, paired with high accountability and autonomy, and foster environments where continuous improvement is important. I have a strong bias to action when it comes to improvement, be it team, individual, culture, or process.

I care deeply about a number of other subjects - mental health and suicide, LGBT+, and women in tech, and try to be an active public ally within these spaces.

Experience

Associate Director of Engineering - Healx

Sept 2021 - Present

Hired to help Healx scale their drug discovery pipelines through both people growth and broader technical improvement, with cross-functional tech and scientific teams. A heavy driver of organisational culture, helping both direct and indirect teams move towards high performing, and accelerating Healx drug discovery efforts.

Key achievements:

- **Scaled organisation**, delivering a **hiring strategy**, **rewrites of hiring and onboarding process** to increase hiring consistency and success, 3-4x growth with 11 successful direct hires, and multiple manager/director hires across the org. **Created and onboarded a number of new teams** - platform engineering, product engineering, and support more widely to help meet the scaling needs of the organisation.
- **Delivered cross-tech growth support**, devising, delivering, and open-sourcing a [career growth framework](#), **mentoring and coaching managers**, and mentoring engineers in their career growth. Delivered supporting guidance, and advised on growth frameworks for Product Management and Design, and I'm now driving growth frameworks for Managers and the broader organisation.
- **Driver and connector for company strategy** - lead or active on tech strategy group, scaling group, drug matching groups, compliance/QMS, and others. Active in funding rounds, driving content and presentations for Series C funding. Providing all of that context to teams to **maximise their commercial and company impact** via OKRs and broader team strategies.
- **Led organisational and process efficiencies**, delivering **process improvement research and value stream mapping exercises**, taking complex processes and optimising, taking ~1 month processes with heavy manual toil into ~2-3 days of automation, **improving speed of delivery and feedback loops** for all teams involved.
- Strong driver of technical strategy and practice
 - **Developed and Delivered a cloud strategy** to transition a legacy cloud platform with significant manual toil and bottlenecks, and optimising for automation, developer experience, and security posture.
 - **Built out cloud principles and practices at Healx**, drove platform engineering to build out an in-place replacement for the legacy platform, **allowing engineers to move from idea to production easily, and quickly** - shifting from 'weeks' to 'minutes' for new workload orchestration, improving value delivery and speed to market hugely.
 - **Focusing the team around optimal cloud usage**, bringing about ~20% (~£110,000) annual saving in **cloud costs**, without any detrimental impact to users, stability, or performance.
 - **Driver on Legacy Data Migration** - ran workshops, and helped build strategy and plan for migration between significant legacy data storage and a **more manageable, scalable solution**.
- **Measurable impact with teams and culture**, having a 'top 5%' manager 360 review cross company, and having impact on Engagement (raising scores from 6.0 to 8.5 in 2021), Loyalty (4.4 to 8.6) and building high scores for key impact drivers for commercial delivery - Autonomy 10.0, Management Support 10.0, Growth (Coaching and Mentoring) 10.0, Freedom of Opinion 9.8, Peer relationships 9.5, Recognition 9.3, Challenging work 9.2
- **Active contributor to Healx culture**

- Engagement with Engineering SIG - delivering widely adopted RFCs for Code Review Best Practice, Coding Standards, Definitions of Ready/Done, Cloud Best Practice, Tech Lead, Principal/Staff Archetypes, Third Party Oversight (TPO)
- Delivery of Feedback and Emotional Intelligence workshop, Psychological Safety talks (company wide + managers),
- Lead on Culture Champions groups, driving people strategy with People team, occasional Chair of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion group
- Published opinion pieces externally on [platform teams](#) and [psychological safety](#)

Director of Software Engineering - GlaxoSmithKline

Nov 2018 - Sept 2021

Leading teams of remote software and platform engineers within a cross-functional environment, delivering digital products and a cloud platform to support patients and healthcare practitioners. Brought to GSK to be a 'nucleus for change' as the organisation underwent a number of 'transformations', and have guided, advised and supported throughout. I delivered an effective vision and strategy for the team and helped amplify context and direction, supporting the team to link quarterly OKRs with wider organisational goals. My role at GSK is primarily to lead an engineering team, though I've had the opportunity to have a far broader impact across the whole tech organisation.

Key achievements:

- Led the **handover of a digital e-commerce product which processes \$200m in sales** (GSK Direct) from a tech team in the US to our own without any issue. Then orchestrated effective ownership, improvement and ways of working on the product. **Improved lead time, helping the teams to cut waste** from the release process while still safely getting products into production - **25% improvement in release cadence**.
- Led a team of cloud engineers to orchestrate a highly effective, **automated cloud platform on GCP, raising the bar for governance, security and zero trust operation**. The outcome of this was a '0-60 vision' to allow builder teams to go from **idea to production, safely, securely and compliant, in under 60 minutes**. See medium.com/gsktech for posts from the team. Challenged and changed bureaucracy around process to reduce human interaction/handoffs in the delivery value stream significantly.
- **Designed, orchestrated, and delivered a programme of psychological safety** - awareness, measurement, and behaviour change. I've **rolled this out to thousands of employees and managers** now in multiple areas of the organisation (Pharma, Supply Chain, Consumer Healthcare, Legal), leading to active, measurable improvement of underlying culture in many areas.
- **Minimised time-to-productive for new employees** by overhauling the staff onboarding process. It allows new engineers to get up to speed rapidly, and they are **often shipping value within the first week**.
- Created an organisational focus on technical excellence by **co-creating the GSK Tech Blog** (medium.com/gsktech), giving builder teams a window to **share and amplify the tech culture within GSK**. This has been **cited in a number of interviews across the organisation as a driver for recruitment**.
- Focus on **culture change and growth across the organisation**, spearheading and leading topics within a tech culture network, and **amplifying them to change across thousands of tech employees**. Topics covered inclusion and diversity, mental health, management, and leadership.
- **Developed an engineering progression framework** (influenced by the Monzo framework) to support conversations around growth for engineers across the tech organisation, which was adopted by many teams.

Development Team Lead - Bingo – tombola

Aug 2015 → Nov 2018

Web Team Lead – tombola

Jul 2012 → Aug 2015

Development Project Lead – tombola

Aug 2009 → Jul 2012

Senior Developer – tombola

Aug 2009 → Sep 2011

Lead architect, engineer, and team management within the bingo division, focusing on a technical overhaul of all work, and heading up the people development of the engineering team as well as increasing the overall collaboration and communication within the wider organisation. I maximised some key learnings here around building, adapting, and owning high-traffic software, and managing teams in the ownership of those products.

Key achievements:

- Design and **re-architecture of a legacy codebase** into a modern modular multi-tenant solution, **helping the business scale from £10m to £20+m in profits** (on approx £90m revenue).
- Significant **driver on a move to cloud** (AWS) from on-prem, initially a 'lift and shift' but eventually drove ownership costs down and improved resilience and performance of the site for customers. **Monthly bills settled at around £125k from nearer £160k.**
- **Drove the technology to enable the brand to scale** into other countries, helping tombola become **market leader in Spain and Italy**, and expand upon its UK presence with an Arcade offering.
- **Replaced manual releasing** with Continuous Delivery, **reducing MTTR to minutes (previously hours)**, and improving deployment frequency to daily (more regular possible).
- Spearheaded efforts to **move from legacy (flash) gaming to modern JavaScript based game development**, I created the new team, and set them up for success, **improving time to market for games.**
- Orchestrated improvements that saw total cost of ownership reduce - from **multiple painful customer impacting incidents per month to a handful per year.**
- **Improved delivery processes** moving from waterfall through to minimal waste agile/lean processes - **reducing lead times across all divisions.**
- **Improved significantly upon Change Failure Rate** with automated testing across the full delivery pipeline that maximised quality.
- Delivered a **landslide change in data capture**, logging and monitoring, integrating key products (ELK, New Relic and others), **enabling data-driven decisions across all aspects of the product.**

Data-driven examples:

- Site performance focus (reduction in response times across the site, uplift in customer transactions, reduction in live site issues).
- Improving password reset (a **reduction of 71,000 password reset walkaways** or customer service calls over the period of a year).
- Move to login with email (**18% reduction in failed logins, and 32% of customers switch to using it**).
- Chatmods (**Reducing time to support for customer service staff**, and providing them with the tools to resolve issues more efficiently).
- Delivery of **push notifications** (the apps were slow to adopt this, and **adoption hit over 80% within the 6 months** after launch, providing more timely/targeted information to players).

Development Team Lead – Fawthrop McLanders

Jan 2006 → Aug 2009

Team and architecture lead; Build of e-commerce/CRM platform that was rolled out to many clients (ranging from £20k-£200k/annum sales); Led on 'Microsoft Partner' accreditation for the products, achieving significant internal cost savings on licensing; Stakeholder and client management.

Senior Software Developer – SCHIN Ltd

Mar 2000 → Jan 2006

Engineering team lead within health informatics; Design and Development on first in class appraisal system for NHS GPs to address post-Shipman lack of transparency; Delivery of clinical decision-making tooling for active use by GPs during consultation; Key external stakeholder management - Department of Health, Healthcare Practitioners, Trusts and Practices.

Software Developer – Newcastle University

1996 → 2000

Many 'early web' solutions delivered; Unix system administration

Education

BSc Computing – Northumbria University

Public Talks / Workshops

As part of my own growth, I take the uncomfortable step of delivering talks on subjects I'm passionate about. This encourages me to research and learn the topic more broadly, but also to maximise the impact of that learning by sharing. I've given talks internally to a number of organisations, and at conferences on a number of topics.

- **Psychological Safety** - north east tech leaders user group, SEACON ([youtube link](#)), GSK agility conference, and many other internal awareness sessions. Also ran workshops to supplement on high-performing behaviours, understanding risk, and manager/leader behaviours.
- **Active LGBT+ Ally** - spoken on transgender parenting at panels for NHS Business Authority, Diageo, Scott Logic, and given talks within GSK on transgender parenting and allyship
- **DevOps** - a number of talks focussing around the human side of DevOps, to user groups (Leeds, Newcastle), at conferences, and within GSK a part of their journey towards improvement
- **Personal Productivity** - delivered talks to north east tech leaders and GSK on maximising personal productivity
- **Feedback and Emotional Intelligence** - north east tech leaders and GSK, talks on empathy, emotional intelligence, and effective feedback
- **Value Stream Mapping** - internal talks to support GSK transformation around VSM and systems thinking
- **Remote Working** - north east tech leaders talk on effective remote working, with particular focus on changes from the pandemic

The Human Part

My other passions in life are my family, and spending time with them. As my kids reach their teenage years, it's fun to share music/gigs with them, go to the gym, explore photography, and all those things that are truly valuable in life. I enjoy hill walking, and doing this with my family is part of the reason I work.

When I'm not doing these other things, I can generally be found running or cycling - I do both for clubs, and although injury and age have taken away chances of trophies, I still compete with myself, and find it a great outlet for self-challenge.

I also am an aspiring author, and the website at the top (<https://brilliantmanagers.info>) is the start of a journey for me in creating some tooling and discussion around the fact that everyone deserves a brilliant manager. The book is still in the "mind maps and scribbled notes" stage at the moment, but if I put it in my CV and talk about it enough, peer pressure will see me have to work on it! :)