Nick Charney Kaye

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Cross-Functional Technical Lead — Interactive Entertainment

People are usually handed my name along with a problem — a build, a system, a show, a date that cannot move.

Most recently, led incident response for TKO's FIFA World Cup '26 premium hospitality commerce program — a 70-person cross-functional ops/engineering team that brought in over $630M in cash in under 15 months, without a single notable loss. Now Game Director at Outright Mental, shipping Fever Tilt and Conversation Simulator. Twenty-five years of interactive media, typography to C++: U.S. Patent 10,446,126 for generative music composition, enterprise-grade broadcasting and identity resolution systems, and mobile platforms serving millions at global events. Equally at home guiding technical strategy, creative direction, and cross-functional teams to deliver both.

Areas of Expertise

- Project Management
- User Experience (UX) Design
- Microservices Architecture
- Mobile App Development
- Full-Stack Development
- Game Direction
- Cross-Functional Leadership
- System Architecture
- Incident Response

Technical Proficiencies

Programming Language & Tools:	JavaScript/TypeScript, Dart, Java, C++, C#, Objective-C, Go, Python, Ruby, HTML5/SCSS, Google Cloud Platform BigQuery/DataStream/Spark/Beam/PubSub/Firebase/Firestore, AWS Redshift/DMS/EMR/Glue/Kinesis/SNS/SQS/EventBridge/Amplify, MySQL, PostgreSQL, MongoDB, REST APIs, GraphQL, GRPC
Frameworks & Operating Systems:	React, React Native, Swift, Flutter, Unreal, Unity, Canvas, WebAudio, Phaser, Supercollider, Max/MSP/Jitter, Dash/HLS, OpenGL, GNU/Linux, BSD/macOS, Windows
Media & Communication:	Typography, Graphic Design, Animation, Audio production, Video editing, Adobe Photoshop/Illustrator/Audition/Premiere/AfterEffects/XD, Figma, Ableton Live

Career Experience

Outright Mental, San Francisco, CA **2016 – Present**
Game Director

Operate an independent interactive entertainment studio, directing original titles from concept through ship — design, engineering, audio, and creative direction under one roof.

- **Fever Tilt (fevertilt.com)**: Directing a ruthless 1v1 sport of exploitation & sabotage in zero-G — competitors mine gems, weaponize drifting debris, and strike back with lasers, forcefields, and explosives; launching in Steam Early Access November 2026.
- **Conversation Simulator (conversationsimulator.com**): Shipped the simulator for conversations — rehearse job interviews, high-stakes negotiations, language practice, and difficult conversations with AI characters that react in real time, scored by live state meters and post-session debriefs; sold on Steam.
- **Local-First AI Engineering**: Architected the entire AI stack to run on-device — llama.cpp language models, whisper.cpp speech recognition, and neural text-to-speech — for a fully private experience with no account, no cloud, and no telemetry.
- **Open Source & Creator Tools**: Released the Conversation Simulator core as open source (Apache-2.0), published scenario packs and documentation under CC BY 4.0, and built the in-app Creator Workbench so players author and share their own scenarios.
- **Full-Stack Studio Operations**: Own every discipline between idea and storefront — game design, systems engineering, audio direction, brand, and Steam publishing across Windows, macOS, Linux, and Steam Deck.
- **Reads, Builds & Retainers**: Advise outside teams through the studio's consulting practice — a Read, a Build, or a Retainer — twenty-five years of shipped work applied to hard builds and immovable dates.

TKO, New York, NY (Remote) **2024 – 2026**
Program Technical Lead, Incident Response, FIFA World Cup 2026™ Premium Hospitality

Following Endeavor's sale of On Location to the newly formed worldwide entertainment giant TKO, continued as the Staff Technical Lead on the FIFA World Cup '26 premium hospitality e-commerce initiative. Spearheaded high-profile product releases, architected scalable solutions, and oversaw cross-functional teams to deliver global fan experiences at exceptional levels of quality and performance.

- **Revenue at Tournament Scale**: Helped lead a 70-person cross-functional ops/engineering program that brought in $630M+ in cash in under 15 months of live commerce — without a single notable loss.
- **Threat & Integration Defense**: Directed the incident-response unit that neutralized a relentless stream of malicious actors — fraud, abuse, and attack traffic — while de-risking high-stakes technical integrations across partner and internal systems.
- **Cross-Functional Coordination**: Organized daily scrums, code reviews, and cross-team collaboration with Secutix, Salesforce, and internal stakeholders. Drove the creation of a comprehensive "System Implementation Checklist" to streamline project readiness and mitigate last-minute risks.
- **Performance Optimization & Monitoring**: Diagnosed and resolved critical page-load bottlenecks—reducing key load times by over 6X—through targeted refinements in front-end architecture and integrating Datadog Real User Monitoring (RUM) and APM best practices.
- **Risk Management & Quality Assurance**: Enforced robust SDLC milestones and built a proactive QA framework, catching issues early and sustaining high test coverage across multiple environment deployments (UAT, pre-production, and production).
- **Stakeholder Engagement**: Served as a central point of contact for leadership, product owners, and technical teams worldwide and regularly presented progress and roadmaps to senior executives, ensuring transparency, consensus, and timely decision-making.

Endeavor, New York, NY (Remote) **2022 – 2024**
Lead Software Developer, Event Mobile Apps, On Location

Provided technical guidance and leadership within the Consumer Experience team, contributing to the digital strategy and fostering innovation. Acted as a key contributor to identity resolution, customer metrics acquisition, and mobile app development for major events, resulting in higher user engagement and revenue growth.

- Enhanced the Hyde Park Winter Wonderland mobile app, leading to 6M users in the first week and a 12% increase in event revenue.
- Improved the Barrett-Jackson Auto Auction mobile app, attracting 2M users in the first week and boosting event revenue by 17%.
- Optimized the Professional Bull Riding mobile app to track 10K statistics in near-real time, contributing to a 15% rise in event attendance.
- Engineered AAA user experiences for high-traffic mobile applications using React Native, optimizing performance across iOS and Android platforms during major release events to enhance user engagement and app stability.
- Revamped an outdated React Native framework into a cutting-edge, scalable template to elevate development efficiency and product quality.

XJ Music, San Francisco, CA **2016 – 2024**
Director of Engineering

Led cross-functional teams in developing innovative audio streaming technology, focusing on integrating legal, financial, digital, and musical expertise. Architected and oversaw the construction of an enterprise-grade HLS broadcasting system. Designed and implemented mobile applications with advanced features, including HLS audio streaming and in-app purchases.

- Secured U.S. Patent 10,446,126 for creating a groundbreaking system that generates nonstop musical audio compositions, driving innovation in music technology for video games, live streams, and environments.
- Spearheaded and launched an open-source codebase in Java and C++.
- Led a global team of designers, developers, and testers to collaborate on developing a unique open-source music production framework, integrating with Unreal Engine and fostering innovation in audio technology.
- Facilitated user testing in a dedicated UX lab, engaging diverse stakeholders, including audience listeners, developer community members, and video game music composers, to ensure optimal user experience.

Bioengineering Department, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA (Remote) **2022 – Present**
Technical Lead (Consultant)

Collaborate with the principal investigator and Biological Engineering Ph.D. candidates to design infrastructure tailored for machine learning applications, optimizing neural network resource allocation, and improving result reproducibility.

- Engineered and enforced high-quality, testable software development life cycles (SDLC) while conducting code reviews to elevate team skills and ensure coding excellence.
- Designed and implemented proof-of-concept architectures for scalable machine learning platforms, enabling efficient, on-demand use of costly resources like Nvidia A100s and reducing unnecessary operational costs.

Goodwater Capital, Burlingame, CA **2019 – 2021**
Lead Software Engineer

- Partnered with analysts to create services that reduced a 30-day manual process to a 5-second AI-driven task, followed by just 3 days of manual review, enhancing daily workflows and portfolio operations.
- Streamlined 20+ data ingestion processes from a 1M-line POC Java monolith, cutting processing time from 1 day to 1-4 hours and reducing virtual machine usage from hundreds to fewer than 10, thereby enhancing system efficiency.

Signal Digital, Brooklyn, NY **2014 – 2017**
Senior Software Engineer

- Spearheaded full-stack development on a Skunk Works team, consistently slashing week-long workloads to mere minutes, boosting operational efficiency.
- Collaborated with b2b partners to design and implement custom dashboards, enabling stakeholders to rapidly assess metrics, determine priorities, and take direct action to modify workload schedules.
- Engineered and integrated dashboards and tooling for 70+ engineers, maintaining 6σ uptime and supporting 1T+ daily transactions, ensuring system reliability at scale.

Additional Experience

Software Developer | Art Director, Independent

- Pioneered a cutting-edge online platform for David Blaine's 7-day stunt, garnering 300K fan messages, and contributed to the D. Blaine Productions team for six years over numerous projects.
- Contributed to groundbreaking projects at industry-leading agencies, including Big Spaceship, Foundry9, Cheil, 360i, Transistor Studios, Smuggler, and RadicalMedia.
- Produced and animated a U.S. Department of Justice PSA, achieving nationwide exposure through Oxygen, NBC, and CBS.
- Partnered with the CEO of Stetson to revamp the 150-year-old brand with a modern, dynamic web platform, driving brand rejuvenation.
- Created the viral video Colgate Wisp: Quick Draw, introducing one of the first consumer engagement campaigns and enhancing brand visibility.

Education

Bachelor of Arts, Film & Music
NYU Tisch, Maurice Kanbar Film & TV | Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music

Bachelor of Science in Business
University of Phoenix, Phoenix, AZ