

DARREN CARD

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SUMMARY

Product and technology executive with 20+ years of B2B SaaS leadership, specializing in AI-native product development, 0-to-1 product launches, and scaling product organizations from \$0 to \$50M+ ARR. One of a small number of product leaders who has built and shipped production-grade AI products (LLM, RAG, agentic architecture) from scratch, not just piloted or evaluated them. Proven track record hiring and leading empowered, cross-functional product and engineering teams, driving SMB-to-enterprise pivots, creating new categories, and delivering measurable revenue outcomes across eight industry verticals. Deep expertise in AI product strategy, AI economics (token budgets, inference costs, credit systems, gross margin optimization), product-led growth, usage-based pricing, and enterprise go-to-market.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Chief Product & Technology Officer (Employee #1)

Lexful (Top Down Ventures Portfolio) | Vancouver, BC | March 2025 - Present

AI-powered MSP documentation platform. Built from zero to production launch, displacing \$100M+ ARR incumbent.

- Defined AI-native platform strategy and product vision for underserved MSP market segment, establishing competitive advantage through autonomous knowledge operations, conversational search, and comprehensive ecosystem integration
- Architected and shipped a production AI platform with LLM/RAG-powered knowledge retrieval, universal data ingestion, entity resolution, and agentic workflows, designing AI-native user experiences from the ground up
- Built the cross-functional product and engineering team from 0 to 10, achieving outsized output through AI-era team structure: AI coding agents, QA agents, and agentic operations that multiplied effective capacity
- Delivered paying customers on day one, validating product-market fit against five incumbent platforms while iterating rapidly from data migration POC through conversational search to full platform experience

- Owned AI economics end-to-end: designed token budgets, inference cost tiers, API rate limiting, and credit-based pricing tied to real LLM costs, directly optimizing gross margins and unit economics
- Designed GA pricing strategy, product tiers, and expansion model while shipping with SOC 2 compliance under aggressive timelines with no locked scope or detailed requirements

Entrepreneur in Residence (Product & Technology)

Top Down Ventures | Vancouver, BC | March 2025 - Present

Venture studio focused on IT services and MSP software investments.

- Evaluate new product and technology investment opportunities, conducting due diligence on product-market fit, technical architecture, AI readiness, and team capability
- Provide strategic guidance to portfolio companies on AI product strategy, pricing, technical architecture, and scaling
- Leverage industry expertise and network across eight verticals to support portfolio company growth initiatives

VP, Product & Technology

Cognota | Vancouver, BC | March 2021 - May 2024

Learning operations (LearnOps) platform for corporate L&D teams. Category creator in HR technology.

- Recruited by the CEO as the first product leader. Drove the strategic pivot from an SMB point solution to an enterprise suite, defining the new LearnOps category within HR technology
- Elevated ACVs from 4-figure to 6-figure multi-year enterprise deals, securing and retaining clients including EY, Synchrony Financial, and Delta Airlines
- Built an outcomes-focused product operations function from scratch, improving development team performance from "low" to "high" in 6 months using Google's DORA benchmarks
- Led product strategy and execution that increased business valuation, directly contributing to a successful \$5.5M Series A raise (December 2023)
- Drove continuous customer discovery with enterprise L&D leaders to validate product direction and prioritize high-impact features over stakeholder-driven roadmap items

Director, Product Management

Elastic Path Software | Vancouver, BC | March 2019 - February 2021

Enterprise composable commerce platform. Post-\$43M Series B, targeting \$30M ARR.

- Built a high-performing product team of 5 product managers, establishing coaching practices, outcome-focused planning, and cross-business unit collaboration
- During COVID, rapidly reprioritized the roadmap to address urgent customer needs (curbside pickup), unlocking a new revenue channel for clients including United Airlines, Pella Windows, and reMarkable
- Led assessment and acquisition of a modern microservices platform, accelerating the product roadmap by 18-24 months and opening new market segments
- Drove composable commerce positioning that contributed to MACH Alliance leadership and enterprise differentiation

Director, Product Management

Unbounce | Vancouver, BC | July 2018 - February 2019

Landing page optimization platform for digital marketers. Early AI/ML product experience.

- Led a beta program to develop and ship an AI/ML solution that auto-generates personalized landing pages through real-time A/B testing, an early application of machine learning to marketing automation
- Shifted the product team to an outcomes-focused mindset, establishing measurement practices around user satisfaction, engagement, adoption, and retention
- Built strategic technology partnerships with Google and HubSpot, accelerating revenue through partner channels

Director, Product Management & Product Design

Allocadia (now Uptempo) | Vancouver, BC | October 2015 - June 2018

Marketing performance management platform for enterprise marketing teams. Post-\$7M Series A.

- Drove product strategy that supported ARR growth from \$5M to \$20M through new product modules ("strategic planning," "marketing insights"), ACV expansion, and enterprise upsell
- Established a quarterly customer advisory board with Microsoft, Box, and Red Hat, using continuous customer feedback to drive roadmap decisions and improve key account retention
- Built the product function from scratch: hired 4 product managers and 2 product designers, establishing modern product practices across discovery, delivery, and go-to-market

- Developed a product integration offering and partner ecosystem, enabling customers to meet unique needs while keeping the core roadmap focused on highest-leverage opportunities
- Engaged with Gartner, Forrester, and IDC to define marketing performance management as a key martech category, strengthening competitive positioning

Director, Product Management & Product Design

QuickMobile (acquired by Cvent) | Vancouver, BC | February 2013 - October 2015

SaaS mobile app platform for corporate meetings and conferences. Post-\$3.2M Series A, targeting \$10M ARR.

- Recruited by the CEO to lead product evolution post-Series A, driving the platform toward \$10M ARR through new capabilities and enterprise adoption
- Led delivery and launch of a multi-tenant architecture, reducing per-customer costs and enabling scalable growth
- Migrated 100+ enterprise customers (Visa, Target, Deloitte) to a standardized platform, freeing engineering resources for new feature development and improving retention
- Launched the first Apple Watch conference app, generating significant market attention and reinforcing innovation positioning

VP, Product Management

Vision Critical | Vancouver, BC | July 2009 - February 2013

SaaS community insights and market research platform serving 300+ global enterprise customers.

- Owned product strategy for a platform serving Banana Republic, Conde Nast, NASCAR, and 300+ enterprises, contributing to growth from \$10M to \$50M ARR
- Created and launched two new standalone products co-developed with customers (Molson-Coors idea testing, ESPN video perception analysis), each reaching \$1M ARR within 12 months
- Launched the first mobile-enabled survey experience, timed with early smartphone adoption, generating PR and opening a new engagement channel
- Optimized the full customer journey from first touchpoint to renewal, improving retention and expansion across the enterprise customer base

VP, Custom Software Solutions

Vision Critical | Vancouver, BC | February 2009 - July 2009

- Managed P&L for custom development services, extending core platform for customers including John Deere and Kaiser Permanente
 - Generated over \$2M in revenue including recurring maintenance, through customer business analysis, proposal creation, and project delivery
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INDUSTRIES

IT Services/MSP | AI/ML | SaaS Infrastructure | E-Commerce | MarTech | Learning/HR Tech | Enterprise Events | Market Research

ENTERPRISE CLIENTS

EY | Microsoft | Visa | Deloitte | Target | Red Hat | Delta Airlines | Synchrony | Box | reMarkable | Intel | ESPN | United Airlines | GE Digital | Charles Schwab | John Deere | Kaiser Permanente | Banana Republic | NASCAR | Conde Nast

CORE COMPETENCIES

AI Product Strategy | LLM/RAG Architecture | Agentic Architecture & Workflows | AI Economics & Pricing | Conversational AI & Co-Pilots | 0-to-1 Product Development | Product-Led Growth (PLG) | Enterprise Go-to-Market | B2B SaaS | Product Operations | DORA Engineering Performance | Team Building & Coaching | SMB-to-Enterprise Scaling | ACV & NRR Optimization | Usage-Based & Hybrid Pricing | SOC 2 Compliance | Product & Technical Due Diligence | Cross-Functional Leadership | Category Creation | Continuous Customer Discovery | Data Analytics | AI Operations Transformation

ADDITIONAL

- **Founder, Dacard.ai:** Decision intelligence platform for AI-native product teams. Architected and shipped a scoring engine, integration framework (25 sources), and agentic coaching layer using modern AI stack (Next.js, TypeScript, Claude API, Turso).
- **Volunteer:** BC Bike Race (Course Marshal), North Shore Mountain Bike Association (Trail Maintenance), North Vancouver Minor Hockey (Coach)