Andy Axton

Staff Front-end engineer with 10+ years of experience

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I am a self-taught software engineer with experience working across organizations of all sizes. My passion lies in crafting high-quality, user-focused experiences while contributing to scalable and efficient systems. As a "big picture" thinker, I thrive in roles that involve infrastructure, developer tools, architecture, and optimizing page performance. I bring a strong ability to scale codebases and create solutions that balance speed with maintainability.

- ✓ Technical leadership
- ✓ Technical mentoring
- ✓ Team lead, great communicator
- ✓ Front-end architecture and infrastructure
- ✓ Web performance optimizations
- ✓ JavaScript / TypeScript / NodeJS
- ✓ React, NextJS
- ✓ End-to-end and unit testing

Afterword / Founding software engineer   7/2023 - 5/2024

Afterword helps families navigate the loss of a loved one by providing modern, user-friendly software for the funeral home industry. As the first external engineer on the team, I played a key role in developing core features that contributed to scaling the company to serve more clients. Notable projects include:

- **Document eSign System**: Designed and implemented a system for generating and sending documents for electronic signatures from Funeral Directors to family members.
- **Quickbooks Integration**: Designed and implemented an oAuth flow for connecting a Quickbooks account and syncing invoices from Afterword to Quickbooks.
- **Multi-Tenant Website Platform**: Designed and implemented a scalable platform using NextJS and PayloadCMS for creating customizable landing pages. The new platform improved the speed of creating new sites from weeks to just days.
  - Each funeral home can have a custom theme, including colors, fonts, and typography.
  - Page builder: Created flexible, reusable blocks to share commonly used elements between funeral homes. The system also allowed for completely custom blocks for one-off elements.
  - Efficient Management: Enabled the platform to host hundreds to thousands of sites on a shared codebase, simplifying maintenance for a small team.
- **E-Commerce Sympathy Store**: Designed and implemented an e-commerce store for purchasing flowers and memorabilia for passed individuals. Built with NextJS and PayloadCMS.
  - Customizable product library for each funeral home with product photos and variations.
  - Integrated with Stripe to process payments and webhooks to notify relevant parties when a purchase was made.

MasterClass / Staff front-end engineer   4/2017 - 3/2023 (6 years)

Contributed to the platform team as a Front-End Infrastructure Engineer, focusing on building and optimizing core frameworks, tools, and systems to enhance developer productivity and application performance. Notable projects include:

- **Infrastructure**: ie "back of the frontend"
  - Built and maintained our front-end build system in Webpack / Rails.
  - Helped to build and maintain libraries and tooling used by other teams.
  - Helped to build and maintain the design system UI library.
- **Consumer Cart and Checkout**: Single handedly built and architected the cart front-end that was used between 2018-2023 which processed hundreds of millions in revenue.
- **A/B Testing Client**: Rebuilt the experimentation framework used by all teams on web.
  - I designed the new library to match the existing API and components used by devs in order for a smooth transition between providers.
  - Enabled the framework to work with both the old and new provider simultaneously for validation testing and as an escape hatch.

- **NextJS Conversion**: Drove the development and execution of a complete conversion of our marketing pages (masterclass.com) from Rails/React to NextJS which serves millions of users.
    - Architected reusable patterns for data fetching, analytics and A/B testing.
    - Collaborated with the BE platform team to build an nginx layer to transition individual pages with a certain percentage of traffic.
    - Collaborated with the growth team to convert remaining pages and train devs on NextJS usage and patterns.
    - Helped convert the codebase into a monorepo to support running multiple apps.
    - Increased the conversion of our landing pages by an estimated 7-20%.
- **Web Performance**:
    - Helped foster a performance culture by advocating for the importance of page speed. Implemented real user metrics, synthetic monitoring and budgets to maintain page speed.
    - Created and led training sessions for best practices for improving core web vital scores.
    - Routinely made changes to our landing pages which improved loading times (LCP) up to 50%
    - Implemented automatic image optimization that reduced image file size by 30-90% across web, the iOS native app, Android app, and AppleTV app.

Rocket Department / Co-founder   4/2014 - 10/2019 (5 years)

We created Rocket Department to help startups prototype MVPs and build our own line of products. We had a multi-disciplinary team that worked on hardware, electronic and web based projects. We also built interactive installations for local music festivals and maker faire. Clients included Uber and Sacramento Kings.

- **WhiteKoat**: Designed and developed the front-end for a medical education platform powered by machine learning to help students learn and understand medical concepts faster and easier.
    - Included a database of pathologic images which would quiz students by letting them draw and highlight specific areas of interest.
- **CitizenUp**: Helped to scope and build a political donation system which would scan Twitter for specific hashtags and direct people to donate to said politician/cause.
- **ShipRiot**: Helped to scope, design and develop a platform that would compare shipping providers for a specific package size and destination.