

Dwain Lourens Maralack

South Africa | Remote-Ready

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Engineering Manager | Technical Lead

Executive Summary

Human-first engineering leader with over a decade of experience building and scaling digital payment platforms, marketplace extensions, and internal engineering systems. Known for simplifying complex systems, enabling team cohesion, and solving high-stakes technical challenges with empathy and precision. At Automattic (WooCommerce/WooPayments), led transformative cross-team initiatives in fraud risk mitigation, incident response, and sprint efficiency across 8 globally distributed teams. Adept at shaping engineering culture, defining product strategy, and mentoring diverse talent. Specializes in **remote engineering management**, **risk and compliance infrastructure**, and **technical process design**.

Career Highlights

- **Engineering Leadership & Cross-Team Collaboration:** Reduced fraud losses from **90bps to 10bps** by leading the design and deployment of a processor-agnostic Merchant Risk Service API. **Built and scaled a new engineering team** from inception, fostering a neurodiverse, high-trust culture across four global meetups. Championed **incident review retrospectives** and built new standards for on-call rotations across 8 engineering teams, reducing burnout and increasing coverage.
- **Platform & Infrastructure Development:** Implemented **automated vendor deployment systems** that improved release cycles and empowered 3rd-party developers on WooCommerce Marketplace. Built infrastructure for **OAuth stability and token refresh logic** in the Square extension, minimizing disruptions for global merchants. Created **Technical Solution Document templates** that standardized project kickoffs and improved estimation across cross-functional teams.
- **Process Innovation & Scaling Systems:** Rolled out a **5-week sprint model** with cooldowns and GitHub Projects adoption, leading to better prioritization and delivery timelines. Drove the **integration of real-time support chat tools**, replacing a clunky ticket system and improving merchant satisfaction. Led documentation and support for **flagship extension testing**, maintaining sales volume and platform stability across over 100 SKUs.

Technical Skills & Toolkit

- **Languages & Frameworks:** PHP · JavaScript · React · Node.js · HTML/CSS · REST APIs
- **Dev & Ops Tools:** Git · GitHub · CLI Tools · Docker · CI/CD pipelines · Automated Testing (PHPUnit, Jest)
- **Platforms & Product Domains:** WooCommerce · WooPayments · Sensei LMS · Square Extension · WordPress Ecosystem
- **Team Collaboration & Management:** Sprint Planning · GitHub Projects · Asynchronous Workflows · Skills Matrix Development · Hiring & Mentorship
- **Soft Skills & Leadership Competencies:** Stakeholder Engagement · Cross-Team Coordination · Incident Management · Technical Project Management · Process Engineering · Remote Team Building

Professional Experience

Automattic Inc. – Remote

ENGINEERING MANAGER – WooPayments Division

2020 – 2025

Led global cross-functional engineering teams responsible for enhancing platform security, developer velocity, and product scalability within the WooPayments vertical.

Key Contributions:

- Reduced fraud losses by 88% through implementation of a flexible, processor-agnostic Merchant Risk Service API.
- Redesigned on-call rotation across 8 teams, improving service reliability and mitigating burnout.
- Built a new, neurodiverse team from scratch; introduced a lightweight process framework and led 4 global meetups to strengthen collaboration.
- Introduced and scaled a 5-week sprint cycle model using GitHub Projects; increased visibility and prioritization of critical tasks.
- Authored the Technical Solutions Document template adopted by all Transact teams, improving kickoff consistency and estimation accuracy.

Automattic Inc. – Remote

PRODUCT DEVELOPER – WooCommerce Extensions Team 2016 – 2017

Supported maintenance, feature releases, and internal tools for the multi-million-dollar WooCommerce Marketplace ecosystem.

Key Contributions:

- Designed and deployed an **automated deployment pipeline** for third-party vendors, dramatically reducing release cycle time.
- Diagnosed and resolved OAuth/token refresh failures in the Square payment extension, stabilizing transaction processes.
- Led integration of a **new support chat system**, improving merchant experience and internal support workflows.
- Authored incident reports and retrospectives that became a **standard for the engineering org**.

Automattic Inc. – Remote

PRODUCT DEVELOPER – WooCommerce Extensions Maintenance 2016 – 2017

Key Contributions:

- Maintained over 100 flagship WooCommerce extensions impacting 1M+ global merchants.
- Built automated test frameworks for PHP and JavaScript to manage critical updates across shipping and payments extensions.

Earlier Experience

SOFTWARE ENGINEER – SENSEI LMS | WooThemes (acquired by Automattic) Jan 2015 – Jun 2015

- Led backend development for Sensei LMS. Simplified architecture, resolved high-priority bugs, and owned second-line support. Improved product stability and UX for learners and educators globally.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT SPECIALIST – WooThemes | Remote Jan 2013 – Dec 2014

- Provided frontline support to global WordPress users and WooCommerce merchants. Gained deep product understanding and customer empathy that shaped future product development work.

FREELANCE SOFTWARE ENGINEER | Remote Feb 2012 – Dec 2012

- Delivered custom backend WordPress solutions to digital agencies across South Africa.

FOUNDER / WEB DEVELOPER – MIIWEB | Paarl, South Africa Jan 2008 – Feb 2012

- Ran independent web development business serving local SMEs. Led all aspects of design, development, sales, and support.

Leadership & Community Engagement

- **Speaker and Advocate** for Automattic's Diversity Program at global tech events.
- Featured in DEI storytelling campaigns and printed assets, amplifying inclusivity.
- Contributor to hiring via code test evaluations, reducing backlog and supporting high-velocity recruitment.

Education & Professional Development

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

National Diploma, Information Technology (Software Development) 2005 - 2007