

# Michael T. Smith

Austin, TX · 347-387-0400 · [michael@homeward.ventures](mailto:michael@homeward.ventures) ·  
[linkedin.com/in/michaeltsmithnyc](https://www.linkedin.com/in/michaeltsmithnyc)

---

## Summary

Fractional and contract CTO for B2B SaaS companies that need senior technical and product judgment without a full-time executive salary. I have built two companies from nothing as the first technical person in the room, at Ellevest under Sallie Krawcheck and as co-founder of YvesBlue. In both cases I wrote the early code myself, then hired and led the teams that took over. I am equally comfortable running an engineering organization and carrying the entire technical surface alone, which is what my most recent engagement required. Deep experience in regulated and enterprise-facing environments, including SOC 2 programs at two companies across Vanta and Drata.

---

## Experience

### Homeward Ventures

*Founder and Principal · Jun 2024 to Present · Austin, TX*

My fractional CTO practice, working with B2B SaaS companies from seed through Series B.

Engagements take four shapes. Ongoing fractional CTO work, usually 10 to 20 hours a week, owning the technical surface and the decisions that are expensive to reverse. First product and engineering hire, prototyping and building an MVP so founders can onboard clients and raise. Security and compliance programs, covering SOC 2 readiness, audit management, enterprise vendor security review, AI governance, and technical due diligence. And technical advisory a few hours a month for founders who have a team but nobody senior to think with.

### SmallWorld

*Chief Technology Officer · Aug 2024 to Jul 2026 · Remote Engaged through Homeward Ventures. Technical Advisor from Jun 2024.*

B2B SaaS relationship-intelligence platform. I joined with a team of five engineers. As the company cut headcount I took on more of the work, and eventually handled the full technical surface myself across product, engineering, design, and infrastructure.

- Re-platformed the core product from server-rendered Rails views to React single page apps on a new versioned API, covering seven product surfaces built on a shared app shell, router, data layer, and component library.
- Led a full product redesign over six months ahead of a major version launch, working through 85 revisions across 14 features. Each one was prototyped in code rather than static mockups, on a design system I wrote, and I built the production implementations.
- Owned security and compliance. Ran the SOC 2 program in Drata through two Type 2 audits with Prescient Assurance as auditor, and handled every customer and vendor security review.
- Cut cloud infrastructure spend 55 to 60% by auditing what we were running and retiring an unused graph database, redundant compute, and extra load balancing.
- Rebuilt platform search on Elasticsearch, which removed eight database queries per request and brought response times down from over 30 seconds to under 5.
- Rebuilt the CRM and email integrations as a phased service architecture, and built the third-party enrichment layer that kept client relationship graphs current without running past budget.
- Shipped OpenAI-backed natural language processing in the product, then an MCP integration that exposed our APIs as tools for agentic clients.
- Ran an AI-assisted engineering practice built around Claude Code and automated code review, and set the standards for where AI belonged in the workflow and where it did not.
- Designed the self-serve pricing and billing model, including tier structure, packaging, and payments architecture, ahead of a planned launch.

## YvesBlue

*Co-Founder, Chief Technology Officer and COO · Oct 2018 to Jul 2023 · New York, NY*

ESG and impact reporting SaaS for institutional investors. Rails, Postgres, and React on Google Cloud Platform. Raised \$5M+, including through COVID.

- Sole engineer for the first three months. I built the original prototype, and that prototype won us our first and largest client, a major financial institution.
- Architected and built the production platform, multi-tenant and multi-user, with separate data and access boundaries for each client organization.
- Built the ETL pipeline that ingested ESG, financial, and reference data from Refinitiv Datastream and other providers, tens of thousands of records nightly.

- Solved entity resolution and symbology normalization across sources, so holdings from different data providers resolved to the same company.
- Built client portfolio book ingestion and reconciliation on monthly and quarterly cycles, delivered by upload API or automated FTP drop, which institutional diligence teams depended on.
- Designed and built the platform's entire reporting output. Every visualization ran on Nivo, and a plugin-based PDF engine composed them into client-ready reports.
- Grew the team from myself alone through hires across engineering, product, design, data science, and client services. All technical hiring and delivery ran through me.
- Took the company through its first SOC 2 Type 1, writing every security policy and procedure in Vanta and managing the audit engagement. Deployed device management and company-wide security training.
- Built the financial model and pitch decks, pitched VCs and angels alongside the CEO, and presented at quarterly board meetings.
- Ran finance and HR as co-founder, covering payroll, benefits, 401(k), the cap table, and board resolutions with counsel.

## PINCHme

*Chief Technology Officer · Oct 2017 to Feb 2018 · New York, NY*

Consumer product sampling platform for CPG brands, serving 25,000+ concurrent visitors per minute during sampling drops.

- Stabilized and upgraded the infrastructure for that traffic, migrating the core platform from Rails 2 to Rails 5 and re-architecting our AWS setup.
- Built the data pipeline that gave the company real-time KPI reporting, using Kinesis feeding a Presto and Hive cluster through Treasure Data.
- Led product development on a new revenue line projected at roughly \$1M annually.
- Managed the engineering, product, and design groups, and oversaw corporate IT and information security.

## Ellevest

*First Technical Hire and Founding Chief Technology Officer · May 2015 to Oct 2017 · New York, NY*

Robo-advisor and SEC-regulated investment advisor co-founded by Sallie Krawcheck. Rails, MySQL, and React.

- Architected the platform and built the engineering organization from nothing. I was hands-on through the early build, then hired and led a team of nine as we grew.
- Went from first commit to accepting our first client deposit in about five months.

- Co-architected the patent-pending Financial Projection System with our Chief Investment Officer and Morningstar's Wealth Forecasting team.
- Led the integration with Folio Institutional, our clearing and custody provider, which handled account opening and every client transaction across taxable and retirement accounts.
- Delivered the client exceptions management system that financial operations and client experience used to review transactions, integrated with Zendesk.
- Established the information security program for a regulated entity, writing policies and procedures with an outside CISO, deploying device management, and overseeing corporate IT and cybersecurity.

## Canvas

*Chief Technology Officer · Oct 2012 to Apr 2015 · New York, NY*

Digital product studio.

- Managed a team of ten engineers, technical project managers, and QA across client work for NBC, Showtime Sports, Metro-North, and TheHighLine.org.
- Delivered NBC's Million Second Quiz companion site, built in under four weeks and handling 20,000+ concurrent visitors live during primetime television.
- Responsible for pitching and closing \$1M+ in revenue from 2014 onward.

---

## Technical

Ruby on Rails, React, PostgreSQL, MySQL, Elasticsearch, AWS, Google Cloud Platform, Docker, Cloudflare Workers, Heroku, Datadog. ETL and data pipelines, entity resolution, versioned REST API design, Stripe, Salesforce, Google APIs, WorkOS and SSO, OpenAI, MCP. SOC 2 with Vanta and Drata. AI-assisted development with Claude Code.

## Patent

*Systems and methods for determining and dynamically adjusting risk capacity,*  
US-20170323386A1

## Education

**New York University**, College of Arts and Science. B.A., Psychology and Sociology