Russ Watson-Thomas

Senior Technical Delivery & Platform Lead

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Complex technical delivery • Platform roadmaps and service recovery • Supplier and release coordination • Ecommerce, payments and mobile • QA and operational readiness

I lead technical delivery across products and services spanning teams, suppliers and systems. I turn customer needs, architecture dependencies and operational risks into clear decisions, priorities and release plans.

My career started in hands-on commerce QA and release operations, then grew into enterprise replatforms and platform ownership. At Harrods, I owned In-Store Ordering product decisions and coordinated mobile, loyalty, identity and supplier delivery.

01 / Career Impact

- Owned In-Store Ordering roadmap and solution decisions, extending the platform into Furniture to replace legacy FPOP ordering and paper-based workflows.
- Diagnosed a mobile checkout outage as a configuration error, reverted the change and published the fix, restoring checkout in 20 minutes.
- Held end-to-end assurance and sign-off accountability for near-daily production releases across Harrods' digital estate for six years.

02 / Employment History

Harrods

2017–Jul 2026

Platform Lead | 2023–2026

- Made final product-roadmap and prioritisation decisions for In-Store Ordering, personally handling stakeholder management, solution and UX design, project/product ownership and testing while coordinating engineering delivery.
- Held direct ownership across seven platform/product areas: Harrods iOS/Android app, In-Store Ordering, Digital Rewards, MyBeauty, Beauty Appointments & Bookings, Drybar UK and Food to Order; supported Private Shopping's Brompton app and QA.
- Coordinated security, integration and supplier handoffs across connected commerce services, keeping engineering and operational ownership aligned.
- Worked with the mobile supplier and internal teams to establish release readiness, ownership and continuing support after the January 2024 iOS/Android app relaunch.
- Took production service-restoration decisions, including a controlled mobile checkout rollback, and coordinated follow-up change-validation and monitoring improvements.

Test & Release Manager | 2017–2023

- Owned story validation, test and release planning, QA, acceptance and sign-off for every production change within the digital estate remit, with near-daily releases across Harrods.com (independent Browse, Account and Checkout deployments), apps and backend services.
- Led the Farfetch ecommerce quality workstream, coordinating 2,000+ documented test cases across 13+ areas and business/supplier release-readiness decisions.
- Administered Azure DevOps work and test tooling, including permissions/processes, and contributed to TFS migration and adoption.

Michael Kors

2016

Test Manager

- Led a five-person testing team through an international Oracle Commerce replatform, coordinating external partners, release readiness and launch assurance.

Spindrift Consulting Group

2015–2016

QA Manager

- Led Canon integrated QA/UAT and release readiness for its B2C commerce programme, with hands-on CMS and JavaScript test-harness contributions.
- Worked across delivery tooling, test environments and device coverage to expose problems before cutover.

Bright North
2014–2015

Senior Quality Assurance Manager

- In a small startup, supported the practical delivery of image-processing and social-commerce client projects, spanning testing, scripting/DevOps support, documentation and client communication.

Venda
2007–2014

QA Technician → QA Manager

- Supported monthly multitenant releases, retailer-specific upgrades, patch validation and cutover risk across an ecommerce SaaS platform serving 170+ retailers.
- Personally configured and tested retailer commerce journeys, payments and promotions, including SoapUI integration diagnostics and checkout/payment test activity.
- Established release and QA practices for distributed teams; configured RT-to-Jira workflows and issue administration to improve delivery visibility.
- Took functional responsibility for an established UK and Thailand QA organisation of 60+ specialists and developed its capability through three-month secondments and testing alongside developers.

Eidos Interactive
2004–05

Games QA Technician

- Credited on Championship Manager 5.

03 / Independent Product Work

- Built and operate DunDunSee™, a live UK redundancy-planning product. I own its product direction, design, testing, releases and ongoing support.

04 / Technical Capabilities & Platforms

Delivery and ALM tools: Jira/JQL, Request Tracker migration, Confluence, Azure DevOps Boards and Test Plans, REST APIs, TFS transition, ServiceNow/Freshservice and HP ALM operational use.

Integration and customer-journey assurance: Venda VCP/VPS, SoapUI/SOAP/WSDL, REST/Postman, Selenium/WebDriver, Gherkin, PayPal, DataCash, 3-D Secure, Checkout by Amazon, Solr and promotions/pricing.

Commerce, payment and fulfilment programmes: Oracle ATG/Oracle Commerce, Canon Site Builder, Worldpay XML, Syncreon/returns QA; SAP CPI/SCAYLE, Farfetch/Adyen, Akamai and digital identity dependencies at Harrods.

Release operations and monitoring: Hudson/Jenkins test CI, TeamCity programme adoption, Git/GitHub, Nagios, Dynatrace, exploratory JMeter, Firebase CI/CD, TestFlight and iOS/Android supplier releases.

Independent product operations: React/TypeScript, Vite/Vitest, Playwright, GitHub/Vercel and Stripe, with Cloudflare Web Analytics and Search Console.

05 / Education & Qualifications

BSc (Hons), Games Computing & Software Development, 2:2 | University of Lincoln (Hull Campus), 2004

Certifications: ISTQB/ISEB Software Testing Foundation Level; ISTQB Test Manager; Master CIW Designer (mCIWd)

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