

JONATHAN BIRKBECK

TECHNICAL LEADERSHIP / XR & SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

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PROFILE

Technical development leader who builds capable teams, establishes reliable engineering practices and turns client problems into practical products. Lead a multidisciplinary XR function, combining people management, delivery oversight and technical strategy with hands-on prototyping. Work directly with the CEO and senior leadership on feasibility, investment trade-offs and product opportunities, grounded in experience across software, enterprise IT and commercial operations.

LEADERSHIP AT A GLANCE

People leadership & recruitment • Technology direction & feasibility • Portfolio delivery & quality • Client engagement & solution design • XR and real-time software innovation

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Technical Lead — XR Development

Virtual Safety Lab | Monza / Giussano, Italy | 2023–Present • consultancy engagement

- **Lead and develop the team.** Manage a core team of five permanent staff plus contract specialists as needed; recruit developers, conduct performance reviews and support professional growth, including movement towards project-management responsibilities.
- **Improve engineering delivery.** Introduced shared planning, experience-flow specifications, debugging and test practices, reusable asset libraries and release processes. Increased team autonomy through clear ownership, cross-functional working and tools that simplify recurring tasks.
- **Oversee development work.** Guide 3–5 concurrent projects and assess approximately two new opportunities weekly; review schedules and priorities with business leadership every month.
- **Advise on feasibility and direction.** Work with the CEO, senior leaders and project owners on technical proposals, client requirements, project costs and commercial viability; challenge unsuitable work and identify strategically valuable opportunities.
- **Explore future products.** Prototype emerging interfaces and delivery models, including mixed reality, hand tracking, physical devices and a potential learning platform integrating web content and VR experiences.
- **Embed lasting standards.** Introduced development and product-lifecycle practices that are now being incorporated into VSL's ISO 9001 implementation work.

SELECTED OUTCOMES

- **Product portfolio growth.** Contributed technical leadership as the subscription application portfolio expanded from 5 products in 2023 to 22 in 2026, with approximately six additional applications now added each year.
- **Faster bespoke delivery.** Established reusable approaches and independent delivery capability; selected bespoke applications are now delivered in as little as six weeks following final client sign-off.
- **Enterprise delivery.** Support bespoke XR work for organisations including Enel, Eni Plenitude, Coca-Cola and the Italian Navy, with personal end-to-end responsibility varying by project.

SELECTED TECHNICAL AND CLIENT WORK

Coca-Cola | Forklift risk simulation

Personally led client meetings and application development for a first-hand forklift safety experience. Participant feedback highlighted how the simulated collision changed their understanding of how quickly an accident can occur.

Mixed-reality fire response | Prototype to commercial product

Owned the concept, design and development of a mixed reality fire-response experience using a tracked physical extinguisher, passthrough, real-world occlusion and scent feedback. Visitor feedback informed customisation and setup improvements before commercial release.

Emerging XR capabilities | Practical evaluation

Developed multiplayer applications, hands-only interaction concepts, hardware-integrated simulations and rapid proofs of concept, including applications built during three-day hackathons.

EARLIER EXPERIENCE

Head of E-commerce / previously Digital Sales Manager

Mackmyra Swedish Whisky | Europe / remote | 2018–2022

Led digital B2C and B2B sales operations across European markets, spanning online delivery, customer journeys, analytics, automation and cross-functional launches. Built commercial and customer-facing experience now applied to technical scoping and product decisions.

Founder & Business Owner

Ollie's Brewery | Cardiff, UK | 2015–2018

Founded and ran an independent business, responsible for product development, sales, marketing, suppliers, finances and operational delivery.

Enterprise IT and Infrastructure Leadership

International organisations | 1999–2015

Roles ranged from desktop support and systems engineering to infrastructure management and team leadership, across local authorities, education, pharmaceuticals and a national parliament. International support formed a substantial part of this work.

TECHNICAL FOUNDATION

Engineering & platforms Unity, C#, Meta Quest, PCVR, XR interaction, real-time applications, multiplayer and systems integration.

Applied innovation Mixed reality / passthrough, hand tracking, tracked props, physical controls, Depth API, Logitech MX Ink and scent-enabled experiences.

Development operations Reusable architecture, asset libraries, testing, release management, technical documentation and AI-assisted development.

EDUCATION & LANGUAGES

Postgraduate study in Geographical Information Systems – Birkbeck, University of London

BSc Geography and Astronomy — University of Glamorgan | 2004

Languages English (native); Italian (A1–A2)