Kevin Olson

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Meet Kevin Olson, a seasoned technology executive with over 25 years of experience architecting and delivering enterprise applications, data platforms, and cloud-native solutions. A trusted leader across financial services, agriculture, and SaaS sectors, Kevin blends deep technical fluency with pragmatic innovation to align complex systems with strategic business outcomes.

> "I have had the privilege of working with Kevin for over two decades, during which he has consistently demonstrated exceptional capabilities as a technology leader… In my extensive industry experience, Kevin uniquely embodies the rare combination of architect, builder and delivery expert – a true end-to-end solutions architect."
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> *Ashwin Kumar, Former Manager*
> *Garda Capital Partners*

With a track record spanning startups to multibillion-dollar enterprises, Kevin has led transformative initiatives that modernized legacy infrastructures, enhanced operational resilience, and accelerated digital innovation. His leadership has shaped technology roadmaps, scaled engineering organizations, and enabled enterprise-wide agility through secure, scalable architectures.

Kevin's strengths span full-stack development, cloud engineering (AWS), application modernization, and the complete SDLC. He brings particular expertise in Clojure, Datomic, and React, enabling elegant solutions to complex data and systems challenges. At Garda Capital and Black River (Cargill's hedge fund), Kevin delivered mission-critical platforms supporting real-time trading and analytics. As founder of FirstLark, he built data-driven solutions that reimagined system performance, architecture, and usability.

A collaborative, hands-on executive, Kevin is known for leading with clarity, mentoring cross-functional teams, and bridging the gap between technical complexity and business strategy. His deep architectural insight and calm leadership style make him a valuable force in fast-paced, high-stakes environments.

Kevin holds a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Management Information Systems from the North Dakota State University and is a Sun Certified Java Programmer, underscoring his commitment to excellence in cloud-native design and scalable systems architecture.

Professional History Highlights

Founder & Principal Architect | FirstLark | 2023 – Present

Architects and builds scalable, cloud-native applications and data platforms for early-stage startups and growth companies. Leads full-cycle development using Clojure, Datomic, and AWS, translating complex business logic into maintainable systems. Delivered high-performance web and data products that enhanced speed, reliability, and usability, helping clients scale from MVP to production with minimal technical debt.

Senior Solutions Architect | Garda Capital Partners | 2016 – 2023

Led architecture and delivery of enterprise data and application platforms supporting real-time investment analytics, trade reconciliation, and reporting. Designed microservices-based infrastructure on AWS to ensure scalability and fault tolerance. Modernized legacy components into event-driven architecture, improving system performance and developer velocity while reducing outages and deployment risk.

Director, Software Architecture | Black River Asset Management (Cargill) | 2005 – 2016

Directed application modernization and cloud migration initiatives for global hedge fund operations. Designed and delivered strategic platforms enabling trading, portfolio management, and data governance. Spearheaded adoption of functional programming and domain-driven design across engineering teams, improving code quality and reducing cycle times. Partnered with finance and risk leaders to align technical priorities with business goals.

Application Development
Enterprise Architecture
Cloud Platforms (AWS, Azure)
Data Platforms
Business Intelligence (Tableau)
Disaster Recovery & Continuity
DevOps Tooling
Software Modernization
Systems Integration
Agile Methodologies
Vendor Management
SDLC Oversight

Senior IT Analyst | Cargill | 1998 – 2005

Managed enterprise system development supporting financial reporting, compliance, and global data integration. Led cross-functional initiatives to replace legacy systems with scalable, maintainable applications. Developed custom tools to streamline data workflows and improve visibility for business stakeholders. Recognized for collaborative problem-solving and ability to translate business needs into technical solutions.

Summary

Now focused on architecting enterprise-scale cloud platforms and modernizing legacy systems, Kevin is targeting **Senior Solutions Architect, Director of Application Development,** or **Head of Enterprise Architecture** roles where he can drive scalability, align technology with business strategy, and deliver long-term operational resilience