

# Ryan K. McDonald

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Senior PM with 10+ years leading platform modernization, digital transformation and enterprise product strategy at Disney, Splunk, Yahoo and Bank of America. *Most of the time the problem isn't execution — it's system design. Decision ownership is undefined, feedback loops are broken and execution state has drifted from intent.* Engineering background means teams trust me with technical complexity. I find the real constraint and fix it before touching anything else.

Platform Operating Models · Program Governance · Decision Rights Design · Enterprise Roadmap Ownership · Detection Platform Strategy · AI Product Development · Agent Workflow Design · Digital Transformation

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## SELECTED IMPACT

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- **\$5M in enterprise renewals retained** at Yahoo Edgecast — two back-to-back acquisitions, Disney and Discovery on the line, roadmap reprioritized around what actually kept customers from leaving.
- **\$500K in incremental platform funding secured** at Splunk — built the business case, won it from leadership, used it to consolidate the detection lifecycle into something engineering could actually ship against.
- **50M COVID tests/month scaled from pilot in 6 weeks** at Cognizant by coordinating across manufacturing, supply chain, regulatory compliance and the NAVICA digital health app — a sequencing call that drove Abbott to ~65% of the U.S. rapid test market at peak.
- **10 weeks to 3 weeks time-to-value at Splunk** — rebuilt onboarding as a product surface instead of a services handoff. Same CS team, no new headcount.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**Senior Product Manager, Platform & Detection Systems (Contract)** | Bank of America via Apex Systems 2025-2026

*Short-term contract to restore delivery on a stalled enterprise SIEM modernization. Mandate: establish program governance and an operating model before touching the roadmap. Contract concluded at program milestone.*

- Established decision rights and an operating model across security ops, engineering and compliance — developed with each group, not handed down. Closed an estimated \$60K/month in coordination overhead (measured against PI planning cycle waste) and unblocked reliable delivery commitments
- Sequenced the full Splunk + Anvilogic migration from scratch — no shared plan existed when I arrived. Defined activation, onboarding and operational readiness milestones that gave all three organizations a roadmap they could commit to
- Defined explicit state boundaries between exploratory detection work and production commitments — the same architectural principle that prevents feedback loop contamination in autonomous systems. Restored forecasting reliability across all three organizations without adding process overhead
- Standardized detection onboarding workflows, reducing rework and improving enterprise activation consistency

**Founder & Product Lead** | Ascendvent LLC 2024–Present

*Left Splunk to build something entirely mine and sharpen AI product skills without guardrails.*

- Thesis: coaches, tutors and mentors are doing relationship work with operations tooling — email threads, calendar apps and spreadsheets. Ran 50+ discovery interviews, killed the B2C hypothesis when unit economics failed, pivoted to the real problem
- Pivoted to B2B practitioners after discovery identified ops overhead as the real constraint — validated by willingness-to-pay signals in early outreach
- Consulting practice live with active clients — each engagement is a discovery session that de-risks the product roadmap and generates revenue while Checkin is built
- Checkin scoped to a single practitioner check-in workflow to validate B2B distribution and willingness to pay before any platform expansion

**Senior Product Manager** | Splunk 2022–2024

*Recruited to own the security content platform within Splunk Enterprise Security. Inherited a roadmap adding complexity to an already fragmented surface. Left to start Ascendvent.*

- Redirected roadmap from rule expansion to centralized content governance, driving a 12% adoption lift across 2,000+ enterprise customers by improving time to value rather than adding to the sprawl
- Secured \$500K in incremental platform funding by making the business case directly to leadership — consolidated the detection lifecycle and opened the path to AI-assisted detection workflows
- Rebuilt onboarding as a product surface instead of a services handoff, cutting time to value from 10 weeks to 3 — same CS team, no new headcount
- Replaced output-based reporting with OKR-aligned activation and retention dashboards, giving leadership an accurate view of actual product health

**Senior Technical Product Manager** | Yahoo Edgecast 2021–2022

*First role with a true PM title and direct product ownership. Company went through back-to-back acquisitions (Limelight to Verizon to Yahoo). Recruited to Splunk for a senior role in a new domain.*

- Built session-based playback end-to-end — gave live-stream viewers pause, rewind and replay and drove a 35% engagement lift within months of release
- Retained \$5M in enterprise renewals including Disney and Discovery — kept both relationships through proactive roadmap reprioritization while the company changed hands twice
- Reduced cloud storage costs 18% through session caching — same user experience, fraction of the DVR infrastructure cost
- Delivered geo-blocking and live time-shift features under hard customer deadlines during both ownership transitions, keeping contracts intact when the company had every excuse not to

**Associate Director, Product** | Cognizant

2019–2021

*Healthcare population management platforms during COVID across Kaiser Permanente and the Abbott BinaxNOW rapid testing rollout. Moved from Accenture Strategy to get closer to delivery; left for Edgecast to take full PM ownership.*

- Took over Abbott's BinaxNOW platform and scaled it from pilot to 50M tests per month in 6 weeks, coordinating across 4 functions: manufacturing, supply chain, regulatory compliance and the NAVICA digital health app
- Prioritized NAVICA verification fidelity over feature velocity — the call that made result records trusted enough for travel, employer return-to-work and school access programs, driving Abbott to roughly 65% of the U.S. rapid test market at peak
- Built an OKR-driven delivery model with clear decision ownership that gave engineering reliable prioritization signal and improved execution consistency across 6 teams
- Coached junior PMs to diagnose real constraints instead of running templated playbooks — approach that improved client outcome quality across engagements

**Business Strategy Manager** | Accenture Strategy

2017–2019

*Product and platform strategy for media and telecom clients after ESPN. Built investment case and roadmap skills here; left when the distance from real ownership became the constraint.*

- Generated \$1.5M in new revenue for an ad-tech platform through persona-based onboarding redesign grounded in direct customer interviews and behavioral usage patterns
- Launched an AI-driven operational intelligence system enabling 72-hour advance broadcast outage detection, preventing customer-facing incidents before they happened
- Connected portfolio prioritization to measurable ROI, driving 75% platform adoption across client leadership teams — no direct authority, all influence

**Audio / Video Engineer** → **Technical Product Manager** | Disney ESPN

2015–2017

*Started owning video player engineering and next-gen ad tech strategy then moved into product as the platform decisions — transitions, vendor evaluation and monetization architecture — naturally became mine.*

- Led the Flash-to-HTML5 streaming migration, owning vendor tradeoffs and platform architecture decisions that delivered a 25% engagement increase and 60% improvement in ad insertion success
- Led ad-tech proof-of-concepts that shaped ESPN's move to Google Ad Manager — evaluated the vendor tradeoffs, documented the risks and gave leadership a clear basis for the decision

**Technical Consultant** | Accenture Technology

2011–2015

*Led enterprise integration architecture and platform modernization programs for large-scale state government, telecom and media clients, directing a 25-engineer team across multi-system delivery initiatives.*

- Directed a 25-engineer delivery team across enterprise integration and platform modernization for large telecom and media clients, defining system boundaries, API contracts and dependency sequencing across 4 platform domains: provisioning, search, monitoring and operations
- Designed and patented a Fast Channels delivery architecture covering core channel delivery and ad insertion; the solution directly competed with Yahoo Edgecast's platform and later became the basis for my recruitment there
- Established technical governance, reliability standards and release sequencing models that caught integration failures before they reached production

## ENGINEERING BACKGROUND

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Before product, I spent my early career as a software engineer at Cox Communications, AutoTrader, TRX (Concur) and USAN building provisioning systems, search infrastructure, ticketing workflows and network monitoring tools. At Cox, I integrated Splunk for network monitoring. Years later I became a PM at Splunk — the clearest example of what technical depth actually buys you in a product role. Engineering teams trust me because I work in the actual system, not above it.

## EDUCATION

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**B.S. in Computer Science (Operations Management concentration)** · Clemson University