

JAMES ESPIE

ENGINEERING MANAGER

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

I'm an engineering manager based in Tauranga, New Zealand.

I love building **resilient** and **performant** engineering teams. I'm at my best when I can see engineers grow and make a difference in the world around them.

WORK EXPERIENCE



Envato

May 2025 - Present

Engineering Manager (May 2025 - Present)

Envato is a leading creative marketplace and community platform.

As **Engineering Manager**, I lead and support a team of engineers to deliver innovative solutions for creative professionals worldwide.

Some of my contributions:

- I led an **AI-powered conversational search project**. This required adapting to a new experimental approach - shipping experiments quickly, and iterating based on feedback and analytics in production.
- I worked with the wider Engineering Management group to **identify and address systemic bottlenecks**, including optimising our support and maintenance processes.
- I coached my team on breaking down and prioritising their work, and gave visibility to our WIP and DORA metrics. This led to **notable improvements in our cycle time**.



Fergus

April 2021 - May 2025

Engineering Manager (May 2022 - May 2025)

Quality Practice Lead (April 2021 - April 2022)

Fergus is New Zealand's leading trade job management solution.

My key responsibilities at Fergus included **People**, **Delivery** and **Engineering Practice**:

- **People** - I empower my teams to do their best work. This included running a dynamic re-teaming exercise, empowering engineers to decide what they worked on. This kind of autonomy has led to a happier, more engaged team.
- **Delivery** - I worked with senior leadership to prioritise our work streams. This meant advocating for technical debt work alongside features, and achieve the right balance.
- **Engineering Practice** - A large part of my role was to improve our engineering practices. One example of this was leading the charge to move from two-weekly production deploys, to an on-demand CI/CD process.



Senior Quality Specialist

UneeQ provide a platform for building and hosting Digital Humans - lifelike digital brand ambassadors.

Some of my contributions:

- Coached the engineering team to focus on **collaboration** between testers and engineers.
- I **implemented three new automated test suites** from scratch. API tests, E2E tests and visual regression checks.
- I created Slack bots and other **automations**, to increase visibility of changes during deployment.
- Advocating for **testability** early in the lifecycle as we built new features.

Other work history (more details available on request)

Pushpay - Senior Tester

January 2016 - July 2019

Xero - QA Analyst

December 2013 - December 2015

ActiveDocs - Software Tester

April 2011 - December 2013

Hansen Tech - Test Engineer

April 2004 - March 2011

EDUCATION

AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner (2025)

University of Auckland - BSc in Computer Science, graduated 2003

SKILLS AND QUALITIES

My key strengths are:

- Technical - I have an all-round understanding of various software technologies. Across my I have worked with Java, JavaScript, PHP and C#, along with a number of AWS services.
- Coaching - I coach my team on their career plans, unpacking difficult career problems, and identifying networking and sponsorship opportunities. I take pride in helping others grow.
- Communication - I'm a proficient written and verbal communicator.
- Incident management - I take pride in my ability to remain calm and act pragmatically when incidents happen.
- Conflict resolution - I am good at working through conflicts within my team and working towards solutions. This leans on my strong empathy and listening skills.

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

I'm an active member of the software community, and enjoy **presenting** and sharing learnings. I have spoken at a number of events both **nationally** and **internationally**

I have co-hosted a **YouTube** series, Tech Engineering Lounge, with Camy Bhandari.

I sporadically publish a **newsletter**, Pie-Mail, discussing engineering and leadership challenges.

I contributed a chapter to the **book** An Exploration of Testers compiled by Dr. Lee Hawkins.

For two years, I was the co-host of the Super Testing Bros **Podcast**, supported by the Ministry of Testing.

REFERENCES

Available upon request