

STEVEN RILEY WILLIAMS

Chief Information Officer | Chief Technology Officer | AI & Digital Transformation Executive

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EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Board-level technology executive with a 25+ year track record of leading digital transformation, M&A integration, and enterprise platform modernization across startup, mature, private, PE-backed and publicly traded retail and consumer enterprises. A recognized thought leader in applied AI and advanced analytics, serving on the Retail AI Council Board, with hands-on deployment experience across Azure OpenAI, Claude, Copilot, and other AI-enabled data platforms. Equally fluent in technology strategy and business value creation: from NYSE IPOs and multi-brand eCommerce scale-up to ERP modernization and cybersecurity maturity.

BOARD & INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

- Board Member, Retail AI Council: Guiding retailers in navigating AI adoption and disruption
- Editorial Advisory Board, CIO Magazine / CIO.com: Former contributing author and thought leader
- Founding Member, Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA) Technology Council

Awards: Retail Innovator of the Year (Retail Touchpoints) • DFW IT Executive of the Year (SIM) • CIO Leadership & Innovation Award (Executive Technology Magazine)

EXECUTIVE EXPERIENCE

Chief Technology Officer | Buff City Soap Franchising | Apr 2021 – Present

Recruited by the Board to lead technology modernization for a rapidly scaling franchise retail and CPG brand.

Delivered 6x store growth infrastructure and 5x eCommerce revenue growth over four years.

- Built an entirely cloud-native, matrixed technology architecture, scalable, secure, and right-sized for franchise model complexity.
- Stood up a full-stack technology, security, and compliance organization from near-zero, including cybersecurity and governance frameworks.
- Modernized middleware architecture enabling seamless integrations across POS, eCommerce, and franchise operations.
- Deployed enterprise ERP upgrade and complemented initiative with major business process reengineering.

► **FEATURED INITIATIVE: AutoRoute IQ**

Designed and led development and implementation of *AutoRoute IQ*, a custom-built, AI-driven eCommerce order routing agent that optimizes real-time SFS and BOPIS fulfillment across the franchise network for a \$25M+ eCommerce channel, growing 50%+ year-over-year, with an evolving geographic customer base. The agent applies ML-informed decision logic to optimize for SLA compliance, store proximity, inventory capacity, and budget guardrails, with dynamic escalation paths and corporate store fallback routing. For the store-fulfillment model, the agent is enriched with Haversine-distance proximity analytics, leveraging Python and NumPy, and optimized with tools such as Cursor and Claude Code.

Founder & Managing Director | Seamark Advisory Group | Dec 2020 – Dec 2024

Concurrent advisory practice serving retail and consumer brands on technology strategy, ERP selection, cloud migration, and digital commerce.

- Wound down consultancy once I joined Buff City Soap.
- Advised PE-backed and growth-stage retailers on technology roadmaps aligned to value creation and exit objectives.
- Led ERP evaluation and vendor selection engagements across NetSuite, Dynamics 365, and Aptos.

EVP, Chief Information Officer & Chief Supply Chain Officer | Specialty Retailers, Inc. (Stage Stores) | Houston, TX Jun 2017 – Dec 2020

Dual mandate as CIO and Chief Supply Chain Officer for a \$1.7B public retailer operating ~800 stores across 6 nameplates. Led technology and operations transformation, including preparation for an off-price business model pivot.

- Reduced IT operating expenses by \$15MM+ in Year 1 while improving service KPIs , without degrading capability.
- Eliminated 7+ years of accumulated audit deficiencies and strengthened cyber defenses, achieving zero security incidents during full tenure.
- Restructured supply chain operations to support off-price model transition, improving distribution performance and reducing costs.

Chief Information Officer | Boot Barn, Inc. | Irvine, CA Jul 2012 – Jun 2017

Executive team member guiding a high-growth western lifestyle retailer from 80 stores and \$140MM in revenue to 220+ stores and \$650MM+ , including NYSE IPO, 4 acquisitions, and expansion to 3 eCommerce brands.

- Led technology strategy through NYSE IPO (2014) and 4 acquisitions, doubling the size of the enterprise.
- Scaled eCommerce from one brand to three national online properties; technology infrastructure remains in production and supports a \$5B+ market cap company today.
- Absorbed leadership of supply chain and merchandise planning functions, creating full operational alignment across technology and the business.

Progressive Technology Leadership | Early Career, Multiple Organizations | United States

Increasingly senior CIO and technology leadership roles across retail and consumer brands, building the enterprise systems, store operations, and infrastructure foundation that underpins the executive career above.

- SVP & CIO, Mattress Giant / Mattress Firm, spanned 5× store growth, 3 PE ownership transitions, multiple acquisitions, and co-leading the company's sale to Mattress Firm, followed by managing full integration into the 1,000+ store chain.
- Progressed from hands-on technical roles to executive leadership reporting to CEOs, establishing a consistent pattern of aligning technology investment with business growth objectives.

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Cloud Platforms: AWS, Azure, Google Cloud (GCP)

ERP: NetSuite, Microsoft Dynamics 365, Epicor/Aptos, Manhattan, Sage

POS: Oracle Retail, Aptos, NCR, Revel

Digital Commerce: Shopify, Salesforce Commerce Cloud, ATG

Order Management Systems: Manhattan, Salesforce, NetSuite, Aptos

AI Platforms: Azure OpenAI, Claude (Anthropic), ChatGPT Enterprise, Microsoft Copilot; AI-enabled analytics on Snowflake & Databricks

BI / Analytics: Power BI, Domo, Tableau, Strategy (formerly MicroStrategy)

Security & Compliance: NIST, ITIL, ServiceNow

Integration: MuleSoft, Microservices, CI/CD

Data / AI Engineering: Microsoft SQL Server, Postgres, Python, NumPy, Claude Code, Cursor

Service Management / Support: Zendesk, Gorgias, ServiceNow, Jira, BMC Helix/Remedy

EDUCATION

B.B.A., University of Texas at San Antonio

Dual Majors: Information Systems & Marketing | Minors: Accounting & Organizational Management