Cetric Okola

Founder & CEO, Staypace

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Profile

Founder and CEO of Staypace, and a software engineer and technical leader with 9+ years of experience designing, building, and scaling reliable software systems across web, cloud, data, and AI-enabled platforms. Strong background in backend engineering, API design, database modelling, cloud infrastructure, and technical team leadership.

Experience

Founder & CEO

Staypace · Present · Leadership

Lead Staypace’s company direction and product delivery while remaining hands-on in system architecture and software engineering.

- Company leadership: Set strategy, priorities, and direction, aligning business goals with product and engineering delivery.
- Product direction: Translate customer and stakeholder needs into a clear roadmap, practical requirements, and delivery priorities.
- Technical architecture: Design scalable systems, service boundaries, APIs, and data models, with attention to security and maintainability.
- Hands-on engineering: Build and review backend services, integrations, and product features, guiding implementation from concept to production.
- Engineering leadership: Guide technical decisions, mentor developers, and establish code review, testing, and delivery practices.
- Infrastructure and reliability: Oversee cloud infrastructure, CI/CD, monitoring, and operational improvements for dependable software delivery.

Lead Fintech Architect & MVP Engineer

Staypace Limited · Dec 2025 — Jun 2026 · Contract

Led architecture and hands-on development of a fintech MVP, taking payment workflows from early concept to a working platform.

- Built pay-ins, payouts, collections, disbursements, refunds, reversals, and transaction tracking.
- Designed configurable payment orchestration across providers, currencies, countries, and merchant rules.
- Owned service boundaries, API contracts, database models, retries, callbacks, and asynchronous processing.

Lead Systems Architect

Purple Elephant Ventures · Jul 2025 — Jan 2026 · Contract

Led the architecture and development of Swoop Africa, establishing the technical roadmap and a scalable platform foundation.

- Designed secure multi-tenant backend services with Node.js and PostgreSQL.
- Established containerized cloud infrastructure and CI/CD pipelines.
- Worked with product and business teams on technical priorities, maintainability, and infrastructure costs.

Chief Technology Officer

TandaPay · Feb 2024 — Jun 2025 · Leadership

Led technology strategy, platform scalability, engineering teams, and AI integration in the fintech ecosystem.

- Developed Wallet-as-a-Service capabilities for merchant digital wallets and payments.
- Scaled microservices using Docker, Kubernetes, and Google Cloud, supporting 99.9% uptime.
- Led AI-powered KYC document parsing with OCR and NLP, alongside transaction anomaly detection.

Lead Software Engineer

TandaPay · Dec 2022 — Feb 2024 · Engineering

Managed a team of 10 developers building a payment gateway for merchant collections and disbursements.

- Introduced Drone CI pipelines and automated testing across unit, integration, and end-to-end workflows.
- Designed microservices and centralized email and SMS delivery.
- Mentored engineers, led code reviews, and collaborated with product and design teams.

Senior Software Engineer

TandaPay · Sep 2021 — Dec 2022 · Engineering

Built data pipelines, APIs, monitoring, and transaction tracing for production payment systems.

- Integrated third-party services and developed web alternatives to existing mobile applications.
- Contributed to project planning, operational feasibility, and solution design.

Associate Software Engineer

Cytonn Investments · Jul 2020 — Sep 2021 · Engineering

Developed and maintained web applications, supported production systems, and mentored junior developers.

- Worked across requirements, design, implementation, and technical support.
- Collaborated with designers on intuitive web experiences.

Junior Software Engineer

Cytonn Investments · Oct 2019 — Jul 2020 · Engineering

Modernized existing applications with PHP Laravel and contributed to a new Vue.js web portal.

- Updated legacy code to improve functionality and maintainability.

Selected projects

Staypace · Fintech platform
Configurable pay-ins, payouts, merchant collections, and transaction orchestration. Architecture and hands-on engineering, from the data model to the payment flow.
https://staypace.com

PlayDarena · Sports challenge platform
A sports challenge platform bringing together a public website, participant experience, and administration tools. Work spanning web applications and shared platform foundations.
https://playdarena.com

Purple Elephant Ventures · Swoop Africa
A scalable platform foundation with secure multi-tenant services, a clear technical roadmap, and infrastructure built for sustainable growth.

TandaPay · AI-driven KYC
AI-powered document parsing and onboarding workflows using OCR and NLP to reduce manual review and improve compliance accuracy.

Kusco Agri Loans
A lending assessment system that evaluates farmer produce history to inform loan eligibility.

Lima Portal
A platform connecting farm produce suppliers and buyers to improve market linkages and supply chains.

Skills

Backend & data: Golang · Node.js · Java · Python · REST APIs · gRPC · PostgreSQL · MySQL · MongoDB · Redis
Web & interfaces: TypeScript · JavaScript · React.js · Vue.js · Nuxt.js · HTML & CSS
Cloud & delivery: Docker · Kubernetes · AWS · Google Cloud · Drone CI · Jenkins · Linux · Nx
Architecture & applied AI: Microservices · Multi-tenancy · Kafka · RabbitMQ · System design · Automated testing · OpenAI APIs · NLP & OCR · OpenCV