

Martin Ellemann Olesen

Product, Technology & Transformation Leader

Turning product strategy into scalable organisations and execution



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Profile

Executive Product & Technology leader with more than 25 years of experience leading product and engineering organisations through growth, transformation, and leadership transition.

I specialise in creating clarity, direction, and momentum in complex organisations where product strategy, engineering capability, and organisational structure must align with business objectives. Throughout my career I have worked closely with CEOs and executive leadership teams to stabilise organisations, prioritise product roadmaps, and ensure strong execution across Product and Engineering.

I have built product organisations, recruited and coached Product Owners and Product Managers, and established portfolio governance and prioritisation structures ensuring that development capacity consistently focuses on profitable value creation. My experience also includes working with internationally distributed engineering teams across Europe, North America, and Asia.

My experience spans founder and executive leadership roles as well as mandate-based transformation engagements, often supporting organisations during periods of organisational change, leadership transition, or strategic refocusing.

I thrive in environments where product, technology, and people intersect and where organisations need clear priorities, strong leadership, and disciplined execution.

Core Competencies:

- Product & Engineering Leadership
- Product Strategy & Roadmap Prioritisation
- Portfolio Governance & Strategic Prioritisation
- Product Organisation Design
- Transformation & Turnaround Leadership
- Executive Leadership Team Sparring
- Agile Product Development & Ways of Working

Professional Experience

2012 –
Present

21Leadership

Founder · Executive Advisor & Transformation Leader

Worked closely with CEOs and executive leadership teams in organisations undergoing growth, transformation, or leadership transition, often with mandate-based responsibility across Product and Engineering organisations.

Key contributions include stabilising product and engineering organisations, clarifying product strategies and development priorities, and strengthening collaboration between product, engineering, and commercial teams.

Selected contributions:

- Designed and implemented product operating models enabling stronger alignment between strategy, product development, and business objectives
- Recruited, coached, and developed Product Owners and Product Managers across multiple organisations
- Established portfolio governance and prioritisation structures across Product and Engineering organisations ensuring transparent and disciplined allocation of development capacity
- Clarified product roadmaps and development initiatives in complex product environments
- Supported executive leadership teams in identifying organisational and operational risks across product and engineering organisations
- Strengthened collaboration between Product, Engineering, and commercial stakeholders
- Led organisational transformations enabling more effective product development and faster execution
- Worked with internationally distributed engineering teams including teams in Canada, Ukraine and India across multiple product organisations

Work delivered across both private and regulated environments where technology platforms are business critical.

2014 – 2021

Ugilib

Co-Founder and Co-CEO

Co-founded and scaled a consultancy focused on modern software development and agile product development.

Key achievements

- Built and scaled a sustainable business to more than DKK 100m in revenue
- Led distributed engineering and delivery organisations
- Established governance and prioritisation structures enabling scalable product development
- Supported organisations in aligning product strategy, engineering capacity, and business priorities
- Developed engineering and product leadership capabilities across organisations

The company worked closely with technology and development organisations, and I held overarching responsibility for building, leading, and scaling delivery and development capacity in line with business growth.

2012 – 2014

goAgile

Partner and Transformation Leader

Partner in a consultancy specialising in agile transformation and modern product development organisations.

Worked closely with executive leadership teams on:

- product development operating models
- organisational design
- governance structures
- leadership capability within Product and Engineering

2005 – 2012 **ProActive (now Fellowmind)**

Senior Manager and Head of Project Management

Senior leadership responsibility in a software development and delivery organisation serving large private and public clients.

Responsibilities included:

- Led a 50+ person development and delivery organisation including developers, architects, and project managers
- Held responsibility for delivery capacity, financial performance, and execution quality
- Developed engineering and delivery leaders and strengthened leadership capability
- Worked closely with executive leadership on strategy execution and organisational development

Results:

- Achieved 82% revenue growth over three years through improved execution, prioritisation, and leadership clarity
- Transitioned the organisation from traditional delivery models to adaptive and agile development

2004 – 2005 **e2e Factory**

Senior Associate

Worked in an early scale-up environment delivering SaaS solutions in the aviation industry.

1999 – 2004 **TDC og Maersk Data**

Programme and People Management

Leadership roles in technologically complex and regulated organisations.

- Held people management responsibility for development teams at TDC
- Led a group of international architects at Maersk Data
- Managed large, business-critical programmes balancing stable operations and change

**Earlier
Technical
Experience**

- Software Developer, TDC Services (1998 – 1999)
- Software Developer, PC Data Consult (1998 – 1998)
- Software Developer, ModaCAD Europe (1997 – 1998)

Selected Transformation Engagements

Bluegarden (now part of Visma)

Product & Engineering Turnaround

Brought in by the CIO to support a company-wide turnaround during a period of significant financial pressure and organisational change.

Worked closely with executive leadership to stabilise the product and engineering organisation and restore focus on profitable value creation.

Key contributions:

- Co-led the transformation of a 100-150 person product and development organisation within a company of ~600 employees
- Reorganised development around dedicated product teams with clear ownership
- Strengthened Product Management and Product Owner roles and introduced modern product development practices
- Introduced transparent executive portfolio prioritisation across leadership, reducing hundreds of competing initiatives to a focused set of strategic priorities
- Reduced time from idea to production through improved development and release processes
- Strengthened alignment between product development, commercial priorities, and company strategy

Result:

- Contributed to a major turnaround, reducing a loss of more than DKK 300m to near break-even within one year and restoring profitability the following year.
- The company later became part of the Visma group.

IDA – Danish Society of Engineers

Supported executive leadership in strengthening product development and organisational alignment between technology, marketing, and strategy.

Focused on operating model design, governance, and prioritisation structures enabling more effective product development.

Trackunit / ZTR

- Supported the integration of Canadian and Danish technology organisations following an international merger.
- Focused on leadership alignment, cultural integration, and strengthening collaboration across Product and Engineering in a global organisation combining hardware, software, and service platforms.

ALKA Insurance (later acquired by Tryg)

Supported the digital transformation of ALKA's product development organisation during a period where the company significantly strengthened its digital capabilities and self-service platforms.

Key contributions:

- Helped design and establish governance structures supporting modern digital product development
- Supported the recruitment and development of Product Owners and Scrum Masters across product teams
- Introduced agile development practices and strengthened collaboration between business, design, and engineering
- Contributed to the development of highly digital customer journeys and self-service solutions

ALKA was acquired by Tryg in a transaction valued at approximately DKK 5.7bn, where ALKA's strong digital capabilities and customer self-service platform were highlighted as key strengths.

VP Securities · BRFKredit · LB Insurance

Supported leadership teams in stabilising development organisations and strengthening governance and prioritisation in highly regulated financial environments.

Novo Nordisk · Danish Agency for Digital Government · Roche Innovation Center Copenhagen

Strategic advisory and leadership development in organisations with high requirements for stable operations, compliance, and scalable digital platforms.

Education

- **MBA with specialisation in Organisational Psychology (ongoing)**
Edinburgh Business School, Heriot-Watt University
- **Deploying AI for Strategic Impact**
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) xPRO
9-week programme in AI strategy and executive application
- **Master of Management Development (MMD)**
Copenhagen Business School

The above education is supplemented by ongoing executive education within technology leadership, AI adoption, and organisational development.

Additional Activities

Host of **Leadership in Motion**, a leadership podcast exploring how senior leaders sustain decision-making capacity, leadership effectiveness, and balance in demanding roles.