

# RAJU PILLAI

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## Executive Profile

Dynamic leader with over 25 years of experience driving modernization, digital transformation, and cost optimization through data and analytics. Expertise in leveraging Generative AI, Cloud Computing, and advanced data strategies to enable strategic decision-making, create competitive advantages, and drive revenue growth across industries including Insurance, Financial, Hospitality, and Marketing. Proven ability to lead global teams in developing innovative solutions to solve complex technical and operational challenges. Skilled in strategic planning, budgeting, and product roadmaps, with strong communication skills and the ability to engage senior management and stakeholders.

## Professional Experience

**Onyx CenterSource** | Global Hospitality Payments and Intelligence Aug 2019 - present  
**Head of Data Engineering and Analytics (Director)**  
**Sr. Architect of Data Analytics**

- Led enterprise-wide data engineering, AI, analytics, and data architecture functions to modernize operations, optimize costs, and drive innovation.
- Directed a global, cross-functional team of data engineers, scientists, analysts, and business experts to develop a multi-terabyte AWS-based data lakehouse, consolidating global hotel bookings, properties, and travel agency data.
- Delivered cost-effective data solutions within a year, resolving multi-year business challenges, enabling timely data-driven decisions, and significantly improving revenue and customer satisfaction.
- Spearheaded the digitalization and automation of manual statement and invoice validation using AI and ML. This project streamlined the process of handling diverse formats from multiple countries with varying standards, drastically reducing manual labor and increasing accuracy.
- Developed an innovative master data reference solution using machine learning and advanced matching logic, leveraging open-source and cloud-based technologies to enhance data quality and accuracy.
- Implemented a modern data access platform, improving performance by 4x, which increased application throughput, usage, and customer satisfaction, enabling rapid access to large data volumes and supporting faster decision-making.
- Drove business strategy through data insights, from ad-hoc reporting to advanced customer analytics, utilizing AWS, Generative AI, and cloud-based solutions to enhance operational efficiency and customer engagement.
- Established data governance and integrity standards in collaboration with business partners, ensuring consistent data quality across the organization.
- Partnered with C-level executives to align data solutions with product roadmaps and strategic business goals, driving digital transformation initiatives.
- Managed the data and analytics budget, achieving cost savings while leading the recruitment, development, and mentorship of a high-performing team.
- Winner of Hackathon 2023 for developing a Generative AI application, which is set to be implemented to improve customer support processes.
- Key technologies: AWS (S3, EMR, EKS, Glue, Lambda, SQS, EventBridge, Step Functions, Athena, RDS, Redshift, Sagemaker, EC2), Snowflake, OpenAI, Apache Iceberg, Apache Spark, Apache Arrow, Dremio, Python.

- Led the Enterprise Data and Application Architecture Center of Excellence, providing strategic direction on data architecture, analytics, and digital transformation.
- Advised the CEO and CMO on data-driven initiatives, supporting M&A projects with seamless data and application integration.
- Managed large-scale initiatives across Marketing Analytics, Business Intelligence, CRM, and e-Commerce, supporting nearly \$500M in revenue while building and leading a high-performing analytics team.
- Consolidated fragmented BI systems into a unified data warehouse and lake, improving data accessibility and operational efficiency.
- Architected and implemented complex, data-driven applications in both cloud and on-prem environments, delivering a competitive edge.
- Developed predictive analytics for e-commerce, optimizing user engagement through machine learning-based insights.
- Established a comprehensive data governance framework supporting CCPA, GDPR, and PCI compliance.
- Directed cross-functional teams to build scalable data solutions for major financial institutions, driving significant business growth.
- Expertise in infrastructure, application architecture, and big data technologies, including AWS, Azure, Snowflake, MapR, and Oracle Exadata.
- Recipient of multiple awards, including the Pillar of Excellence for outstanding contributions.

- Spearheaded a pioneering project in the Canadian insurance industry, converting a core business application from DB2 Z/OS to SQL Server and DB2 LUW in collaboration with Microsoft. This was a first-of-its-kind initiative that modernized the company's PMS system.
- Designed, implemented, and maintained database solutions on DB2 (Z/OS and LUW), SQL Server, and Oracle to support both transactional and analytical applications for one of Canada's largest commercial and personal insurance providers.
- Recruited, mentored, and developed a team of database administrators (DBAs) and analysts to support ongoing database operations and enhancements.
- Responsible for all aspect of design and management of all application databases.
- Implemented cross-platform transactions using DB2 Federation and DB2 Connect, which resulted in over \$1 million in cost savings from upgrades and licensing fees.

- Initially brought on as a consultant, transitioned to a permanent role due to top performance and expertise in managing large-scale database systems for B2C and B2B e-commerce applications.
- Designed and implemented the company's first e-commerce database platform, enabling scalable and efficient data management for high-traffic online transactions.
- Led the implementation of IBM DB2 cross-platform replication systems, selected to collaborate with IBM developers during the early stages of the product for debugging and setup.
- Performed a wide range of DB2 maintenance activities, including COPY, REORG, LOAD, RECOVER, DSN1COPY, RUNSTATS, REBIND, SQL-LOAD, IMPORT, and EXPORT, ensuring optimal database performance and reliability.
- Provided critical support for mainframe and client-server applications, working closely with developers on design, troubleshooting, and optimization for DB2 on AIX, DB2 on OS/390, and Oracle systems.

**Database Programmer**

- Developed applications for order processing, inventory management, and accounting, specifically tailored to the cashew processing industry.
- As a direct result of these efforts, the client generated multiple leads per week, increasing revenue by \$200,000 within a year.
- Created efficient database extraction and transformation scripts to seamlessly move data across various database systems.

## Education

**Post Graduate Program in AI ML**, April 2024, University of Texas at Austin

**Master's in information systems**, Oct 2008, University of Phoenix

**Bachelor's in commerce**, April 1996, University of Kerala

## Certifications

- AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner
- Emerging Leadership Series 2018
- Big Data Certificate Course from Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- IBM Certified DB2 Database Administrator for LUW

## Skills

- IT Leadership & Management
- Strategic & Budget Planning
- Resource & Vendor Management
- Process & Cost Optimization
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Modernization & Digitalization
- Performance Management
- Agile Project Management
- Conflict Resolution
- Team Building & Development
- Generative AI & Machine Learning
- Predictive Analytics
- Cloud Computing (AWS, Azure)
- Data Lakehouse & Warehouse
- Data Analytics & Engineering
- Data Governance & Integration
- Data Visualization
- SQL & NoSQL Database Solutions
- REST APIs