

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 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 and the CIO Magazine Editorial Advisory Board — with hands-on deployment experience across Azure OpenAI, Claude, Copilot, and 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. Known for building high-performance organizations and delivering results in high-growth, high-change environments.

BOARD & INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

- Board Member, Retail AI Council — guiding retailers in navigating AI adoption and disruption
- Editorial Advisory Board, CIO Magazine / CIO.com — 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** | Dallas, TX Apr 2021 – Present

Recruited by the Board to lead technology modernization for a rapidly scaling franchise retail and CPG brand. Delivered 6× store growth infrastructure and 5× eCommerce revenue growth over four years.

- Deployed enterprise ERP and redesigned eCommerce platform, driving 5× revenue growth from 2021–2025.
- 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.

Co-Founder & Senior Partner | **Seamark Advisory Group** | Dallas, TX Dec 2020 – Dec 2024

Concurrent advisory practice serving retail and consumer brands on technology strategy, ERP selection, cloud migration, and digital commerce — run alongside CTO role at 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/Epicor.

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 national 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, Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America

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 the CEO, establishing a consistent pattern of aligning technology investment with business growth objectives.

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Cloud: AWS, Azure, Google Cloud

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

Digital Commerce: Shopify, Salesforce Commerce Cloud

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

BI / Analytics: Power BI, Domo, Tableau, MicroStrategy

POS: Oracle Retail, Aptos, NCR

Security & Compliance: NIST, ITIL, ServiceNow

Integration: MuleSoft, Microservices, CI/CD

EDUCATION

B.B.A., University of Texas at San Antonio | Dual Majors: Information Systems & Marketing | Minors: Accounting & Organizational Management