

Good afternoon, everyone.

Thank you for being here, and for making this room feel like a harbor I've sailed into many times—familiar faces, steady hands, a few new crew members I'm proud to see on deck.

I walked through our doors in 1991 as a product manager with more questions than answers.

What I did have was curiosity, an unreasonable amount of optimism, and leaders who believed that integrity and long-term thinking matter even when the calendar is yelling.

Those beliefs shaped me, and, I hope, they shaped the way I tried to lead.

There are a few moments I keep replaying as I look back.

In 2003, ten minutes before a major client pitch, our demo server gave up the ghost.

We'd rehearsed every click, every data flow, and suddenly the lights went out.

I grabbed a whiteboard and started sketching the architecture from memory while the team narrated the workflows as if we were walking through the product together.

No slides, no blinking lights—just clarity and trust.

The client signed anyway.

That day reminded me that tools help, but trust carries.

And when a team believes in one another, conditions don't have to be perfect for outcomes to be.

That same year we shipped our first cloud-ready platform.

We were not the biggest nor the loudest, but we were determined.

Some of you remember the debates: latency assumptions, security postures,

and the lines of code that only compiled properly if you hummed the right song. We learned together, and we built a foundation that let the company stretch beyond its comfort zone.

From 2008 to 2012, I had the privilege of leading our expansion into APAC. Those years were a master class in humility—early mornings with teams in Singapore and late nights syncing with Tokyo and Sydney. There were missteps; there always are when you're learning a new ocean. But there were also the small wins that still make me smile: the first local partnership signed after months of listening instead of pitching; the moment our roadmap actually reflected regional needs instead of our assumptions back home. We didn't just expand; we learned to be guests in other markets and to earn our welcome.

In 2014, I became Chief Product Officer and, four years later, Executive Vice President. Titles are markers; people are the substance. In those roles, I tried to build teams that could outlast any one leader. That meant letting go of answers and insisting on questions. It meant shielding the teams when wind and weather got rough, and stepping back when the sun finally came out so others could steer.

Some of the work I'm proudest of doesn't show up in a press release. Sponsoring our sustainability roadmap taught me to quantify the footprints we leave and the responsibilities we carry. It pushed us to design for efficiency, not just for speed, and to remember that the systems we build sit inside larger ones we don't control. And preparing for our 2020 IPO readiness program—well, that felt like fitting a schooner with new rigging mid-journey. Countless checklists, yes, but also a deeper discipline about how we measure, decide, and tell our story. We became crisper thinkers through that process.

Mentoring two cohorts of leadership fellows was a gift.

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Watching talented people test their edges, ask sharper questions, and, occasionally, push back hard when I was wrong—that's the good stuff.

If any of you from those cohorts are in the room, keep pushing.

Ask why until you find the bedrock.

Then ask why again.

My values have stayed steady even as our tech and our markets moved at full tilt.

Integrity is the boat that doesn't leak when pressure rises.

Long-term thinking is choosing the sturdy timber over the quick veneer.

Curiosity is what keeps you coming back to the workshop when a joint won't quite fit.

And building teams that outlast any one leader—that is the best succession plan I know.

This company has been my classroom and my compass.

The product and engineering teams challenged me daily—sometimes by putting evidence in front of me that rewired my opinion on the spot, sometimes by taking a risk I wouldn't have taken and proving me delightfully wrong.

Thank you for the candor in design reviews, for the late nights you didn't broadcast, and for the mornings you started over because "almost right" wasn't good enough.

To the mentors who gave me room to grow: you handed me problems, not answers.

You let me make mistakes big enough to learn from but not big enough to sink the ship.

I tried to pass that forward, and I hope I did.

To my family—who endured flights that landed after midnight, dinners interrupted by product incidents, and Saturdays swapped for sprints—thank you for your patience.

You taught me that presence isn't measured by hours but by attention.

I am looking forward to offering more of both.

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Retirement, for me, isn't an exit; it's a change of tack.

I'm ready for unhurried mornings that don't start with a calendar alert.

For finishing the wooden canoe that has waited too long in my garage, patient under a tarp like a promise I intend to keep.

For sailing on the bay when the wind is good, not just when the schedule permits.

For weekend trail hikes where the only metrics are miles and conversations.

For teaching product strategy workshops and guest-lecturing at local universities, because sharing what we've learned is how we keep learning.

And make no mistake—I'll be cheering this team from the sidelines.

I will keep a respectful distance, but if you ever want a sounding board, you know where to find me.

You can reach me at [cto@kuchventures.com](mailto:cto@kuchventures.com).

I won't have all the answers, but I will have time to listen.

As I hand the wheel to the leaders who follow, my hopes are simple.

Keep our integrity non-negotiable.

Resist the rush to optimize this quarter at the expense of the next decade.

Be curious in the face of uncertainty; that's when curiosity does its best work.

And keep building teams that teach one another until the leader's name is the least interesting part of the story.

Before I close, a small memory from the workshop at home.

When you're fitting a stubborn piece of walnut into a dado, patience beats force every time.

You shave a millimeter, check the grain, adjust the angle, and eventually it slides into place with that quiet, satisfying click.

Leading here often felt like that—persistent, attentive, rarely dramatic, and deeply rewarding when the fit was true.

Thank you for 33 years—1991 to 2024—of trust, challenge, laughter, and purpose.

Thank you for letting me make a life's work out of good problems alongside good people.

I'll see you on the water, on a trail, or maybe in a classroom.

And I'll be smiling when I hear about what you build next.

Thank you.

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