SALMAN ASHRAFI

Technical Support Leader | Founder, Ritualist | MBA Candidate
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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Technical support leader with 20+ years in enterprise technology and 9+ years leading global, 24×7 support teams. Builds distributed teams, manages critical customer and executive escalations, and drives root cause analysis with Engineering so fixes land in the product. Adds hands-on product practice as founder of Ritualist and through an MBA in Product Leadership: customer discovery, PRDs, go-to-market strategy and UX prototyping.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Product & Technical Support Leadership
- 24×7 Support Operations & Regional Handoffs
- Customer & Executive Escalations
- Root Cause Analysis & Engineering Collaboration
- Customer Experience & Stakeholder Management
- AI-Assisted Process Improvement
- Customer Discovery, PRDs & Roadmaps
- Global Team Building & Development
- Incident, Problem & Escalation Management
- KPI, SLA & Service Delivery Management
- Support Process & Workflow Improvement
- Knowledge Management & Documentation
- Cloud Infrastructure & Enterprise Networking
- Go-to-Market Strategy & UX Prototyping

PRODUCT & FOUNDER EXPERIENCE

Founder | Ritualist (ritualist-app.com) | 2026–Present

- Founded a platform that connects travel operators and pilgrims: operators run every batch in one place, and pilgrims get verified guidance in their pocket. Built for all pilgrimages; the pilot focuses on Umrah and Sabarimala.
- Ran discovery through multiple surveys and pilgrim interviews (54 responses), mapped the pilgrim journey, and refocused the product on the moment of the ritual, where the data showed stress was highest.
- Wrote the PRD (P0–P2 requirements, non-goals, offline-first) and set the North Star metric and kill criteria before testing; framed the business with Value Proposition and Business Model Canvases.
- Built the landing page and an explainer video (61 waitlist sign-ups in two weeks) and working prototypes; first operator pilot with 10–15 families planned for December 2026.

EMBA Projects | Institute of Product Leadership

- **Go-to-market strategy, KlearStack (Skillathon finalist):** 90-day B2B launch plan for an AI invoice-processing product on a ₹12 lakh budget: market sizing (TAM ₹2,400 Cr to SOM ₹300 Cr), ICP and buyer personas, three-tier pricing, and CA firm and ERP reseller partner channels, with LTV:CAC of 6.3× at launch. Defended the plan before senior marketing leaders.
- **UX/UI case study, Spendflo Savings Command Center (solo):** Designed a dashboard and workflow that takes a Head of Finance from scattered SaaS spend to ranked savings, clear owners and verified results; narrowed 16 concepts to four core screens in a Figma prototype.
- **UX/UI concept, SignalGift:** Concept and Figma prototype that turns a LinkedIn profile and a budget into one gift backed by three cited signals, cutting choice time from 45 to 8 minutes in the test scenario.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Senior Manager, Technical Support | Data Direct Networks (DDN) | Sep 2022–Present

- Lead and develop technical support teams through hiring, training, coaching, and professional development, with a focus on consistent customer support.
- Oversee 24×7 distributed support operations, critical escalations, cross-region coverage, and handoffs to maintain service continuity.
- Serve as a key liaison across Support, Field, Sales, and Service organizations; directly engage with customers on high-impact cases.

- Use AI-assisted tools to design and implement process and system improvements for support workflows, incident management, and operational efficiency.
- Drive root cause analysis of recurring and severe technical issues with Engineering, leading to product fixes in subsequent releases and fewer repeat escalations.

Technical Support Manager | Citrix R&D India | Dec 2020–Aug 2022

- Managed frontline technical support teams and customer escalations, coordinating with Account Managers, Partners, and Escalation Leads to progress resolution.
- Supported engineer development through performance feedback, coaching, and guidance to strengthen customer service and problem-solving capabilities.

Senior Manager, Network Support | Oracle India | Jun 2017–Dec 2020

- Built and led a distributed support team across India and China, scaling the organization from 3 to 21 engineers through hiring, onboarding, training, and development.
- Managed support KPIs, SLAs, team performance, and critical customer escalations while partnering across functions to drive timely resolution and service delivery.
- Supported customer transitions from on-premises environments to Oracle Cloud Infrastructure, with a focus on networking and connectivity.

Escalation Manager | Oracle India | Feb 2014–May 2017

- Managed executive-level customer escalations by coordinating Customer Account Teams, Technical Support, and Sustaining Engineering around ownership, resolution plans, and communication.
- Led escalation reviews and root cause analysis for severe and recurring technical issues, partnering with stakeholders to improve customer outcomes.

Senior Technical Support Engineer | Oracle India | Mar 2011–Jan 2014

- Resolved global customer network issues through technical troubleshooting, root cause analysis, escalation handling, and knowledge documentation.

Software Engineer | Accenture | Jul 2009–Mar 2011

- Remotely monitored and maintained banking servers, coordinating with onsite teams to resolve incidents and meet service-level commitments.

Software Engineer | Tech Mahindra (formerly Satyam) | Sep 2006–Jun 2009

- Worked onsite in Nigeria supporting Zain Telecommunications; installed, configured, managed, and monitored the NetBoss telecom network management tool.

TECHNICAL SKILLS & TOOLS

- Platforms & Domains: Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI), enterprise infrastructure, networking, telecom network management
- Product: customer discovery, journey mapping, PRDs, North Star metrics, GTM, pricing, UX prototyping
- Support & Operations: Incident and problem management, escalation management, RCA, service delivery, knowledge documentation
- Tools: Salesforce, JIRA, Figma, AI assistants for workflow and process design
- Foundational Exposure: APIs, Docker, Kubernetes

EDUCATION, CERTIFICATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

- MBA, Product Leadership — Institute of Product Leadership (in progress, expected Dec 2027)
- Senior Management Program — Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode
- Post Graduate Diploma in IT — Symbiosis University
- BE, Electronics & Communication — Visvesvaraya Technological University (First Class)
- ITIL v3 Certified
- Author, “Products Need a Stay-In-Market Strategy”, published by the Institute of Product Leadership (also on Medium and LinkedIn)