

Martin Ellemann Olesen

Business-oriented Technology & Transformation Executive | Turning Strategy into Execution

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PROFILE

I help ambitious organizations turn business strategy into technology execution and scale without losing what made them successful in the first place.

25+ years at the intersection of business strategy, software engineering, digital product development and organizational scaling. Started as a software developer, led development teams and senior architects, co-founded and co-led a consultancy, and for the past 14 years have been a long-term, embedded transformation partner to CEOs, CIOs and CTOs, often for two to four years at a time.

Technology-rooted, but leadership-led. I start with the business, assess current capabilities honestly and stay through execution until new structures and ways of working function in daily operations.

Looking ahead: a permanent CTO, CPTO or transformation-oriented COO role with full responsibility for both the decisions and their long-term execution.

EXECUTIVE HIGHLIGHTS

- Led an 80+ person delivery and development organization and helped scale ProActive from approx. 45 to 150 employees, contributing to 82% revenue growth over three years
- Co-founded and co-led a technology-focused consultancy to more than DKK 100M in cumulative revenue, with owner responsibility for strategy, finance and growth
- Supported a software product turnaround at Bluegarden from a DKK 300M+ loss to near break-even within one year
- Four-year embedded partnership with IDA; currently leading a major Databricks migration and establishing a new AI team and governance model
- Designed operating models, governance and OKR-based strategy execution aligning Product, Technology, Engineering, Operations, HR and Commercial

CAREER

21Leadership | Founder, Executive Advisor & Transformation Leader 2012 – present
Long-term partner to CEOs and executive teams on technology, operating models, leadership, governance and strategy execution, with several engagements lasting two to four years.

Ugilic | Co-Founder & Co-CEO 2010 – 2017
Built a technology-focused consultancy to approx. 15 employees and DKK 100M+ in cumulative revenue, with shared owner responsibility for strategy, finance, commercial development and growth.

ProActive (now Fellowmind) | Head of Project Management, Executive Leadership Team 2005 – 2012
Led approx. 80 professionals across engineering, architecture and project management, and helped scale the company from 45 to 150 employees while moving delivery to Agile at scale.

e2e Factory | Senior Associate 2004 – 2005
Early scale-up experience with digital and organizational solutions for the aviation industry.

TDC & Maersk Data | Program & People Management 1999 – 2004
Led development teams at TDC and senior international architects at Maersk Data; ran business-critical programs.

TDC Services, PC Data Consult, ModacAD Europe | Software Developer 1997 – 1999
Hands-on software development that still shapes how I lead engineers and architects.

SELECTED ENGAGEMENTS

IDA, Danish Society of Engineers | *4-year embedded engagement*

Connected business strategy and technology execution in a politically governed membership organization through value streams, governance and OKR-based strategy execution. Currently leading a major Databricks migration and data-platform initiative, and helped establish a new AI team from business case and Executive Management approval to team formation and governance.

Result: technology moved from delivery function to strategic business partner, with higher throughput, significantly shorter time-to-market and stronger foundations for data-driven decisions and AI adoption.

Trackunit / ZTR | *Post-merger integration*

Aligned leadership expectations, ways of working and operating principles across Europe and North America after the merger, in a connected hardware and software business.

Result: stronger leadership alignment, faster integration and a more scalable operating model for continued growth.

Bluegarden (now part of Visma) | *Turnaround*

Reorganized a large, legacy-heavy software organization around clearer Product Management, Product Owners and portfolio governance, while modernizing how the payroll platform evolved.

Result: from a DKK 300M+ loss to near break-even within one year and profitability the following year.

Also: ALKA Insurance, Roche Innovation Center Copenhagen, BRFkredit, VP Securities, Novo Nordisk, Danish Agency for Digital Government and Sydbank, spanning value streams, operating-model design, regulated environments, post-privatization transformation and strategy execution.

HOW I LEAD

- **Start with the business, not the technology.** Priorities follow strategy, customer value and must-win battles.
- **Understand current capabilities before defining the target.** Honest view of today, clear gap analysis, pragmatic roadmap.
- **Build leadership capability at every level.** Decisions owned close to customers and technology.
- **Professionalize without creating bureaucracy.** Clarity and speed, with entrepreneurial energy intact.
- **Stay through execution and measure what changes.** Value comes when new capabilities work in daily operations.

EDUCATION & BEYOND THE ROLE

- **Master in Management Development (MMD)**, Copenhagen Business School
- **MBA with specialization in Organizational Psychology (in progress)**, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh Business School
- **Deploying AI for Strategic Impact**, MIT xPRO
- **Professional Scrum Trainer, Scrum.org:** trained more than 250 leaders
- **Podcast host, Ledelse i Bevægelse:** conversations with 40+ CEOs and senior leaders on leadership and change