

The Fractional CTO Advantage

Senior technical leadership without the full-time cost — and, done right, more accountability than most full-time CTOs ever provide.

Growth-stage companies face a paradox: they urgently need senior technical leadership, but cannot justify — or afford — a \$300K–\$500K+ full-time executive, and often cannot attract one at their stage. The Fractional CTO model resolves it: an experienced technical decision-maker who owns the hard calls, at a fraction of the cost and with no ramp-up.

When You Need One

- ✓ You have outgrown the architecture that got you here, and the next decisions are expensive to reverse
- ✓ You are making real AI/ML investments and need someone who can tell AI-solvable from AI-theater
- ✓ Your engineers are capable but leaderless — they need direction they do not currently have
- ✓ Your board wants credible technical reporting, not translated optimism
- ✓ Vendor relationships need experienced negotiation and oversight
- ✓ You are preparing for a raise, an audit, or an exit and need to be diligence-ready

What a Fractional CTO Actually Does

Not advice from the sidelines — ownership. The role spans three planes at once, which is exactly why it is hard to hire for and valuable to rent.

Strategic

- Owns the technology roadmap and ties it to the business and money model
- Sets AI strategy — disciplined about where AI earns its cost and where conventional engineering wins
- Drives build-vs-buy decisions with rigorous cost/benefit analysis
- Delivers board-level technical reporting and investor communication

Operational

- Makes architecture decisions with long-term scale in mind, not just the next sprint
- Runs vendor evaluation, selection, and management
- Mentors engineers and builds a culture that ships production quality

- Owns quality standards and production reliability

Protective

- Identifies and mitigates technology risk before it becomes a board problem
- Reviews and negotiates vendor contracts — the client's interests, not the vendor's
- Independently validates technical claims and deliverables
- Keeps the company perpetually diligence-ready

Fractional CTO vs. the Alternatives

Dimension	Fractional CTO	Full-Time CTO	Consulting Firm
Annual cost	From \$5,000/mo	\$300K–\$500K+	\$200K–\$1M+
Accountability	Personal, named	Personal	Firm-level, rotating staff
Availability	Defined hours, flexible	Full-time	Project-scoped
Ramp-up time	Days	Months	Weeks
Seniority on the work	25+ years, always	Varies widely	Junior staff, senior partner on calls
Flexibility	Scales with need	Fixed commitment	Contract-bound

Gerard's Approach

Every Fractional CTO engagement with WildRaven is led personally by Gerard J.R. Keenan — 25+ years of senior systems architecture, trusted by Stanford, Cisco, ESPN, NASA, and the SEC. No junior associates, no hand-offs, no learning curve billed back to you.

The operating principle is simple: your primary job is to protect the client. Every architecture choice, vendor evaluation, and roadmap call starts from that position — which is exactly the posture a company under investor scrutiny needs at the top of its technical org.

How an Engagement Runs

- **Retainer:** from \$5,000/month, scaled to the hours and scope you need
- **Commitment:** a 10-hour monthly minimum and a 3-month minimum term — enough runway to create real, compounding impact rather than a drive-by
- **Cadence:** weekly strategy sessions plus availability for the decisions that cannot wait
- **Deliverables:** a monthly board report, a living technology roadmap, and current architecture documentation
- **On-ramp:** engagements typically begin after a Technical Reality Assessment™ or a Systems Rescue Sprint, so leadership starts from a verified, evidence-based picture of the system — not a first-week guess

This tier is primarily for existing clients and boards — organizations that already know the standard of work and want it embedded, not sampled.

Ready to Get the Truth About Your Technology?

Every engagement starts with a complimentary 15-minute discovery call — no pitch, no obligation.

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[Schedule your discovery call →](#)