

Cohen Chambers

PHP Architect

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📍 Denver, Colorado 80206

STRENGTHS

- 📋 **Production Ownership**
Followed features from design through rollout, graphs, and incident follow-up; peers relied on clear judgment during difficult releases.
- 🔧 **Systems Thinking**
Connected caching, queues, idempotency, and back-pressure in payment workflows; one careful design prevented repeat processing under load.
- 👥 **Clear Partnership**
Worked closely with mobile, QA, Product, and Design teams; concise technical notes helped decisions move forward without confusion.
- 🔍 **Practical Debugging**
Used traces, profiles, logs, and query plans to find bottlenecks; colleagues often called on this approach during production incidents.
- ✅ **Quality Discipline**
Expanded PHPUnit coverage and code-review habits around risky changes; releases became calmer, and component owners gained confidence.

SKILLS

PHP 8.3 API design
API versioning Protobuf gRPC
MySQL SQL schema design
Query optimization
Distributed systems Caching
Sharding Replication
Idempotency Back-pressure
Payment flows

SUMMARY

PHP Architect with 15 years of experience building, shipping, and operating high-traffic consumer platforms across mobile and web. Brings hands-on depth in **PHP 8.3**, modular monolith evolution, schema-driven APIs, **Protobuf**, gRPC, MySQL at large scale, **caching**, **queues**, and high-availability systems. Delivered end-to-end features for millions of members, from data modeling and API contracts through testing, deployment, dashboards, rollout, and incident follow-up. Partners closely with iOS, Android, QA, Product, and Design teams, communicating technical choices in clear language. Experienced with GCP migration, Kubernetes, Docker, Kafka, Google Pub/Sub, Redis, Aerospike, ClickHouse, Elasticsearch, PHPUnit, TeamCity, Prometheus, OpenTelemetry, Jaeger, payment flows, feature flags, and GDPR-aware data handling. Ready to help Northstar Social Labs strengthen member experiences and dependable backend operations.

EXPERIENCE

Lead PHP Architect

Brightline Member Services 📅 July 2023 - Present 📍 Denver, Colorado

Owns backend architecture for a consumer membership platform serving more than 8 million registered users. Guides PHP 8.3 delivery across a modular monolith, shared infrastructure, mobile APIs, monetization systems, and cloud operations while leading architecture reviews and production ownership.

- Reworked Protobuf and gRPC contracts across 120 high-use endpoints, adding compatibility rules and **API versioning** controls that protected older iOS and Android releases during staged launches.
- Directed GCP migration with Docker, Kubernetes, **Google Pub/Sub**, and Kafka, pairing lift-and-shift delivery with cloud-native service boundaries and runbooks for safer operations.
- Established Prometheus, OpenTelemetry, Jaeger, and liveprof instrumentation for latency, queue depth, payment failures, and database saturation, speeding diagnosis during member-impacting incidents.
- Shaped credits, subscriptions, and **in-app purchases** with **idempotency** keys, replay-safe event handling, and reconciliation checks across MySQL and asynchronous CPQ queues.
- Led design sessions, complex code reviews, postmortems, and rollout decisions with mobile engineering, QA, Product, and Design using **feature flags** and **A/B testing** controls.

Principal Backend Engineer

CivicPulse Digital 📅 January 2021 - June 2023 📍 Chicago, Illinois

Owned backend architecture for a high-volume social discovery product, balancing modular-monolith delivery with independently deployable services. Connected database strategy, event processing, deployment controls, testing, observability, and incident management with measurable product and reliability goals.

- Designed **MySQL** schemas, composite indexes, partitioning approaches, and query-plan improvements for tables exceeding one billion rows, using Redis and Aerospike to protect read-heavy paths.
- Built gRPC services with Protobuf contracts and Kafka event pipelines for mobile actions, documenting **failure modes**, **back-pressure**, retries, and idempotent processing for partner teams.
- Implemented Kubernetes deployment patterns through TeamCity and **GitHub Enterprise**, adding health checks, rollback procedures, resource policies, and release verification.
- Expanded PHPUnit unit and functional coverage with **soft-mocks** around payment, subscription, and notification integrations, reducing regression risk during monolith changes.
- Coordinated incident response for backend and monetization issues, tracking postmortem actions and presenting service health, **business metrics**, and rollout results to engineering leadership.

Senior PHP Engineer

HarborPeak Commerce 📅 October 2017 - December 2020 📍 Raleigh, North Carolina

LANGUAGES

English Native

Spanish Intermediate

MY CAREER



- Lead PHP Architect at Brightline Member Services (3.1 Years)
- Principal Backend Engineer at CivicPulse Digital (2.4 Years)
- Senior PHP Engineer at HarborPeak Commerce (3.2 Years)
- PHP Backend Engineer at Redwood Interactive (3.2 Years)
- PHP Developer at SignalForge Software (3.1 Years)

Delivered server-side capabilities for a consumer commerce platform spanning web, mobile, billing, entitlements, search, and asynchronous event processing. Helped a six-engineer backend group evolve a **large monolith** without losing compatibility or release confidence.

- Isolated billing, entitlement, and account capabilities behind documented API boundaries, preserving compatibility across multiple mobile client versions during monolith evolution.
- Modeled subscription renewals, credit grants, refunds, and purchase callbacks with transactional safeguards and idempotent handlers for reliable payment reconciliation.
- Tuned **query plans**, indexes, cache lifetimes, and queue consumers after profiling production bottlenecks, improving consistency across catalog and member activity paths.
- Introduced **PHPUnit** functional suites and peer-review checklists covering schema, migrations, observability, and rollback concerns, strengthening delivery quality across the backend group.
- Partnered with **QA**, mobile developers, **Product**, and Design to validate device behavior end to end, document technical approaches, and monitor feature performance after release.

PHP Backend Engineer

Redwood Interactive 📅 July 2014 - September 2017 📍 Portland, Oregon

Built and maintained PHP APIs for a mobile-first consumer application, translating product needs into business logic, MySQL models, cache strategies, queue workflows, and testable services. Supported release quality across backend, mobile, QA, and operations teams.

- Implemented **API versioning** and response compatibility practices for **Android** and iOS clients, including graceful handling of long-tail app versions and safer staged releases.
- Developed queue-backed workflows for notifications, account changes, and purchase events with Kafka and Redis, documenting retry limits, **failure modes**, and duplicate-message protection.
- Added PHPUnit unit and **functional tests** for account, entitlement, and payment scenarios, improving release confidence across mobile and backend dependencies.
- Used Elasticsearch and query analysis to resolve slow member-search and activity-feed paths, pairing application profiling with index changes and targeted cache invalidation.
- Created deployment and monitoring improvements with **Docker**, **TeamCity**, Prometheus, and operational dashboards, giving engineers clearer rollout and incident signals.

PHP Developer

SignalForge Software 📅 May 2011 - June 2014 📍 Salt Lake City, Utah

Developed PHP backend modules for consumer web applications, progressing from feature delivery into independent ownership of account, profile, and transaction workflows. Built foundational experience in MySQL design, APIs, caching, testing, **code review**, releases, and production support.

- Designed MySQL tables, foreign keys, indexes, and migration scripts for growing datasets, reviewing **query plans** to prevent avoidable production bottlenecks.
- Built JSON APIs and client-server integrations consumed by early mobile applications, documenting contracts and validating edge cases with QA before release.
- Added **Redis** and **Memcached** caching for profile and configuration data, defining expiration and invalidation rules that preserved freshness.
- Wrote PHPUnit tests, participated in peer code reviews, and improved shared coding conventions across a custom PHP framework used by multiple **product** teams.
- Supported production releases and incident investigations by reviewing logs, reproducing failures, communicating findings, and converting recurring issues into **monitoring** work.

PROJECTS

GCP Monetization Migration 📅 2025

Moved payment and subscription workloads from legacy hosting into GCP using Docker, Kubernetes, Google Pub/Sub, and Kafka. Added reconciliation, dashboards, rollout controls, and operational runbooks.

Billion-Row Data Optimization 📅 2023

Reshaped MySQL access for large activity tables through schema changes, indexing, partitioning, query-plan analysis, Redis caching, and Aerospike read protection.

Mobile API Compatibility Program 📅 2020

Created Protobuf and gRPC contract practices that supported long-tail iOS and Android versions, clearer release testing, safer rollout decisions, and dependable client-server communication.

LEADERSHIP & AWARDS

- Engineering Excellence Award, CivicPulse Digital, 2022
- Platform Reliability Recognition, HarborPeak Commerce, 2019
- Backend Innovation Award, Redwood Interactive, 2016

EDUCATION

Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science

University of Utah 🎓 GPA: 3.7 📅 2011 📍 Salt Lake City, Utah

Coursework: *Distributed Systems, Database Design, Software Engineering, Algorithms*

CERTIFICATIONS

- Google Cloud Professional Cloud Developer 📅 2024
- Certified Kubernetes Application Developer (CKAD) 📅 2023
- Google Cloud Digital Leader 📅 2022

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **PHP Development:** PHP 8.3, custom PHP frameworks, RoadRunner
- **API Technologies:** gRPC, Protocol Buffers, JSON APIs
- **Database Systems:** MySQL, Aerospike, ClickHouse
- **Caching Platforms:** Redis, Memcached, cache invalidation
- **Event Streaming:** Kafka, Google Pub/Sub, CPQ event queues
- **Cloud Platforms:** GCP, Kubernetes, Docker
- **Observability Tools:** Prometheus, OpenTelemetry, Jaeger
- **Testing Tools:** PHPUnit, soft-mocks, functional testing
- **Delivery Systems:** TeamCity, GitHub Enterprise, CI/CD
- **Search Technologies:** Elasticsearch, query analysis, indexing
- **Distributed Systems:** sharding, replication, back-pressure
- **Release Controls:** feature flags, A/B testing, gradual rollouts
- **Data Practices:** GDPR, data privacy, schema design

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Architecture Review Council, Brightline Member Services, 2023 - Present
- Open Source PHP Maintainers Group, Volunteer Contributor, 2018 - Present
- Colorado Cloud Native Meetup, Technical Session Organizer, 2022 - Present

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Work Status : Authorized to work in United States. No sponsorship required.

REFERENCES

AVAILABLE ON REQUEST