

Joe Guarino

📍 Henderson, Nevada ✉️ joe@guarino.email 📞 7252255487 🌐 in/itjoe 📧 joe.guarino.email

SUMMARY

With over 18 years of experience in the legal industry, I am a seasoned IT executive passionate about driving innovation, operational efficiency, and service excellence. As the most senior-ranking IT professional and an executive board member at First Legal, I have led the organization through a transformative era of technological advancement and strategic growth.

During my tenure, I expanded the IT team from a modest 3-person department to a robust division of 20 professionals, covering InfoSec, Support, DevOps, Infrastructure, and Product. By implementing best practices, modernizing systems, and introducing scalable solutions, I positioned First Legal as a technology leader in the legal services industry. This strategic approach played a critical role in the company's successful acquisition by Aurora Capital.

In my role as Director of Information Technology, I have overseen major initiatives such as the migration and replacement of legacy systems, the complete overhaul of networking infrastructure, and the introduction of Business Intelligence (BI) in partnership with organizational leaders. These advancements have empowered First Legal's comprehensive File Thru Trial™ services, enabling seamless workflows, enhanced customer experiences, and data-driven decision-making. Additionally, I built InfoSec and compliance programs from the ground up, ensuring regulatory alignment and a robust security posture.

Beyond my professional achievements, I am committed to fostering a culture of growth, innovation, and accountability. As Co-Founder of Unlimited Jiu Jitsu & Self Defense, I have built a thriving community focused on personal development and resilience. My work as an ambassador for the We Defy Foundation further reflects my dedication to giving back, supporting combat veterans through Brazilian Jiu Jitsu training at my academy, which also serves as a host facility for scholarship recipients.

Whether leading large-scale technology transformations or mentoring teams, I strive to align IT strategies with business objectives, ensuring that technology serves as a catalyst for success. My diverse experiences across leadership, community engagement, and martial arts continue to shape my values of integrity, perseverance, and collaboration.

EXPERIENCE

Director of Information Technology

First Legal!

November 2018 – Present, Henderson, Nevada, United States · Hybrid

- As Director of Information Technology at First Legal, I have transformed the IT department into a strategic driver of innovation and operational excellence. Growing the team from three to 20 professionals across InfoSec, Support, DevOps, Infrastructure, and Product, I have positioned IT as a cornerstone of the organization's success, including a strategic private equity acquisition.
- A key accomplishment was introducing a Business Intelligence (BI) framework in collaboration with a senior Organizational Development leader. This initiative aligned technical capabilities with business goals, providing actionable insights that enhanced operational visibility and data-driven decisionmaking across the company. I also spearheaded the creation of InfoSec and compliance programs from the ground up, building a robust security posture to safeguard sensitive data and meet regulatory standards.
- Modernizing First Legal's technology stack has been a primary focus of my leadership. I directed the migration and replacement of critical legacy systems, ensuring alignment with business needs, and led a complete overhaul of the company's networking infrastructure to improve scalability, reliability, and security. These foundational changes have supported the company's rapid growth and operational efficiency.
- As an executive leader, I align IT strategy with organizational objectives, foster crossfunctional collaboration, and drive a culture of accountability and innovation. My role encompasses many CTOlevel responsibilities, including shaping the technology roadmap, identifying opportunities to leverage emerging technologies, and delivering exceptional customer and operational outcomes.
- Through these efforts, I have positioned First Legal as a leader in the legal services industry, ensuring IT is not just a support function but a catalyst for strategic growth and competitive advantage.
- Revamped vendor management processes at First Legal, renegotiating contracts and integrating cloud-based solutions to drive cost efficiency while strengthening system resilience and service quality.

Owner

Unlimited Jiu Jitsu & Self Defense

June 2022 – Present, Henderson, NV · Hybrid

- As Founder of Unlimited Jiu Jitsu & Self Defense, I have played a central role in building a successful martial arts academy known for its community-driven approach and commitment to personal growth. From its inception, I have focused on developing the business and brand strategy, including logo design, marketing campaigns, and local outreach efforts, which have cultivated a loyal membership base and sustainable growth.
- I oversee all aspects of the business, including operations, financial planning, customer service, and community engagement, ensuring a high-quality experience for members. My leadership extends to fostering partnerships with organizations like the We Defy Foundation, where we support disabled combat veterans through mentorship and martial arts training.
- Through careful planning and execution, I have helped grow Unlimited Jiu Jitsu into a recognized brand within the community, earning a reputation for excellence and impact. This success reflects my dedication to creating a welcoming, inclusive space where members can learn discipline, selfdefense, and personal development, and where the values of hard work and resilience are at the forefront.

DevOps Manager

First Legal!

November 2012 – November 2018, Riverside, California, United States · On-site

- In my role, I have overseen Agile development processes, often acting as a Scrum Master for crossfunctional teams to ensure the timely and efficient delivery of software development initiatives. As a Product Manager for several customerfacing and stafffacing solutions, I have defined product roadmaps, prioritized features, and aligned development goals with overarching business objectives. Managing endtoend project lifecycles, I have led efforts in requirements gathering, sprint planning, and stakeholder communication, ensuring that all initiatives align with organizational priorities. I have directed the migration and hosting of critical infrastructure on cloud platforms, prioritizing scalability, security, and reliability to meet both internal and customerfacing needs.
- To support growing business demands, I collaborated with development teams to implement automated testing and deployment pipelines, enabling faster release cycles and improved code quality. Additionally, I designed and deployed monitoring frameworks to track realtime performance and proactively address system issues, significantly improving system uptime. By integrating feedback loops into Agile workflows, I fostered continuous improvement and enhanced stakeholder satisfaction. My efforts in optimizing the delivery of highpriority legal orders, including the introduction of task automation and datadriven decisionmaking tools, resulted in a 30% reduction in processing time. Coordinating with DevOps and infrastructure teams, I ensured hosting environments evolved seamlessly alongside application needs while maintaining transparency and alignment between technical teams and business stakeholders through effective backlog refinement sessions and sprint reviews.

Information Technology Help Desk Technician and Manager

First Legal!

November 2010 – November 2012, Los Angeles, California, United States · On-site

- As an Information Technology Help Desk Technician, I provided frontline technical support, troubleshooting hardware, software, and network issues to ensure seamless operations for staff and clients. I configured and maintained workstations, printers, and other office technology while assisting in the deployment of new IT systems and software updates. My role also included delivering user training and support, enhancing employee productivity and technology adoption, and resolving support tickets with a strong focus on customer service and timely resolution.
- Transitioning into the role of Help Desk Manager, I leveraged my technical expertise and problemsolving abilities to establish First Legal's first formalized help desk team. I designed and implemented a comprehensive ticketing system, significantly improving response times and elevating customer satisfaction. Additionally, I standardized IT workflows and introduced remote support tools to streamline crossoffice technical assistance. As a manager, I developed training programs for new technicians to ensure consistent service quality, managed resource allocation and scheduling, and collaborated with senior IT leadership to identify opportunities for automation and process improvements. These efforts not only increased team productivity but also positioned the help desk as a critical component of the organization's IT infrastructure.

Operations and Management Roles

First Legal!

November 2006 – November 2010, Los Angeles, California, United States · On-site

- In my operations and management roles at First Legal, I gained extensive experience overseeing service delivery and driving process improvements across various facets of the organization. I managed a courthouse desk and an office location, ensuring smooth day-to-day operations and delivering exceptional service to both clients and internal teams. These responsibilities honed my ability to manage complex workflows and adapt to the fast-paced demands of the legal services industry.
- During this time, I developed deep expertise in legal support services, which allowed me to identify and implement innovative operational efficiencies. My collaborative approach with IT and other departments enabled the successful integration of new tools and processes that improved service quality and turnaround times. I played a pivotal role in scaling operational teams to meet growing client demands, building robust systems that ensured consistency and reliability. These contributions were recognized with First Legal's annual Innovation Award, highlighting my ability

to combine strategic thinking with practical solutions to drive organizational success. This foundation of operational expertise later became a critical asset as I transitioned into technology leadership roles within the company.

EDUCATION

Blended Professional, Chief Technology Officer

MIT Professional Education · Cambridge, MA

• Skills: IT Strategy and Leadership · AI Prompting · Team Building and Management · IT Leadership · Technical Leadership

CERTIFICATIONS

Leadership & Innovation

MIT Professional Education · 2025

Bring Your Own AI: Balance Rewards & Risks

MIT Sloan Management Review · 2025

Management of Technology: Roadmapping & Development

MIT Professional Education · 2025

Adult First Aid/CPR/AED

American Red Cross Training Services · 2023

Safesport Trained

U.S. Center for SafeSport · 2023

Certified Court Reporting Firm Owner

State of Nevada Certified Court Reporters Board · 2017

COURSEWORK

Dale Carnegie: Front Line Management

INVOLVEMENT

Member

ILTA International Legal Technology Association · May 2024 – Present

• Focused on legal technology advancements and best practices.

Member

Global CTO Forum · January 2023 – Present

• Networking and resources for technology leaders.

Ambassador

We Defy Foundation · October 2022 – Present

• Supporting disabled combat veterans through Jiu Jitsu and fitness programs.

Member

WSDBA Water Street District Business Association · August 2022 – Present

• Water Street District Business Association is a group of dedicated business leaders focused on the success and the future of downtown Henderson businesses.

Sons of the American Legion

American Legion · January 2016 – Present

- Founded by an Act of Congress after World War I, The American Legion fiercely advocates for the unique needs of every generation of veterans, service members, and their families who pledge to protect our nation. Today, we are committed to destigmatizing mental health support, offering peer-to-peer resources, and empowering everyone to Be The One in the fight to end veteran suicide.

SKILLS

Industry Knowledge: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Sports Coaching, Youth Programs, First Aid, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), Accounting, Director level, IT Leadership, Information Technology Infrastructure, DevOps, Agile Methodologies, Product Development, Product Management, Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC), Software Project Management, Engineering Management, Technical Support, Process Optimization, Customer Service Excellence, Start-up Organizations

Tools & Technologies: Automated External Defibrillator (AED), Databases, .NET Framework, SQL, PHP, Content Management Systems (CMS), Amazon Web Services (AWS), Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop

Interpersonal Skills: Management, Analytical Skills, Team Leadership, Communication, Problem Solving, Leadership

Other Skills: AI Prompting, AI Governance
