HAYSTACK PEOPLE

Tech Lead – PHP/AI

Established | Vast

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Our client is a leading digital player in the real estate market, based in the centre of Rotterdam. Through a number of platforms, they connect millions of home seekers with rental professionals every month, both in the Netherlands and beyond. It is a mature, financially stable organisation that has held on to the agility and informal atmosphere of a scale-up.

The team works within a compact, close-knit organisation where engineering is taken seriously. The culture is informal and pragmatic: no egos, no politics, but a strong engineering mindset with plenty of freedom, room for collaboration and a clear long-term vision. Decisions are made on substance, close to the people doing the work.

The platform you will contribute to is a candidate-management platform that helps real estate agents streamline their entire rental process, from first lead to rented. The ambition reaches further: from lead generator to a full partner in funnel optimisation. That means more intelligence in the selection process, deeper integrations with leading housing platforms and increasingly data-driven features. In short, there is genuinely something to build here.

THE ROLE

As Tech Lead, you are responsible for the technical quality and direction of the team. This is deliberately neither a pure management role nor a pure hands-on role: you are the technical conscience of the team. You think along at architecture level, help developers grow and jump into the code yourself where needed. You move smoothly between collab sessions, code reviews and product discussions.

You report to the Engineering Manager and are their direct sparring partner on capacity, roadmap and architecture decisions. To the team, you are the first point of contact for technical questions. You also work closely with the product owner to arrive at the right solutions for new features and product developments. In short: you steer on engineering, safeguard quality, facilitate good decisions and make sure the team as a whole gets stronger.

What will you do?

Technical leadership and coaching

- You coach the developers in the team on code quality, architecture and professional growth.
- You initiate and lead technical discussions, refinements and reviews.
- You give feedback, asked and unasked, through code reviews and act as a role model for clean, maintainable code.
- You spot when someone gets stuck and help to unblock them.

Architecture and technical direction

- You safeguard the technical integrity of the platform, built on PHP, DDD and CQRS.
- You make well-considered decisions about tech debt, new patterns and tooling, and explain them clearly to the team.
- You think along on scalability, security and performance in the GCP/Kubernetes environment.
- You keep the technical documentation up to date and make sure knowledge is anchored within the team.

Working with the Engineering Manager

- You are a steady sparring partner on capacity planning, technical risks and prioritisation.
- You translate product ambitions into a realistic technical approach and flag bottlenecks early.
- You contribute to improving team processes, from sprint ceremonies to deploy pipelines.

Building along

- You actively take part where it adds value: feature development, bug fixes and spikes.
- You manage the balance yourself between what you pick up and what you delegate, so that coaching and steering do not suffer.

The tech

- The stack is PHP (DDD/CQRS), Docker and Kubernetes on GCP, CI/CD pipelines and tooling such as PHPStan, CS Fixer and Deptrac. AI tooling like Cursor and Claude is not an add-on here but a fixed part of the daily way of working, from code generation to speeding up spikes and supporting architecture choices. That acceleration is only increasing, and you help the team discover where AI truly adds value and where it pays to stay critical.

Growth

- This is a substantial role with a lot of responsibility and direct influence on both product and team. For someone who wants to keep building on technical leadership, this position offers a natural foundation towards architecture and engineering leadership roles.

WHO ARE YOU?

- You have at least 5 years of experience as a software engineer, with demonstrable experience in a leading or senior role within a development team.
- You think and work at bachelor's or master's level.
- You are strong in PHP and know the principles of DDD and CQRS, or you have worked with comparable structured backends and learn quickly.
- You are at home in modern devops practices: Docker, Kubernetes and CI/CD.
- You actively work with AI tooling (such as Cursor, Claude or similar) and know how to use it effectively in your own workflow and that of the team. You see AI not as hype, but as a serious accelerator.
- You know how to coach developers: you give clear feedback, ask questions that make people think and help them grow without taking over.
- You communicate clearly, towards developers, the Engineering Manager and the Product Lead.
- You take a pragmatic view of tech debt: you know when to tackle it and when to move on.
- You are comfortable with the balance between coding yourself and guiding others, and you know which hat to wear when.

WHAT DO WE OFFER?

- A substantial and responsible role with direct impact on product and team.
- A market-based salary, depending on seniority and experience.
- A solid pension scheme: the employer covers 70%.
- Flexible working hours and a full-time position.
- A budget for training and conferences, so you keep developing yourself.
- A laptop of your choice (Mac or Dell) to work on.
- A pleasant workplace high up in a tower in the heart of Rotterdam, with sweeping views over the city.
- Shared lunches, Friday afternoon drinks and team outings.
- A weekly bootcamp and a discount on a sports subscription and on your mobility (shared bike).

Interested?

Do you recognise yourself in this role and would you like to spar about what you make of technical leadership? Then I would be glad to get in touch.
Call or WhatsApp on +31 6 83 93 19 68 or email r.sadloe@haystackpeople.nl for an informal conversation. No CV at hand? A quick call is enough to get acquainted.

Why this is interesting now:

The platform is growing, the ambition is growing and so is the team. That means you can help set the technical course now, in an early and defining phase, shape a team and build software that makes the rental market smarter. Do you want to be the technical conscience of a team that genuinely delivers, while developing yourself towards architecture and leadership? Then this is your chance.

Contact & solliciteren

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