

# CARLA SANTOS

Head of Engineering / Technology | Engineering Transformation & Scaling High-Impact Software Platforms

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## EXPERIENCE

### Technical Director

#### Tridonic (Zumtobel Group)

April 2019 – Present 📍 Porto, Portugal

Scope: 100+ engineers across cross-functional teams in Portugal, Austria, and Switzerland.

- Led a full engineering transformation from a heavily outsourced model (~8 external projects) to a fully in-house organisation of 10 autonomous product teams — completed by 2022 with zero disruption to ongoing delivery.
- Delivered the first fully in-house product from scratch: an emergency lighting hardware and software system launched in 2021, now sold commercially as Nanobox by Zumtobel.
- Owned €5M+ annual engineering budget, driving headcount planning, financial forecasting, and resource allocation across distributed teams in Portugal, Austria, and Switzerland.
- Built and scaled the engineering organisation from an initial team of 2 to 100+, embedding leadership pipelines, performance accountability, and structured governance while sustaining attrition below 9%.
- Defined a unified technology and methodology strategy, consolidating fragmented stacks across geographies while preserving pragmatic exceptions.
- Defined and executed a multi-year technology roadmap aligned to global product strategy and long-term platform evolution.
- Elevated engineering excellence by institutionalising ISO-aligned development processes, strengthening traceability, compliance, and operational discipline.
- Serves as external spokesperson for Tridonic engineering — featured on RTP2 and CNN Portugal showcasing national engineering talent; represents the company at national universities and pan-European industry events.
- Regularly present across engineering hubs in Austria and Switzerland; manages a distributed team with members in Germany.

### R&D Director

#### INOVA+

January 2015 – March 2019 📍 Porto, Portugal

- Tripled unit funding by transforming the R&D operating model from proposal participation to direct execution and consulting delivery across EU-funded innovation programs.
- Secured multi-year contractual revenue ensuring over two years of team salary coverage, strengthening financial stability and reducing delivery risk.
- Led interdisciplinary HealthTech programs including regulated photonics systems for early cancer detection, coordinating software delivery with hardware and clinical partners.
- Based in Brussels for 8 months, representing INOVA+ at the European Commission and coordinating with consortium partners across the EU; travelled extensively across Europe to manage project partnerships.
- Acted as independent judge for European Commission innovation projects, evaluating technical merit and strategic impact across submitted proposals.
- Represented the organisation at major European technology and innovation conferences, strengthening institutional visibility and technical credibility.

### Project Manager & Lead Software Engineer

#### INOVA+

July 2011 – December 2014 📍 Porto, Portugal

- Led cross-functional health technology initiatives from concept to delivery, managing scope, timelines, and regulatory constraints in structured R&D environments.
- Architected and implemented full-stack systems (C#, Unity 3D, Web Services) across embedded, backend, and application layers for medical and therapeutic platforms.
- Integrated software and hardware modules for an endoscopic diagnostic and therapy capsule, ensuring interoperability and system reliability.
- Contributed to digital rehabilitation platforms for Parkinson's treatment and therapeutic applications for special-needs education.

### Earlier Experience

2009 – 2011

- Distributed systems engineering across telecom and financial services — mediation, billing, banking risk, and AI-based routing in high-reliability environments.

## ABOUT ME

Engineering leader with 14+ years of experience transforming and scaling cross-functional organisations across Europe. Proven track record taking fragmented, outsourced engineering functions and building high-performing in-house teams — without disrupting delivery. Owns €5M+ budgets, speaks at European industry events and national media, and has operated across Portugal, Belgium, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

## MOST PROUD OF

### Engineering Transformation at Tridonic

Took a globally fragmented, outsourced engineering function and rebuilt it from the inside out — insourcing, unifying methodology and technology, launching a commercial product from scratch (Nanobox, 2021), and structuring 10 autonomous product teams. All without a single disruption to ongoing delivery.

## EDUCATION

### M.Sc. in Informatics and Software Engineering

#### University of Porto

2005 – 2010 📍 Porto, Portugal

## STRENGTHS

- Engineering Transformation
- Org Scaling
- Platform Architecture
- Delivery Predictability
- Operational Excellence
- Cross-Functional Leadership
- Budget & Financial Planning
- Executive Communication

### VISIBILITY & SPEAKING

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**Media:** Featured on RTP2 and CNN Portugal representing Tridonic engineering innovation.

**Academic:** Guest speaker at University of Porto and other Portuguese universities on engineering leadership and technology.

**Industry:** Company-wide spokesperson at pan-European events; represented INOVA+ at European Commission forums and international consortium meetings.

**EC Judge:** Independent evaluator of European Commission innovation project proposals.

### LANGUAGES

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<b>Portuguese</b> Native	●●●●●
<b>English</b> Fluent	●●●●●
<b>Spanish</b> Professional	●●●●●