BRET SCHWALB

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PRINCIPAL USER EXPERIENCE PRODUCT DESIGNER

Highly accomplished UX product design manager with over two decades of strategic and tactical leadership in architecting complex, people-centered digital products that consistently deliver measurable improvements in user satisfaction, productivity and business outcomes. Proven expertise in adapting cross-functional teams to modern design practices in agile environments.

EXPERIENCE

Discover Network, Riverwoods, IL **2020 – Present**

Design Manager

- Established and led a high-performing product design team, fostering a human-centered design culture that directly resulted in a measurable increase in internal and external stakeholder productivity and satisfaction.
- Directed the end-to-end design for a diverse set of highly complex, internal and externally facing secure user experiences, meeting stringent compliance requirements while enhancing user productivity.
- Introduced a data-driven, continuous improvement process, utilizing user feedback, analytics, and user interviews.
- Developed and deployed a scalable product design framework that unified design, development, and product teams, leading to a 20% faster product launch cycle.
- Fostered relationships across business domains, including senior leadership, driving adoption of design thinking and prioritizing user-centered design.
- Consolidated six legacy portal design systems into a unified, mobile-first, and WCAG-compliant design system, ensuring a consistent and accessible experience across all applications and devices.
- Developed a collaborative culture between designers, developers, and leadership through training, presentations and process improvements that improved team performance and accelerated product innovation.

Strata Decision Technology, Chicago, IL **2019 – 2020**

Senior User Experience Architect

- Strategically embedded product design practices in the development process, driving a significant improvement in user experience quality with no loss of development velocity.
- Mentored mid-level designers in design thinking, client relationships, building cross functional partnerships, and team practices.
- Successfully transformed skeptical stakeholder relationships into collaborative alliances, leading to their endorsement and full adoption of UX design in product development.
- Developed and ran an in-house class teaching design thinking for non-designers, fostering a culture of creativity and forward-thinking solutions.
- Created detailed end-to-end design artifacts, including user flows, wireframes, annotated drawings, and usability testing demos.

Alight Solutions, formerly Aon-Hewitt, Lincolnshire, IL **2015 – 2019**

Senior User Experience Designer

- Designed consumer facing, human resources, benefits and banking software experiences.
- Reimagined the employee benefits enrollment experience to be mobile first, with a 15-minute benefits enrollment time.
- Consulted directly with multiple Fortune 50 clients to win and retain multi-million-dollar contracts through brand and message matched portal designs.
- Developed a cross-culture virtual assistant for the employee benefits enrollment experience.
- Played a key role in modernizing the design system, communicating changes to senior leadership and driving organization-wide adoption.
- Redesigned key consumer-facing applications, resulting in a 20% reduction in call center volume.

Omeda Communications, Northbrook, IL **2011 – 2015**
Senior User Experience Designer

- End-to-end redesign of the customer information management system in four weeks, resulting in the acquisition of Omeda's largest client in over 40 years.
- Established user experience methodologies and practices within the Agile framework, ensuring seamless integration into iterative development cycles.
- Directed end-to-end design processes, fostering cross-functional collaboration and strategic partnerships to deliver cohesive user experiences and ensure project success.
- Instrumental in driving key decisions in design, product strategy, and business direction.
- Designed customer information management systems, order entry, email campaign management, and data management and reporting tools.
- Conducted user research and testing through analytics, surveys, direct observation, and interviews.

Allstate Insurance Company, Northbrook, IL **2000 – 2011**
Senior Communications Consultant, Technology Team

- Led and mentored high-performing teams in experience design, development, and graphic design, fostering an innovative environment that consistently delivered exceptional people centered solutions.
- Implemented and standardized user experience methodologies, building a foundation for data-driven design decisions and fostering a culture of user-centricity within the department.
- Trained designers and contingent workers to effectively operate within Allstate's complex IT infrastructure and brand guidelines, resulting in a higher quality of design and deliverables.
- Identified and implemented new communication technology across all platforms, that reduced operational cost by as much as $750,000, and increased employee engagement by 50%.

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Operating Systems: Android, iOS, Linux/Unix, MS Windows, MacOS
Languages: Agentic AI, HTML, CSS, JavaScript, XML, Java, SEO principles
Software: Figma, Sketch, InVision, Adobe, Google Analytics, Agentic AI prompt engineering
Design: Design systems, Atomic design, Figma design tokens, Figma Variables

PROJECTS, PUBLICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

AI Application Creator
Career Camp Agentic AI career assistant

- Created to bring comprehensive career guidance to students and new graduates.

ListShot

- AI powered app that scans real world text and objects to make lists.

Author and Speaker
Play to Innovate, Edition 2: Unleash Personal and Organizational Innovation

- Self-promoted and read in five countries.
- Speaking engagements with Fortune 500 companies and Chamber of Commerce groups.

Making Great Clients: A primer for designers learning to work with clients.

Toastmasters Int'l – Achieved Competent Communicator and club ambassador designations.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Industrial Design, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign