

BRET SCHWALB

847-489-2211 | folio.5pebblesllc.com | bret.schwalb@gmail.com | www.linkedin.com/in/bretschwalb

PRODUCT DESIGN & OPERATIONS LEADER

Product Design Leader with 20+ years of experience delivering scalable, high-impact digital products. Proven track record of modernizing design practices and leading cross-functional teams to improve user satisfaction and business ROI.

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Design: Design systems, Atomic design, Figma design tokens & Variables, User Research and Testing

AI & Technical: Agentic AI, Prompt Engineering, HTML, CSS, JavaScript, XML, Java.

Software: Figma, Sketch, InVision, Adobe Creative Suite, Google Analytics.

EXPERIENCE

Capital One – Discover Global Network | Riverwoods, IL

Design Manager | 2020 – Present

- Leveraged AI-assisted coding and Figma Make to rapidly build functional internal tools and end-to-end designs for high-risk, secure platforms under strict compliance.
- Accelerated product launch cycles by 20% by developing and deploying a scalable product design framework that nurtured design, development, and product team collaboration.
- Consolidated 6 legacy portal design systems into a single, mobile-first, WCAG-compliant system, ensuring accessibility and consistency across all enterprise applications.
- Increased application modernization by establishing a high-performing design team and fostering a data-driven, human-centered design culture.
- Introduced a data-driven, continuous improvement process, integrating user feedback, analytics, and user research to drive iterative product enhancements.
- Drove adoption of design thinking and prioritizing user-centered design by fostering strategic, cross-domain relationships, including senior leadership.

Strata Decision Technology | Chicago, IL

Senior User Experience Architect | 2019 – 2020

- Improved UX quality with zero loss in development velocity by strategically embedding design practices directly into the engineering process.
- Cultivated cross-functional alliances by transforming skeptical stakeholder relationships into collaborative partnerships that fully adopted UX methodologies.
- Trained non-designers in design thinking by creating and leading an in-house curriculum that fostered organizational creativity.
- Created detailed user flows, wireframes, annotated drawings, and usability testing plans.

Alight Solutions, formerly Aon-Hewitt | Lincolnshire, IL

Senior User Experience Designer | 2015 – 2019

- Reduced call center volume by 20% through the design of key consumer-facing mobile applications.
- Reimagined employee benefits enrollment to a guided, mobile-first 15 minutes experience.
- Secured multi-million-dollar, Fortune 50 clients by delivering brand-matched portal designs that aligned with their complex business requirements.
- Developed a cross-cultural virtual assistant for the employee benefits enrollment experience.

Omeda Communications | Northbrook, IL

Senior User Experience Designer | 2011 – 2015

- Acquired the firm's largest client in 40 years following a high-speed, four-week end-to-end redesign of the customer information management system.
- Established user experience methodologies and practices within the Agile framework.
- Designed SaaS customer management systems, marketing campaign tools, and reporting tools.
- Conducted user research and testing through analytics, surveys, direct observation, and interviews.

Allstate Insurance Company | Northbrook, IL

Senior Communications Consultant, Technology Team | 2000 – 2011

- Reduced operational costs by \$750,000 per year, while increasing employee engagement by 50% by designing and engineering new communication technology.
- Led and mentored high-performing UX and UI design and development team.

PROJECTS & PUBLICATIONS

Career Camp | Agentic AI Career Assistant

- **Architected and deployed** a functional AI-driven career guidance tool designed to assist students and recent graduates in navigating the job market.
- **Developed custom agentic logic** and prompt engineering frameworks to deliver personalized, comprehensive career roadmaps.

ListShot | AI-Powered Computer Vision App

- **Engineered an application** that leverages AI to scan real-world text and physical objects to allow the user to transform them into structured digital lists.
- **Integrated computer vision and LLM capabilities** to bridge the gap between physical objects and digital productivity tools.

Play to Innovate | Author & Speaker

- **Published a comprehensive guide** on organizational innovation, successfully self-promoted and read across five countries.
- **Delivered strategic keynote presentations** and workshops for Fortune 500 companies and professional organizations on fostering a culture of creativity.

Making Great Clients | Author

- **Published a comprehensive primer** on the nuances of building and nurturing business relationships from colleagues to customers.

EDUCATION

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