

Sarah Walczynski

Manager Profile

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[LinkedIn](#) • Tonica, IL

Innovative and driven User Experience leader with over 15 years of experience in Technology, driving results through data analysis, project and product management, and commitment to quality and excellence.

An expert in developing User Experience (UX) roadmaps for client-facing services, applications, systems and interfaces. Adept in identifying improvement areas through user feedback, research, and process evaluation, employing necessary and functional changes. Skilled in organization people management, and quick problem solving, ensuring key team members and players are positioned accordingly to meet goals and milestones, clearing roadblocks and issues quickly and effectively. A natural leader and collaborator, easily able to liaise with cross-functional partners, stakeholders, and executives, encouraging open and transparent communication.

Key Skills:

User Experience, Training, Learning & Development, Application Development, Digital Strategy, Information Architecture, Project Management, Prototyping, Teaching & Instruction, Testing, Interviewing, Client Experience, Knowledge Management, Quality Assurance, Wireframing, Content Management, Client Support, Change Management

Methodologies:

Gestalt Principles, Nielsen's Heuristics, Norman Design Principles, Usability Qualities (5Es), Fractional Notation, Learning Styles, Andragogy and Pedagogy, Design Thinking, and Atomic Design Research

Software & Research Tools:

SDLC, SAFe, Hybrid Agile-Fall, Waterfall, ITIL, Office 365, Slack, MS Teams, SharePoint, MS Project, Six Sigma, Voice of Customer (Qualtrics, Clarabridge), Analytics (Sitecat, Google Analytics), Card Sorting (Optimal Workshop), Eye Tracking (Tobii), Online User Testing (UsabilityHub, User-Testing, UserZoom), In-Lab User Testing (Morae), Surveying (Qualtrics, Select Survey, Forms), Wireframing (Axure), Prototype Development (HTML5, CSS), Web Content Management (Dreamweaver, WordPress, Adobe AEM)

Professional Experience

COUNTRY Financial, Bloomington, IL
Learning & Development, Client Experience

July 2018 – Present

I supervised the Training, Quality Assurance, and Technology teams for the Learning & Development team in the Client Experience division, implementing projects and key initiatives. Implemented and deployed Microsoft Teams to all office staff, utilizing new functions to improve communication between team members and cross-functional departments. Championed pilot project for Connect-the-Dots, analyzing metrics and KPIs for mentoring, coaching, QA, and Voice of Customer (VOC). Led quality assurance meetings for training for VOC, and prepared reporting such as rotational variance reports, and metrics dashboards. Created virtual instructor led (VILT) curriculum and provided Train-the-Trainer online facilitation, engagement, and community best practices. Assisted in hiring and creating internship and student programs to fill mentorship gaps.

- Transitioned 300+ employees to work from home, leveraging technology to ensure smooth communication.
- Participated in J.D. Power Client Support Certification with training and quality assurance in top five items of key customer experiences.
- Saved over 75% on preparation and development time, encouraging and moving to smaller class sizes with one facilitator.
- Utilized Microsoft Stream's Call Library for focused classroom examples vs. passive floor observations and created a showcase for "Rockstar Calls."

User Experience & Product Owner, Interactive Assets & Development (IAD)

July 2014 – July 2018

Utilized Agile methodologies for project management for Interactive Assets & Development Department as Product Owner for Digital Strategy. Groomed user stories and conducted research. Collaborated with a variety of teams such as User Experience, Programming, Design, and SME. Led presentations and status updates for key stakeholders and leadership. Collaborated with three SCRUM teams.

Championed User Experience functions and activities, such as the MyCOUNTRY Customer Portal encompassing responsive, claims, forms, and other customer needs.

- Converted customer portal to responsive and mobile optimized.
- Transitioned from Waterfall method to Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe).
- Set up User Experience lab with observation rooms and remote viewing rooms.
- Conducted lab testing using Morae, Tobii, in-person focus groups, as well as conducting online A/B, multivariate, and scenario-based testing.

Illinois State University, Normal, IL

Director of IT, School of Information Technology | Professor for Human Factors and HCI

Managed strategic leadership and effectively and efficiently delivered of all aspects of information technology in a manner consistent with overall strategic goals of the University. Developed and enhanced IT strategy, architecture, and governance framework. Oversaw strategic and business plans, organizational change and growth initiatives, defined performance objectives and regular review of actual performance. Allocated and managed departmental budget of \$60K USD annually. Built User Experience Testing Lab to emphasize importance of testing cycles and development. Championed application development for online processes and encouraged team to do incubation for new technology for training and research. Developed and managed 15+ full-time, part-time, and student employees, including web programmers, application developers, technical writers, graphic designers, trainers, UX researchers, lab managers, and system administrators.

- Oversaw training for 1000+ faculty members on a regular basis.
- Supported web development for 750+ sites.
- Hired, onboarded, and reviewed performance for new roles of Fiscal Agent, Unit Director, Project Manager, and Tech Leader.
- Taught undergraduate classes for HCI (Designing the Human Computer Interface), and graduate level classes for Human Factors in Information systems, leveraging research in technology to enhance classroom experience and enrich program, setting precedents for future learning.

Education

Master of Science, Industrial & Organizational Psychology

Illinois State University, Normal, IL

Bachelor of Science, Industrial & Organizational Psychology

Illinois State University, Normal, IL

Professional Training

J.D. Power Customer Service, J.D. Power Certified Center, Bloomington, IL, 2020

SAFe Practitioner Certification, Scaled Agile, Inc, Boulder, CO, 2017

Six Sigma Yellow Belt, COUNTY Financial, Bloomington, IL, 2016

IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL), Illinois State University, Normal, IL, 2012

Awards

COUNTRY Financial: Living Our Values Award, Microsoft Champions

Illinois State University: Team Excellence Award, Star Award, Williams Technology Service Award

College of Arts & Sciences: Dean's Staff Award

Volunteering

Volunteer, Starved Rock Foundation

2005 – Present

Volunteer, Tonica Fest

2004 – 2015

ZONTA, LaSalle-Peru Area (President 2012-2014)

2010 – 2016