

Sarah Walczynski

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Professor
IT Director
Project Manager
User Experience
Training/Development

Hello, I'm Sarah W. I love leading teams to find solutions and incubate innovations. My biggest strengths are using data to define what people really want, getting the right players in the room, give them the tools they need, and clearing the way to make it happen.

Experiences

July 2018 - Present

Client Experience

Learning & Development
COUNTRY Financial - Bloomington, IL

July 2014 - July 2018

User Experience and Product Owner

Interactive Assets & Development (IAD)
COUNTRY Financial - Bloomington, IL

January 2012 - December 2017

Adjunct Professor

School of IT
Illinois State University - Normal, IL

October 1997 - July 2014

IT Director

College of Arts & Sciences
Illinois State University - Normal, IL

Degrees & Certifications

MS - 2002

BS 1997

Industrial & Organizational Psychology

Illinois State University - Normal, IL

2012 - IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL)

2016 - Six Sigma Yellow Belt certification

2017 - SAFe Practitioner Certification

2020 - J.D. Power Customer Service

Some things I can do

- + Help create a **shared vision**, blueprint, and roadmap it out
- + Manage a **collaborative team** and **mentor** at different stages
- + **Manage** multi-year projects
- + **Promote** a user-centered design process
- + **Prioritize** ongoing schedule of updates for websites/systems
- + **Incubate** new technology and innovations
- + **Promote** metrics, voice of customer, and secondary research
- + **Guide** primary attitudinal and behavioral research
- + **Train-the-trainer** for classroom, VILT, and self-paced options

Awards

Living Our Values Award (COUNTRY Financial Award)

This award recognizes employees whose behaviors go above and beyond exemplifying the organizational expectations associated with our values.

Dean's Staff Award (College of Arts & Sciences Award)

This is now called the CAS Excellence Award. The award recognizes a staff member for significant contributions to the College.

Team Excellence Award (University Award)

This award recognizes collaborative efforts of a group demonstrating exemplary teamwork. I had received it twice within 5 years.

Star Award (Student Affairs Award)

This award recognizes "Staff That Are Remarkable" for promotion of diversity, innovation by a team, or an outstanding new program.

Williams Technology Service Award (Provost Award)

This award recognizes an individual who has made extraordinary contributions to the University in the area of technology and service.

Management & Collaboration Tools

SDLC, SAFe, Hybrid agile-fall, Waterfall, ITIL, Office 365, Slack, MS Teams, SharePoint, MS Project, Six Sigma, and a rolling white board.

Learning & Design 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 Tools & Methods

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), Surveys (Qualtrics, Select Survey, Forms)

COUNTRY Financial Activities – 2018 to 2020

Learning & Development – Management

- + J.D. Power Client Support Certification with training and quality assurance in top 5 items of key customer experiences
- + Pilot project for Connect-the-Dots to look at metrics across training, mentoring, coaching, Quality Assurance, and Voice of Client (VOC)
- + Research project for #MyJourney to look at the business training as well as individual development
- + Research project for a peer mentoring program
- + Created observation channels in MS Teams for leadership to observe live calls (J.D. Power recommendation)
- + Created collaborative workflow with Agile SAM model
- + Moved from siloed role teams to audience centered teams
- + Implemented Microsoft TEAMS

Learning & Development – Training

- + Hired staff to fill Masters student to fill virtual facilitation and SME gaps
- + Converted all training to Virtual Instructor Led Training (VILT) in MS Teams
- + Conducted Train-the-Trainer on online facilitation, engagement, and community best practices
- + Converted static worksheets into interactive MS Forms for immediate feedback and performance metrics
- + Tied interactive forms to observation sheets for analysis and individual score cards
- + Utilized new Call library in MS Steam for focused classroom example vs passive floor observations
- + Created struggling student intervention process
- + Saved 75% on class prep time moving to smaller classes and one facilitator per class
- + Shifted our team focus to Knowledge Management system
- + Implemented smaller, more frequent classes
- + Created hybrid role for a quality assurance/trainer

Web Tools

Wireframing (Axure), Prototype development (HTML5, CSS), Web content management systems (Dreamweaver, WordPress, Adobe AEM)

Hobbies



Boardgames



Reading



Travel



Doctor Who

Myers-Briggs Type

ENTJ/INTJ

J.D. Power Customer Service certification

- February 2020

"I feel like I am not alone anymore. The trainers, designers, tech, authors, and leadership are now all one team." - Direct Report L.G.

- + Offered in-person classes in our underserved Alpharetta, GA office
- + Started cross-training our previously specialized facilitators
- + Updated MyCOUNTRY self-service training (high 5 from Directors)

Learning & Development – Quality Assurance

- + Created a Call library in Microsoft Stream that can showcase “Rockstar calls” (J.D. Power recommendation)
- + Paired up on monthly VOC analysis meetings for QA and training
- + Aspirational trigger thresholds for group performance
- + Documented process for QA calls to VOC upon request
- + Tracked interrater reliability via rotational variance reports
- + Drafted dashboard
- + Upgraded of NICE Engage call system
- + Smoothed out the Quality Assurance review process to be linear versus having takebacks
- + Created feedback loops between our role teams.

“Five year highs in VOC the last two years running.”
– Analytics, Insights, and Metrics team A.B.

Learning & Development – Technology

- + Moved 300+ people from in-office to work-from-home
- + Updated all personnel to Windows 10
- + Converted from Skype to TEAMS
- + Upgraded eGain knowledge management system
- + Set up new hire and tier 3 with multiple monitors (J.D. Power recommendation)
- + Added a summer intern and a Q4 job shadow
- + Created monthly tech check-ins with southern and western offices
- + Created self-service station for common items like batteries, headsets, etc.
- + Created wireless meeting rooms with ClickShare
- + Hired a Tech Coordinator who was a SME and former Geek Squad
- + Created preset classrooms with 20 small form factors (SFFs) to improve on provisioning roadblock
- + Set up weekly 15-minute non-Prod (training) system meetings to improve stability and fixes

“We would not have been able to do this if we didn’t have your tech background.”
– Director K.R.

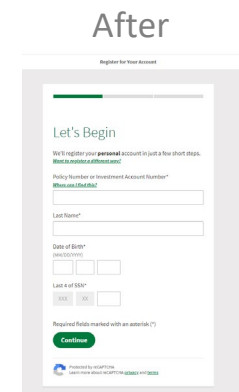
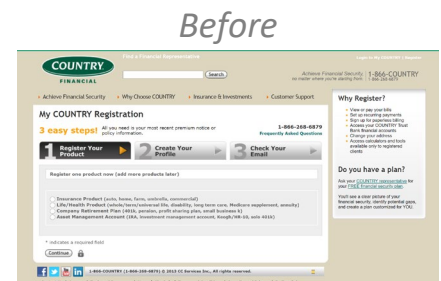
Interactive Assets & Development Activities – 2014 to 2018

Interactive Assets & Development – Project Management

- + Agile - Product Owner on Digital Strategy for 3 scrum teams
- + Created client journeys and user stories
- + Collaborated with UX, Programmers, Designers, and SMEs
- + Conducted presentations for leadership

Interactive Assets & Development – User Experience

- + Optimized MyCOUNTRY Customer Portal (responsive, forms, etc.)
- + Set up lab with multiple observation rooms and remote viewing
- + Conducted live Lab testing with Morae and Tobii
- + Conducted online A/B, multivariate, and scenario-based testing
- + Created information architecture and card sorting
- + Guided iterative prototyping



Illinois State University Activities - the 20 years before

IT Director

- + Ran a facility that did training for 1,000+ faculty
- + Created a user experience testing lab
- + Led a team to support web development for 750+ sites
- + Led a team to do application development for online processes
- + Led a team to do incubation of new tech for teaching and research.
- + Managed full-time, part-time, and student personnel
- + Filled the roles of fiscal agent, unit director, project manager, and tech leader

Professor

- + Graduate professor: Human factors in information systems
- + Undergraduate professor: Designing the Human computer interface
- + Research on technology for classroom enrichment & engagement

Volunteerism

- + Starved Rock Foundation – volunteer 2005 to current
- + TonicaFest – volunteer 2004 to 2015
- + President of Zonta of LaSalle-Peru Area – 2012 to 2014, member 2010 to 2016
- + LaSalle County Historical Society – volunteer 1982 to 2006

“I will never forgive you for leaving us.”

– Mathematics Department,
Dr. O.A.

“This class is what I thought graduate school should be like. You have introduced us to professionals in the industry, given us real-world projects, and the tools to do this ourselves.”

– Graduate student V.S.