MICHAEL HELMAN

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SUMMARY

A results-oriented and accomplished information technology executive with an extensive background in user experience design, stakeholder engagement, prototype development, product management / development, quality assurance, vendor management, digital product design, information architecture, and software development. Leverages excellent communication and an intuitive nature to deeply understand user needs, conceptualize pathways to serve these needs, and deliver market-leading innovations. Driven to achieve results and exceed expectations to secure the long-lasting success of a company.

Key areas of strength include Digital Product Design • UX/UI and Usability • Discovery, Ideation & Conceptualizing • Prototype Development • User Feedback Collection and Analysis • Team Leadership and Mentoring • Concepts & Creative Direction • Information Architecture • Creativity and Innovation.

EXPERIENCE

US FOODS   Rosemont, Illinois
Senior UX Manager, Digital Commerce ....May 2019 - July 2024

- Oversaw development, execution, and branding of various digital products to ensure a cohesive approach to design, resulting in enhanced user experiences, streamlined processes, and delivery against business objectives and key results.
- Developed vision and value propositions for new features and concepts that included emerging technology such as AI to make experiences more personal.
- Spearheaded establishment of robust atomic design-based Figma design system, introducing foundational elements, scalable components, inclusive design patterns, and interaction guide.
- Managed, developed, and communicated strategies, guidelines, and techniques via the creation and maintenance of style guides and user interface libraries.
- Conducted detailed user research employing surveys, interviews, and A/B testing to drive data-informed design decisions, enhancing user satisfaction and engagement.
- Performed detailed competitive analyses and developed actionable recommendations to enhance our digital product designs and user experiences.
- Analyzed market trends and user feedback, leveraging data insights to inform design decisions and guide design strategies.
- Incorporated emerging technologies like AI into new features, significantly personalizing user interactions and achieving measurable satisfaction improvements.
- Led team that deployed intuitive user-centric design strategies, resulting in a 5% increase in NPS score compared to the closest competitor.
- Participated in professional growth by attending significant industry events, including Figma Config 2024, completed advanced training through LinkedIn Learning to enhance skills and remained updated by subscribing to top UX resources such as Nielsen Norman Group, UX Planet, and UX Collective.

US FOODS   Rosemont, Illinois
Senior Manager, UX Design and Development .... May 2015 - April 2019

- Contributed as a key member of development's senior leadership team.
- Directed a team of passionate UX designers, researchers, and developers, driving new features, design patterns, and interaction models that enhanced user engagement and supported application growth.
- Managed UX strategy and ongoing enhancements to align with budgetary limits, achieving a 65% decrease in rework and significantly shortening design cycles.
- Led weekly team meetings / internal design sessions and assisted in customer usability testing to collect feedback on design effectiveness.
- Facilitated card sorting and whiteboard activities to create information architecture, personas, use cases, and customer journeys leading to a more targeted design process.
- Utilized data and analytics to optimize and improve user experience across all channels.
- Facilitated workshops and conducted customer interviews and usability testing.
- Managed and prioritized projects, ensuring that all deliverables were completed on time and within budget.

- Conducted user testing to gain insights and understand needs.
- Assigned project tasks and supervised the development of wireframes, user flows, interaction designs, visual mock-ups, personas, scenarios, prototypes, specifications, and navigation maps.
- Customized interactions and visual interfaces for intuitive, human-centered experiences on the Salesforce platform.
- Collaborated with QA to implement an automated tracking system for UI issues leading to a 35% decrease in errors.
- Met regularly with senior leadership to align user experience strategy with business objectives and goals.
- Developed and maintained relationships with vendors; defined and implemented proof concepts to evaluate vendor technologies when needed.
- Supervised recruitment, management, and mentorship of additional resources.
- Implemented a positive team culture by ensuring all team members felt supported and engaged which led to better designs and a stronger team.
- Leveraged in-depth user data analysis to drive UX design decisions, significantly improving sales channel adoption and profit margins by optimizing user interfaces based on real-world behaviors.
- Ensured compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) by conducting regular audits, enhancing content accessibility for users with disabilities, and meeting legal accessibility standards.
- Collaborated with QA to implement an automated tracking system for UI issues, resulting in a 35% decrease in errors, streamlining issue resolution, and improving overall user interface quality.
- Developed and maintained robust relationships with technology vendors, defined and implemented proof of concept evaluations to assess and integrate cutting-edge technologies, ensuring alignment with strategic UX objectives.

US FOODS   Rosemont, Illinois
User Experience Architect .... June 2013 – April 2015

- Developed wireframes, detailed mockups, and rapid prototypes to effectively portray interaction and intuitive design ideas to complex requirements.
- Applied usability principles to ensure consistent vision and approach was applied when designing and developing new interfaces and enhancing existing ones.
- Collaborated with a third-party creative agency to establish and document design standards/patterns for usage across products to achieve an integrated and consistent experience.
- Presented front-end UI design concepts to senior management for feedback and approval.
- Partnered with front-end developers to build experiences and review finished interfaces throughout the development lifecycle, maintaining a high bar for design and execution.
- Collaborated with external partners to maintain and update the marketing email program.
- Built, managed and developed an experience design team that included designers, researchers, and front-end developers at the initial stage of the development team's expansion.
- Contracted for 8 months, then became the first UX designer at US Foods.
- Highly experienced with Agile methodologies and intuitive development processes. All projects used the Scrum framework and participated in daily stand-up meetings, sprint planning, review, and retrospective meetings.

FREELANCE EXPERIENCE

FLYING MONKEYS STUDIO   Greater Chicago Area
Owner, Designer, and Developer .... October 1997 - Present

- Managed entire business operations, encompassing client acquisition and the creation of all in-house promotional assets, such as branding and website development.
- Developed proposals and engaged with clients to assess their requirements, objectives, timelines, and financial constraints.
- Designed corporate identities, marketing strategies, brochures, advertisements, multimedia presentations, websites, and illustrations for a diverse clientele, from Fortune 500 firms to emerging startups.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

RETROFIT, LLC, Evanston, Illinois, **Art Director**, June 2012 – April 2013. Oversaw the artistic direction of the public website and promotional campaign web pages. Provided strategic direction of marketing initiatives while maintaining consistency of brand. Created project content from inception to completion. Designed, documented, and delivered final web-ready mechanical files to the in-house development team. Worked in a team-based dynamic that developed consistent design concepts that helped drive B2B and B2C purchases. Oversaw execution of marketing print and online communications. Created brand style guide to maintain a consistent look throughout application and marketing materials. Collaborated directly with outside vendors, designers, and search engine marketers.

HCSC / BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF ILLINOIS, Chicago, Illinois, **Senior Web Designer and Front-End Developer**, Nov 2009 - May 2012. Responsibilities encompass project management, information architecture, custom graphic creation, design layout development, cross-browser HTML template production, content management system integration, and website testing and debugging for company branches of Illinois, Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. Led art direction for large-scale, content-rich, public website and global web elements; Blue Access for Members; and Special Beginnings (interactive pregnancy micro-site). Advised developers on usability and UX design principles across all four BCBS websites. Accountable for producing production-ready HTML, CSS, and JavaScript code for web page layouts, widgets, and micro-sites. Developed Flash interactions for micro-sites and documented design department processes comprehensively.

AMERICA'S BEST COMPANIES, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois, **Creative Director and Information Architect**, May 2008 - May 2009. Oversaw the creative direction and execution of the company's website and small business search engine. Accountable for the information architecture, content strategy, graphic design, visual consistency, page layout, HTML and functional development, content creation, and overall project management. Conducted research analyses and developed conceptual models, workflows, sitemaps, and wireframes. Designed and directed all communication efforts, establishing a cohesive brand identity and producing marketing materials, both print and digital. Provided expertise and leadership in the creative development process and project tracking. Managed ongoing email marketing initiatives and performance analysis. Regularly updated senior management on project progress and outcomes.

SHOPLOCAL, Chicago, Illinois, **Senior Graphic and UI Designer**, Mar 2006 - May 2008. Managed the design, architecture, and execution of multiple website projects for a prominent e-commerce and technical services companies. Established the in-house design department, managing supplier and vendor relationships, and overseeing team planning, including staff supervision, contractor management, budget allocation, and mentoring. Supervised a variety of projects, including site optimization, website features, HTML newsletters, marketing campaigns, and sales support initiatives. Partnered with the technical team to guarantee design usability within the company's technological framework and produced all internal and member communication materials, including style guides, brochures, and online marketing campaigns. Engaged in executive meetings to shape strategic decisions and foster teamwork while guiding the design team. Developed and designed HTML emails and other marketing materials, ensuring brand identity consistency across all initiatives.

DIRECT ADVANTAGE, Chicago, Illinois, **Senior Graphic / Flash Designer**, Dec 2004 - Mar 2006. Oversaw the design and development of the company's Flash website, encompassing the establishment of its business identity. Developed direct mail materials, newspaper ads, corporate branding, marketing initiatives, and brochures for a diverse clientele, from emerging start-ups to large automotive dealerships. Managed the updates of software and hardware systems, resolved issues related to the company's Internet connectivity, and administered web hosting and email services.

EDUCATION

COLUMBIA COLLEGE, Chicago, Illinois
Bachelor of Science, Communication Arts

MORAINE VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE, Palos Heights, Illinois
Associate of Arts, Liberal Arts

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Design Tools: Figma, Sketch, InVision, Zeplin, Adobe Creative Suite, Balsamiq
Coding Skills: HTML/HTML5, CSS/CSS3, JavaScript, WordPress
Analytics and SEO Tools: Google Analytics, Adobe Analytics, SEO
Collaboration and Management Tools: Jira, Confluence, SharePoint, Adobe Experience Manager, Lucidchart, Microsoft 360