Larisa Brandt

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Experienced Product Owner and User Experience leader with over 15 years of expertise in delivering complex, user-friendly digital solutions in the health and retirement benefits industry. Proven track record of leading cross-functional teams to develop and implement innovative products that align with business goals and user needs. Skilled in Agile methodologies, product strategy, and translating business requirements into concrete deliverables.

SKILLS

Product Ownership, Agile Methodologies, User Experience (UX) Design, Product Strategy, Roadmap Development, Requirements Gathering, Cross-functional Team Leadership, Software Development Lifecycle, Stakeholder Management, Product Backlog Management, User Research, Data Analysis, Process Improvement, Healthcare Industry Knowledge, Technical Product Management, Prototype Development, Agile Scrum (Azure DevOps), Human-Centered Design, Design Thinking, Journey Mapping, Usability Testing, Product Vision, Strategic Planning, Communication, Problem-solving

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Agile Product Manager, Manager Website User Experience
Portico Benefit Services, MN   **November 2019 – December 2023**
Led Agile team in development and delivery of secure member/employer portals, retirement planning tools, and internal system enhancements using Agile Scrum methodologies (Azure DevOps).

- Led through IT digital transformation including Azure DevOps and Agile SCRUM processes. This involved all Product Owner activities including Agile ceremonies such as sprint planning, writing epics, features, and backlog items with acceptance criteria, as well as prioritization and backlog management and testing.
- Owned product strategy and roadmaps, ensuring alignment with business goals and user needs such as:
    - Identity management system conversion impacting 50,000 members and 10,000 employers while maintaining high customer service levels and NPS scores.
    - Definition and launch of flexible health benefits & retirement products contributing to achieving sales goals five years in a row.
    - A iterative development of dynamic retirement planning tools with specialized functionality for 40,000 members and their Financial Planners. The product increased new retirement contributors 61% as well as increased existing contributions 51%.
- Maintained website user experience (UX) while fulfilling Product Owner responsibilities.
- Led and managed a team of business analysts and user experience designers in operations and professional development resulting in long term employment and promotions.

Manager Website User Experience
Portico Benefit Services, MN   **April 2015 – November 2019**
Led and built a high-performing UX/content team of 4**,** spearheading usability and content design initiatives. Established a content delivery process and collaborated closely with marketing to ensure consistent brand messaging across the website. Owned product vision and roadmap for website user experience, prioritizing user needs and aligning them with business goals.

- Directed the responsive UX/UI refresh project, encompassing content design, process definition, UI/UX development, and technical implementation. This resulted in a successful staged rollout that maintained user satisfaction (no negative impact on NPS or customer service).
- Led the development and launch of a robust retirement planning tool for 40,000 members using a human-centered design process. The tool increased new retirement contributors by 61% and existing contributions by 51%.

Sr. User Experience Architect
Portico Benefit Services, MN   **April 2011 – April 2015**
Led the UX strategy and execution for multiple secure member and employer portals, driving successful product launches.

- Spearheaded user research and stakeholder collaboration to define story maps, content needs, and feature roadmaps for secure websites.
- Delivered impactful UX improvements:
    - Successfully launched a new brand and functionality for registration, sign-in, and bill pay (including online bill payment for the first time) within 9 months.
    - Designed and implemented user-tested employer benefit selection and member enrollment features, enabling online benefit selection for the program's first year (completed in under 4 months).
- Established and maintained a UI pattern library for consistent user experience and efficient development.

Team Lead - Sr. User Experience Designer
Digital River, Eden Prairie, MN   **June 2009 – April 2011**
Led a team of six UX designers (local & remote) to champion user-centric design for the Digital River SaaS eCommerce platform. Implemented UX methodologies across projects and led usability efforts.

- Developed product roadmaps: Facilitated group strategy sessions with stakeholders to gather requirements, ensure buy-in, and define feature sets.
- Enhanced UI consistency and development efficiency: Drove framework & pattern improvements for a shared UI pattern library across the Digital River application suite.
- Established Voice of the User program: Implemented ongoing user research (interviews & remote usability testing) to continuously integrate user feedback into the design process.

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Scrum Product Owner ® (CSPO®) Certification, September 2024
Certified Agile Leadership® (CAL-1™) Certification, September 2024
Mini Master eCommerce, University of St. Thomas
Associate of Applied Science, Visual Communication, Brown College, Minneapolis, MN