

Annie Swank

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SUMMARY

Product designer and strategist with a decade of experience across UX, research, and strategy. I explore and create alongside product and engineering leaders to apply user insights, cultivate a shared direction, and spark transformative innovation.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Research Strategy & Execution
Product Vision and Strategy
Continuous Discovery
Dual-Track Agile

Design Thinking
UX/UI Design
Product Analytics
Product Innovation

Design Leadership
End-to-End Design Execution
Design Systems
Figma

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

WILLIAM BLAIR, Senior Design Strategist

Dec 2022 - Aug 2023

Implemented a new product design function, within the Investment Banking capability, to identify new product opportunities based on user research, business goals, and data science/AI capabilities, specifically:

- Managed research and visual design for 8 enterprise-level products from ideation to launch, including generative AI and automation solutions. Product portfolio generated \$225MM in cost savings.
- Independently developed new in-house international research and design practice. Conducted 400 hours of observations and interviews to understand customer needs and inform customer-centric roadmap.

TXI DIGITAL, Lead Designer & Design Group Manager

Feb 2021 - Nov 2022

Designed over 12 products from initial concept visioning to launch for clients across multiple industries. Led the design group and developed organizational capabilities in user research, product design and data analysis.

Designer Responsibilities:

- Expertly managed design process for over 12 client projects by: creating connection to user needs and motivations, ensuring tools were built around user insights and opportunities; creating visuals for all design phases, from initial concepts and completely designed flows, which communicated intent and direction to diverse project audiences
- Consistently helped grow accounts (2-4x) through close partnerships with clients to identify goals/opportunities and provided exemplary delivery of design capabilities.

Managerial Responsibilities:

- Managed a team of 8 designers and fostered shared vision and goals for the design group. Raised designers' influence level by improving quality levels across all client engagements, especially in areas of product strategy and user research through mentorship and a system for async design critique .

TXI DIGITAL, Senior Designer

Feb 2020 - Feb 2021

Responsible for design work on 6 client projects, built innovation capabilities for custom software consultancy

- Independently worked with the Business Development team to pilot product innovation and design thinking frameworks, successfully expanding market perception of the company's capabilities through case studies and thought leadership efforts.

FREELANCE, Director | Designer | Researcher

Sep 2016 - Feb 2020

Uniquely combined UX design and narrative tools to help clients achieve their storytelling goals by defining audience, refining message, and creating/distributing content..

- Creatively applied UX methods such as user interviews, customer journeys, rapid prototyping, and testing to create resonant, compelling stories for 20+ clients through videos, websites, and podcasts.
- Independently directed a feature-length documentary following 4 Chicago city council candidates throughout their campaigns for Chicago, which was submitted to film festivals and premiered at an O&A panel with the candidates in Feb 2022; also create animated explainers on the philosophy of argument for Oxford University; event videos for The People's Music School and other non-profits.

DRINK TANK, Co-Founder & Head of Product

Sep 2014 - Sep 2016

Co-Founder and creative visionary for a recreational think tank with a national footprint, built to bring together creatives and causes for fun and progress

- Co-created type of event/experience that brought together over 1K designers, researchers, artists, and other creatives over the course of 18 sessions, fully customized each event experience to location, partner, theme, and goals.
- Directed design and production of all content across print and digital platforms, such as newsletters, social media, video, and microsites. In partnership with a global brand, social media strategy generated over 2MM impressions, created over the course of a nationwide tour.

TABLE XI, UX Practice Lead,

Jun 2013 - Aug 2015

As first UX researcher and designer at a digital strategy and product innovation firm, I helped clients and internal teams understand and embrace user-centered design methodologies on over 18 projects

- Partnered with Engineering and Delivery practices on a new client offering, Product Discovery, a period of upfront product exploration. Successfully used with 18 new and legacy clients to discover new business opportunities, and design user flows, wireframes, mock ups, and sitemaps.
- Launched UX discipline at an engineering-focused consultancy, developed and documented user research methodologies in projects across multiple industries.

LOVE HAS NO LOGIC, UX Designer

May 2012 - Jun 2013

As first UX hire, contributed unique capabilities to clients, contributing to 2x value creation and subsequent acquisition of entire agency.

- Experimented and codified repeatable processes and templates to identify and test assumptions at project launch. Educated colleagues and clients on usability heuristics to the extent that user experience was part of every engagement.

DESIGN INSTRUCTOR

Served as an instructor for User Experience Design, Design Thinking and User Research for Code Academy, Starter League, Experience Institute. Taught over 250 people at various stages of their career how to apply UX methods and perspectives to their work.

- Topics I've taught: Design Thinking frameworks, planning and conducting user interviews, synthesis techniques to uncover user needs, rapid prototyping to test hypotheses.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

University of Chicago – Bachelor of Arts (BA), Political Science; Minor English & Creative Writing

Northwestern University, SCS – Certificate in New Media Design and Technology

The Starter League – Certificate in Design Thinking & UX Research