CAROL BALES
UX RESEARCH LEADER
+1 770-855-5858 | cjbales@gmail.com | carolbales.com | linkedin.com/in/carolbales

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Highly innovative and effective UX Research Leader who executes research that drives product innovation and improves user experience seeking a collaborative, forward-thinking organization. Expertise in multiple research methods and metrics. I thrive in dynamic work environments that serve diverse audiences through excellence, experimentation, and continuous learning.

CORE COMPETENCIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

Strategic User Research & Insights:

- **Driving Product Innovation:** Designed and executed research into weather and well-being, widgets, and expert content that significantly influenced product roadmaps for a 400 million monthly active user base at The Weather Company (TWC).
- **Actionable Insights:** Synthesized diverse data sets (primary research, third-party research, pathway analysis, usability metrics) to deliver actionable insights that informed strategic planning and improved user experiences across multiple project initiatives (TWC).
- **Quantitative & Qualitative Expertise:** Utilized a wide range of research methods, including RITE method for rapid prototyping, concept evaluation, iterative usability testing, and quantitative research to inform major product redesigns (TWC).
- **Business Impact:** Drove business strategy by providing key insights into user motivations, leading to increased user engagement and revenue generation (e.g., launching a highly successful weather newsletter) as well as future-proofing against competition (e.g., widgets, and landing experience) and validating the subscription model at TWC.

Leadership & Team Development:

- **Player-Coach Leadership:** Led and mentored a high-volume, remote research team, empowering cross-functional teams (Product, Design, Advertising, Editorial) with critical research insights.
- **Team Empowerment:** Fostered a collaborative and supportive team environment through coaching, mentoring, career guidance, standardization of methods, and training (e.g., wrote training and templates for product teams to perform research with minimal oversight).
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration:** Strengthened business strategy and UX practice through proactive collaboration with stakeholders, facilitating design-thinking sessions, (e.g., created a framework for writing user stories grounded in research in Mural.

UX Design & Strategy:

- **Experience Optimization:** Reduced friction by identifying and eliminating blockers in the purchase process for bundled subscriptions for TWC. Reduced call-wait and call-processing times for Delta Airlines' legacy call-center application. Increased search efficiency in Fiserv's biller search API for Walmart Money Centers. Improved findability of key information buy 70% in Fiserv's bill-pay call-center application.
- **Reduced Friction and Increased Sales** by optimizing the hotel search and booking process through split-testing multiple iterations at InterContinental Hotels Group.
- **Reduced Attrition and Improved Experience** by optimizing the community selection and move-in process for Brookdale Senior Living.

- **Customer Journey Mapping:** Created customer journey maps based on user behaviors, providing valuable insights for strategic planning and UX improvements for TWC.
- **Innovation and Experimentation:** Expert use of creative problem-solving techniques to iterate through ideation, prototyping, and evaluation to arrive at viable and novel solutions.

Knowledge Sharing & Evangelism:

- **Research Evangelization:** Strengthened the research practice at TWC by promoting research insights across new business areas and stakeholders through various channels (research repository, monthly showcases, UX benchmarks).
- **Thought Leadership:** Took a proactive approach to educating and mentoring the product organization at TWC on user-centered design and research best practices, winning praise and gratitude from product managers, leadership, and designers.
- **Educational Leadership:** Teaching Human-Computer Interaction, preparing students for lifelong problem-solving using human-centered, design thinking methodologies.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- **Georgia State Univ**, Adjunct Instructor, Dept of Computer Science (Jan 2018 - Present)
- **The Weather Company**, IBM, GA. Sr. Manager, Consumer Insights and Sr. User Researcher (Oct 2018 - Aug 2023)
- **Silver Spring Interactive**, GA. UX Design, Strategy and Research (Feb 2011 - Sep 2018)
- **Fiserv**, GA, Sr. UX Architect (May 2009 – Jan 2011)
- **Cartoon Network**, GA, UX Architect (July 2008 – Jan 2009)
- **Intercontinental Hotels Group**, UX Architect (Mar 2004 – Sep 2005)
- **Cingular Wireless**, GA, Sr. Information Architect (Aug 2003 – Mar 2004)
- **IBM Interactive Design Studios**, GA, Sr. Information Architect (Mar 1999 – July 2003)

EDUCATION

Georgia Institute of Technology, GA
Master of Computer Science, Human-Computer Interaction

University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Bachelor of Fine Arts

SKILLS & TOOLS

User Research, Usability, Qualitative/Quantitative Analysis, Research Design, Remote-moderated or unmoderated, Mixed methods, Formative & Summative, Research-based Requirements, Moderation, SUS, NPS, CSAT, RITE Method, Surveys, Third-party data, Usage metrics, Primary research, Heuristic Evaluation, UX Strategy, UX Design, Design Thinking, Interaction Design, Prototyping, Journey Mapping, UI Design, Requirements Writing, Zero-to-One Strategy, Innovation & Experimentation, Ideation, Wireframes, Navigational Flows, Taxonomy, People Manager, Practice Building, Team Leader, Mentoring & Coaching, Budget & Planning, Teaching, Vendor Management, Excellent Communications & Storytelling, Privacy Compliance, Stakeholder Management

Alchemer, UserZoom, SPSS, Mural, UserTesting, Qualtrics, Morai, OvoStudios, Figma, Mural, Adobe XD, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, Axure, ChatGPT, Gemini, Midjourney, Trello, Slack, Jira, Salesforce, OneTrust, Discourse, Office 365, HTML/CSS