

MICHAEL SYNOGROUND

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Product Management & Design Leader

Accomplished product leader and strategist with a passion for design thinking and a history of creating innovative technologies, products, and experiences for a wide range of top organizations—including T-Mobile, Amazon, Microsoft, AllRecipes.com, and DreamBox Learning.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- **Defining corporate UX vision/strategy** and partnering with marketing, product management, R&D, and customer support teams to define and execute on the end-to-end customer experience.
- **Defining optimized product roadmaps** and lifecycle management strategies—in addition to championing design thinking, continuous innovation, and agile practices throughout the design/development process.
- **Managing complex product development projects** under tight budget and time constraints—drawing upon a career-long action bias and belief in a “fail fast” philosophy to generate stellar results.
- **Conducting deep-dive UI/UX research** to fully understand customer requirements and market needs, in addition to defining clear metric/KPI targets to drive accountability and maximize ROI.

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS & EXPERTISE

User Centered Design Thinking	UX/UI/CX Team Leadership	Brand Strategy & Experience Design
Customer Journey Mapping	Product Requirements & Specifications	Mobile/Cloud/SaaS Products
New Product Development	Query Building & Data Visualization	Business Intelligence / NPS / KPI
Agile/Scrum Methodology	Partner & Vendor Management / Negotiations	Cross-Functional Collaboration
Product Lifecycle Management	Product Rationalization & Roadmap Creation	Talent Acquisition / Development

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Sr. Director of User Experience | DREAMBOX LEARNING

Bellevue, WA: 2016 to Present

Recruited to lead UX and product strategy for this award-winning, adaptive learning platform utilized by millions of K-8 students and educators around the globe. Mentor/manage teams in creation of all product elements and constantly update the product portfolio to meet evolving user needs and changing market trends. The company’s flagship product suite includes a SaaS style user management and data visualization tool for administrators, in addition to three student-focused desktop/mobile learning environments.

- Member of the Senior Leadership Team—responsible for helping clarify the company’s strategic goals/vision, plan strategic initiatives, build the culture, establish KPIs, and execute around business strategy.
- Define the UX Strategy and Vision for all of the company’s EdTech Products, resulting in double-digit YoY growth as measured by top-line KPIs (revenue, retention, and student impact).
- Recruited, built, and lead a multi-disciplinary team of artists, designers, and researchers in transforming the learning process via innovative digital tools, visualizations, and experiences.
- Increased the efficiency of product delivery/development by defining new design and prototyping processes, implementing best practices and incorporating the use of visual systems, personas, and journeys.
- Champion design thinking and customer-centric practices throughout the firm, integrating User Research as a central part of the design process to enable faster iterations and significant development-related cost savings; additionally facilitated an NPS survey in collaboration with external vendor to gauge current client sentiment.
- Work in close collaboration with Product Management, Marketing, Technology, and Learning Teams to influence and execute the product roadmap—representing the Voice of Customer, guiding GTM strategies, and facilitating the effective translation of business/learning requirements into commercially-successful products.

Founder & UI/Product Consultant | DYNAMO PLUS

Seattle, WA: 2013 to 2016

Applied successful entrepreneurial experience to build a second design agency from the ground up, guiding teams in delivering a robust array of UX/UI design, development, marketing, and recruiting services.

- Led the sourcing, scoping, and negotiation of multiple projects in a 3-year period—primarily related to the development of websites, mobile applications, digital advertising and social media campaigns—landing a top tier list of clients that included AllRecipes.com, Amazon, SanMar.com and T-Mobile.

- Designed a new digital campaign management system/process for Amazon Publishing, recruiting and managing a multi-disciplinary team of project managers, designers, writers, and business analysts in operationalization the new workflow within a 3-month period. The new system included A/B testing to better analyze performance and inform design iterations—in addition to incorporating a series of style guides, templates, and processes necessary for meeting a weekly publishing schedule of ~50 ads.
- Retained by T-Mobile to lead prototyping, UX/UI research, and usability studies in support of the company's My Account mobile application and website. Contributions included test preparation, facilitation, and analysis, as well as design guidance and delivery of an executive-level set of findings/recommendations.

Product Manager, Mobile Games | T-MOBILE

Bellevue, WA: 2011 to 2013

Recruited by this top wireless carrier to manage the mobile games, discovery & e-commerce, and hardware product categories. Authored a strategy that helped establish T-Mobile as a leader in the gaming space, including the design of innovative smartphone/tablet and retail experiences. Managed pivotal relationships with outside game studios including Electronic Arts, Rovio, Zynga, WildTangent, Gameloft and Glu.

- Negotiated a deal with Electronic Arts to provide a custom build of Need for Speed: Most Wanted that integrated with the MOGA Bluetooth controller for the company's hero device, the Samsung Galaxy Note II.
- Worked with internal business development team to source and secure an industry-first deal with Zynga to provide an exclusive and innovative social gaming mobile application. Launching this app required intensive collaboration with internal/external technical teams to meet aggressive promotional deadlines.
- Led the scoping, design, delivery, and roadmap development for Game Base—a mobile app for merchandising Android games—working with outside gaming partners to list/promote their titles, as well as collaborating with T-Mobile hardware PMs to get the app pre-installed on several of the company's current phones.
- Additional projects included ongoing support of the T-Mobile Mall, an application storefront on Android and Java platforms, as well as working with Rovio and Walmart on the Angry Birds Space launch.

Founder & Chief Product Consultant | BIG FISH (INNER AGENCY)

Seattle, WA: 1994 to 2011

Launched this creative consultancy to provide cutting-edge design, development, and staffing solutions to clients throughout the Seattle Area and beyond. Led execution of innovative branding/marketing initiatives that resulted in significant market share growth, in addition to developing a pioneering cloud-based recruiting application. Managed business strategy for the firm throughout periods of both rapid growth and market turbulence, in addition to recruiting/mentoring/leading a 20-member cross-disciplinary team.

Highlighted Projects, Contributions & Interim Roles:

- **2002-2011: PROGRAM MANAGER, SITE MANAGER, WEB DEVELOPER & DESIGNER CONSULTANT @ MICROSOFT**
Played key development and UX roles for a broad spectrum of Microsoft websites and products, handling an intensive mix of project scheduling, business requirements gathering, functional specifications authoring, site planning, product design, and program management responsibilities—in addition to gaining deep e-commerce expertise and building an end-to-end content management/publishing system.
- **2010-2011: UX DESIGNER, UX MANAGER @ T-MOBILE**
Worked with T-Mobile's Creation Center to deliver a variety of mobile applications on the Android Platform, leading teams in the management of complex product development workflows and designing/launching new applications in collaboration with internal business owners.
- **1997-1998: DIRECTOR OF NEW MEDIA @ GA DESIGN**
Retained as Program Manager and Development Leader for all new media projects—conducting extensive product research, handling all product-related planning and budgeting steps, leading vendor acquisition/negotiation efforts, and managing all product quality, scheduling and production issues.
- **1996-1997: WEB DEVELOPER & GRAPHIC ARTIST @ LANDOR ASSOCIATES**
Recruited on consulting basis to provide web development and design services to this top national advertising and branding Agency, guiding the production of websites and various UI components including icons, splash screens and wallpaper designs.

EDUCATION & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

BA in Visual Communications (Minor: Music) | WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Software Proficiency | Adobe Creative Suite; Sketch (wireframing/prototyping); Microsoft SQL Server; Visual C#; ASP.NET; front-end coding (HTML, CSS, JavaScript)

Outside Interests | Standup Paddleboarding & Surfing, Gamification Research & Psychology