Aaron Soto

Product • UX • Technology

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Summary

I am currently looking for a **senior/technical product** opportunity to innovate in an agile environment where I can develop talent and lead cross-functional teams to deliver meaningful and measurable value for all stakeholders.

I am a results-oriented project leader with 20 years of experience at all stages of the product lifecycle. I enjoy using my skills in project management, HCI/UX, development, and entrepreneurship to create value for my organizations and their customers. My interpersonal skills make me a strong cross-functional communicator and effective team leader. I serve on the Advisory Board for UC Irvine's Master of Human-Computer Interaction and Design program and maintain connections with UCI's Applied Innovation technology incubator as a means of staying actively engaged with some of the area's top minds and technologies.

Skills

Product/Business
- *Process Frameworks*: OKRs, Agile/Scrum/Kanban, Design Thinking, Lean Startup/UX, Jobs-to-be-Done
- *Strategy*: Market Research, Competitive Analysis, Value Innovation, Push/Pull Market Forces Diagrams
- *Professional*: Creative Problem Solving, Public Speaking, Personal Selling, Pitch Decks, Executive Presentations
- *Interpersonal*: Participatory Leadership & Design, Stakeholder Engagement, Empathy Towards Team & Users
- *Writing*: Business Requirements, User Stories, Product Roadmaps, Product Content, Marketing Content

User Experience (UX)
- *UX Research*: Formative + Summative, Qualitative (Interviews/Ethnography), Quantitative (Surveys/Analytics)
- *UX Design*: Contextual/User-Centered Design, Journey Mapping, Iterative Wireframing/Prototyping/Testing
- *UX Evaluation*: Heuristic Evaluation, Cognitive Walkthrough, In-person + Remote Usability Testing

Technology
- *Cloud Solutions Architecture*: AWS Certified Solutions Architect + Developer (Recertified Nov 2018)
- *Serverless Dev+Prototyping:* Serverless.com Framework w/ API Gateway, Lambda, DynamoDb, S3, SNS, SQS
- *Other*: Relational + NoSQL DB Design, REST APIs, .Net Core + NodeJS Backends, HTML/CSS/JS, Vue/Nuxt

Education

- **Master of Human-Computer Interaction & Design**, UC Irvine, September 2017
  Highlight: 6-month Capstone Research & Design Project on Customer Loyalty in partnership with *Accenture Labs*.
  Highlight: 3-month Advanced Design & Prototyping Project on a novel product design that we named *KidAR*.
  Honors: 2nd place in the UCI New Venture Competition & acceptance into The Cove's *Wayfinder* tech incubator.
- **B.S. in Information & Computer Science**, UC Irvine
- **Marketing Specialization Certificate** in Marketing, Advertising, & Professional Selling, Orange Coast College

Experience

Director of Product+UX at Assure Point (an InsurTech startup)   Feb 2018 – Present

Overview: I lead our core UX R&D innovation team within our InsurTech parent group tasked with iteratively discovering and solving customer problems for subsidiary lines of business at various stages of maturity.

Outcomes:
- Designed our internal innovation processes for researching and evaluating insurance niches.
- Designed InsurTech-specific business canvas documents for ideation and idea communication.
- Delivered Product+UX strategy plans for our prospective InsurTech niches to our CEO.

Details:
- Oversee all aspects of innovation including strategy, ideation, mockups, prototypes, and MVPs.
- Responsible for the continual refinement of our innovation structure, processes, and execution.
- Oversee content strategy, content creation, and content management within our headless CMS.
- Responsible for our data acquisition and analytics tools for quantitative behavior analysis.
- Work with our Business+Insurance leaders on customer acquisition strategies and techniques.
- Creation of User Research screening and interviewing outlines and conducting interviews.
- Creation of Personas that work within a Jobs-to-be-Done (JTBD) framework of customer behavior.
- Creation of Customer Journey Maps that communicate researched business issues & opportunities.
- Executive reports to our CEO of research findings, product progress, and recommended actions.

Chief Architect at Assure Point   Oct 2017 – Feb 2018

Overview: Hired for my combination of Dev+UX abilities to create our desired customer acquisition platform. Worked with our CEO+CTO to strategize customer acquisition methods and requirements as well as led a small team to build.

Outcomes:
- Designed and developed our MVP customer acquisition platform in a matter of months.
- Can quickly define new websites, pages, and input forms for efficient product/market fit testing.
- Support content personalization and form pre-filling based on known visitor data and/or personas.

Details:
- Set up Prismic.io for our headless CMS serving A/B testable content via a NodeJS backend.
- Forms can be defined quickly with pre-filling, logic jumps, direct S3 multi-part file uploads, and other personalizations via an augmented SurveyJS open-source implementation.
- Activity of link+button clicks, form submissions, and page views are routed through a serverless data processing pipeline that integrates with other systems like Slack, Salesforce, and Elasticsearch.
- Project services were built using the Serverless.com Framework using NodeJS 8.x and deployed to AWS services like API Gateway, Lambda, DynamoDb, S3, CloudFront, and SNS.

UX Research and Evaluation with UCI + Accenture Labs   Mar 2017 – Sep 2017

Overview: MHCID Graduate Capstone Project aimed at uncovering customer needs and behaviors around wine culture through research interviews, a design sprint, and iterative UX design and evaluation activities.

Outcomes:
- Produced a JTBD-based research white paper received at Accenture Labs with high acclaim.
- Produced an Invision prototype based on our research, our GV Design Sprint, and many iterations.

Details:
- Created research test plans, conducted user interviews, & open+axial coding of data into themes.
- Helped run a GV Design Sprint with my team and our PhD UX Research advisor from Accenture.
- Created and tested a variety of prototypes that addressed the various user needs from our research.

Experience (continued)

DezTech Consulting LLC   1998 – 2017
Co-Founder, Developer, Solutions Architect, and UX Consultant. Key, most relevant client projects listed below...

Gensun Casual Living: Website & Product Configurator   2015 – 2017

Overview: Beautiful new [website](#) targeting retail visitors with the goal of a clean, product-focused visual design and [product configurator tool](#) that allows visitors to view products in their available colors and fabrics.

My Role: Led a cross-functional team consisting of Gensun and DezTech resources where I was responsible for overall project management, architecture, backend dev, systems integrations, and UX evaluation.

Outcomes:
- Substantially increased traffic & engagement: +18% Sessions, +35% Page Views, -6% Bounce Rate.
- Visual design consistently and enthusiastically described as "beautiful" or similar in user testing.
- New product configurator delivers an engaging experience allowing users to visualize products.
- New admin tool that updates complex product data copied+pasted from their internal data sheets.

Thousand Islands Winery: Ecommerce Website + Wine Club System   2015 - 2017

Overview: Warm new [ecommerce website](#) and integrated Wine Club Management system built using Shopify, Shopify API, and a custom ASP .Net web application.

My Role: Managed all project details overseeing design as well as architecting and developing the custom web app that serves as a member portal, auto-bills members, synchronizes data with Shopify, and more.

Outcomes:
- Significantly higher traffic, engagement, and sales on their ecommerce website.
- New club management system allows for nearly full automation of club-related activities.
- Brand new implementation of a Loyalty Rewards program within their club management application.

Note
- Built from the ground up based on previous work with other wineries, including South Coast Winery in Temecula, CA, where that DezTech-built system manages a multi-million dollar club business.

Thales InFlyt Experience: "T3" Project Time-Tracking Application   2006 - 2017

Overview: Time Tracking Tool (T3) is an internal time tracking & reporting app for customer projects.

My Role: To evaluate and revamp their existing T3 app created by an offshore company that was plagued by a variety of user experience issues resulting in lack of use, data entry errors, and other usability problems.

Outcomes:
- Built a new Web UI based on user interviews and other feedback from all app user types.
- Kept all existing tables, relationships, stored procedures, and data for integrity and consistency.
- Conducted moderated, in-person user testing that verified the new application was meeting goals.

Note
- This was one of roughly sixteen applications we built or improved for Thales over a 12yr span. *Key App Areas*: Parts Manufacturing, Repairs Tracking, Investigation Workflows, Program+Project Management, Demand Forecasting, Procurement, Bid Risk Assessments, & Customer Extranets.

My Interests & Favs

- Anything Outdoors: Camping, Hiking, Road Cycling, Outdoor Concerts, Environmental Advocacy, etc.
- Anything Artisanal: Independent Craft Beer, Wine Culture, Stinky Cheeses, and Autumnal Meads.
- Favorite Books: *Blue Ocean Strategy, The Lean Startup, Business Model Generation* (this book is beautiful!)
- Hon. Mentions: *UX Strategy, Zero to One, Don't Make Me Think, Rocket Surgery Made Easy*

References available upon request.
Thank you for your time considering my qualifications.