

Gary Cooke - UX Manager & Strategist

Website: GaryCooke.com

People-focused UX leader, designer, mentor, & problem-solver.

Highly experienced and people-focused UX Manager & Strategist with a strong track record of leading successful teams, fostering innovation, and delivering outcomes that improve lives while increasing company profitability. I am committed to a servant-leadership philosophy centered around autonomy, radical candor, principles-based accountability, and mutually-beneficial career development.

EXPERIENCE

Driveway, Remote — *Product Design Manager Over Revenue*

DECEMBER 2023 - PRESENT

I was hired to help transform a stagnant design team that handled the revenue section of the Driveway experience. In this role I was responsible for moving the team from waterfall to an agile design process, delivering on projects that had been stuck in design for the past year, and fix the relationship and collaboration between design and product teams.

- Ensure brand consistency across all revenue UI / UX design projects by building closer ties between experience design and the design systems teams.
- Improved and implemented new project management tools which gave transparency and accountability throughout the design process, while integrating with the development team's agile project management.
- Provided leadership, supervision, and mentoring to a team of 5 designers ranging from Jr to Lead level.
- Worked with internal teams and external agencies to overhaul and personalize the digital experience.

LINQ, Remote — *UX Manager*

NOVEMBER 2020 - DECEMBER 2023

I balanced strategic design work with team oversight in this leadership position, notably leading the product design team to modernize the UI of K12 software in the areas of district nutrition, state nutrition, finance software, and contributing to numerous new business proposals. Additionally, I led the hiring, staffing and growth of our team.

- Outlined & piloted a research program to bring research to LINQ and establish in a way that worked alongside Scrum to make User Research part of the process.
- Led the team in creating a unified design system and strategy to bring multiple legacy products together to create a first of its kind K12 platform.
- Solidified relationships with thousands of school & government bodies across 36 states to give the team a pool of users to reach out to for research needs.
- Upskilled 8 designers to design across app and web, positioned UX to drive product development.

Jaguar Games, Remote — *Brand & User Researcher*

APRIL 2020 - SEPTEMBER 2020

During my short term contract at Imertual I established myself as an inclusive design leader and strong user advocate. Overseeing experience strategy, user research and UX/UI design for the core game the studio was developing, my focus was on demonstrating the value of human-centered design to the team, while building out an engaged player base for feedback and testing.

- Built user personas based on user interviews, surveys, and research to allow the team to narrow in and discover their audience's hidden needs.
- Led focus groups covering topics such as patches, game balance, quality of life improvements, bug reports, international issues, and player concerns.
- Created storyboards, problem/POV statements, usability tests, and landing pages.

World Travel Holdings, Remote — *Lead Product Designer*

MARCH 2018 - APRIL 2020

In my year and a half on the digital marketing team at this leading luxury travel company I was able to grow my design leadership and experience strategy skills exponentially. I had the opportunity to work on many diverse projects including leading UX and content strategy for the Jamaica Villas & Villas of Distinction brands and being integrated into the product development sessions to help bring their new digital & mobile offerings to life.

- Developed user-oriented visuals and features using front-end technologies that led to an increase in leads by 40%.
- Created the strategy and conducted A/B testing that led to a 70% growth in leads from a core business channel that was falling behind its goal.
- Planned and optimized data analytics & collection strategy on all company websites increasing from 5 actionable data points to over 200.
- Facilitated multi-disciplinary design thinking and brainstorm sessions.

Check Into Cash, Cleveland TN — *Lead UX Developer*

OCTOBER 2016 - MARCH 2018

I was hired to oversee the UX Design & Development of the company's digital ecommerce offerings. I was responsible for the UX, UI, and Visual design for all desktop and mobile offerings.

- I built a strategy for an out of the box experience for the affiliate marketing channel, which led to 8,000 new visitors to the website in the first month.
- I researched and tested email templates to increase open rates by 22% and the CTR of emails by 11%. This change also contributed to the eCommerce team bringing in an extra \$10,000 in the first year.
- I championed an effort to de-bloat the main website's code, which led to a website load time going from 9 seconds to under 2 seconds and bounce rate on key lead generating pages dropping by 15%.
- I worked with the project manager to streamline and optimize design infrastructure for a more efficient production workflow by converting the design team from waterfall to agile.

Serious SEM, Rock Island TN — *Senior Digital Designer*

FEBRUARY 2014 - OCTOBER 2016

I found my niche by advocating for content driven search strategy, refining clients' digital properties to increase value, traffic and conversions while maximizing technical health to enhance user experience and accessibility.

- Created strategies that increase referral traffic to client websites by an average of 7%.
- Redesigned email communications and mobile acquisition flow for clients.
- Focused on problem space research to better understand users in our clients B2B & B2C models.
- Led a team of 4 made up of designers and developers.

EDUCATION

Interaction Design Foundation, Online — *UX Management: Strategy and Tactics*

Zenva Academy, Online — *Mobile App Development*

Zenva Academy, Online — *Unity & Godot Game Development*

International Academy of Design, Online — *Graphic Design*