

ROB FAY

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QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY

Rob Fay is a seasoned design and research leader with a passion for human-centered innovation that transforms complex ecosystems—particularly in education, healthcare, and government. He has a proven track record of scaling UX design and research operations, building Centers of Excellence, and shaping product strategy through deep customer empathy, strategic clarity, and cross-functional collaboration. Rob thrives as a culture change agent, known for cultivating high-performing, inclusive team cultures that foster continuous learning, intelligent risk-taking, and shared purpose. He unites product and service design to deliver seamless, empowering experiences for employees, customers, and mission-driven organizations navigating digital transformation.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Sr. Manager, Human-Centered Design Center of Excellence

Jul 2018 – May 2025

Sikich LLC (formerly Tantus Technologies, Inc.)

- Championed a team of design strategy managers, driving human-centered design (HCD) and design thinking transformation for a Center within the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), directly supporting 180 contracts and over 50 products and services mapped through customer journey frameworks.
- Led and operationalized the HCD Center of Excellence (CoE) and partnered with the Lean Agile Center of Excellence to scale Research & Design Operations, instituting best practices, launching 15+ training programs, and mentoring 200+ CMS stakeholders annually. Aligned delivery teams under SAFe agile practices and an OKR framework to maximize value at scale.
- Spearheaded and governed 5+ enterprise-wide initiatives, including deploying a centralized design system across 30+ application development organizations (ADOs), crafted an HCD maturity model evaluated across 8 business units, and embedding enterprise feedback loops (e.g., voice of the customer, CSAT, NPS), driving a 25% increase in measured customer satisfaction.
- Orchestrated research and design engagements that unified enterprise-level product and service solutions across CMS, enabling teams to boost efficiencies and consistency using AI to improve user experiences across 30+ digital and non-digital solutions.
- Designed and delivered HCD training programs to over 1,500 CMS employees and contractors, elevating user experience and accessibility standards across a wide portfolio of digital health products, services, and policy initiatives.
- Built, curated, and headlined quarterly Communities of Practice and digital events, engaging over 400 participants annually through high-visibility initiatives such as World Usability Day.
- Advised and empowered teams through coaching and design thinking leadership, catalyzing service design improvements across CMS, resulting in a 20% reduction in service delivery times and enhancing customer satisfaction across lines of business.

Director User Experience

May 2015 – Jun 2018

Allegis Group

- Architected the UX strategy for a job seeker platform, driving a 60% surge in user engagement and a 40% increase in average session duration through innovative, user-centered design solutions.
- Accelerated a 35% rise in positive user reviews by analyzing 2,000+ pieces of customer feedback and executing high-impact UI enhancements that streamlined the job search experience.
- Built and scaled a high-performing UX research and design team, supporting 5 product teams and shortening feature delivery cycles by 20% through seamless design integration.

- Facilitated and orchestrated 5+ executive-level service design workshops, delivering strategic employee and customer journey maps that informed enterprise-wide CX transformation initiatives.
- Championed and led qualitative and quantitative research programs across 10+ studies, delivering actionable insights that drove a 15% increase in user satisfaction and shaped high-priority product decisions.

Consultant, Design Strategist

Sep 2012 – May 2015

Design for Context

- Instituted design leadership practices in agile environments across government and commercial projects, accelerating product delivery cycles and enhancing user-centered outcomes.
- Streamlined and empowered cross-functional teams through agile sprints for government initiatives, expediting the development of a next-generation patents review system for the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) and reducing delivery timelines by 20%.
- Spearheaded research and design efforts for a USPTO self-service financial transactions platform, enhancing customer autonomy; crafted usability testing plans that identified and resolved critical friction points, leading to an estimated 30% reduction in support calls.
- Conceived and engineered browsing, navigation, and social sharing capabilities for the National Gallery of Art collections, increasing digital engagement among online visitors by 25%.
- Revamped and optimized Education Week's mobile site, boosting mobile engagement rates by 20% through intuitive design enhancements and streamlined content delivery.

User Experience Architect

Sep 2007 – Jul 2012

Anthology (formerly Blackboard Inc.)

- Devised and executed UX strategies to deliver intuitive and engaging user experiences across Blackboard Learn product lines, impacting millions of users worldwide for a \$1.65 billion global leader in educational technology.
- Founded and scaled the company's first user and design research program, reducing user clicks and page loads by approximately 33%, streamlining workflows across key product interfaces.
- Architected and curated the enterprise design system, driving consistency across the full product suite while enabling teams to accelerate innovation and deliver high-quality, differentiated user experiences.
- Designed and prototyped multi-device experiences, applying AI for plagiarism detection, and enhancing cross-platform usability and supporting Blackboard's expansion into mobile and responsive learning environments.
- Formulated and implemented comprehensive metrics frameworks to quantify and maintain product quality standards, increasing user satisfaction scores and providing actionable insights for ongoing product optimization.

Senior Information Architect

Mar 2006 – Jul 2007

Stride Learning Solutions (formerly K12 Inc.)

- Crafted and delivered critical user experience artifacts to accelerate software development efforts as K12 Inc. prepared for its successful IPO, strengthening the company's digital readiness for public offering.
- Synthesized and communicated complex design solutions through a full suite of UX deliverables—including sitemaps, wireframes, task analyses, competitive analyses, and process flows—enhancing cross-functional alignment between design, engineering, and product teams.
- Led the end-to-end design and development of a marketing microsite, increasing campaign engagement by 30% and supporting strategic brand positioning efforts during the IPO process.

Consultant, Senior Business Analyst

Jan 2005 – Mar 2006

MORI Associates, Inc.

- Planned and executed a comprehensive heuristic evaluation of the National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases (NIH NIDDK) website, implementing expert design recommendations based on web analytics, persona development, and competitive analysis, resulting in a 25% improvement in site usability scores.
- Led and facilitated usability testing for the Institute's web-based scientific grants coding system, identifying and resolving critical usability issues, reducing user error rates by 30%, and accelerating grant processing workflows.

EDUCATION

Master of Information Management, HCI track
University of Maryland, College Park, MD

Master of Science in Marriage & Family Therapy
University of Maryland, College Park, MD

Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education
Messiah University, Grantham, PA

CERTIFICATIONS

Certified SAFe® 5 Product Owner/Product Manager (PO/PM)

Certified SAFe® 6 Release Train Engineer (RTE)

Certified Customer Experience Professional (CCXP)

IBM Generative AI Engineering (in progress)

IBM Enterprise Design Thinking Practitioner

Skillsoft PMP ATP Certificate of Completion

Packt Change Management

SKILLS

Leadership & Strategy

- UX Design & Research Operations
- Product & Service Design Strategy
- Cross-Functional Team Leadership
- Culture Building & Change Management
- Executive Stakeholder Engagement
- Center of Excellence (CoE) Development

UX & Product Design

- Experience Strategy
- Journey Mapping & Service Blueprints
- Interaction & Interface Design
- Accessibility (WCAG / a11y) Compliance
- Design Systems (creation & governance)
- Prototyping (Figma, Sketch, Adobe XD)

User Research & Insights

- Mixed-Methods Research (qual & quant)

- Usability Testing & Heuristics
- Contextual Inquiry & Field Studies
- VoC & Continuous Discovery Programs
- Research Repositories (e.g., Dovetail)
- Metrics-Driven Experience Optimization (ServiceNow, Qualtrics, Salesforce, Google Analytics, Matomo, HotJar)

Tools & Technology

- Figma, Mural, Lucidchart, InVision
- Dovetail, UserTesting, Optimal Workshop
- Confluence, Jira, Trello, Tableau
- CMS & Front-End (HTML/CSS)
- Agile, SAFe, Lean UX frameworks

Education & Training

- HCD Curriculum Development
- Facilitation of UX Workshops
- Coaching for Research & Design Maturity