

MELISSA GENA

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SUMMARY

Product Leader with an **M.A. in Organizational Leadership** and **15+ years' experience** developing strategy and leading product development for fast-growth start-ups and enterprises in marketing, edtech, CRM and other markets.

- Tech-savvy professional with expertise in B2B & B2C, platform development, SaaS and Mobile.
- Skilled communicator and collaborator who earns trust and buy-in from multiple stakeholders.
- Strategic and detail-oriented leader adept at understanding customers, leading teams and driving revenue.

EXPERIENCE

Director of Product—*TargetX, LLC.*, Oakland, CA 2016 – present

Recruited to provide senior leadership for a green product team, mentoring individuals in various cross-functional roles. Define product vision and strategy for platform components that support ~20 products.

- Lead requirements gathering and definition across multi-functional teams, prioritizing development efforts among new product features, enhancements, bugs, and technical debt.
- Coordinate and manage sprint planning and daily standups in support of 6 annual releases, acting as Product Manager and Product Owner for teams including architects, front- and back-end engineers, Salesforce developers, QA engineers, UX/UI designers, and technical writers.
- Ensure input from sales, support, implementation services, customers, internal C-level stakeholders, and product and engineering teams is well-represented, considered thoughtfully in developing roadmap, and all parties are kept informed about progress and planning efforts.

Director of Product—*OneUni, Inc.*, Oakland, CA 2015 – 2016

Led planning and development of a market-driven, user-centered product experience that supported students in emerging economies seeking affordable degrees on their mobile devices with the help of a learning coach.

- Responsible for product strategy encompassing complete product experience from account setup and university application process to course content/LMS system, Android app development, assessment item bank, system administration functions, and data analytics.
- Built strong relationships across all company functions in order to best understand and represent the needs of internal stakeholders while balancing against the needs of multiple end user types.
- Defined and prioritized requirements for all product areas over the course of five months, bringing the product from concept through delivery of a pilot program launched in Kenya in partnership with the leading private higher education institution in market.
- Launched digital university admissions application system that supported multiple degree programs and customization of application requirements for multiple university partners.
- Launched mobile and web clients that integrated with Canvas to manage and present learning content to students.

Senior Product Manager—*Cengage Learning, Inc.*, San Francisco, CA 2014 – 2015

Brought on to assist in organizational transition from traditional print publishing company to digital-focused education technology company.

- Responsible for performance and growth of print and digital portfolio that generated **\$12MM+ annually**.
- Set product vision and manage content developers, software developers and other cross-functional resources in a matrixed organization to execute on product vision.
- Implement analytics in HTML5 sites; analyze data to make data-informed decisions about feature development.
- Maintain deep connections with users and market in order to identify problems and develop solutions aimed at improving higher ed student learning outcomes and easing the teaching burden for instructors.
- Perform market research with focus groups, surveys, usability studies, and competitive analysis.
- Establish strong relationships with authors, working to engage them in development of digital content to supplement their written works.
- Collaborate with Marketing and Sales to develop effective go-to-market messaging and campaigns.

Founder, Product Person—*Iteration Z*, El Cerrito, CA

2012 – 2014

Founded independent product management consulting firm.

- Strategic technical advisor for The Town Kitchen.
- Consulting producer in Wells Fargo Wholesale User Experience department; responsible for oversight of design sprint planning, requirements analysis, interaction design, visual design, and user research, as well as content strategy and development, editing and delivery.
- Performed product positioning, web usability and marketing audit for startup digital publishing company leading to complete overhaul of company website and an interface that was significantly more accessible and engaging.
- Strategic advisor to Startup Product community group, instrumental in moving organization from a perspective that valued only content to one that also emphasized information organization and presentation. Managed websites, edited original content published on community blog, selected and implemented cloud-based collaboration and content tools for use by distributed volunteer network.
- Co-producer of Startup Product Summit SF2 and ProductCamp SF conferences, Oct. 10-12, 2013.

Senior Project Manager—*ECWise*, San Rafael, CA

2011 – 2012

Brought on to lead development of a MVC-architected document composition platform for company specializing in analytics, data mining, software development, and data integration and management.

- Client-facing PM for largest account which served **Wells Fargo**. Earned client's praise for responsiveness, attention to detail, and fast delivery time, based on implementation of largest new feature release with the fewest quality issues in the platform's 6-year history.
- Oversaw development and maintenance of flagship product that generated **~\$7MM in annual revenue** from leading client.

Director of Product—*AppCentral (formerly Ondeege)*, San Francisco, CA

2010 – 2011

Established Agile product management function for early stage start-up with SaaS product that distributed Mobile apps through private "App Stores" with Web and Mobile app discovery interfaces. (Good Technology acquired AppCentral in 2012 and Blackberry acquired Good Technology in 2015)

- Created product management process that separated sales from engineering and centralized product feature management. Resulted in exponential increase in efficiency and production from engineering team.
- Created values-driven prioritization model, led product planning and created first roadmap for complete rebuild of the AppCentral "store" and an overhaul of the flagship product, AppGuard, which allowed clients including **Pepsi** and **Huawei** to securely distribute mobile apps to enterprise employees.
- Delivered incremental releases on v1.x on a bimonthly schedule while working on v2.0 roadmap and architecture.
- Documented user stories, non-functional requirements, POV statements, white papers, and release notes.
- Created wireframes and provided direction to graphic designers, UI developers and engineers.

Director of Platform & Production—*The Marketing Arm Wireless Services (formerly ipsh!)* San Francisco, CA

2005 – 2010

Promoted through a series of increasingly responsible positions after being hired as a programmer to build a SaaS Mobile marketing campaign management application. Post-acquisition, planned and led reorganization from "technology shop" to "marketing agency." Managed (hired, trained, mentored, and evaluated) 20 Program Managers and Engineers.

- Owned product roadmap for web-based Campaign Management product ("Messenger"), managed requirements definition, development, QA, and scheduled releases, prioritized feature requests and bug fixes.
- Led teams responsible for complete life cycle execution of wireless digital agency portfolio, spanning Web & mobile development, Bluetooth content distribution networks, and Messenger applications. Portfolio included: **Warner Music Group, AT&T, Bank of America, Anheuser Busch, and Frito Lay**.
- To increase efficiency and maximize cross-functional teamwork, defined and optimized detailed business processes, including: Program Kick-off, Project Planning Guidelines, Program Risk Analysis, Functional Specifications, QA Plans, Post-Mortem, and Mobile Marketing Best Practices.
- Defined requirements for internal infrastructure and centralized middle-ware and support systems.
- Architected SMS traffic routing systems; Built and documented APIs for external integration with SMS systems.
- Optimized marketing tactics using results from A/B tests and other metrics such as error rates and opt-outs.
- Increased user engagement—in both initial conversion and in length and frequency of interaction.

EXPERIENCE, *cont'd*

Co-Founder—*Domino Developer Network, Inc.*, Berkeley, CA 1999 – 2004

Partnered with software engineer to co-found a Domino web hosting company that virtually eliminated the need for manual service setup by administrators. Defined user-centric subscription-based business model that relied on heavy automation to scale customer base exponentially as compared to increases in overhead and technical resources required to support customer growth. Managed business, sales, technical support and marketing operations. Sold share in 2004 to pursue other opportunities.

- Architected and developed multiple APIs extending programmatic access to web hosting account features.
- Grew subscriptions by ~500% annually from 1999 to 2004; expanded initial market base of individual developers to include small- to mid-sized businesses.
- Achieved an annual revenue growth rate of ~1000% by growing revenue per client and subscriptions.
- Created channels for support, community feedback, and competitive research to feed product enhancements.
- Analyzed metrics to monitor adoption of new services and gauge the success of product/feature enhancements.
- Actively managed user community by monitoring and administering public forums, managing technical support, and creating partnership programs.

TECHNOLOGY QUALIFICATIONS

	Advanced/Proficient	Familiar
Product Mgmt Software	UserTesting, Jira, Pivotal Tracker, Balsamiq Mockups	Sprintly, Rally, OnTime, Axure
Collaboration Software	Asana, Confluence, SamePage, Workflowy	BaseCamp, Rizzoma, Podio
LMS Software	Cengage MindTap, Canvas	Blackboard
Misc. Software	Microsoft Office, Google Apps, Prezi	Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator
Languages/Frameworks	LotusScript, JavaScript, HTML, CSS	Python, SQL, XML, Ajax, JSON, JQuery

EDUCATION

Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership, GPA 3.94, 2012—*Gonzaga University*, Spokane, WA

Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), Summa Cum Laude, 2010—*Golden Gate University*, San Francisco, CA
Courses completed 1997–1999 through *American College of Computer & Information Systems* (now *American Sentinel University*):
Computer Programming (Intro and Intermediate); Data Structures; Database Systems; Computer Organization

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & AFFILIATIONS

Six Sigma Green Belt

Servant Leadership, Certificate 2010

Member, Association of International Product Marketing and Management (AIPMM)

Member, Academy of Management

Selected list of courses completed through Coursera:

- R Programming & The Data Scientist's Toolbox, *Johns Hopkins University* (2 4-week courses, 2014)
- On Strategy: What Managers Can Learn from Great Philosophers, *Ecole Centrale Paris* (6-week course, 2014)
- Leading Strategic Innovation in Organizations, *Vanderbilt University* (8-week course, 2013)
- Algorithms: Design & Analysis Part I, *Stanford* (6-week course, 2013)
- Programming Languages (ML, Racket, Ruby), *University of Washington* (10-week course, 2013)
- Human-Computer Interaction, *Stanford, D-School* (9-week course, 2012)
- Gamification, *University of Pennsylvania, Wharton School of Business* (6-week course, 2012)

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Strategic Technical Advisor, *The Town Kitchen* 2014 – 2017

Volunteer Product Strategist & Conference Producer, *Startup Product* 2013

Member, Board of Directors, *edRover* (www.edrover.org), 2010 – 2013
California Public Benefit Corporation supporting fund raising for schools via smart phone apps.