

## Video transcript

### Get insights from a UX designer

Hello, my name is Sara. I am user experience designer and I've been with IBM for about four, a little bit over four years now.

So, what drew me to user experience design is that it is a creative field. So, early on in my career I was actually a graphic designer and even though I loved the digital design aspect of it I found it sometimes to be a little bit subjective. So, when I learned about user experience design and learned that a lot of the design decisions, if not all of them, are based on user research, on design principles for digital design. I was really attracted to it. I loved how we could use design to simplify a process for user or just make something easier to use. So, I love the fact that, you know, you can use your design background and your design skills to make things simpler for users and all of those design decisions are grounded in research or, again, in digital design principles. So, that's really what led me to user experience design.

So, I knew that this was the right career for me, because initially, early on in my in my work history I was working a role that was very technical and super stressful. And so, when I started developing skills for user experience design, I found myself being challenged, but in a way that I really, really loved. I found myself going to the classes and with a lot of enthusiasm, learning the material with a lot of energy and I just found myself wanting to keep learning, wanting to keep designing, and it was different than what the experience I had in my original job. It was something that I looked forward to. So, it was challenging in the best way. And even to this day, I still have almost every single day, immense gratitude for being able to find a creative field that I can really develop in.

So, the mentors that helped me kind of get to where I am, I would say are definitely my university professors. I learned so much from them about user experience and user experience design. And the biggest thing really was always keeping the user in the center of the process. Essentially human centered design. And just kind of always looking back and making sure the design is addressing their pain points, meeting their needs, and considering how the technology is affecting the humans that we're designing for.

So, I would definitely say that they really challenged me to think about design beyond just what does something look like, instead focus on how does it work and how does it affect the people that we're designing for. So, the best career advice I've received is definitely to build trust with the people that you work with. In all the projects that I've worked on at IBM, and in other places as well, the most successful projects have been the ones where there's trust in the team. Because when you have trust as a foundation, you're able to collaborate better. Collaboration also leads to, you know, helping each other, having the best in mind, for not just a project, but for the people involved and I think that always leads to a successful outcome, not only on the project but also you enjoy doing the work a little bit more. When you have trust, then collaboration that flows easily within the team.

So, I think is the UX designer the way that we change the world is because we are essentially taught to ask the big questions and think holistically also were taught to challenge assumptions and I think that's important. Especially nowadays when I feel that technology is moving so fast, the world is moving so fast, I think designers are super critical in kind of helping the team really think through how is the

technology that we are creating, that we're implementing going to impact the end users. Again, user experience design is all about keeping the humans in the center of what we do. So, it's super important for us as designers to ask the important questions, challenge assumptions and just ensure that whatever we create we're doing it for the benefit of the people we're creating for.

So, a typical day in the life of the UX designer at IBM looks a little bit something like this. I would say most days you are on Figma creating different designs, mockups, anywhere from low fidelity all the way to high fidelity designs. And then other days you might be talking to users. So, there's some days where I spend the whole day just on calls with users. Whether it's user interviews, whether it's usability testing and then summarizing the findings. Those are kind of like two types of days that I have. But one thing that is for certain that I do most days is meet with my team, the developers, the product owner talk about, you know, where we're going, what direction we're heading in. I'll have a lot of design meetings where I share some design ideas get feedback and then go back to start designing whether it's you know making those updates or moving forward to the next thing, but I would definitely say my favorite days are the ones where I spend the whole day just in flow, in the zone designing ideas for different features.

So, I think my favorite part of the job is definitely working in a space that's creative because it allows me to really come up with many different ideas and I definitely have a lot of them. So, it's really awesome to be able to spend the day putting those on paper and sharing them with the team. But then another favorite part of my job, I think I have two, to is the fact that I get to work with other designers and I have found that to be so much fun because we will have designed sessions where we'll sit with a design, think of different ideas together, and always one hundred percent of the time that I do that we always come up with something better. So, I think, yeah, just the creative aspect than working with other creatives is my favorite part of the job.

So, for someone that wants to get started and user experience design, I would definitely recommend two things. The first one has to do with theory and then the second one is a little bit more hands on. So, for the first one I would say definitely learn as much as you can about user research methods and when and how to use them based on your goal. I'm also learning about the design principles for digital design, also interaction design. So, kind of just learn the basics. But I also think it's super important to actually design yourself. So, I would recommend downloading any design program, I actually recommend Figma. I think it's there's a free account that you can make and just get familiar with Figma. If you see that there is a website that maybe you've struggled using in the past see if you can redesign it using what you've learned about UX. And then, base your design decisions on what you've learned. I think that, you know, learning both the theory but also the practical side of it of actually designing is a good place to get started and it's a place you can get started right away.