

Benjamin Mikiten *(MIK-ih-tin | he/him)*

Senior Front-End Developer

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Overview

I'm a senior front-end developer looking to join a cross-functional team where I can build tools and systems that make it easier for my team to see their vision come to life. My design background helps me excel where UX designers and developers are a tight-knit team and prototyping, exploration, and creative problem-solving are important parts of the process. I care deeply about facilitating great experiences on the web that everyone can use. I'm looking for an opportunity to join a team building a product they care deeply about the craft of, where I can lead a team of developers and help set standards and practices to quickly scale a front end.

Education

BFA in Communication Design, Texas State University (2013)

I attended Texas State University from 2009 - 2013 and graduated Summa Cum Laude. I took classes in the Honors College and focused on web design and development.

- Background in UI/UX design gives me an insight into working with design teams and an instinct for good UX practices.
- Focused on Interactive Design courses, graduated with a portfolio of UI/UX design work and websites.
- Courses and self-taught in web development, computer science, constantly learning more.

Experience

Senior Front-End Developer, McGarrah Jessee (8 years)

McGarrah Jessee is a mid-sized full-service ad agency in Austin, Texas, known for its work with Shiner Beers, Frost Bank, YETI Coolers, Costa Sunglasses, and Whataburger. In 2017 it won AdAge's "Small Agency of the Year". In my time there I was one half of a development team that built and maintained every digital project that entered the building. At the end of 2020, I was part of a layoff that included the entire digital department.

- Lead front-end engineering decisions to optimize projects for performance, stability, and maintainability.
- Pursued uncompromising attention to detail, dedication to delivering the absolute best product to clients.
- Learned new technologies and tools as needed to fit client goals and stay current.
- Collaborated with back-end developers, UI/UX designers.
- Worked directly with client teams coordinating and managing team goals.
- Brought designers' comps and wireframes to pixel-perfect reality while championing a11y and UX best practices.
- Scoped and quoted projects to meet deadlines, budgets, and requirements.
- Communicated technical considerations and goals to team members and clients.
- Maintained documentation, style guides, and design systems for long-term projects.
- Mentored interns, and shared experiences and knowledge with colleagues.

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Senior Front-End Developer, Springbox (1 year)

Springbox is the digital activation wing of Prophet, the largest strategy consultancy in the world. Their work is focused on B2B marketing and enterprise web platforms, and Springbox brings their strategy to life for their clients. I led a team of local and offshore developers while building and implementing an in-house style guide, development process, and design system we utilized across several projects to quickly scale and deploy sites for our clients on tight timelines.

- Built and led a team of developers that collaborated remotely and across time zones to deliver successful site launches. Ran code reviews to only allow quality code into our projects, building our team know-how with every PR.
- Collaborated with UX/UI teams to develop a flexible in-house component system that reduced rework between projects and rolled paid-for features forward into subsequent projects to consecutively reduce development and design time.
- Developed in-house development best practice guidelines to align staff and contracted developers to a consistent style that produced scalable and bug-free experiences.
- Produced design deliverable requirements to ensure my team had all artifacts necessary to produce high-fidelity web experiences without any last-minute speed bumps. This consistently reduced our QA time and number of tickets and drove success.
- Presented regular talks on development best practices, process improvements to upskill my team.
- Mentored and educated junior developers in under-the-gun problem solving, professionalism, and soft skills to stay cool and effective and well-regarded by your peers.
- Communicated with clients to bridge technical knowledge gaps, find solutions and build team cohesion and trust.
- Quoted projects, managed my team's resourcing, and found contractors as needed to meet staffing requirements for projects.
- Developed detailed requirement documentation and provided governance for offshore teams.

Skills

I have a broad skill set focused on UX Engineering and Front End Development. However, my time as part of flexible small development teams has given me familiarity with the full stack. I succeed in cross-functional teams where I get to collaborate with UI/UX designers.

Front-End Development

- React, Gatsby, Next.js
- Styled Components, Modular SCSS
- Redux, zustand
- JS, HTML & CSS/SCSS
- Framer Motion, React Spring, GSAP
- Design system development
- Jira, Wrike, Github
- Consuming GraphQL, RESTful APIs
- Implementing A11y standards
- Figma, Sketch, Adobe CC
- Version control (git, git-flow, GitHub)
- Agile processes
- Analytics integration
- SEO

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UI/UX Design, Digital Production

- Creating and maintaining design systems
- Asset production and optimization
- Video encoding
- UX best practices

Back-End Development / DevOps

- Node, Express, MongoDB
- RESTful API design
- Rails, Postgres
- NGINX, Apache
- Docker
- AWS, Azure, Netlify

Strengths

Collaboration and Communication

My greatest strength is communication. My favorite part of this field is helping to convey technical ideas, understanding designer needs, and writing fail-proof requirements. This is an essential skill for developers that makes me a vital part of a technical team. In my experience, the best solutions always come out of a conversation across disciplines, whether within a team, or with clients.

Professionalism and Drive

I come to work to work. I value professionalism and leaving ego at home so we can focus on finding solutions -- not getting hung up on problems. I understand that being a part of a team means moving our work forward, and identifying barriers before we hit them. I expect the same of my team: as a manager, my job is to facilitate their success, and address anything they need to do their best work.

Attention to Detail

My formal design training gives me the ability to see and appreciate the details that designers put into their work. I can meet them at their level, and ensure the fine details of their art make it into the experience I'm building for them. My experience at ad agencies has given me the patience and drive to commit to never cutting corners, to tweaking and polishing my websites to match comps, and ratting out every dark corner of an experience that doesn't work or feel right, because bugs don't stay swept under the rug for long.

Process and Component / Design System Creation

At McJ, I built and maintained Frost Bank's *Opt For Optimism* campaign hub website for three years, taking the lead in organizing and architecting our design system into flexible and reusable components. I used this project to show our team the importance of design system thinking and helped transition the UX/UI designers to use this approach across all our client projects.

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At Springbox, I used this experience to institute a similar process, where I was able to hit the ground running. Within my time there, I developed an internal component system, defined design artifact requirements, functional specification requirements, and brought the design team up to speed on how to design for and deliver the artifacts my team would need to succeed. This effort was well-liked internally, and supported a series of websites for a major enterprise client that were all delivered under budget and time as a result.

Technical Know-How and Adaptability

As a developer at an ad agency, our technical decisions were often made for us by our clients' requirements. Whether that meant quickly coming up to speed on a new technology or devising clever ways around a roadblock, I learned to RTFM and think obliquely around issues and focus on *how* to make something work, rather than why it *wouldn't* work.

Throughout my career I have regularly functioned as a technology consultant in house, helping to bring the technical side of creatives' visions into focus. To that end, I built a number of interactive digital museum exhibits for Frost Bank's HQ, including a 2-axis check-signing robot, helping to spec and troubleshoot displays, speakers, and of course the AxiDraw robot.

Personal

I live in San Marcos, Texas with my wife Lauren and four cats (Lady, Pelon, Sandwich, and Also). We're active in our small college town community and keep several large gardens where we grow our own veggies.

I am a voraciously curious hobbyist, notorious with my friends and family for picking up a new hobby every month or so and taking a deep-dive into the subject before moving on to a new interest. Those that I've stuck with the longest include building, programming, designing, and collecting mechanical keyboards; BBQing; amateur meteorology; linguistics and etymology; Dungeons and Dragons; and most importantly, music: I play seven different instruments and participate in several local bands. My latest focuses have been adapting my jazz piano know-how to the guitar, and building guitar pedals.