

October 29th, 2014

Greetings,

I am writing to express my interest in the Senior UX Researcher position at XXXXXXXX. This position stands out as an excellent opportunity for me to contribute my skills and experience in UX research to a team and organization that truly values the perspective of users in the design and development process.

Most recently I worked as a UX Researcher at Empirical, a local design consulting firm. My responsibilities focused primarily on designing, conducting, delivering and managing UX research for clients in the tech and automotive sectors (e.g., Intel and Jaguar Land Rover.) As a consultant, I worked with clients to identify and develop research projects that addressed business goals, collaborated with designers and developers on concept and prototype design, and advocated for users in the delivery of design recommendations.

The projects I worked on addressed challenges in software design, developer support programs, in-vehicle systems, small business IT environments, hardware optimization, app testing, mobile productivity, and others. Prior to Empirical, I worked as an in-house researcher at State Farm Insurance, where I assisted business and design teams with research related to insurance products and experiences with agent offices, call centers, StateFarm.com and the State Farm mobile app.

I have always believed that the best way to provide value to people is to seek out and prioritize their perspectives and experiences through research. It is important because we are not our users, because understanding is greater than assuming, and because our users are the experts of their lives. UX research involves an end-to-end understanding of how people interact with and experience a product, service or system, and appreciating the needs and preferences of the people who will be most impacted by our decisions. The best way to do this is to engage with people, empathize with their worldviews, goals, challenges and values, and to advocate for them throughout the process. UX is not a box to check on a list; it's an approach, process, philosophy and way of thinking about design that involves actually caring about people and showing them through continuous improvement. Ultimately it helps us make better decisions, build better relationships, and strengthen our appreciation for other perspectives within our organizations and ourselves.

One of my favorite parts of being a researcher is the power of insights to uproot assumptions. I love challenging myself to go into research and learn as much as I can from the perspective of others, because I often discover things I never expected. For example, at Empirical, I co-lead an exploratory project that involved interviewing 24 Android developers in China, Brazil and Germany. Our client, XXXXXXXX, wanted us to find out all about their world and recommend areas of focus for their developer support program along with ways to entice developers to work on XXXXXXXX architecture. The client had many assumptions about the developers that were primarily based on their own experiences and those of developers here in the United States rather than on a global perspective.

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Through an understanding of their experiences, frustrations, values and motivations, our research helped to uncover areas the client had not even considered for the support program. While we were not surprised to hear that the developers were frustrated by device, screen and OS fragmentation, or by competition from the “big guys,” there were more than a few interesting insights that came from this work. For one, we found that the developers were just as interested in making a difference in the world through their apps as they were in making money. They saw developing as a means to improve the common good and have an impact on the local and global community. There was also a unanimous element to how they defined success – positive user feedback on their apps. We uncovered many simple ways in which XXXXXXXX could support their efforts and help them get to the next level, from better UI design tools and access to better and more devices and software for testing, to guidance for how to run a start-up and an increased presence in the community from XXXXXXXX.

From exploratory research to concept and usability testing, I have an affinity for approaches, methods and techniques along the qualitative spectrum, as well as experience in basic survey design and analysis. As a formally trained ethnographer, I especially enjoy conducting contextual research for an in-depth and realistic understanding of how people actually interact with and experience things in the context of their lives.

I am applying to XXXXXXXX because my goal as a UX researcher is to work for a company that values UX research as much as I do. I feel strongly that my skills, experience, interest in technology, and passion for understanding people would be a great match, and look forward to the potential opportunity to work directly with stakeholders, designers and developers, help solve real-world problems, make people's lives easier, and support the XXXXXXXX mission.

I am excited to apply for this position and would appreciate the chance to discuss this opportunity in more detail. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Santee