

Gayle Denney

User Research Leader | Research Team Builder | Mixed-Methods Strategy | AI-Enabled Insights

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SUMMARY

Research and insights leader with 25+ years of experience building and scaling research practices across enterprise and consumer technology. Proven record of leading high-performing teams, embedding research into product and design strategy, and translating complex customer, behavioral, and business signals into clear product direction. Deep experience moving organizations beyond tactical usability work toward mixed-methods programs that connect qualitative insight, telemetry, and business goals. Known for mentoring researchers, elevating organizational research capability, and turning emerging AI tools into practical accelerators for synthesis, storytelling, and decision-making.

CORE STRENGTHS

Research leadership & org design • Team building, coaching & capability development • Mixed-methods strategy • Qual + quant synthesis • Product telemetry & behavioral pattern validation • Strategic roadmap influence • Executive storytelling • Research operations & scalable programs • AI-assisted synthesis & workflow acceleration • Enterprise platforms, workflows & ecosystems

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Paylocity | Principal UX Researcher, Product & Technology

2023 – Present

- Lead research for Paylocity Next, the company's next-generation platform transformation, informing product strategy, roadmap direction, and experience design across complex enterprise workflows.
- Help establish and scale research practices, programs, and team capability, including frameworks that strengthen intake, planning, synthesis, and stakeholder adoption.
- Partner closely with Product, Design, Engineering, and leadership to translate research into actionable decisions tied to platform strategy, workflow simplification, and business priorities.
- Drive research in AI-enabled workflows and intelligent product experiences, identifying where automation, guidance, and decision support can create customer and business value.
- Mentor researchers and cross-functional partners, expanding the organization's ability to ask sharper questions, run effective studies, and apply insights with confidence.

Meta | Research Manager, Enterprise Products

2020 – 2023

- Built and led a high-performing, globally distributed research team supporting enterprise products, with among the highest engagement scores in Enterprise Products.
- Defined research strategy across 48 enterprise products, shaping platform direction, prioritization, and long-range roadmap decisions.
- Established scalable research practices and programs that increased the organization's ability to generate timely, decision-ready insight across teams.
- Delivered insights that contributed to more than \$30M in projected annual cost savings while improving product and operational efficiency.

- Partnered across design, product, engineering, and data stakeholders to ensure research addressed both customer needs and technical realities.

Magic Leap | Research Manager / Lead UX Researcher

2019 – 2020

- Built and led a cross-functional UX research team supporting mixed reality product development.
- Defined research strategy to identify adoption barriers, opportunity spaces, and customer needs for emerging mixed reality experiences.
- Influenced product and platform direction by translating technically complex behaviors and signals into human-centered design recommendations.

AT&T | Senior Manager / UX Researcher

1999 – 2019

- Led research shaping consumer digital products used by millions worldwide across large-scale service and platform experiences.
- Built research programs and led cross-functional initiatives that informed product strategy, concept development, and roadmap decisions.
- Applied mixed-methods research to connect customer behavior, product performance, and business priorities in complex, large-scale environments.

SELECTED IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Built and scaled research teams and practices across enterprise, emerging technology, and consumer environments.
- Shifted research influence from tactical execution toward strategic product direction, organizational capability building, and measurable business outcomes.
- Bridged qualitative insight with behavioral data and product context to help teams understand both what is happening and why it matters.
- Advanced AI-enabled research workflows and product opportunities, using new tools to accelerate synthesis, communication, and decision support.

EDUCATION

Master of Arts (Summa Cum Laude), Communication and Information Studies — Rutgers University

Bachelor of Arts (Magna Cum Laude), Sociology; Minor in Psychology — Rutgers University