MELTEM GÜRÇAY-MORRIS, PhD

(206) 698-4096 ▪ [melgm@uw.edu](mailto:melgm@uw.edu) ▪ [linkedin.com/in/melgurcaymorris](https://www.linkedin.com/in/melgurcaymorris/) ▪ Seattle, WA 98133

**HIGH-IMPACT PRODUCT & PROGRAM LEADER**

**Enterprise AI & Decision-making Subject Matter Expert**

***Align, empower, and lead teams to create next-generation solutions within a fast-paced, ever-evolving landscape.***

* Strategic Thinking & Execution
* Team Leadership & Development
* Project Management
* Data Analysis & Decision-making
* Stakeholder Engagement and Communication
* User-Centric Product Development | UX
* Qualitative & Quantitative Research Expertise
* Risk Mitigation & Decision Process Improvement
* Design Thinking
* Leadership & Advocacy
* Training & Mentorship
* Proactive Problem-solving

As an adaptive leader and continuous learner, apply a holistic approach that ensures products resonate with customers, enhancing user experiences and driving business outcomes: (1) Foster a growth mindset and create team and cross-functional synergy, (2) leverage research expertise to gain deep insights into customer needs, cultivating a user-centric culture across teams, and (3) champion a narrative- and data-driven methodology, collaborating cross-functionally to cultivate inclusive relationships, maintain alignment, and develop strategies that address functional needs and deeper customer motivations.

**Professional Experience**

**Microsoft** ▪ **Redmond, WA** ▪ **2021 to Present**

**Senior User Researcher**

Promoted 3X within tenure. Initially recruited into a newly created role to improve customer feedback processes. Led user research for orchestration, evaluation, monitoring, and content safety product areas to create and improve developer and data scientist experiences as they create generative AI applications for their business needs. Served as Project Lead on ~10 projects. Advised the Office of the CTO to provide insights on users’ generative AI journeys to aid longer-term strategic planning. Recently transitioned to the Azure Networking team, continuing to work on AI, but in a more central team to cloud computing. Already shaping the discussion, guiding product leads to help customers scale their AI solutions on the cloud.

Product Portfolio

“Mel has been instrumental in the success of our Responsible AI product portfolio, including Azure AI Content Safety service, AI safety, evaluation, and monitoring system in Azure OpenAI, and Azure AI Studio, offering invaluable insights into user behavior and preferences that have directly influenced our product development strategies and design. Her ability to blend data-driven analysis with a deep understanding of user needs has led to the implementation of several key features that have markedly improved user satisfaction and engagement. Her collaboration with cross-functional teams demonstrates her outstanding leadership and communication skills.”

*- 2024 Feedback, Principal PM Manager*

“I am really impressed with how Mel manages to work on multiple projects with different deadlines and requirements simultaneously and still deliver high-quality results. She is always ready to help and collaborate with others, and she shares her knowledge and expertise generously.”

*- 2023 Feedback, Senior UX Researcher*

Content Safety: 2,776 customer accounts, with ~11 over 1K consumption units (CU)

Document Intelligence: 34,201 customer accounts with ~600 over 1K CU

Azure Open AI: ~4,200 customers with over 1K CU

* **Discovered content safety and responsible AI (RAI) mitigation gaps** in customers’ large language model (LLM) solution creation journey through user research; started workstreams with RAI product and customer experience teams to educate and empower customers in responsible AI practices.
* **Boosted customer satisfaction** by delivering an Azure AI Content Safety Studio feature that allows users to monitor their content safety solutions in real time.
* **Accelerated the Azure AI Content Safety Studio’s launch** for general availability (GA) 2 months ahead of schedule by improving collaboration and alignment across UX, product, and engineering teams via customer-centric research and insights.
* **Led a cross-functional collaboration** with Azure Content Safety, AzureML, and Azure OpenAI teams to test and improve content filtering design experiences, resulting in a new design pattern for Azure AI Studio, enhancing the user experience, and establishing a consistent, future-proof, and accessible content safety experience across the platform.
* **Significantly improved NPS** for Azure Document Intelligence (ADI) from ~mid-30s to ~60 within 3 months. Developed a process to reach out to customers–C-suite executives from large enterprises.
* **Introduced a usability benchmarking process** for the product team’s studio, leading to a GA launch with the highest revenue across the organization (ADI).
* **Identified customer needs for creating an enterprise ChatGPT service** (Azure AI On Your Data) through a quantitative feature prioritization survey, resulting in the priority list of features to implement and informing product planning for FY23. The product is now being sold across the US, Europe, Australia, India, and China.
* **Created new processes** for the Document Intelligence product and engineering teams to aid them in understanding and improving new user experiences in the core product and at different touch points, including marketing, pricing, documentation pages, and the cloud platform (Azure Open AI).
* **Developed a new framework** to enable product teams to improve cross-functional team communications and increase their customer focus to help Cognitive Services PMs with their 1P collaborations and 3P positioning; the work was presented at 2022 UXR Day and an AI Platform-wide Learning session.
* **Facilitated a workshop** as the UX Research horizontal lead that helped create a new product development gating process to standardize product release and improve quality. The process was used by teams across Cognitive Services to support the organization’s efforts in delivering world-class products.
* **Presented company-wide at UXR Day and the monthly forum** for Microsoft Design Community on conducting fast and rigorous user research for Generative AI products, and designing for Responsible AI. Also presented organization-wide on engaging in diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiatives at different levels.

**Lake Partners Strategy Consultants** ▪ **Seattle, WA** ▪ **2019**

*A people-focused boutique consultancy guiding diverse clientele from institutional investors to Fortune 500 companies.*

**Analyst**

Hired on the spot to provide consulting services to help clients improve efficiency and drive cost savings. Leveraged creativity to gather information/data. Worked on 5 projects over the course of 6 months.

* **Directed a comprehensive market research project** on Nuance’s Ambient Clinical Intelligence offering, using surveys and interviews to aid a client in making near-term investment decisions (healthcare AI).
* **Decreased the average cost** of projects from ~35K to $15K by automating several processes.

**University of Pennsylvania** ▪ **Seattle, WA** ▪ **2010 to 2016**

**Instructor & Graduate Researcher**

Served concurrently as a graduate researcher and instructor. Taught foundational theories of social psychology and semesterly guest lectures on Bayes’ Theorem and its applications within judgment and decision-making literature.

* **Spearheaded 2 multiyear research projects** to design interventions and training modules to improve individual and group decision processes, resulting in one peer-reviewed journal article, a book chapter, and a dissertation. The research was part of a grant by the US government through the Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA).
* **Led a research project** on sequential 2-system models of moral judgment; designed online quantitative experiments and analyzed data to challenge the accepted theory in literature, resulting in 2 peer-reviewed journal articles.

**Executive Profile**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Education** | **Master of Business Administration (MBA)** ▪ **University of Washington** (in progress)  **PhD in Psychology, Judgment & Decision Processes Specialization** ▪ **University of Pennsylvania** (2016)  **MA in Psychology** ▪ **University of Pennsylvania** (2011)  **BA in Psychology with Honors, Cognitive Science Concentration** ▪ **Williams College** (2010) |
| **Development** | Dale Carnegie Develop Your Leadership Potential Program (2023)  Dale Carnegie Skills for Success Program (2023)  University of Washington Data Programming Using Python (2022)  General Assembly User Experience Design and Research Immersive Program (2020) |
| **Technology** | Generative AI, Azure AI, Qualtrics, R, PowerApps, Python, Azure DevOps, M365 |
| **Advisory**  **Roles** | **GPSS Representative at Student Tech Fee Committee** ▪ **University of Washington** (2024 – Present)  Review and approve funding proposals; ensure fiscal responsibility; promote technology accessibility; and support innovation on UW campuses |
| **Thought Leadership** | Gürçay-Morris, M. B. (2024). Ethical Implementation of Generative AI in Business Use Cases: A Practical Guide for Innovating Responsibly. Accepted talk at the Women in Data Science Conference in Seattle, WA.  Gürçay-Morris, M. B. & Ojukwu, L. (2023). Calibrating Your Conference. Accepted workshop held at the 49th Annual Convention of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) in Kansas, MO. |