

# Heather R. Laurence

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Austin, TX | 512-799-8364 | heatherthegreat@gmail.com | [linkedin.com/in/heatherlaurence](https://www.linkedin.com/in/heatherlaurence) | [heatherthegreat.com](https://www.heatherthegreat.com)

## Profile

Executive MBA and program management professional with eighteen years of experience serving B2C and B2B markets, able to efficiently manage multiple complex technology programs and lead high-performing cross-functional teams to resolve complex problems, achieve objectives, and create impactful results. Specializing in AI and Machine Learning product development, consistently creating alignment between departments using exceptional communication and efficient processes to deliver outstanding business value and generate multi-million dollar revenue streams.

## Skills

- Business Operations
- Process Improvement
- Change Management
- Program Execution
- Agile Methodologies
- Relationship Building
- Cloud Architecture
- AI & Machine Learning
- Data Engineering

## Experience

### **DIRECTOR, PROGRAM MANAGEMENT | EXPEDIA | DECEMBER 2021 - OCTOBER 2023**

- Directed a team of seventeen Technical Program Managers to develop and manage the Machine Learning Project Lifecycle for multiple high-value consumer AI & ML products supporting over 150 ML Scientists and ML Engineers and over 250 company-wide stakeholders.
- Oversaw the program to build a custom Machine Learning platform to automate data workflows, accelerate data processing, and optimize ML deployments for multiple complex programs that generated more than \$100 million in gross profits.
- Managed the development, collection, and reporting of metrics, a program that tracked over 95% of the 300+ company portfolio of machine learning models and 400+ organizational initiatives for the 850-person Data & AI organization. Reported to the SVP.
- Collaborated with VPs and above on multiple projects from ideation through implementation including Personalization, Generative AI, and Reinforcement Learning. Reported to the CTO.
- Developed the company-wide talent identification program to recruit, hire, and develop dozens of newly graduated Program Managers to build Expedia Group's early career talent pipeline.
- Led the learning committee for Program Management, managed the annual Data & AI Conference event, and was President of the Austin Chapter of Women in Technology employee resource group.

### **SENIOR MANAGER, PROGRAM MANAGEMENT | EXPEDIA | MAY 2021 - DECEMBER 2021**

- Managed a team of seven Technical Program Managers to develop innovative AI & ML products that enhanced user experience in three major brands under the Expedia Group umbrella.
- Identified the need for various process improvements and worked with direct reports to innovate multiple processes that saved time and improved workflow efficiency, including the Quarterly Roadmap Review, portfolio metrics, and RACI matrixes.
- Provided mentorship and skills training for five Program Managers and eight Women in Technology members facilitating improved performance ratings, additional promotions, and the advancement or attainment of full-time roles in the STEM field.

### **SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER | EXPEDIA | JUNE 2018 - MAY 2021**

- Functioned as the Program Manager and Scrum Master for five unique teams of over 50 Machine Learning Scientists and Engineers to conduct research and develop algorithms to solve business problems and increase product value.
- Managed the full lifecycle of multiple successful AI & Machine Learning programs that generated over \$20 million in gross profits including Recommendations, Computer Vision, and more.
- Collaborated with the Machine Learning Science Director to track quarterly OKRs - achieving 80% of targeted milestones (+15%).
- Mapped and developed project timelines and milestones for high-profile, multi-million-dollar budget Machine Learning programs.
- Identified risks and communicated status to executives and stakeholders to ensure successful project completion.
- Set Agile goals and coached teams on best practices to facilitate epic and story generation, including JIRA system administration.
- Recognized by Management as the 'One Team Culture Superstar' and awarded the 'Gold Star' for outstanding performance.

### **SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER | BLACKBAUD | MAY 2014 - JUNE 2018**

- Functioned as the Project Manager and Scrum Master for three unique development teams of over 25 Software Engineers to successfully manage multiple projects simultaneously through the product release pipeline.
- Closely collaborated with Product and Engineering Managers to shape project scope and timelines, mitigate risks, and remove roadblocks to deliver quality software features for a flagship product that generated over \$100 million in annual sales revenues.
- Managed the release and deployment cycle for six products, including change control, artifacts, process steps, operations & risks.
- Facilitated defect and escalation management, including assignment, research, and remediation processes for each product.
- Led PMO projects including system migration, executive reporting, and project accounting to ensure successful implementation.
- Administered a 10,000-person software use license for JIRA and Confluence for the entire RDO dept.

### **IT PROJECT MANAGER | HEWLETT-PACKARD | SEPTEMBER 2013 - MAY 2014**

- Managed all aspects of project delivery for internal software applications with 2000+ users and a \$1 million project budget.
- Facilitated the reduction of business operational expenses by \$40 million through innovative process improvements.
- Led two project teams of over 20 global resources and managed the lifecycle of three unique projects simultaneously.
- Transformed the IT department by deploying Agile software development processes and systems to improve team and development efficiency.
- Gathered metrics and developed reports on project status and communicated to Executive stakeholders responsible for \$2B in sales.
- Oversaw the HP New Hire Onboarding program and mentored three junior Project Managers in project management best practices.

## Education & Certifications

### **THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN | MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMIN, EXECUTIVE**

- Class President | Graduate Business Council Student Org
- President | Graduate Women in Business Student Org
- Student Service & Leadership Award Winner
- McCombs+ Leadership Fellow
- McCombs Alumni Advisory Board Representative

### **THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN | BACHELOR OF ARTS, HISTORY**

- Magna Cum Laude
- Distinguished College Scholar with Highest Honors
- Dean's List Award Winner

### **THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN | PROJECT MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION**

#### **LEAN SIX SIGMA GREEN BELT**

#### **NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING MASTER PRACTITIONER**

#### **FORMER PMP & CERTIFIED SCRUM MASTER**

## Activities & Interests

McCombs School of Business Alumni Advisory Board Member, Austin Digital Jobs Advisory Board Member, Mission Accomplished Board Member

I love to travel, read, game, and spend time with my family. We've been to 38 states in our giant RV!