Former Web Designer Finds Her Sweet Spot in Instructional Design at Home Depot

“Instructional design and eLearning is booming because companies are trying to retool their workforce by incorporating technology in training and development.”

Imani Nance, M.S. ‘11

I didn’t know the instructional design field existed

After graduating with a bachelor’s in Computer Science, I started a website and graphic design firm. I worked on ecommerce sites, flyers, promotional materials and event websites for about five years before deciding to pursue a master’s degree. Most of the projects involved training clients, which were small business owners; I enjoyed that much more than design. When I started looking into the learning field, I was interested in careers involving training and development and stumbled upon the Instructional Design and Technology (IDT) master’s program at Georgia State University. I didn’t even realize

I found my sweet spot in the IDT master’s program

As a wife, mother and working professional, the online classes provided the flexibility I needed. All the classes were synchronized in order to have dialogue and build supportive relationships with my professors and classmates. Once I enrolled and began taking courses, I realized the IDT program was perfectly aligned with all my skills and experiences. Instructional design encompasses (1) programming so you can develop eLearning courses, (2) graphic design to create beautiful paper-based and eLearning materials, and (3) education and training to help learners overcome performance gaps. Georgia State University’s IDT program was my sweet spot.

Instructional design positions are in high demand

While in the program, I worked as an office manager for a media company. Towards the end of my second year, my manager offered me contract work to develop eLearning for the Federal Aviation Administration. Shortly after I wrapped up that project, it took four weeks to find another position. My career at Home Depot began as an instructional designer, and within two years I was promoted to learning strategy manager in charge of developing curriculum for all managers. I’m lucky to be in Atlanta because there’s a great community of learning professionals in high demand.

ACCORDING TO CNNMONEY/PAYSCALE’S TOP 100 CAREERS WITH BIG GROWTH IN 2013

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNERS

$60,000

MEDIAN SALARY

$100,000

TOP PAY

+12%

GREATER THAN NATIONAL AVERAGE PAY RATE IN ATLANTA