

Caleb Zahnd

Director of Web Development | Senior WordPress / PHP Developer | Technical Leadership

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Profile

Senior web developer and technical leader with 25+ years of experience building, scaling, and maintaining complex web platforms in agency and client-services environments. Deep expertise in WordPress back-end architecture, custom theme and plugin development, DevOps workflows, performance optimization, and long-term platform sustainability. Currently serving as Director of Web Development at 829 Studios, with a strong preference for hands-on technical leadership, ownership of architecture decisions, and mentoring developers through practical, real-world problem solving. Experienced across the full lifecycle of web projects, from discovery and technical planning through launch and ongoing support.

Core Expertise

- WordPress full-stack development (custom themes, plugins, integrations)
- PHP architecture and application design
- Technical ownership of full-site builds
- Performance optimization, security hardening, and scalability
- DevOps workflows, CI/CD, and deployment strategy
- Technical documentation and client training
- Agency-based, multi-project delivery
- Mentorship, code review, and technical guidance
- Accessibility-minded and standards-based development

Experience

Director of Web Development 829 Studios

Boston, Massachusetts (Remote)
October 2022 - Present

- Lead and scale a multidisciplinary web development department responsible for 40+ annual website launches and long-term client support.
- Define and oversee technical strategy for WordPress-centric builds, balancing performance, accessibility, scalability, and delivery timelines.
- Serve as senior technical authority for complex WordPress architectures, custom plugin development, and platform-level decisions.
- Act as oversight and ongoing steward of *Propel*, 829's proprietary WordPress framework focused on consistency, maintainability, and developer experience.
- Partner closely with design, strategy, production, and client services leadership to ensure technical execution aligns with creative and business goals.
- Establish and uphold development standards, documentation, and deployment workflows across teams.
- Mentor team leads and developers through architectural guidance, code review, and hands-on problem solving.

Senior Technical Solutions Architect 829 Studios

Boston, Massachusetts (Remote)
May 2019 – October 2022

- Served as lead developer on custom WordPress projects, owning technical implementation from discovery through launch and post-launch support.
 - Built and maintained custom WordPress themes and plugins using modern best practices, with a strong emphasis on clean PHP architecture and long-term maintainability.
 - Developed flexible content architectures using custom post types, taxonomies, and block-based editing (ACF and Gutenberg).
 - Translated design and strategy into responsive, accessible, and performant WordPress implementations.
 - Led site migrations, rebuilds, and deployments while preserving SEO, performance, and content integrity.
 - Integrated WordPress with third-party platforms and APIs, including CRMs, analytics, and marketing tools.
 - Collaborated closely with designers, project managers, and account teams to scope solutions, estimate work, and communicate technical tradeoffs.
 - Supported DevOps workflows including version control, staging environments, and deployment coordination.
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Front End Lead / Technical Solutions Architect MMGY Global

Kansas City, Missouri (Hybrid Remote)
April 2014 – May 2019

- Served as both a hands-on, full-time developer and technical lead, contributing directly to front-end and application code while overseeing technical direction and delivery.
- Led the ideation, technical planning, and implementation of client digital solutions across MMGY Global's full portfolio of web properties.
- Acted as primary technical owner on client engagements, leading architecture decisions and participating in all major client-facing technical discussions.
- Built and maintained production code for complex websites and applications, with the majority of projects implemented in Drupal, Umbraco, and Sitecore, and selective use of WordPress where appropriate.
- Led front-end architecture and implementation across platforms, ensuring responsive, accessible, and performant experiences across a wide range of devices.
- Delivered immersive and award-winning digital experiences for clients in the travel, hospitality, and entertainment industries.
- Supported and implemented digital marketing and experiential initiatives, including native mobile applications, interactive displays, kiosks, and non-traditional digital experiences.
- Managed and collaborated with local and remote teams using Agile workflows, leveraging the Atlassian Suite (JIRA, Confluence, Bitbucket) for planning, documentation, bug tracking, version control, and deployments.