



# Joy Laforme

## PRODUCT DESIGNER MZINGA

### **What was the first career move you made after graduating?**

Around the time when I graduated, the job market wasn't so great, unfortunately. I applied to lots of jobs, but in the end decided that I would continue school and obtain my Master's Degree. I applied to the Savannah College of Art and Design and was accepted. I decided regardless of what happened with a job, I would attend school to sharpen my intellect. Soon after I graduated from Messiah College and was accepted to the Master's program at SCAD, I landed a temporary web design job with the Marketing and Public Relations office at Messiah College, working with some great people who taught me a lot about interactive web and learning to interact with clients. I continued school part time during that job and I've been going to school part time and working full time ever since.

### **What steps did you take in getting to your present position?**

Networking and pressing those companies I had a desire to work for was the most important thing I could do, considering how the job market wasn't going to find me a job on its own. I attended Career fairs and interviews and didn't stop contacting potential employers to see if positions had opened up. I eventually landed a job at Mzinga, Inc. Being in graduate school also allowed employers to see that I was driven and motivated to set myself apart from those vying for the same job.

### **What are the most rewarding aspects of your current position?**

Working with social media software, I interact with a large variety of people and clients every day. I've designed new pieces of our product and interact with different parts of it almost every week, which allows me to learn a lot over very short time periods. I've also learned that different people like different designs, and that's a good thing. I'm constantly changing the look and feel of certain aspects of our product and sharpening the user experience to make the client's interaction with our product seamless, universally understood and user friendly.

### **What role did attending Messiah play in your career path?**

Messiah College was a great stepping stone for my career. I worked with the Collaboratory for a large portion of my time at Messiah, and having the experience of learning how to be a part of a functioning organization was a rewarding experience that I won't forget. It offered a picture of what its like to work on a team uniting for a purpose beyond a school project. I also had a lot of great teachers in the Computer Science major who pushed me beyond what I thought I was capable of, and some who even pushed me into realistic job experiences. Working with professors like Scott Weaver and Brian Nejmeh really gave me a realistic image of what life in the professional world would be like. The projects they applied to our courses pushed us to see outside of the classroom and focus on what career paths we as students would be strong in. Their passion for passing on their knowledge and professional acumen to their students is something I'll never forget.

### **What advice would you give to a current Messiah student?**

Don't worry about what the next 10 years will look like after you graduate, because it may look very different from what you'd envisioned while you were at Messiah. Focus on your very next steps and where you currently are, because they will create a strong foundation for a professional career. Don't be afraid to take a job just for the experience, because even if it isn't the perfect job, work is work and your resume and portfolio are the most important pieces to focus on. Continue to work and be driven by what you love to do, and surround yourself with people who inspire you to be better at what you're passionate about.