

BENJAMIN AHRENS

Product & Experience Strategy | Customer Experience | Service Design

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Product and experience strategist who works from frontline observation. Ten-plus years inside retail, food service, logistics, and public safety operations, and a working understanding of how backstage decisions surface as customer friction. Turns time on the floor into coded themes, structural root causes, and scoped concepts with named owners, baseline measures, and a pilot a team could run next quarter.

WAY OF WORKING

- Observed, not assumed. Findings begin with time spent watching real behavior in situ, not with a persona or a survey.
- Synthesized, not anecdotal. Field notes captured in a consistent, codable structure, then clustered by root cause rather than by department.
- Scoped, not aspirational. Every opportunity ships as a pilot with an owner, a measure, and a cost — designed against staffing, task load, and peak volume so it survives a Saturday.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Contextual and Field Research, Customer Journey Mapping, Qualitative Coding and Affinity Mapping, Root Cause Analysis, Frontstage and Backstage Service Analysis, Service and Touchpoint Design, Concept Development and Wireframing, Pilot Design and Success Measures, Business Case Development, Stakeholder Alignment, Operational Feasibility

SELECTED WORK

Frontline Field Study and Operating Proposal — *independent, large-format retail*

- Logged 60 friction moments on shift across a three-week, evening-weighted window in a single store; 45 recurred on every or most shifts.
- Clustered entries into nine operational themes scored on frequency, severity, safety, sales impact, scalability, and effort — five carried P1 priority, and every one proved structural rather than behavioral.
- Traced symptoms to root cause and designed a six-phase pilot with named owners per theme, three leading and lagging measures, and a documented objection set covering capture burden, signal ownership, and prioritization authority.

Customer Help-Routing Service Concept — *concept study, three-surface design*

- Mapped an eight-stage customer journey from project need through post-visit perception, identifying emotion, friction, and cross-department handoffs at each stage.
- Designed three surfaces, each doing one job, that convert a stuck customer into a located request the store can own — delivered as wireframes with pilot measures and a public correction log.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Founder and Service Designer

2026 – Present

Duke's Detailing LLC — Austin, TX

- Designed the service end to end — three offering tiers, a no-card booking flow, on-site delivery standards, payment, and post-service follow-up — then operate it daily and revise from what breaks.
- Built a per-vehicle condition report as a deliberate trust touchpoint, giving customers evidence of the work and creating a natural point for expansion conversations.
- Own the brand system, service voice, and customer communications across every touchpoint from booking to follow-up.

Order Fulfillment Associate

2026 – Present

The Home Depot — Austin, TX | Frontstage retail; source of the field study above

Police Officer

2023 – 2025

Jonestown Police Department — Jonestown, TX

- Volunteered for and championed recurring quantitative data collection — traffic speed studies, rabies-vaccination awareness campaigns, and community programs — designing collection methods and presenting findings to decision makers.
- Analyzed how public-facing processes fail under pressure and recommended changes upstream of failure; communicated with audiences from residents to command staff.

Senior Corrections Officer and Training Officer

2020 – 2023

Travis County Sheriff's Office — Austin, TX

- Designed and delivered staff training on policy, procedure, and de-escalation — backstage enablement built to hold up when conditions change.

Sales Consultant

2017 – 2020

CarMax — Austin, TX

- Worked inside a deliberately designed no-haggle service model, delivering a customer journey where transparency replaces price negotiation. Ranked consistently among the top five sales consultants in the region.

Medical Courier — RML Labs, Austin, TX | Time-critical specimen transport; chain of custody

2015 – 2017

Bar and Restaurant Manager — Houlihan's and Fat Daddy's, Olathe, KS | Front and back of house

2009 – 2015

TOOLS AND SERVICE CONTEXTS

AI and LLM tooling for research synthesis and qualitative coding; no-code web development and prototyping (Lovable); workflow automation (Zapier); Stripe; Calendly; Mailchimp; Google Workspace; Microsoft Office.

Service contexts: retail operations and fulfillment; automotive retail; mobile and field service; hospitality; healthcare logistics; public safety.

EDUCATION

Pittsburg State University — B.A. Sociology, Criminal Justice emphasis; NCAA baseball | **A.A.S. Automotive Technology**