

**Women
Who
SPARK**

THE 2024 SERIES



BRITTANY ROSS

Utility Innovation
and Advocacy in
Equity for All



BRITTANY ROSS

In the U.S., the teen birth rate is approximately 17.4 births per 1,000 females aged 15-19. Only about 50% of teen mothers receive a high school diploma by age 22, compared to approximately 90% of women who did not give birth during adolescence—Moreover, less than 2% of teen mothers complete college by age 30. The economic and psychological impacts on teen moms can be profound. Teen mothers are more likely to live in poverty and depend on public assistance, facing significant educational barriers, discrimination, and threats to their health and well-being.

Brittany Ross, a former teen mom who overcame immense challenges after giving birth to twins at 17, is a testament to resilience and determination. She earned her bachelor's degree from Lindenwood University in 2009 and her master's in finance from Webster University in 2012. Today, Brittany serves as the Manager of Financial Operations at [Central States Water Resources \(CSWR\)](#) and is a recipient of the Women Who SPARK Award for Customer-Centric Innovation. Simultaneously, she is in the early stages of writing a book and building a nonprofit to support teen moms and parentless young people in the Metropolitan St. Louis area with their educational, personal, and professional goals. Brittany is an overall champion for equity and believes that providing equitable resources and opportunities to everyone positively moves our communities forward.



Everything needed for this life's journey is already deep within. When I wake up in the morning, it's a brand-new day to become my ancestor's wildest dreams.



Driving Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement for CSWR **InvoiceCloud®**

Brittany Ross spearheaded a transformative project at CSWR, introducing [InvoiceCloud](#) to revolutionize payment processing. This implementation wasn't just a simple upgrade; it was a comprehensive overhaul that involved changing payment processors, billing software, and banking relationships simultaneously. Despite these challenges, Brittany's strategic approach, which included meticulous customer communication and continuous process improvement, significantly increased customer engagement. Within 16 months, CSWR saw a remarkable 180% rise in customer adoption rates.





Brittany seamlessly aligns diverse elements into a unified vision, transforming challenges into successes.

Spencer Hoppes, CSWR Manager



Integration and Software Stability

One key aspect of Brittany's success was her hands-on approach to understanding customer needs. Recognizing a significant customer concern—the lack of in-person payment options—Brittany tested and refined the new payment systems before they went live. This proactive approach ensured a smooth transition and solidified customer trust from day one. Her role as project manager and ongoing product owner of the InvoiceCloud platform has been pivotal in maintaining software stability and integration, swiftly and effectively addressing customer issues.

According to her manager, Spencer Hoppes, "Brittany excels at project management with a skillful touch in vendor relationships; she seamlessly aligns diverse elements into a unified vision, transforming challenges into successes. Her ability to navigate complex dynamics and foster collaborative partnerships makes her an invaluable asset to the team. Her dedication extends beyond professional endeavors, as she brings the same passion and commitment to her volunteer service, driving meaningful impact in the community."

Fostering Collaborative Solutions and Continuous Improvement

Brittany emphasizes the importance of strong relationships both within and outside the organization. Her collaborative leadership style encourages open communication and continuous feedback, allowing quick adjustments and improvements. Regular interactions with her internal team and vendors have led to streamlined processes and enhanced customer experiences. Brittany's dedication to operational excellence is evident in her commitment to resolving customer issues promptly and effectively.





Mentorship and Community Service

Beyond her professional achievements, Brittany is deeply committed to mentorship and community service. As a non-traditional college student and teen mom, she has firsthand experience overcoming societal biases and barriers. This background fuels her passion for equity and empathy, guiding her mentorship of young girls ages 12-18 through the [Rhoer Club](#) under the auspice of [Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.](#) Her leadership extends to community projects like the [CSWR Cares Committee](#) where she served as Chair for 2023 and was instrumental in leading the creation of an Adopt a Classroom curriculum focused on water

education and responsibility for kids and partnerships with [Ronald McDonald House](#) and [Operation Food Search](#). Brittany also actively participates in her sorority, [Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.](#) where she has been a active Alumnae member for 14 years serving as chair of several partnership community campaigns throughout the years such as [St. Jude Children's Research Hospital](#), [March of Dimes](#), etc. She is a champion of community initiatives, emphasizing giving back and supporting others and a member of [Women of Project Management](#), [Women of Water](#) and the [National Association of Black Accountants](#). Brittany also is a supporter of [Ready Readers](#) which provides books to young children in low-income area to help them learn to read, she proudly sits on their Finance Board.





Notable Career Achievements

Brittany's outstanding contributions have earned her numerous accolades, including the [Women in Leadership honor by Focus St. Louis](#) (Cohort 78) and was part of the Inaugural Mentorship Program sponsored by the [United Way Women Leaders](#). Her work has impacted the financial operations at CSWR but has also set a benchmark for customer-centric practices in the utility industry. Brittany has spent much of her career in the investor owned/privately held space and has created her own path forward.

Looking Ahead

As Brittany continues her professional journey, she is preparing for the Project Management Professional (PMP) certification, further solidifying her expertise in project management and next plans to sit for her Six Sigma Certification. She is also focused on spending more time with her family, particularly her children (two sets of twins), who are growing up fast. Brittany's book titled "Growing in Grace" will be an inspirational memoir offering a motivational mindset shift on using life's barriers as growing experiences rather than finding them as negative roadblocks. Her nonprofit, Reflections of Me, will center around the mental, financial, and emotional support of young teen mothers and parentless teens/ young adults providing them resources, mentorship, and support villages that aid them in their plight to succeed in life.

Brittany Ross's story is a powerful testament to what we can achieve when we look past the limitations others may see in us and grasp what we know about ourselves. Commitment, dedication, and an innovative spirit are essential. Her work at CSWR not only exemplifies what customer-centric innovation looks like but also serves as an inspiration to others in the industry and beyond. As Brittany's favorite quote states, **"The only limit to the height of your achievements is the reach of your dreams and your willingness to work hard for them."** - Michelle Obama

