

MOMENTUM

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Generative AI is all the rage right now and business and IT leaders understandably want to skip to the good stuff. Not to sound like a parent telling you to eat your vegetables, but there are a host of policies and practices that enterprises need to get right before they can use AI at scale. This stuff might not be as fun as playing around with an image generator, but it's necessary for building the kinds of pervasive applications across your organization that enable you stand apart from your competition.

What practices do you see as key for organizations to ensure the responsible deployment of AI across functions?

Generative AI opens all kinds of doors to new and imaginative use cases that really let people's creative run free. Unfortunately, it can also open the door to new risks, but we're getting better at identifying these risks and understanding how to avoid them. Generative AI models train on massive amounts of data. Understanding where that data came from and who owns it is critical to avoiding copyright and ownership complications.

Businesses also need to have a handle on the content of those training data sets. Generative AI is great at reproducing what it sees. The downside is that if your training data sets contain biases, your AI tools will reproduce them. This risks impacting protected classes of people, but it also could favor one approach to solving business problems over potentially better alternatives.

Lastly, it's important to get buy-in from the workers whose day-to-day might look different after AI. People want to feel like they're involved in the process, not like they're being squeezed to the side by their new cyber colleagues.

What do you see as the essential ingredients that constitute a strong foundation for generating meaningful business value from AI?

The first thing is the data. As mentioned above, generative AI needs mountains of data to train its models. If you're working with a vendor, they've likely done the hard work of developing the foundational model. However, if your business just sticks with that, you'll only get the same results that every other business using the tool gets. Your secret sauce is your data. When you train generative AI models on your sales data, brand and marketing standards, product catalogs, or any other data that's unique to your organization, they become vastly more effective. They're able to craft reports, social media posts, marketing campaigns, and customer service bots that actually know your business and know how you beat your competition.

The second thing is finding the right use case. Don't do generative AI just because it's what all the cool kids are doing. Find the areas of your business where the special, creative capabilities of generative AI will actually augment your workforce and their ability to get things done.

With the rapid pace of development and innovation in AI, where do you think companies will see the biggest benefits from it in the next 2 years?

This is something that will look different for each business. Because generative AI is so good at getting to know you and your unique business problems, it can really fit into a variety of specific workflows. Online retailers are using advanced chatbots to enhance customer service.

Advertisers are getting an assist from AI to generate marketing collateral. The use cases are as varied as there are unique businesses.

At a high level, though, we believe the most impactful use cases will be ones that explore and develop new market opportunities. If you view generative AI simply as a tool for cutting costs, you're likely to miss out on its biggest benefits. We have a saying: "You can't shrink your way to success" Generative AI is likely to be one of the biggest growth catalysts enterprises have encountered in generations. If all you see is a tool for shrinking labor costs, you're going to be left behind by your competition.

AI is transforming work. How can companies bring their workforce with them on their transformation journeys and foster a culture of learning and innovation?

It's important to think about what employees do after you bring in AI. For example, the newest generation of customer service chatbots can handle a lot of the workload that customer service agents carry today. But this doesn't mean there's less work to do. Now those customer service agents are freed up to do higher-level work. Maybe they move to customer success roles, where they provide ongoing proactive support after sales, rather than waiting reactively for customers to get angry in the first place.

The key is that employees should not be made to feel that AI is coming for their jobs. If your organization is doing it right, AI won't come for their jobs. It will arm employees with the creative capabilities to take on higher-order, more valuable tasks. In this way, AI serves as a ramp up to better careers.