



AI360 podcast

Season 1, Episode 10: Transformative role of AI in CPQ workflows

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Soumyadeep Bakshi: Welcome to AI360, the podcast that gives you a 360 view of AI topics in just 360 seconds. I'm your host, Soumyadeep, and today we are diving into the transformative role of AI in technical workflows, especially with CPU systems. Joining us is a special guest, Jagjeet. Jagjeet, would you please introduce yourself and share your experiences with AI?

Jagjeet Gill: Hey, Soumyadeep. Nice to see you today. I'm Jagjeet Gill, partner in our Deloitte Strategy practice and focused on technology clients. GenAI has been a game-changing innovation in the latest technological trends, and I've been involved in several executive conversations on implications of GenAI on business operations and technology.

Soumyadeep Bakshi: Fascinating, Jagjeet. Moving on, CPQ systems have traditionally faced several pain points. Could you enlighten us on what these are and how GenAI potentially presents a solution to them?

Jagjeet Gill: In simple terms, CPQ is configure offering, apply pricing, and then generate the quote for the customers or partners. Typically, CPQ process can become high touch or complex depending upon the product structures, pricing rules, and selling motions. On top of that, the lack of process standardization across product portfolio can further complicate the process. This is where today's business demands an intelligent CPQ to make proactive, tailored, and a timely decision to meet customer and partner needs.

I see immense possibilities of AI and CPQ. For example, visual configuration encoding, advanced guided selling process, virtual and interactive product demo, advanced dynamic pricing and deal desk guidance, and finally contract drafting. As, and when, the technology is evolving, these use cases continue to be evolving for our clients and us.

Soumyadeep Bakshi: That's incredibly insightful. AI seems to be a game changer indeed. Now, could you tell us a little bit more into how AI can enable a more personalized and customer-centric approach for CPQ processes? Any real-world use cases that you would like to share with us?

Jagjeet Gill: Let me share two use cases which are pretty relevant today, as some of our clients are piloting them. GenAI copilot provides an assisted selling experience. The solution can parse through the product catalog; customer data, including the customer segment and profile; account hierarchy; details of preexisting contractual relationships; the support tickets; and the previous interaction history.

And this helps identify fit-for-purpose solution recommendations for the customers or the partners. The second big use case is the renewals, which is a significant portion of recurring revenue. AI can be leveraged to understand key trends in customer subscription behavior, interaction history, and the usage patterns to anticipate the customer preference to propose discovery of better-suited products and services. While you're doing renewals, you can also identify the complementary products and services to help with the new renewals or the upgrade of the products in the versions due to more, you know, with including the enhanced feature sets itself and thereby making the renewal process very enriching for your customers and the partners.

Soumyadeep Bakshi: It seems like there is immense potential in both copilot and renewal use cases here. Shifting gears a little bit. How will the salesperson's CPQ workflow change with these advancements? And what does that mean for their roles?

Jagjeet Gill: See today, the salesperson's experience is very cumbersome because the data is a challenge, there are multiple steps to go through—a CPQ process as well through multiple tools, multiple workflows. Now with AI, the salesperson will have more information readily available at their fingertips. AI will help reduce the human error and increase sales productivity by empowering the sales reps with insight-driven, intelligent processes and systems. It can also enable better self-service capabilities for the customers. At the end of the day, GenAI can drive a frictionless buying experience, accelerate deal conversion, and mitigate the leakage across the sales funnel.

Soumyadeep Bakshi: Interesting. Sounds like the role of a salesperson is evolving in exciting new ways. So for our listeners here today, who are considering integrating AI into their CPQ processes, what are the first steps they should take, and what key considerations should they keep in mind?

Jagjeet Gill: I would recommend that the clients and the customer should focus on two main areas. One, the data quality itself. The better the quality of the data—whether it's about product, whether it's about customers, or whether it's about the various buying behaviors of the customers and the partners—availability of high-quality data is very essential for any AI solution.

The second most important one is aligning and integrating the CPQ process with the upstream lead and opportunity management process and the downstream fulfillment to invoicing process. Because when you are looking at the quoting itself, you have to essentially look at the full lead to cash value chain, because that's where really you get the true benefit of AI and helping AI to achieve the operational efficiencies, as well as the kind of revenue growth target you are aiming with the acceleration of deal conversion process.

Soumyadeep Bakshi: Great advice, Jagjeet. As we wrap up, I'm curious about what your top three predictions are for the future of CPQ processes, especially with ongoing advancements in GenAI.

Jagjeet Gill: See predictions—it's always hard to make when the technology itself is evolving so rapidly. However, some of the use cases, in addition to what I laid out earlier in the conversation, are the conversational quoting, where the sales reps will be able to create quotes with verbal instructions. The second one is generating the sales training and the certification program content, which is tailored to the sales rep's specific role, the segment they are targeting, and the type of learning preferences they have. And finally, collating and quickly surfacing the type of content to build a very robust proposal, which is very tailored to the specific customer and the partner needs.

Soumyadeep Bakshi: Our episode has been focused on the impact of AI on CPQ systems, straight from our expert here. Please share this episode with your colleagues, and join us next time for another episode. Thank you.

Jagjeet Gill: Thank you, Soumyadeep, for having me here.

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