B2B MARKETING

Future Forward: Top Tips For Implementing AI Into Your Business

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Whether you're joking about it taking over your job or using ChatGPT for the first time, AI has become quite the buzzword. And with all the curiosity around it, it's important to understand how it fits into the B2B world. Kavita Singh spoke with Julia Pilkes, EMEA Head of Marketing, HubSpot to round up the top tips for implementing AI.

Know the common pitfalls and avoid them

Before you start experimenting with AI capabilities and tools, it's important to understand the fundamentals and misconceptions. That means eliminating the notion that your role will be replaced with AI. Instead, leaders should be stressing the potential of the business.

Julia said: "AI technology is designed to assist and support human efforts and not replace them. If you look at the integrations, you're filled with the aim of automating repetitive tasks and improving efficiency throughout, but it will actually help employees to focus on strategy and other creative tasks as opposed to the repetitive ones. So I think that's actually a very positive change and therefore also a huge misconception."

An additional misconception? AI is expensive when in actuality, there are plenty of affordable (and sometimes even free) tools that are quite accessible for any type of business and for all types of budgets. For more on this, check out this informative session on Propolis which outlines some free AI tools.

Another huge pitfall is using AI but in the wrong way. Firstly, marketers should be aware of the privacy and data security risks. While managing sensitive information and personal data, it is crucial to be using it responsibly. According to a recent BrightBid study, 71% of respondents expressed concerns over ethics in the use of AI.

Julia said: "Trust is built by showing that AI technology delivers the expected outcomes with consistency, operates ethically, and respects privacy and security considerations. If AI systems are incorrectly implemented, it can lead to violations of privacy laws and regulations, resulting in potential legal consequences and penalties. The other example could be when AI systems are not configured in the right way or lack access controls - this could lead to unauthorized individuals accessing sensitive information and this could then also result in privacy breaches."

Start building out what you spend time on

So where to begin? Julia encourages teams to start building a list of all their responsibilities and pinpoint the most time-consuming tasks. This can either be delegated to one person to sort or it can be a collaborative process where teams share what eats up their time on a daily basis.

For example, a recent HubsSpot study reported that sales spend on average about two hours per day on actually selling while the rest of the time is spent on repetitive and admin tasks. And according to a Censuswide study, employees can earn back about 390 hours per year when using AI - that's nearly two hours every day.

After narrowing down where AI can alleviate tasks, leaders can then ask themselves 'are there specific tools that can enable us?' When teams start to map these out, it will not only narrow down the AI tools that you can start utilizing, but it'll answer the all-encompassing 'why;' question for using AI in the first place.

Just start testing out tools

Julia's main tip is once you determine the area and tool you'd like to start implementing. Just start using it - try it and test it out. There's no harm in experimenting with a few tools to see which one suits your company.

She stressed: "Bear in mind that you don't become a copycat. If you start using AI, use it and add your own knowledge to make it as creative as possible and not just more of the same."

Once marketers identify what AI tool they'd like to experiment with, Julia advises them to ask the following questions:

- Is it compliant with regulations such as data privacy?
- Does it have the ability to integrate with existing platforms?
- Does it allow for customization?

She added: "In general, marketers should look at the AI tool's capabilities, limitations, and potential impact on their marketing strategies. This will help them make informed decisions when selecting and implementing AI tools into their workflows."

Encourage change management

Whenever there are massive changes in processes, it's important to speak transparently about what is to come with AI. As you're trialing or changing AI tools, it's imperative to upskill your team and make sure all stakeholders are equally educated across the board.

" [At HubSpot], we continue to talk about its purpose, we talk about its potential impact. We share success stories and use case studies to really showcase its value. And we also foster a culture where we collaborate and allow people to test and learn about the technology, which I think is super important."

And whilst going through these highlights, it'll create a culture and environment to not only accept its capabilities to enhance customer experience but also the chance to question any concerns along the way.

Julia said: "I truly believe that humans and AI should work together to achieve better outcomes because where AI can provide better data-driven insights, you can automate repetitive tasks and improve personalization. From there, we bring the emotion, the creativity, and the empathy. And I think these are extremely important if you want to provide the best experience."

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