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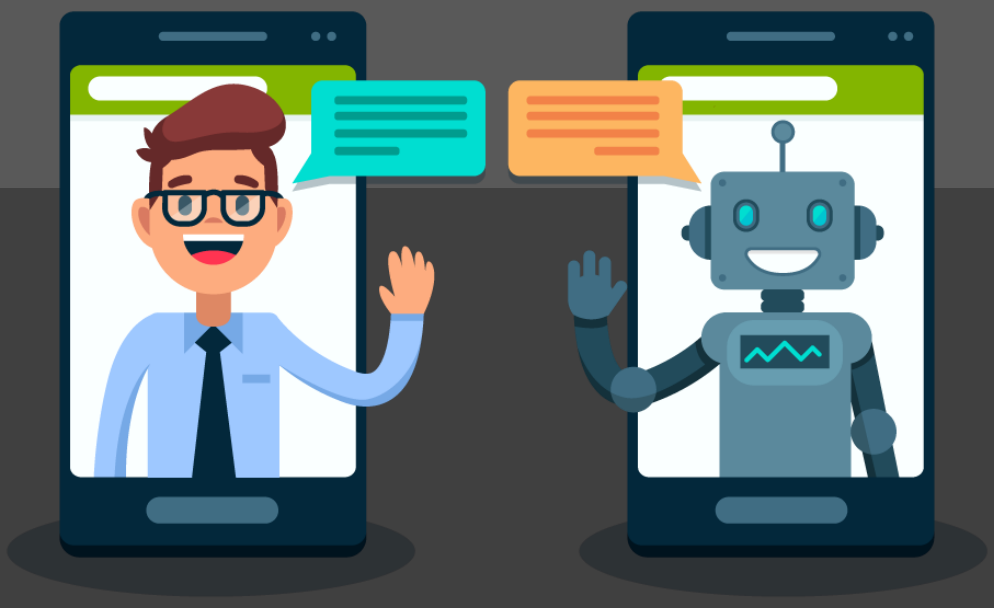
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Six steps to artificial intelligence **implementation**

The artificial intelligence revolution is already well underway. Gartner predicted that the global AI business value would reach $1.2 trillion by the end of 2018 – a number that clearly demonstrates the global saturation of AI; both in business and, in turn, our everyday lives.

Putting aside the sensationalised fear of a dystopian future, the result of robots taking over the world!, this guide offers you six practical steps you can take to ensure your business is ready to avoid AI disruption and prepare for its most important transformation, yet.



1. Educate yourself



One of the main issues businesses face when considering the adoption of artificial intelligence is the seemingly overwhelming scale and speed of innovation. In a recent study undertaken by Vuture, 61 per cent of marketing professionals in professional services said that the main barrier holding them back was the uncertainty of where to start. **Our response? Hit the books.**

There are many on and offline resources out there that provide a quick overview of the AI landscape and will help you on your way.

The Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI), for example, offers many materials that are pitched at individuals with varying abilities and focus.

In particular, its AI Topics site curates the most recent content, by area, from a variety of sources, to assist you on your own learning journey.

In addition, established by Stephen Hawking and Elon Musk, The Future of Life Institute's site has a dedicated AI tab and shares the latest research, news and views on all things AI. If you would like to be inspired by what AI can do, this is the spot.

2.

What problems are you trying to solve?

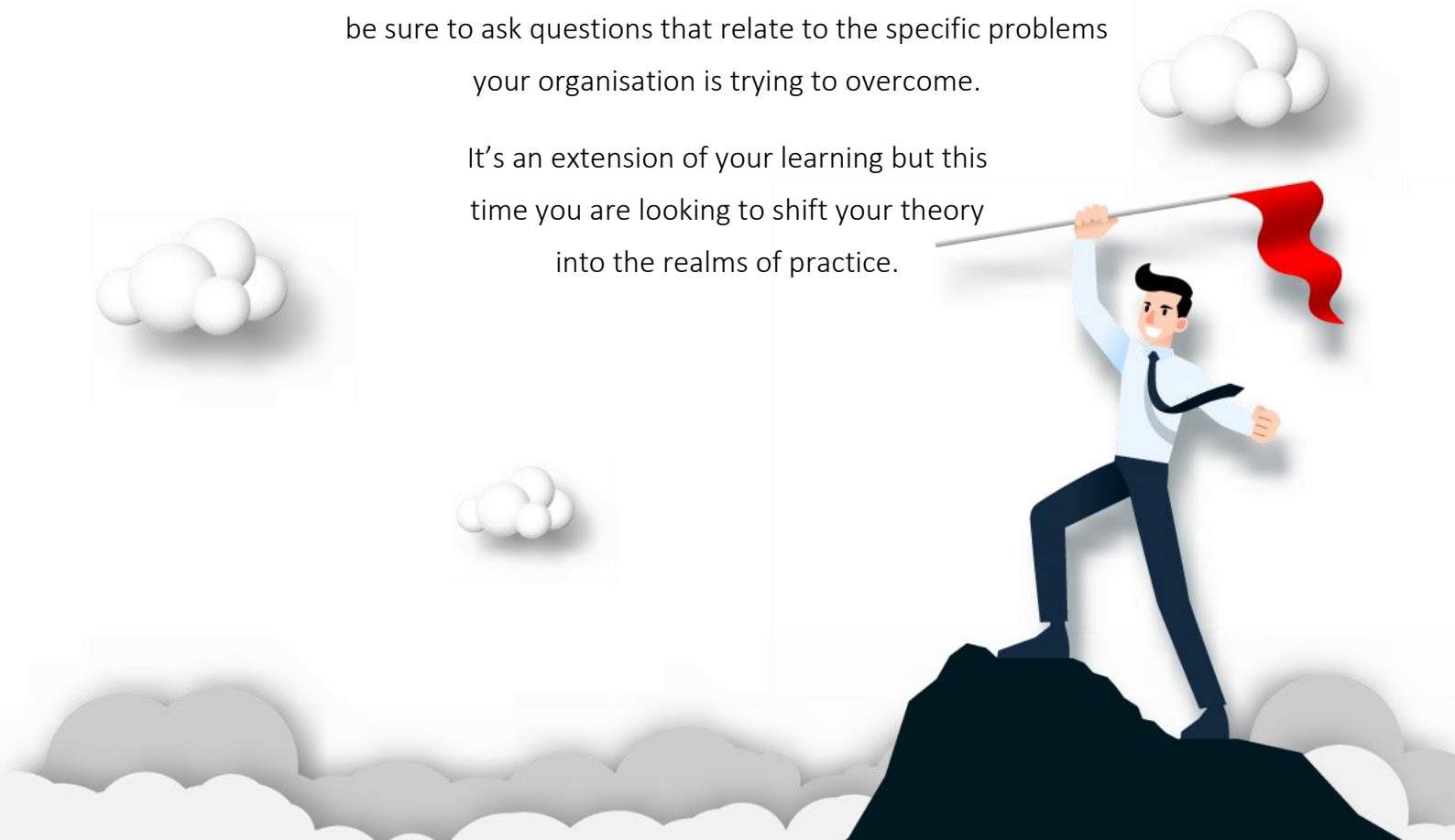
So often, when caught in the business vortex, we react to the day-to-day issues that hurtle our way without having the opportunity to see the bigger picture. With AI, once you have an understanding of the types of technology available to you, it is vital to press pause and consider what the business objectives are and how AI might play a role in solving some of the problems that will help you reach those goals.

So, how might you do this?

Consider specific business case studies where AI has been deployed successfully to achieve something similar to the objectives you have in mind and learn from those already trialling the technology.

Meet and engage with AI technology leaders and innovators, in business and academia. Attend lectures, watch Ted Talks, and be sure to ask questions that relate to the specific problems your organisation is trying to overcome.

It's an extension of your learning but this time you are looking to shift your theory into the realms of practice.



Prioritise . ❸

> As Oscar Wilde once wrote: 'A cynic is a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing', so, this can be a very apt consideration for those of you prioritising the early investment costs over the long-term benefits to ROI and business growth.

At this stage you will likely need to involve senior management and board-level executives, so be prepared to have a business case to clearly and logically demonstrate each step of your decision-making process.



To achieve this, prioritise the business goals in relation to your proposed AI deployment, over time. This will enable you to demonstrate the return on investment of your proposed plan. And don't be dazzled by the shiny new technologies. Hold firm to the research and strategic thinking that carried you through to this point to avoid an untimely Icarian descent.



4. Understand your resources

Knowing about the technology is one thing but understanding the resources you have at your disposal is a whole other consideration, and one that must be taken on board ahead of commencing with an AI roll-out. In a recent study, conducted by O'Reilly, senior AI professionals cited the lack of qualified AI professionals as the single biggest barrier to its implementation. So, the struggle is real.

Consider who you need on the team; whether you have those skills already or whether you need to make additional hires. Furthermore, think about upskilling existing members by way of an investment in those individuals as well as the future of the business itself.

It is not the case that robots will steal our jobs but that the change driven by AI innovation will alter the types of roles required for the future of business. This process will only serve to give you a head-start on other businesses.

5. Start small

Run the programme as an incubator to start with. Begin with small amounts of data as part of a pilot to test and incrementally scale the project up. This way you can learn from your mistakes and build a firm foundation from which to move forward on.

Communicate .6

Artificial intelligence has a habit of breeding fear amongst employees. Ensure that you bring the organisation along for the ride, providing regular updates and feedback on both the successes and failures of the project and the scope for which AI has been rolled out. With so many headlines in the news about job losses, this will serve to reassure the workforce and drive goodwill in return.



Watch the *Artificial intelligence: science fiction becomes marketing fact* webinar* to learn more about the state of Artificial Intelligence for professional services. And you can still take part in the poll as you watch the replay.

** The webinar was held in association with BrightTALK*