

Eight areas where an MSSP can help you use AI

Suddenly, everyone is talking about artificial intelligence (AI). It is constantly in the news now. It suddenly is looming like some intimidating Terminator. However, AI is not a toggle switch that was suddenly turned on one day this year. AI is everywhere and has been around for far longer than most of us are aware. We just didn't realize it.

Ever think about how Instagram shows you reels based on your past views? Youtube does the same. Amazon makes recommendations based on your browsing and purchase history. By the newest standard, that is old hat AI, but it is AI. Lately, significant advances have been made that increased the power of these learning algorithms exponentially. The new tools Chat GPT, BARD, Well-said are examples very widely covered in the media.

Why are businesses so interested?

There are a wide variety of uses for AI in the business space, from project management to customer service. A bit of background, it might be helpful to take a quick survey of places where AI is being deployed.

Before looking at examples, let's discuss why use AI in any area at all?

Given technology, any organization has the capacity to collect–from the perspective of a human–an incomprehensibly large amount of data on almost any subject. This data can be used to do many things, but there is so much of it, we have a limited capacity to see patterns and synthesize. AI has the capacity to do that.

Three examples:

- **Demand forecasting in retail:**
  Who doesn't want the magic bullet to decide how much to stock for each season? However, just observing how much sold this month last year isn't a sufficient predictor. What about the weather? Bad economic news. Construction on a nearby road that is now finished this year. The endless factors that may influence buying decisions can be used to forecast demand more accurately.

- **Disease screening in healthcare:**
  AI has the capacity to potentially use data to identify or eliminate certain diagnoses that an individual medical professional whose experience is necessarily finite, might be able to do. Like much else, there are ethical issues that can make AI a complex tool, but there is much potential.

- **Customer retention:**
  Like other areas, you probably can collect more information about your customers than you can make sense of. So, why did they leave? You may have the answer, but it may actually be a calculus of many factors. AI can help identify all of the issues that may have led a customer to leave. Without AI, you may incorrectly attribute it to one single factor.

Why are marketers so interested?

AI has potential applications in the marketing end of any business, large or small. Marketers, in particular, may find AI useful in these three general categories

- **Collecting Data about prospective customers**
  Even small businesses can collect a significant amount of data. AI can allow you to analyze that data. No matter how much data you collect, it is useless unless you can synthesize it, see patterns, etc. The human capacity to make sense of the massive amount of data we collect is limited.

- **Using data to market more effectively**
  Even the most novice marketer knows that the more you know about each prospect the easier it will be to target them. The more you know their needs, the more you can explain how your product or service meets those needs. AI allows you to do more with the data you collect- to make sense of it so you can use it.

- **Generating the right message**
  AI may be also able, to a certain degree, assist you in creating the messaging to reach your target. However, it is important to recognize that AI is not a silver bullet.

  In short, AI may offer you some new tools to more effectively market without expanding your present marketing resources.

Where does an MSSP fit in?

AI, on its own, is a complex tool. It is also a tool that can be misapplied. Remember, the term artificial is key. To be used effectively and wisely, AI needs to be applied by someone with experience using it in your particular business. An MSSP can offer the following to help you begin to integrate an AI solution into any aspect of your business.

- **Step one: Assess your organization's potential use of AI.**
  Basically, with the holistic understanding of your business that an MSSP has, they can evaluate where there is opportunity, and prioritize where to implement first
- **Step two: Understand your KPIs and organizational goals, from the top down.**
  Before you do anything, it is essential to articulate your specific goals. What do you identify as the key strategies and how will you measure your success?
- **Step three: Propose a possible range of AI solutions.**
  Here is an area where your MSSP can be of particular value. An MSSP will be knowledgeable about the variety of applications out there and lead you to select those most appropriate for your goals.
- **Step four: Estimate the solution's ROI.**
  Remember, measurement is important. And you can not do everything. So identify each potential AI solution's ROI. This will guide you to make the most effective use of your resources.
- **Step five: Ensure compliance:**
  For example HIPAA, PCI. HITRUST. ISO27001, SOC1, SOC2. AI is a powerful and potentially intrusive tool. Compliance is critical.
- **Step six: Implement the solution.**
  An MSSP can implement the solution for you. Most business owners do not have the resources available for what can be a time-intensive project.
- **Step seven : Manage tool-related risks.**
  This is a post-implementation issue that most businesses do not have the in-house resources to maintain long term. Examples of ongoing tasks include password management, security patches, and updates, as well as monitoring response
- **Step eight: Ongoing evaluation for effectiveness and reliability.**
  Remember, nothing is stagnant in business. Technologies change, the competitive environment changes. Your organization moves forward. Make sure you commit to ongoing reviews of the effectiveness of your chosen solution.

  In the end, AI can be useful. But with any powerful tool, it can cause a lot of trouble if used by an organization without experience. Small to medium sized businesses lack the in-house IT resources and depth of knowledge to implement and maintain an AI infrastructure. An MSSP can bring that to the table.

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