

AI-DRIVEN PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

An overview of the opportunities AI creates for recruitment, skills development and coaching of salespeople

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Prompt: A woman in the distance in an abstract AI environment.

INTRODUCTION

Why this report?

Over the past 30 years, HR departments have evolved from being primarily an administrative function dealing with salaries and benefits to a strategic partner for management. Nowadays, it is more about talent recruitment, skills development, and performance evaluation as well as the promotion of corporate culture. The increasingly strategic role is not surprising; research shows that the way a company manages its employees has a significant impact on its performance.¹

Until recently, the main benefit of technology has been to deliver efficiency gains. Technology has made it possible to do the same thing as before, but faster and more cost-effectively. Not only does AI allow for faster online recruitment, but it also becomes a powerful tool for recruiting the *right* people by assessing the skills match for the different roles. It is possible to assess the probability of future performance as well as to estimate the expected time to fill a particular role. AI thus comes in as a component that allows the HR function to better solve critical business challenges, often based on analysis of the existing workforce. While previous HR initiatives led to incremental improvements, AI can provide

the opportunity for exponential performance improvements.

The report you hold in your hand focuses on the recruitment, skills development and coaching of salespeople. We call it *people management*. What opportunities does AI create for everyone involved in recruitment, candidate assessment, interviews, testing, onboarding, training and many other HR sub-processes? The questions are many and not always easy to answer. Our ambition, therefore, is not to be comprehensive in any way, not to guarantee that the tools mentioned in the report are of high quality. That would be almost impossible. Developments in AI are moving at a rapid pace, with new innovations, applications and features being launched every day.

Instead, our ambition is to highlight the possibilities of AI, how it can be applied and to illustrate with some interesting and innovative examples, solutions and tools that you can start applying today. Think of it as an encyclopedia, an idea book, a source of inspiration or guidance for you and your company as you navigate the rapidly changing world of artificial intelligence.

¹ Combs, J., Liu, Y., Hall, A., & Ketchen, D. (2006). How much do high-performance work practices matter? A meta-analysis of their effects on organizational performance. *Personnel Psychology*, 59 (3), 501-528.
<https://www.ibm.com/downloads/cas/AGKXJX6M>



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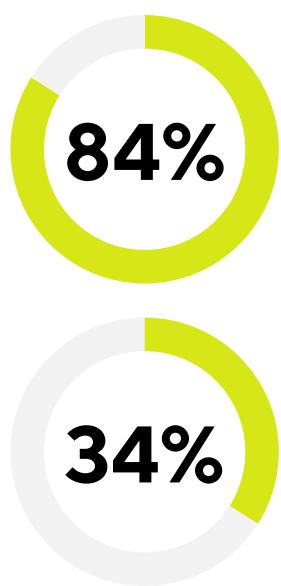
If you have any questions or want to get in touch with the authors, you can reach us at info@mercuri.net. We also invite you to comment on parts of the report and highlight areas that you find interesting on social media using the hashtag **#mercuriinternationalAI**. If you also tag us authors, we promise to comment and answer your questions.

Henrik Larsson-Broman
Peter Siljerud

WHAT IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?

Have you ever thought about how often you use artificial intelligence (AI)? In reality, the majority of us use AI on a daily basis without even realising it. Every time you use your fingerprint or FaceID to unlock your phone, you are using AI. Every time you use Facebook or Instagram, the ads you see are adapted based on AI. Every time you use Google Translate, the text is translated using AI. Every time you read a book online, the recommendation is based on AI, and when you press the order button, your payment card is checked with AI to detect any misuse.

AI is now a big part of our daily lives, even if many people are not aware of it. A survey conducted a few years ago showed that:



And the pervasiveness of AI will only grow. If digitalization has been the big topic of the 21st century so far, it's likely that AI will dominate the discussion in the coming years. We are probably witnessing the most dramatic shift in technology since the advent of the internet.

But what exactly is artificial intelligence? Well, that's what the scholars argue about. AI

is a vague and often misused term that even researchers cannot describe in a coherent way. But in simple terms, it can be described as a *machine's ability to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence*, such as problem solving, learning and decision making.

Unlike our biological intelligence, this intelligence is provided by computers. One way of looking at it is that AI receives input (e.g. data or information from its environment) and then interprets and learns from it to achieve individual goals.

Much of the technology behind today's AI solutions is nothing new. In fact, the world's first neural network was commissioned back in 1959 to eliminate echoes on telephone lines. In the following decades, the experiments continued, but there was no major impact - until recent years. Unlike earlier systems that were rule-based and static, modern AI solutions are based on *machine learning*. This concept means that computers can learn and improve their abilities over time - it's about letting computers train themselves to get better and better.

Simply put, the purpose of machine learning is to create systems that are more human-like in their ability to identify and understand the world, particularly images, speech, text and other things that have historically been easy for humans to handle but difficult for computers. Computers have long been better than humans at some things, especially calculations. Multiplying 2 539 342 by 4 393 245 is ridiculously easy for a computer but complicated for a human. Conversely, a human being finds it easy to recognize, for example, a dog in a picture, while a computer has traditionally found this type of analysis very difficult. But with rapid developments, even this is now possible. Every

day, new solutions are launched based on what we call *narrow AI*. These types of solutions are good at solving specific problems and tasks. Many of the niche products we see today in text, image, sound and photo are based on these systems.

The next stage of development is artificial intelligence, which has the ability to solve more general problems. When computers reach this level, it is called *artificial general intelligence (AGI)*. Perhaps we are heading towards a future where computers become more generally intelligent, where they acquire a form of common sense. So AGI is an intelligence comparable to

that of humans. These are systems that think, understand and learn, and can then use their intelligence to solve problems in a given situation in a similar way to a human - or potentially much better. AGI does not yet exist - there is an intense debate in the industry about how to create it, whether it can be created at all, and whether or not we need to be concerned about it. Only time will tell how it goes.

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WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF AI ON PEOPLE MANAGEMENT AND HR?

People management and HR have always been about people. People to be recruited, assessed, developed and retained. But despite the strong human aspect of this area, technology is becoming an increasingly important component. New IT-based solutions to manage and support parts of the recruitment process have become increasingly sophisticated over the past decades. And now everything is changing again. AI provides new opportunities to further sharpen the instruments for even greater precision. AI has the potential to further automate and streamline previously manual and time-consuming HR processes. This can free up time and resources for an HR department, allowing it to focus on more strategic tasks and relationship-building activities. There is an opportunity to better streamline the recruitment process and make more high-quality matches. But there is also the opportunity to create a better and more personalized experience for candidates.

One of the most fascinating things about AI is that it is a form of general purpose basic technology.

AI is not limited to a specific area but is something that can be applied widely. This means that for most people management and HR activities, there are one or more players offering solutions.

For those working in this field, there is thus every reason to familiarize themselves with the available tools to assess which ones may be relevant in their own organization. This report is intended to facilitate this task. It provides a map for orientation in the AI landscape, with examples of tools in different HR areas and tasks. It provides an overview of the current offer to let you feel more confident and secure in discussions with external suppliers.

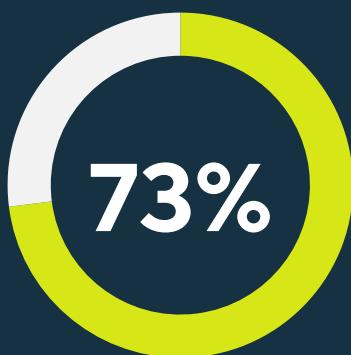
The new AI-based tools are not only better than the previous ones, but often add completely new functionalities that we haven't seen before. For example, AI can learn the qualifications of employees who are successful in a role and apply this knowledge to review, rank and rate candidates who match the criteria. AI can also assess the quality of a job advertisement or automate calendar bookings. While recruitment is a big part of HR, the range of AI solutions is growing in other areas as well. For example, it is now possible to identify with some certainty employees who are about to leave - as well as create new offers for other positions internally, based on their knowledge and preferences.² In skills development, there are AI solutions that can personalize training activities based on both focus and implementation. And for administrative tasks such as payroll, bonuses and employee queries, there are other tools.

² <https://medium.com/willbe-group/can-ai-put-the-human-back-into-human-resources-f42756a1bfca>

According to a 2022 study by SHRM (the Society for Human Resource Management), a quarter of companies use AI in HR-related activities.³

However, company size is a strong determinant, with almost half of companies with more than 5,000 employees using AI in HR. In a narrower study by Eightfold.ai of 250 HR managers, 73% said they use AI for recruitment.⁴ Whatever the exact figure of AI use at the moment, the direction of travel is clear: 92% say they will increase AI investments in the coming years.

In conclusion, in a business where speed is the key to finding the best talent, there is value in being early and experimenting with today's powerful AI tools. AI will not replace HR professionals in the foreseeable future. But HR professionals who use AI will replace HR professionals who do not.



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³ <https://www.shrm.org/about-shrm/press-room/press-releases/pages/fresh-shrm-research-explores-use-of-automation-and-ai-in-hr.aspx>

⁴ https://eightfold.ai/wp-content/uploads/2022_Talent_Survey.pdf



Chapter 1:

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION WITH AI

AI as a resource for finding, assessing
and appointing candidates.



Prompt: A middle aged smiling woman, sitting at her desk with another colleague. She's directly looking on the camera.

Introduction

1.1 THE ROLE OF AI IN RECRUITMENT

Hiring the right people is crucial to a company's success. As well as contributing to continued competitiveness, successful recruitment can also help create a strong and positive corporate culture. At the same time, competition for skilled workers is greater than ever. According to the ManpowerGroup Talent Shortage Study 2023, 77% of companies say they are having difficulty filling open positions.⁵ This compares to the first survey in 2010 when the figure was 31%, an increase of 148%. Finding and recruiting talent has thus become increasingly difficult over time. This is especially true when it comes to sales and marketing. In "The Future State of Sales Skills" study, in which Mercuri International interviewed more than 1,000 commercial decision-makers, 87% responded that they had difficulty finding and recruiting skilled workers for their sales and marketing functions.⁶

As such, HR has a key role to play, with several important steps in a recruitment process, such as:

- Understanding the company's needs and culture
- Creating attractive job advertisements
- Advertising and searching for candidates
- Evaluating applications
- Interviewing candidates
- Reference tagging
- Testing and job simulation

Several of these steps can be both laborious and time-consuming. AI has the potential to speed up processes, free up time and often improve quality. Let's look at some examples where AI can help in the recruitment process.

⁵ <https://go.manpowergroup.com/talent-shortage>

⁶ Mercuri International (2021). The Future State of Sales Skills. Can be downloaded at: <https://mercuri.net/the-future-state-of-skills-report/>

1.2 UNDERSTANDING THE COMPANY'S NEEDS AND CULTURE

A fundamental first step before recruiting salespeople is to understand the company's needs and culture.

What type of salesperson is best suited to the company and what are the specific requirements for the position? What values and standards are important to the company? Such an analysis can ensure a good match between the company and the potential candidate.

This is particularly important when it comes to salespeople, as they are the visible point of contact with the market. Sellers who do not align with the company's values, principles and standards can potentially damage the brand and its trust in the market. For example, the study "The Future State of Trust", conducted by Mercuri International in 2022, found that factors such as reliability, competence, integrity and goodwill were all important in gaining customer trust.⁷ The absence of these can therefore have a negative impact on sales performance.

For those who want to get it right from the start, it is therefore crucial to create a clear understanding of the company's culture and values in order to identify the qualities and skills needed to fit into the organization.

AI can be used to identify the most important factors related to a company's culture, for example by analyzing texts in company communications and internal surveys. *Sentiment analysis* allows you to determine from a text whether it expresses positive, negative, or neutral emotions.

One example is *Culture15* which has tools for internal analysis of the organization's culture and values, based on websites, external communication and social media posts. By analyzing texts, they can assess the values that characterize the business, such as collaboration, innovation, customer focus, agility, security, digital literacy, diversity and inclusion.

The company *Humu* can map internal values based on surveys complemented by analysis of internal data. This can include things like participation, psychological safety, innovativeness, efficiency, targeting, trust, transparency, inclusion, etc. Based on this, one can get a good idea of the values that characterize the organization.

⁷ Mercuri International (2022). The Future State of Trust. Can be downloaded at <https://mercuri.net/the-future-state-of-trust-report/>

Examples of AI-based tools for understanding company needs & culture



CULTURE15

Tools that measure an organization's culture and values and assess the characteristics of the business.

WEBSITE



HUMU

Analyzes company valuations and current conditions.

WEBSITE



1.3 CREATING JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

To ensure that a specific position is filled by the right person, a first step is to develop a relevant job description and requirements profile.

Rytr is a solution that generates job descriptions in different languages based on keywords and phrases. It is also possible to adjust the tone of the text. The result is a descriptive text that also includes responsibilities. Although the result may need to be fine-tuned, it can facilitate manual handling. Similar solutions are offered by *Jobg8* which can also analyze the text to ensure it is free of bias and inclusive.

A high-quality job ad is important, as it is the company's first contact with potential candidates and can be crucial in attracting the right people to a vacancy. The requirements for a job advertisement are high and it must be both realistic and attractive. It should include company information, role description, as well as the educational and experience requirements for the candidate. But at the same time, it is also a market window to attract as many applicants as possible - provided they meet the qualifications.

What we now see is a range of tools that can assist in the creation of job ads in different ways to optimize them. On the one hand, there are tools that can generate draft job ads using keywords based on the specifications of the service and the company's brand. On the other hand, there is the possibility to receive feedback with suggestions for improvement

on your own texts, with the aim of increasing visibility and attracting the right candidates.

Jobdescription.ai is an example of a solution that can generate job descriptions. Based on a title, it can suggest what kind of knowledge might be relevant given the role in question. Similarly, it can propose responsibilities, qualification requirements and provide a role description. The solution is based on the candidate and can also generate text that addresses reasons why they may have decided to leave a particular job. It also includes spelling and grammar check.

If you want to write your own job advertisements, you can take advantage of various services to improve your texts. A first step can be to use one of the basic services that remove grammar and spelling errors, which helps to create a professional impression and gives potential candidates a positive perception of the company.

For those who want to further refine their text, there are other solutions that provide feedback on existing texts. One example is *Textio*, which can improve the quality of a text and create more accurate and engaging job ads. *Textio* analyzes a text based on several parameters and can provide feedback on, for example, whether the tone is masculine or feminine or what age group it appeals to. You can also get suggestions on how to improve the text; if the sentences are too long, if it uses complicated technical language or by suggesting alternative wording.

Other solutions, such as *Paraphrasetool*, rewrite texts in all kinds of ways. They can replace words for more variety, shorten or lengthen texts, and reshape texts to achieve a certain desired tone, such as academic, clear, creative, empathetic or explanatory.

Examples of AI-based tools for creating job advertisements



RYTR

Creates job descriptions based on language, tone, and key words and phrases.

WEBSITE



JOBG8

Tools for creating workplace descriptions, among other things.

WEBSITE



TEXTIO

Improving the text of job descriptions and making them open-minded at the same time.

WEBSITE



JOBDESCRIPTION.AI

AI-powered service for creating job ads.

WEBSITE



PARAPHRASETOOL

Web-based tool for paraphrasing text.

WEBSITE



1.4 ADVERTISING AND SEARCHING FOR CANDIDATES

Attracting the right candidates in a more competitive environment has meant that recruitment is increasingly bordering on marketing. In many cases, it is a job seekers' market, which increases the pressure on companies to have an interesting story and a strong employer brand. All leading job platforms such as *LinkedIn*, *ZipRecruiter*, *Indeed*, *CareerBuilder* and *Monster* are already using AI in various ways to improve matches.

Whichever platform is deemed most appropriate, from *LinkedIn* to industry-specific portals, to your own network, it is worth considering how AI can be included as a component. Given the extensive nature of the recruitment process, many players have developed solutions to streamline and automate this step. Although congestion is high in this niche, there are different approaches to the various solutions.

For example, AI can be used to export job ads from *LinkedIn*, which can be valuable for those who are actively searching for jobs or for HR managers and recruiters to identify new recruitment requirements. *Browse.ai* is one such tool. With this robot, you can easily export job ads from *LinkedIn* for the desired title and location. Data can be exported in e.g. spreadsheet format for further analysis. You only need to provide the maximum number of jobs you want on each run, job title and location to extract data such as job title, company, location, job description and links.

Several tools can search the web for candidates based on a job description, such as *Arya*, *Kaspr*, *Eightfold* and others. With tools like these, recruiters can find and reach candidates more easily. The possibility is also given to reach passive candidates.

A CV or a cover letter tells you a lot about a candidate's abilities, but far from everything. With the transparency provided by the internet, there are great opportunities to rationally collect and analyze information from public sources and social networks, such as *TalentBin*.

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Examples of AI-based tools for advertising & searching for candidates



BROWSE.AI

Enables the extraction of job ads from LinkedIn.



ARYA

Helps HR teams search for candidates online based on job descriptions.



ENTELO

Tools to identify and reach out to passive candidates.



KASPR

Helps recruiters get instant access to talent's contact details.



EIGHTFOLD AI

Recruitment platform to identify and engage the right candidates.



TALENTBIN

Identifies potential candidates by analyzing data from social media and other sources.



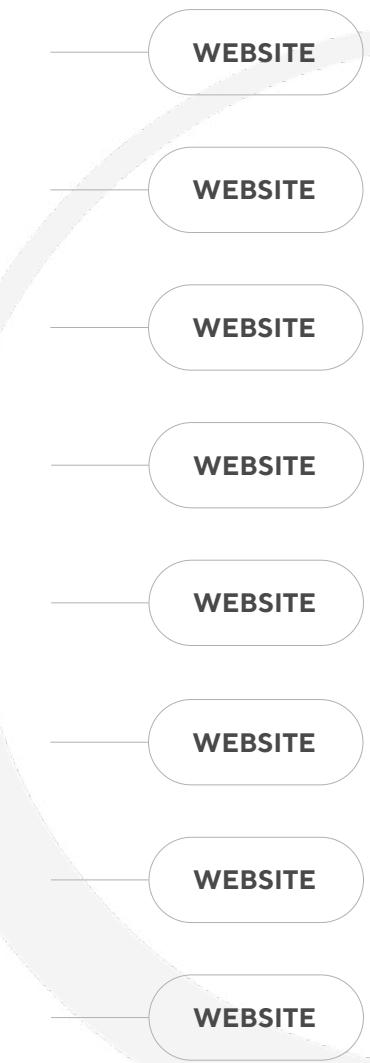
IDEAL (CERIDIAN)

Uses predictive analytics to identify the best candidates for a position.



BEAMERY

Helps HR teams manage and nurture candidate relationships.



1.5 EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

Evaluation of applications usually involves extensive work to find the candidates who match the requirements of the role. Many aspects should be taken into account, such as experience, training and past performance. In practice, it is often only a fraction of applicants whose qualifications meet the requirements of the position in question, but all applications must be processed. It is a delicate balance between hiring someone quickly and finding the exact right match.

With advanced AI tools that can analyze and filter candidates' applications in different ways, it is possible to meet both of these requirements.

There are many solutions for automatic analysis of CVs and cover letters, such as *Ideal* (acquired by Ceridian). These AI tools can typically search and interpret keywords, phrases or patterns in the text that match the job description (including synonyms). Candidates' education, skills, and experience can be scored based on the job description and each candidate's suitability can be assessed on a scale. Numerical analysis is also possible, for example to detect gaps in the timeline. The systems are in some cases learning and can be improved over time. Some solutions can handle a large number of languages, while others have the finesse to estimate the likelihood of the candidate staying for more than a year, as well as providing an estimate of how quickly the person can be expected to advance within the organization. Several of the systems offer the possibility to rediscover previous candidates.

Automated assessment also usually means a fair process for candidates as they are only assessed on how well their education and experience fits the job description - not based on personal characteristics such as age, gender or ethnicity. This is also known as open-minded recruitment and involves reducing the risk of discriminating against candidates and instead increasing the chance of selecting candidates who fit the expected norms. There are many solutions in this area. For example, *Pymetrics* uses AI to identify the most suitable candidates based on their cognitive, personal and social abilities without being influenced by bias. Another solution is *GapJumpers*, which uses "blind auditions" to eliminate bias in the recruitment process. Candidates are allowed to complete a task anonymously, which helps to focus on their abilities rather than their background.

It is important to note that these AI solutions are intended to be a decision support tool - not a final decision on who is excluded from the next stage of the recruitment process.

One variant is tools that extract and summarize the most important aspects of CVs and cover letters. Although nuances are lost, it can be a rational way to process large amounts of applications for a more manageable manual first analysis. This can reduce the time needed to extract the most important information and thus shorten the recruitment process - even if the evaluation is otherwise manual. In addition to tools dedicated to CV extraction, such as from *Affinda*, *ChatGPT* should be mentioned. There is no shortage of AI solutions that summarize long texts, but ChatGPT is excellent in this role.

Examples of AI-based tools for application evaluation



IDEAL (CERIDIAN)

Evaluation of CVs and cover letters..



XOPA

Analysis of CVs to assess match relevance, as well as future performance and loyalty.



AFFINDA

Extracting and summarizing the CV.



PYMETRICS

Tools to identify suitable candidates without being influenced by bias.



GAPJUMPERS

Uses AI to conduct "blind auditions" to eliminate bias in the recruitment process.

WEBSITE

WEBSITE

WEBSITE

WEBSITE

WEBSITE

1.6 INTERVIEWS BY PHONE, VIDEO OR CHAT

The options for interviewing candidates who have made it through the first selection are increasing. In addition to personal phone calls or video meetings, candidates can also communicate directly with chatbots or through video recordings. In face-to-face interviews, AI can be supportive and identify keywords and phrases that indicate a strong candidate profile. Other AI solutions can conduct the entire interview – and automatically evaluate it.

Based on video interviews conducted by the candidates themselves, it is possible to analyze facial expressions, word choice, sentence structure, etc. to get an idea of their suitability for a particular position. Is the person an introvert or extrovert? Is the person an individualist or a team player? Is the person committed, loyal, trustworthy, well-organized or risk-taking? AI solutions like these can summarize a person's character – and compare it to the ideal profile you are looking for. One example is *Talent.ai*, which can assess desired knowledge and skills related to specific roles, such as B2B Sales Manager, Key Account Manager and Field Sales Executive. This provides the opportunity to assess things like sales skills and other critical factors for sales positions.

A first step could be to use a chatbot to conduct an initial online interview to see directly whether the formal education and experience requirements are met. One example is *Mya*, which can use a job description to ensure that the applicant has the right education and qualifications – or, if not, give an immediate negative answer. Or suggestions for other open posts for which the candidate may be better suited. *Mya* is also able to answer questions about the position as well as the company. Another chat-based interview solution is provided by *Sapia*, which also has the possibility

to add video-based questions.

A nice touch is that candidates who are rejected are given coaching tips on how to improve – a way of showing consideration.



“

AI can be supportive and identify keywords and phrases that indicate a strong candidate profile. Other AI solutions can conduct the entire interview – and automatically evaluate it.

HireVue goes one step further and offers a video interview platform that candidates can complete at any time. Thus, it is not a conversation between two people but instead a video recording of the candidate answering a set of questions. The AI-based solution can then analyze what is being said, but also facial expressions, eye contact, tone of voice, sentence structure and grammar to create a picture of the person's suitability. A similar solution is offered by *VanillaHR* which has a video-based tool that analyzes facial expressions, body language and speech.

The analysis provides an estimate of a candidate's vocabulary, communication skills, social skills, confidence building skills, and motivation.

Other solutions, such as *Voicesense*, can analyze phone interviews to track personality traits. Based on 60 seconds of speech, a large number of parameters can be analyzed with AI. An assessment can therefore be made of a person's characteristics, such as enthusiasm, empathy, loyalty and well-being.

Examples of AI-based tools for virtual interviews



TALENT
Can assess desired skills and knowledge related to specific roles, for example in sales.



MYA (STEPSTONE)
Chatbot that can conduct a first simple interview and can answer questions.



SAPIA
Chatbot for interviews that can also provide feedback and coaching tips..



HIREVUE
Video interview platform with personality analysis to assess suitability.



VANILLAHR
Video interviews with personality analysis.



VOICESENSE
A service based on speech analysis that can track personality traits.



1.7 PERSONAL INTERVIEW

Candidates who pass the telephone interviews may be invited for a face-to-face interview, where there is an opportunity to ask more specific questions about their experience and skills, as well as giving candidates a chance to ask questions about the company and the job. Again, there are various AI solutions that can assist.

One example is the administrative burden of making appointments. Getting a meeting with relevant people with slightly overcrowded calendars can be a challenge. A solution offered by *Clara* takes care of the appointment booking for candidate interviews. *Clara* manages the email correspondence with the ultimate goal of ensuring that an interview time is scheduled that suits all involved. It will thus provide administrative support in the process of booking appointments.

Another possibility provided is the translation of the interviewer's questions into the candidate's language and vice versa. This can be particularly useful when the candidate speaks a different language from the interviewer, which can help improve communication and reduce any language barriers. Today's solutions are not perfect, but we are rapidly approaching real-time translation between languages.

Examples of solutions are the *Google Translate* app, which handles hundreds of languages, or *Kudo*, which handles about 20 languages.

Microsoft also offers real-time translation for around 40 languages via *Teams*, albeit with subtitles.

Another advantage of recording an interview is that the AI can transcribe what is said for later analysis. For a human recruiter, it can be difficult to assess all candidates without bias or preconceived notions of whether a candidate fits in an organization. AI has the advantage of being able to objectively analyze personal characteristics and soft skills such as emotional intelligence. For example, *Tengai* offers AI analysis of the individual responses. They have also experimented with 'robot interviews', although this is not currently offered.

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AI has the advantage of being able to objectively analyze personal characteristics and soft skills such as emotional intelligence. They acquire a form of common sense.

Examples of AI-based tools personal interviews



CLARA

Automates email correspondence for easier booking of meetings.

[WEBSITE](#)



GOOGLE TRANSLATE

Provides translation between a wide range of languages.

[WEBSITE](#)



MICROSOFT TEAMS

Offers real-time text-based translation between different languages.

[WEBSITE](#)



TENGAI

AI-based evaluation of candidates' answers.

[WEBSITE](#)



HONEIT

Transcribing and summarizing interview conversations.

[WEBSITE](#)



1.8 REFERENCE TAGGING

One of the last steps in the recruitment process is reference checking. This step aims to ensure that the selected candidates have the formal background they declared, as well as contact previous employers to get a better idea of the candidates' strengths and weaknesses. AI can assist in parts of this process to see if the final assessment is positive or negative.

There are a few AI solutions for automating the background check of candidates. Self-verifying

each candidate's education and previous work can easily become an extensive task. *VeriKlick* has an AI solution that increases the possibility of identifying potentially false data. Similarly, *Glider* offers a solution that can validate candidates in various ways during the hiring process. This can include people making multiple attempts, cheating on tests or taking unauthorized help from others. *Harver* also has a solution for automated reference taking with features to check the legitimacy of each reference.

Examples of AI-based tools for reference tagging



VERIKLICK

AI-based solution that offers features to automate the background check of candidates.



GLIDER

AI tools that validate candidates during the hiring process.



HARVER

Automated reference taking solution for checking the legitimacy of each reference.

WEBSITE

WEBSITE

WEBSITE



1.9 TESTING AND JOB SIMULATION

Increasingly popular are AI-based platforms for various forms of testing abilities such as cognition and social skills. Many of these benefit from the concept of 'gamification' linked to AI. They are therefore game-like solutions through which one can appreciate qualities such as attention, focus, risk tolerance, decision-making, learning, fairness and generosity.

One example is *Pymetrics*, which offers AI-based neuroscience games to create personality profiles. These can provide a picture of the candidate's ability to, for example, process information quickly, detect patterns and plan activities. By testing existing employees in the same role, an understanding of what criteria are desirable (as well as, of course, what development needs exist) can be gained.

Similar solutions are offered by *Plum* and *Harver*. The advantage of solutions like these is that they reduce the administrative burden by allowing them to rank candidates and see how well they match the desired profile. In some cases, the solutions provide direct feedback to the candidate, which can improve the recruitment experience.

Another increasingly common practice in recruitment is *job simulation*, where the candidate performs tasks that are similar to the real job. It is not only a way to evaluate the applicants but also an opportunity for them to get a rough idea of what the work might involve on a daily basis. Job simulation works better for certain roles, such as programmers or customer service, but also for junior salespeople.

The advantages of job simulations are that they can provide a more objective assessment of a candidate's skills. By simulating tasks or scenarios similar to those the candidate will perform in the actual job, the employer can get a more realistic assessment of a candidate's performance. Job simulations can also reduce the risk of misjudgments that can occur in traditional interviews where the candidate may give an impression that does not match their real abilities.

For salespeople, there are job simulators that use voice recognition and natural language processing to create realistic sales conversations. This type of simulator can be used to assess the candidate's ability to conduct customer meetings and do business with fictitious customers. A simulator can create a variety of scenarios, from initial conversations and customer needs analysis to pricing, negotiation and closing. The simulation can also be adapted to the specific industry or type of sales that the candidate will perform.

During the simulation, AI technology can be used to analyze the candidate's voice and language use to assess their communication skills and sales techniques. For example, the AI analysis can assess whether the candidate uses persuasive language, handles objections effectively, and uses the right questioning technique to identify the customer's needs. After the simulation, the employer can receive a detailed report with results and feedback on the candidate's performance to support recruitment decisions.

An example of an AI-based tool comes from *Quantified.ai*, which uses job simulation to assess a range of aspects such as confidence, trustworthiness, influence, articulation, presence, gestures, eye contact, and more. *Vervoe* is another company that, in addition to hundreds of ready-made knowledge tests, also offers job simulation tools for certain roles.

A variation from *Harver* is to only give candidates an insight into the business through interactive videos. It becomes a way to assess candidates' natural reaction to real workplace situations, while giving them an insight into whether the role is right for them. It is a way to reduce early drop-outs and set expectations at the right level before employment.

Examples of AI-based tools for candidate assessments



PYMETRICS

Neuroscience games for assessing different abilities with AI.



PLUM

Tools to assess personality, problem-solving skills and social intelligence with AI.



HARVER

AI-based tool that assesses cognition and personality.



GLIDER

Platform for knowledge matching against hundreds of roles.

WEBSITE

WEBSITE

WEBSITE

WEBSITE

Examples of AI-based tools for job simulation



QUANTIFIED

Job simulation to assess personality traits and characteristics.



VERVOE

Job simulation tools for different roles.



HARVER

Solution that gives candidates insight into the business and assesses their reactions.

WEBSITE

WEBSITE

WEBSITE

Prompt: A young woman in an AI desert-like environment.



“

The AI analysis can assess whether the candidate uses persuasive language, handles objections effectively, and uses the right questioning technique to identify the customer's needs

1.10 OFFER AND EMPLOYMENT

The final stage of the recruitment process is an offer of employment. This includes what is expected of applicants, as well as pay, benefits and other details of the job. But it is also important to communicate and keep all candidates updated during the process to create the best possible candidate experience. For these steps there are also innovative AI solutions that can be applied.

Starting with continuous communication solutions, *Talentadore*, for example, creates personalized candidate communication in the form of automatically generated personalized status updates. Messages can be sent in several steps either individually or to different groups. This allows each candidate to receive personalized feedback. The advantage is that even rejected candidates have a positive experience and can remain in the talent pool for future recruitment. They can also get feedback on what their strengths are and what can be improved.

A similar solution for automating communication is offered by *Paradox.ai*, which answers every possible question a candidate might have. The company *Recii* has components for several stages of recruitment, but in this context we

can highlight that they offer multi-channel communication, where the idea is to adapt the dialogue to the channel each individual candidate prefers, such as WhatsApp, text message, web or phone. *Entelo*'s solution also provides the ability to optimize communication to ensure that candidates are not passive. This can provide suggestions on how to optimize communication so that the most interesting people do not lose interest in the process.

If we then turn to the employment contract itself, AI solutions are also available for both generating employment contracts and reviewing existing ones. *Ironclad* and *Shake* offer automatic contract generation with the option of digital signing as a way to simplify the process. *DocuSign Analyzer* and *LegalSifter* are tools that can analyze contracts to find potential risks, inconsistent text and suggest improvements. There are also chatbots that can provide candidates with answers to questions about contracts, which can sometimes be complicated or bureaucratic. *Bloomfire* and *Legal Robot* are services that explain in an easy-to-understand way the components of an employment contract as well as difficult legal terms and clauses. They can also provide tips on further reading for those who want to learn more or get in touch with legal advisors.

There are also solutions to ensure that the salary is reasonable based on similar positions in other companies. *PayScale* has an AI-based solution that can benchmark salaries against other companies in the same industry, but also takes into account other factors such as education, experience and location. *Glassdoor*, which is essentially an employee-facing service, also offers an employer-facing service to estimate a suitable salary based on anonymized data from millions of employees. Similar solutions are also available from *Salary.com*.

Examples of AI-based tools for employment administration



TALENTADORE

Creates personalized candidate communication in the form of auto-generated personalized status updates.

WEBSITE



PARADOX

Platform that provides answers to candidates' questions during the recruitment process.

WEBSITE



ENTELO

Optimized communication to ensure that candidates are not passive.

WEBSITE



IRONCLAD

Automatic generation of contracts with signature option.

WEBSITE



LEGAL.IO

Automatic generation of contracts with signature option.

WEBSITE



BLOOMFIRE

Chatbot function that handles candidates' questions.

WEBSITE



LEGAL ROBOT

Legal AI assistant for automated document review.

WEBSITE



PAYSCALE

Platform for salary analysis and benchmarking.

WEBSITE



GLASSDOOR

Ability to compare salary levels based on different industries.

WEBSITE



SALARY.COM

AI-based benchmarking of salaries and benefits.

WEBSITE

1.11 ONBOARDING AND FOLLOW-UP

Once the new salesperson is hired, it's important to make sure they feel welcome and that they get a good start in their new role. The onboarding process can include everything from introduction to the company to training on products and services. Monitoring is also important to ensure that the new salesperson integrates well into the team and to understand how they are performing in their new role. Studies suggest that successful onboarding can reduce staff turnover and increase productivity.⁸ According to a study by G2, 20% of new employees leave their job after less than 45 days.⁹

AI can help automate parts of the onboarding process by continuously collecting and analyzing information. An example of automated administration is *Levity*'s solution that reviews whether relevant documents have been handled correctly, such as employment contracts, tax returns, confidentiality agreements and driver's license checks. AI also allows for in-text sentiment analysis from survey responses to quickly identify new hires who are dissatisfied for various reasons. *Leena* offers a solution that uses AI to match new employees with a suitable onboarding buddy. *Kallidus* is another example of an automated onboarding solution to minimize administration.

With AI, there is also the possibility to personalize the process based on the individual. For example, *Sana Lab*'s solution customizes the introductory courses that a new employee should attend, such as safety regulations, expense policy and company culture, based on their role and previous experience.

There are also internal chatbots that can provide quick answers to common questions, such as parental leave and teleworking. With solutions like these, the onboarding process can be streamlined with greater opportunity for follow-up to ensure no one falls through the cracks. Notably, there is also AI support for automating offboarding, such as from *Leena*.



20%

According to a study by G2, 20% of new employees leave their job after less than 45 days.

⁸ <https://www.hrcloud.com/blog/how-ai-is-reshaping-the-onboarding-process-for-hr>

⁹ <https://www.g2.com/articles/onboarding-statistics>

Examples of AI-based tools for onboarding and follow-up



LEVITY

AI solution that ensures correct handling of different documents.

[WEBSITE](#)



LEENA

AI-based onboarding process with multiple components such as verification, employee matching, chatbot, and more.

[WEBSITE](#)



KALLIDUS

Automated onboarding to reduce manual administration.

[WEBSITE](#)



SANA LABS

Adapting the induction and training of new staff.

[WEBSITE](#)



1.12 ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

It is easy to focus on the more spectacular AI solutions. But much of the benefit can also be found in tools that tackle the more mundane administrative tasks. A first step to get acquainted with AI can be a more internal perspective where you can pick the low-hanging fruit.

Talla offers an AI-based solution that automates recurring tasks such as employee queries or updating HR data. The aim is to reduce the

burden on staff and increase internal productivity. Similarly, *WorkFusion* creates “virtual employees” who can handle repetitive HR tasks such as text entry and scheduling.

Translating texts between different languages can be time-consuming and require the right skills. Modern AI solutions like *DeepL* are not perfect, but often provide a very good draft that can be further processed.

Examples of AI-based tools for HR administration



TALLA

AI-powered chatbot and automation platform for customer support, HR and IT help.



WORKFUSION

Platform that focuses on automating repetitive tasks.



DEEPL

AI-powered translation service offering high-quality translations of texts.

WEBSITE

WEBSITE

WEBSITE

1.13 AI FOR CANDIDATES

In this context, it is also important to note that job seekers can also benefit from AI. Today, there are several AI-based tools that can be used to sharpen texts, write and design CVs but also for interview coaching. It is therefore important to assess what the candidate has achieved - and what has been produced with the help of AI. Perhaps most notable is the powerful chatbot *ChatGPT*, which can act as an advisor and sounding board for a job applicant. It can provide career advice and prepare a person for an interview situation. For example, a question could be formulated like this:

"I am preparing for an important interview at a large IT company for a sales role. Can you list some examples of interview questions for which I might need to prepare?"

A more specific solution from *Yoodli* coaches a candidate before a job interview with various questions that may arise. It can also provide feedback during this training, for example if you speak too fast or use inappropriate words or expressions.

Other solutions, such as *Kick Resume*, can create an articulate and well-designed resume in minutes. It is also possible to create a personal website to present your CV and other personal interests. Solutions like these can typically also provide feedback on an existing CV, as well as writing an appealing cover letter. And even write a letter of resignation for the employee who finds it awkward.

Examples of AI-based tools for candidates



CHATGPT

Career advice, interview coaching and more.



YOODLI

Coaching for job interviews with feedback.



KICK RESUME

Preparation of designed CV and cover letter.

WEBSITE

WEBSITE

WEBSITE

1.14 RETAINING STAFF AND REDUCING STAFF TURNOVER

At least as important as recruitment – if not more so – is that the employees you want to retain do not resign. Identifying who is about to quit is not a simple task, as this is a decision that often develops over time. However, those who are reluctant to stay in the job are often less committed and may show poorer results than before. Other indicators of whether an employee is thinking of changing jobs can be the current salary level, length of service, position, distance to work, disinterest in further training and major personal life events.

There are several different AI platforms to identify the risk of employees leaving based on factors like these. So, if you want them to stay employed, which you probably do, there is an opportunity to address them proactively with proposals for another post or perhaps a higher salary. According to a pilot study at HP, a system like this reduced staff turnover by 25%. Clearly, people can be wrongly categorized as 'about to resign', which can unfairly label them as disloyal. We have to keep in mind that these systems are not perfect.

For example, *IBM Watson Talent Insights* offers a tool that analyzes data related to employee engagement, job satisfaction and performance. It can identify which employees are most likely to resign, as well as an explanation of the factors that contribute to this risk.

Limeade's tool is based on employees providing feedback on their work situation in the form of surveys linked to their job satisfaction. The text-based parts of the surveys are analyzed to look for patterns that may indicate dissatisfaction or low engagement.

Visier has a tool that can visually illustrate the risk of employees leaving based on historical data.

”

There are several different AI platforms to identify the risk of employees leaving based on factors like these. So, if you want them to stay employed, which you probably do, there is an opportunity to address them proactively with proposals for another post or perhaps a higher salary. According to a pilot study at HP, a system like this reduced staff turnover by 25%.



At the individual or group level, you can see how the risk changes, as well as how it correlates with other variables such as time since last promotion.

AI tools from *Phenom* and *Plum* are based on the idea that it is about matching employees to the tasks they are best at performing. It is a form of career planning where each person's skills are matched to the tasks that need to be completed.

Examples of AI-based tools staff retention



IBM WATSON TALENT INSIGHTS

Identifying which employees are most likely to resign.



LIMEADE

Analysis of text-based surveys to identify dissatisfaction or low engagement.



VISIER

Assessment of the risk of employees leaving based on historical data.



PHENOM

Matches employees to the tasks they are best suited to perform



PLUM

Career planning tools to ensure the best use of skills.





Chapter 2:

TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT WITH AI

AI to train and upskill salespeople
more effectively



Introduction

2.1 THE INCREASING NEED FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Our world is constantly changing at a pace that seems to be accelerating. In recent years alone, a series of external events have redrawn the playing field for many industries. The COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, inflation, interest rate hikes as well as the effects of increasing climate change. Add to this the rapid digitization with increased e-commerce and rapid AI development and it becomes obvious for most industries that change should be seen as a constant state that constantly fuels the need to develop new skills.

This is also confirmed by several studies. For example, according to Gartner, as many as 58% of all employees today need new skills to do their current job.¹⁰ This is particularly true in sales and marketing.

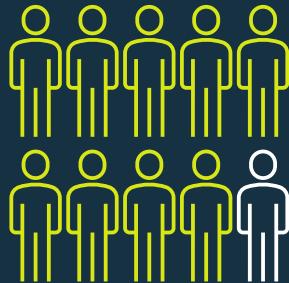


58%

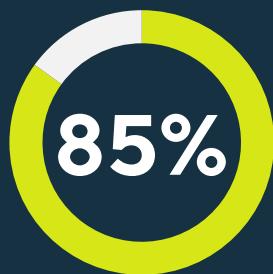
According to Gartner, as many as 58% of all employees today need new skills to do their current job.

¹⁰ <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2021-02-03-gartner-hr-research-finds-fifty-eight-percent-of-the-workforce-will-need-new-skill-sets-to-do-their-jobs-successfully>

In the study “The Future State of Sales Skills”, in which Mercuri International interviewed over 1,000 commercial managers,



nine out of ten managers indicated that they experienced a skills gap in their sales and marketing organization,



while 85% estimated that the skills gap would increase in the next three years.¹¹

Despite this fact, investment in skills development is modest. According to Eurostat, the average employee in Europe spends only 1-2 hours on learning each month. In Sweden, the figure is 4.3 hours per month. This compares to a study by the World Economic Forum which concluded that we should spend at least 20 hours per month, or 25 days per year, just to get our job done.

Another explanation for the rapidly increasing skills gap is that the half-life of a particular knowledge or skill has gone from around 10-15 years to only 5 years today. In other words,

what we consider to be valuable knowledge today will only be worth half as much in 5 years' time. The figures are of course not exact and highly dependent on the industry, but IBM and Deloitte come to the same conclusion. In other words, knowledge quickly becomes dated. The conclusion is that every person who wants to maintain their position and succeed in their professional field must double their personal knowledge every five years. And even faster if they aim to get an edge over competitors or colleagues.

Introducing continuous learning and ongoing skills development as part of a company's day-to-day operations is thus a key success factor. This is particularly true in sales. Research shows that investing in the training and development of salespeople can have a significant impact on companies' sales performance and profitability. A study by Forbes Insights shows that companies that have a dedicated focus on developing salespeople through training and education estimate an average 9 percent increase in sales revenue compared to companies that don't focus on training.¹² Moreover, companies that invested in sales training estimated a 50% higher increase in sales per employee than those that did not.

Another study by McKinsey & Co on the future of B2B sales found that investment in finding and training the right talent is what differentiates fast-growing from slow-growing companies. 48% of fast-growing companies invest significant time and resources in sales training while the figure was only 22% for slow-growing companies.¹³

Research from LinkedIn also shows that B2B salespeople with high levels of expertise have a greater ability to engage their customers and create long-term relationships with them.

¹¹ The report can be downloaded at <https://mercuri.net/the-future-state-of-skills-report/>

¹² Forbes Insights: “The State of Sales Performance” <https://www.forbes.com/forbesinsights/the-state-of-sales-performance/>

¹³ <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/what-the-future-science-of-b2b-sales-growth-looks-like>

The study found that B2B salespeople who invested in their skills and learning were more likely to achieve their sales goals and create long-term customer relationships.¹⁴

An important point in this context is that success requires persistence, sustainability and continuity. The reason is simply because knowledge becomes obsolete quickly, but also because newly acquired knowledge is quickly forgotten. This suggests that a single course is not enough to improve salespeople's performance in the long term. As a result, it is therefore important to have continuous training programs to maintain salespeople's skills and develop their competencies in the long term. Continuous learning and training also allows salespeople to keep up to date with industry and market trends and to develop new skills and strategies. This can help them adapt to changing market conditions and develop new ways to engage and persuade customers.

Another benefit of continuous learning and training is that it can help salespeople maintain a positive attitude and reduce stress levels. A study from Baylor University found that training in psychological skills, such as positive thinking and stress management, can reduce stress levels in salespeople and thus improve their performance.¹⁵

A number of studies thus point to the importance of continuous development, creating a learning culture, but also having employees with the right "learning mindset", which is crucial for maintaining and improving companies' sales performance and profitability both in the short and long term. To achieve this, AI can be very useful. With the help of AI, we can now develop employees' skills in a smarter and more cost-effective way. The processes for this can look

different depending on the company's needs, resources and strategies but let's look at a general overview of the different steps to develop the skills of your employees, for example:

- 1 Identifying skills gaps
- 2 Developing training plans
- 3 Scheduling training
- 4 Carrying out training activities
- 5 Monitoring and evaluation

Several of these steps can be both laborious and time-consuming. AI has the potential to speed up processes, free up time and often improve quality. Let's look at some examples where AI can help with skills development.

¹⁴ LinkedIn Sales Solutions: "The State of Sales 2020" <https://business.linkedin.com/sales-solutions/state-of-sales>

¹⁵ Baylor University: "Selling and Stress: Positive Influence of Psychological Capital on Performance and Health in Sales Jobs" <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1046496414531791>

2.2 IDENTIFYING SKILLS GAPS

Employees are constantly learning and developing new skills through experience at work, during courses, but also in their private lives.

As the business world changes, so do the skills that companies will need in the future. The same knowledge required today will not necessarily be required next year, let alone five to ten years from now. In the increasingly rapid turnover of knowledge, it is a challenge to understand which gaps need to be filled. A first step in developing employees' competences is to identify which competences are missing or need improvement. This can be done by looking at the company's objectives and strategies as well as the existing competences of the employees.

Workday Skills Cloud leverages AI to map skills by seeing how different skills relate to each other. It

leverages data from job history, training, position, language skills, completed projects, certifications and more to create graphical representations of each individual employee's knowledge. Group-level summaries can also reveal organizational competence, which can be compared to the desired future vision.

The *Cornerstone Skills Graph* is an AI-based tool that can automatically detect employees' skills, where their unique skills profile can take them, what jobs or assignments best fit their skills and goals, and what development will help them get where they want to go.

Another tool is *LinkedIn Skills Insights*, which analyzes what skills employees have, how they change over time, and provides a benchmark against peer companies.

Examples of AI-based tools to identify skills gaps



WORKDAY

AI-based analysis of employees' skills

WEBSITE



LINKEDIN

The Skills Insight platform analyzes the skills of employees

WEBSITE



CORNERSTONE

AI detection of employees' skills.

WEBSITE

2.3 DEVELOP INDIVIDUALIZED TRAINING PLANS

Based on identified skills gaps, training plans can be developed to help employees develop the necessary skills. In addition to traditional courses, training plans can include different types of activities, such as workshops, seminars, e-learning, coaching and mentoring. There are many Learning Management System (LMS) solutions, many of which now have various AI components.

AI also enables personalized learning, where the pace of learning and the pedagogical approach are optimized for each individual's needs. Everyone learns in different ways, some prefer to listen, others are more visual and some like to try things hands-on. Much of today's education is struggling to meet all these needs at the same time. AI makes it possible to identify each person's specific learning needs to optimize the process. Thus, the possibility exists to provide each individual with customized tasks and personalized feedback. Each person can thus receive a tailored educational explanation that corresponds to their ability to absorb information. It is also a way for teachers to get early indications of whether some people are struggling and where to focus their efforts.

The conclusion is that learning activities can be adapted in both content and accessibility based on what is meaningful and relevant to the individual. These include the technological platforms, which are chosen based on the person's prior knowledge and needs, the pace of learning, which can also be adjusted, and the learning methods. Studies from Stanford University show that students with AI support learn 30% more and 30% faster. Let's look at some different examples.

Docebo has an AI-based tool that offers personalized development paths with the right training at the right time.

Based on the employees' role and previous knowledge, they use AI to identify knowledge gaps and match it to different training proposals. Similarly, *Saffron Interactive* and *Softengi* use AI to analyze a person's previous knowledge and performance to suggest appropriate training and customize tailored programs with different orientations.

Riid offers an AI solution that can connect with existing training platforms with the goal of recommending accurate training suggestions, as well as predicting how well the outcome and engagement will be. *Skillsoft* has a solution that maps skills and provides personalized recommendations on which parts of a course can be skipped and which should be given focus. *Infor* uses AI to create personalized learning plans that not only customize focus but also take into account the person's specific learning style.



30%

Studies from Stanford University show that students with AI support learn 30% more and 30% faster.

Another approach is to focus on short, fast and personalized courses – often using the mobile phone. This type of microlearning or mobile first is something Mercuri International has been helping clients with for a long time. The idea is to be able to continually replenish knowledge,

where it is seen as part of the flow of working life to constantly update oneself. In this area, there are also other players such as *Gnowbe* and *TalentCards*, both focused on developing shorter ‘micro-courses’ using AI, with the aim of providing almost daily access to important new knowledge.

Examples of AI-based tools and solutions for developing individualized training plans



DOCEBO

Learning Management Platform for individualization of training tracks.

WEBSITE



SOFTENGI

AI-based solution to propose training courses and monitor progress.

WEBSITE



SKILLSOFT

Personalized training plans.

WEBSITE



INFOR

Personalized training that takes into account learning styles.

WEBSITE



TALENTCARDS

Adapted micro-courses.

WEBSITE



SAFFRON INTERACTIVE

Uses AI algorithms to analyze learning needs and develop tailored learning programs.

WEBSITE



GNOWBE

AI tools for content creation and planning to design learning programs tailored to individual needs.

WEBSITE



RIID LABS

Tailored planning of training content based on participants’ knowledge and history.

WEBSITE

2.4 PRODUCE AND IMPLEMENT TRAINING ACTIVITIES

The next step is the implementation of the planned training activities so that staff can develop the necessary skills. AI can assist in administrative tasks as well as in producing various forms of course material. In sales, another important part is to practice the craft concretely, so that salespeople can improve their skills in areas such as communication, negotiation and active listening.

AI offers the possibility of creating realistic role-playing games, where different sales situations can be simulated. This allows salespeople to practice their skills in a safe and controlled training environment. There is the possibility to get real-time feedback on how well participants are performing, providing quick feedback and a chance to improve. The aim, of course, is to improve sales performance in real-life situations. The list of these tools gets long quickly, but let's mention *Second Nature*, *MindTickle* and *ELB Learning*, which offer interactive sales simulations with AI-based virtual characters. The latter also have the *Cenario VR* solution that takes it a step further with virtual reality (VR) that can provide an additional sense of proximity.

In terms of administration, there are tools that can answer common questions that arise, preferably in the form of chatbots, such as *Ivy*. Typically, course participants often have similar questions regarding the conduct of the course, dates, location, course materials, etc. A chatbot can handle a large number of these, freeing up trainer time and reducing response time.

There are a variety of tools that can assist in the development of course materials. Properly managed, AI-based tools can support everything from producing videos to webinars, podcasts, simulations, courseware and more. One example is

Synthesia, which uses texts to create video material presented by human avatars who present the content. The teacher's appearance and language are highly customizable. A similar tool is offered by *Lumen5*, which quickly creates PowerPoint slides and video content that can be used for training.

Other solutions like *Quillionz* create AI-based quiz tests from the training material. As well as freeing up the trainer's time, it also provides a way to monitor how well the knowledge is being received and where specific efforts should be directed. A similar solution comes from *Quizlet*, which can also create AI-based knowledge games.

There are many different platforms to follow participants during their skills development, such as from *Cognii*. This allows them to receive continuous feedback and guidance during their training.

A major benefit of AI is that it can facilitate learning through effective self-study. Artificial intelligence is phenomenal at finding, sifting and sorting information and news. However, a note of caution must be raised as fact-checking is sometimes lacking.

The current leading tool, *ChatGPT*, can identify and summarize complex information from multiple sources. Long reports, articles or documents can also be summarized, even books, which can save time and effort.

ChatGPT can of course be used for a variety of purposes in this context. From creating components of course materials to acting as a personal training assistant, designing and grading quizzes and tests, creating interactive stories or generating different types of exercises or training modules.

There are also a variety of other tools that can speed up research and learning by compiling and summarizing reports and news articles, such as *Bearly*.

For those salespeople who are also training to write better texts, there are several solutions to improve this ability. *ChatGPT* can fine-tune texts and also change the style and tone of the content, for example if you want it to sound more business-like, human or friendly. There is also *Grammarly*, which can make linguistic adjustments to grammar and spelling, or suggest alternative words to increase dynamics. And of course a whole range of AI tools that can develop the language and help with copywriting in different ways, such as *Craftly*, *Notion* and *HyperWrite*.

Prompt: A confident HR director smiling in front of the camera.

Examples of AI-based tools producing and implementing training activities



SECOND NATURE

Platform offering interactive sales training simulations with virtual characters.



MINDTICKLE

AI-based role-playing simulations.



ELB LEARNING

The Rehearsal tool trains salespeople with AI-based role plays. They also offer VR-based opportunities with CenarioVR.



IVY

Provides chatbots that can answer recurring questions from participants.



SYNTHEZIA

AI platform to quickly generate training videos based on textual material.



LUMENS

Tools to quickly create PowerPoint slides and video content for training.



QUILLONZ

Tool to automatically create quiz questions based on the training material.



QUIZLET

Tools for creating quiz questions and knowledge games.



COGNII

Offers a virtual learning platform that provides participants with personalized feedback and guidance on training activities.



CHATGPT

Huge capacity to find relevant information, answer questions and summarize texts.



BEARLY

Compiles and summarizes reports and news articles.



GRAMMARLY

Writing support that can improve and adapt texts.





Chapter 3:

AI-DRIVEN SALES COACHING

AI to support coaching salespeople to improve performance



Prompt: Two colleagues engaged in a training session.

Introduction

3.1 WHY IS SALES COACHING IMPORTANT?

Companies that actively invest in sales development and frequently coach their salespeople have higher turnover growth than those that do not. The difference in annual growth rate is as high as 10%. At the same time, only one in three salespeople in Sweden have a manager who gives them the necessary coaching. This is according to Mercuri International, in one of the world's largest research projects on effective selling.¹⁶

The fact that leadership is one of the most important factors for a company's success has already been established in several studies. Author and consultant Jim Collins, in his acclaimed study *Good to Great: How Ordinary Companies Make the Leap to Master Class* (2006), rigorously demonstrated that leadership is the key to success.

The key is the leaders' stated desire to develop the company and the business and their ability to create a culture conducive to further development. Next comes the ability of leaders to consistently identify, implement and live their 'hedgehog concept' – the business idea that combines what the company can be the best in the world at, what is at the core of the company's business model and what the company is passionate about.

Just as Jim Collins was able to demonstrate that leaders' willingness to develop created success, Mercuri International's multi-year research project, Sales Efficiency Study III, captured multiple categories of activities that contribute to organic growth. One of the most important is the continuous development of the salespeople and the sales organization.

¹⁶ Larsson-Broman, H. et al. (2012). The search for the DNA of sales. ProSales Institute AB (now Mercuri International)

The difference in annual growth between companies that are sales development oriented and those that are not is at least 10 percentage points, all else being equal. There are a number of variables that can explain the difference, with the three most important components being:

-  Sellers receive feedback and coaching at least two to three times a month
-  Salespeople receive training on the company's products at least once a quarter
-  The company works on improving its sales process at least once a quarter

The fact that the frequency of coaching has such a large effect on growth is also confirmed in a qualitative sub-study within the framework of the research project. In a small but in-depth study of managers at a major IT company in Sweden, Mercuri International wanted to find out what qualities are most important for managers to have, in terms of what is best for the company.

Data on managers' capabilities were generated through in-depth interviews with other people inside and outside the organization who were asked to assess the managers based on their broad experience (not least the managers' own managers). The information gathered was then used to score the different capabilities of the managers.

- 1 Coaching skills (ability to help salespeople grow and develop)
- 2 Business acumen (business acumen, profitability, ability to identify business opportunities)
- 3 Own sales skills (several of the managers had own sales responsibilities in addition to managerial responsibilities)
- 4 Administrative skills (ability to keep track of figures, follow up on activities)
- 5 Social skills (ability to create well-being)
- 6 Recruitment skills (the ability to find and keep good salespeople)

One of the key findings was that coaching ability drives turnover – the better the coaching ability – the higher the increase in turnover over time. Coaching ability alone explained 40% of the variation in turnover growth, which is remarkably high given that no account was taken of differences in the conditions of the different departments (e.g. differences in market conditions in different regions). Other important conclusions were that good social skills are not a substitute for coaching skills and that well-being does not create development, but investment in development does create greater well-being.

Another important conclusion is that coaching should not be seen as a one-off 'quick fix', but as a developmental activity. It is something that requires an investment in time and resources, but can pay off in the future. Investing in coaching is an investment in the development of your people and your business. It also means that companies that do not invest in coaching or postpone it risk sacrificing part of their future. Mercuri International believes that – to achieve lasting success – companies must constantly balance efforts to survive with efforts to develop. Without investment in development activities – no development.

AI undoubtedly has the potential to accelerate this development. AI opens the door to both freeing up time for managers to coach more and allowing technology to coach employees. In this chapter, we therefore provide some examples of how AI can be used and the benefits it brings to more effective coaching and thus increased sales growth.

Prompt: A modern office, in style of an old train station. Natural light shines through the big arched windows.



99

Coaching ability drives turnover – the better the coaching ability – the higher the increase in turnover over time. Coaching ability alone explained 40% of the variation in turnover growth, which is remarkably high given that no account was taken of differences in the conditions of the different departments (e.g. differences in market conditions in different regions).

3.2 WHAT IS AI-DRIVEN SALES COACHING?

In short, AI-driven sales coaching can be described as a process of using artificial intelligence to provide individualized coaching. With AI-powered sales coaching, sales managers can use data-based insights to provide more objective feedback and coaching to their salespeople, as well as provide tools for salespeople to coach themselves over time.

As with many other AI-based solutions, AI-powered sales coaching is based on collecting and analyzing large amounts of data. This includes data from sales calls, emails, and other customer interactions that AI can analyze to provide feedback and recommendations tailored to each salesperson's unique needs and situation.

One of the biggest benefits of AI-powered sales coaching is its ability to provide real-time feedback and coaching. Instead of waiting for quarterly performance reviews or annual appraisals, salespeople can get immediate feedback on their performance and behavior. This can help salespeople quickly adjust their efforts and behaviors, leading to faster improvements and better sales results.

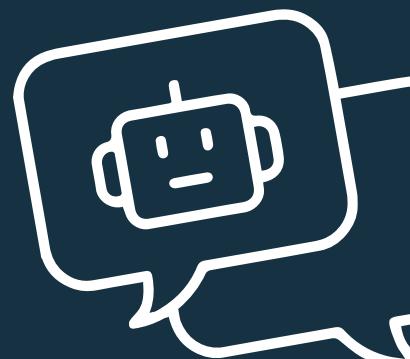
AI-powered sales coaching can also help create a more supportive and engaging environment for salespeople. By giving salespeople access to insights and feedback tailored to their needs, AI can help boost their confidence, motivate them to improve their skills and make them more engaged in their work. In addition, AI can help relieve sales managers and coaches of time-consuming tasks such as data analysis and reporting, giving them more time to focus on personalized coaching and development.

Overall, AI-driven sales coaching represents an exciting development in the field of sales. By combining the power of AI with human ability

and insight, this approach can help improve salesperson performance, drive business results, and create a more supportive and engaging environment for salespeople.

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One of the biggest benefits of AI-powered sales coaching is its ability to provide real-time feedback and coaching.



3.3 VIRTUAL REAL-TIME COACHING

A key part of sales coaching is providing feedback in real customer meetings. In the physical world, this has been a time-consuming and costly exercise, not least because it requires the coach to be present in the meeting.

But as more and more customer meetings take place virtually - via digital video meetings, for example - the number of AI-based solutions that enable virtual coaching has also increased rapidly.

The advantage of these so-called AI coaches, apart from being cost-effective and freeing up a manager's time, is that salespeople can now be offered objective coaching in real time during the meeting itself. Today there are several tools that can analyze and provide feedback on both visual and verbal communication skills. This can include giving feedback on visual elements such as facial expressions, body language, eye movements and hand gestures, but also the ability to express oneself professionally, use the right kind of wording, speak clearly and keep a comfortable pace.

An example of a tool that can be used for this purpose is *Gong*. Not only can it record and transcribe sales calls so that a sales coach can follow up with personalized coaching interventions, it can also give the salesperson real-time feedback - during the meeting itself. This can include giving automatic tips and reminders to the

salesperson when, for example, they talk too much and don't let the customer speak. These real-time insights can help the seller to immediately adjust their behavior and improve their performance.

Other solutions that enable salespeople to coach themselves in real time are *Yoodli*, *Poised* and *Allego*. All of these help the salesperson to improve their communication and presentation skills, including feedback on unnecessary filler words such as "er" and "hmm", tempo, word choice and content. All to help the salesperson become a better storyteller and listener and speak with greater confidence and clarity.

At a more general level, you can analyze which salespeople are performing best - and why. At a systemic level, these analyses can provide answers to questions such as how often the price should be mentioned, when in the conversation it is important to talk a lot and which counter-arguments are effective. The opportunity exists to discover successful - and replicable - keywords, phrases or behaviors that lead to closure.

Examples of AI-based tools for virtual, real-time coaching



GONG

Uses AI to analyze sales calls and provide real-time feedback to salespeople.

[WEBSITE](#)



YOODLI

Provides real-time feedback on the user's communication and presentation skills.

[WEBSITE](#)



POISED

Coaching tool that helps users to communicate with confidence and clarity.

[WEBSITE](#)



ALLEGRO

Records and analyzes sales calls and provides feedback to salespeople to improve their sales techniques.

[WEBSITE](#)



3.4 PERSONAL COACHING

Coaching your employees and providing constructive feedback can be challenging for several reasons. One challenge is that we humans are governed by our emotions. Accepting criticism, even if it is constructive and well-intentioned, can therefore be difficult. People can become defensive or emotionally affected, which can make communication difficult.

Another challenge with giving constructive feedback is that it requires good communication skills. The coach must be able to express their feedback in a clear and direct way, while showing empathy and understanding. It is often about finding the right balance between honesty and kindness, which can be difficult, especially in more sensitive situations.

To provide effective feedback, the coach must also have a deep understanding of the individual's performance, strengths and weaknesses. This requires time, insight, attention and often a certain level of expertise. Without this understanding, the feedback risks being unclear, irrelevant or misleading. Despite these challenges, constructive feedback is a critical component of effective coaching as it can have a significant impact on an individual's performance and development if handled correctly.

The main benefit of AI-driven coaching is that coaches can base their feedback on more facts and objective data, rather than on their own subjective opinions, preferences or experiences.

This can be valuable for both parties as the discussion does not have to be as emotionally charged. In practice, it involves measuring and collecting data on the salesperson's performance and behavior in order for the coach to help the salesperson reach their goals more effectively. This could be data from email conversations, phone calls or video meetings. This data can then be analyzed by AI to provide insights into a salesperson's strengths and weaknesses, as well as recommendations on what support the salesperson needs to achieve their goals.

By using data-driven insights, coaches can better tailor their coaching to each individual team member and provide customized feedback and guidance specific to their unique needs.

To gain objective insights into a salesperson's behavior and performance in video meetings with customers, tools like *Chorus* can be used. By using *Chorus*, a sales manager can listen to call recordings, identify patterns and trends, and give salespeople specific feedback based on their actual call performance. For example, *Chorus* can help identify important buying signals from customers that the salesperson misses.

There are also solutions that can similarly analyze texts in email conversations between salespeople and potential customers. An example of this is *Wingman*. By analyzing customer interaction via email, it identifies potential barriers and suggests next steps. This could be a low level of activity in a deal, the price has not been mentioned yet, or the seller is talking too much about the competition.

There are also tools that analyze sales and pipeline customers in different ways. For example, *Spiro* has a product that analyzes different sales activities and links them to deals that are ready to be closed. Through an AI-based assistant - a "virtual sales coach" - salespeople can then receive prioritized lists of daily tasks. Sales managers can see what tasks are being performed, as well as which customers are at risk of falling through the cracks.

Another tool from *SalesDirector* can detect obstacles as to why a potential deal is not moving forward. Based on analysis of customer communications, it is possible to see which people on the customer side are positive or negative about a deal, so that salespeople can contact the right person at the right time. The tool can then "coach" salespeople with continuous tips and reminders.

Another tool aimed more at sales managers is *Cultivate*, which provides feedback to sales managers, such as how often they communicate and coach their salespeople and how feedback and opinions are given. It can also be about the times at which employees want to meet, for example, which can improve dialogue.

A final example is *Textio*, whose solution can help managers create more effective, inclusive, and constructive feedback. When a manager gives

feedback in written form, *Textio* will suggest how it can be formulated in a way that is more positive for the recipient. Among other things, it suggests alternatives for words or phrases that may be perceived as exclusionary, stereotypical or negative.

With insights like these, sales managers are better equipped to coach their employees. Basing development work and behavioral change on objective data can eliminate much of the guesswork about which methods work. Sales managers thus have an important role to play in providing analysis and insights to boost both individual salespeople and entire teams.



By using data-driven insights, coaches can better tailor their coaching to each individual team member and provide customized feedback and guidance specific to their unique needs.

Examples of AI-based tools for personal coaching



CHORUS

Tools to record, transcribe and analyze sales calls to provide feedback and coaching to salespeople.

WEBSITE



WINGMAN

Analysis of customer communications to provide salespeople with suggestions for next steps.

WEBSITE



SPIRO

Provides customized tips and recommendations to salespeople based on their performance.

WEBSITE



SALESDIRECTO

Provides sellers with information on current customer status and suggests next steps.

WEBSITE



CULTIVATE

A platform that essentially targets sales managers and their performance.

WEBSITE



TEXTIO

Tools for better text-based communication from managers to employees.

WEBSITE

3.5 AI-DRIVEN GAMIFICATION AS SUPPORT IN COACHING

Who doesn't want to be coached and at the same time feel that what they are doing is more enjoyable? With AI-driven Gamification, this is now a reality. Gamification is the use of game and play-based elements to engage, develop and motivate employees in order to improve their performance.

Initially, this approach has involved using different game systems to highlight and reward desirable behaviors. In short - carrot instead of stick. This may involve awarding points for desirable activities carried out by the seller, which gives the participant a higher status in the game. With badges, participants can also obtain proof of their achievements or skills. By visualizing the level the salesperson is at, it also indicates a long-term and sustained performance that gives increased status internally. With leaderboards and various ranking systems, you can also visualize how sellers are doing in relation to others. The board can display performance in real time, thus increasing engagement.

With the development of AI, these gaming systems have taken a further step. It is no longer just about increasing engagement and making work more enjoyable, systems can also be used to provide support, training and coaching to the salesperson.

For example, AI can analyze a salesperson's performance and behaviors to create custom games and challenges that target their specific strengths and areas of improvement. AI can also use data to adjust the games' difficulty and reward structures in real time, ensuring they are always engaging and challenging.

AI-driven gamification also means that systems can coach salespeople through sales simulations. With realistic simulations of different sales situations, based on real data, the salesperson is given a safe environment to practice and improve their skills. The salesperson can receive immediate personalized feedback and coaching from the AI based on their performance in the simulation, helping them to learn and develop faster.

Another example is the use of AI-driven scoring systems and leaderboards. AI can measure and reward salespeople's performance in a fair and objective way, creating healthy competition and motivating salespeople to constantly strive for improvement.

Today, there are several companies offering solutions like these. *Ambition*, *LevelEleven* and *Centrical* all provide AI-based gamification that aims not only to engage employees, but also to coach them.

Ambition takes sales coaching to a new level by collecting and analyzing sales data and presenting it in an engaging way through interactive scoreboards. While making each salesperson's progress visible, sales coaches can use these insights to identify each individual's strengths and weaknesses, allowing for more effective and personalized coaching.

Similarly, *Level/Eleven* leverages AI to provide customized feedback and coaching based on individual performance. However, *Level/Eleven* differentiates itself by creating contests and reward programs based on the most critical aspects of the sales process, which can be used by managers to have better coaching conversations.

Centrical, like *Ambition* and *Level/Eleven*, offers a variety of game-based activities to engage and

motivate salespeople. The main difference is that their solution focuses more on learning and development. The platform can customize games and challenges based on each salesperson's performance and needs, providing a personalized and effective coaching experience.

In summary, these AI-based gamification tools can effectively coach salespeople by engaging them, increasing their motivation and offering customized learning opportunities.

Examples of AI-based tools for AI driven gamification as support in coaching



AMBITION

Analyzes sales data, visualizes performance through interactive scoreboards, and creates a competitive environment to increase motivation and performance.

WEBSITE



LEVELELEVEN

Leverages AI to provide personalized feedback and coaching based on individual performance and focuses on key performance indicators to create motivating competitions and reward programs.

WEBSITE



CENTRICAL

Combines AI-based gamification with microlearning for improved sales performance. Offers a variety of game-based activities to engage and motivate salespeople while they learn new skills and improve their sales techniques.

WEBSITE



Chapter 4:

RISKS AND CHALLENGES OF AI

4.1 RESPONSIBLE USE OF AI

While AI has the ability to assist in many ways, it is important that these systems are developed and used responsibly. There are many issues of bias, fairness, integrity and other social considerations where these tools can have a significant impact. Data is the key to today's artificial intelligence systems, and its quality is crucial. If the data the AI systems are trained on is not representative, the results will be skewed. The systems learn cultural and demographic differences, explicitly or implicitly represented in the data, and repeat them.

One example is Amazon, which launched recruitment software - but quickly had to withdraw it because it tended to favor men. The reason was that the data used by Amazon was based on the applications they themselves received over the last 10 years - where men were heavily overrepresented.

Data can be likened to a time capsule that captures values and phenomena representative of the time when it was created. Thus, there is a risk that AI inadvertently discriminates against marginalized groups. Moreover, data sets in the HR area tend to be smaller compared to other areas, such as retail. Even for a large company, the data that can be collected on recruitment, performance, dismissals and the like is relatively limited.

AI can also be used in other areas. For example, Amazon has an algorithm to automatically dismiss drivers who do not meet their requirements.¹⁷ Unsurprisingly, this function has been heavily criticized, although they themselves believe it serves a purpose. Thus, great care must be taken before deploying AI solutions with far-reaching consequences for candidates and beneficiaries. It is therefore essential to ensure that the data on

which the systems are based is of high quality and impartial.

As AI tools become an increasingly accepted part of the recruitment process, legislators are taking an interest in this development. The UK is discussing 'algorithmic decision-making' and the US already has local regulations requiring employers to inform job applicants if their applications are being analyzed by AI.

At a national level, the issue of more comprehensive legislation is being pursued through the Algorithmic Accountability Act initiative.¹⁸

Another issue is how well AI can assess candidates based on text, voice and video. Of course, this is not an easy task for a human being either, but estimating the personality of candidates based on facial expressions, tone of voice and body language, for example, has been questioned.¹⁹ We should remind ourselves that AI systems - just like humans - are flawed and sometimes do not provide the most desirable answers.

¹⁷ <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/fired-bot-amazon-against-machine-100013296.html?>

¹⁸ <https://amp.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/may/11/artificial-intelligence-job-applications-screen-robot-recruiters>

¹⁹ <https://www.technologyreview.com/2021/07/07/1027916/we-tested-ai-interview-tools/>

Prompt: A business man looking at and interacting with a high-tech screen in the middle of the room.



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There are many issues of bias, fairness, integrity and other social considerations where these tools can have a significant impact. Data is the key to today's artificial intelligence systems, and its quality is crucial.

4.2 HOW TO GET STARTED WITH AI?

For many, getting started with AI can be considered a long uphill battle, especially if there is no experience or expertise within the company. In addition, it can be difficult to navigate the rapid developments and the huge variety of different AI-based tools on the market.

There are, of course, many different ways to get started and implement AI since the needs and goals of different organizations can be so

different. For a company that seriously wants to take advantage of AI and, for example, wants to review all processes in a company, it is important that the initiative comes from the management team or even the board of directors. Especially if it is about changing the business model or if it is a question of how to increase shareholder value.

Take a look at Tesla.

What did Tesla do when they started selling cars?

Well, they made sure that, using sensors, cameras and internet connectivity, they had access to all the driving data generated from their customers. This includes everything from car performance, position, speed, environment, energy consumption and driver behavior. These sensors monitor acceleration, braking, changes in direction and weather conditions, among other things. The cameras provide information on the traffic situation, signs, road markings and possible obstacles.

All this data has given Tesla an edge over many competitors, contributing to an improved customer experience but also providing ideas for new innovative solutions.



In this case, where Tesla has built its main product on AI, it is therefore a question of the company's overall strategy and objectives. Thus, it must be an issue that should be addressed in the management or boardroom.

Another reason why AI is in many cases an issue for the management team is the need to comply with applicable laws, regulations and ethical principles. If employees start using AI without any code of conduct, there can be serious consequences in terms of intentional or unintentional misuse of AI, such as discrimination or invasion of customers' or employees' privacy. It may also involve risk management, which is a key part of management's responsibility. It involves identifying, assessing and managing risks associated with AI technologies, such as cybersecurity, technical failures, unintended consequences and possible financial losses due to incorrect AI decisions.

At the same time, the issue of liability must also be carefully examined. If something goes wrong, who is responsible? The department that requested the AI service, the programmer behind it, or the senior manager? To avoid future conflicts and also to protect employees, it is important to develop a clear division of roles and responsibilities.

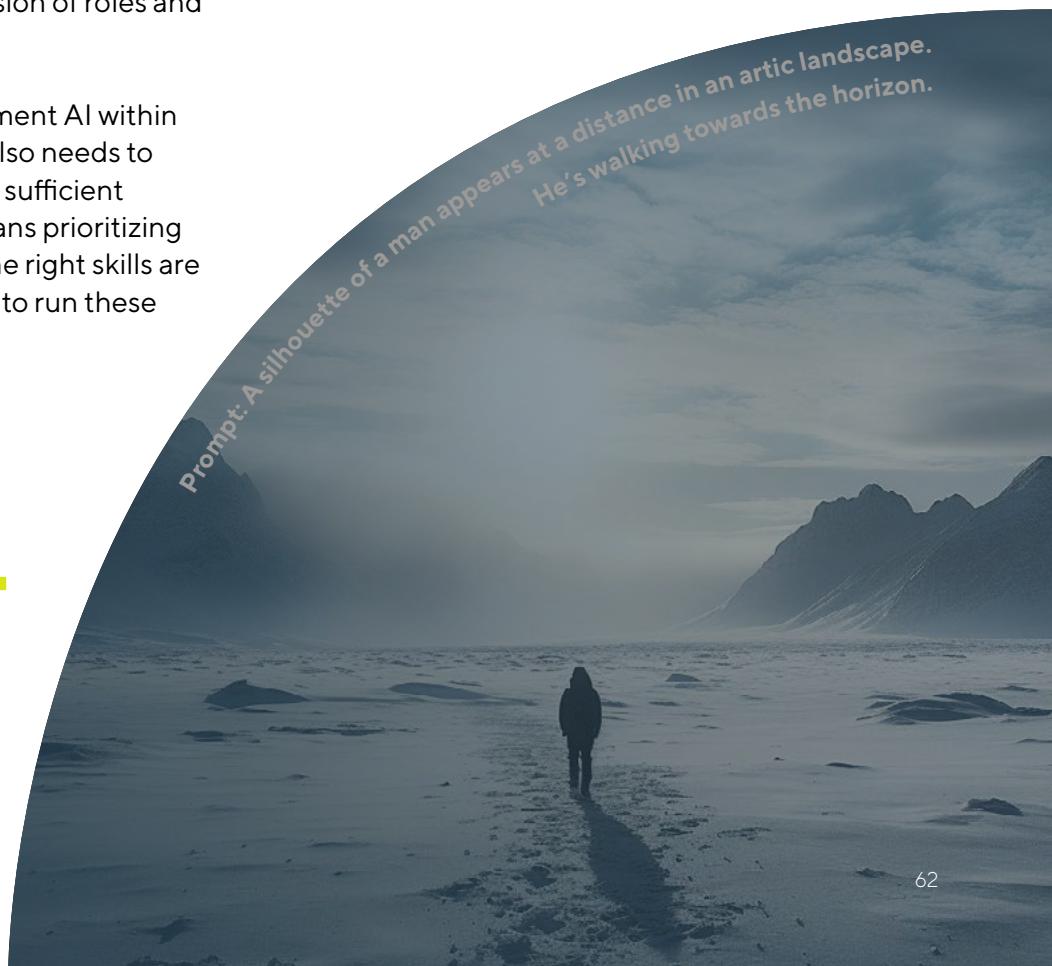
To successfully adopt and implement AI within the organization, management also needs to ensure that the company invests sufficient resources in AI projects. This means prioritizing AI initiatives and ensuring that the right skills are available within the organization to run these projects successfully.

Whether or not AI is an issue for the management team also depends on its scope. Is it about starting

to use one or more AI tools available on the market, or is the idea that the company will develop its own AI solutions?

For a marketer who just wants to get up and running quickly and take advantage of the available solutions, it is important to start by understanding the basics. You don't need to be an expert in programming to benefit from AI tools, but it can be helpful to get a basic understanding of different terms and how AI works.

In a second step, it is about learning critical skills, experimenting and testing. For example, this report can serve as inspiration to identify a number of suitable tools to start experimenting with. Many of them are also free or offer the possibility to test the tool before deciding to order it.



For an HR, sales, or marketing department that wants to take a broader view of the possibilities of AI, the process can be expanded. The process could look like this:

1 **Identify needs**

Start by identifying your organization's needs and objectives. What marketing tasks and processes can AI facilitate or improve? This may involve automating certain tasks, analyzing customer data, optimizing advertising or improving the customer experience. Understanding what your organization wants to achieve makes it easier to choose the right tools.

2 **Explore which tools match the needs**

AI technologies vary in complexity and functionality. Some tools are specialized to solve specific problems, while others are more general and can be adapted to different needs. Make sure you understand how the different tools work and what opportunities they offer. It is important to choose a tool that both fits your needs and has a technology that is scalable and adaptable to future challenges. The solutions should also be relatively easy to integrate with existing IT systems and platforms.

3 **Compare prices and work with your budget**

AI tools can vary widely in price, and it's important to find a solution that fits your organization's budget. Review both initial costs and any ongoing charges. Consider also that the investment in AI can bring a return in terms of efficiency gains and better decision-making.

4 **Evaluate ease of use**

To get the most out of your AI tool, it is important that it is easy to use and that employees feel comfortable using it. Feel free to test different tools and evaluate their user interface before making a decision.

5 **Check support and training**

A good AI tool comes with good support and training resources. Make sure you choose a provider that offers support, updates and training to ensure your team can use the tool effectively and get the most out of the investment.

For those who want to complement this with analysis based on their own internal data, or even develop their own AI-based solutions, the process can be broadened further. In simple terms, this process can be described in seven steps:

1 **Define goals and strategy**

Identify what problems or challenges you want AI to solve, and how AI technology can help achieve your company's overall goals. Develop a clear strategy that describes how the AI initiatives will be integrated into the company's existing processes and operations.

2 **Map existing data**

Examine what data is already available in the company and how it can be used to train AI models. This can be campaign data, financial data, customer data or data from different customer activities, but also external data that can be purchased, for example from social media or different databases.

3 **Prepare the data and select the model**

Preparing data is about ensuring that the data is of high quality and is "washed" from duplicates and misleading data. The data should then be appropriately structured to be used for analysis in the relevant model. It can take advantage of existing solutions or develop a completely new one.

4 **Train the model**

Train the AI model using the prepared data, which can take anything from a few seconds to several weeks depending on the complexity.

5 **Evaluate the model**

Evaluate the model to see if it meets the requirements and provides high performance. Testing several different models is a common practice—the process is iterative.

6 **Implement the system**

Once the training is completed, the developed AI solutions are incorporated into the company's existing systems and processes. This may involve adapting workflows, developing new user interfaces, and ensuring that AI solutions work smoothly with existing technologies and solutions.

7 **Monitor and optimize the system**

After implementation, the system needs to be monitored to ensure that the AI solutions continue to be effective and relevant. If necessary, the model can be adjusted and updated.

In summary, getting started with AI can be perceived as difficult. But there are ways to facilitate the process. For the employee who wants to get started quickly, it's all about experimentation and testing, while for a company that wants to make AI a business strategy, it's about carefully setting goals, strategies and planning to implement AI as effectively as possible in the company.

4.3 THE HR DEPARTMENT OF THE FUTURE

So, what will happen to the HR departments of the future? AI developments will largely change which tasks are performed and which are replaced by smart technologies. Some tasks or possibly entire professions may disappear, while new skills requirements and entirely new roles may emerge. What is certain is that the future workforce will need to adapt their skills to keep up. It is very likely that tasks such as administration, data collection, quality control and reporting will be reduced. At the same time, demand will increase for skills related to relationship building, flexibility, emotional intelligence, creative thinking and complex problem solving.

It may seem overwhelming to start thinking about AI for those who are also struggling with digital transformation. But an organization with high digital maturity has a much easier time embracing the opportunities presented by AI.

The first step is often to automate already established functions to make them more efficient or to reduce costs. In a next step, services can be expanded or improved to create more added value. Finally, the introduction of AI can transform entire

processes where things are done in a completely new way.

Seeing the wide array of AI solutions in HR can easily paint a picture of a technology-heavy and inhuman future. But it is by no means certain. Instead, we can see just the opposite trend. For example, imagine an AI solution that explains the details of a payroll to an employee in an educational way. Although technology is the engine, such a solution takes a more humane approach to the employee. While traditional HR systems are often streamlined processes for managing large numbers of people, whether for recruitment, payroll, onboarding, or training, AI offers the opportunity for greater personalization, flexibility, and creativity. Instead of treating people as assets to be hired, technology can allow us to consider them as unique individuals to be given personalized attention. Just as Amazon, Netflix and Facebook create personalized suggestions and services, AI can bring a personalized and unique HR experience to candidates and employees. AI can thus provide a great opportunity to redefine HR and make it more relevant.²⁰

²⁰ <https://medium.com/willbe-group/can-ai-put-the-human-back-into-human-resources-f42756a1bfca>

AI in HR is clearly on the verge of a breakthrough. But as with any major change, staff need to be on board.

Studies show that many employees are positive about AI, but there are still strong concerns about AI, mainly about the risk of losing one's job.²¹

Early involvement and training of employees can be an important part of the transition to reduce anxiety and increase engagement. Because it is probably a fact that many of us will have an AI service for a colleague in the future.

You will meet colleagues who believe that AI will be more impactful in the future, not right now. This is certainly correct, but the future is not determined by what you do in the future, but by what you do today. The old way of doing things is not necessarily the right way of doing things.

AI is not only creating a change in HR through a range of new tools. It also presents a whole new challenge for HR departments: to build a picture of the professions of the future and the skills that will be needed. While our jobs will not be fully automated, for many they will look radically different from today. And it is HR's responsibility to explore this fascinating future.

It is important to keep in mind that some AI startups in HR have only a limited understanding of the HR function. Some tools that can solve narrow tasks may be difficult to integrate with other HR and IT systems in the company. There is also a certain amount of "AI-washing" where AI is mainly used for marketing purposes. The AI component of these platforms may then be marginal at best. So, there is every reason to increase your own expertise in AI to better assess different solutions and their performance.



²¹ Nicholas McQuire, "Get ready for AI to help make your business more productive", Google (December 5, 2017), blog.google/products/g-suite/get-ready-ai-help-make-your-business-more-productive (visited April 4, 2023)



Chapter 5:

KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMS IN AI

Prompt: A futuristic train station with a cutting-edge ceiling.

In Artificial Intelligence, there are many concepts and terms that can be difficult to understand but also relevant to know. Here we list some of the most common terms and concepts in the field of artificial intelligence (AI).

- 1 (AI) Artificial intelligence: the technology that allows computers to perform tasks that traditionally require human intelligence. AI technology is used in today's society in many ways, such as voice recognition, image recognition, self-driving cars, chatbots and much more.
- 2 Machine learning: A technology that allows computers to learn and improve performance on a task by analyzing data. One example of the use of machine learning is Netflix, which uses an algorithm to recommend movies and TV shows based on the user's previous viewing history.
- 3 Deep learning: A subset of machine learning that uses multi-layered artificial neural networks to train computers to perform complex tasks such as voice and image recognition. One example is self-driving cars that use deep learning to identify obstacles and traffic signs on the road.
- 4 Generative artificial intelligence: Generative AI is a rapidly growing subcategory of AI that involves using advanced algorithms and machine learning techniques to create images, video, music, speech, text, software code and product design. In recent years, the development of generative AI has advanced significantly, and it is now used in different industries for different purposes.
- 5 Neural networks: A structure that simulates the function of the brain and consists of several layers of nodes that process information. Most of today's advanced AI systems, especially deep learning, benefit from neural networks.
- 6 NLP (Natural Language Processing): NLP is a branch of AI that focuses on getting computers to understand and process human language. NLP is used by virtual assistants such as ChatGPT, Amazon Alexa and Apple Siri to understand and respond to questions asked in natural language.
- 7 Computer vision: A branch of AI that focuses on making computers capable of "seeing" and analyzing images and video. An example of the use of computer vision is in surveillance systems that can detect and identify criminals or suspicious behavior. Using high-resolution cameras and advanced image recognition, the system can identify behaviors such as robbery, vandalism or illegal parking and alert the police or security personnel.
- 8 Robotics: The use of robots to automate processes and perform tasks. For example, robotics is used in industrial automation to automate production processes and to help people with disabilities perform daily tasks.
- 9 Chatbot: A program that uses natural language to interact with people and answer questions. Chatbots are used by many companies to provide customers with quick answers to questions about products and services.

Prompt: A futuristic train station with a cutting-edge ceiling.

- 10 Data mining: A process that uses technology to find patterns and information in large amounts of data. Data mining technology is used in e-commerce to analyze customer behavior and make product recommendations.
- 11 Algorithm: A sequence of instructions that a computer can use to perform a specific task or solve a problem. An AI algorithm is usually designed to learn from data, for example to identify patterns in large data sets or make decisions based on a number of factors. Algorithms in AI can be based on a variety of techniques, including machine learning, deep learning and regression analysis.
- 12 Artificial General Intelligence (AGI): AGI is a hypothetical form of artificial intelligence that would be capable of solving problems and performing most tasks that a human intelligence can. AGI would have the ability to learn and understand a variety of tasks and situations, adapt to new situations, reason and solve problems, communicate naturally, and take initiative and make decisions independently. AGI is considered one of the most ambitious and challenging goals in AI research, and researchers have yet to develop a fully functional AGI. Leading AI researcher Dr. Alan D. Thompson says that with current solutions we are halfway there.
- 13 Singularity: The singularity is usually described as a hypothetical point where technology becomes so advanced and self-improving that it exceeds human ability to understand, control or predict its effects.

These are just a few examples of common concepts in AI. There are, of course, many more terms and concepts in this field that may be relevant depending on what you are interested in.

The background of the slide is a high-angle, black and white photograph of a city's financial district, showing a dense cluster of skyscrapers and modern buildings. A large, solid green triangle is positioned in the bottom-left corner of the slide.

Chapter 6:

OVERVIEW - AI-BASED TOOLS FOR PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Prompt: A daylight aerial view of a modern city with skyscrapers.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

As you have probably noticed by now, there is a wide range of different AI-based solutions and tools that can be used for recruiting, training and coaching salespeople. Of course, trying to get to grips with all these tools can be overwhelming. Our advice is therefore to start by identifying what problems or challenges you want AI to solve for you and how these solutions can contribute to your company's overall goals and strategies. You can then consider appropriate AI-based tools.

The tools presented in this report are examples that will hopefully serve as inspiration and guidance. However, it is up to you to decide what is suitable for your business.

We want to highlight again how fast developments in AI are happening right now. This means that many of the tools we provide examples of may have changed, disappeared or integrated with other tools since the publication of this report. Moreover, many tools have a much broader functionality than what we describe. But for simplicity, we have tried to categorize them according to some main areas of application.

6.2 AI-BASED TOOLS FOR RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Analysis of corporate culture

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Culture15	Tools that measure the organization's culture and values, and assess the qualities that characterize the organization	www.culture15.com
Humu	Analyzes company valuations and current state of affairs	www.humu.com

Create job descriptions and job advertisements

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Rytr	Creates job descriptions based on language, tone, and key words and phrases.	www.rytr.me/use-cases/job-description
Jobg8	Tools for creating workplace descriptions.	www.jobg8.com
Textio	Improving texts.	www.textio.com
Jobdescription.ai	AI-powered service for creating job ads.	www.jobdescription.ai
Paraphrase tool	Web-based tool for paraphrasing text.	www.paraphrasetool.com

Advertising and searching for candidates

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Browse.ai	Enables the extraction of job ads from LinkedIn.	www/browse.ai
Arya	Helps HR teams search for candidates online based on job descriptions.	www.goarya.com
Entelo	A tool to identify and reach out to passive candidates.	www.entelo.com
EngageTalent	Helps HR teams identify potential candidates who are open to new opportunities.	www.engagetalent.com
IBM	Helps recruiters find and reach candidates.	www.ibm.com/talent-management/candidate
Eightfold AI	Recruitment platform to identify and engage the right candidates.	www.eightfold.ai
TalentBin	Identifies potential candidates by analyzing data from social media and other sources.	www.talentbin.com
Ideal	Uses predictive analytics to identify the best candidates for a position.	www.ideal.com
Beamery	Helps HR teams manage and nurture candidate relationships.	www.beamery.com
AllyO	A platform for recruitment automation.	www.allyo.com

Evaluation of applications

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Ideal (Ceridian)	Evaluation of CVs and cover letters.	www.ideal.com
XOPA	Analysis of CVs to assess match relevance, as well as future performance and loyalty.	www.xOpa.com
Affinda	Extracting and summarizing the CV.	www.affinda.com
Pymetrics	Tools to identify suitable candidates without being influenced by bias.	www.pymetrics.ai
GapJumpers	Uses AI to conduct "blind auditions" to eliminate bias in the recruitment process.	www.gapjumpers.me

Interviews by phone, video or chat

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Talent	Can assess desired skills and knowledge related to specific roles, for example in sales.	www.talent.ai
Mya	Chatbot that can conduct a first simple interview and can answer questions.	www.myah.com
Sapia	Chatbot for interviews that can also provide feedback and coaching tips.	www.sapia.ai
HireVue	Video interview platform with personality analysis to assess suitability.	www.hirevue.com
VanillaHR	Video interviews with personality analysis.	www.vanillahr.com
Voicesense	A service based on speech analysis that can track personality traits.	www.voicesense.com

Personal interviews

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Clara	Automates email correspondence for easier booking of meetings.	www.claralabs.com
Google Translate	Provides translation between a wide range of languages.	www.translate.google.com
Microsoft Teams	Offers real-time text-based translation between different languages.	www.microsoft.com/sv-se/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software
Tengai	AI-based evaluation of candidates' answers.	www.tengai-unbiased.com
Honeit	Transcribing and summarizing interview conversations.	www.honeit.com

Reference tagging

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
VeriKlick	AI-based solution that offers features to automate the background check of candidates.	www.veriklick.com
Glider	AI tools that validate candidates during the hiring process.	www.glider.ai
Harvesters	Automated reference taking solution for checking the legitimacy of each reference.	www.harver.com

Tests and job simulations

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
VeriKlick	AI-based solution that offers features to automate the background check of candidates.	www.veriklick.com
Glider	AI tools that validate candidates during the hiring process.	www.glider.ai
Harver	Automated reference taking solution for checking the legitimacy of each reference.	www.harver.com
Quantified	Job simulation to assess personality traits and characteristics.	www.quantified.ai
Vervoe	Job simulation tools for different roles.	www.vervoe.com

Offer and employment

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
TalentAdore	Creates personalized candidate communication in the form of auto-generated personalized status updates.	www.talentadore.com/sv
Paradox	Platform that provides answers to candidates' questions during the recruitment process.	www.paradox.ai
Entelo	Optimized communication to ensure that candidates are not passive.	www.entelo.com
Ironclad	Automatic generation of contracts with signature option.	www.ironcladapp.com
Legal.io	Automatic generation of contracts with signature option.	www.legal.io
Talla	Chatbot function that handles candidates' questions.	www.talla.com
Legal Robot	Legal AI assistant for automated document review.	www.legalrobot.com
PayScale	Platform for salary analysis and benchmarking.	www.payscale.com
Glassdoor	Ability to compare salary levels based on different industries.	www.glassdoor.com
LinkedIn	Ability to compare salary levels based on different industries.	www.se.linkedin.com
Salary.com	AI-based benchmarking of salaries and benefits.	www.salary.com

Onboarding and follow-up

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Levity	AI solution that ensures correct handling of different documents.	www.levity.ai
Leena	AI-based onboarding process with multiple components such as verification, matching with employees, chatbot, etc.	www.leena.ai
Kallidus	Automated onboarding to reduce manual administration.	www.kallidus.com
Sana Labs	Adapting the induction and training of new staff.	www.sanalabs.com

Administration

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Talla	AI-powered chatbot and automation platform for customer support, HR and IT help.	www.talla.com
WorkFusion	Platform that focuses on automating repetitive tasks.	www.workfusion.com
DeepL	AI-powered translation service offering high-quality translations of texts.	www.deepl.com

AI for candidates

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
ChatGPT	Career advice, interview coaching and more.	www.chat.openai.com
Yoodli	Coaching for job interviews with feedback.	www.app.yoodli.ai
Kick Resume	Preparation of designed CV and cover letter.	www.kickresume.com

Retaining employees

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
IBM Watson Talent Insights	Identifying which employees are most likely to resign.	www.ibm.com
Limeade	Analysis of text-based surveys to identify dissatisfaction or low engagement.	www.limeade.com
Visier	Assessment of the risk of employees leaving based on historical data.	www.visier.com
Phenom	Matches employees to the tasks they are best suited to perform.	www.phenom.com/gigs
Plum	Career planning tools to ensure the best use of skills.	www.plum.io/grow-your-people

6.3 AI-BASED TOOLS FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Identifying skills gaps

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Workday	AI-based analysis of employees' skills.	www.workday.com
LinkedIn	The Skills Insight platform analyzes the skills of employees.	www.linkedin.com
Cornerstone	AI detection of employees' skills.	www.cornerstoneondemand.com

Develop individualized training plans

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Docebo	Individualization of training tracks.	www.docebo.com
Softengi	AI-based solution to propose training courses and monitor progress.	www.softengi.com
Skillsoft	Personalized training plans.	www.skillsoft.com
Infor	Personalized training that takes into account learning styles.	www.infor.com
TalentCards	Adapted micro-courses.	www.talentcards.com
Saffron Interactive	Uses AI algorithms to analyze learning needs and develop tailored learning programs.	www.saffroninteractive.com
Gnowbe	AI tools for content creation and planning to design learning programs tailored to individual needs.	www.gnowbe.com
Riiid Labs	Tailored planning of educational content based on learners' knowledge and history.	www.riiid.com

Produce and implement training activities

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Second Nature	Platform offering interactive sales training simulations with virtual characters.	www.secondnature.ai
MindTickle	AI-based role-playing simulations.	www.mindtickle.com
ELB Learning	The Rehearsel tool trains salespeople with AI-based role plays. They also offer VR-based opportunities with CenarioVR.	www.elblearning.com/create-learning/rehearsal
Ivy	Provides chatbots that can answer recurring questions from participants.	www.ivy.ai
Synthesia	AI platform to quickly generate training videos based on textual material.	www.synthesia.io
Lumen5	Tools to quickly create PowerPoint slides and video content for training.	www.lumen5.com
Quillonz	Tool to automatically create quiz questions based on the training material.	www.quillionz.com
Quizlet	Tools for creating quiz questions and knowledge games.	www.quizlet.com
Cognii	Offers a virtual learning platform that provides participants with personalized feedback and guidance on training activities.	www.cognii.com/solutions#corporate
ChatGPT	Finds relevant information, answers questions and summarizes texts.	www.chat.openai.com
Bearly	Compiles and summarizes reports and news articles.	www.bearly.ai
Grammarly	Writing support that can improve and adapt texts.	www.grammarly.com

6.4 AI-BASED TOOLS FOR COACHING SALESPeOPLE

Coaching in virtual meetings

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Gong	Uses AI to analyze sales calls and provide real-time feedback to salespeople.	www.gong.io
Yoodli	Provides real-time feedback on the user's communication and presentation skills.	www.app.yoodli.ai
Poised	Coaching tool that helps users to communicate with confidence and clarity.	www.poised.com
Allego	Records and analyzes sales calls and provides feedback to salespeople to improve their sales techniques.	www.allego.com

Personal coaching

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Chorus	Tools to record, transcribe and analyze sales calls to provide feedback and coaching to salespeople.	www.chorus.ai
Wingman	Analysis of customer communications to provide salespeople with suggestions for next steps.	www.trywingman.com
Spiro	Provides customized tips and recommendations to salespeople based on their performance.	www.spiro.ai
SalesDirector	Provides sellers with information on current customer status and suggests next steps.	www.salesdirector.ai
Cultivate	A platform that essentially targets sales managers and their performance.	www.cultivate.com
Textio	Tools for better text-based communication from managers to employees.	www.textio.com/products/perform-ance-management

AI-driven gamification in coaching

NAME	DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Ambition	Analyzes sales data, visualizes performance through interactive scoreboards, and creates a competitive environment to increase motivation and performance.	www.ambition.com
LevelEleven	Leverages AI to provide personalized feedback and coaching based on individual performance and focuses on key performance indicators to create motivating competitions and reward programs.	www.leveleleven.com
Centrical	Combines AI-based gamification with microlearning for improved sales performance. Offers a variety of game-based activities to engage and motivate salespeople while they learn new skills and improve their sales techniques.	www.centrical.com

About **Mercuri International**

Mercuri International are the sales training experts, empowering companies in over 50 countries. Our training is built around an organisation's specific needs, while our experts on the ground ensure that real-world skills are effectively implemented. We give your people the support and coaching they need to thrive – and ensure your company enjoys sustainable growth.

At Mercuri International Research, we conduct independent research to gain more facts and knowledge about profitable sales growth.

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