

Artificial Intelligence and Small Businesses

Marketing experts Ming-Hui Huang and Roland Rust wrote an influential article titled “Artificial Intelligence in Service” in which they theorized that there are four types of intelligences needed to perform service tasks: mechanical, analytical, intuitive, and empathetic.

A key point associated with the theory was that to perform some more advanced service tasks, artificial intelligence applications need to be able to move beyond just being mechanical and analytical to develop capacities that require intuition and empathy.

As most of us who have dealt with chatbots for a customer service issue know, human intuition and empathy are more difficult to emulate via AI, leading this theory to make a great deal of sense.

So, in the meantime how can small businesses benefit from AI?

The biggest advantages of AI use reported by small business owners who use it include using technology to save time that can be devoted to other tasks, cutting down on manual mistakes, and growing faster.

Data Recording – Keep track of customer purchasing habits which can help inform inventory and marketing decisions.

Streamlining – AI helps many fill orders efficiently, streamline bookkeeping, interact with customers, and manage staff, among other functions. Therefore, freeing up time for business owners to do future planning, develop new strategies, or simply enjoy some well-deserved free time.

Automation – AI can also help attract new customers and convert leads to sales. Russ Morton, Chief Product Officer of Constant Contact shares “Most small businesses are only marketers by necessity, and they are so busy running the show that it can feel overwhelming to find the time to create and manage marketing campaigns. That’s where AI and automation come in. Social media, content, and email campaign creation are the most common areas we typically see SMBs using these technologies. Automations allow them to put some of the most common marketing tasks on autopilot – like welcome emails, reminder texts, social media posts, and campaign sends, and becomes even more powerful when it’s paired with AI.”

Although AI tools serve well as a way to be more productive and get certain jobs done swiftly, they cannot completely remove humans from the equation.

In conclusion, artificial intelligence is transforming businesses and the way they operate on a day-to-day basis. All industries are looking for ways to save time and make the most of their job. As technology continues to evolve, it will be necessary for businesses to carefully consider the potential risks and challenges associated with AI adaptation, and also to explore ways to maximize its potential to grow and succeed in your niche.

With that in mind...

- Is AI a threat to our values and privacy, or a pathway to personal and societal growth?
- Does AI pose a risk to jobs, or can it be a tool for workforce improvement and evolution?
- Can AI be a source of ethical dilemmas or a means to make more ethical decisions? How do we ensure AI remains a valuable aid rather than a threat to our moral compass?

“If we do it right, we might be able to evolve a form of work that taps into our uniquely human capabilities and restores our humanity. The ultimate paradox is that this technology may become a powerful catalyst that we need to reclaim our humanity.”

[John Hagel](#)

Excerpts taken from [Forbes](#) by Justin Grome and [Forbes](#) by Charles Taylor

