Why I Spend So Much Time on AI

I'm sure most of us are following the constant stream of news on AI—more powerful models, novel use cases, the advent of "agentic AI." Many indicators tell us that we have entered the steeper slope of the S-curve of this exponentially advancing technology.

I feel it in my own time allocation as CEO: I spend more time on AI than any other topic as we help clients in all industries transform themselves with AI. Achieving return on investment hinges on broad adoption, which some refer to as "scaling."

Overcoming Psychological Barriers

In a recent article, "When Companies Struggle to Adopt AI, CEOs Must Step Up," one key message has stayed with me: AI adoption is more about overcoming psychological barriers than technological ones. People fall into comfort zones at work, and AI can be uncomfortable. People have a well-earned sense of competence, pride, and job security—and AI can upset those sensibilities.

One of the CEO's jobs is to help your people and your clients realize that AI allows them to become better versions of themselves, not just more productive versions.

What can CEOs do to encourage adoption?

Deploy the technology. Though it may seem obvious, this is a step many companies have not yet fully embraced. Deploying secure enterprise AI platforms sends a clear signal to employees

that regular use is encouraged and expected.

Upskill managers. Some of our greatest allies—and biggest adversaries if they are not on board—in promoting AI adoption are middle and frontline managers. They have to create a supportive environment—the processes, skills, incentives, culture—to encourage and drive use of the technology by their teams.

To address low AI adoption, a global Fortune 500 company partnered with BCG U, our capability building platform, to upskill thousands of middle managers. The training focused both on the fundamentals of GenAI and its application in day-to-day workflows. As a result, the company saw an 89% increase in usage, significantly improving its ROI.

Invite your people to innovate. Companies should also adopt a grassroots approach to encourage adoption. Employees need time to play with AI. CEOs should promote collaboration, experimentation, and sharing of best practices.

Adoption in Action

I have a front row seat to AI at BCG. Early on we decided to provide all 33,000 employees with access to custom GenAI tools, for example, in knowledge management and slide creation, as well as enterprise ChatGPT.

Habitual users—those that leverage advanced GenAI features almost every day—represent nearly half of BCGers and up to 80% of some cohorts. We track this carefully as habitual users stick with the technology, generating outsize improvements in quality, productivity, and job satisfaction. They also have a halo effect on the teams around them in encouraging GenAI usage.

We deeply embed GenAI into our ways of working. We have an enablement network of 1,000 GenAI black belts, employees who act as AI evangelists and coaches, and sponsor regular high-profile training events and competitions. GenAI is increasingly connected to our core processes.

Our results have been encouraging. More than three-quarters of our
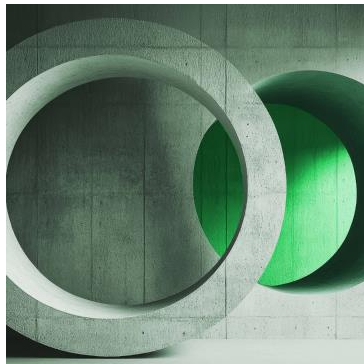
employees say they are generating greater value in their work because of GenAI.

Until next time,

Christoph Schweizer

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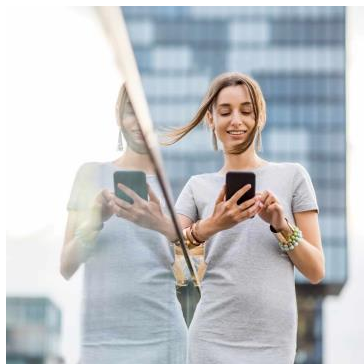Chief Executive Officer

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Further Insights

When Companies Struggle to Adopt AI, CEOs Must Step Up

AI only delivers impact when employees embrace it. And that only happens when the CEO leads the charge.

LEAD THE AI SHIFT NOW

AI Agents Can Be the New All-Stars on Your Team

These powerful new tools are distinguished by their ability to act—to observe, understand, plan, and do.

BRING AI INTO THE GAME

New GenAI Tools Offer an Edge. Why Aren't More Professional Services Firms Using Them?

BCG's 2025 survey reveals the compelling advantages of specialized GenAI and what professional services firms and information services providers should do to boost adoption.

DRIVE RESULTS WITH GENAI