

5 questions to ask before putting AI into practice and a checklist for success

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Despite the power of Artificial Intelligence to transform the customer experience, many AI projects fail at the first hurdle. Henry Jinman at EBI.AI outlines the 5 most common mistakes and how to avoid them using a tried and tested checklist

While it promises a new dawn of efficiency, performing tasks better, faster, with fewer people, at lower cost and on a far larger scale, Artificial Intelligence (AI) holds the key to transforming the customer experience (CX). Chatbots are already a common phenomenon in contact centres while millions of people interact daily with virtual assistants such as Google Home and Alexa.

For those organisations who haven't yet invested in AI, many are experiencing a fear of missing out(fomo). As a result, plenty of businesses are rushing in and too many AI projects are failing. So, what's going wrong?

5 reasons why Customer Experience AI projects fail

AI technologies are transformational but they can be complex to scope out, build, deploy, and operate. Here are the 5 most common mistakes organisations make:

1. Unrealistic expectations – it's common for users to have inflated expectations of new and emerging technologies. This could be because of marketing over-hype, lack of familiarity with the technology, or the plain old hope that they have found a solution to some of their problems.
2. Addressing the wrong challenges – 'Trying to boil the ocean' is a favourite term at EBI.AI to describe companies who try to fix everything with one project or, at the other end of the scale, spend 18 months writing an AI strategy paper that delivers nothing!
3. Lack of training data – many say the more data you have the better. Yes, you do need data, lots of it, but it must be relevant.
4. Lack of stakeholder engagement – the people who will make or break the project are those responsible for deploying the technology and the leaders of that department. Remember to involve the budget holders from the very beginning.
5. Misunderstand the technology – Many AI projects fail for the simple reason that they are not really AI projects. AI technologies for customer contact need to be three things: digital, intelligent and automated.

5 questions to ask and a checklist for success

Don't rush in. Here are the top five questions to ask before you begin:

1. Where do I start? – most organisations will want to achieve and demonstrate some quick wins but where do they begin? Should they be ambitious and try everything at once or run a mini-pilot to test the

waters and find out what works and what doesn't before going live?

2. How do I measure success? – whether you are starting out big or small, the budget holders will want to monitor your progress and see they are getting a return on their investment. Which goals should organisations focus on? Should they look to the competition, what customers want or what the business wants? It could be a combination of all three.

3. How do I overcome the fear of uncharted territory? - the clue is in the word 'different'. If you are normally conservative and play safe, could you change this approach to become bold and experiment even if you fail? It's a great way to learn and there are even greater ways to share that learning before the all-important go-live.

4. How do I test in a real-world environment? - and crucially, while maintaining business as usual. How many users and customers should try out the new AI technology? What should be the criteria for selecting them? How do organisations ensure the new solution can integrate with the production environment, provide the required functionality, and deliver a return on investment?

5. How do I ensure a successful roll-out? There are various options to consider including the two most popular methods, known as 'Incremental Improvement' and 'Applying the Learning'. What are the benefits of each and which one is best for my organisation?

Fast-track your way to a new generation of customer interactions by asking the right questions. Then, find out the answers and discover real-world examples of good and bad AI practice by downloading our latest white paper.

Henry Jinman is Commercial Director of EBI.AI (<http://www.ebi.ai>)

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About EBI.AI

Established by EBI in 2014, Warwick-headquartered EBI.AI is among the most advanced UK labs to explore the mind-boggling potential of Artificial Intelligence for customer communication. It is changing the ways businesses interact with their customers by providing faster and better resolutions to customer queries using conversational AI technology.

The company has applied its collective 18 years' experience of working with big data, analytics and systems integration to create a range of innovative and natural tools for all businesses in multiple sectors including Transport & Travel, Property, Insurance, Public and Automotive.

EBI was one of the first IBM Watson Ecosystems Partners and EBI.AI's core platform was originally based on IBM Watson. This has evolved over 5 years and EBI.AI now selects the best AI and cloud services available from IBM, Amazon, Microsoft and others, combined with bespoke AI models to deliver its EBI.AI communication platform.

For more information, please visit EBI.AI (<http://www.ebi.ai>)

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