Optimizing back-office operations with AI:

A NEW ERA FOR INDUSTRIALS AND MANUFACTURING

By Brad Anderson and David Taylor

The integration of AI, particularly within back-office enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, is not just a tech upgrade; it's a strategic move that's transforming operational efficiency and planning for the better. The impact of this evolution is especially noteworthy for the industrial and manufacturing sector.

With its ability to minimize human error and forecast business demand, AI is reengineering business processes for maximum efficiency and supercharging automation of back-office operations.

Powered by AI, forward-thinking industrial and manufacturing organizations are future-proofing their operations, ensuring they stay ahead of the curve — and their competition.

AI thrives on business data, which presents ample opportunity for data-rich manufacturing firms to quickly adopt use cases and develop strategic utilization of AI within their systems — including the ERP, CRM, and other core technologies.

Use cases for AI integration in industrials and manufacturing

As you consider integrating this AI technology into your daily operations, consider the following potential use cases.

Forecasting and advanced analytics: The integration of AI in ERP systems is capable of processing vast amounts of data at a rapid pace, paving the way for precise demand prediction. This increased foresight minimizes potential disruptions of service and reduces waste, leading to considerable cost savings. The melding of these advanced capabilities liberates employees from the time-consuming and manual data extraction and analysis, enabling them to devote their expertise to tasks of higher strategic significance and, ultimately, business value.

Customer service: The transformative role of AI in customer service is realized through its ability to provide highly personalized customer interactions and reduce the time required to understand a customer's problem and identify a relevant solution — in some cases, before issues surface. This proactivity and quick resolution of routine issues using tools like AI-powered chatbots enhances customer satisfaction and fosters loyalty.

More innovative users of AI are using the tool to identify and mitigate potential failure points. By using AI to analyze and extract meaning from the natural language inherent in traditional customer service ticketing methods, companies can more easily pinpoint and solve for the root cause of key issues.

Human capital management (HCM): Technological revolutions are almost always accompanied by apprehension regarding the impact on the worker. This proves true as AI redefines the landscape of human capital management by optimizing recruitment, onboarding, and talent management. AI's predictive algorithms can identify potential candidates, predict their success in specific roles, and aid in their onboarding process.

AI's capacity to analyze employee performance data can predict future trends and provide prescriptive measures for their professional development. This ensures not only the growth of the organization but also the satisfaction and retention of its employees.

Finance and accounting: Waiting for month-end close will soon be relegated to a bygone era as reliable insight into business performance moves from historical to predictive insights. AI algorithms analyze financial data at unmatched speeds and accuracy enabling (nearly) real-time identification of potential risks and forecasting of revenue trends to inform budgeting decisions.

Automation of routine tasks reduces the chance of human error and enhances the overall efficiency of financial management. As the market shifts and changes, these capabilities foster financial stability and ensure the organization's overall economic health.

The role of AI in the industrial and manufacturing sector extends beyond trends and buzzwords. It can be viewed as a strategic advantage, helping businesses stay ahead of the competition. Now is the time for leaders to understand the potential of AI, identify meaningful use cases, and take action toward strategic integration of this solution in everyday operations. While AI paves the way for efficiency, innovation, and forward thinking, its utilization will be underpinned by strategy and defined processes to be successful.

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