mindmatrix
One Platform: Enabling Sales Ecosystems

ACHIEVEUNITE
The Partnering Success Company

AI IN THE CHANNEL

INTRODUCTION TO AI, ML, & GEN AI

mindmatrix.net | achieveunite.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive summary

Welcome to a journey where cutting-edge technology intersects with the complex world of partner management. As the landscape evolves, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and Generative AI (Gen AI) are poised to transform how we manage and optimize partner ecosystems.

With billions of data points collected daily in both structured and unstructured forms within the channel (Figure 0), these technologies offer the potential to consolidate data and empower ecosystem participants with actionable insights for better decision-making. AI, ML, and Gen AI bring opportunities to enhance partner relationships, streamline operations, and drive growth—from automating onboarding to personalizing partner engagement.

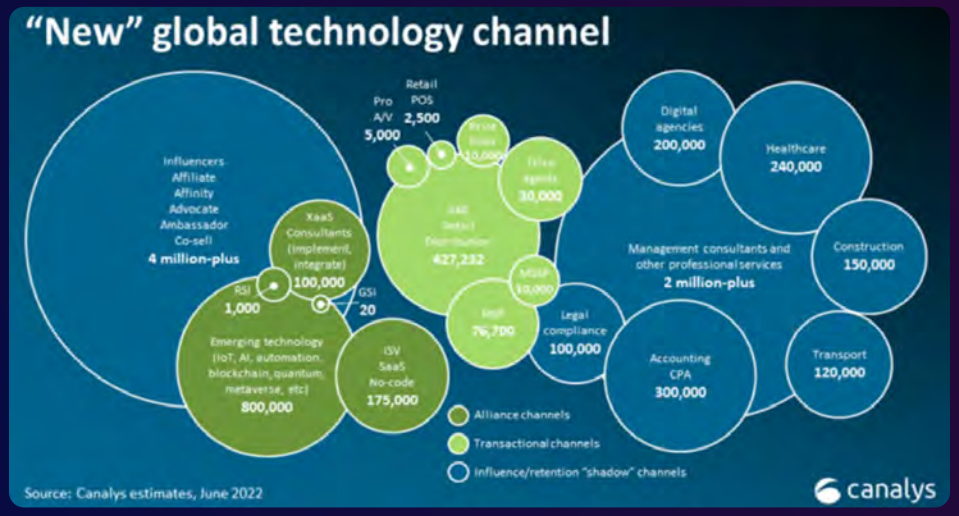


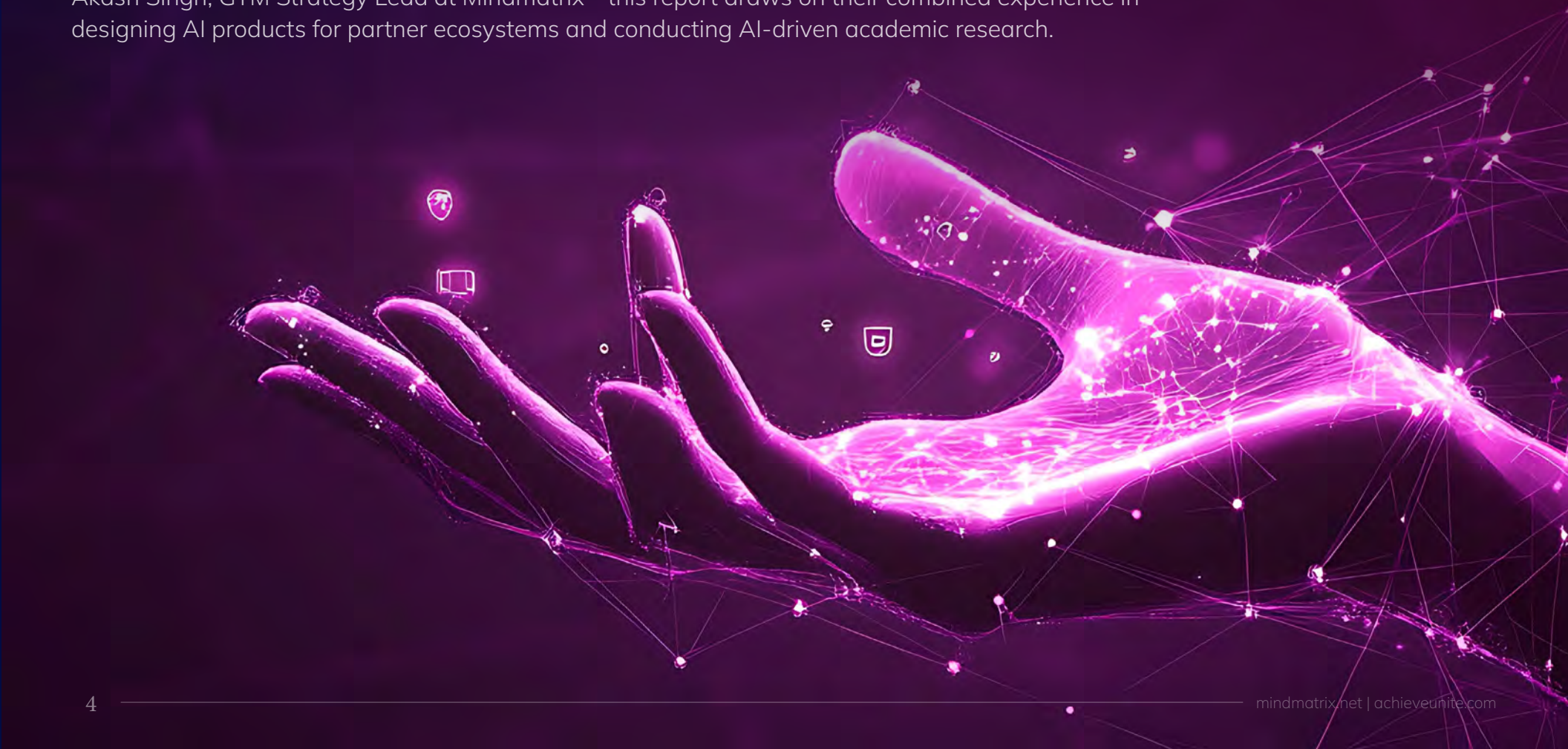
Figure 0: Global Technology Channel Ecosystem (Source: Canalys)

Generating over billions of data points per day

This report explores both the strategic and tactical aspects of leveraging AI, ML, and Gen AI to build dynamic partner ecosystems. By integrating industry data on AI/ML, survey insights from channels and partnerships, and expert knowledge, this report offers a comprehensive guide to understanding and implementing AI/ML technologies to drive business outcomes.

The first two chapters provide an in-depth overview of AI and ML within partner ecosystems, followed by key use cases for channels, partnerships, and alliances. The next chapters cover the tactical side, focusing on measuring the impact and ROI of AI/ML investments, and offering foundational insights on developing and executing AI/ML strategies. The final chapters highlight relevant tools and platforms for partnerships and provide a glimpse into future trends and emerging technologies.

Authored by two subject matter experts—Jessica Baker, Chief Program Officer at AchieveUnite, and Akash Singh, GTM Strategy Lead at Mindmatrix—this report draws on their combined experience in designing AI products for partner ecosystems and conducting AI-driven academic research.



CHAPTER

01

UNDERSTANDING AI, ML, AND GEN AI

Definitions and basic concepts of AI, ML, and Gen AI

Overview of AI, ML, and Gen AI across different sectors

Benefits of using AI, ML, and Gen AI

Definition & basic concepts of AI, ML, and Gen AI

AI refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines, enabling them to perform tasks such as decision-making, speech recognition, and visual perception. It encompasses a broad range of technologies, including natural language processing (NLP), machine learning (ML), computer vision, robotic process automation (RPA), and generative AI, forming a diverse ecosystem (Figure 1).

At the core of AI is machine learning (ML), which allows systems to learn from data and improve performance without explicit programming. ML algorithms identify patterns in data to make predictions, laying the foundation for advanced AI models that solve complex problems.

Gen AI, a key part of this ecosystem, extends AI's capabilities by creating new content, from text and images to music and virtual environments, akin to a digital artist and writer in one.

Figure 1

Overview of AI, ML, and Gen AI across different sectors

Various sectors such as technology and healthcare have always been at the forefront of adopting innovative solutions, and AI, ML, and Gen AI are no exceptions. These technologies are revolutionizing various aspects of the tech industry, which primarily include:

In economic terms, the AI ecosystem is expected to unlock **$17-$24 trillion** of economic value in the global economy[1].

Of all the economic value, ML and deep learning alone are expected to unlock **$11-17 trillion**[1].

65% of companies who are planning to adopt machine learning say the technology helps businesses in decision-making[2].

74% of respondents consider ML and AI to be a game changer, indicating it had the potential to transform their jobs and industry[2].

About **75 percent** of the value that generative AI use cases could deliver falls across four areas: Customer operations, marketing and sales, software engineering, and R&D[1].

Current generative AI and other technologies could automate up to **70%** of employees' time by automating their routine work activities today[1].

Some of the highly impactful areas of these technologies include advanced analytics (predictive and real-time), automation, content & asset creation, and personalization.

Benefits of using AI, ML, and Gen AI in managing partners, channels, and ecosystems

What tangible benefits can AI, ML, and Gen AI bring to your partner and channel management?

01

ENHANCED TEAM ENABLEMENT AND EFFICIENCY:

Gen AI interaction with training content gives you a 10x increase in content consumption. Enabled teams lead to more effective partner management and a 40% gain in productivity[6].

02

IMPROVED ACCESS TO INFORMATION:

AI-powered knowledge banks offer instant access to vital information, cutting down search time and enhancing decision-making. The result: quicker responses and improved decision-making capabilities.

03

PERSONALIZATION & PARTNER SUCCESS:

Gen AI enables content customization for specific contexts, such as tailoring product positioning for healthcare with relevant use-case examples. This helps partners effectively convey product benefits, driving higher sales and increased partner satisfaction.

04

DRIVING INNOVATION:

AI, ML, and Gen AI can open new opportunities for innovation by enabling businesses to experiment with new products and services, optimize existing processes, and explore new business models.

05

IMPROVED PARTNER ENGAGEMENT:

AI-powered tools enhance partner interactions by delivering personalized experiences. AI chatbots, for instance, can handle partner inquiries around the clock, offering instant responses and freeing up human agents to focus on more complex issues.

06

ENHANCED DECISION MAKING:

ML-driven analytics offer deeper insights into business operations, empowering leaders to make better-informed decisions. For example, predictive analytics powered by machine learning can forecast partner pipeline, partner behavior, and satisfaction.

07

COMPETITIVE EDGE:

AI technologies can help vendors reduce time-to-market for new products and services by rapidly distributing information to and through partners.

CHAPTER

02

THE KEY USE CASES OF AI, ML, AND GEN AI WITHIN PARTNER ECOSYSTEMS

AI, ML, and Gen AI have the potential to significantly transform how businesses operate, particularly in the management of partners, channels, and ecosystems lifecycle. Let's explore how these technologies can be applied specifically to transform traditional practices into dynamic, data-driven strategies.

45%

of respondents in the survey conducted by Mindmatrix and AchieveUnite are curious about AI/ML and exploring how it could help.

PARTNER RECRUITMENT AND PROFILING:

AI and ML technologies streamline partner selection by using partner profiling. This process gathers data from sources like partner websites, LinkedIn, social media, and marketing materials to validate information and gain insights. It accelerates recruitment and automatically identifies the most suitable partners.

STREAMLINING ONBOARDING AND TRAINING:

Onboarding new partners can be time-consuming, but AI can automate and personalize training, helping them get up to speed quickly. Picture a virtual assistant guiding partners through the process, offering customized resources and instant feedback.

ASSET PERSONALIZATION AND RECOMMENDATION:

Asset personalization and recommendation are key use cases of AI/ML. With simple prompts, users and partners can quickly tailor content based on customer attributes, co-brand assets on the fly, and modify colors or banners. Additionally, when users view an asset, the ML model automatically suggests related content they might have overlooked.

LOCALIZATION AND TRANSLATION:

AI can automate asset localization and language translation, two crucial services for global partner programs that boost asset adoption. AI models have become highly effective at translating languages with local dialects and nuances. However, adding a human quality check, especially for technical or legal content, helps minimize errors.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

Imagine the impact of packaging all partner program information, strategies, best practices, and knowledge that your CAMs/PAMs need to upskill. The AchieveUnite PQi® AI platform does exactly that, offering a comprehensive knowledge base to support continuous learning and help partnership and channel teams excel in their roles.

OPTIMIZING CHANNEL SALES AND MARKETING:

Leveraging AI and ML in channel sales and marketing can create more effective campaigns. These technologies help identify high-potential leads, uncover trends in customer and partner interactions, optimize marketing spend, and boost conversion rates, driving substantial revenue growth.

INTELLIGENT HELP AND PARTNER SUPPORT:

AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants offer 24/7 support, instantly addressing common partner inquiries and resolving issues. This enhances partner satisfaction while reducing the load on your support team, freeing them to focus on more complex tasks.

SENTIMENT ANALYSIS:

ML models can analyze customer and partner sentiment across multiple touchpoints, allowing vendors to categorize them as positive, negative, or neutral. This enables the creation of tailored strategies for each group.

SOLUTION CONFIGURATION:

In the evolving ecosystem, multiple partners and sellers collaborate at different stages of the customer journey to co-develop joint solutions. However, this adds complexity to collaboration, alignment, and co-selling. AI can simplify this by automating the entire process—enabling partners or CAMs to discover solutions, configure pricing, access relevant documents, generate co-branded proposals, and craft tailored client messages in real-time.

PARTNER CLASSIFICATION:

ML models can automate partner classification or tiering by analyzing various data sets and partner activities, eliminating the need for manual scoring models. This is especially useful for managing large partner ecosystems with multiple programs, where manual methods are less effective.

VIDEO ANALYTICS:

Video-based marketing and content distribution are gaining popularity. Vendor channel marketing teams can use short-form video infrastructure to create engaging videos for any asset or collateral, boosting partner engagement and content distribution. The AI model within these platforms tracks attribution, asset usage, and user engagement.

REAL-TIME PARTNER ANALYTICS:

AI and ML can analyze vast data from your partner network, revealing trends and insights that may otherwise go unnoticed. This provides a bird's-eye view of your ecosystem, uncovering patterns that inform strategic decisions. For example, you may identify partners excelling in specific market segments, enabling you to tailor support and resources more effectively.

PREDICTIVE PARTNER ANALYTICS:

Predictive analytics powered by ML can anticipate issues before they arise, allowing proactive problem-solving. It also aids business planning by forecasting key partner metrics, such as sourced deals, win rates, incentives, certifications, MDF utilization, and co-marketing campaigns. By predicting partner performance, you can allocate resources more efficiently, boost partner satisfaction, and drive better outcomes.

PERSONALIZED PARTNER ENGAGEMENT:

Generative AI can create personalized content and engagement strategies for each partner, strengthening relationships. Customized newsletters, targeted marketing materials, and tailored support resources can greatly enhance partner loyalty and engagement.

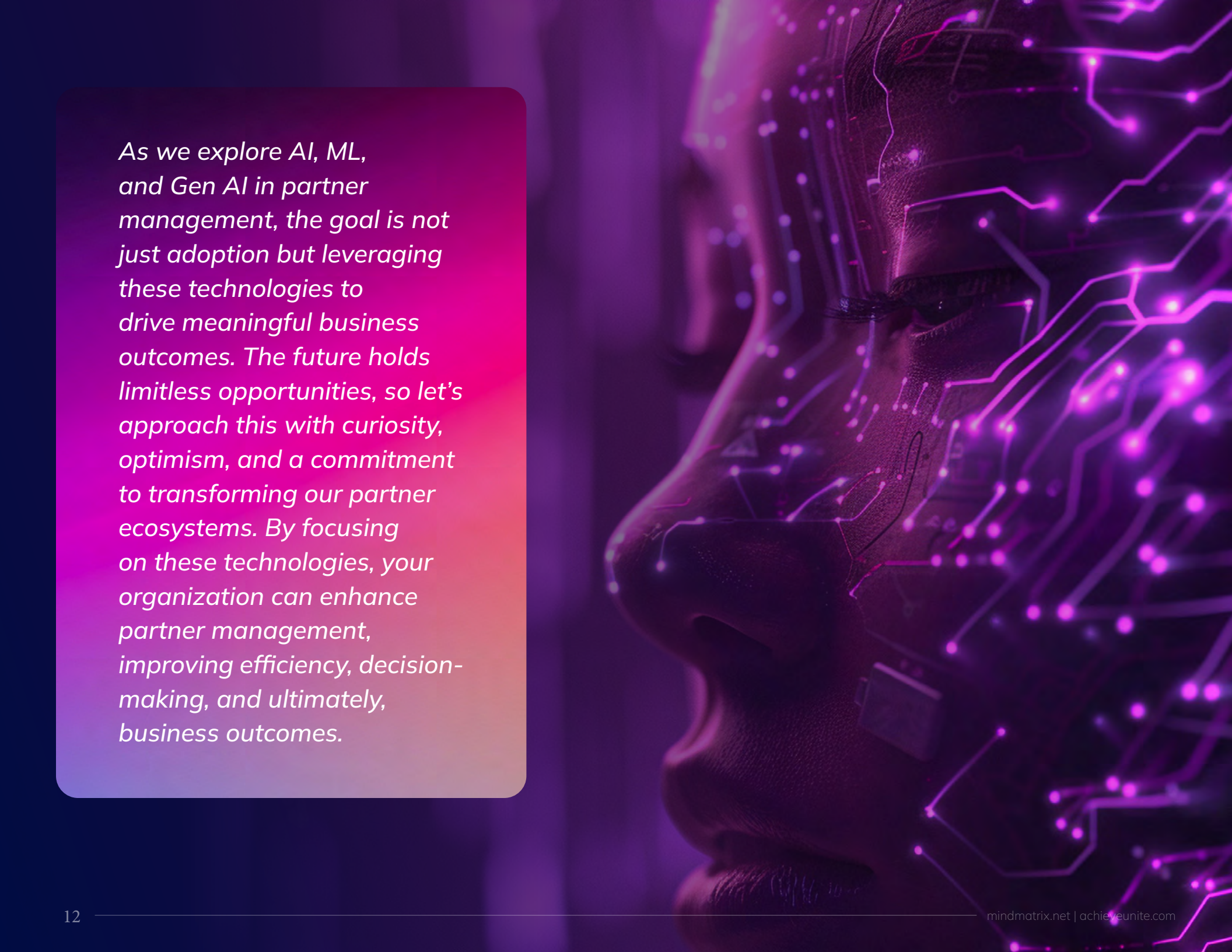
AI DRIVEN CO-SELLING:

Most of the account mapping tools such as Crossbeam and PartnerTap have introduced AI to identify the best partners who have the most account overlaps with you and provide an automated report of potential business opportunities that might have been missed through a manual process.

TEXT-TO-VOICE:

AI can enable users to convert text to voice, which can be a powerful tool to generate personalized content for partners, drive engagement with partners, influence the audience, and train CAMs/PAMs.

As we explore AI, ML, and Gen AI in partner management, the goal is not just adoption but leveraging these technologies to drive meaningful business outcomes. The future holds limitless opportunities, so let's approach this with curiosity, optimism, and a commitment to transforming our partner ecosystems. By focusing on these technologies, your organization can enhance partner management, improving efficiency, decision-making, and ultimately, business outcomes.



CHAPTER

03

UNDERSTANDING BUSINESS OUTCOMES AND ROI FROM AI, ML, AND GEN AI

The real value of AI, ML, and Gen AI lies in their ability to drive measurable business outcomes. To unlock this potential, this chapter will explore methods for evaluating these technologies, discuss KPIs, and offer real-world examples to illustrate the ROI of AI, ML, and Gen AI implementations.

45%

of respondents from our survey report say that they believe AI/ML can help, but they are not sure how.

55%

of respondents from our survey report say that they know AI/ML can help and have a vision of how.

Real world examples for demonstrating measurable business outcomes

Increased sales through Gen AI-driven research

THE CHALLENGE:

A distributor faced challenges handling volume of inquiries stemming from various partner sources to find information on federal contracts and navigate government purchasing vehicles for bids. Previously, this research was done upon request and the process was very manual.

THE SOLUTION:

By consolidating federal information into a private AI knowledge bank, the distributor helped partners gain easy access to valuable resources and information, allowing them to pursue more opportunities.

THE RESULT:

This led to a 25% increase in lead conversion rates and a 15% rise in quarterly revenue.

McKinsey & Company reports that companies implementing AI in sales typically see a 3% to 15% revenue uplift and a 10% to 20% improvement in sales ROI[3].

Hyper personalization and recommendation with ML

THE CHALLENGE:

Amazon and Netflix offer vast platforms with thousands of assets, images, and videos. The abundance of information makes it difficult for users to quickly find the right products or solutions, leading to sales loss and a poor user experience.

THE SOLUTION:

Both companies have leveraged ML-driven predictive algorithms to automate recommendations.

THE RESULT:

According to McKinsey, 35% of Amazon purchases and 75% of Netflix viewership come from ML-based recommendations. Additionally, Netflix retains over a billion users through these personalized suggestions[4].

According to Forrester, 77% of B2B marketers believe that personalized experiences are essential for building strong partner relationships[5].

Real world examples for demonstrating measurable business outcomes

An engineering technology firm supporting partner transformation

THE CHALLENGE:

The challenge faced by the company was moving their partners from an on-premise solution to a cloud-based solution and driving partner-led professional services.

THE SOLUTION:

By implementing Gen AI this company provided instant access to product and program materials, allowing partners to navigate the transformation as they needed it, when they needed it. It also allowed for partner managers to generate content and coach partners through the process.

THE RESULT:

The company saw a 20% increase in channel sales and a 15% improvement in partner satisfaction.

Partner programs integration post M&A

THE CHALLENGE:

A major computer, printer and peripherals company bought a complementary peripherals company. Each company had a significant B2B channel that needed to be integrated without disrupting the flow of revenue. Swiftly implemented integration plans with a wave rollout meant that things were changing practically daily.

THE SOLUTION:

To avoid any confusion, migration documents outlining the plan, process and procedure were accessed in a Gen AI platform, allowing users instant access to the most up-to-date materials and partners could self-serve and ask their questions with instant answers.

THE RESULT:

All partners migrated to the net new partner program within 9 months and cross-product adoption increased 35%.

By identifying the right areas to implement these technologies and understanding their tangible benefits, your organization can stay ahead of the curve and drive growth and efficiency.

The key is to start small, measure results, and scale as success is achieved. Having reviewed the case examples, let's now explore how to measure the success of AI and ML implementations.

Measuring quantitative impacts

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY:

Automating repetitive tasks cuts labor costs, saves time, and reduces errors. Comparing task completion times before and after AI/ML implementation reveals its effectiveness.

RESOURCE OPTIMIZATION:

AI-driven insights improve resource allocation, minimizing waste and boosting the bottom line. By tracking the reduction in workloads, you could enable your human capital to focus on strategic tasks.

ENHANCED SALES:

Companies using AI in sales see an average 50% increase in leads and appointments. You can track increases in partner-sourced or influenced revenue to gauge impact.

MARKET EXPANSION:

AI analytics uncover new market opportunities and optimize product offerings. Measuring the impact involves identifying new revenue streams after implementing AI/ML tools.

DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS:

AI provides deeper insights into market trends, enabling faster, more informed decisions. Reduced decision-making time is a key metric for measuring tool effectiveness.

Measuring qualitative impacts

PERSONALIZED INTERACTIONS:

Measuring how tailored content and support improve partner relationships and loyalty.

ENGAGEMENT RATE:

Tracking the frequency and quality of partner interactions facilitated by AI tools can demonstrate how AI enhances partner engagement.

EFFICIENT ISSUE RESOLUTION:

Monitoring how AI-powered support tools enhance the speed and accuracy of issue resolution.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE:

Leveraging AI can position your organization as an industry leader, attracting more partners and customers. Therefore, these tools may indirectly impact your partner recruitment efforts.

Methodologies to measure the impact

SIMPLE ROI FORMULA:

- ROI = (Net Profit / Investment Cost) x 100
- Calculate net profit by subtracting the total costs of the AI project from the total gains achieved.

PAYBACK PERIOD:

Measure the time it takes for the AI/ML investment to pay for itself through cost savings or/and revenue gains. Calculate the payback period with the following formula: Payback period (yrs)= Total cost of investment ($)/Annual benefits ($)

PARTNER ENGAGEMENT:

- Build a dynamic engagement scoring model in your PRM platform to create a benchmark, find bottlenecks, and measure how AI/ML tools are driving engagement among your partners.
- Key metrics that need to be included in your partner engagement model are user logins, asset usage, certifications completed, deals registered, campaigns executed, proposals created, solutions accessed, leads generated, among others.

Tools and techniques for impact assessment

PERFORMANCE DASHBOARDS:

Develop simple dashboards that display real-time KPIs, allowing for continuous monitoring and quick adjustments. These dashboards can integrate data from multiple sources to provide a comprehensive view of AI/ML impacts.

SET BASELINE:

Collect the current data on aforementioned KPIs to set the baseline first before implementing AI/ML solutions.

SURVEYS AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS:

Implement regular surveys and feedback loops to collect qualitative data on partner and customer satisfaction. This data can provide valuable insights into the human impact of AI/ML initiatives.

CHAPTER

04

DEVELOPING AN AI, ML, AND GEN AI STRATEGY

Developing a successful AI and ML requires careful consideration of factors that influence outcomes. This section explores critical considerations and best practices to guide your AI and ML journey. By addressing these key aspects, you can create a strong foundation for sustainable and scalable AI and ML integration.

Define your objectives

IDENTIFY KEY GOALS:

Begin by defining your primary objectives for AI, ML, and Gen AI. Are you looking to boost partner engagement, streamline operations, or drive sales growth?

SET MEASURABLE TARGETS:

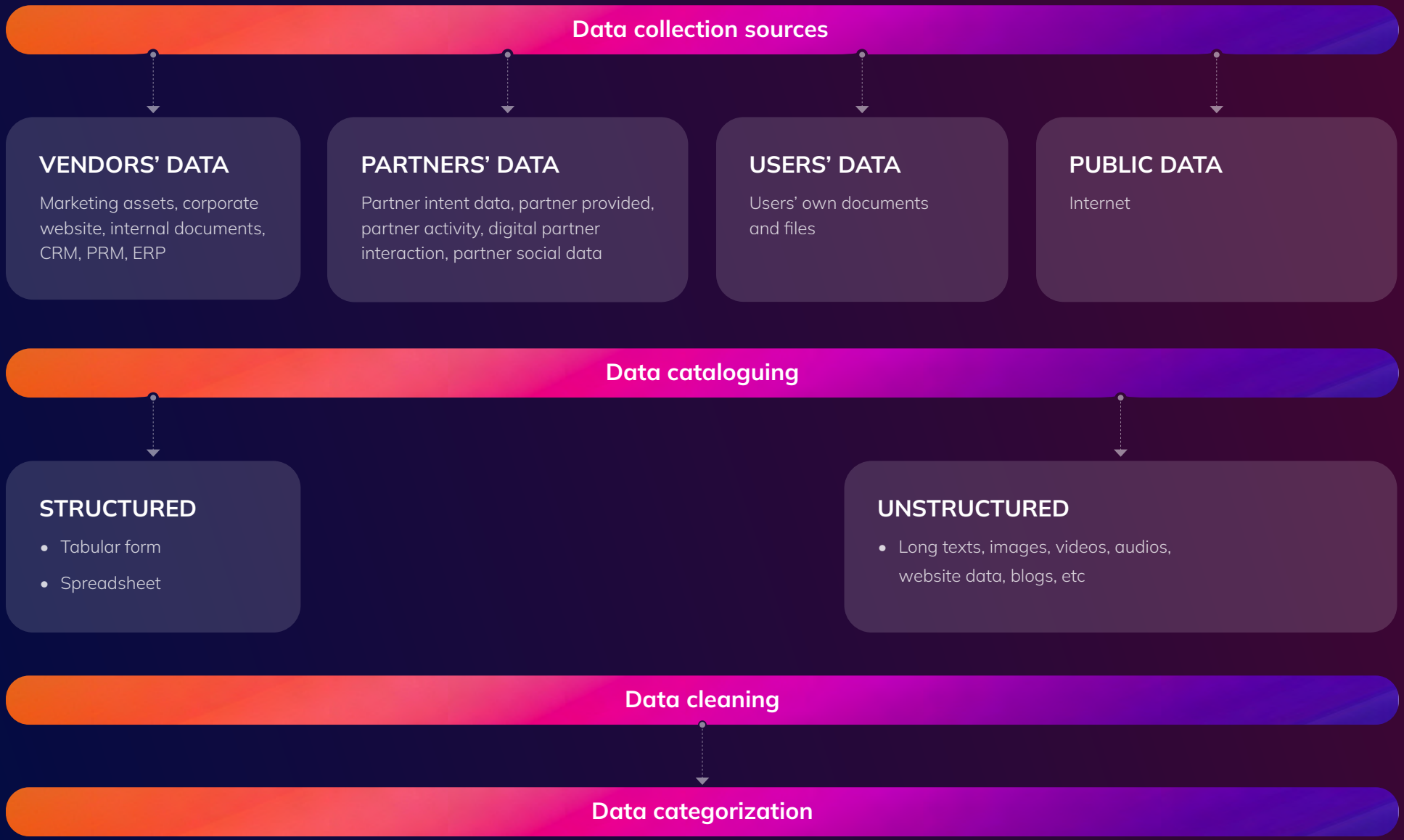
Set Measurable Targets: Establish clear, quantifiable goals that align with your business needs. For example, aim to cut routine task time by 30% or increase partner satisfaction by 20%.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- What are the main business challenges you want to solve with AI and ML?
- What specific results do you expect from their implementation?
- How do these initiatives align with your partnership goals?
- How will AI empower channel managers, partners, and leadership?
- What tools will help you tackle these challenges and meet your objectives?

Define data strategy

Data is the foundation of any successful AI or machine learning application. Understanding the different types of data and the data pipeline process is crucial for building effective AI models. The following architecture illustrates the simplest version of building the solid data foundation for your AI applications:



Enforce data privacy and security

COMPLIANCE:

Ensure your data practices adhere to regulations like GDPR or CCPA and implement strong security measures to protect sensitive information.

TRANSPARENCY:

Be transparent with partners and customers about how their data is used, building trust through clear communication of your privacy policies.

DATA GUARDRAILS:

Set boundaries for accessing specific types of data. For example, restrict access to personal data, limit partners to relevant company data, and ensure CAMs/PAMs only access data related to their regions and responsibilities.

DATA MINIMIZATION:

Collect only the data necessary for AI applications, and regularly review and delete data that is no longer required.

MITIGATION PLAN:

Establish an incident response plan for data breaches, ensuring all stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities in the event of a security incident.

Understand ethical AI

BIAS CONSIDERATION:

Partnership teams must remain alert to potential biases in AI models, especially when trained on diverse datasets. Regularly auditing AI algorithms helps ensure fairness and prevents bias. Additionally, incorporate mechanisms for human oversight and intervention when needed.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES:

Develop ethical guidelines for the use of AI, ML, and Gen AI applications. For example, citing sources for AI-generated content and avoiding the submission of sensitive information to open-source platforms like ChatGPT can help ensure compliance and responsible usage by your team and partners.

Build prompt engineering

CLEAR OBJECTIVES:

Ensure AI models are trained to achieve the desired outcomes, and align user prompts accordingly. Test various prompts to identify the most effective ones, analyze the results, and refine prompts based on performance.

BIAS MITIGATION:

Be mindful of potential biases in prompts. Avoid leading questions or biased language, and ensure fairness and inclusivity, especially for users across different geographies, to prevent discriminatory or offensive language.

PROMPT DOCUMENTATION:

Maintain a repository of effective, tested prompts and share them within your team as best practices.

USER FEEDBACK:

Collect and analyze user feedback to assess the impact of prompts, using this feedback to continuously refine prompt engineering strategies.

Understand common risks and their mitigation strategies

DATA QUALITY AND INTEGRATION:

Implement thorough data cleaning to ensure accuracy, completeness, and consistency. Use integration tools to merge data from different sources into a unified dataset for better analysis and model training.

TALENT AND SKILL SHORTAGES:

Deloitte reports that lack of technical talent is the top barrier to Gen AI adoption. Address this by investing in workforce upskilling through online courses, workshops, and certifications.

MANAGING STAKEHOLDER EXPECTATIONS:

Misunderstandings about AI can lead to unrealistic expectations. To mitigate this, establish clear communication about AI's capabilities and limitations, and set achievable goals and milestones to ensure a gradual and realistic implementation.

Develop a strategic roadmap

PRIORITIZE USE CASES:

Focus on AI, ML, and Gen AI use cases that align with your objectives and offer the most value. Start with high-impact, low-complexity projects and implement them in phases.

BUILD OR ACQUIRE SKILLS:

Invest in training your team on AI, ML, security, privacy, and ethics. If in-house expertise is limited, consider partnering with external vendors or consultants.

ALLOCATE RESOURCES:

Identify the required budget, technology, and personnel for each phase. Ensure your team has the right skills and expertise.

IMPLEMENT AND ITERATE:

Launch pilot projects to test solutions, gather feedback, and refine as needed. Scale Gradually by expanding AI initiatives based on pilot success and continuously monitor performance, adjusting as necessary.

CHAPTER

05

OVERVIEW OF SOME KEY AI/ML PLATFORMS FOR PARTNERSHIP AND CHANNEL ECOSYSTEM

Selecting the right tools and technologies is crucial for the success of AI/ML projects. However, the use of each tool may differ depending on the user. In this section, we explore key AI/ML platforms tailored for various roles within the channel and partnership community.

Open platforms

ChatGPT Gemini Claude Meta

OpenAI's Chat GPT/Google's Gemini/Anthropic's Claude/Meta's Llama: Gen AI platforms can be useful for generating content, images, and code using natural language. However, it is not advisable to use these platforms for handling personal or sensitive company information. For instance; avoid uploading key partner contracts, signed NDA agreements, sales data, or any non-public information due to potential data security and privacy concerns.

Rytr

This content writing tool, distinct from platforms like ChatGPT, allows for highly personalized content creation across various formats, including emails, blogs, social media posts, cover letters, CTAs, and copywriting frameworks (AIDA). It's especially valuable for product and channel marketing professionals.

grammarly QuillBot

The AI writing assistants like Grammarly and Quillbot can help you make writing clearer and more effective. These popular AI-powered writing tools can help you strengthen your prose, correct your grammatical errors, and paraphrase your writing.

FATHOM Read

AI-powered note-taking platforms like Fathom and Read AI record meetings, generate notes in various formats, highlight key discussion points, and identify trends across conversations. They can be used by anyone in the channel and partner ecosystem. For instance, a partner manager can use it to qualify partners after initial calls or collaborate more effectively with AEs by tracking trends and accessing key insights from multiple discussions.

AI/ML-driven partner technology platforms

AI/ML-ENABLED CRM

Salesforce, HubSpot, and Microsoft have integrated AI into their CRMs at scale, offering features like predictive analytics, personalized recommendations, lead scoring, chatbots, and automated workflows to boost customer engagement and operational efficiency. For example, Salesforce's Einstein uses rules-based and predictive models to provide agents with contextual recommendations and offers for customers.

AI/ML-POWERED PRM AND PARTNER MARKETING

Tools like Mindmatrix Bridge AI enable partners, CAMs/PAMs, and partner marketing professionals to securely access relevant information, profile partners, create content using company and public data, design marketing templates with simple prompts, and write tailored email, blog, and social posts for target persona and industries.

AI-DRIVEN ENABLEMENT

AchieveUnite's Ignite AI platform offers CAMs, PAMs, and CPOs a valuable resource to upskill on channel strategy, partner enablement, and development. Serving as a personal coach, it provides tailored education, frameworks, templates, and processes to enhance performance in their roles.

LEAD GEN AI

AI-powered account mapping tools like Crossbeam and PartnerTap help partner rev ops teams and AEs quickly identify new prospects, especially those not in your CRM but already customers of your partners.

AI-DRIVEN PARTNER PROFILING

AI platforms like Mindmatrix Bridge AI can aggregate data from sources such as partner websites, blogs, and LinkedIn to create detailed profiles based on predefined categories, helping vendors recruit the right partners and connect them with the right customers.

AI/ML ENABLED SUPPLY-CHAIN

Companies like e2open are enhancing supply chain visibility and efficiency through AI/ML-powered channel data management and supply chain solutions, which support planning, logistics, global trade, and channel analytics.

AI-POWERED SHORT FORM VIDEO INFRASTRUCTURE

Mindmatrix's AI-powered short form video tool is ideal for boosting user and partner engagement. Partner marketing professionals can easily syndicate videos across partner websites, microsites, blogs, and partner portals.

Advanced analytics platforms with ML capabilities

POWER BI

Power BI is a powerful data analytics tool that consolidates insights from sources like CRM, PRM, and partner marketing platforms, offering KPIs, charts, and forecasts on partner activities, pipeline, and performance. Its AutoML capabilities allow users to build ML models without extensive data science expertise.

tableau

It offers a strong alternative to Power BI with similar capabilities, especially for Salesforce users. However, if you're already using Microsoft products, Power BI may provide a more seamless experience.

Looker

Looker Studio is a Google data analytics product worth exploring, especially if your data is within the Google ecosystem. It can be used alongside other platforms for comprehensive insights.

While many AI/ML tools are available, we've curated this list for their relevance and quality within channel and partnership ecosystems. When selecting a tool, consider your specific needs, budget, and security requirements.

CHAPTER

06

THE FUTURE OF AI, ML, AND GEN AI IN PARTNER AND CHANNEL MANAGEMENT

As AI, ML, and Gen AI technologies continue to evolve, their potential to transform partner and channel management grows exponentially. In this chapter, we'll explore emerging trends and future opportunities, innovative applications on the horizon, and strategies to stay ahead of the curve in this dynamic field.

Emerging trends and future opportunities

EVOLUTION OF AI TECHNOLOGIES AND THEIR APPLICATIONS:

AI technologies are advancing rapidly, offering businesses new opportunities for innovation and efficiency. Integrating AI into partner management can streamline processes, improve decision-making, and enhance customer experiences. For instance, AI-driven analytics can identify top-performing partners, optimize resource allocation, and predict market trends more accurately.

GROWING IMPORTANCE OF AI ETHICS AND GOVERNANCE:

As AI becomes integral to business operations, ethical and governance considerations are crucial. Companies must ensure their AI applications are transparent, fair, and accountable. Regulatory frameworks like the EU's GDPR and the proposed AI regulations emphasize the need for robust governance. Ethical AI practices foster trust with partners and customers while mitigating legal and reputational risks.

ARTIFICIAL GENERAL INTELLIGENCE (AGI):

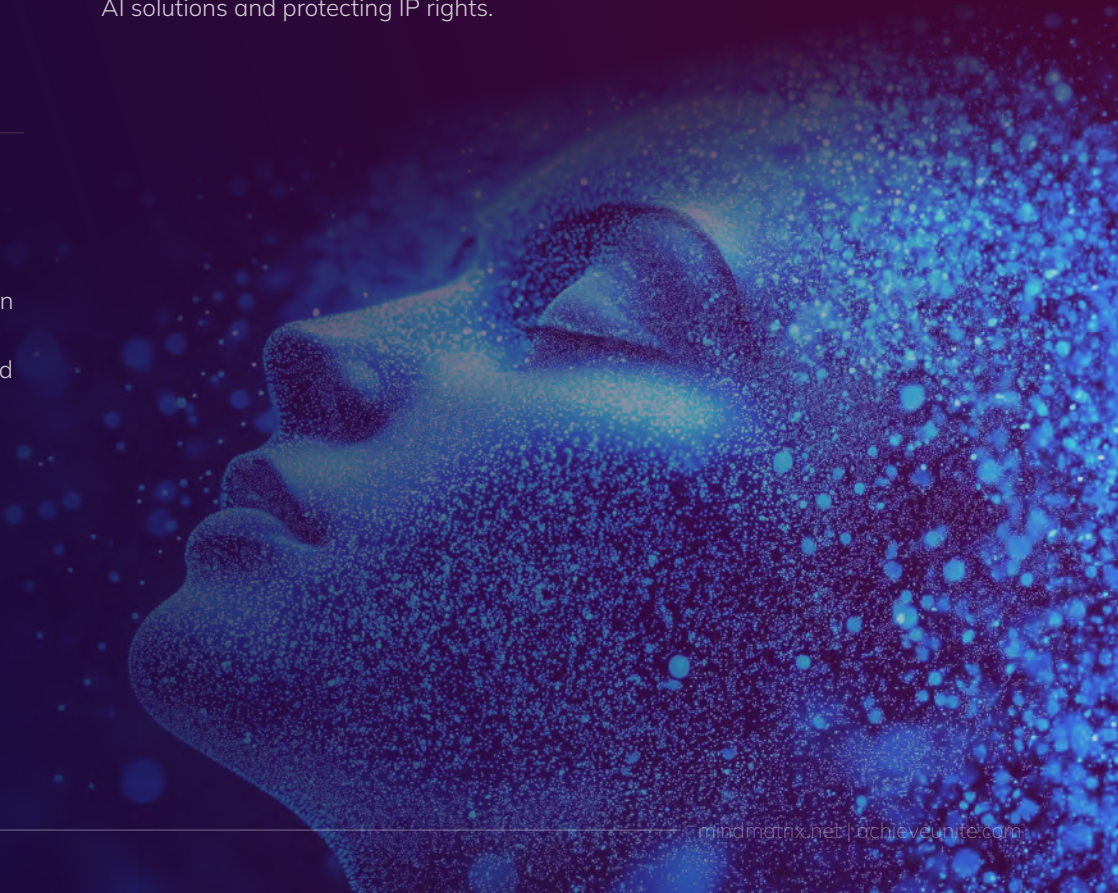
AGI represents a future where machines can perform tasks across a wide range of domains with human-like cognitive abilities. AGI has the potential to surpass human intelligence in certain areas, leading to breakthroughs in automation, strategic decision-making, and personalized partner interactions. Companies like OpenAI and Anthropic are pioneering AGI research, which could transform business operations and drive unprecedented levels of efficiency.

HUMAN-AI COLLABORATION:

While AI is expected to automate 50% of work activities across all sectors by 2030-2060[1], upskilling and collaborating with AI tools will be key to staying competitive and mitigating the impact of automation. Moreover, since AI is generating content at such a faster rate, human intelligence is now more important than ever to leverage the data and create tangible business outcomes.

PROTECTING IP AND NAVIGATING REGULATIONS:

Using data to train AI models poses risks related to intellectual property (IP) infringement. Understanding the data involved and staying informed about evolving regulations, such as the EU AI Act, is essential for making informed decisions about AI solutions and protecting IP rights.



Innovative applications of AI, ML, and Gen AI on the horizon

AI AGENTS AND ROBOTICS:

The future will see an increase in AI agents and robotics performing tasks with minimal or no human input. In channel management, these systems can automate repetitive functions like order processing, inventory management, and logistics coordination, freeing human resources for more strategic tasks and enhancing overall efficiency and productivity. Case in point, companies like Salesforce and ServiceNow have already started exploring offering AaaS (agent as a service).

ADVANCED NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING (NLP):

As NLP technologies evolve, they enable machines to understand and generate human language with greater precision. Advanced NLP can transform customer support, content creation, and knowledge management. For example, AI-powered platforms like AchieveUnite's Ignite AI provide real-time partner enablement, while tools such as Mindmatrix short form video infrastructure provides a very unique way to drive user and partner engagement.

AI-DRIVEN PREDICTIVE AND PRESCRIPTIVE ANALYTICS:

Predictive and prescriptive analytics are reshaping decision-making. Predictive analytics uses historical data to forecast future outcomes, while prescriptive analytics recommends actions to achieve desired results. In partner management, these tools can predict partner performance, optimize incentive programs, and suggest strategies to boost channel effectiveness.

How to stay ahead of the curve in AI, ML, and Gen AI

CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

In today's fast-evolving tech landscape, digital literacy is essential. Organizations must prioritize upskilling teams in AI competencies, including prompt engineering and tool usage. This not only boosts confidence but also ensures teams can leverage AI effectively to drive business success. Companies that invest in digital literacy programs see higher productivity and reduced skill gaps.

BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES:

To fully leverage AI, ML, and Gen AI, partnerships with tech-forward companies are crucial. Collaborating with organizations like Salesforce and HubSpot, which integrate AI into their CRM and partner management systems, enhances operational efficiency, strategic insights, and partner satisfaction.

INVESTING IN AI-DRIVEN TOOLS AND PLATFORMS:

Adopting AI-powered tools, such as AchieveUnite's Ignite AI and Mindmatrix's Bridge AI, can significantly boost internal engagement and partner management. These tools automate routine tasks, personalize interactions, and deliver measurable results, including increased revenue, reduced operational costs, and higher partner satisfaction.

About authors

JESSICA BAKER

Chief Program Officer, AchieveUnite

Jessica Baker is the Chief Program Officer at AchieveUnite, with over 30 years of expertise in developing and managing top-tier partner programs, marketing, and sales strategies for companies from $15M to over $1B. She excels in strategy, program design, marketing enablement, sales and technical ramp planning, strategic alliances, and operational scale.

A Certified Prompt Engineer, Jessica recently launched the AchieveUnite Ignite AI platform, leveraging Gen AI to optimize partnering success and teaches Prompting Certification classes. She is a passionate advocate for Gen AI, cloud technology, and SaaS, and regularly speaks on these topics.

Before joining AchieveUnite, Jessica held leadership roles at Progress Software, Compuware, Signiant, and Softek. Her work has been recognized by CRN magazine, including listings among the “Women of the Channel” from 2011-2015 and in 2023, and the partner programs she has written for clients have received many awards and distinguished honors.

LinkedIn

AKASH SINGH

GTM Strategy Lead, Mindmatrix

Akash Singh serves as the GTM Strategy Lead at Mindmatrix, bringing over 11 years of experience in business development and partnerships. In his current role, he is responsible for devising indirect go-to-market (GTM) strategies and manages global partnerships and alliances.

In a previous position, Akash successfully built a partner program from the ground up for a technology startup, driving an impressive 256% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) in partner-sourced revenue over three years.

Akash holds an MBA and has been recognized for his expertise in academic research. His work has earned accolades from the University of Strathclyde for developing a GTM strategy for cloud-based data and AI solutions, and from the University of Oxford for creating a private equity investment strategy for acquiring a publicly listed company.

LinkedIn

References

1. The economic potential of generative AI: The next productivity frontier (McKinsey & Company)
2. 45 Statistics, Facts & Forecasts on Machine Learning [2024] (aimultiple.com)
3. https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/ai-powered-marketing-and-sales-reach-new-heights-with-generative-ai
4. https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/how-retailers-can-keep-up-with-consumers
5. Personalization 2.0: Identity Matching For Individualized Marketing (forbes.com)
6. How generative AI can boost highly skilled workers' productivity | MIT Sloan