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WHITEPAPER

AI Means Sales Is Evolving – But Is Your Sales Team?

Why personality-friendly omnichannel engagement, via new cutting-edge sales tools, will determine the winners and losers



With its ability to evaluate huge caches of data, spot connections and patterns humans are unlikely to spot, and make meaningful predictions, artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming the way sales professionals operate. The question is no longer whether AI will change the landscape, but how best to adapt to a new environment in which sales teams must use AI in innovative ways to compete.

Recently, we spoke to Dr. Michal Kosinski, Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business. Dr. Kosinski has published over seventy papers, yielding over 17,000 citations. He is among the most cited researchers in his field, and his work was instrumental in bringing the **Facebook/Cambridge Analytica data scandal** to light. Dr. Kosinski's research interests encompass both human and artificial cognition. Currently, his work centers on examining the psychological processes in large language models (LLMs), and leveraging artificial intelligence, machine learning, Big Data, and computational techniques to model and predict human behavior. He has emerged as an important voice in the ongoing global discussion about the intersections of AI, business ethics, bias, and predictable human actions.

We asked Dr. Kosinski about the changes business leaders should expect to encounter in the current environment – and how sales teams can adapt to those changes in a way that sustains and expands competitive advantage.

Question 1 Beyond ChatGPT

Q **Let's start with a basic question – something that somebody who is used to thinking of artificial intelligence as synonymous with large language models may be curious about. Is being able to have what feels like a one-on-one conversation with an LLM application like ChatGPT enough to keep an individual salesperson competitive – to keep them ahead of the curve?**

A Probably not. And the reason I say that can be best understood when you consider that a massive, ongoing experiment is now underway in the public digital space that we all share. Now, the best experiments unfold in the laboratory, of course, under controlled conditions, but there is another big experiment happening, an important one, and it is already yielding results, right now, that we should notice. Because what has happened in the digital space is that it suddenly became easy to record and analyze people's behavior on a very, very large scale. And lots of people and lots of companies are doing that now, looking at these huge collections of behavioral data and analyzing them, because it's so useful and valuable and because it's comparatively cheap to do so. And because the analysis of that data, of course, can be relevant to initiatives like improving the customer experience. But that's not all that data is good for. In terms of the sales team, that data also sheds light on personality and communication predispositions that are highly likely to be present at the individual level – for individual buyers or influencers, say. And those personal predispositions are not going to show up in exchanges with a large language model like ChatGPT. It's not designed to incorporate results from that big, ongoing experiment about determining the preferences of individual users.

Question 2 Buying Behavior

Q **We've talked to salespeople who've had the experience of asking ChatGPT to craft a personalized email to a customer by understanding and catering to their buying behavior. And what happens is fascinating. ChatGPT responds that it's impossible to gather someone's personality data with their email ID alone. Is that the kind of response you mean?**

A Exactly. It's not analyzing the behavioral data for that individual. ChatGPT isn't designed to do that. Because, you know, me clicking on something is behavior. Me commenting on something online, or rating something, is behavior. Me writing a tweet is behavior. All of that behavior can be aggregated and analyzed, and the analysis can tell you important things about me – but only if you're using the right tool. Now, this behavior is oftentimes driven by conscious or subconscious, or instinctual, factors, individual emotions and motivations and tendencies and so on. And the point is, there are tools available now, tools that are *not* large language models, that can analyze and summarize those drivers with very high levels of accuracy.

Question 3 An Explosion of Behavioral Data

Q **Based on an individual's online history, yes? Their LinkedIn profile and social posts and so on.**

A Yes. We are likely now to have access to more explicit records of a given individual's behaviors and thoughts than a lot of people realize, all based on what is available online. So, if I'm online, there are going to be a whole lot of things I do in public online spaces that can be collected and analyzed. For instance, I may summarize my thoughts in a tweet, I may play games online – I may engage in many, many different activities while I'm online, and all those public behaviors can now be aggregated and analyzed. Not only that: there will also be data arising from this analysis that connects specifically to my interactions with other people, and to their interactions with me and about me. So we now have this unprecedented explosion of very accurate behavioral data and interpersonal data. And yes, the reason all of this is relevant to sales teams and the people who lead those teams is worth considering closely. That reason connects to a very familiar maxim, the idea that past behavior is a great predictor of future behavior.

Question 4 Targeting Buyers and Influencers

Q **We're all used to hearing that maxim in relation to the performance of financial investments over time, and also in relation to a job applicant's resume and personal history. But you're saying it's now relevant to salespeople who are targeting potential buyers and influencers, yes?**

A Yes. That maxim still holds true. My past behavior *is* a great predictor of my future behavior. It's a reliable predictor of my future behavior in any number of areas, but notably when it comes to my personal communication preferences if you are texting me, or emailing me, or creating a personalized video message for me. If you know what those personal communication preferences are, and you create messaging that takes those preferences into account, that's a potential competitive advantage for the seller. All of this data, which was previously regarded as more or less useless when it came to analyzing individual behavior, became extremely useful when the AI resources and the computing capacity caught up with these almost inconceivably large data sets. And what we're seeing now is that the data can be quite powerful.

Question 5 Leveraging AI to Communicate More Effectively

Q **So what is an example of a tool that is out there now, and available that sales leaders and sales teams might want to take a look at, when it comes to leveraging AI to get a better sense of how best to communicate with buyers and influencers in an omnichannel selling environment?**

A One that I'm familiar with is Personality AI from Humantic AI.

Question 6 A Competitive Advantage

Q **We've test-driven that one. One of the things it does is quickly generate a detailed summary of a given buyer's likely communication preferences, attitudes toward risk, and likely decision-making priorities. But can you walk us through what else it does for sales teams? Why it provides a competitive advantage?**

A One good way to get a clear sense of what this tool does to help sellers is to pose a simple question: What happens when you ask this tool to create a draft of an email to a given buyer or influencer you've identified? Well, it uses what it concludes about that person's communication style, social preferences, and attitudes toward risk to create a personality-friendly draft of an email that person is likely to engage with. But the question remains: *How* does it do that? What happens inside the program?

Question 7 The Optimal Approach

Q **Fair enough. What happens?**

A Let's imagine this tool writing an *infinite* number of potential emails to this person, and then predicting which of those units is going to be most successful in engaging the buyer. Now, I cannot do this. As a human being, I cannot write and analyze an infinite number of emails. And of course, in the real world, the tool cannot write and analyze an infinite number of emails, either. But the reality is, the tool can write and analyze a number of emails that is far, far larger than I can – a number that for practical purposes *might as well be* infinite, from a human perspective. It does that so that it can perform computations at a vast scale. For me, for a human being, writing a draft of an email is always going to be intuitive. For the tool, though, it's always an exercise in computation and prediction, a layered exercise that operates on multiple levels very quickly, to generate predictions. And all these predictions are driven by numbers. So what salespeople and sales leaders might want to consider is that using Personality AI to create that draft, and then adjusting the draft using our human intuition, might just be the optimal approach to the problem of what to write in an email to a buyer or influencer. Because failing to personalize the messaging at all puts your team and your organization at a disadvantage. And personalizing is something the Humantic tool does quite well. Essentially, it breaks down the available user behavior, boils it down to machine-readable dimensions, and then predicts the future – so we can tweak the draft that it predicts will do the best job, and then send out the message. And that's perhaps the optimal approach. At any rate, it's preferable to me composing a message that assumes every new person I reach out to has exactly the same personality and exactly the same motivations … because that's just not true.

Epilogue: The Metrics

114% Increase in LinkedIn Connection Request Acceptance

One of the world's best known financial services companies saw a 114% increase in LinkedIn connection request acceptance after implementing Personality AI, as illustrated in the table below.

Table 1

Test Group	Invites Sent	Invites Accepted	Acceptance
0 Control	60	13	0.216667
1 Test	110	51	0.453636

100%+ Clickthrough Rate Increase

The table below illustrates the results of recent research showing a clickthrough rate increase in excess of 100% in targeted inbound email sequences, when compared with an untargeted control group.

Table 2

Email Type	Open Rate	Click-Through Rate	Click Rate	Unsubscribers
Default Type	44.39%	50%	37.5%	52.83%
D Type	9.2%	30.56%	33.33%	14.29%
I Type	4.08%	15.28%	12.5%	7.55%
C Type	1.53%	0%	0%	7.55%

What Delivers Metrics Like These? Personality-Based Winning Strategies

The table below offers a simplified version of the starkly differing buyer priorities that Personality AI leverages while composing messages for targeted contacts.

Table 3

Personality Type	Why They Are Tough	Magic Lever	Winning Strategy
D Type	Not aligned on goals	Goal orientation	Help envision results
I Type	Lack of trust	Friendliness	Relationship building
S Type	If approach feels pushy	Slower pace	Give them time
C Type	If promises seem vague	Detailed approach	Get into nitty gritties

Source on all of the above: Humantic AI

The takeaway

Selling is evolving. LLMs are not designed to create unique messaging to individual buyers and influencers. There are tools, however, like Personality AI, that are designed to do this.

The key question is: which sales teams are keeping pace with the changes … by mastering and using the best AI-driven omnichannel selling tools?

To learn more about Sandler's partnership with Humantic AI, contact your Sandler trainer or representative.





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