

CMO Summit at Leaderex: How AI is changing the way we work

By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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Artificial Intelligence and other technologies are changing the way organisations work. To be successful in this new way of work, requires more than just implementing new technologies.



CMO Summit at Leaderex 2019. Image supplied.

AI and the new way of working were just two of a wide range of topics addressed recently at CMO Summit at Leaderex. Held at the Sandton Convention Centre topics included data science, digital skills, disruptive technology customer experience, and more - all providing marketers with knowledge and inspiration.

AI: overhyped?

With AI the buzz word of the moment, it was no surprise that the AI and Automation talks were filled to capacity. In his talk, the future of AI, Justin Spratt, director of business development at Uber, warned the audience to be aware of over-hyping AI. He advocates taking a balanced view of AI.



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“Hundreds of different concepts, from machine learning to algorithms, make up AI.” He also believes we have a way to go before we get to full AI. “Scientists are of the opinion that it will take us from 20 to 100 years to get to full AI. It’s not only science that makes me say that; AI faces a number of blockers from cost to regulation and privacy issues.”

For Brian Lewkowicz, a partner at Ernst & Young focusing on intelligent automation within IT advisory services, many of these blockers are also the biggest risks involved when it comes to AI. “Cost is a particular concern as no-one wants to sink a ton of money if there is no benefit. Companies must make the right choices when it comes to AI.”

Despite this, AI is still the biggest digital priority in South Africa for companies over the next five years. “Most South African companies are using AI to transform products, services, employees and customer experiences using machine learning, advanced analytics and algorithms and playing with bringing these together.”

All about the customer

He believes the customer is the next viewpoint for organisations when it comes to AI.

“While everyone talks about customer experience, the reality is that customer experience in South Africa is average,” says Lizette Akker, managing executive of the customer experience management team at IQ Business. She attributes this to companies obsessing over their competitors.



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“ Instead, beware of what is happening in South Africa and how that affects your customers’ expectations. The way we buy is influenced by our reality. ”

Stop seeing value as a one-way street, ROI is more than profit. Think about why you are in business: to deliver value to the customers to understand what that value, is she adds. “Core of business is the purpose of business and that drives people to the business. Look at your culture and see if it is still serving your business well.”

To deliver value to the customers, she recommends you place your employees first and your customers second.

“Employee experience drives customer experience.”

Simplify your message and avoid jargon

Quinton Pienaar, lead: customer engagement and salesforce at PwC South Africa agrees with this. “When designing and executing CX, engage the heart and soul of the employees and customers. It is not good enough to measure ROI anymore. Employees work in a new way and how do you engage them to do this while you want more customer to fill baskets?”

He says companies need to measure more than ROI and ROE. “Companies measure outcomes and impact, that is profit and revenue, but they do not look at all the pieces to get you there. You need to measure what you spent to create the customer experience.”

Building on this, Collin Govender, group executive, shared services at Altron, says, “Digital transformation without impact on your organisation is useless, so ensure you have systems and processes in place when you start your journey.” He was drawing on lessons Altron went through when it transformed its organisation and culture.

“ Our Group Executive: Shared Services, [@collingovender](#) just wrapped up a great talk on how to drive companies through [#DigitalTransformation](#) complexities. [#Leaderex2019 pic.twitter.com/i0ZTziBLO](#)— Altron (@AltronGroup) [September 3, 2019](#) ”

Then he says simplify your message and avoid jargon, get the management and board on board, and keep people at the centre. “You will have to reorganise your team. There is a new way of work and people need to work differently. Training, training, and more training is essential.”

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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