The Marketer’s Guide to Successful AI
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AI In Marketing Has Become Necessary

In so many ways, AI is helping both Fortune 500 companies and tiny start-ups improve their engagement with people and optimize their consumer processes to grow their brand and increase their chances of success.

Marketers can no longer afford to be ignorant about AI. They can no longer reject AI simply because they don’t yet understand it or they don’t know how to incorporate it into their strategic marketing plans. They also don’t need to become experts in AI. Marketers do need to understand the role that AI plays in consumers’ lives if they want to survive and be relevant. Companies are already using AI to disrupt a broad range of businesses. The question is whether the established players will take proactive steps to ensure that disruption doesn’t happen to them.
Recommendations for AI Success

The long-term path to success with consumer products and services that rely on AI, including chat bots, voice assistants, facial recognition, and robots, requires marketers to understand their target audience, the role that AI can play in marketing to them, and the AI Triple Win framework of Utility, Privacy and Security, and Trust.

Our research suggests that success is maximized by targeting and winning with Early Adopters, those consumers and customers who will ultimately set the stage for Laggards to become adopters themselves. And, in order to raise their odds of success with those Early Adopters, marketers must approach the integration of AI into their brand processes and applications through what we call the “Triple Win” framework – every AI product or service must have utility, and also embed privacy/security, and trust. These recommendations evolved out of two paths. First, we conducted proprietary primary research among 1000 adults in Canada to understand their opinions and uses of artificial intelligence (see methodology in the Appendix). Second, we explored the consumer-facing AI landscape to identify tangible examples that highlight each of the three pillars of our Triple Win framework.
Canadians are Cautiously Curious

Various perceptions surround AI in terms of how people currently use AI tools in their personal and work lives as well as their perceptions of specific AI applications such as chatbots and voice assistants. Not surprisingly, our research discovered a vast disparity within the population. We listened to people who fully understand and use the most advanced AI tools as well as people whose lifestyles nested them in a world void of AI recognition. We listened to Early Adopters, Laggards, and everyone in between.

Awareness of AI is Strong

Despite the never-ending barrage of global, political, entertainment, and social news to weed through, more than half of adults in Canada (58%) heard something in the media about artificial intelligence over the last year.

Words that Describe Immediate Reactions to Hearing the words 'Artificial Intelligence'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NET: Positive</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity/interest</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NET: Negative</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery/unknown</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science fiction</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear/Anxiety</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awe</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hype</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Canadians Have Mixed Feelings

And, given that the media shared an incredible range of successful and shameful stories which we’ll discuss in more detail later on, it’s not surprising that personal feelings about AI are conflicted. About 53% of people expressed both positive and negative feelings about AI. This includes about 70% of people who expressed positive feelings about artificial intelligence, including curiosity (57%) and excitement (20%), as well as more than 45% of people who expressed negative feelings including fear (20%), disappointment (4%), and concern (33%).
Not All AI Applications Have Utility

These positive and negative perceptions impact people’s perceptions of the usefulness of AI tools. For many people, AI is perceived to be more useful for impersonal tasks such as getting quick answers to questions such as restaurant reviews, movie times, or trivia (44%), and managing home utilities (41%). However, tasks requiring a greater element of trust or security are perceived to be less useful AI applications. For instance, only 27% of people think self-driving cars would be a useful application and only 17% believe AI would be useful for building personalized learning plans.

Abilities of Artificial Intelligence That Would Be Most Useful

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provided</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Chart Bar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get prompt answers to your questions</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage your home heating, water and AC systems</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess or diagnose health issues</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage your everyday tasks</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-driving cars</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase your productivity</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help make best financial choices</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplifying shopping</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a personalized music list for you</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get prompt help for an AI customer service representative</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop tailored learning program</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help make best shopping decisions</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrange your travel plans</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Barriers Must Be Overcome

It’s clear that people recognize the double-edged sword that is AI. They recognize the utility of AI, that it can solve many important problems. At the same time, a lack of trust regarding safety and ethics remains a key barrier to adopting personalized AI tools. People recognize that while there is great potential in AI tools, there is also much room for caution.
The AI Triple Win Framework

Marketers who want to be successful with AI applications must incorporate each of the three pillars – Utility, Privacy and Security, and Trust. For clarity, we will discuss each of these pillars separately, but they truly cannot be separated as the recipe for success requires the successful integration of all three. We call this the AI Triple Win framework.

Pillar 1: Utility

For companies yet to employ it, AI is a shiny object already being quietly tested or overtly assimilated into the systems of their most aggressive competitors. But to simply have the goal of using AI because competitors are using it is misguided. Just as when any new tool or technology is incorporated into business tactics and strategies, AI too must solve a pain point or add value. Whether that means answering customer questions within seconds, serving consumers with more relevant website ads, creating product delivery efficiencies, or entertaining people while they wait for a taxi, every AI tool must serve a genuine need. Marketers must have clarity on the role that AI can play in building a successful brand and that requires Utility, a foundational property that the two remaining pillars depend on for success.
Pillar 2: Privacy and Security

To provide useful AI services, companies must collect, store, and use personal data. But for consumers to buy into this need, companies must prioritize both privacy and security.

Privacy:

Privacy by Design\(^1\) is a concept introduced by Ann Cavoukian, a global privacy expert from Canada. In summary, companies must incorporate privacy as a fundamental principle in every aspect of their work not as an afterthought or reaction to a breach, but rather as a formal and preplanned aspect embedded throughout every business process. Privacy, whether it relates to consumers, customers, or the company, must be respectful, visible, and transparent. With a privacy focus, companies collect only that data which is essential for providing a service or product and ensure that only those people who must access the data can do so.
Security:

Security entails creating AI systems that hold data safely, and have transparent and auditable outcomes and processes. Though breaches and accidental data losses are inevitable, successful companies must have sufficient processes in place that prevent casual errors and make hacking nearly impossible. Of course, when problems do arise, companies focused on security are highly responsive and keep consumers informed.

Marketing is intertwined with privacy in that it depends on understanding personal and private information about people in order to more precisely address their needs and desires. Companies must use the information consumers provide to them in context or it will be perceived as a violation of privacy. Those companies that fail to clearly disclose they are using personal information for those purposes are violating consumer expectations of privacy. Together, these aspects of safety and security are what make consumers comfortable sharing their most sensitive data, including financial records and health data.
Pillar 3: Trust

The third pillar of successful applications of AI is trust, an aim to achieve AI for Good, to serve a purpose greater than simply increasing profits and market share. In today’s world of transparency and instant communication, revenue grabs are simply not sustainable. Marketers and brands must go beyond acting for the good of the brand and also act for the good for the customer.

AI applications using consumer information such as favourite songs, retailers, or purchase behaviours must ensure they provide a fair value exchange for this personal information. At a minimum, the exchange of data for services must be in the best interest of consumers. Over time, Trust can grow and evolve with a stretch goal of being in the best interest of humankind.
The Foundation for **Successful Implementation** of AI

Marketers who implement AI marketing strategies via these three pillars of AI success have discovered the Triple Win framework. In the following sections of this paper, we’ll isolate each pillar to provide more clarity around how successful brands have implemented them.
Marketers in many industries have leveraged AI to build successful brands that solve consumer pain points and add value. In the examples that follow, you’ll observe that marketers have created clarity around the role that AI can play in growing their brand.

Pillar 1: **Utility**

How many apps on your phones have sat there, untouched, for months or years? Downloaded with good intentions, apps that have no value, solve no pain points, and create no efficiencies are doomed to fail. AI tools are no different.

Marketers in many industries have leveraged AI to build successful brands that solve consumer pain points and add value. In the examples that follow, you’ll observe that marketers have created clarity around the role that AI can play in growing their brand.
Retail

Customer service is one of the most recognizable and useful applications of AI for consumers. Many brands currently use voice assistants, chatbots, and robots to help consumers physically and virtually wade through the increasingly complicated customer decision journey.

These AI tools help people find clothes that fit properly (Levi’s²) and answer questions about products and services (Sephora³, Lowe’s⁴). Vodafone⁵ has even imbued a culturally relevant personality for their New Zealand based customer service voice assistant. Alibaba⁶, a leader in applying advanced technologies in the retail space, has employed smart racks and mirrors to help people see themselves in new styles without ever trying the clothes on, a boon for accessibility.
Alibaba AI powers a tool to generate multiple ideas for products

Lowe’s LoweBot
A rolling kiosk that helps customers find products in-store and answer customer service questions

Vodafone Voice Assistant
Chatbot that helps customers tailor trip ideas based on personal preferences

Alibaba
AI powers a tool to generate multiple ideas for products

In our research, we discovered that Canadians feel positive about AI in the customer service space. About 64% of Canadians understand that AI can answer questions and 44% believe that AI’s ability to get prompt answers to questions would be useful to them. Further, 59% of people would feel comfortable with AI providing recommendations on what to purchase.
Travel

Brands in the travel industry are also taking advantage of chatbots and virtual assistants to offer more efficient customer service. Kayak, KLM, and Best Western use AI to help consumers select and book the most suitable flights and locations, while Hilton and Marriott are using robots and virtual assistants to help guests better navigate both the hotel and the surrounding area. Customers can even use Marriott’s in-room voice assistant to order room service or book spa appointments.

This extensive use of AI for customer service reflects Canadians views towards AI in the travel industry. About half of Canadians (48%) say they’d feel comfortable if AI arranged their travel plans and 38% say they’d feel comfortable using AI to book a hotel or car. Early Adopters are great advocates for these AI applications.

KLM
Helps customers book tickets, send confirmation, deliver flight updates, answer questions

Kayak
Facebook messenger chatbot to make finding and buying flights easier and quicker

Marriott Hotels
Voice assistant help guests find and use their hotel amenities
Food and QSR

Companies that take innovative risks to meet and exceed customer needs and create exciting, personal experience will be rewarded with loyal consumers. Within the food and QSR category, both Campbell’s Soup\textsuperscript{12} and Knorr\textsuperscript{13} use AI to help customers customize recipes based on ingredients currently in their home. Taco Bell\textsuperscript{14} uses a Slack chatbot to take orders. And, Domino’s Pizza\textsuperscript{15} allows consumers to place orders by sending a message that contains only the word “Pizza.”

These uses are very much in keeping with Canadian perceptions of AI. About 60% of people are comfortable with AI providing them with recommendations on what to eat based on their personal medical history and goals. And, many believe that AI has the potential to improve customer service (40%) or provide the same or better customer service than a person (20%).

All of these tools put AI at the forefront of consumer experiences allowing people to see for themselves the benefits that AI brings to the customer journey.
Without collecting, storing, and analyzing personal information, brands are unable to market to people based on their personal needs and desires. Marketing is unavoidably intertwined with privacy.

Pillar 2: Privacy and Security

Without her permission, Amazon’s Alexa recorded and sent a woman’s confidential, in-home conversation to a random person on her contact list. This is privacy and security. Or the lack thereof.

Without collecting, storing, and analyzing personal information, brands are unable to market to people based on their personal needs and desires. Marketing is unavoidably intertwined with privacy.
Making Privacy Easy

Unfortunately, few consumer facing brands have made privacy a key differentiator. DuckDuckGo\(^7\), an internet browser that purposefully does not track its users movements (unlike Google, Firefox, and others), is enjoying increased consumer interest. Snips\(^8\) is an up-and-coming voice assistant alternative to Alexa and Siri that focuses on privacy and security. The University of Toronto\(^9\) in Canada has developed a privacy filter that, when applied to photographs, adjusts pixels in images to render them nearly useless to facial recognition systems. One particularly interesting application is the European Consumer Organization\(^10\) (BEUC) using AI to help people better understand complex privacy policies.
A Case for Transparency
Like MeWe, a social media network that allows users to control which aspects of their data are shared, marketers aiming to create successful AI strategies for their brands must make privacy and security a key component. In many cases, it’s impossible for consumers to physically see that a company handles their data securely. As a result, most companies that genuinely care about privacy and security address this unavoidable lack of transparency through publicly displayed company policies on their websites. Plain language allows anyone to understand what data is being collected for what purpose (Apple, Encircle), learn about changes to those privacy policies (Fitbit), or find out how to withdraw consent for the collection of data (Danske Bank).

**Purism digital devices**
*Mobile phones, laptops, devices designed with privacy and security*

**Apple**
*Privacy page describes how the company uses data. Includes a transparency report, and security policies for iCloud data.*

**Encircle insurance company**
*Provides its privacy policy on the homepage, and describes data storage standards, who can access the content, what happens to data in transit, and how they handle passwords.*

**MeWe social network**
*Provides a Privacy Bill of Rights that promises control over information sharing.*

**Danske Bank**
*Details how to withdraw consent for the collection data, a list of website cookies they collect, and how those are used.*
Security By Design

More important for consumers, however, are brands that employ Privacy by Design and deliberately build their products and services with privacy and security in mind. One of the few examples is Purism, a company that builds digital technologies with security as the main feature.

In general, our research showed that people are comfortable with the possibilities that AI facilitates. People are comfortable trusting AI systems with even the most sensitive aspects of their personal lives including regulating the temperature inside their homes (72%), organizing their schedules (64%), and providing companionship to people who need it (58%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comfort With AI Performing Tasks</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regulate the temperature in your home (based on your habits)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize and notify you about your schedule and appointments</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide companionship for people (e.g. elderly people living with disabilities)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control your house utilities and appliances</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide you with financial advice</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide you with legal advice</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send ‘Happy Birthday’ and other personal messages to people in your contact lists</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnose your medical condition (without a doctor’s involvement)</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interact with and teach your children</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the same time, people recognize that they can’t blindly trust brands to respect their privacy and maintain 100% security, a position that Laggards hold on to dearly. Demonstrating distrust, more than 20% of people have added their phone numbers to the Do Not Call list. More than 43% of people worry about the AI on their phone, and a whopping 78% believe that AI will increase the lack of privacy.

We’ve already seen that people understand and want the benefits of artificial intelligence in their personal and work lives. They simply want marketers to implement those processes in a way that respects their privacy and maintains their security.
Pillar #3: Trust

Uber. A super convenient ride-sharing alternative to taxis. A company accused of harassment within the company and by the drivers. A company accused of underpaying drivers and overcharging customers.

In any discussion of companies creating trust within a community, Uber is identified as one that used to be a shining example. However, a growing lack of trust quickly hurt its bottom line. Now, with the onboarding of new a CEO who is more focused on doing the right thing rather than endlessly increasing revenue, consumer opinions are gradually improving.

Amazon also failed on the Trust pillar when its AI hiring system learned from human biases that male employment candidates were preferable to female candidates. The project was terminated prior to implementation but not before news of the blunder leaked to outraged consumers. Amazon did the right thing on their own volition though not soon enough for consumers.
Link AI with Brand Purpose

Fortunately, many companies build consumer trust by not only providing good quality products and services but by also actively and intentionally striving to do the right thing, strategies that greatly appeal to Early Adopters and Laggards alike. Nike\textsuperscript{29} and Under Armor\textsuperscript{30} are prime examples in that they have taken a higher level approach to implementing AI in their business.

Rather than simply using AI to facilitate customer service and purchase decisions, Nike and Under Armor mapped AI tools against their mission statements to create AI for Good. Their apps and virtual assistants go beyond their products and services and help people lead healthier lives. Their tools offer motivational messages to help people make better health choices, and track health data such as sleep, heart rate, movement, and steps. Nike even risks its brand reputation and customer loyalty by tackling polarizing societal issues head-on, most notably signing to their roster Colin Kaepernick, a football player who offended many by kneeling during the national anthem to protest social inequality.

\textbf{Nike}  
*Mobile app that encourages healthier lifestyles and exercise via motivational messages*

\textbf{Under Armor}  
*Mobile app that tracks and analyzes workouts, sleep data, and nutrition, and provides personalized recommendations for nutrition and training*

\textbf{Waymo}  
*Primary mission is to make roads safer, free up time, and improve mobility for everyone*
In a bold, up-front statement on their website, Waymo actively promotes the greater good of its self-driving vehicles. Rather than describing their innovative technology or fashionable design, the first thing website visitors see is their ‘mission to make it safe and easy for everyone to get around.’ The key messages here are personal safety and accessibility (think people who don’t have drivers licences, are disabled, or who are impaired due to medications or alcohol).
The Ethics and Trust Gap

From the consumer point of view, companies using AI still have a long way to go for consumers to see them as trustworthy and ethical. Our research found that 20% of people believe companies using AI don’t have any ethical standards for AI in place, 31% worry companies might misuse a powerful AI to their own advantage, and 41% believe those companies are focused on reducing their costs at the expense of people.

When prompted about the ethics of seven of the top globally recognized companies using AI, 60% of people were unable to select one as having the most ethical approach to AI. In fact, the company with the most endorsements only elicited 18% of the endorsements. Companies must do a vastly better job of proving to their consumers that they deserve to be trusted with their personal data.

Companies With the Most Ethical Approach To Using AI

- Don’t know: 60%
- Google: 18%
- Apple: 15%
- Tesla: 13%
- Microsoft: 11%
- Amazon: 9%
- IBM: 7%
- Facebook: 6%
- Other: 1%
Implications of the Ethics Gap

The broader industry has heard these concerns and created new initiatives in response. For example, the AI Commons is a ‘universal and open framework for advancing the benefit of AI for everyone’ which will hold special events, working groups, and task forces to achieve this vision. Similarly, the Foundation for Responsible Robotics (FRR) is launching a quality mark which will offer consumers a reliable method for knowing which brands they can trust even when they don’t truly understand how the brand is using AI.

When consumers can’t trust companies to activate AI for Good, associations like the AI Commons and the FRR will do it for them. And if AI applications become a wild west of brands misusing and abusing privacy, security, and trust, consumers will demand that government steps in and regulates the AI industry for them. Naturally, marketers who bake consumer trust into the brand and company mission will increase their odds of success.
Conclusions

Across many industries, marketers have embedded AI processes throughout their systems to improve their engagement with or optimize their processes for consumers and customers. Through chatbots, voice assistants, and AI enhanced processes, AI is helping innovative companies offer their customers more relevant products and services, speedier answers to questions, and faster bookings and sales. And along the way, those companies are collecting vast quantities of data allowing them to better understand consumer and customer needs and desires, and provide increasingly better service.

Marketers who want to build successful brands can no longer reject AI as being irrelevant or overly complicated. At the same time, they don’t need to become experts in artificial intelligence, machine learning, neural networks, and deep learning. Based on our research with Canadians and exemplified in the case studies throughout this paper, the following three-step process will help marketers using AI technologies build more successful brands.
How To Build More Successful Brands With AI

Marketers must understand and clarify the role that AI can play in marketing
Marketers must understand consumer needs, unmet needs, and pain points, as well as the company’s brand purpose and mission. Clarity around these areas will guide strategic briefs and subsequent development efforts.

Marketers must understand the target audience
Marketers must focus on Early Adopters who are aware of and experimenting with AI tools today. This group will ultimately determine the success or failure of AI initiatives. Brands that earn the trust and advocacy of Early Adopters will create a smooth path for Laggards who will eventually follow.

Marketers must employ the AI Triple Win framework of Utility, Privacy and Security, and Trust.
Without Privacy, Utility is immaterial. Without Security, Privacy is immaterial. Each of these three pillars is a key ingredient for success that cannot be disconnected. The three pillars must be incorporated, by design, on day one, into every AI development.

The results shared here are a small part of a much larger study. If you would like to learn more about Canadians’ perceptions of AI and how Early Adopters are creating the path to successful AI innovation, or how to apply the Triple Win framework in your business please reach out to us. We’d love to help you navigate your AI journey.
Methodology

1019 adults in Canada, balanced to Statistics Canada demographics on age, gender, region, and French/English language, completed a 20-minute self-administered questionnaire between August 1 and 15, 2018. The 2017 survey was conducted similarly, in August 2017, with 1001 participants. As with all non-probability samples using research access panels, margin of error cannot be calculated, and these results are subject to both sampling and non-sampling error. The questionnaire did not distinguish between Canadians and non-Canadians (e.g., residents, visitors, students, workers) although the term ‘Canadians’ is sometimes used for convenience.


References

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About Sklar Wilton & Associates

Sklar Wilton & Associates is a brand and retail consultancy that helps Canadian and global Fortune 500 companies unlock growth opportunities and build stronger brands. We are experts in understanding consumer needs, unmet needs, and pain points on the path to helping marketers and brands implement AI strategies that grow their brand through disruptive innovation.

Leveraging strategic advisory, quantitative, and qualitative research and analytics, Sklar Wilton & Associates works with Canada’s leading consumer and B2B brands across a range of marketing challenges. Core capabilities include brand purpose and positioning, portfolio and brand strategy, marketing planning, innovation, consumer segmentation, advanced analytics and strategic facilitation. SW&A was recognized as a Great Workplace for Women in 2018, the Best Workplace in Canada for Small Companies in 2017 by the Great Place To Work® Institute, and the number one Employee Recommended Workplace among small private employers by the Globe and Mail and Morneau Shepell in 2017.

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