Innovative recruiting with AI

The TREND REPORT editorial team got together with Dr. Jan Christian Seevogel, Senior Vice President DACH at Avature, to discuss the impact of new technologies on HR.

How important are AI technologies for HR management today?

If companies want to take advantage of AI technologies for growth, I recommend that they focus on using these new technologies in HR management. In a world that keeps changing at an accelerating rate, growth comes from transformation – and transformation starts with the people who make up the company, i.e. the employees. So, HR management plays a central strategic role. AI helps build and develop teams based on strategic decisions and can thus drive transformation for the entire company. On top of that, AI can increase HR productivity while helping reduce costs – an effect that is all the more important because HR generally makes up a high proportion of the total cost of doing business.

Can you provide examples of how AI technologies can be used wisely in recruiting?

AI can be used to find talents and candidates and automatically compare profiles during the subsequent screening process. The HR-specific semantic search helps recruiting teams find the right candidates more quickly, e.g. by identifying similarities in job titles and making corresponding suggestions. For example, when searching for a web developer, the system might suggest also searching for a front-end engineer because the usage of the word is very similar. This helps HR managers without specialized industry knowledge optimize and accelerate the search process. The semantic search is equally helpful when it comes to skills, spelling mistakes, industry-specific abbreviations or special regional place names. In this way, the semantic search helps to find the needle in the haystack – the top candidate – as fast as possible, especially when combined with other company-specific

search filters. AI can also be used to find profiles in large company databases or externally on the Web that are similar to existing promising candidates or even newly hired employees. The same functionality can be used to find similar jobs within the database, which can be enormously helpful for strategic planning in large companies with many positions. If, for example, I know of a job that took a long time to fill, I can take the right steps early on for other, comparable jobs – building a talent pool, for instance. AI can also be used externally, for the candidate. With automated matching, talents no longer need to find the right job on their own. They can simply upload their CV or link their Xing or LinkedIn accounts to the career portal with a single click. The AI then lists the most suitable jobs from the database by analyzing the candidate data, and another click sends the application. AI can also help automate processes for scheduling interviews and engaging with candidates, both of which are extremely time-consuming.

What are the challenges facing large companies and corporations in this context in particular?

Artificial intelligence only works with a lot of data, and the systems that process this data need a lot of computing power. First of all, this needs to be represented technically. In addition, the use of data and AI technologies is subject to different regulations in different regions around the world. This demands a certain amount of flexibility from companies operating globally, since they have to act differently in different countries. There are also challenges associated with machine learning in AI. Here, care must be taken that the system only learns what it should learn – otherwise a prejudiced AI threatens to make decisions that nobody wants.

How can this problem be solved?

Initially, you can feed the AI only data that is rather harmless to its decisions (for example, education or work experience). If you want to feed the AI data that is potentially more risky – in the sense of a possible wrong decision – then you need a fixed, company-wide

set of rules that avoids bias and above all a white-box AI model. In other words, every employee who uses or looks after the AI needs to know what the AI is doing at any given moment. I strongly advise against black-box AI, where the decision criteria are unknown.

Does white-box AI also help relieve any fears that employees might have about the technology?

Exactly. People usually experience fear in situations that are unfamiliar – for example, when I am faced with decisions without fully understanding where they come from, when they are not transparent. However, if I make the AI's decision-making transparent, I will enable those involved to deal with it and, if necessary, rethink and revise it. That should ease the fear. Another anxiety is that your own job will be replaced by the new technology. However, there are still very few jobs that can be fully automated without further leaps in technology. Meanwhile, AI can relieve people of about half of the activities they perform during their work, especially the administrative tasks. The core issue, then, is to free up employees through AI so that they can focus on the really important and fulfilling challenges. That should relieve any anxiety and inspire confidence. www.avature.net

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