The Importance of AI Integration for Business Leaders

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Artificial intelligence (AI) has reshaped how businesses in every sector operate. At its best, AI can help streamline workflows, improve customer relations, and enhance profit potential. However, *Forbes* reports that 95 percent of AI integration initiatives fail to make it past the pilot stage or fail to create value.

For rising business leaders planning their own career trajectories, here are some of the benefits of AI adoption, four tips for integration, and how the A. B. Freeman School of Business at Tulane University has adapted its MBA programs to meet the needs of students navigating this new, uncertain business landscape.

Why Is AI Integration Important in Business?

According to a 2025 survey conducted by McKinsey & Co., 78 percent of businesses use AI to carry out at least one task. In 2023, only 55 percent did. This demonstrates that in today's business landscape, AI integration is crucial to keeping pace with competitors.

Some uses of AI are industry-specific. In finance, for example, AI powers real-time fraud detection tools. Logistics companies, on the other hand, use it to streamline both their own and their clients' supply chain routes. However, across every sector, companies use AI to:

- Collect and analyze data about consumers, competitors, and economic forecasts
- Automate simple, time-consuming tasks
- Monitor and troubleshoot IT operations
- Provide continuous customer service through chatbots and similar natural language processing technologies

By employing AI in these ways, companies hope to increase both profits and efficiency. In another 2025 survey entitled "Superagency in the Workplace: Empowering People to Unlock AI's Full Potential," McKinsey & Co. reports that 92 percent of companies plan to invest more in AI in the next three years — an indication that AI-assisted operations may very well become the norm before much longer.

How to Use AI in Business: 4 Tips for Successful Integration

While AI integration is quickly gaining popularity and becoming more accessible to businesses of all sizes, using this technology to its fullest potential requires intentional and strategic planning. At the same time, leaders must keep emerging

ethical issues in mind and lines of communication open.

1. Create Measurable, Actionable Goals

The first step to using AI in business operations is identifying areas where it can help and ensuring that progress can be measured. For example, a company using AI software to automate data entry tasks might set a goal of reducing report turnaround times by one day or reducing mistakes by 50 percent.

Creating actionable goals can also generate buy-in from stakeholders and employees. Just as important, it allows leaders to notice when and investigate why their current AI policies might not be working as intended.

2. Create a Data Strategy

To function properly, AI software must typically be trained with past data, especially for forecasting sales, costs, and similar metrics. Before generating and using reports, managers and other leaders must ensure that all existing data is accurate and entered correctly.

Another important aspect of a data strategy is avoiding data silos. Data silos are banks of information that are walled off from team members who might need it. AI applications may also not be able to access this data, causing them to create incomplete or inaccurate reports.

3. Consider Ethical Issues

Many of the ethical issues surrounding AI are far from solved. Like people, AI programs can learn biases. In some cases, business leaders are not familiar with how applications operate, creating issues with transparency, accountability, and privacy.

These issues can have real-world consequences. For example, AI applications used to filter job applications may learn biases from past hiring practices. This has resulted in complicated lawsuits leading to lost revenue and stakeholder trust.

4. Communicate With Stakeholders

The 2025 McKinsey & Co. report about AI in the workplace found a lack of communication is often a problem with AI initiatives. In the survey, executives severely underestimate how many of their employees already use AI.

At the same time, executives are more likely to think employee readiness is a bigger barrier to AI integration than their own leadership issues. To prevent this integration killing gap in communication, it is important to communicate directly and often with everyone involved in AI adoption projects, from the employees who use the technology to the vendors who provide it.

How Tulane's MBA Programs Teach AI Business Strategy

According to Paulo Goes, dean of Tulane's business school, AI business strategy is shaping the job market recent graduates are stepping into.

"There is a lag between the potential AI effect on jobs and how industries are reacting. Not every company is a Google or Amazon," he says. "Most companies are still sorting out all the developments trying to understand and embrace the new world. And new developments keep coming every day!"

As a result, the Freeman School of Business has developed a new comprehensive AI platform to have students experiment with the technology in a variety of courses.

By participating in business environments of the future, our students develop AI fluency and are equipped to help companies implement their AI-enabled work environments.

"They get to try different large language models, develop their prompting skills, build their own bots that emulate business processes and workflows, and share their prompting efforts with their teams and their instructors," Goes says.

Goes says this hands-on AI experience will soon be available in about half of all business classes, but it was initially piloted in classes such as:

- Entrepreneurship and Venture Development
- Negotiations
- Project Management

- Data Analytics
- Software Development

Additionally, the Career Management Center in the business school is focused on helping students be more strategic in their job hunts, find short-term roles that can turn into full-time business careers, and demonstrate their hard AI and soft leadership skills.

Become a Leader in the AI-Enabled Business Environment of Today and Tomorrow

While vital in today's business environment, AI is only one facet of the MBA programs offered by the A. B. Freeman School of Business at Tulane University. Students have the choice of online or in-person and full time or part time with an Executive MBA program for experienced rising leaders.

From there, students can choose from specializations in Business Analytics, Finance, Marketing, Strategy and Innovation, and Energy and Sustainability. To discuss your options and learn more, request more information today.

Sources:

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