

Please Sign In and use this article's on page print button to print this article.

Technology

How artificial intelligence will help, or hinder, your workforce



There are a number of ways AI tools can help your workforce. There also are some challenges that could be created.

MIKHAIL SELEZNEV VIA GETTY IMAGES



By Andy Medici – Senior Reporter, The Playbook,
Jun 26, 2023

IN THIS ARTICLE

Career & Workplace

Industry

Playbook

Topic

National

Topic

Whitney Zhang

Person

Jake Klein

Person

Seth Price

Person

Shakked Not

Person

Listen to this article 9 min

Attorney [Seth Price](#) wants you to know that ChatGPT and the rise of AI tools is not a drill.

“It’s going to change the world. It is the greatest technology innovation I have seen since the web became of age. It is going to change the way we work and learn and communicate, I have no doubt,” Price said. “It’s adapt or perish”

Price, a founding partner of Washington, D.C.-based Price Benowitz LLP, has grown the firm to more than 40 attorneys. Now he sees an opportunity to harness artificial-intelligence tools to become more productive, innovative and adaptable. He already has asked staff to come up with low-risk ways AI tools and technology can be used at the firm.

That doesn’t, however, mean throwing caution to the wind.

“We are in the infancy of this, and with all new emerging technologies, people are going to use it badly while figuring out how to harness it for good,” Price said. “Limiting the risk as we innovate is really important.”

OpenAI's ChatGPT release in 2022 led to it becoming one of the fastest-growing platforms in the world, hitting 100 million users in just two months and becoming one of the more popular forms of what is called "generative AI."

Generative AI technology essentially uses a massive bank of text and phrases scraped from across the internet to predict the words that would follow a question or prompt. From there, it can generate coherent responses, although not always the correct ones – leading to what some experts have dubbed "hallucinations." Other AI tools can generate images, analyze data or create visualizations.

There are a number of ways these new tools can help your workforce. There also, however, are some challenges that could be created. Here's a look at some of the possibilities.

Using AI to boost productivity

Shakked Not and Whitney Zhang from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology wrote in a working paper dated March 10, 2023, that the use of ChatGPT among college-educated professionals boosted average productivity by cutting down the time it took to write short, self-contained, business-related documents.

They found that overall quality went up while overall job satisfaction also went up with the use of the technology.

"Only time and future research will fully reveal how ChatGPT and its successors will affect labor markets. For now, the evidence we provide suggests that generative AI technologies will – and have already begun – to noticeably impact workers," they wrote in the paper.

A separate working paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research studied data from 5,179 customer-support agents from a Fortune 500 firm supporting small-business owners with access to a generative AI tool like ChatGPT. That research found that the use of AI boosted the number of customer issues respondents were able to solve by 14%.

But there was one important caveat: The use of the AI tool only seemed to

truly boost new and less-experienced customer-service workers.

The authors' theory is that higher-skilled workers benefit far less from AI assistance because the AI is reflecting behaviors and skills it learned from the skilled work, making it more beneficial to reduce the learning curve and help out new customer-service workers instead.

Workers might get incorrect information

ChatGPT, while taking the stage by storm in recent months, has also made news with its inability to separate fact from fiction. Recently, a pair of New York attorneys reportedly filed a legal brief from a chatbot that cited fake cases – and now face potential sanctions.

Separately, a judge in Texas issued a requirement recently for lawyers to certify to him they did not use AI to draft their filings without having a human check for accuracy.

Another person is suing the company behind ChatGPT for libel for false information generated for a report, saying that every statement about him by the AI tool is false.

Experts have dubbed these false outputs “hallucinations.” Critics have said many of these tools are just predicting which words follow the others and are not able to determine accuracy.

“If you turn in something blindly, there is amazing risk,” Price said.

He stressed that while the technology is improving every day, the data the AI is based on is important. Business owners should look at the data the AI is trained on to see how valuable it could be for them – or how unusable it might be.

“At the moment, you don’t know what’s Hamburger Helper and what is sirloin,” Price said. “Buyer Beware: It’s only as good as the data that’s put into the system.”

Helping make sense of analytics and data

Jake Klein, CEO of Dealtale, said in an email that it’s one thing to have access to raw data and reporting, but it’s another thing to understand what it means – especially without a background in data analysis.

“Integrating generative AI removes barriers to analytics for marketers, offering them the tools to prove ROI at their fingertips and freeing their workload up to focus on creative campaigns and connecting with their audience,” Klein said.

Automating human resources and employee skill-building

According to the results of a survey by payroll firm Paychex Inc., more than 75% of human-resources leaders at companies with 20 or more employees said they plan to use artificial-intelligence tools over the next 12 months. That includes AI tools for tracking applicants, assessing employee satisfaction and identifying potential candidates online.

The report identified other ways AI tools could help companies, including to gather employee feedback and synthesize the data to help highlight areas of improvement. Chatbots also can answer basic employee queries and help skill-building and training activities.

But business owners and managers looking to incorporate AI tools into their work need to ensure proper oversight when it comes to the use of those tools, Price said. That includes workers who might try to use ChatGPT or other tools to pass off its own work as theirs. That could lead to problems, especially if that content is being used online for marketing purposes. Google does not look kindly on artificially-generated articles, Price said.

"They are not going to be rewarding people using ChatGPT," he said. "Use it at your peril."

ChatGPT can, however, be used to make suggestions on existing content, or to look at articles about the competition.

Many workers also are using AI tools at work and simply not telling their managers. A survey of 3,000 American workers by human-resources company Checkr found 69% of workers say they are afraid to tell their managers they use AI tools at work for fear of one day being replaced by those same tools.

At the same time, workers are feeling pressure from managers to adopt AI tools. About 79% of American workers

say their managers want them to use the tools more at work, and the rise of ChatGPT is already been seen in job listings.

About 74% of American workers said they agree with or are on the fence about the adoption of AI tools leading to them losing their jobs. Those worries are not unfounded. About 66% of managers say they would gladly replace employees with AI tools if the work was comparable, according to a survey by Beautiful.ai of 3,000 Americans in management positions. Another survey of 1,000 U.S. business leaders by ResumeBuilder.com found about 25% of companies said ChatGPT has already saved them \$75,000 or more.

That being said, experts say companies need to proceed with caution when it comes to using AI to cut labor costs, as there are several important factors to consider that transcend the bottom line.

Business owners that want to take advantage of AI should figure out the areas in which they have “room to breath” and experiment without running into any undue risk. Owners also should put into place controls to ensure they know how the AI is being used.

Price stressed some additional caveats, as well. Among them, make sure not to put sensitive information into ChatGPT or other AI tools, especially information about clients or any other private information.

“We want ChatGPT and other AI platforms to learn and learn and learn – but not by putting things in that we don’t want the world to know,” Price said. “Right now, we are seeing ChatGPT get better and better but it still in its early stages.”

Price is optimistic about the AI-assisted future, as law firms especially will be able to use it to take advantage of productivity boosts. Eventually he sees a future where a company can have its own “private” AI trained on its own internal documents and tailored to its specific needs, further boosting the technology’s usefulness.

“I am looking to embrace this and use this responsibly and not burying our

head in the sand and letting this pass us by – or used by rogue employees," Price said.

Want more stories like this? To stay up to date on the news and information to grow your business, sign up for [The Playbook newsletter here.](#)

RELATED CONTENT

Workers can't get vacation from office emails. It's burning them out.



Bipartisan group renews push for affordable-housing tax credit



Companies to increase use of AI for hiring, employee engagement



Small businesses have an edge on remote work. Here's why.



Many companies not prepared for Pregnant Workers Fairness Act



MORE FOR YOU

[More >](#)



Statewide education: How policy changes in Florida are impacting the business of higher education



Founder of public company to receive millions after leaving firm. Here are the details.



The fight to end hybrid work is showing up in job postings



Emptying offices alone not expected to dry up city coffers, S&P Global finds



Helping small businesses unlock potential through digital tools



Downtown Vitality Index: Who is winning the Covid-19 comeback?

T H E L I S T

[More >](#)

LGBTQ+ - Owned Businesses in

COMMERCIAL REAL ... Sacramento Area

NM LGBTQIA-

Birmingham's Largest Privately