

The Transcript

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● **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** started transcription

HG Horwood, Gail 0:03

Approve any use of Novartis, you know or my name or likeness and associated with this material, OK.

M Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth 0:05

The first one is about the marketing function how has marketing been leveraging AI for business growth.

HG Horwood, Gail 0:33

Sure. So taking a step back, I have All think it is leader led and my background is in digital.

So I started my career 20 years ago and I have been a chief digital officer, so I'm very I'm a marketer with a very tech data background.

Because of that, I've been at the forefrfr for years, to be honest in leveraging AI applications and approaches.

At the beginning, more on the content and scale.

Areas when generative AI and ChatGPT came onto the scene, it became clear that this was going to be more than just production efficiency, that there were going to be lots of ways. So in my organization I became because of my background and fluency in the area, the.

Commercial leader that was helping the rest of the organization shape.

A perspective on how to implement AI in our company. In our company we have two distinct.

Kind of operating groups.

We have medical research and drug development, which was already heavily invested in using.

Large language models, etcetera.

So I have nothing to do with that.

I'm on the commercial side of the business and we were not using it as much.

So the approach that I've taken is to take the native tools that we already have and take advantage of AI features and functionality within those tools to.

Do our jobs better?

So I've taken a very.

Near term view on getting as many people in the organization using the tools because the ideas will come from them.

It doesn't.

I could.

I can't come up with all the use cases that they could.

So the two philosophies are or the the framework is get everybody comfortable and using AI and we do that because.

For example, we have a huge.

Investment in Microsoft Copilot licenses, so we as a company have made that available and our CEO has expressed that he wants us all to be AI proficient and enabled. So that's great.

So I have that at my back. You know, I I just, just because the CEO says something doesn't mean everybody jumps on board and uses it right.

So we have led extensive training subgroup training, large scale you know.

We call them AI discovery days where we have the whole organization have featured speakers.

This has been going on for a year and a half.

Consequently.

We have about 95% of our employee population that has access to these tools.

Using them on a regular basis.

So that's great.

Within that, we are now at the point where we're identifying marketing specific use cases.

So my first task was to get everybody using it, comfortable with it, and now we're identifying marketing specific use cases.

The initial use cases are around taking our marketing planning and executional process.

Identifying areas that are heavily manually kind of driven and that where a lot of time is spent, you know, so there are different areas.

You know a simple one.

It sounds basic, but we call it calendaring.

It's about taking all of our materials deadlines.

So we're a huge organization with we put out 20,000 pieces a year and they're all regulated. So they have to be reviewed and.

So each brand team has materials, deadlines, key dates, et cetera.

Sounds very basic. We put that all into an AI model and we're now helping prompt all of our marketers about when they need to get started, you know? Hey, you better start the brief on this and then it sounds very basic, but you can't imagine how much that.

Still an Excel spreadsheet and.

We are again at scale.

You know, spending billions in marketing, so getting a handle and and from my perspective as a leader in my leadership team, you can imagine that without something like that, we're constantly being told you you have a day to look at this create. So So what we're trying to.

Do is smooth out the process and make it more.

Thoughtful in terms of when things need to be started, when they need to be reviewed, when they need to go into market, and keeping that all together.

So that's a very practical it's significant and it's it's we're in the process of implementing it.

We're all very excited about it, 'cause it's it is productivity, but it's also gonna give us more time to focus on the work, right?

And again, this is when you're doing something at scale.

We are using it to build better briefs, so we have spent a lot of time and I think one of the things that's useful when you're doing.

Marketing use cases is to really understand your marketing process.

How do you go to market?

What? What is your planning process?

So we've codified what is a great, brief look like what are the.

Elements of a great brief and now what we're doing is creating the AI system that allows marketers to start a briefing process, reference the right.

Insights the right brand.

You know, brand systems, the right research and insights, but I'll do that with the Press of a button.

So I'm starting a brief for this product and I need these pieces of information.

So it starts to assemble a brief for them.

So then they can then review it and add more detail.
But again, even just finding all of those elements and emailing my colleague in research to get all the pieces to put into a brief that is huge.
And imagine we do.
300 briefs see it just monumental amount of time.
So this is we're using it for productivity, but meaningful processes so that we can take work out of the system.
That's how we're doing it.
We have been doing it and using it for content and creative that isn't as big.
An A challenge for us here because.
In a single market I'm I'm responsible for the US.
So I I don't need to.
We're doing it like for translations and other things, but not versions. I I don't need.
That's not as much of an issue for me.

M Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth 7:09

OK.
Very interesting.
And who are the? Who are your partners, then, on all these, in terms of the C-Suite, like who do you need to to work closely with?

HG Horwood, Gail 7:18

It's great for me is that I've chosen things that I I I don't need to to to. In other words, I have a A obviously an IT partner. But other than that and a finance partner, because it does cost money to put these things into place. So I.
I've involved finance etcetera, but I've chosen things that we can do on our own power and get them finished, because if I'm picking such monumental projects and there are a couple that we're working on that.
Bigger it. It's too slow, right?
We just my view is my operating guideline is people need to use the tools and put them to work so.
So use AI daily and then use it for their work, because that will help them understand what's possible.
So I focused almost entirely on things that will help them in the next year or two.

I'm not working on moon shots.

You know, things like that.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 8:18

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

So what about legal?

And what about?

Because your industry is very highly regulated.

Also Gen.

AI and the use of AI comes with a lot of concerns.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 8:31

Yeah. So the nice thing is, yes, I mean, but but we have been given freedom within a framework. So we've been given tools that were already legally vetted.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 8:40

Mm hmm.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 8:42

So I don't.

Again, I was part of that process, but legal has vetted the tool set so.

I also have all of my processes that are currently in place that are manual are approved.

So yes, there is a legal review, but it's not a heavy lift because I'm taking an approved process and automating it or using AI, it's not.

There's very few examples where it's a heavy legal lift, but that's enabled because our company CEO has said this is important.

So we have these tools.

Sure, legal would be involved.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 9:19

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

And can you tell me?

HG **Horwood, Gail** 9:21

It's more finance, to be honest, because they are looking for savings everywhere and you know you have to spend money to automate things.
So there's a lot of partnership there, more than you would think.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 9:34

Yeah. Yeah, I can imagine.

So how did the CEO get on board with the whole, let's say, adoption of AI?

HG **Horwood, Gail** 9:43

Very sophisticated, I mean, so. So just to be clear, in our company, the CEO is a comes from a drug development background and that's it.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 9:51

Mm hmm mm hmm.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 9:51

It's it's it's central to that.

So he didn't need to get on board. He's been using it, I mean.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 9:54

Mm H.

No, I understand. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 9:58

It's what was what was needed to get on board was putting this in the pans of every employee.

That was a bit of a not.

He was supportive of it.

I mean, he he thought that was a good idea.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 10:09

Mm hmm.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 10:10

But you can imagine there's some groups compliance, regulatory, legal who would

say is that a good idea?

So there were a lot of discussions around that, but that was enabled.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 10:21

Mm hmm, very interesting.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 10:22

Trainings. So we do a lot of.

Trainings that are required to be honest, but again, it's just none of this is magic.

It's just very tactical.

You know, steps to get people comfortable understanding using coming up with ideas.

So I would say that we're again, like I said, we have very high utilization of native AI for like example in Microsoft and other applications.

And now where we're going is how do we build on that knowledge that you've created to?

You know, really make it better.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 11:05

And have you been involved in any organization wide initiatives?

HG **Horwood, Gail** 11:10

Yeah. So what I was given the commercial responsibilities. So a lot of the initi.

So what we did was we have an innovation team that sits in my group and we did a we partnered with Microsoft and we're big partners with Microsoft.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 11:22

Mm hmm.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 11:28

Anyway, we partnered with Microsoft.

This is a year and a half ago and we outlined almost like an idea day.

So we had teams pitch.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 11:35

Hmm.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 11:37

All the things they wanted to accomplish with AI, but keep in mind this was the year and a half ago when people weren't 100% sure what AI could do for them.

So what was excellent?

Having Microsoft with us is that they said they would evaluate the ideas in real time. It was very educational.

The teams liked it where they said, you know what, this is not really.

You don't need AI to solve this problem or.

This can be solved with another tool and maybe AI is a part of it, but that's not, you know, so.

So they helped us.

So we we went from like.

Let's say 50 idea 50 things to a list of 10, and then we prioritize the top three and a lot of them was around democratization of information and insights.

It is a. It's a head bucket across the organization, yeah.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 12:26

Mm hmm.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

I'm very, very interesting.

Yeah. OK. And I mean, we started the conversation where you explain that you used to be Chief digital officer.

So if you look broader into this whole AI transformation, what are the possibilities for business growth coming out of it?

What do you think that marketing specifically as a function is bringing?

To the table.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 12:57

Well, AI is a tool to help you get customer intimacy and deliver better experiences.

So marketing is doing is executing on that.

So they're using these tools and that's what we're doing.

But but Mariana, we're doing it through.

For example, we use Salesforce marketing cloud that has Einstein AI built into it. So we are using it, but it's not like it's not an end game, it's embedded into the things we.

So as I said, what marketing is doing is taking it into their workflow to gain better behavioural insights and design.

Stronger experience plans and then using it to optimize those plans and create triggers and such.

So that's happening today.

I don't.

I don't make a big show of calling it like an AI initiative, but it is because I just call it modern.

I I I've been calling it the future of marketing.

It's it's marketing automation really. I mean at a very simple, but it's it's it's on steroids.

M Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth 13:59

OK.

Mm hmm mm hmm. OK, and if we look a little bit ahead, what's?

Yeah. What are some of the biggest opportunities that you see?

HG Horwood, Gail 14:17

I mean, for me, the biggest opportunity is to have everybody have an AI mindset because again, I I can't stress enough.

It's like digital and I've been through that for 20 years.

You can't have a digital office, even though I was head of one. I mean, that's what companies wanted.

They wanted digital office and then they wanted that somebody else to handle it.

I see the same is happening with AI. Don't believe in that.

So we haven't created an AI office, right?

We it doesn't make sense.

We wanna make empower individual employees and teams to leverage AI so we do a lot of what I call role based training.

So if your experience.

If your job is experience optimization, AI will be used in very different ways.

And if you're a marketing strategic person, so we have role based trainings, but my view is the future is and this has been widely quoted.

AI is not gonna replace your job, but not knowing AI will so it.

Like you have to.

It applies across the board, in marketing, etcetera, so.

For us, it's about designing.

Better, better ways to reach our stakeholders and and what we need to be able to measure that and prove it with these new experience plans and optimizations and new concepts and it will help with speed to market today your your agility and speed to market is critical even.

In a regulated industry, you have to move faster, so yeah.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 15:55

Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Very interesting thing.

So what about?

You touched upon this whole, let's say, fear of AI taking away jobs, losing the human side, etc.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 16:08

Yeah.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 16:10

Of course, we're very interested in humanized growth approach.

So how do you see that one?

HG **Horwood, Gail** 16:15

Yeah.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 16:17

So how do you see this tension between, let's say, the human side of it? The machine side of it, and probably already have some experiences from your previous job as well?

HG **Horwood, Gail** 16:27

I mean it's.

I don't so. So it's also been widely commented on, or at least I've seen many times that they talk about human in the loop.

We're we're not designing AI to to take over anything.

We're we're designing our programs to make AI an accelerant.

There's always judgement.

And you know.

Creative execution and just because AI can make an ad doesn't mean it's good, right?

So or it doesn't mean it doesn't so.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 16:58

Yep.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 17:02

It's it's about. So we very much see this as leveraging. Sorry Andrew.

Leveraging the tools in our tool set.

To build better experience and it's it's not taking humans out, but it's taking out the work that humans.

Don't necessarily need to do, and that's people don't like that because it it it means they.

You know, if I spend my day assembling things, I have a real value because nobody else can do that because it's all in my head. What we're saying is.

That's not your job anymore. It's to think about what you're assembling.

So I'm oversimplifying it.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 17:37

Mm hmm.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 17:38

But I mean, to be honest, that's what we all do.

We're all like many project managers.

Even I like, I'm gaining this from here and there and I'm putting it into a deck.

As a human, your job is synthesis and storytelling simplification and storytelling in marketing, and we are creating the conditions to have more time to do simplification and storytelling.

And that's like an ideal, I mean, and it sounds like who wouldn't want to do that in my mind?

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 18:10

Mm hmm. Mm hmm definitely.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 18:11

But some people don't.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 18:15

Yeah. No, it's really OK.

Well, this has been really insightful until now.

Is there anything that you wanna share?

But I didn't ask you yet. If we talk about humanized growth in the era of AI.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 18:27

No, not really.

No, not really.

But good luck with the project and excited to see the outputs.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 18:38

Yeah. And and GAIL, now you know more or less what we're exploring in the project because of the questions I asked, is there something else that you will be hoping to learn from this study if we share with you, let's say the the report six months from now?

Is there something you would be looking for?

HG **Horwood, Gail** 18:55

You've done a good job of trying marketing to growth use cases.

I mean, part of what all this does is help.

It should help make marketing better and to the extent and again, nobody. I can't believe anybody's really measuring this now, but those are the things we need to look at.

How do we evaluate?

Whether this increased time on thinking and storytelling and synthesis is actually

contributing to the bottom line. I you know, I I think I mean.

In our in our business, we use AI to uncover.

Like an untapped need. But it's very specific because we're looking at segmentation for people who are, let's say, undiagnosed for a disease.

So I have some different so we use it a lot in segmentation and I think it can play a very big role there.

To bring in more variables than you've been able to do in the past, so I think that's another area, but it's it's sort of a.

It's it's marketing, but it's it's a different piece in different way in.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 20:03

Yeah, yeah, definitely.

Yeah, it's interesting.

Today I spoke to somebody else who's from a very different industry, FMCG, and they were talking actually about demand spaces. And again the segmentation they create with AI. So that's very interesting.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 20:16

Yeah, yeah.

So that is that is a key area and that we were we were already doing that though. So I don't mean to sound like but but I I think it'll be more and more for sure.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 20:23

No.

Yeah. Yeah. Perfect. OK. And then basically my last question is, so our partner on this is Google.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 20:29

Thank you.

Yeah.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 20:35

I don't if you work with them or not, but basically they wanna learn from those interviews.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 20:38

Sure.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 20:40

They're also looking for, let's say, cm OS and stories to feature in their publications. Their events, of course, with approval.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 20:46

Yeah.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 20:48

Is it OK if I share the script with them?

HG **Horwood, Gail** 20:51

Yes, that's fine.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 20:53

Yeah, OK, that's perfect.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 20:54

No you can.

You can share it. Yeah, it's fine.

All right. Thank you.

M **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** 20:56

So thank you so much.

It was lovely to meet you and hopefully we speak soon.

Thank you, GAIL. Bye.

HG **Horwood, Gail** 21:01

Yes. OK, bye.

● **Mariana Peneva | Institute for Real Growth** stopped transcription