

# DREAM

A person with long brown hair, wearing a brown patterned scarf and a black leather jacket, is shown in profile from the back, looking out over a body of water under a hazy sky. The person is also wearing dark-rimmed glasses.

## DATA RULES EVERYTHING AROUND ME

A GAME-CHANGING APPROACH TO SCALING GROWTH

by Raz Choudhury

# the concept

*The concept of DREAM (Data Rules Everything Around Me) is pretty simple, let the data that you gather for your enterprise rule and govern your core decisions and serve as the engine for growth and scalability. For a business to experience exponential growth, it must have an elastic business model that intakes data from all aspects of its operations. Decisions made without data backing it up is not something we really think about on a daily basis. Business leaders make countless decisions each week and for the most part, these decisions are not backed up by data – rather personal observations, experience, and sometime intuitions.*

*Gut feeling and decisions based on vision and preference will always have its place but when you need to scale and sustain rapid growth – data will be the best friend that you can count on to make sure that the blind spots are covered and biases do not influence the ultimate decision. This is why it is absolutely imperative that organizations ready themselves to have their core sales, marketing, and operations dept. collect and gather data at every opportunity possible. Today it's not difficult to collect data for your departments with a wide range of software tools - so, with a little bit of effort and initiative – you should be able to collect data.*





# execution

*Data collection is the first step, the second essential step is to centralize that data so that it can be properly processed and deciphered. This means rolling out a fully integrated solution that do not leave your business-critical data in silos. This is especially true for sales and marketing, as mentioned earlier in this book, companies in average have to use over 16 different sales and marketing tools.*

*This is a big problem if you are trying to have your data influence your decision-making. These tools may have certain features or appeal to certain team members in your organization – but if they do not incorporate seamlessly with your central data engine – then those small features and usability benefits do not mean anything since the data collected cannot readily be put into use by the organization as a whole.*

*Once the data is centralized, organizations can use the power of Automation and AI to act on that data. It can be something as simple as making sure no prospects are left under-nurtured with proper marketing messages to making sure that the sales reps know how many times a prospect visits your website. It is important to note that AI and Automation simply cannot be leveraged without data.*



*Centralized Data Collection is a critical step, followed by utilization of Automation to act on that data in an efficient way, and then AI to decipher that data to discover hidden patterns and predict future trends. This whole concept of D.R.E.A.M can take a little time to put into place organization-wide, but if you consider doing it for your core business functions such as sales and marketing, you will see a dramatic impact on your growth.*

*This is true not because it is preached by advocates of technology, it is simply because your customers are leaving critical business data when they interact with your team or your digital marketing assets and there is an expectation by the customer that you serve them well with the data that they leave you with. According to Gartner by 2020 your customers will expect their interactions with your enterprise to be managed by without humans.*

*Consumers have higher expectations from businesses today than they did 5 years ago, they expect you to know how to greet them before they arrive and also expect you to serve them in the most efficient way possible with the most relevant information possible. And neither is doable – if the data you collect is not actionable. Remember - Data has been and will always be leveraged by your bigger competitors, it's up to you to make it your friend or relegate it to an IT initiative.*





# EXPLORE

NEW AVENUES WITH AI

by Raz Choudhury





# AI - a brief history

*So let's break down AI a little bit. The early excitement in Artificial Intelligence was mainly about robotics and autonomous machines – my Westinghouse research paper in High School was in fact about Artificial Intelligence and how 'machines' would evolve into smarter beings and enter the workforce. For the most part, AI is built on solid foundations laid out by countless mathematicians' decades ago and are now being utilized in programming languages in modified formats.*

*Today AI is popularized by chatbots and software outlets dealing with three main areas: deciphering big data, recognizing patterns and predicting future events, and understanding and processing natural language. The advent of AI in today's economy is primarily due to the fact that we now amass a wealth of data. The internet has enabled enterprises and agencies to collect a tremendous amount of data. This immense data collection now can be understood, leveraged, and utilized better through the application of mathematical formulas and programming languages that perform learning – predicting – and recognizing behaviors.*



# the hype

*It was just the other day when I got an email from a start-up asking if I wanted to use their software to help me figure out what my team would like to have for lunch. They claim that their AI technology with its machine learning abilities would be able to help me identify what someone in my team would want to eat for lunch today. Implying that it may help me engage my team better and perhaps keep my team happy and build culture.*

*Being a part of the early tech culture, I am a big proponent of using technology to propel forward in our goals and objectives, but am not sure how I feel about this one. On one side, I see that this start-up is simply trying to solve the problem of a big team grappling with ordering lunch for everyone any given day in an efficient and seamless manner. But as a team leader, I feel that what someone wants for lunch should be discretionary and not based on what the machine learns about their preference. Essentially - not creeping up on their device usage and then predicting what they want to eat today.*

*The point is, terms such AI and Machine Learning are being thrown around for anything and everything technology – useful or not – and it's being fueled by spectators and speculators to an extent that the term and its merit is getting dragged through the mud.*



# the good

*AI can be used to find live saving patterns. The team at Google, for example, can find patterns of pandemic outbreaks before they get out of control and enterprises can find more efficient ways to serve their clients while reducing the cost of operation and passing on the savings to their customers.*

*Elements of AI can also help the workforce in today's economy by allowing them to have more human engagement with their clients and apply more human intelligence to their roles and relegate mundane tasks to the machine.*

*Smart cars, homes, and cities are already building essential building blocks to collect data and utilize elements of AI to make our lives, homes, and cities better, cleaner, and safer. So there is no doubt that there is a lot of good AI will bring to society.*





# the bad

*Scientist Robert Oppenheimer once recited a quote from an ancient Indian text, right after the first test detonation of the atomic bomb, “Now I’ve become Death, the destroyer of worlds”. Advanced technology in our dualistic world can be used for good or evil and we must guard against evil at every instance of it vigorously.*

*There is no doubt that in the very near future Automation and AI will negatively impact employment rates and displace many people and change their livelihood for good. This tidal wave will be greater than what globalization has done. Things within the realm of blockchain and cryptocurrency can all be considered a form of AI in its broader sense.*

*The truth is that advanced technology has propelled civilizations for eons and it’s no different today. But what is different is simply the fact that today the world is more interconnected, overcrowded, and heavily depended on commerce for basic necessities of life such as water. Our global economy ruled by consumption – will be seeing changes happen at a much faster rate, more like every year than every decade, and AI will be a major catalyst of this change.*



# the opportunity

*The bedrock of the US economy is founded on Small and Midsize Enterprises. SMEs contribute more than 50% to the US GDP, account for more than ½ of all private sector jobs, and more importantly are at the heart of innovation – which truly is the primary export that our economy produces. That said, SMEs are last on the list when it comes to true value and support from large enterprise solution providers. SMEs usually get leftover technology or watered-down solution as they typically do not muster up budgets that big enterprises have.*

*Considering that SMEs employ the most amount of private sector jobs and impact the economy more directly than large enterprises – isn't it time that these businesses are given groundbreaking technology to sell and market their products more intelligently.*

*This is where we at SAM get excited, our vision is BIG, we want to help Small and Midsized Enterprises grow so that they in-turn can help employ more people and grow the economy. It's our hope that this will counterbalance other forces at work to reduce workforce and automate all aspects of our lives. For the team at SAM, we are using AI to help decision makers get data served to them based on their role in their company – essentially curated content that they can act on. SAM is basically serving as an expert system by harnessing millions of data sets across all sales and marketing activities to decipher hidden patterns that impede growth, predict future trends in site traffic and customer acquisition, and most importantly alert the right person in your company with data that is actionable. The truth is not everyone in your organization drills down on data and knows what to do with it unless it is served to them in a manner that is understandable. Businesses now can count on AI as their Ally to counter bigger competitors and to allow them to be more competitive and scalable.*

