

AI in Product Management
Prof. Zillur Rahman
Department of Management Studies
Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee

Lecture – 28
AI in Sales Training

. Welcome to this NPTEL online certification course on artificial intelligence and product management. Now we will talk about module 28, which is AI in sales training. To give an overview of this module, we will start with an introduction to AI in sales training and its benefits. Then we will discuss how to use and prepare for AI in sales training.

We will also discuss how to get started with sales AI training and overcome challenges with AI implementation. Finally, we will discuss best practices for AI in sales training and how generative AI is revolutionizing sales coaching. To give an introduction, we are so deep in the AI revolution that it is not really a revolution anymore. It is a standard, a borderless, ubiquitous factor in virtually every field, and sales is definitely no exception. It has a massive presence in practice, including, or especially, in sales training.

Artificial intelligence resources that augment, support, and streamline the way sales teams get their reps up to speed are everywhere, and every sales leader should have a pulse on what those tools are and how to use them. Today, most organizations have vast amounts of employee, prospect, customer, and product data available to them, thanks to the rise of integrated AI software solutions such as chatbots and CRM. This valuable data can be repurposed and used to create a customized AI sales training program, personalized to suit the individual needs of each sales rep by focusing on their skill and knowledge gaps. Not only does this allow for a more targeted approach to upskilling and professional development,

But it will help to predict learners' training needs based on their role, helping your sales team stay one step ahead at all times. Creating a high-performance sales team is becoming even more difficult with the traditional approach, so it is no surprise that the days of each employee learning the same material at the same time and in the same place are changing, making way for more flexible, targeted, and convenient ways to upskill. Dispersed and international sales teams. Now, let us look at the benefits of AI in sales training. The traditional one-size-fits-all approach to sales training is quickly becoming a thing of the

past. Thanks to AI, training programs are now as dynamic and individualized as the sales teams they are designed to help.

In this section, we dive into how AI-enhanced sales training is transforming the way teams learn and succeed. The first is personalized learning paths. One-size-fits-all training hardly works. AI sales training aligns learning with the strengths and weaknesses of sales reps at scale, motivating them to upskill and close their individual learning gaps.

Next is real-time feedback. Think of AI in sales training like a football coach. It guides your sales reps like players on the field, teaching them how to navigate challenges and seize opportunities in real-time, from handling customer objections to highlighting key product features that meet specific needs, or asking critical qualification questions before the calls wrap. Data-driven insights: AI breaks down big datasets into prescriptive and accurate information, trends, patterns, performance metrics, and reports.

That aids sales reps in making data-driven decisions instead of throwing spaghetti at the wall with their sales strategy. Automated Content Recommendations: In between note-taking, listening to the prospects, and finding upselling or cross-selling opportunities, valuable information can fall through the cracks. AI in Sales Training allows your reps to hit the right chord with proactive recommendations without breaking concentration. To find buyer-specific content, automated lead prioritization: Why spend time chasing a mismatched opportunity? AI can improve productivity and win rates by predicting which leads are more likely to convert after analyzing factors such as recent interactions, industries, their JTBDs, and demographics, and shortening the lifecycle of your MAPs. Now, let us look at how to use AI for sales training. So first, leverage AI for analyzing sales calls.

Even with the rising tide of digital transformation shifting the sales landscape, sometimes things never change, and the effectiveness of a well-executed sales call fits that bill. There is something about direct communication with reps that will always resonate with prospects. That is why sales leaders need to have the resources and know-how required to teach their Thoughtfully communicate over the phone, and AI can be a big help on that front. Sales Role-Playing: Conversational AI software presents a revolutionary approach to enhancing sales training by offering lifelike

Interactions and immersive opportunities for role-playing within sales scenarios. Intricately designed talking heads are at the heart of this innovation, which serves as virtual avatars closely mirroring real-life individuals. These avatars lend unprecedented authenticity to the

training experience, allowing sales professionals to engage in lifelike dialogue that encompasses the challenges and nuances they would encounter in actual sales interactions. Through conversational AI software, sales teams can immerse themselves in various lifelike scenarios spanning initial customer outreach, objection handling, negotiation techniques, and closing strategies.

The third is supporting customers. Research. Getting reps acquainted with individualized prospects and customers is a challenge for many sales leaders. Every sales engagement is unique, relying on a salesperson's ability to accommodate specific needs, interests, and circumstances. That is why thorough, thoughtful customer research is mission-critical for both selling and training reps.

It is also an area that can be supported and enhanced with AI. And several sales leaders are aware of that. The fourth is sales coaching. AI-assisted coaching software offers a data-driven approach to sales improvement by analyzing your team's phone calls with clients, providing feedback on tone of voice, talking speed, customer sentiments, and much more. It aggregates and analyzes vast amounts of call data to identify patterns and trends, uncovering strengths and areas that need

enhancement for individual salespeople and the team. Onboarding new hires. When it comes to onboarding new sales team members, AI for sales training plays a pivotal role in streamlining and enhancing the process. Imagine the scenario where a freshly recruited sales professional enters the organization. It can indeed be a rather overwhelming experience.

This is precisely where AI-driven sales training steps in to create a more seamless and engaging onboarding journey. The sixth is on-demand learning. With AI, on-demand learning becomes a sophisticated tool for refining skills like sales pitches and customer conversations. The real magic happens when AI analyzes your team's interactions. It can dissect the sales pitches and customer conversations, evaluating their effectiveness based on various factors.

Were they able to address objections confidently? Did they use persuasive language effectively? AI examines these nuances and provides insightful feedback. Think of it as a personalized coaching session with a digital mentor. As your team engages in onboarding learning activities, AI tracks their performance and identifies areas where they excel or need improvement.

It then tailors subsequent learning materials to address these specific points, ensuring their growth is targeted and efficient. Now, how to prepare for AI-assisted sales training? Whether you are excited, nervous, or indifferent, artificial intelligence for sales is very real and here to stay. Not only is it becoming the go-to answer for sales leaders, trainers, managers, and coaches to solve challenges, but it is also helping organizations make better business decisions and train sales reps more effectively. We will discuss how to prepare for adopting new technology for sales in the sales training process in the next slide.

So the first step is to evaluate current sales training tech. When considering how AI for sales training can help your organization, the best starting point is to assess the sales training tech you already have by auditing your current sales training tools for a holistic view of your in-house capacities. Next, identify any knowledge or skill gaps within management. Then educate yourself and them on current AI sales training tools available by reading blog posts, analyzing reports, and user reviews to understand the current landscape. It is also crucial to consider

industry-specific needs when implementing AI for sales training. Different scenarios, such as healthcare or telecommunications, each have unique challenges. Your sales training efforts should recognize these distinctions and offer tailored programs that combine AI-driven techniques to tackle industry-specific challenges. This ensures sales professionals are equipped with both cutting-edge tools and sector-relevant skills. The second step is to encourage a data-driven mindset. When preparing to adopt AI for sales training, you must be explicitly clear about the metrics you want your team to measure and report.

By doing so, you will be able to determine where the sales team's knowledge, skills, and experience gaps lie. To achieve this, you should always start meetings by reviewing metrics as a team as part of a larger conversation about deals in progress. Talk to teams when salespeople hear about the idea of AI for sales training. They often react in one of two ways. They are either both fit in, enthusiastic, and ready to get started, or they are nervous, hesitant, and worried that the AI revolution will take over their jobs.

That is why, when preparing to invest in AI sales trading solutions, you need to complete team buy-in for it to achieve a successful return on investment. Now, how to get started with sales training? The first is to pinpoint where your needs are. Not all AI sales training resources are going to produce the same returns for your sales organization.

There is a massive range of these tools available. Some are bound to suit you better than others. Before you get started with sales AI training, you have to have a sense of where

your needs are. You need to audit how your team is performing and where you really need to see better results.

At what stages of the sales process are your reps getting held up? Is your cold call conversion rate problematic? Does your team struggle with handling objections overall? Ask questions like those to get a sense of which aspects of your current training standards need the most work. From there, you will be able to identify the appropriate tools to accommodate those needs. The second is to identify the appropriate tools to accommodate those needs, as we have mentioned literally one sentence ago. You need to identify the appropriate tools to meet your needs, where they are when getting started with AI sales training.

Are reps struggling with sales calls? Consider leveraging resources like conversation intelligence platforms to augment your sales messaging and ensure your reps can articulate it effectively. Are your salespeople having a hard time with objection handling? Look into generative AI tools that can simulate contentious interactions with prospects. There are tons of artificial intelligence tools that support sales. Training on the market and new ones are emerging all the time. Stay on top of both your team's needs and the available AI resources that can assist with them.

Commit to both the old and the new. If you decide to fold an AI sales training resource into your tech stack, you can't halfway commit to it and expect to see real results. If your company is willing to make the financial investment in tools like this, you have to invest time and energy in it as well. But like virtually any AI-related resources in sales, AI sales training tools are not replacements for the human element of the process; they are augmenters.

They enhance, support, and refine your efforts. You have to have both sides of the equation work in tandem. You have to both lean on the more traditional elements of sales training and embrace these new tools that can support them. Now, how to overcome challenges with AI implementation?

When used correctly, AI can increase your revenues and sales rep performance. In fact, 84% of US and UK-based sales leaders forecasted significant revenue increases after introducing new sales technology to their organization. And 80% of sales professionals attest to AI driving rep productivity. We will discuss three common challenges with AI integration and how to solve them in the next slides. The first problem is that of data quality.

AI leverages industry-scale machine learning models to serve up relevant information. However, synthesizing output from current external data sources freely available on the open market corrupts data quality, resulting in biased sales predictions. To combat this challenge, combine AI trained on your internal company and customer data such as emails, meetings, and seller and buyer-based facts with context and specificity to ensure data cleanliness, accurate predictions, and minimized biases. The second is integration with existing systems.

Sales reps use an average of 10 sales tools in their workflows. Adding more tools will hurt work efficiency and cost-wise if they don't integrate with existing legacy systems or serve up data in a familiar format. By identifying and sorting compatibility issues, sales managers can seamlessly integrate AI technology into their already existing tech stack as part of the complete system, not standalone tools. The third is complexity. Not every AI is made the same.

And for sales leaders who want to capitalize on its productivity advantage, you have to identify what sets them apart. For example, large language models are available on the market. LLMs have been trained by data available on the open internet, and they can synthesize output based on that knowledge and training. But what they lack is the data that resides within the company, such as history-based context, Email, calls, meetings, etc.

that ensure relevancy from prior conversations. Seller-based accuracy. Seller's facts with recent updates such as pricing and packaging, market positions, and competitive offers. Buyer's facts like prices quoted or quantities ordered that must be included for personalization. What are the best practices for AI in sales training?

We have looked at the implementation and advantages of AI. Series training lets us review some practical tips and recommendations for effective implementation. The first is to start small and scale gradually. Begin by introducing AI in a small, controlled aspect of your training to see how it integrates and impacts results. As you gain confidence and understand its benefits, you can gradually expand its use across different areas of your training program. Integrate with existing tools. Ensure that the AI solutions you adopt can seamlessly integrate with your current sales tools and private phones. This promotes a smoother transition and helps maintain continuity in your sales processes. Focus on continuous learning.

AI is continually evolving, so it is crucial to keep your training program up to date with the latest AI developments and techniques. Encourage ongoing learning and experimentation

within your team. Measure and optimize; regularly track the outcome and effectiveness of AI-enhanced training. Use these insights to tweak and improve the training methods, focusing on areas that show the most significant potential for improvement or that need additional support. Now we will look at how generative AI is revolutionizing sales coaching.

The world of sales coaching is changing rapidly, and as a sales leader, you need to be on top of the game. That is where generative AI like ChatGPT comes in. While generative AI has found a ton of use cases already in marketing and software development, its potential in sales, sales coaching, training, and revenue operations is still in its infancy to be explored. In this section, we will discuss how generative AI can elevate your sales coaching game, drive your team to hit quotas, and propel your business forward. AI has permeated almost every aspect of your life.

And sales coaching is no exception. Traditional sales coaching methods are increasingly being replaced by AI-driven tools and techniques that can help sales leaders and coaches analyze data, identify areas of improvement, and provide personalized training to their sales reps. Generative AI such as ChatGPT can generate human-like text based on the given input, making it an invaluable resource for sales leaders. All you need is to figure out what to give to ChatGPT as the context and the prompt, and it can play a variety of roles for you. We will discuss how you can use ChatGPT or similar generative AI text systems to role-play a customer call, serve as a learning management tool for product marketing material and other company-specific contexts for new reps, and help you identify weaknesses in reps' handling of customers by analyzing call transcripts.

and emails and pointing out the issues. With the power of generative AI, sales leaders can automate various aspects of sales coaching, freeing up time for more strategic tasks and enabling them to focus on what matters most: driving revenues and leading their teams to success. The following slide discusses ways in which generative AI can benefit sales coaching. The first is identifying coaching opportunities with generative AI. Generative AI can analyze vast amounts of data, including sales reps' commerce metrics, and pinpoint areas that require attention.

By identifying trends and patterns in how the rep has handled customer conversations on the phone, video calls, and emails, AI-driven tools can help you develop targeted coaching initiatives to address specific weaknesses. The second is targeting key areas for improvement. Once you have identified the areas where your sales reps need improvement,

generative AI can provide insights into the best ways to tackle these issues. By generating personalized coaching plans, AI can empower you to provide tailored guidance that truly resonates with each member of your team. The third is AI-powered training and development.

Generative AI can also play a crucial role in creating and maintaining learning management systems. By generating customized LMS content, tailored to your sales reps' specific needs, you can ensure they receive relevant training that helps them develop the skills they need to excel in their roles. AI-driven tools can also create personalized quizzes and assessments that test your sales reps' understanding of the training material. This allows you to gauge the effectiveness of your training programs and make any necessary adjustments to help your team reach its full potential.

Role-playing sales scenarios with generative AI Role-playing is a tried and true sales coaching technique, and generative AI can take it to the next level. By simulating various sales scenarios, AI-driven tools can help your sales reps practice their pitch, objection handling, and closing techniques before they ever step foot in a real sales call. Generative AI can also provide real-time feedback on your sales rep's communication skills during role-play sessions. This can help them fine-tune their approach, resulting in more effective sales calls and ultimately higher close rates.

Fifth is AI-assisted call scripts for discovery and demo calls. Generative AI can generate personalized call scripts for discovery and demo calls based on the sales rep's unique selling styles and the prospect's specific needs. This can ensure that your sales reps are always equipped with the right talking points to guide their conversations with potential customers. By analyzing the AI-generated call scripts, sales leaders can gain valuable insights into what works and what does not in their team's sales conversations. This information can then be used to provide targeted coaching

and feedback, helping your sales reps refine their approach and improve their overall performance. The sixth is measuring the impact of AI-driven sales coaching. By incorporating generative AI into your sales coaching efforts, you can easily track the progress and growth of your sales reps over time. AI-driven tools can help you monitor key performance indicators and other metrics to measure the effectiveness of your coaching initiatives. Allowing you to make data-driven decisions and continuously optimize your coaching strategies.

As your sales reps begin to see the results of your AI-powered coaching efforts, their motivation and engagement will likely increase. Be sure to celebrate their success and use their achievements as an opportunity to reinforce the value of AI-driven sales coaching. Fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement within your team. Generative AI has the potential to revolutionize sales coaching, transforming the way sales leaders support their teams and drive performance. By embracing the power of AI-driven tools like ChatGPT, you can elevate your sales coaching game, boost your team's productivity, and ultimately grow your business to the next level.

So, to conclude, in this module, we have started with the introduction to AI in sales training and its benefits. Then, we have discussed how to use and prepare for AI in sales training. We have also discussed how to get started with AI sales training and overcome challenges with AI implementation. Finally, we have discussed best practices for AI in sales training and how generative AI is revolutionizing sales coaching. These are some of the sources from which the material for this module was taken.

Thank you.