

# Business Ascending: USE AI TOOLS TO FORGE YOUR ENHANCED BUSINESS

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Spring 2023 is definitely the high-fashion season for AI. Now, seemingly overnight, consultants, technologists, students, business leaders, and hackers are feverishly trying to find how to use our amazing new Generative AI toolset – currently led by [ChatGPT](#) – to do everything from saving the world to creating phishing attacks for our unsuspecting parents.

This is making business leaders a little nuts. On one hand, there's a sense of, "If we don't move now, we're toast." On the other hand, "If we take a wrong step, we flush time and money down the drain."

So now what? How do we surf the wave of this powerful, seemingly magical new toolset? How do we move beyond using one of the most sophisticated technologies of human history to investigate whether a dog or cat would win a debate; how to speak dolphin, and how to train a pet rock? ([Ada Lovelace](#) would be so proud....)

Everyone has an opinion. One crowd is the dour naysayers – We're all doomed! – while the other is starry-eyed tech optimists – Nothing bad will happen because of AI, ever!

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With all the noise bubbling up around AI every day – and a lot of it is noise – it's easy to miss the signal that matters.

The signal -- the path ahead -- is becoming more clear, and it's time to be proactive. Recognize that without fully leveraging AI, your company will essentially be using a water wheel for power while trying to compete with upstarts and agile leaders accelerating their businesses with real-world fusion reactors.

It's time to act accordingly to grab value by becoming an [Enhanced Enterprise](#).

It's early days, so there are a lot of unknowns. There are, however, some new guideposts coming into focus. Here are a few.



# Focus on Enhancement, Not Replacement

It's tempting to frame Gen-AI deployment as an IRL battle between Humans v. Machines. That's fun at a happy hour, but not in your Board Room. This shift is not about replacing humans, it's about improving productivity using the bots.

The Luddites smashed some looms, but they were replaced by new machines. John Henry ultimately lost his battle with the steam-powered drill. The lesson that technology makes humans more productive shows up with every major technical innovation. Some jobs certainly are displaced, but other jobs are created while productivity of existing work rises as humans become enhanced. **This is happening again today.**



What does this mean for us? The name of the game is productivity. Don't fall into the trap of targeting **replacement** (bot comes in; human goes home). Focus on deploying technology to **enhance** your worker or consumer experience.

But how much productivity improvement is "good"? This is a **Big Question** for business leaders. The truth is, we don't know yet at a granular level, but we're learning.

- **IBM** is saying **30% of certain functions will be eaten by the bot.**
- **Kotak Mahindra Bank** released their expectation of "a **33 per cent increase in productivity.**"
- **Ascendion**, the software engineering company where I work, has been using AI to improve productivity for years. In addition, our most recent deployment of Generative AI is delivering a significant productivity lift (up to double-digit improvements depending on the activity).
- **BT Group** announced plans to shed more than 40% of their current jobs by 2030. They will still be huge - 75,000 to 90,000 - but their CEO said about **10,000 of the impacted roles will be due to AI.**
- **Microsoft**, in addition to investing an additional \$10 billion into their partnership with **OpenAI**, is working on using AI to improve the productivity of everyone who uses their Office 365 apps (nearly 350 million of us).

These are early-stage game-changing indicators showing where we are heading, and there is MUCH more to come. This is not a bus you want to miss.

# Recognize What Your Company Already "Knows"

The WWW started with input from some of our smartest folks – researchers, academics, spies – but it has since been inflated by the rest of us. At global scale, we're ... not great sometimes. (See: [Monster](#).)

Now we suffer with spambots, PewDiePie, and state-sanctioned trolls injecting [lies, cruelty, and idiocy](#) that is now "training" Large Language Models. Social media isn't only [harming our kids](#), it's making ChatGPT stupider. But we don't need to solve this problem before we create business value.

Lew Platt, former chair of [HP](#), is credited with saying, "I wish we knew what we know at HP." Platt and others recognized that inside our organizations – now locked away on our laptops and encoded on our local and cloud-based corporate servers – lies an untapped treasure of knowledge, know-how, experience, and best practices.

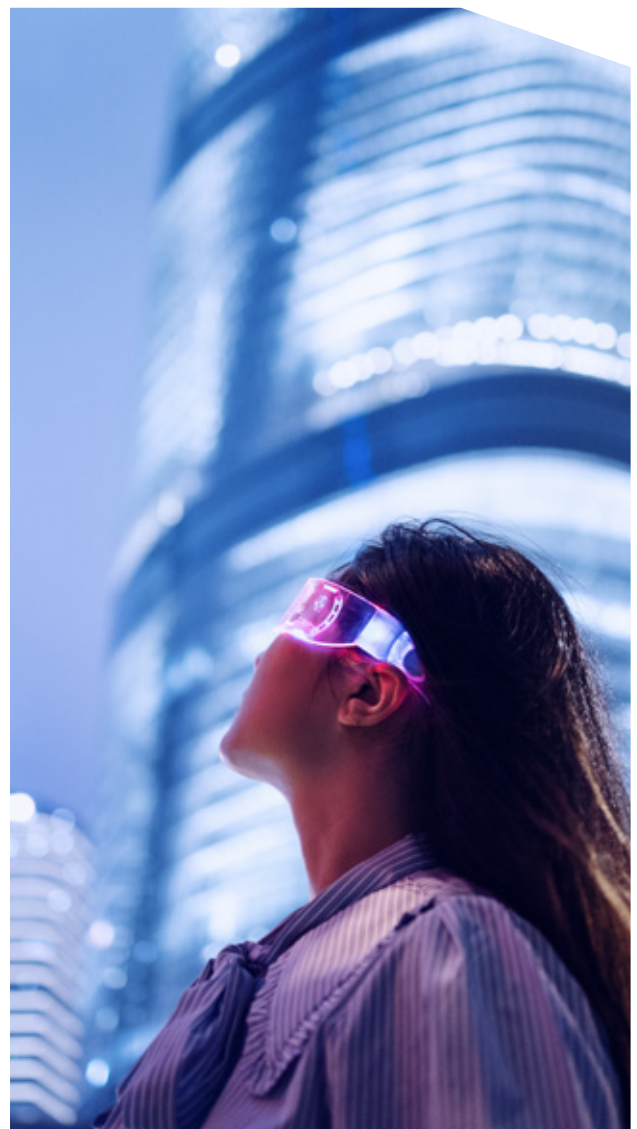
In the 1990s, gobs of cash were devoted to "Knowledge Management" to share information inside organizations. It was a great idea, but many programs didn't have the desired transformational impact. Generative AI with Large Language Model capability gives us – perhaps, finally – a chance to actually "know what we know."

How? The key is to start in our own back yard. Some early successes with Gen AI are based on data from inside the company as well as external data. Begin by pulling data from YOUR context aligned to YOUR work. Make friends with your [INTRANET](#).

It's impossible to overstate the importance of your enterprise data. The new bots are voracious, hungry for process data that is clean, available, trusted, and real-time. (If your company isn't in good shape here, [get busy](#). The productivity improvement and economics from data modernization will more than justify the investment.)

More to come, but the critical insight in this phase of innovation is to focus on what you have, what you already "know," to drive productivity UP.

The internet brought us [Netflix](#), [Facebook](#), [TikTok](#), and [Amazon](#), but it's proprietary data on your INTRANET that can help your company become 20%, 30%, 40% more productive.



# Don't Let Innovation Pass You By

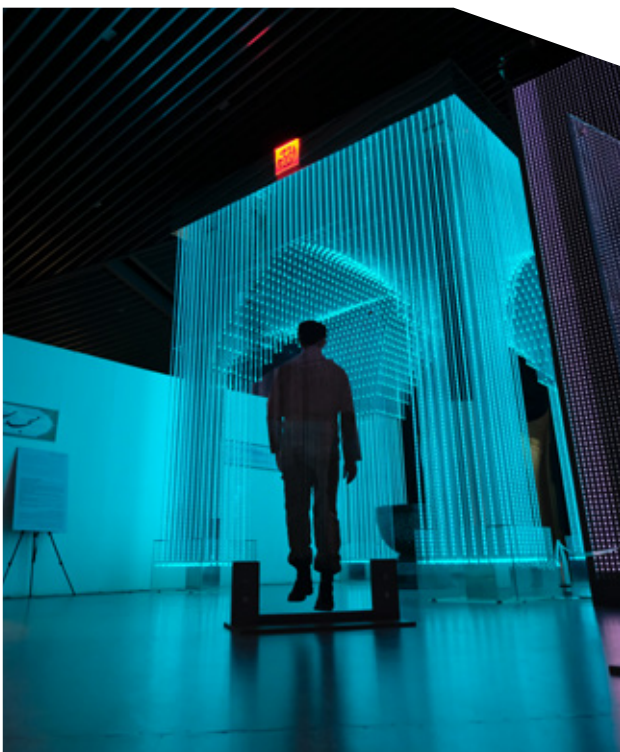
Generative AI systems are now accessible to billions of us, rather than the relative handful of tech experts. This democratization of new capabilities is driving a season of playing around with ChatGPT, Bard, DALL·E, Watson and other systems. As in the past – this will drive a **massive** wave of innovation and value creation *outside* the computer laboratory.

As we said in [What To Do When Machines Do Everything](#):

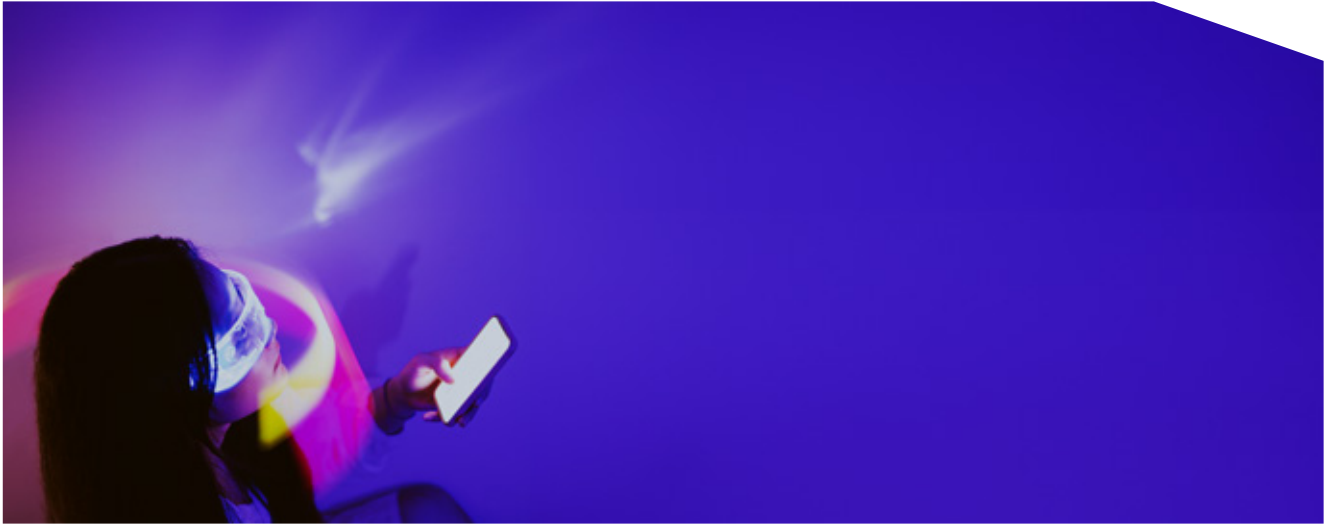
This is the phase when innovations move from the radical fringe to the mainstream. It is the time for the 'democratization' of the innovation, as new ideas, which are initially implemented in very concentrated areas, become much more widely disseminated.



This will occur over the next few decades, when industries and institutions that serve as the pillars of our society—banking, insurance, health care, education, transportation, law enforcement, government—leverage the power of the new machine and begin to base their operating models on digital technology.



We're at a remarkable time in the history of business, technology, and society. The coming months, quarters, and years will be spent engineering software – powered by AI – that enhances workers, companies, and entire industries. What we do in these next quarters will shape our economics and societies for decades to come. It's our responsibility to push our companies forward (and have fun doing it).



## Let's Keep It Going! \_\_\_\_\_

If inclined, please share this out, follow along, and add your comments, critique, and questions so we can keep the conversation going.

## About the Author \_\_\_\_\_



**Paul Roehrig** is the Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer for **Ascendion**. He is a co-author of multiple award-winning and best-selling books and a sought-after presenter at public, academic, and industry events. He is regularly featured in major publications all over the world. Paul holds a PhD from **Syracuse University** and was formerly a professional musician. He lives in the Washington, DC, area with his family.

For more on how to tame AI to create your own enhanced organization, please see: **What to Do When Machines Do Everything: How to Get Ahead in a World of AI, Algorithms, Bots, and Big Data** by **Malcolm Frank**, **Ben Pring**, and **Paul Roehrig, PhD**. John **Wiley & Sons**, Inc., 2017.

# ASCENDION

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