

Cognitive Diversity and Marketing: How AI is Improving Innovation



NASA employee George Washington handles clerical work more quickly and efficiently than ever before. He never complains about working late hours and he never needs to stop for a coffee break.

[Washington is a bot](#) who takes in information from emails and identifies job candidate suitability — something formerly completed by human resources personnel. He represents a new type of diversity within organizations, cognitive diversity.

Cognitive diversity, simply put, includes different ways of thinking. It consists of both humans (cognitive thinking) and machines (cognitive technologies). Today, automation is pouring into the workplace at an accelerating rate. Cognitive technologies involve: robotic process automation, traditional machine learning, natural language processing, and rule-based expert systems. We already witness this artificial intelligence (AI) in our everyday lives as it handles answering services, account balance inquiries, and payment services.

Marketers are particularly in tune with AI, as it has already greatly impacted their work flow.

According to research from Accenture, 86% of marketers believe AI will make their industry's work more efficient and effective as practical applications already include processes that include precision targeting, dynamic ad creation, and marketing automation. In these cases, adopting cognitive

diversity into the workforce improves efficiency, increases accuracy, and frees humans to focus on more complex tasks.

Data from Emarsys shows widespread inclusion of AI by retail marketers worldwide:

- 54% are using AI to personalize customer experience and behavior across channels
- 52% are using it to manage real-time customer interactions
- 48% are using it to Identify or reorganize customers across channels
- 41% are targeting appropriate audiences for new customer acquisition

Most companies begin by integrating AI and other machine systems to replace the repetitive, “low hanging fruit” projects. This allows them to achieve quick wins early in the adoption process. The idea of accepting these new “employees” at work as equals, however, can initially cause concerns about long-term job security.

In NASA’s case, the organization feels that cognitive diversity, through the inclusion of bots, is a way to meet shrinking budgets and allow existing humans to focus on higher-level tasks. Thus far, George Washington has been met with open arms, and NASA plans to bring on a Thomas Jefferson bot soon. NASA’s experience shows that integrating machines as cognitive tools has improved the bottom line.

While demographic diversity is important for success, marketers that can include new ways of thinking and automation will expand organizational agility and innovation. As cybernetic models improve, they will become more commonplace when organizations consider the functions of diversity and inclusion executives. Embracing cybernetics, the science of communications, and automatic control systems in both machines and living things, may sound like science fiction. But in reality, it boosts agility, innovation, and profits.

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