



Q&A WITH WALMART

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CAN YOU SHARE YOUR CAREER JOURNEY IN GENERATIVE AI AND HIGHLIGHT ANY CHALLENGES YOU'VE FACED AS A WOMAN IN THIS FIELD?

My journey into the world of AI began in 2015 at MIT Sloan, where I was first introduced to the transformative potential of AI. At the time, AI through advanced ML models was revolutionizing traditional sectors, enhancing shopping search experiences, and powering recommendation engines for giants like Netflix and YouTube. This exposure to AI during business school was pivotal, and ignited my passion for leveraging AI to solve complex problems.

After completing my MBA at MIT, I joined McKinsey. There, I had the unique opportunity to serve clients across the Technology, Media and Teleco (TMT) sector, fostering my growth in the field. This role was instrumental in my growth, allowing me to partner with clients to strategize ways to reduce fulfillment costs, improve supply chain efficiencies and enhance the customer experience. The strategy for achieving these results often relied on leveraging technology, including advanced AI and ML models, underscoring the transformative impact of AI on business operations.

My roles at DoorDash and currently at Walmart are focused on delivering an exceptional customer experience, where meeting customer needs is paramount. Through the sophisticated application of backend AI and ML models, we ensure a seamless and smooth shopping experience for millions of Americans. Navigating the field of AI as a woman has come with its unique challenges, from confronting biases to seeking out the right organizational partners and mentors to spearhead and drive projects. However, these challenges have only strengthened my resolve to champion greater inclusivity and diversity within the tech industry and continue to leverage AI to solve business problems

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HOW DO YOU BELIEVE THE INDUSTRY CAN IMPROVE TO FOSTER MORE INCLUSIVITY AND SUPPORT FOR WOMEN'S CAREER ADVANCEMENT IN AI?

To foster more inclusivity and support women's career advancement in AI, the industry must embrace comprehensive strategies that address both structural barriers and cultural norms. The three key pillars that need to be addressed are:

Education and Awareness: It begins with education, creating programs that inspire, teach and inform women about opportunities in AI. This extends from classroom curriculum at colleges to continuous professional development opportunities that encourage women to explore emerging AI technologies.

Mentorship and Support Networks: The value of mentorship cannot be overstated. Women benefit immensely from having mentors who can guide, encourage, and advocate for them. Support networks, both formal and informal, provide a sense of belonging and a safe space for sharing experiences and developing strategies that facilitate career progression and personal growth.

Career Development Opportunities: Clear pathways for advancement and opportunities for leadership roles are essential. These should be coupled with transparent criteria for progression to ensure women understand how to advance their careers.

To truly advance women's careers in AI, the industry must adopt a holistic approach, addressing systemic barriers and fostering an environment where women are encouraged to explore, innovate, and lead. Mentorship, support networks, and a commitment to unbiased practices are key components of the Enterprise Generative AI Summit West strategy, ensuring women not only enter the field of AI but also thrive and lead within it.

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REFLECTING ON YOUR KEY LEARNINGS AND EXPERIENCES IN GENERATIVE AI, COULD YOU DISCUSS A PROJECT, ACCOMPLISHMENT OR EXPERIENCE THAT HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY IMPACTFUL IN YOUR CAREER?

In my capacities as a director at DoorDash and now at Walmart, I have strategically employed Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) to improve the customer experience for millions of Americans. Among numerous initiatives, a standout project was the creation of my first AI model. This initiative provided me with a first-hand glimpse into the immense potential and transformative power of AI, showcasing its ability to revolutionize industries and transform customer experience.

At DoorDash, our mission involved supporting a diverse range of merchants, from grocery giants like Safeway and retail powerhouses like Sephora to local mom-and-pop store supermarkets and neighbourhood bodegas. A critical aspect of this support was the digital representation of their catalogs, ensuring an online shopping experience that was seamless and intuitive for customers. The challenge lay in the variability of catalog quality across merchants. Establishing online storefronts was a manual, labor-intensive process, requiring meticulous examination and manual transcription of each item.

This is where our AI-ML model came into play, bridging the gap. We recognized that an item's essence and identity (name, photo, barcode etc) remains constant across vendors—a Coke from Safeway is identical to one from a local bodega. The realization that we didn't need to repeatedly recreate item listings for each new merchant was pivotal. By deploying multiple AI and ML models, we could automatically interpret and predict item identities from incomplete or poor-quality catalog data, streamlining the item listing creation process.

This automation not only drastically reduced the time and cost associated with merchant onboarding but also significantly enhanced the customer experience. Millions of DoorDash users, relying on our platform for delivery during their...

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busiest moments, benefited from this improved efficiency and accuracy. Reflecting on this project, it's clear that it marked a critical juncture in my career, demonstrating first-hand the transformative power of AI and ML. This experience has fuelled my ongoing commitment to harnessing AI technology to drive industry advancements and elevate the way we work and live.

WHAT SIGNIFICANT TRENDS OR INNOVATIONS DO YOU SEE SHAPING THE FUTURE OF AI, PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY WITHIN THE INDUSTRY?

AI will transform the way we live, work and play but it also offer a unique opportunity to advance gender equality within our society. Some of the key developments to be on the lookout for are:

Increased Diversity in AI Development: There's a growing recognition of the importance of diversity in AI development teams. Diverse teams, including more women and individuals from varied backgrounds, are crucial for creating AI systems that are unbiased and equitable. This trend is expected to continue, with organizations prioritizing diversity to ensure their AI products serve a broad spectrum of humanity fairly.

Ethical AI and Gender Bias Mitigation: As the industry becomes more aware of the risks associated with biased AI systems, there's a significant push towards Enterprise Generative AI Summit West's ethical AI. Advocating for and developing algorithms that mitigate bias including those based on race, color and gender will continue to be key.

The Rise of Female AI Entrepreneurs and leaders: There's an increasing number of women-led AI startups and ventures, focusing on a wide array of applications from education and healthcare to environmental sustainability. These...

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entrepreneurs are not only contributing to the economy but also serving as role models for future generations of women in AI.

Community and Networking for Women in AI: The growth of communities and networks that support women in AI, such as Women in Machine Learning (WiML) and Women in AI (WAI), provides a platform for sharing knowledge, experiences, and opportunities. These communities are vital for fostering collaboration, mentorship, and advancement of women in the field.

AS YOU ARE SPEAKING AT THE ENTERPRISE GENERATIVE AI SUMMIT THIS MAY, WHAT ASPECTS OF THE EVENT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT AND HOW DO YOU HOPE THE CONFERENCE WILL FURTHER SUPPORT AND AMPLIFY THE VOICES OF WOMEN IN GENERATIVE AI?

I am eager to participate in and witness the diverse range of panel discussions and keynote speeches. These sessions, led by pioneers and innovators in AI and Generative AI, offer invaluable insights into the latest advancements, ethical considerations, and practical applications of the technology. It is in these forums that I anticipate engaging conversations that not only push the boundaries of what AI can achieve.

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