

Building your team for AI innovation

The business impacts of artificial intelligence (AI) are substantial and in the healthcare sector in particular it has been one of the major transformative successes of our time. AI represents a massive business opportunity for organizations to improve productivity and the efficiency of care delivery. It can also help to improve the role of healthcare practitioners in streamlining their day-to-day operations to allow for more time dedicated to patient care. AI even plays a critical role in advancing medical breakthroughs and in bringing life-saving treatments to market faster.

AI promises to be a powerful tool in the medical technology (MedTech) industry as well solving problems around data accuracy in disease diagnosis and ultimately improving patient treatments and outcomes. The nature of MedTech also does not confine AI innovations to the operations side of the organization, as it can play an equally vital role in research and development, clinical decision making and disease management. Since AI can span across so many functions within the medtech value chain, it represents an even bigger innovation potential.

To realize this potential though, medtech organizations need to plan their infrastructure and their teams accordingly. Without the right teams and people in place to ensure the successful implementation of AI technology, organizations run the risk of falling flat in their execution. Attracting and retaining talent for building AI success in MedTech requires a new way of thinking.

Attracting top talent

MedTech companies committed to implementing AI understand the need for acquiring the best teams possible but are confronted with challenges in talent scarcity as well as competing against industries further along the AI route which limits the candidate pool.

Focusing on an internal culture of innovation will be attractive to candidates along with solid investments in quality data and IT. These factors show prospects that the organization has a commitment to AI and its success. Cultures that encourage innovation, creativity and autonomy are also appealing as candidates look for flexibility in the organization. Having internal evangelists promoting the power of AI works to increase the overall receptivity to the technology and highlighting inspirational leaders from the organization that have great AI vision can be enticing.

MedTech has an advantage over other technology firms attracting candidates in that deploying AI in this field can have a direct impact on the quality of people's lives and improving the health

and wellbeing of others. Organizations should not be afraid to leverage the goodwill factor of the industry in order to attract top talent.

AI skills playbook for MedTech

Considering the impact AI can have on so many functions within a MedTech organization, it helps to distinguish the roles and the specific AI skills to be on the lookout for when building the team.

Product development

Candidates in this function should have the ability and expertise to oversee the launch of a product from inception to market, essentially managing the entire lifecycle of a product.

Critical attention should be paid to QA and testing as AI's most valuable contribution in product development is predicting when a device will fail. Building out a product that medical experts can trust is crucial. Having a product development team that can utilize AI to understand the lifetime of the product and when a device will need to be fixed or replaced is equally important.

Manufacturing

Critics of AI will point to job displacement as robots can be deployed throughout many manufacturing functions to manage the entire supply chain. However, AI is simply changing the nature of those jobs and teams built for success will need to be on the lookout for candidates with experience managing data.

AI can help augment the decision making process and train the machines to be smarter and more operationally efficient. Predictive maintenance from AI can help determine when machines should be serviced and an AI-backed solution can manage inventory and reduce risk of over-ordering based on buying patterns. These processes will all be data-driven and acquiring skills in modeling and database management are key as more data scientists will be needed in manufacturing.

Customer care

The benefits of AI across customer care are tremendous from faster more accurate diagnoses to personalized medication plans and predictive rather than reactive medical care. Patients can now truly take control of their own healthcare. However patients are not likely to have extensive experience in using these types of applications to understand what the data is telling them.

Hiring for customer care within the MedTech organization will take some data interpretation skills along with customer service to guide patients along their healthcare journey. A background in training can also be useful to build up others in the organization on how to use the various applications.

Integrating a MedTech AI team

Once recruited, building a team that functions successfully within the larger MedTech organization will be crucial in order to achieve optimal AI implementation results. Finding AI leaders will be fundamental to that success. There are AI consultants that can help lay out the foundations for projects and can help to identify other necessary AI roles within the organization. These AI leaders need to be more than just data scientists though and require engineering skills along with project management.

Often data is kept in silos within the organization. An effective MedTech company will learn to break down those silos and share data across the organization. Ideally the team will be in place that understands the implications of that data and have the right skillset to action that data in their own roles and improve business processes.