

HOW CORPORATE COMMUNICATION IS EVOLVING WITH THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Kartik Rao

Delhi Public School Gurgaon

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ABSTRACT

The area of business communication was largely untapped and clubbed with general communication. Evaluation methods focused on assessing grammar and most measurement techniques were coach-dependent. This not only made assessment subjective but became an impediment for skilling at scale. Two solutions were necessary: (a) Measurable Parameters and (b) A scalable solution. This paper addresses both the challenges.

We have used a secondary research, analysing available research and data from them to identify how the use of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning can help corporates in improving business communication within. The data also looks into justification of financial investments by corporates into available online grammar tools for use among employees.

Keywords: Communication, Corporate, Artificial Intelligence , Data.

Introductions

Effective Communication

In a simple line, if the receiver does not comprehend what the speaker is saying, the communication is ineffective. The primary assumption made here is that the language used by the speaker and understood by the listener is one and the same.

For further simplicity, English is presumed to be the language of communication because English is the most widely used and accepted language of business. Communication can be any form-email, letters, social media, and even verbal. When communicating with a broader audience, especially on social media, any errors can be misunderstood, amplified, and cause harm to the speaker and even several others.

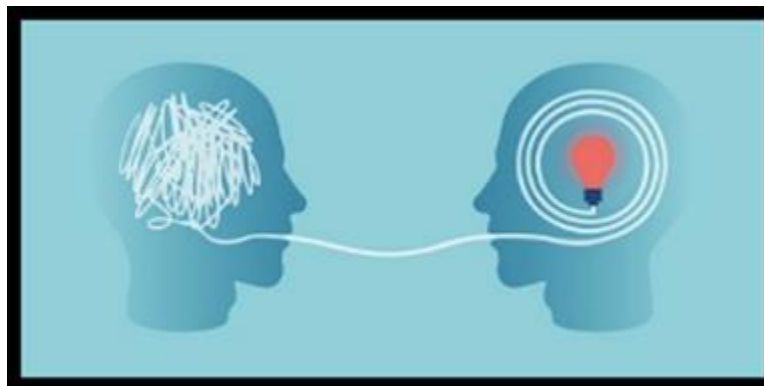


Figure 1: Effective Communication

Source: www.independenceplus.com

Training for Improvement

There are a plethora of programs available that assure better language skills, improved communication leading to increased confidence and performance at the workplace. The fundamentals of grammar and vocabulary building form the foundation of many such programs.

These communication programs focus on improving language skills rather than communication skills. But why is communication and English used interchangeably? English has traditionally been a “bridge” language for non-native speakers. With the advent of globalization starting in the late 1980s and the rise of economies in Asia and Africa, the native population had to connect with people based in English-speaking countries. Multinational Companies (MNCs) thronged the Korean peninsula, China, India, and Africa and employed local nationals who were competent and highly aspirational. But communication across boundaries became a major bottleneck.

How is English Communication Measured?

Proficiency in the English language is measured through various standardized tests such as International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS), Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL), and the Cambridge English Assessment Examinations.

Proficiency in the English language is measured for four modes, namely, reading, writing, speaking, and listening because the most common argument is that different people have varying aptitudes for each of these modes. Whilst some speak well, others do well in writing. Listening is a critical skill because communication breaks down if either or both parties in a conversation are poor listeners.

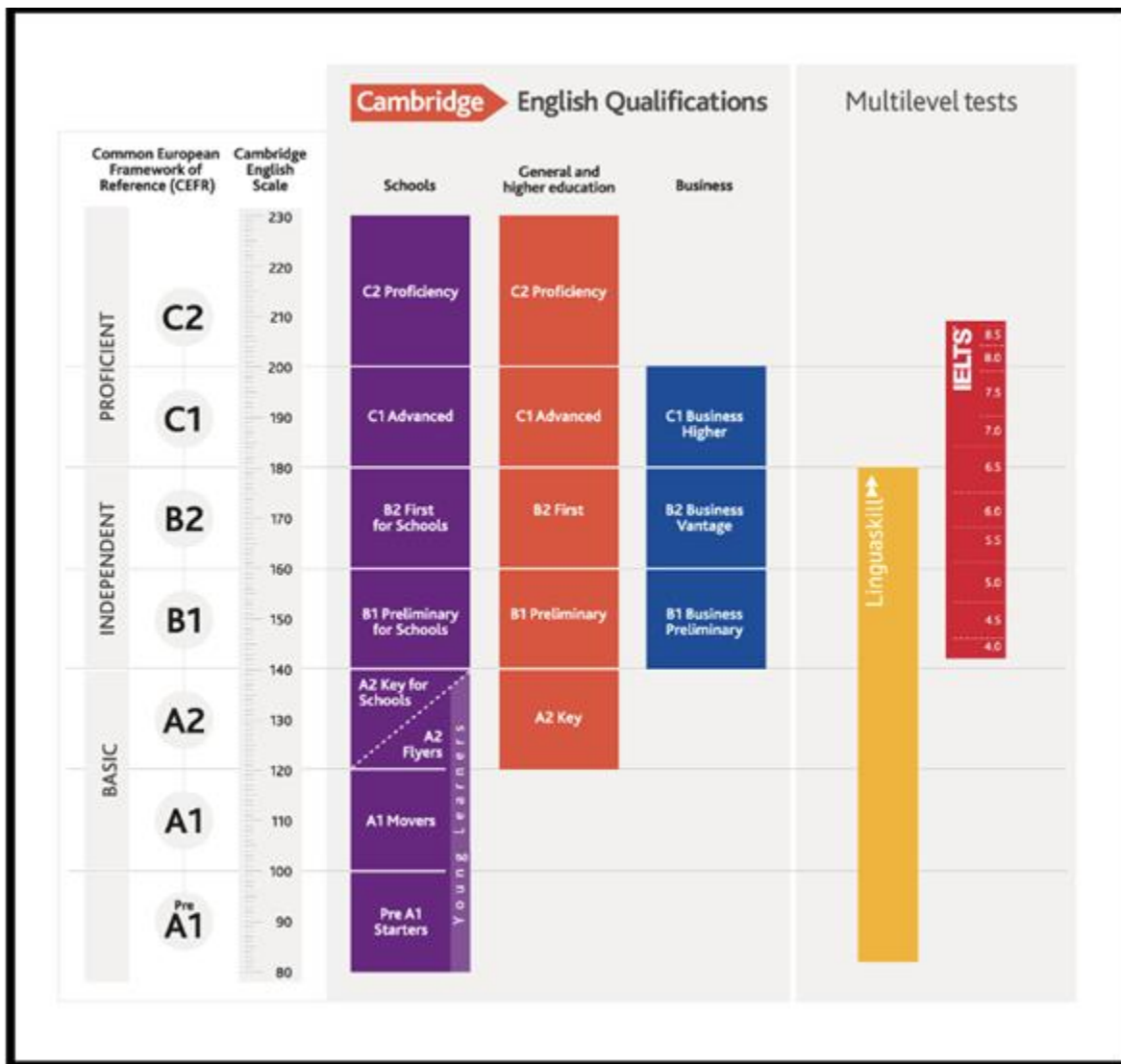


Figure 2: Cambridge Levels

Source: <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/cefr/>

Research Methodology

For this paper, we chose secondary research primarily to save time and cost of the review paper. We have referred to a variety of online articles and data available from reliable sources like Government and Non-government Archives.

Our paper also relies on previous interviews and data gathered through focus groups which helps an organization to understand the needs of its customers and plan to fulfill these needs.

Literature Review

The basics of speech communication: This text focuses on the fundamentals of communication skills with an emphasis on skills and competencies, this text delivers the necessary material without being overwhelming or cost-prohibitive.

Brilliant communication skill: The paper looks into techniques, practical pointers and real life examples which help boost and polish communication skills.

Excellence in Business Communication: This paper follows in the wake of the digital revolution and the advent of social media, business communication the most significant and recent technology-related changes affecting the business world are thoroughly discussed.

How AI transformed the business community: This article focuses on the variety of use cases of Artificial Intelligence within the business communicational tools.

How Will AI Impact Communication in the Workplace?: This 2021 paper looks into how AI is gradually transforming how businesses communicate.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Business Communications: looks into how corporations use impacting communication tools and most importantly how they can take advantage of it.

Statistica: is an advanced analytics software package originally developed by StatSoft and currently maintained by TIBCO Software Inc, providing relevant data on data mining, machine learning, text analytics and data visualization procedures

Quantified: IA a communication training and improvement platform, which has conducted a variety of studies on business communication and improvement using AI.

Analysis Of Data

Business Communication Vs General Communication

Any communication in a workplace or business setting is classified as business communication. The rest falls under general communication. In a workplace or business setting, employees routinely interact with internal and external stakeholders that include superiors, subordinates, peer groups, vendors, clients, regulators, and government bodies.

Business Communication is important for employees as well as founders of new-age fledgling start-ups because effective communication helps deliver impactful presentations, influence

decision-makers, and shape entrepreneurs for elevator pitches. Whereas most basic principles of both business and general communication are the same, the broad differences lie in the focus, style, and intended area of application.

The market force is the major driver behind English emerging as a corporate gold standard for communication. Whilst globalization shrunk boundaries for business, the Internet penetration made it even easier to communicate with clients, suppliers, and investors from across the world. But for a transaction to happen, the seller and the buyer should understand the product and pricing. Sheer common sense tells that the buyer will not bend backward to understand the seller and his/her products/services.

A Korean company cannot sell to a client, based in India, by speaking in Korean. The vice-versa is also true. English then becomes the, de facto, intermediary for communication. English adaption is easier because most large regions in Asia, such as the Indian sub-continent, were erstwhile British colonies. Take the example of India that currently has approximately 12Crore English speakers. This English speaking populace is twice the population of the United Kingdom and six times the population of Australia. India's total population is about 130 Crores which makes it every enterprise's target market to sell goods and services. English is the only common language that can connect India with the rest of the world.

Application of Business Communication Skills

Business communication requires verbal and written communication with colleagues, suppliers, clients, and regulatory bodies. The degree of usage of verbal vs written varies depending on functional area and industry.



Figure 3: Good Business Communication Skills

For example, staff working in research labs of pharmaceutical companies may need writing skills more often because they have to prepare standard operating manuals and also adhere to stringent reporting guidelines stipulated by government regulatory bodies. Sales staff in a service industry may find verbal skills more useful in influencing buyer decisions whereas those in manufacturing and heavy engineering rely extensively on preparing quality proposals and documents to win large-scale contracts.

Writing Vs Speaking: Which is Easier?

Developing quality writing skills is easier as compared to verbal skills for a fairly simple and obvious reason. The speaker has almost NIL time in hand while speaking. S/he has to keep crunching words on the go and still make the conversation engaging. Written communication gives the luxury of time. The reader is not facing the writer and ergo, the writer can deliberate, validate and then write. The only exception to this rule would be when people are engaged in real-time chat conversations.

Does Good English Translate to Good Business Communication Skills?

Not necessarily. Communication skills is a much broader term covering the following:

1. **Proficiency in the Language:** The building blocks of the language, i.e., Vocabulary and Grammar are learned here. Knowing grammar and having a sound vocabulary does not, however, imply that the person is an effective communicator. But a great communicator, generally, has a good grasp of grammar and vocabulary.
2. **Confidence:** A shaky speech is a sign of a lack of confidence. The person may be proficient in the English language but that does not necessarily reflect in his speech because of the lack of confidence.
3. **Body Language:** It is common knowledge that body postures, hand movements, eye contact, etc can complement verbal communication. A person's overall communication can greatly differ between a podcast, a video call (taken on desktop) and a video communication recorded using standard camera/room settings.
4. **Tone:** The crests and troughs in simple terms. Emphasizing important terms and phrases while de-emphasizing content of lower priority. Though the English language is context-based, the tone makes a difference in signaling the real feeling-sincere, harsh, or even sarcastic!
5. **Pitch:** The degree of highness or lowness in the voice as perceived by the ear. The

ability to adjust the pitch depending on the situation is an important part of communication. A high pitch may be perceived as rude in some situations whereas such a pitch may be necessary for some others.

6. **Structuring of Thoughts:** Any conversation that has all the required information is not necessarily perfect communication. The structure of the conversation should be such that the communication is receiver-focused. A clear context setting followed by a comprehensive body of content and a quick recap or summary makes the content easy to comprehend.
7. **Narration:** The Art of Storytelling shapes your conversation, defines the degree of impact on the receiver. Any content, be it a manufacturing process or a software development lifecycle can be narrated in the form of such a powerful story that the listener gets hooked on.
8. **Speech Hygiene:** Pronunciation of words, pauses, speed, and clarity contribute to making a dialogue comprehensible and immersive. Drooling, while speaking, leads to poor speech hygiene, creating not just embarrassment, but also distracting the listener.

Measuring Quality of Communication

Anything that cannot be measured, cannot be monitored. Thus goes a corporate pithy! A relevant derivable axiom is that improving something that is not measurable is not feasible. Business communication, for long, has been a subject of perspective because it was measured by purists who focused on the rules of grammar rather than on the magnitude of impact.

Grammar is, no doubt, important, but that alone should not form the basis of assessment of communication. The 8 parameters mentioned above can be clustered under four broad pillars, of business communication that should be strengthened to be an efficient and effective speaker.

1. Thinking: The thought process defines the structure of the conversation. A random and ambiguous thought process is obvious if the speaker moves to and fro between topics, starts/ends abruptly, and does not have content to communicate. The receiver is left to fend for him/herself about the topic, context, and details.

Table-1: Scale for Measuring Presence

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Runs out of thoughts	Comprehensive, but not structured	Not structured from receiver's perspective	Structured from receiver's perspective	Structured for domain expertise	Structured for both domain and generic topics	Strategic and insightful	Sets benchmarks

2. Narration: The art of storytelling, in any field, can no longer be undermined. If the listener is not absorbed in the conversation, s/he will not look forward to hearing more or engaging in the conversation. Any message can be narrated in the form of a good story that hooks the listener. Depicting a scenario and taking the listener on a journey, described by words, is an art in itself. For example, a start-up founder, articulates his vision for his venture, in front of venture capitalists whereas a senior manager, in a large enterprise, influences the leadership team to avail a larger budget for his department. Both cases require excellent storytelling skills.

Table-2: Scale for Measuring Narration

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Totally unclear	Meaning somewhat clear.	Generic. Reading bulleted points	Smooth narration for domain of expertise	Succinct and concise	Wide range of expressions	Literary language quality	Powerful, global scale

3. Grammar: Proficiency in grammar is an inalienable constituent of effective business communication. But business communication rarely requires mastery over the entire set of grammar rules. The most common areas that need focus are verb conjugation, tenses, voice (passive and active), and collective nouns. These focus areas are under focus for a simple reason. Tenses, voice, and verb conjugation form the backbone of basic communication and are also the most erred lot.

Table-3: Scale for Measuring Grammar

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Grammatical errors in 75% of the speech	Grammatical errors in 50% of the speech	Grammatical errors in 25% of the speech	No errors in verbs and tenses.	Errors in less than 10% of the speech	Errors present but infrequent and not affecting quality	Errors rarely present	Flawless

4. Presence: People perform differently in different settings. A simple comparison could be made between audio, video (on laptop), and video (using a standard camera setup). Presence is measured by observing the body language, pitch, and tone of the conversation.

Table-4: Scale for Measuring Presence

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Nervous/Frozen	Nervous but holds the conversation	Understandable, flat tone, lacks expressions, regional accent	Seems confident, but unable to express emotions	Has a natural rhythm	Calm. Uses humor, inspiration	Charismatic	Flawless

Artificial Intelligence and Communication

In recent years, we have seen massive strides in the advancement of technology. New applications and services simplify personal and professional tasks in the workplace. Introduction to platforms like SIRI, Alexa, directions from Google maps and even music suggestions on Spotify uses Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.

Current use of AI in Business Communication

Chatbox: Chatbots are virtual advisors, consultants or assistants who serve as the preliminary face of a company conversing with the visitor on a website trying to narrow down their needs and requirements.

Smart Campaigns: AI Algorithm based marketing campaigns like Google ads, Facebook ads

and Instagram ads, engaging Hyper targeted audience based on collated data through their browsing history.

Email Filters: According to Statistica, 53% of all email accounts to spam mails, while Radicati Research Group, identified that spam emails cost about \$20 billion globally in a year resulting in productivity loss of \$253 million yearly. Gmail uses AI based filter tools like, text filtering, client filtering and engagement to filter out such spam mails.

Smart replies: Tools like Google Smart reply uses AI and ML based technology to predict what people are trying to convey in emails and accounts for over 10% of entire email content globally.

These applications are just a small sample of the many unique ways A.I. has improved business communication. While these capabilities are fascinating and already drastically changing the way businesses operate, it's important to remember that the use of A. I. for business communication is still in its infancy. Nonetheless, every business should keep up with advancements in the field and look at how they can use A.I. to bolster their communication processes.

Comparison

Improving Business Communication Skills

Business communication skills can be improved through rigorous practice under the guidance of an experienced coach. The coach should not be a grammar purist because the objective of business communication development is to improve collaboration in the workplace. Empathy plays a significant role in collaborative working and improving business performance. A coach with rich industry experience, who is also proficient in the English language, *per se*, is an ideal candidate to train participants in business communication.

The practice should be wholesome and cover a wide variety of assignments that will improvise:

- a. Confidence
- b. Grammar
- c. Pronunciation
- d. Vocabulary

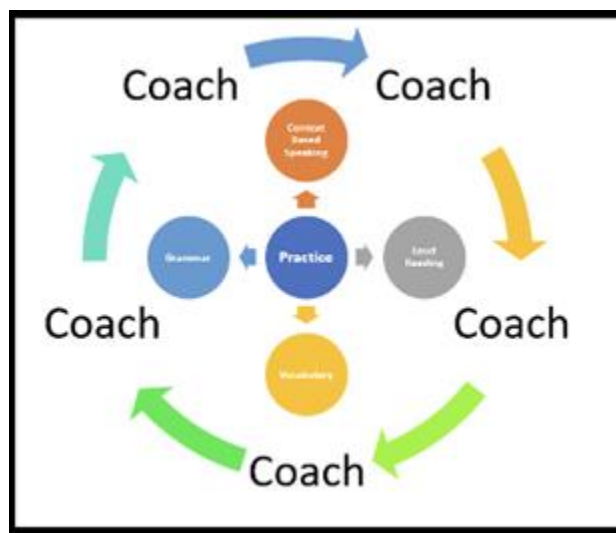


Figure 4: Hyper Personalized Learning

Practice does not require an investment of loads of time each day. Disciplined practice over a year can demonstrate significant improvement. Some recommended methods of practice:

I. Daily Reading: For simplicity, consider the advantage of reading for 4-minutes, on a different topic, each day, for a year. Record the conversation with an audio recorder and playback. This humble 4-minute reading exercise can give several outstanding benefits.

- a. **Vocabulary Building:** Underline at least one word that is not clearly understood. Find the meaning by typing *define: <word> in Google*. The pronunciation in US and UK accents would also be available, in addition to the meaning, in the results. Using this newly learned word in emails, verbal conversations, will permanently imbibe the word in the memory. Repeating this practice for 365 days leads to 365 new words in the vocabulary bank.
- b. **New Subject:** Reading articles on broad topics from periodicals, newspapers, and websites makes a person capable of contributing to coffee table discussions and ice-breaking sessions in larger forums. Knowledge of current affairs builds confidence which is quintessential for powerful communication
- c. **Speech Hygiene:** Reading regularly improves the quality of speech. Learning pronunciation while finding meanings of newfound words adds to the clarity of speech. This clarity makes the dialogue more receiver-focused.

II. Context-Based Speaking: It is natural to be more confident in speaking about one's area of

expertise (AOE). This can also be a good starting point to find gaps and recommend solutions. In the initial stages, a higher volume of content will help the coach assess areas of improvement and recommend appropriate learning solutions. Context-based speaking requires the learner to record responses to questions on work-based scenarios.

III. General Speaking: Non-context-based speaking or speaking on topics that are generic and commonplace helps the coach assess the true baseline of competence of the learner and improve from that point. Performance in context-based conversations would be a few notches above this.

IV. Audio Vs Video: A beginner struggling to put his thoughts together should initially practise recording audio clips. Once s/he develops enough confidence speaking seamlessly for 4-5 minutes, s/he should occasionally switch over to video recording. The coach can spot the variation in performance between the two and will strive to close the gap over time. Whilst body language is the most common difference, learners also tend to fumble more, miss out on some points, etc on videos compared to that on audio.

The coach can give feedback basis the above parameters. Specific consistent errors should also be pointed out so that the participant gradually improves through practice.

How Will Artificial Intelligence (AI) Help?

The four parameters described above make the assessment far more objective than it used to be earlier. Practising regularly will show a clear trend of improvement when tracked throughout a minimum of 4- 6 months. Disciplined year-long learning can yield a significant change in communication behavior. The coach's role evolves with the introduction of AI because the technology evaluates the practice recordings and rates the learner on the four parameters. Accuracy is the simplest to evaluate using semantic analytics tools and recommend areas of improvement in grammar.

When machines can be trained to identify consumer behavior and respond accordingly, then training machines to measure specific factors such as fillers, tone, and voice is not difficult. The machine learning tool has to be fed with several thousands of minutes of conversations with factors that make someone best-in-class as well as someone who does not meet even the minimum basic standards. Once, both the baseline and best-possible performance levels are set, scoring is set for specific performances in between the two levels. For example, the machine can exactly and quickly count the number of times a filler word has been used in a conversation. If the conversation has the word "actually" for more than, say, 30 times, the machine can flag this up and downvote the conversation by a couple of points.

AI is a catalyst that speeds up the skilling process because the machine does all the repetitive tasks and lets the coach focus on building customized learning plans instead. This method is the need of the hour as the world focuses and bouncing back quickly from the devastating effect of the pandemic that has left businesses shattered and employees scrambling for employment. Most jobs will undergo a 360-degree transformation and rely more on automation, technology and collaboration. EQ will further trump IQ thus making reskilling an urgent prerequisite to be successful in any role.

Alelo, an industry torchbearer, assists learners simulate real-world encounters, by practising communication with AI-driven avatars. Their Enskill ® tech helps operate at scale and lowers cost per learner thus making it affordable for large businesses that want to reskill thousands of employees in one go. Enskill ® reskills employees within the context of work-related scenarios thus making it relevant for both the employer as well as the employee (learner). Training on generic topics is frowned upon in my organizations as the Learning & Development departments look at it as wasted efforts that may or may not directly help improve efficiency and efficacy at the workplace.

Conclusion

The Business Advantage

Translating human voice into the computer's language using Natural Language Processing (NLP) methods makes the analysis much faster. AI can process content in minutes provided it has been fed with (a) a variety of samples and (b) Detailed coach feedback in the past. The AI uses this experience to build on newer understandings and arrive at super-fast feedbacks.



Figure 5: Quality and Quantity
Source: Quantified Communications

Quantification of content enables coach-agnostic analysis of communication and frees up human time for hyper-personalization of recommendations based on the analysis. An AI-powered system is not rid of human intervention but rather uses human expertise for improving capability rather than finding fault lines. Finding gaps is a repetitive exercise that adds almost zero value to the coach. This is akin to a surgeon wasting time checking the height, weight, and other vitals of a patient, instead of leaving them to the staff in the lab.

Technology can help leaders evaluate how an audience will react to the different ways you can deliver your message. The tone, pitch, rate of speech, facial expressions, and body language can be experimented with to arrive at an ideal pattern. Using AI can also help marketers tailor-make communication that reinforces the brand image in the prospects.

Picking up business communications skills is very much possible through sheer practice by reading any content or speaking on diverse topics. The need for well-rounded business communication is not new to Corporate Inc. However, the quantification of communication was rare or hardly existed which made improvisation very vague and coach-centric. Setting quantifiable parameters in accuracy, voice modulation, and articulation helps set baselines as well as benchmarks. AI speeds up evaluation processes so that human coaches spend more time personalizing the learning plan rather than waste time going through millions of bytes of data. Using AI also helps scale up-skilling activity in large conglomerates that have lakhs of workers posted in different parts of the globe. In a hypercompetitive business world, it is hard to wait because any delay in menial tasks costs money in terms of opportunities lost.

Acknowledgement

Ever since I was using the internet, I was always intrigued by how companies and businesses all over the world convey their messages to people, clientele or not.

From chatbots to targeted marketing campaigns, A. I. is quickly changing the way businesses communicate both internally and externally. A.I. played a key role in changing the way businesses communicate and operate across the web. I wondered how over time these changes developed more advanced and better A.I. to perform such tasks. This curiosity pushed me to research more on the subject.

I would like to thank my supervisor Mr. Vijayendra Khannah for his guidance throughout this project.

Lastly, my family deserves endless gratitude: my father for teaching me to appreciate history and storytelling, my mother for teaching me how to write with concise purpose, and my brother for

teaching me that an assertion of dominance is not necessarily a bad thing. To my family, I give everything, including this.

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