

Leadership development through self-upskilling: role of generative artificial intelligence

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Introduction

Leadership has evolved in response to technological advancements, global issues, and new corporate models. Leaders now face a constantly changing professional landscape where skills and knowledge are becoming obsolete. A paradigm shift in leadership development emphasizes the importance of continuous self-upskilling. Leaders are more responsible for their professional success and must embrace continuous learning to capitalize on opportunities and solve problems (Schreiber-Shearer, 2023). Leadership self-upskilling is critical for leaders to retain a lifetime learning mentality and adjust to shifting corporate circumstances. It helps leaders detect skill deficiency areas, encourage responsibility, and stimulate creativity.

Challenges, including accessibility, relevance, resource allocation, learning retention, resistance to change, quality of training programs, impact assessment and measurement, adaptability to individual learning styles, ethical concerns, and long-term sustainability, affect upskilling, especially in leadership development. The advent of AI tools such as Generative AI is transforming businesses, mandating employee upskilling to remain relevant in the digital age (Becky, 2023).

This paper investigates the dynamic connection between leadership and GAI and how this technology helps leaders with their self-upskilling. It investigates GAI's vital function in shaping leaders' professional development. As we continue through these ideas, the critical role of GAI in empowering leaders to embrace self-upskilling will become evident. In the digital age, effective leadership requires inspiring greatness, directing others, and embracing a future where leaders are active designers rather than passive beneficiaries of change.

The changing landscape of leadership

Modern leaders require human qualities to inspire, set direction, develop trust, and foster teamwork since people want authenticity, trustworthiness, and inspiration from their leaders. They must also foresee and guide strategic transitions, which include reevaluating fundamental strategies, finding opportunities, and aligning with changing customer expectations. Volatility and unpredictability are created by global uncertainties such as geopolitical instability and economic fluctuations. Significant changes and disruptions have occurred due to the digital era, necessitating leaders' ability to adapt, stay educated, and continuously self-upskill (Lambrechts *et al.*, 2021).

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Leaders must manage risks, make sound decisions, and equip their organizations to face unexpected difficulties. Addressing these difficulties necessitates a proactive attitude to self-development, being educated about emerging trends, and adopting new technologies such as generative AI. Leadership continuously develops because of technical breakthroughs, geopolitical uncertainty, and shifting workforce dynamics. Leaders may benefit from GAI by providing personalized, efficient, and data-driven learning experiences, allowing them to stay competitive in the workplace.

Leadership & upskilling

For leaders, self-upskilling is a proactive skill development and career advancement strategy. Agility, adaptability, filling up skill gaps, encouraging creativity, and fostering a lifelong learning mentality are just a few of its many advantages. Prominent figures in the business world, such as Satya Nadella, Angela Ahrendts, Elon Musk, and Sheryl Sandberg, have all embraced self-directed learning. These leaders highlighted the value of ongoing education and personal development to promote an innovative and creative culture (Susan and Tiffany, 2022). Leaders can maintain their relevance and effectiveness in dynamic situations by adopting self-upskilling.

GAI in self-upskilling

A branch of artificial intelligence called generative AI (GAI) trains models to produce content based on patterns and instances seen in incoming data. Personalized learning materials, information tailored to each learner's unique style, real-time feedback, content-generating automation, self-assessment tools, and ongoing content improvement are all possible with it. GAI transforms education by combining natural language processing, data analytics, and neural networks to produce dynamic, individualized learning experiences. However, CEOs must have a broad view of the technology's possibilities and closely consider how it will affect their organization if they are to empower people truly.

Due to the rapid growth of technology, shifts in the global market, and challenges posed by digitalization, leaders depend more on GAI to help them enhance their knowledge and abilities. Since the half-life of skills is getting shorter, leaders must be open to lifelong learning to seize opportunities and resolve issues. GAI speeds up the process, allowing leaders to gain new information and abilities more quickly, resulting in higher productivity and a competitive advantage. It also provides low-cost alternatives to traditional training and development programs, allowing leaders to access high-quality learning resources without costly seminars or courses. Artificial intelligence (AI) personalizes education and offers in-the-moment insights for ongoing improvement, revolutionizing how leaders view and handle their development (Schreiber-Shearer, 2023).

Challenges of adopting GAI for self-upskilling

Adaptability, scalability, and real-time content updates are among a few of the advantages of GAI for self-upskilling. However, it raises issues such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the necessity for lifelong learning. Leaders should employ encryption and secure methods and follow data protection standards to mitigate these concerns. They should also perform bias and fairness audits on AI systems, diversify training data, and establish openness and accountability in AI decision-making processes. They should also foster a culture of continuous learning within their organizations, follow ethical norms, empower users, and constantly check AI models to ensure they reflect changing social and technological landscapes. Leaders may embrace the benefits of GAI while minimizing its potential drawbacks by following these measures, ensuring that self-upskilling remains a profitable and ethical practice.

Revitalizing leaders with GAI

Self-up skills enabled by GAI have enormous promise for leadership and professional development. It will allow continual leadership evolution by equipping leaders with the most up-to-date skills and insights to adapt to quickly changing corporate settings. Leaders will benefit from personalized development routes, real-time leadership feedback, and an alteration in organizational dynamics. AI-powered self-upskilling has the potential to democratize leadership development, making it more accessible to a broader spectrum of people.

AI-powered decision support will allow leaders to make more informed decisions and foresee consequences. AI will deliver scalable and cost-effective training, making leadership development more scalable for organizations (Lambrechts *et al.*, 2021). The development of responsible leaders will be the primary focus, with AI-enabled positions in leadership changing to incorporate AI. Self-up skills enabled by AI will impact many industries worldwide, fostering success, rivalry, and innovation. To achieve beneficial outcomes for leaders and organizations, navigating this future with a strong focus on ethics and ethical AI use is critical.

Exemplar

A leading IT company supports employees' learning and development journeys with an AI-powered learning assistant. This platform offers hyper-personalized teaching based on training on a large data set of 16,000 content pieces and employee inquiries. The system evaluates employees' employment backgrounds and CVs to offer tailored training suggestions. It also provides concept refreshers and job advice to keep employees relevant and effective. Employees, as well as managers, gain from this strategy since it gives them the ability to grow professionally and develop their talents (Roepe, 2023).

Managerial implications

- GAI Strategic Integration in Learning Initiatives: Determine how GAI can improve self-upskilling procedures.
- Investment in Technological Knowledge: Give senior executives access to resources and training a top priority so they can grasp the possibilities of GAI.
- Fostering a Culture of continual Learning: Emphasize upskilling and embracing cutting-edge technology like GAI.
- Creating Ethical Frameworks and Considerations: Address algorithmic bias issues, data privacy, and decision-making openness.

Action Insights for

- Leaders: Evaluate them to determine the areas of strength, weakness, and need for improvement.
- Organizations: Encourage a culture of self-improvement and invest in GAI-powered educational resources.
- Policymakers: Advocate for lifelong learning policies and support efforts to promote lifelong learning among policymakers.

Conclusion

This research delves into the relationship between GAI and leadership, emphasizing the former's ability to propel businesses in the digital age and help individuals better

Keywords:
Leadership
development,
Leaders,
Learning,
Upskilling,
Generative AI

themselves. It highlights how important it is to consider ethics and employ AI appropriately. According to the study, including GAI in self-upskilling initiatives can guide leaders through the digital landscape. Still, more investigation and creativity are required to guarantee that GAI is used in a way that is ethically correct, useful, and advantageous to organizations and leaders. Generative AI can empower people only if executives adopt a broad perspective on the technology's potential and carefully analyze its organizational ramifications.

Advanced personalization, integration with cutting-edge technologies like augmented reality and virtual reality, tackling moral and legal issues, and long-term research on the effects of GAI-enabled self-upskilling programs on organizational performance and leadership development are important future areas of investigation.

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