Artificial Intelligence Maximizing Human Potential in a Technology-Driven World

December 12, 2019

Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer speculative science fiction, which was demonstrated at a BLG-led private CEO roundtable addressing its significant impacts on business. The exclusive discussion was moderated by Melinda Park and Calgary Managing Partner Alan Ross, and featured theoretical neuroscientist, artificial intelligence expert and Socos Labs founder Vivienne Ming in an engaging session with a diverse group of leaders, including CEOs of major companies.

The key questions posed to the executives were:

- What is the value of human capital in a world where technology replaces human tasks?
- What leadership challenges does AI create?

Ming addressed the first question in her presentation to a global audience earlier in the day at the Energy Disruptors Unite 2019 conference, where she was the keynote speaker and panelist: “If we don’t ask how humans will interact with technology, we won’t be able to see what the future holds,” she said. “AI can only take you to a certain point, which means that human capital will always be important.”

Ming was joined on stage by *New York Times* best-selling author Malcolm Gladwell and Sir Ken Robinson, a global authority on creativity and innovation in education and business.

Gladwell’s presentation provided insight on the question of AI and Leadership: “Pick any new innovation and you’ll see that the social problems that follow its introduction, and not the technology itself, are the issue,” he said. “So the best way to introduce innovation is to let as many different voices as possible into the discussion.”

Robinson’s talk illuminated the relationship between innovation and progress, both immediate and prospective: “Innovation never really sees the consequences of its introduction. Steve Jobs didn’t anticipate social media, Henry Ford didn’t anticipate freeways and OPEC, and the inventors of the printing press never thought it would lead to Martin Luther’s challenge to the Catholic Church. But the fact remains that human

progress has always been informed and will continue to be informed by our relationship to technology."

"What emerged is that AI can assist, among other things, with team-building and development, with recruiting by supplying historic data that identifies the most important characteristics required of candidates in a particular job, and with decision making by providing a wealth of information that could contribute to better decisions," Ross said in an interview.

But like humans, AI is subject to unconscious bias. Without an appropriate range of data sets, AI is capable of discriminating across broad categories. For example, hiring software that searches for periods of long unemployment could discriminate against single parents or veterans who served in the armed forces. Similarly, AI with cognitive emotional components that analyze video interviews, messages or answers to questions may discriminate against individuals with physical and cognitive challenges.

The core issue is that AI is solving problems that have traditionally been left to humans, including human resource tools for promotion and firing, programs for credit scoring and even public safety inquiries into the likelihood of a particular person or group committing various crimes.

"There was general agreement among the participants about AI's tremendous impact, a sense that business needed to engage AI, a deeper understanding of best practices, the need to assess their enterprises' needs and AI practice, a realization that AI can enhance human capital as well as replace it, and some deep thinking on the power of AI and the nuances it brings to the table," Ross said.

While there is still much that is unanticipated, leaders who want to capitalize on AI's potential must first understand its vast capabilities and unprecedented challenges.

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