

# AI Deployment Case Study: Using ChatGPT to Simplify the Kroger Calendar

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## Problem

Kroger and its suppliers operate on a unique 13-period retail calendar, where each period has four weeks and follows the naming convention “PxWx Year” (e.g., P3W2 2025). Two overlapping week types add complexity: Fiscal Week (Sunday–Saturday) used for reporting, and AdWeek (Wednesday–Tuesday) used for promotions. Teams frequently need to translate between the standard Gregorian calendar and the Kroger 13-Period calendar when preparing reports or discussing promotion timing. Before this project, this required referencing static PDFs or printed copies—an inefficient and repetitive process that interrupted workflow. Additionally, the Kroger calendar PDFs do not clearly label AdWeeks, only Fiscal Weeks, which made manual translation even more confusing. Accurate week alignment is critical for analyzing promotional performance, comparing year-over-year trends, and communicating timing with Kroger buyers and internal teams.

## Tool

OpenAI GPT-5 via Harvest Group’s ChatGPT Enterprise platform was used. As the company’s authorized LLM, it enabled safe interaction with real Kroger data while maintaining compliance. GPT-5’s advanced reasoning and contextual recall made it ideal for embedding custom business logic, such as Kroger’s 13-period calendar system.

## Workflow

1. Uploaded several years of Kroger calendar PDFs, including future versions.
2. Provided detailed explanations of the 13-period, 4-week structure, fiscal vs. AdWeek definitions, and exceptions such as occasional 5-week periods.
3. Conducted iterative testing using real-world prompts (e.g., “What period/week was Easter 2023?”) to ensure accuracy.
4. Added persistent clarifications so GPT-5 always specifies Fiscal vs. AdWeek unless otherwise stated.
5. Deployed the solution for daily and weekly use across the team.

## Result

### Quantitative Impact:

- Eliminated the need to search for PDF files or physical calendars (~30 seconds saved per lookup).

- Used multiple times per week across the Insights team, saving several minutes per session and improving reporting consistency.
- Reduced errors in weekly alignment across teams.

**Qualitative Impact:**

- Improved speed and confidence in reporting conversations.
- Standardized calendar interpretation across cross-functional teams.
- ChatGPT now “speaks our language” — it can understand and communicate in Kroger-specific terminology and logic.
- Knowing that teaching ChatGPT the Kroger calendar is a few more steps than simply uploading PDFs allows teammates to replicate the process in their own accounts without friction.
- New analytical advantage: Enables investigation of macro variables by week (e.g., identifying if a winter storm occurred during a specific AdWeek to explain sales anomalies).

**Lesson**

Validation matters—without stress-testing, GPT-5 initially misinterpreted the calendar’s structure; prompting it to reference the PDFs fixed accuracy. This training builds a foundation for broader AI-driven initiatives at Harvest Group, allowing the system to “speak the industry’s language.” This project lays a strong foundation for future ChatGPT-powered initiatives, such as uploading brand promotional calendars and performance data for faster referencing and deeper analysis.

**Risks and Guardrails:**

- Kroger promotional calendars for clients remain securely stored within enterprise access.
- Future models should be back-tested before deployment to prevent logical drift.

2024												
MONTH	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	PERIOD				
FEB.								Q1				
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	8	9	10	11	12	13	14					
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21					
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28					
	29	30	31									
MAR.								P1				
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APR.								P3				
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MAY								P4				
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JUNE								P5				
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AUG.								P7				
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SEPT.								P8				
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OCT.								P9				
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