**Health and Wellness and AI**

Artificial Intelligence, or AI, is not a single technology. Rather, it is a combination of technologies to statistically assemble outputs that resemble understanding. Machine Learning (ML) is another term associated with AI. ML consists of presenting an assemblage of data to computing analysis to derive patterns. AI and ML are not interchangeable terms, but they are often used together to provide actionable insights.

Many single services, like email, offer the ability to search within the available entries for a term that is matched. Searching for “spaghetti” will return messages containing that word, obviously, but might also return “spa” unless told not to. An email service with some basic AI could be programmed to return semantic results associated with spaghetti, like “Bolognese”. More likely, the AI would be programmed to return email messages that discussed Italian restaurants.

More sophisticated applications use Machine Learning to infer meaning from the messages as a whole. At this level, one may begin to ask questions that have some business value like “Which of my prospects are most eager to make an appointment?” or “What day will my email be most likely to result in an appointment?”

AI’s applicability to the Health and Wellness industry is very relevant in new and useful ways.

Most businesses have at least one staff member who receives the bulk of internal and external communications. These individuals are ‘golden’ in the sense that they can respond to a wide variety of inputs appropriately, and take proactive measures, or take advantage of an opportunity. AI is not yet at the level to replace these humans, but let’s take a look at a possible reality that is definitely within our grasp today, using the example of a Massage business.

In a Massage business, particularly one that offers a variety of services like Acupuncture, or Esthetician work, clients make appointments fit within their busy schedules. Sometimes the client need is sudden, as with an injury, requiring a short notice appointment. Often, appointments must be canceled and rescheduled, and recurring memberships compel clients to squeeze in their last appointments all at the end of the month.

In any system there is complexity that emerges quickly when a single change is made that affects a series of other outcomes. Typically, success requires desk staff that can assemble the facts to determine what changes best accommodate everyone’s needs. If that desk staffer is having an ‘off’ day, or if there are not enough heroes to provide a consistent level of service, client relationships suffer and business chaos can ensue.

Building client loyalty is incredibly important too. Each individual must be catered to, creating goodwill and ensuring that ‘word of mouth’ advertising keeps new clients coming in.

In the former age of voice-only interactions, a human was required to glean information from clients, determine the best action, and obtain feedback. Now, so much of the information being dealt with is digital that a single item can be used with multiple services to provide multiple benefits, while enhancing loyalty through client convenience.

Let’s go back to the example of scheduling a massage. A client with a four massages per month ‘package’ is charged regardless of their use. To maintain goodwill, the client might like to be reminded if they have not used all of their appointments. If an AI service is allowed access to the database of clients and a calendar, it would be trivial to send a text message or initiate a phone call reminding clients to book an appointment before the ‘end of the month rush’.

Taking this one step further, when the history of appointments is available, the AI service could determine which day is most likely to be chosen, and compare it against available slots for the preferred massage therapist, then provide a suggestion that would delight the client and solve multiple issues at once - while removing effort from the desk staff altogether. Scheduling a single event may not be arduous, but in reality when dozens of such interactions are managed in-between the staffer’s other duties, too many notifications will slip through the cracks.

In the common case of short-notice appointment changes, a few different actions must be accomplished. The client needs to be rescheduled, the therapist needs to be notified, and their time slot is made available to others. The therapy room is made available, and a waitlist of clients is then examined to determine who likely wants the available slot. From one interaction, a cascade of events must take place to keep operations flowing and AI suits this use perfectly.

By combining a human decision point, with appropriate AI software interactions, the client’s experiences can be thoroughly enjoyable and responsive to individual special situations. More importantly, once freed from concern about being overtasked or missing important messages, the staff is available to bring calm competence to their interactions, positively affecting the client experience.

So, a natural question is how to achieve the gains without making one’s existing infrastructure useless. That’s where a consultant is most useful. A competent organization can create systems that use existing data from a variety of business software to create insights and responses of value. AI is a young enough technology that expertise and experience are not commonly available. Finding trustworthy developers at a fair price can be demanding.

The key to quick turnaround and effective design is the expert assembly of ready-made parts. To accomplish that, a company with experience and a broad range of successes can quickly understand your needs, then determine what will best suit the application at hand.

Let us call you to discover interactions that will ensure your client’s delight and surface insights that your existing data already contains.