

Why startups need to prioritize GenAI use cases to drive long-term growth

The potential of **artificial intelligence** is exciting and vast, with uses to be found across all areas of a startup, whatever industry you're in.

With all the hype about the possible time and money efficiencies Generative AI can bring, it's easy to haphazardly experiment with lots of uses at once. This can result in lower quality outputs, as you may only end up scratching the surface of how this cutting-edge technology could be used.

To effectively implement GenAI into your startup, you need a considered strategy where you test individual uses, measure their impact and refine processes as a result.

Why your startup needs a targeted GenAI strategy

When it comes to GenAI, it's tempting to give everyone in the team (or yourself!) freedom to use it whenever possible.

However, **successful innovation projects** are data-driven, outcome-based and aligned to business goals – and that includes implementing GenAI. Rather than diving straight in with every application possible, startups should aim to be more measured.

Creating a targeted strategy will help you identify potential use cases and be realistic about where GenAI could support your business. It's easy to imitate what other founders are doing, but remember that every business has its own needs and you might benefit from GenAI in a completely different way.

This approach should also give you greater clarity over how to use GenAI in the long term. The risk of making lots of changes at once is that when something works, it can be hard to pick apart what made the difference. By running individual GenAI tests, you should have a clearer idea of what will add value and be an effective use of resources for your business.

How to decide where to use GenAI

Identify possible uses

The first step is to think about all the ways to use GenAI in your startup. You might want to start with your current business goals and any barriers that are getting in the way of achieving them. How could GenAI help you overcome these barriers, or achieve better or faster results?

Another angle could be what your customers might want from your business that you're not currently able to deliver. Even if GenAI can't help you to do this directly, it can be a great way to speed up other processes and free up time to focus on business growth and innovation.

For example, most founders want better visibility over their business data, but very few have the time to analyze it in depth. GenAI can analyze internal and market data to:

- Inform your marketing strategy based on real insights like buying behavior
- Identify inefficiencies in your supply chain
- Preempt concerns around cash flow in advance
- Conduct market research to spot new opportunities

Plenty of startup founders are also using GenAI to generate content. While the output might not be immediately ready to publish, it's an efficient way to generate blog ideas and short text – like social media captions and product descriptions – which will be quick to edit.

Involve staff and provide training

Involving everyone in brainstorming uses for GenAI can help to build an **innovation culture**, where employees feel inspired to share ideas and contribute to your startup's success.

Asking your employees for input also lets founders understand where efficiencies are most needed across the business. As your startup grows, it's natural to take a step back and focus more on strategy, so it's important to have insight from any employees who are actively involved in business processes.

To support this, consider training your staff on appropriate and **safe ways to use GenAI**, so they can try it out in their roles and identify further use cases. Doing this will also help to remove any roadblocks to using GenAI internally, such as nerves or anxiety about testing new technology.

Test ideas and don't rush

Prioritize the ideas that you and your team came up with. You might start with the idea that could make the biggest immediate impact or the one that would be easiest to implement.

Whichever you choose, it's critical to go into this process with an open mind, and not discount possibilities before you've tested them. Be mindful of confirmation bias and where your own beliefs and preferences could be affecting your approach.

Test the individual use cases one by one, so the results can't get skewed. Make sure you've got a clear idea for what success for each use case will look like, using metrics that you can track over time and directly compare to the results you get without using AI.

Evaluate the results qualitatively, too. How do the AI outputs compare to human ones? If human input is still needed to optimize the outputs, how much more efficient is the process with GenAI involved? Can you and your staff undertake training on using better prompts to generate better outputs?

Fostering long-term growth with GenAI

It's easy to make ad-hoc changes when your startup is small. However, as it grows, it's important to be more measured and systematic in how you implement new technology and processes.

Creating an environment where you test and refine GenAI use will help to optimize how, when and where you use it in your business. It's also a powerful way to democratize innovation, empowering your employees to uncover new uses and explore profitable new avenues that will support long-term business growth.

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