

DATA FOUNDATIONS & SCALING AI

I'm Nick Millman. I'm based in the UK and I lead Data Engineering and Architecture Capability globally within Accenture Applied Intelligence.

Why is scaling AI important?

I think scaling AI is really important because it's the scale that drives the significant business value and drives more return on investment, and what we've seen I think is a lot of organizations experimenting and doing proof of concepts with AI, which is all good and shows value but I think to get significant value organizations need to work and have to scale effectively.

What role does the data foundation play in scaling AI?

The data foundation plays a critical role in scaling AI. To me the data foundation is, from a technical perspective, the platforms and the engineering capability that goes alongside that, so that organizations can ingest and process the datasets, the fuel for AI, but also from an operating model perspective, it's about having the right skills and talent within the organization combined with the right operating model to actually deliver AI through an agile and iterative approach.

So the data foundation is critical as the fuel for the AI and if organizations don't get the data right then they risk having a frustrating stop-start journey as they try to drive their AI transformations.

How are we helping clients build their data foundation?

The data foundation is a critical part of delivering AI effectively and the way that we help our clients with their data foundation is firstly to work with them to make sure there's a clear data strategy and that data strategy would look at such questions as how do we get the right culture across the organization, how are we going to incentivise different parts of the organization to share and reuse data so that we're maximizing the value for the whole organization.

It would also look at some of the more technical architectural choices about what kind of data platforms do we need, particularly looking at not just the data platforms that we need for today but also what we might need in the future with different data types; potentially more unstructured data, more voice, more image, more video type of data sources. So there's a part of the strategy that needs to look at technical choices as well.

And then I think a very important third part of the strategy is to look at the governance from both the perspective of the management of the transformation journey, but also looking at the governance of the data and the AI outcomes to make sure they're to the right quality and that the information is being used in a fair and responsible way across the organization.

So we'd start out with a data strategy and then once the data strategy is established the most important thing to me is to actually accelerate the journey because we already talked about how AI is going to fuel the future growth of the organization.

So the faster that you get the data foundation in place and can actually start accelerating that value generation the better.

For organizations that do want to scale AI in a data powered way, then I'd really encourage them to read Ready, Set, Scale or also feel free to reach out to us.