

Embracing a People-First Approach to Innovating with AI

In the rapidly evolving landscape of artificial intelligence (AI), a people-first approach is not just a noble aspiration but a strategic imperative. The heart of accelerating innovation is, in fact, empowering individuals: enabling them to harness the transformative potential of AI while ensuring trust and security in these tools. A recent panel discussion at Dell Technologies World, moderated by **Jen Felch**, Chief Digital Officer and CIO at Dell Technologies, featured insights from **Zak Brown**, CEO of McLaren Racing, **Rich Gagnon**, Assistant City Manager and CIO of the City of Amarillo, and **Steve George**, Global CIO at EY. These leaders shared their experiences and strategies on empowering teams to leverage AI for transformative outcomes.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Embrace a culture of continuous learning and improvement.
- Democratize learning to involve everyone in the innovation journey.
- Align AI initiatives with clear business objectives.
- Create a safe environment for experimentation and 'failing forward.'
- Encourage collaboration across teams and with the community.

The Human Element in AI Innovation

Felch opened the discussion by emphasizing the importance of people in realizing the potential of AI: "Without people, it's really hard to make that impact on our businesses or in our operations." This sentiment was echoed by the panelists, who collectively highlighted that technology, no matter how advanced, requires human expertise and creativity to truly make a difference.

Brown shared his perspective from the high-octane world of Formula One racing: "At the end of the day, we're in the most technology-advanced sport in the world. But it's powered by people." He stressed the need for individuals to become experts in their fields, and fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement. This is essential for innovation, where every incremental gain can be the difference between winning and losing.

Cultivating a Culture of Collaboration and Learning

Next, the leaders discussed how culture should be shaped to encourage innovation. George pointed out the necessity of a curious culture and democratized learning: "Do you have a culture that's curious? Do they want to learn?" He also highlighted the importance of aligning business objectives with AI initiatives to avoid the "hammer looking for a nail" problem.

Gagnon brought a unique perspective from the public sector, underscoring the need to create a safe environment for iteration and 'failing forward,' both internally and with the community: "We have to create the same environment with our residents so that they're comfortable with iterating solutions." This approach extends beyond the walls of city hall, involving residents in co-developing solutions thereby fostering trust and transparency.

Breaking Barriers and Embracing Change

In their final learnings, the panelists agreed that overcoming the fear of failure is crucial for innovation. Brown described the culture at McLaren Racing as one where making mistakes is acceptable as long as they lead to learning and improvement: "Mistakes are okay, don't make the same one twice."

George concurred, advocating for a shift from a culture where failure is unacceptable to one where it is a stepping stone to progress: "Fail often, fail fast, learn, iterate."

In conclusion, the panelists demonstrated that while AI holds the promise of revolutionizing industries, it's the human element—our creativity, expertise, and collaborative spirit—that truly drives innovation. By putting people first and fostering a culture that embraces learning and experimentation, organizations can unlock the full potential of AI to create a more innovative and impactful future.

To learn how you can accelerate your innovation with AI, visit www.dell.com/innovationcatalyst