Sparx

USING MACHINE LEARNING IN YOUR OWN COMPANY – HOW TO MAKE IT WORK

by Ralf-Dieter Wagner, AWS

IN SHORT

- **Implementing machine learning (ML) in a company is like a journey with three stages: envisioning, enabling, and implementing.**

- **Programmes from AWS provide customers with appropriate assistance, technology, tools, and expertise for each of these three stages.**

- **The programmes don't have to be taken from A to Z but can be accessed at whatever point one is on the ML journey.**

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Machine learning holds opportunities for virtually any business that deals with some kind of data. For example, the technology can automate steps, minimise errors, make predictions more accurate, personalise customer interactions, and enable innovation/new business models.

It may be a bit jarring when I say that technology is not the only thing that matters for the comprehensive use of machine learning and that it doesn't always call the tune – but that's how it is. Of course, the right technology is essential and indispensable. However, to perform an orchestral piece, you need many instruments playing in unison. And just as an orchestra does not rehearse today and perform on the world's great stages tomorrow, implementing machine learning is like a journey on which skills are (further) developed that

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ultimately result in the successful implementation of machine learning in the company. No matter what stage a company is at on this ML journey: AWS supports the onward journey with customised programmes exactly where support is needed.

Figure 1: Three stages on the machine learning journey.

ENVISIONING

This first stage addresses the executives of a company. It is about setting the right course not only in technology but also in organisation, culture and strategy. For these course settings, important questions should be answered such as:

- What business goals are we pursuing with the use of ML?
- Which KPIs do we want to optimise with an enhanced exploitation of data insights?
- In which business area and with which use case should we start?
- How can data insights drive innovation?

An "ML culture" and cross-functional team collaboration are essential here. At AWS, we also talk about the "Culture of Innovation", on which we have developed a dedicated programme for the executives of our customers; details on this "Culture of Innovation" programme can be found in this factsheet.

ENABLEMENT

I have had companies come to me with a data culture already in place, as well as a strategy for how machine learning should be used. Now, they needed support in enabling their employees. Through comprehensive training as well as free online courses, technicians learn everything from the basics to expert knowledge – again, customers can be picked up right where they currently are. For example, AWS learning videos on the "Machine Learning University" YouTube channel can be compiled according to the individuals' level of knowledge and watched at their own pace. Developers can go through AI/ML certification programmes. In addition, we conduct technical "deep dives" on AWS technologies and solution architectures upon request and support customers with expert knowledge for a quick proof of concept or prototype creation.

IMPLEMENTATION

After the vision has been developed, the necessary know-how has been gained, and the first practical experiences with the technology have been collected, nothing stands in the

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way of implementing and commissioning the individual ML application – the next use cases can be tackled and the organisation can be scaled step by step to implement the multitude of possible applications securely, flexibly, and quickly. Professional Services teams from AWS as well as our certified partners are on hand to provide advice and support as needed.

CONCLUSION

No matter what stage in the ML journey our customers are at, with the help of individual programmes and customised technologies we can start from the current state, successfully complete the machine learning journey together, and realise the desired value for the business.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Ralf-Dieter Wagner (*1967) is based in Munich, Germany and is responsible for the go-to-market for the AWS AI /ML service portfolio, focusing on the DACH region. In his role, Wagner enables clients across industry verticals to leverage data and AI/ML for better business outcomes and consults them on how to get started quickly and scale. Prior to joining AWS, he served as General Manager EMEA for the US-based AI start-up r4, and prior to that he spent more than 20 years at Accenture, as a partner.

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