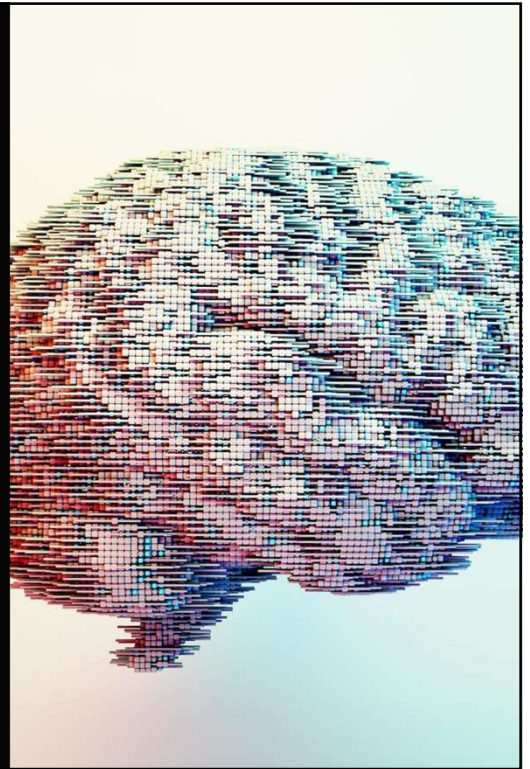# AI Applications that Small Businesses can start using today

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the way businesses operate. In this presentation, we'll explore the top AI applications for small *businesses*.

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Adrian Markey

- Chartered Accountant
- Managing Director
- Business Advisor
- Geek

@adrianmarkey

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Show of hands:

1. Who here has an awareness of AI & AI applications?
2. Who here has used AI or AI applications?
3. Who here is scared of AI?

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"AI is not going to take your jobs; it's going to take your tasks."

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes more prevalent in the workplace, many people worry about losing their jobs to automation. However, the truth is that AI is more likely to take over repetitive and time-consuming tasks, freeing workers to focus on more creative and critical work.

There is a school of thought that says it is an inevitability that AI will eventually takeover and replace humans as the rulers of the world.

There is another school of though that says this is actually a good thing because humans are irrational and have historically been unable to act in their own best interests.

But for today we'll just be looking at business applications of AI. Keep things light!

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What we'll cover

What is AI?

What can we use it for?

AI Applications available for Small Business to use today

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What is AI and why is it relevant for small businesses?

AI is a branch of computer science that creates systems that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and language translation.

AI represents a move away from "if-this-then-that" programming, and a move towards having the computer learn.

It's relevant to small businesses because it can help automate repetitive tasks, improve customer service, and provide valuable insights into business operations.

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Benefits of using AI for small businesses

Increased productivity

AI can automate repetitive tasks, freeing up time for employees to focus on higher-value tasks.

Improved customer service

Chatbots can provide 24/7 support, answer common questions, and improve response times.

Better decision-making

AI-powered analytics can provide insights into customer behavior, sales trends, and business operations, helping to improve decision-making.

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Automating repetitive tasks with AI

1 Data Entry

AI can automate data entry tasks, reducing human errors and improving accuracy.

2 Invoicing and Billing

AI can automate invoice and billing processes, reducing manual effort and improving cash flow.

3 HR Tasks

AI can automate tasks such as payroll processing, benefits management, and resume screening, freeing up HR professionals for more strategic work. "One-click" payroll is not far away.
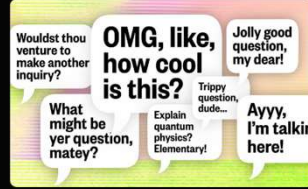
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Chatbots for customer service

24/7 Customer Support

Chatbots can provide 24/7 support, answer common questions, and improve response times, freeing up employees for more complex tasks.

Engage Customers

Chatbots can be programmed to have a unique brand voice and personality, engaging customers and improving brand recognition.

Improve Customer Experience

Chatbots can tailor responses to individual customers based on their past interactions and preferences, providing a more personalized experience.

Prediction: Within the next 2-5 years you won't be able to tell if you are chatting with a ChatBot or a human. Within the next 5-10 years, you won't be able to tell if you are _speaking_ with an AI or a human.

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AI-powered analytics for better business decisions

Customer Behavior

AI can analyze customer behavior data, such as website visits, social media interactions, and purchase history, to identify trends and patterns that can inform marketing and sales strategies.

Operational Efficiency

AI can analyze operational data, such as supply chain performance and employee productivity, to identify areas for improvement and cost savings.

Financial Performance

AI can analyze financial data, such as revenue and expenses, to provide insights into cash flow, profitability, and financial health.

If you have a large dataset, AI can be trained to analyse this data, spot patterns and suggest (or in many cases, take) actions.

Huge potential in supply chains, stock management, waste management, pricing models, marketing strategies, etc.

Think of any large sets of data you currently spend a long time sifting through to draw conclusions on. This can be done automatically.

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Improving Efficiency and Quality in Manufacturing with AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing manufacturing and machine operations. With AI, manufacturers can improve quality control, reduce downtime, and optimize production processes. From predictive maintenance to automated quality inspection, AI is helping manufacturers save time and money while improving overall efficiency.

AI-powered predictive maintenance helps reduce downtime and increase efficiency

Robotic process automation (RPA) helps optimize production processes and improve quality control

Automated quality inspection powered by AI helps improve product quality and reduce defects

AI is currently being rolled out to do quality inspection. Can be trained to spot defects and take different actions for different defects.

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AI now has eyes

Example of a coffee shop using AI on its security cameras to track how long customers spend in the coffee shop and how productive employees are.

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AI Lifeguard

Cameras on a beach can be utilised to track and differenciate between swimmers, surfboard, boats etc. It can identify signs of distress and automate a response whilst also notifying lifeguards.

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Keeping policitians focused!

AI tracks these Belgian politicians phone usage during sittings and if it goes above a certain threshold a tweet goes out to the puiblic and tags them.

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Now the good stuff...

There are literally thousands of AI platforms and applications out there that you can start using today.

Some are very similar to others, but if there is something you think you can automate or simplify by using AI, it's highly probably a solution already existis (or at least the component parts of a solution).

So, what's out there?

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AI Applications for Small Businesses

Small businesses can benefit from AI technology as well. Some of the main AI applications available for small businesses include:

Chatbots

Automate customer service and support, saving time and enhancing customer experience.

- Chatfuel
- Zendesk Chat
- Tars
- HubSpot Conversations

Marketing Automation

Personalize marketing campaigns, improve lead generation, and increase revenue.

- HubSpot Marketing Automation
- Rapidely.app
- Canva
- Deepbrain AI
- Jasper.ai

Accounting Tools

Predict future sales trends and forecast revenue.

- Syft
- Dext
- Xero Analytics Plus

Content Creation

Create text and media

- ChatGPT
- Midjourney
- Stable Diffusion
- Gamma
- DALL-E

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ChatGPT

- Chat GPT is a Large Language Model (LLM). It creates reponses to inputs ("prompts") based on its knowledge - a snapshot of the internet as at September 2021.
- Free to use with GPT-3.5 or $20/month for GPT-4 which allows for app add-ons such as Canva, PDF readers, SEO optimisation tools and lots more.
- Excellent tool for creating social media posts, website blogs, email responses and even e-books.

The key is to perfect the prompt. Be Specific!

"Write a blog post about **[SPECIFY SUBJECT MATTER].**"

This will generate a response, but the output will be very general and a little flat to read.
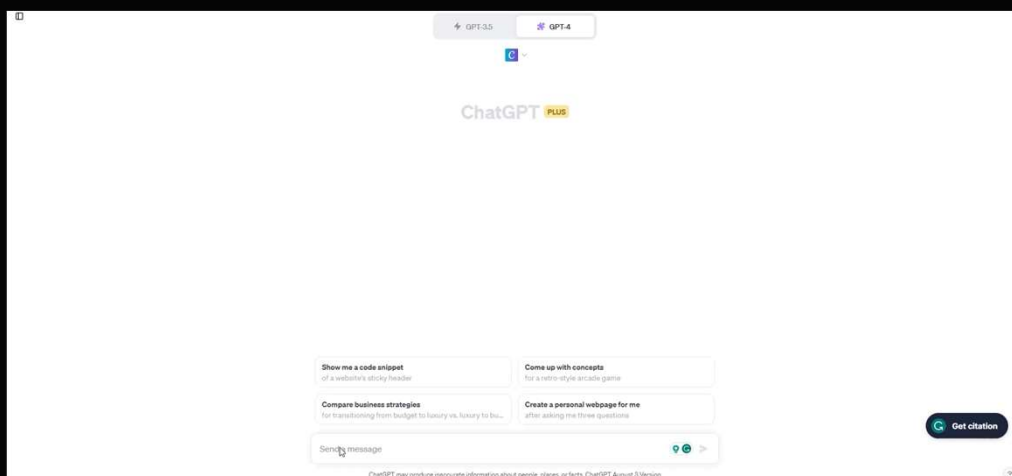
"I want you to take on the role of a marketing content creator for a small business that **[DESCRIPTION OF WHAT THE BUSINESS DOES]**. Create an article for the website of this business on **[SPECIFY SUBJECT MATTER].** The article should have a freindly yet professional tone, should be broken into sections with headings where appropriate, and be around 1,000 words. Use clear and concise language and end the article with a call to action for the reader such as 'contact us today for advice'."

This will craft a much better output as you have specified the length, tone, structure and language of the article.

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A Quick Example

It takes the average person 12-13 minutes just to type 500 word, let alone think of what to write. This video has been sped up, but took 1m 50secs to generate. That's a 500 word article and a handful of curated templates for an accompanying image in under 2 minutes.

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ChatGPT API

You can also use ChatGPT's API to train your own AI that runs natively on your own PC or Network. Requires a little bit of coding but step-by-step tutorials available online.

- Load PDFs into a folder and point ChatGPT towards it
- ChatGPT reads all info in the folder
- You can then prompt ChatGPT to generate content based on the PDFs you feed it
- Numerous applications here for research or any businesses that have huge amounts of technical data that they need to distill and scrutinise.

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Gamma.app

Fantastic tool for creating presentations. Guess where I created *this* presentation?

Free credits on sign up that get used buy asking AI to perform certain tasks (eg. create a slide with an image talking about the benefits of using Gamma.ai, insert a table of pros and cons etc).

If you don't know what your next sentence should be, just type 3x + symbols and Gamma will write one for you.
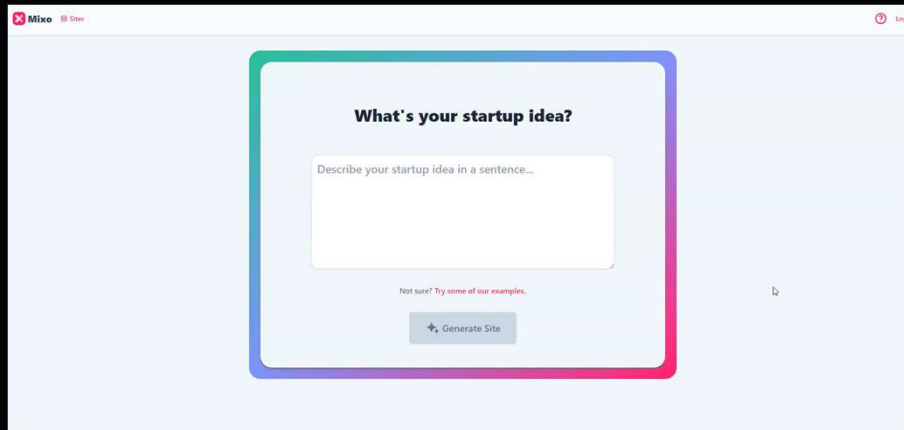
For example:

If you're struggling to come up with a catchy introduction, just type "+++" three times and Gamma will generate a captivating opening sentence for your presentation. This feature saves time and helps you create engaging content effortlessly. Plus, Gamma.app offers a user-friendly interface and a wide range of customizable templates to make your presentations visually appealing.

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Mixo.io

Mixo is a platform that generates a website from a one sentence description. Free to try with packages from $9-39/month depending on how many pages on website.

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Stable Diffusion

A platform that creates images from text prompts. Free with paid options for faster responses.

Example: "A man riding a horse wearing a suit. The horse should be standing on its back legs. The man has a sword in his hand" (Style: Comic Book)

Still not perfect - yes, the horse has 5 legs - but getting faster and more accurate all the time.

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Syft

Syft is a financial analysis tool that reads data directly from your bookkeeping software (Xero, QuickBooks etc) and enables you to create reports from this historical data.

It also looks at past patterns of transactions to predict future cashflows and performance.

For example, if a customer orders from you every month and normally pays you on the Friday before the due date, Syft will predict this into perpetuity.

It also allows you to plug in expected or known non-recurrinig income and expenses (Eg. buying a van in six months time, balancing payment from client on large project etc)

It also allows you to create projected profit and loss account, balance sheet and set up rolling budgets in just a few minutes.

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Rapidely.app

Rapidely.app is an AI application that helps you plan social media content in advance.

It will generate ideas for social media content based on information you provide about your business. You can select which platforms you use, whether you want text, image or video content. You can also select a market niche, tone of voice and lots of other options.

Tip: Once you have the ideas, you can copy and paste into ChatGPT to generate the text and do the same with Stable Diffusion to generate the image to accompany the post.
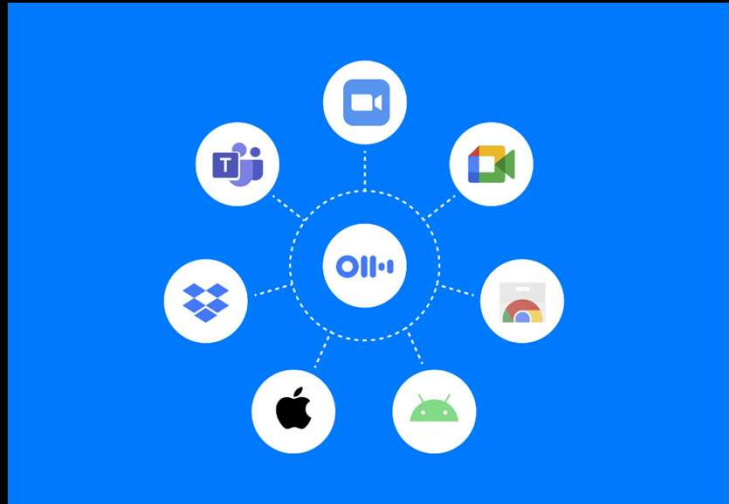

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Otter.ai

Otter.ai uses AI to develop speech-to-text transcription. Integrates with apps like Zoom to take notes on meeting so you know who said what and when. Transcriptions are then searchable so you can check the details on what you discussed. It will also capture shared slides and generate a meeting summary.
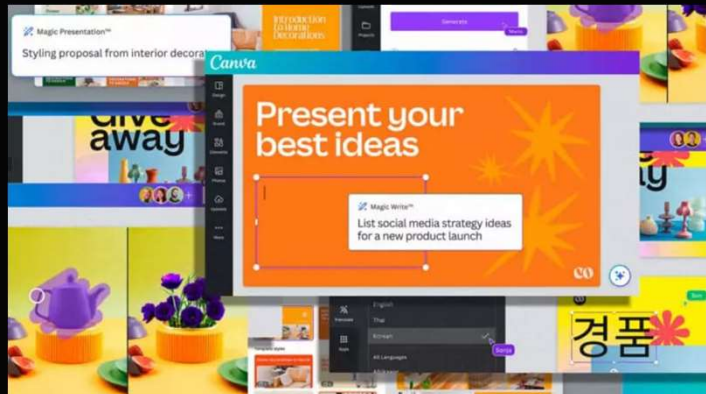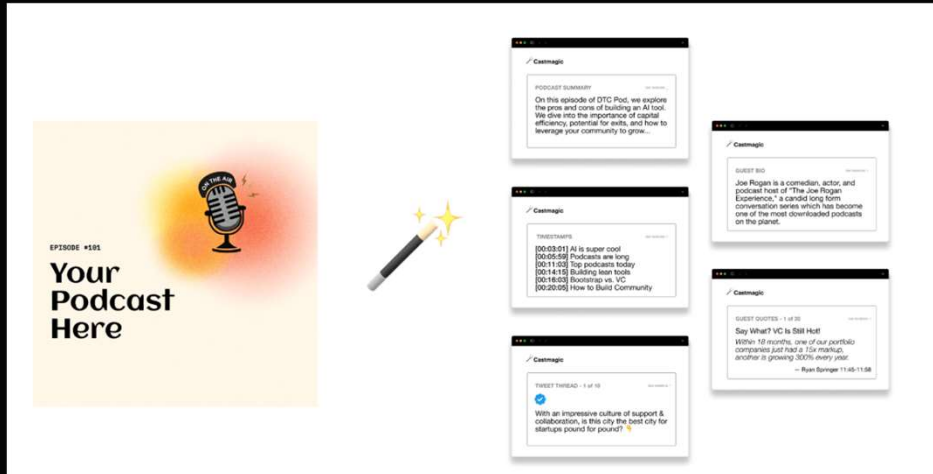

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Canva

Canva is an easy-to-use image editing app loved by millions. They have a feature called Magic Design which is currently in Beta. You can upload a photo or image and Canva will suggest multiple templates, styles colour pallets etc for your design and walk you through the design process.

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Castmagic.io

A tool for podcasters - create transcriptions of episodes, show notes, summaries, quotes and social media content in seconds.

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Resemble.ai

Resemble.ai is an AI voice generator and cloning platform. You can generate speech from text, convert speech from one voice to another, or record samples of your own voice and have it read text back to you.

If you use one of the "off-the-shelf" voices, you can change empahsis, emotion and even language to suit the context.

I tried this. And it was… well, judge for yourself.

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What Next: AI for Small Businesses

Now that you've seen some of the ways AI can be used to improve your business, it's time to start thinking about next steps. Here are some ideas:

1 Identify your business needs

What tasks could you automate or improve with AI? Look for areas where AI could save you time or money.

2 Research AI tools

There are many AI tools available to small businesses. Do your research to find the ones that will work best for your needs and budget.

3 Start experimenting!

Start small with a pilot project to test out an AI tool. This will help you get a feel for how AI can work for your business.

4 Get help

If you're not sure where to start or need help implementing AI, reach out to a consultant or service provider who can guide you through the process.

Remember, AI is not a magic solution that will solve all your problems. But by incorporating AI into your business strategy, you can gain a competitive edge and position your company for success.

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Final thoughts

- Taste everything - try out as many tools as you can find and see what works
- Treat AI as "the assistant" - it is a tool to facilitate collaboration, not stifle it.
- Trust but verify - as good as some of the content creation tools are, you are the editor. Check what has been created and ensure it is what you wanted.
- Be curious, not fearful.
- Ask for help. Plethora of information online as well as in your own professional network.

Thank you for you time and attention.

ADRIAN MARKEY
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT

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