

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.


If you have any questions or need help you can email us

AI usage at the AAM Emerge Conference.

Jason Bramwell • Oct. 12, 2023



By now we all know that artificial intelligence is a pretty powerful tool, and it can solve a lot of problems in the workplace. But some accounting firm partners and stakeholders may still not be convinced that they should invest in the technology and allow AI to be used by staff on certain projects.



Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

“When communicating the benefits of using AI to them, you need to do so in a compelling way and be able to get them to buy in to what you're actually selling them,” Nicole Sterling, director of marketing and communications at Montreal-based full-service accounting firm RSW Accounting + Consulting, said during the 2023 Association for Accounting Marketing (AAM) Emerge Virtual Conference on Oct. 4.

So, how can you make your firm's partners and stakeholders fully understand why using AI is pivotal in the current business environment? Sterling provided five steps to demystifying AI usage.

## 1. Define the value

First, show the firm's partners and stakeholders the value of using AI within your role and explain how it will benefit your role and the firm, Sterling said. Summarize what problems AI solves and what benefits the technology will bring to your partners. She said the value should be something specific, very measurable, and aligns with your firm's strategic goals, needs, and expectations.

“For example, you could say that using ChatGPT-4 can reduce the manual effort of creating content for your firm's website by 80%, saving our firm time, energy, and effort. We won't be using our key accounting staff and partners for the creation of the information,” Sterling said. “If you're like me and chasing your partners to get content is often a nightmare, this alone might change their mind on using AI in your firm.”

## 2. Choose your metrics and key performance indicators

These are the things you're going to measure to show the value of AI to your

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

firm wants to do strategically, and use them to track and report your outcomes.

- Be sure to select relevant KPIs that are crucial to demonstrating the performance and the impact of the AI you want to use. "Always ensure the metrics and KPIs are relevant, achievable, and reliable. Carefully chosen measurements will better help stakeholders understand, except, and approve you using AI in your firm," Sterling said.

### **3. Establish a clear roadmap with defined milestones**

Defining and creating a roadmap will allow you to know from where you're starting and end where you want to finish, she said.

"You'll have milestones along the way to show your partners and your stakeholders how you're progressing and what's happening, but also with this roadmap, you can see if it's veering off to one side or the other or that it's not reaching where you need to go," Sterling said. "It allows you the ability to monitor your efforts and change them if you need to so you meet your end goals. By creating this roadmap, you can show your stakeholders that the AI project is aligned with all of the priorities of the firm, how you plan to achieve your goals, what results you expect to deliver, and when. This will be valuable to them allowing you to go ahead with using AI in whichever specific case you're going to be using it for."

### **4. Use examples during talks with stakeholders**

Sterling said some partners at her firm were leery of using AI at first, mentioning the movie *The Terminator* and how robots were coming for everyone and their jobs. She said you need to ease their concerns.

“One of the most effective ways to show the value of AI is to use examples. Describe

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

create a full website article, but what I am saying is you can use it to create the outline, title, and subtitles of the article and really use it to get 80% down the field, and then turn it into an article of your firm's very own.”

## 5. Create drafts and prototypes

“I did this to get my partners to really understand what I needed because my partners weren't into AI, they're not tech people, and they're not people who would be investigating AI at that point in time,” Sterling said. “So, I created drafts and prototypes of various cases that I wanted to use it for. I presented that at our monthly partners meeting, and this way I could show the value of the AI and allow them to actually see something tangible: what it's going to look like, what I expect it to do, and how it's going to look. These examples and drafts really helped them better understand the information I was trying to get them to approve.”

Accounting • Artificial Intelligence • Firm Management • Technology

CPA Practice Advisor is registered with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) as a sponsor of continuing professional education on the National Registry of CPE Sponsors.

© 2024 Firmworks, LLC. All rights reserved