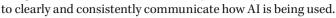# Communicating AI Use
Leading by example with clarity & confidence

by: Christina Catenacci & Tommy Cooke, voyAIge strategy Inc.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer an emerging trend. It is a daily reality. AI is used in a number of areas, including customer service, document generation, analytics, ticket triage, product development and hiring. It is reshaping business operations across industries. But with that transformation comes something that is often overlooked: the responsibility to clearly and consistently communicate how AI is being used.

This is especially true for managed service providers, dealers and technology vendors. For instance, when you deploy or sell AI, you are not just offering a product — you are setting an example. Clients, customers and employees are watching how you use these tools. They take cues from your messaging, your transparency and your tone. Whether you intend to or not, you are modeling what responsible AI adoption looks like.

That is why it is no longer enough to simply "use" AI. It must be managed, and managing AI must include clear communication — both internally and externally. When we say "clear communication," we emphasize it — vague and inconsistent messaging is not only confusing, it is also a risk.

Why? Because people are becoming more perceptive when it comes to AI. According to a recent report on AI trends for 2025 by National University, while 65% of consumers trust businesses that use AI, only 39% believe that current AI is safe and secure, and 85% want industries to be transparent about AI before new products are brought to market.

This means that every time you introduce AI into a workflow or customer interaction, it sends a message. It tells people something about your values, your priorities and your understanding of risk. If that message is unclear, people will fill in the blanks themselves.

Think of a client who receives your sales forecast that was generated with the assistance of AI. If you have not explained that AI was involved in creating the document — or how the output was reviewed — your client may assume it was prepared entirely by a human. That could lead them to overtrust the results or, if they suspect AI was used but you have not said so, they might become skeptical of the numbers altogether. Similarly, if your customer support team uses an AI-powered chatbot but the team never mentions that AI is used when providing support, customers might become confused, frustrated or misled. In both cases, the harm is not caused by the tool — it is caused by the silence around its use.

Setting the Foundation With Internal Communication

Before an organization can effectively communicate AI use to the public, it must ensure its own teams are aligned. This starts with internal communication. It is necessary for leadership to be able to clearly explain the following:

- What each AI system is used for
- The limitations of each AI system
- The person accountable for each AI system's performance

These explanations should be shared across the company, not just within technical teams. Salespeople, account managers, support staff members and HR team members all need to understand the role AI plays in the company's operations and offerings.

Clarity around AI should be integrated into training materials, onboarding documents and operational briefings. Employees should be encouraged to ask questions, raise concerns and request guidance when they encounter unfamiliar tools or new systems. When employees understand how AI works within the organization, they are more likely to use it responsibly. They are also more likely to speak about it with accuracy and confidence.

External Communication: Discussing AI With Clients & Customers

Now that there is internal alignment within the company on AI, external messaging with clients and customers needs to be clear and consistent. In this way, employees are equipped to accurately converse about AI and avoid inconsistent messages that can confuse clients and customers, or oversell AI's capabilities.

Here is a tip: Do not wait to tackle the challenge of communication about AI until you adopt it — communicate the intention to adopt it and encourage staff members to engage and discuss.

In some cases, leaders may be hesitant to discuss their situations with AI in public-facing communications. However, disclosing AI use can be a sign of confidence and trust building. Interestingly, MIT Sloan Management Review and Boston Consulting Group assembled an international panel of expert AI academics and practitioners to gain insights into how responsible artificial intelligence (RAI) is being implemented in organizations worldwide. When asked if there should be mandatory disclosures about the use of AI in their products and offerings to customers, the experts were overwhelmingly in favor of mandatory disclosures, with 84% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.

Why did so many experts say "yes"? They pointed out that disclosures promoted transparency, which is "the foundation of an effective RAI framework." In fact, some suggested that companies had an ethical obligation to be transparent about their use of AI.

ForHumanity's Ryan Carrier stated that AI users had a right to know the risks associated with the use of a tool, just like people want to know the side effects of taking a prescription drug. With the full information, large language model users could seek to mitigate risks — some of which include hallucinations and made-up sources. The panel highlighted that, "Beyond any ethical obligation, disclosures help promote trust and build confidence among customers, investors and employees."

That said, the panel also pointed out it could be challenging to disclose because AI was hard to explain in customer-friendly language. This led to a consensus that disclosures should be made in plain English and not hidden away in inaccessible terms and conditions. Another thing the panel noted was that disclosures may not always be practical. For example, if a person uses AI to conduct secondary research, the disclosure may not be needed. But it would definitely be necessary to disclose when AI is used in consequential decisions. Likewise, disclosures would be necessary if someone's personal data is being used to train a model.

The panel recommended that companies consider RAI principles such as transparency and accountability; make disclosures easy to understand; go beyond the legal requirements; and publish their AI codes of conduct or details of their responsible AI programs. For example, if a vendor uses AI to receive customer complaints, like in a chatbot, it might be helpful to have a policy or info source that explains why the company uses the chatbot, how it works, what it enables for them, and how they review and monitor interactions.

We recommend leaders keep the following in mind:

■ If you carefully disclose your use of AI, people will trust you to deliver products and services through AI safely. Invest in creating a consumer culture that is not afraid of your AI use.

■ When customers and clients ask about your AI use, be ready with a prepared response that clearly explains how you use AI. This will assure them that you are aware of the risks and you are making an effort to use AI with care.

■ When you disclose your AI use, you are satisfying customers' curiosity about the technology. Many are fascinated and excited about what it can do.

■ When you avoid discussing your use of AI, you run the risk of damaging your reputation. People will wonder why you are not disclosing or whether you are against using AI altogether.

■ There are several ways to disclose your use of AI. Use legal disclaimers, share your responsible AI practices and post a public-facing policy on your website.

> Communication is part of your responsibility ... That responsibility is also an opportunity to lead by example, earn trust and model what responsible AI looks like in action.

Depending on where you live, there could be legal requirements concerning AI transparency. Each state is different. For example, section 22757.2 of California's AI Transparency Act requires that covered providers — such as companies that offer generative AI tools, platforms that distribute AI-generated content or businesses that embed AI in customer-facing products — create an AI detection tool by which a person can query the covered provider as to the extent to which text, image, video, audio or multimedia content was created, in whole or in part, by a generative AI system.

The law also says that any AI-generated content — like images, text, videos or audio — must include a visible disclosure that clearly states it was created using AI. That disclosure must be easy to find, difficult to remove and include information such as which tool was used and when the content was created.

California Governor Gavin Newsom signed this act into law on Sept. 19, 2024, and it takes effect on Jan. 1, 2026. To date, it is the nation's most comprehensive AI watermarking law.

AI is changing the way business is done — but how you talk about AI will shape how it is received, trusted and adopted. Whether it is because of new laws like California's, or growing pressure from clients and employees, the message is clear: silence is no longer an option.

Communication is part of your responsibility. For dealers, vendors and service providers, that responsibility is also an opportunity to lead by example, earn trust and model what responsible AI looks like in action. ■

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