AI Analysis

The AI Ops Toolkit: Agentic Workflows for Speed and Growth

Richard White
Founder and CEO, Fathom

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Summary

The session delved into the complexities of integrating AI into company workflows, emphasizing the challenges and strategies for successful implementation. The speaker highlighted the difficulties faced in in-house AI builds due to ambitious goals and the often disappointing reality compared to vendor tools. The failure rate of AI initiatives was discussed, with in-house tools failing more frequently than vendor solutions, and ChatGPT showing a relatively higher success rate compared to other AI tools. The variability in effort and impact on AI software development was likened to a Jenga model, where flexibility and adaptation to new models are crucial.

Building AI tools internally was advocated for tasks with narrow scopes, specific use cases, or cost-prohibitive vendor solutions. The speaker recommended timeboxing internal solutions, using the most expensive models first, and expecting a high failure rate. An R&D lab mentality was suggested, where rapid prototyping and iteration are key. Hiring in-house AI expertise, even at a hobbyist level, was encouraged to foster innovation and effective internal tool development. Examples of successful in-house AI implementations included AI support solutions, sales trend analysis, and knowledge base suggestions, all demonstrating the benefits of tightly scoped projects.

When purchasing AI tools, a rigorous evaluation process was recommended, including 90-day pilots, ruthless QA, and partnering with vendors for feedback. Running parallel bake-offs with multiple vendors was suggested to identify the best solutions. The importance of evaluating individual features rather than vendors as a whole was stressed, as vendor quality can vary significantly across different features. Successful vendor implementations included AI resume screening and voice customer reports, while failures highlighted the importance of specific use cases and data quality. Overall, a strategic approach to both building and buying AI tools, with a focus on narrow scope and detailed evaluation, was presented as essential for effective AI integration.

Takeaways

Challenges of In-House AI Builds

In-house AI builds often fail due to ambitious goals and the difficulty of achieving desired outcomes. Companies should focus on integrating, evaluating, and modifying AI vendor tools where possible, as vendor solutions tend to be more reliable. Narrow scopes and specific use cases are more suitable for successful in-house AI development.

Strategic AI Tool Development

A strategic approach to AI tool development involves timeboxing solutions, using expensive models initially, and adopting an R&D lab mentality. Hiring in-house AI expertise, even at a hobbyist level, can significantly enhance innovation and effective tool development. Companies should expect a high failure rate and be prepared to iterate rapidly.

Rigorous Evaluation of AI Purchases

Purchasing AI tools requires a rigorous evaluation process, including 90-day pilots, ruthless QA, and partnering with vendors for feedback. Running bake-offs with multiple vendors can help identify the best solutions. Evaluating individual features rather than vendors as a whole is crucial for successful implementation, as vendor quality can vary significantly across different features.

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