



Decoding
Artificial Intelligence
Hiring in Italy

Building organizational expertise in artificial intelligence, and the criticality of such expertise has to permeate internal boundaries in organizations so as to fully exploit its value across the entire value chain.

Artificial Intelligence in non-ICT companies is still very new, and companies are increasingly deploying AI to improve internal business efficiencies and to serve customers better with new products or services. Typically, companies want to house the AI experts within their commercial department, and that is indeed a big challenge as these resources are largely employed in ICT companies where they are part of the technology department.

In our experience, the following are the key considerations:

- AI is a very new for non-ICT companies, where it is at its early-adoption stage. According to research by Milan Polytechnic School of Management, only 12% of all companies and 56% of large corporations in Italy have completed a project based on AI
- AI platforms are mainly used today for operations streamlining, and is widely being used in the banking and insurance sectors
- Most executives in charge of AI projects are working in support functions (IT and technology infrastructure) and have a technical education and background (computer science & engineering)
- It is very rare to find executives in charge of AI projects in the so called "primary functions" and even more so in the commercial functions

Moreover, it is quite clear that AI is not an off-the-shelf solution: the introduction of AI platforms needs to go through several stages of validation:

- Building a strong business case, setting a clear goal and evaluating costs and benefits, organizational impact and economic impact

Companies are increasingly deploying AI to improve internal business efficiency and to serve customers better

- Meticulously redesigning processes: studying how AI will change the way of working throughout the organization
- Clearly defining the road map and the key influencers to implement the required changes
- Project management and deployment

Based on our experience, we feel it is best for organizations to recruit high potential candidates who have extensive experience in digital platforms and AI, coupled with a business mindset. Decoding this further, the key characteristics of a successful candidate are elaborated further:

In this context, high potential means high learning agility. The ability to face new challenges and to understand how to select and implement new systems and processes without any previous experience. Business transformation & and change management experience will be critical to success.

The incumbents will have an open mind to try out various approaches to solve problems, with a focus on the end customer. Prior experience in digital platforms dealing with data and analytics will be valuable.

In addition, these leaders need to be disciplined, structured and analytical. They also need to have an assertive style to introduce innovations, and good influencing skills to convince the key decision makers of the need for and benefits of change.

Strong business acumen, and the ability to partner, and to identify business growth opportunities and to communicate with technology teams will be critical to the success of the new AI executive.

Organizations should recruit high potential candidates who have extensive experience in digital platforms and AI, coupled with a business mindset

Author



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Clara is the Co-Managing Partner for our office in Milan. A native Italian, Clara lived in Canada during high school and University and earned a degree in Management from McGill University.

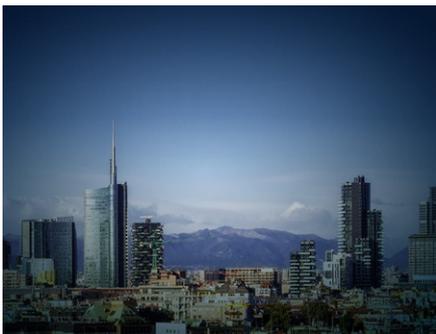
She returned to Italy to start her career in marketing at Procter & Gamble (Health & Beauty Division) before studying for an MBA at SDA Bocconi. She worked as Marketing Director for Italy and Europe at Ferrero, Sitia Yomo and Carlo Erba/Pharmacia.

Clara also spent time as a Consultant at Bain & Co as well as at two Italian start-ups before joining the search profession in 2010.

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