CLARITYES1™ PODCAST

Welcome to the ClarityES1 podcast series.
I'm your host, Chris Deren and after a couple of decades helping field teams develop into their full potential, I can say that we've learned a lot. Especially around Strategic Account Management and how to get it right.

It's also served to remind us how much more there still is to learn everyday as new patterns and trends emerge in selling to major accounts. One such development you've been hearing a lot about lately is ChatGPT, the artificial intelligence chatbot that's all the rage.

This podcast will offer some insights and opinions about how ChatGPT applies to Strategic Account Management and whether or not it's something you need to have on your radar now or in the near future.

First, a bit of clarification here. The "GPT" in ChatGPT stands for "generative pre-trained transformer" which in layman's terms is a tool that lets users enter prompts, requests or questions to receive human-like images, text or videos generated by artificial intelligence.

As you start to overlay the role of ChatGPT in the world of Selling and Strategic Account Management, an important distinction between ChatGPT and predictive AI also emerges. Predictive Artificial Intelligence ("Predictive AI") has been around for some time now, and it's used to analyze data for the purpose of predicting and anticipating future needs, trends or events at a company. A common use case scenario? Manufacturing sales teams using predictive AI to anticipate increases or decreases in ordering volume for a particular product by companies in their territories within a certain time range. The results of this analysis may lead to decisions to prioritize one account over another or focusing on a particular stakeholder or department within the account.

ChatGPT is another whole thing altogether. Launched at the end of November 2022, ChatGPT acts more as an extension of someone's selling or SAM efforts. It can automate routine tasks like creating personalized sales pitches, lead generation emails or letters. It can also automate parts of the lead nurturing process and generate other types of content.

Like many of you, I've been hearing about it since it was launched but the "old school" part of me was hesitant until I could understand better where the applicability to Strategic Account Management and Selling in general lied and within what context ChatGPT could be used.

That veil started getting lifted recently when I decided to jump into the deep end and give ChatGPT a try. I had read up on its limitations… no data to process after 2021, its tendency to reflect bias, inability to pivot quickly to changes in context, etc., But with so much talk about how it can help with business development, I just had to give it a go. So, after I created a free ChatGPT account, here are the prompts I created: the first one I did with a bit of tongue-in-cheek I have to admit. I asked……. "Can you produce a podcast script that talks about how

ChatGPT applies to selling?" In case you're worried… **this** podcast is 100% original and of my own making. I have to say though, what it produced within 10 seconds was pretty remarkable. It gave me back a 4-segment word-for-word script where I was interviewing an expert in ChatGPT on the topic. If I wanted to, all I would need to do is literally fill in my name, the name of the guest expert and adjust or add anything I want. But it was essentially done. Yes, I know, college professors are probably already losing sleep over this, but that's for someone else to dig into.

Next, I asked it to write an "introductory sales letter to the vice president of finance". Seconds later, a perfectly formatted professionally written letter. Granted, it was more of a template waiting for me to fill in specifics about key benefits of my products and/or solutions and how they could potentially solve the VP's problems but still, very impressive and timesaving.

For the last one, I asked: "how do I get an appointment with a chief technology officer?" Once again, I had within seconds, 12 recommendations including things like: "identify mutual value", and "attend industry events". Now, having worked with SAMs for so long on how to access the c-suite, I can't say there was anything on the list that we haven't seen or coached before but the speed with which it generated all 12 points of advice was startling.

What also became obvious is what ChatGPT couldn't give me… the specific details that make all the difference. "What did I learn from up-front due diligence on a **specific** CTO and his or her company that I could weave into the narrative of the approach?" "What business issues or challenges specific to **their specific** organization were they experiencing?" And "why would it be worthwhile to make time in the schedule to explore these with the SAM further?"

So… my ChatGPT journey continues for now and my brief time with it so far certainly reveals its limitations. But there's something there. And who knows, everything my old school self thinks it knows about getting strategic account management right might end up being a little bit re-shaped by this intriguing technology.

Thanks for listening to the ClarityES1 podcast series. Until next time!