'Do It Right' with AI: Ally creators experiment with generative AI in marketing test case



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Early results show Ally.ai capabilities could boost speed, drive team creativity and productivity

CHARLOTTE, N.C., Nov. 16, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Ally Financial Inc. (NYSE: ALLY) announced today the early results of an experimental generative AI use case with its marketing team designed to help understand the real-world impact the technology could have on campaign development and employee productivity. Using the Ally.ai platform's large language model (LLM) chat and prompt functionality, a select group of marketers were able to reduce the time needed to produce creative campaigns and content by up to 2-3 weeks and reported an average time savings of 34%, compared to typical processes without AI.

Additional results reported from the month-long experimental program include:

- The reduction in time needed for content creation and other marketing outputs of up to 2-3 weeks was primarily found in the early stages of the creative process in tasks such as research, first drafts and naming exercises
- The 34% time savings on tasks when using the Ally.ai interface could equate to an annual savings of almost 3,000 hours across the participant team
- More than 80 prompts developed by participants during the test had an 87% usefulness rate, showing the value of prompt engineering training for teammates and the effectiveness of outputs that could be used in assigned work
- Users also noted a prompt accuracy rate of 81%, signifying that they received the right type of content or response outputs from the Ally.ai platform to complete their assignments
- Participants also saw usefulness and accuracy in outputs when using Ally.ai for data analysis, quality controls and search engine optimization (SEO)

"The best marketing teams know the art of evolution, which includes evaluating and testing of transformative technologies," said Andrea Brimmer, Chief Marketing and Public Relations Officer at Ally. "The early results demonstrate how AI could enable our talent to focus on creative tasks that needed the most human involvement, while speeding up the routine efforts of our day-to-day work. We look forward to the continued exploration of generative AI and learning more about how the technology can assist our team."

Ally.ai, the company's proprietary, cloud-based AI platform that serves as a secure, private bridge between enterprise-grade LLMs and Ally's data and AI applications, launched in June 2023. The test with marketing comes on the heels of Ally's pilot with its Customer Care and Experience group where Ally.ai was used to quickly and accurately summarize customer service calls, helping associates focus their energy on more meaningful customer interactions and reduce the time needed to service and close a customer inquiry.

Read more about Ally.ai and the Customer Care use case here

Both use cases reflect a commitment to Ally's core principles for the enterprise use of AI: initially focusing on use cases that suppor employee productivity and optimizing internal business processes; providing human intervention and controls for oversight and training; protecting against the disclosure of personal identifying information and prohibiting third party model providers from using Ally data to train their foundational models.

"The purpose of building Ally.ai in-house, and with foundational data, cloud and network infrastructure already in place, is to scale it use throughout the organization while also keeping a close eye on potential risks and opportunities for new use cases," said Sathisl Muthukrishnan, Chief Information, Data and Digital Officer at Ally. "The value that our marketing colleagues could get from Ally.ai demonstrates how important cross-functional collaboration is to the development of enterprise AI capabilities."

Generative AI in Marketing: Supporting Productivity

In addition to the preset system prompts and security features already embedded in Ally.ai, the platform needed a place where teammates could engage with the LLM directly. Understanding that most LLMs and generative AI applications are good for summarization, content creation, ideation/brainstorming, and information analysis, Ally's developers built an open prompt user

interface (UI) for Ally.ai that would allow teammates to do two types of work: chat directly with the secured LLM and also develop specialized prompts that could be saved, used again, and shared with colleagues based on their accuracy and usefulness rates.

Teammates could change features of the platform depending on the work they did, including toggling between chat and prompt mode, adjusting prompt length as well as the model's creative parameters and vocabulary. The participant team frequently used Ally.ai as a starting point for creative development, specifically for first drafts of advertising copy, video scripts or social media posts or enhancing human-driven ideas that originated from brainstorms or naming exercises.

An example: the content team performed a test of Ally.ai by providing the platform with a transcript of a podcast that featured an Ally executive. The team asked the platform to create the first draft of a 750-word article for Ally's *Conversationally* blog with the information provided, plus direction to incorporate the most insightful, informative and entertaining parts that would be relevant to consumers. While the Ally.ai output required editing and the finesse of Ally's content writers and it still went through Ally's well-established regulatory review processes, having a quick first draft done in 15 minutes helped reduce the total time needed to create and edit the blog article from four hours to just one.

"We look at Ally.ai as an assistant that will be able to help our teammates with faster and smarter project delivery, which leads to a better experience for our customers," Brimmer said. "In several different instances, our content writers were able to use thoughtfully crafted prompts to either start up the creative process or help extend the distribution of content to new channels. Anytime we can reduce the time to publish while also letting our creatives do what they do best, that means a lot in our fast-moving, competitive environment."

Dig deeper on how the Ally Marketing team tested AI on the Ally Tech blog

With the Ally.ai UI in place, Ally teammates can be trained to use it for the exploration and development of approved business use cases. The opportunity to learn more about AI and train using the platform has created a positive energy inside the company. Earlier this month, Ally hosted its second AI Day – a half-day dedicated to education and knowledge sharing around AI – with almost 1,000 teammates from multiple business units in attendance.

"You can't escape the conversation around AI, so we are taking hold of that momentum and using it as a springboard to continue to explore new use cases that will drive AI adoption internally while supporting business goals," Muthukrishnan said. "Right now, there are more than 100 use cases being carefully evaluated throughout the enterprise. While not all of them will pass our rigorous testing, we remain optimistic about what AI can bring to our teammates at Ally and to the financial services industry."

For more insights from the technology team at Ally, including how the team is exploring new innovations like quantum computing and digital accessibility, visit https://ally.tech.

About Ally Financial

Ally Financial Inc. (NYSE: ALLY) is a financial services company with the nation's largest all-digital bank and an industry-leading auto financing business, driven by a mission to "Do It Right" and be a relentless ally for customers and communities. The company serves more than 11 million customers through a full range of online banking services (including deposits, mortgage, point-of-sale personal lending, and credit card products) and securities brokerage and investment advisory services. The company also includes a robust corporate finance business that offers capital for equity sponsors and middle-market companies, as well as auto financing and insurance offerings. For more information, please visit www.ally.com and follow @allyfinancial.

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