

MSI 2023: AI at the Front End of Innovation

Speaker:

Jessica Yankell – Director, PBNA Innovation Insights & Strategy, PepsiCo

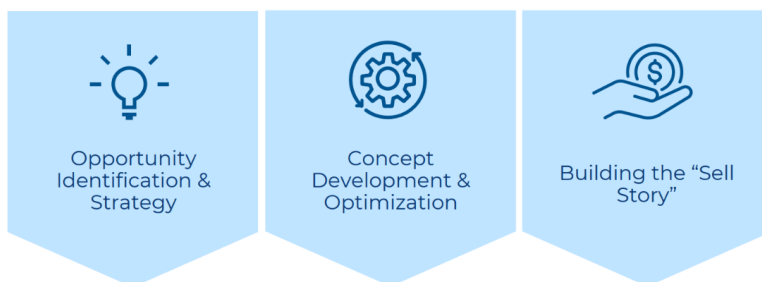
Overview:

Jessica Yankell (PepsiCo) examined the important role of AI in product innovation. In her discussion, she indicated that in terms of product innovation and the expansion of new offerings, the challenge for PepsiCo is that they “compete across a wide range of evolving categories” and place great importance on understanding “which consumer trends to act on and when.” Yankell acknowledged that PepsiCo “had to rethink how we innovate, finding new more agile ways to bring the consumer in” besides the traditional focus group. She then demonstrated ways they leverage “AI-fueled insights for innovation” through a tool known as the Attribute Engine, which can aggregate deep insights and conversations of beverage-related feedback across multiple platforms to inform new products.

Takeaways:

- Old methods such as qualitative focus groups are still relevant in new product development but still have deficiencies, particularly when **there is a need for more efficient, comprehensive and agile feedback.**
 - By leveraging their Attribute Engine, **PepsiCo can look across “all the spheres that influence beverage trends”** such as TikTok, Pinterest, YouTube, Reddit, Instagram, etc.
 - The Attribution Engine takes all the information derived from all the platforms, and this **information is parsed out into a very beverage industry-specific taxonomy.**
 - The information in the Attribute Engine can be used to **“create the universe of conversations that are happening around that consumption occasion to help us build the concepts”** to test with consumers.

The Attribute Engine plays multiple roles across the innovation development process



- **AI enables real-time consumer-centricity at scale** in a rapidly evolving landscape.
- **“Quality data, relevant taxonomies and integrated frameworks”** are vital to success.
- There is still a **balance between the role AI and human** actionability of outcomes.