On the Radar: whiz.ai delivers rapid, hyper-contextual insights

A conversational AI platform delivers targeted insights across applications

Summary

Catalyst

Whiz is a conversational intelligence platform from whiz.ai that empowers executives and business teams with contextual, actionable, real-time insights in a natural language on desktop and mobile. Its voice- and text-based conversational interface reduces the application adoption challenge and maximizes employee productivity. The platform's access to enterprise data, insights, and workflows through natural language on desktop and mobile has been shown to improve sales rep productivity and marketing effectiveness and streamline sales processes.

Key messages

- The market has reached an inflection point that requires intelligent platforms to automate the task of preparing and analyzing enterprises' data and then turn that data into valuable insights and recommendations.
- Through its natively built natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning capabilities, whiz.ai's enterprise conversational AI platform automates workplace tasks and processes through voice or text.
- It intelligently produces business and customer insights in real time that anticipate employees' needs and deliver targeted knowledge.
- The intelligent conversational automation capabilities allow employees to bypass the otherwise tedious path of creating dashboards, building reports, accessing information, or using data to create visuals.
- In December, the company announced that it raised $1.1m in a funding round led by Trigyn Technologies, bringing the total raised to $1.6m.

Ovum view

Enterprise systems of the 1990s are limited by human entry, and their value is restricted because of an inability to integrate scattered and siloed data sources. The market has reached an inflection point that requires intelligent platforms powered by AI and machine learning to not only automate the task of preparing and analyzing enterprises' data but also to effortlessly turn the data into valuable insights and recommendations. Significant advances in machine learning have allowed conversational systems to better recognize complex sentences of speech, navigate human interactions, and transform text into speech – key elements of a powerful natural language processor.

Ovum believes that whiz.ai is well positioned to capitalize on this significant turning point. Through its natively built NLP and machine learning capabilities, the enterprise AI platform provider offers an intelligent solution that automates workplace tasks and processes that it delivers through voice or text. It analyzes data and produces business and customer insights in real time that anticipate employees' needs, deliver targeted knowledge rapidly, and instantly create visuals based on real-time computations.

Whiz is beyond an automation of scripted conversation. Powered by capabilities that make it convenient to talk to, it allows employees to bypass the otherwise tedious path of creating

dashboards, building reports, accessing information, or using data to create visuals. Instead of clicking on a menu of choices or speaking predetermined commands, users can type or talk as if they were having a conversation in natural language to conduct day-to-day sales and marketing activities. Such effortless experiences will become paramount as customer experience continues to emerge as the next competitive battleground. Whiz sits at the forefront of this shift to enterprise productivity enhancement through a combination of automation, NLP, and data connectivity that provides customers with easy and contextual access to their data and the insights that they need on a day-to-day basis. The company brings the last mile of connectivity in those enterprises that sit on mountains of data in large numbers of applications but have no way to get a bird's eye view of the important information. Whiz solves that by bringing contextual insights, data, and workflows to business user teams including executive leadership, sales, marketing, and finance.

Recommendations for enterprises

Why put whiz.ai on your radar?

With a pretrained horizontal AI engine and vertically focused training models, Whiz offers the ease and affordability associated with out-of-the-box solutions, while its industry-trained AI layer targets specific industry challenges such as those in heavily regulated sectors. According to whiz.ai, its proprietary AI platform is increasing rep productivity, institutionalizing sales best practices, empowering marketing and commercial ops teams with AI-powered analytics, and improving adoption of existing data and applications.

Highlights

To achieve personalized, frictionless, and connected experiences, enterprises need conversational AI platforms that are deeply integrated into information systems and can communicate across most corporate channels including text messaging, voice interfaces, corporate websites, social networks, and enterprise collaboration tools (e.g., Skype, Teams, Slack, and Symphony). They follow the user around as they switch devices and services throughout the day and deliver personalized responses. They achieve this by integrating back-office databases with third-party data from connected devices to provide relevant guidance to users and share valuable data with each interaction.

In AI-powered voice- or text-based recognition scenarios, AI will answer customers' and employees' questions, anticipate their needs, and deliver the knowledge or product they expect. With Whiz, rather than click on a menu of choices or speak predetermined commands, users can type or talk as if they were having a normal conversation in natural language. Clients of whiz.ai in manufacturing and life sciences are using the Whiz platform to increase rep productivity, institutionalize sales best practices, empower marketing with AI-powered analytics, and improve adoption of existing data and applications by providing seamless access in natural language on desktop and mobile.

Background

CEO Rohit Vashisht, CTO Amitabh Patil, and COO Aaron Carlock founded whiz.ai in 2017. Vashisht founded Sverve, which was later acquired by Bloglovin'. He has also held leadership positions at large

enterprise software companies and spent time in private equity. Patil spent over two decades building enterprise intelligence products prior to founding whiz.ai. While at Vistaar Technologies, he created an AI-powered communication system for ALS patients as well as serving as principal architect for the company's enterprise analytics platform. Carlock founded Vonlay Consulting, which was later acquired by Huron Consulting. He has more than 15 years of experience deploying enterprise solutions at large healthcare institutions.

Vashisht, Patil, and Carlock started whiz.ai to address a ubiquitous challenge they witnessed at numerous companies: with the enterprise and third-party data explosion and the manual nature of its operation, enterprise software has been increasingly difficult to use, which often leads to low adoption rates. They intended to create a new layer in an enterprise software stack that can connect users with workflow in a seamless fashion. "We are focused on employees and how they can access the data easily," Vashisht explained.

Product

Whiz is built for large enterprises and can be deployed within the client's firewall. It integrates with multiple data sources and is maintained and customized by the IT team. The technology is a proprietary, pretrained AI platform that empowers commercial teams with conversational intelligence (see Table 1). Whiz achieves this through seamless access to enterprise data, insights, and workflows in natural language on desktop and mobile. The goal is to improve marketing and commercial team effectiveness and streamline sales processes.

AI is embedded in the platform and is trained on horizontal business concepts including computations, market share, calculations, charts, and graphs. On top of this prebuilt horizontal layer, whiz.ai builds vertical training models for heavily regulated industries. In December, the vendor rolled out a vertically targeted solution for life sciences clients after training its model based on 16,000 hospital names and 867 healthcare providers listed in the National Provider Identifier database. In addition, Whiz is already trained on manufacturing-domain concepts such as sell-in, sell-through, inventory, orders, review and ratings, etc. This verticalization enables whiz.ai to optimize for specific business problems and outcomes. Additionally, enterprise customers can optimize the AI themselves.

Vashisht said the technology solves the adoption problem of applications such as BI, CRM, and HRM within enterprises, which he said hovers around 5%, because it removes friction across sales and marketing through intelligent conversation automation.

The technology adds a vital layer in the enterprise technology stack that connects business users to key enterprise resource planning data. The intelligent data layer understands, based on the user's voice- or text-based commands, what to pull and which specific recommendations to make and creates visualizations or computations in real time.

Table 1: Whiz Platform capabilities and functionalities

Functionality	Capabilities
Human-machine collaboration	Human-machine AI requires minimal training data.
	Trained directly on sales and marketing best practices through natural language interaction.
Curation	Connects with enterprise applications and data sources through its AI- powered data integration layer.
	Co-exists with third-party and internal data sources, including business intelligence and CRM, to help increase adoption of applications.
Access	Provides ubiquitous access to data and insights from across all channels – web, mobile, SMS, Skype, Teams, Slack, and Symphony.
	Delivers data through personalized text- and voice-based interface.
	Learns and adapts to user preferences.
Enterprise	Built for large enterprises and supports key requirements of IT such as single sign-on (SAML, AD), on-premises, and private cloud deployment.
	Offers compliance with strict security guidelines, high configurability, and administration and logging capabilities.

Source: whiz.ai

Current position

Current clients of whiz.ai include large life sciences and manufacturing companies, and it has raised $1.6m to date. In December, the company announced that it raised $1.1m in a funding round led by Trigyn Technologies, Inc. (a wholly owned subsidiary of Trigyn Technologies Limited, a company incorporated under Indian law and listed on BSE and NSE), with participation from angel groups and existing investors. The funding will help whiz.ai further build out its AI platform, and the partnership will accelerate customer acquisition.

In November the company announced that it has joined the Nvidia Inception Program, which is a virtual accelerator program that helps startups during critical stages of product development, prototyping, and deployment. Members receive benefits including hardware grants, marketing support, and training with deep-learning experts. The Nvidia Inception Program will benefit whiz.ai by providing customizable resources in AI, deep learning, and data science as well as access to its global network of deep-learning experts and thought leaders.

Data sheet

Key facts

Table 2: Data sheet: whiz.ai

Product name	Whiz	**Product classification**	Conversational AI platform
Version number	1.1	**Release date**	December 2019
Industries covered	Manufacturing, finance, and life sciences	**Geographies covered**	US
Relevant company sizes		**Licensing options**	Subscription
URL	www.whiz.ai	**Routes to market**	Direct sales, partners
Company headquarters	Edison, New Jersey, with offices in India and Ukraine	**Number of employees**	15

Source: Ovum

Appendix

On the Radar

On the Radar is a series of research notes about vendors bringing innovative ideas, products, or business models to their markets. Although On the Radar vendors may not be ready for prime time, they bear watching for their potential impact on markets and could be suitable for certain enterprise and public sector IT organizations.

Further reading

Conversational AI: The Future of Customer Engagement, INT001-000119 (expected to be published in January 2019)

Ovum Market Radar: AI-Powered Marketing and Sales, INT001-000101 (October 2018)

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