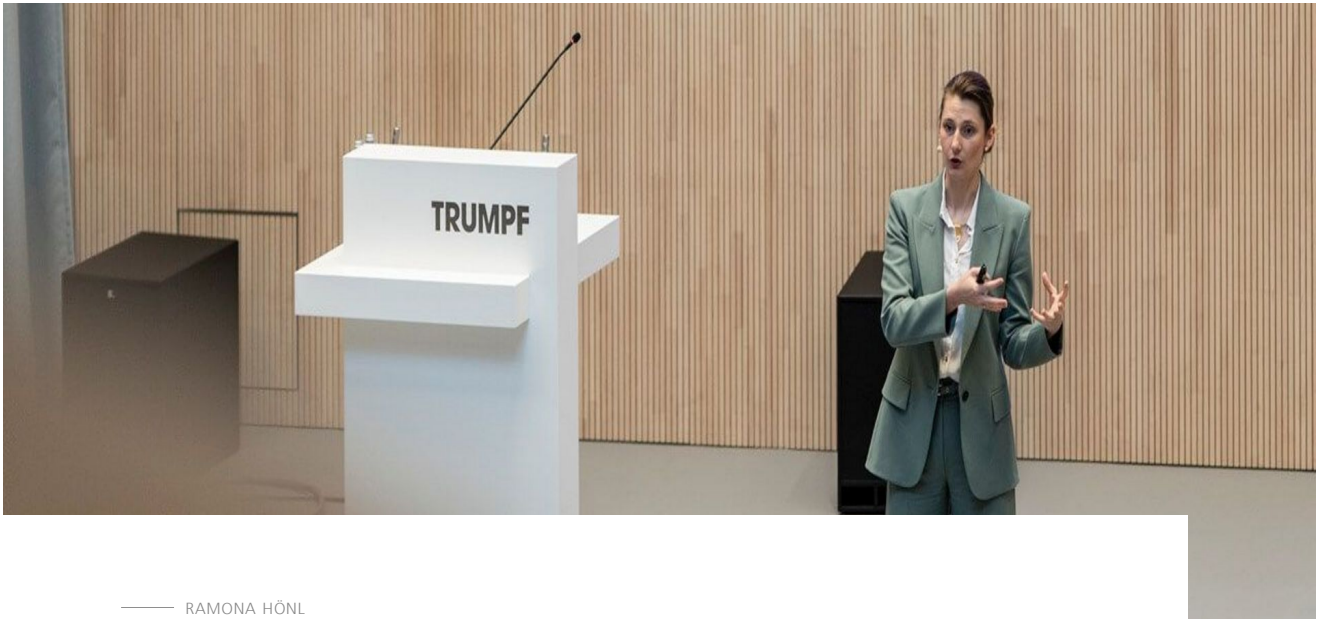




— RAMONA HÖNL

“We need AI in order to be competitive”

In this interview, Sarah Engel, Head of AI at TRUMPF, talks about why the company relies on artificial intelligence (AI), how the employees' work will change and where AI reaches its limits.

Why is TRUMPF focusing on AI?

Engel: Because we believe that AI is a critical factor in the future of our work, our products and our services. AI enables us to optimise processes, boost efficiency and offer our customers innovative solutions that enhance their competitiveness. TRUMPF has an innovation commitment in relation to high technology – so we also want to play a leading role in the industry when it comes to AI.

In which areas at TRUMPF does AI have the greatest potential?

Engel: I'll briefly explain what makes AI unique. It's a technology that emulates cognitive abilities, such as understanding speech, image processing and pattern recognition. AI uses large amounts of data, statistics and learning mechanisms to achieve this. The fields of application are diverse. Among other things, AI helps to analyse data, identify regularities and irregularities, make predictions, automate processes, generate texts and images or operate knowledge management. We want to use AI extensively to generate added value in as many areas of our company as possible – such as sales, HR, research, development and the manufacture of our products and provision of services.

Can you put a figure on the efficiency gains from AI?

Engel: Yes. Our goal is to identify application areas in which AI generates substantial added value. We want to realise this step by step. The added value of AI extends through all areas of the company and varies depending on the application. We have already been able to identify some potential. For example, we can process customer requests faster and in a more personalised way, offer training more cost-effectively and comprehensively, develop software more efficiently, cut costs and energy consumption in production and bring about sales growth thanks to innovations in our products and services. We are not running out of use cases. It is more a matter of implementing them in a focused manner and realising quantifiable added value.

How does TRUMPF train its employees to deal with AI?



Engel: TRUMPF employees can now access a range of resources on our intranet to further their knowledge of AI – available for all levels, from beginners to experts. This includes training courses, education, mentoring and interdisciplinary working groups. We are constantly expanding our range. In addition, we are training AI experts throughout the company to enhance their expertise in specialist areas of knowledge. The curiosity and drive of TRUMPF employees are key strengths in the further development and embedding of AI within the company.



At internal events, TRUMPF employees can find out about artificial intelligence and share their ideas.

What challenges does TRUMPF face as it transforms into an AI-driven company?

Engel: AI will change our work significantly. As a company, for example, we need to become even more active and agile – this applies to our processes, but also to us as humans. It takes more courage to make decisions, courage to take action, and courage to undertake further development. In addition, a number of technical requirements must be met in order to apply the added value of AI to the company's individual divisions.

What competitive advantages does TRUMPF have when it comes to developing AI solutions for industry?

Engel: The combination of expertise, customer orientation, innovative strength and a sense of responsibility gives us a competitive edge. As a solution provider, we have complete control over our process chains – from hardware to service. This allows us to integrate AI into products and processes that are precisely tailored to the requirements of our customers. In addition, acting responsibly is a priority for us. This includes handling our customers' data sensitively in relation to AI. The fact that they trust us gives us further competitive advantages and positions us as a trusted partner in the industry.

How can a company with German roots avoid missing the boat when it comes to AI?

Engel: Europe has a unique opportunity to combine its deep-rooted industrial expertise and clear sense of responsibility with AI technology. I see this combination as the key to sustainable innovation. We are fundamentally different from nations such as the USA and China.

Why do we still need people?

Engel: People are and remain the focus. AI brings with it technological progress, comparable to the steam engine, printing or electricity. It serves as a tool to support us and help us push beyond our limits.



What action is TRUMPF taking in terms of data protection?

Engel: Responsible use of AI goes hand in hand with data protection at TRUMPF. In addition to technological security mechanisms, we need to remember that data protection starts with every employee. As an example, large language models such as ChatGPT use huge amounts of data to deliver results. When employees use public AI tools, there is a risk that sensitive or business-critical data could be exposed outside the company – this is something to be avoided at all costs. When developing AI, we always think about what data is used for, what the risks are and how we can keep them under control. When it comes to data security, we work closely with our legal, IT and cybersecurity departments.

What are your favorite AI tools?

Engel: I hardly use Google anymore, instead using AI tools such as Perplexity or Claude. It makes research much easier, can respond much more precisely to the context, and source references make it possible to verify the answers. I also use our internal AI tool blueGPT in my daily work at TRUMPF. I advise all colleagues who have not yet dealt with AI to give some different AI tools a try. You can also use them to learn how to work with them.

**About Sarah Engel**

Sarah Engel is fascinated by the interface between humans and AI, in particular how artificial intelligence can be used in a trustworthy way. She studied cognitive science and neuroinformatics in Tübingen and Ulm. In her previous positions at IBM and Capgemini, she advised and supported companies on AI and generated added value – from strategy to scaled implementation. At TRUMPF, she is really looking forward to working creatively in an innovative environment and taking a major step forward in the field of AI in collaboration with various departments.

**RAMONA HÖNL**

SPOKESPERSON FOR MACHINE TOOLS

