

THE DISRUPTOR

Brewing Innovation: How Coffee is Fueling AI Adoption at Ascension

How Coffee With AI Sparked a Culture Shift at Ascension

When our CEO, [Karthik Krishnamurthy \(KK\)](#), challenged the entire organization to embrace AI 2 years ago, I saw an opportunity to turn that vision into action. AI wasn't just another tool to use—it was a transformation waiting to happen. The challenge, however, was making AI feel accessible and applicable to everyone's daily work. That's what led me to create *Coffee with AI*—a space where AI is actively explored, tested, and implemented to drive real impact.



Breaking Silos: Fostering Collaboration Across Teams

When I launched *Coffee with AI* series, my goal was simple: make AI tangible, practical, and useful. What started as a small initiative within marketing, soon took on a life of its own, fostering collaboration across departments and unlocking new ways for teams to integrate AI into their workflows.

From the start, [Paul Roehrig, PhD](#), [Ascension's](#) Chief Strategy & Marketing Officer, championed the idea and pushed me to expand it beyond the marketing team. His support helped turn *Coffee with AI* into more than just a knowledge-sharing session—





it became a movement that broke down silos, encouraged open conversations, and empowered teams to experiment with AI-powered tools.

Cross-Department Inspiration: Spreading the AI Spark

Success has a ripple effect. As word got out about our AI-powered transformation, colleagues from other departments started reaching out...

“How are you doing this?”
 “Can you show us how to adopt AI too?” “How can we get started”

By bringing together marketing, sales, engineering, and operational teams, we created a cross-functional ecosystem where ideas flowed freely, and AI adoption accelerated. Conversations that once happened in isolation turned into structured collaborations, where teams learned from each other's successes (and failures) to refine their own AI-driven strategies.

Driving Productivity and Real Business Impact

The impact of *Coffee with AI* has been incredible. In marketing, AI has allowed us to automate manual tasks, optimize the performance of campaigns, and improve content generation. With this transition, our team can focus on high-impact strategic initiatives.

One of the biggest challenges in AI adoption is overcoming hesitation—people often don't know where to start.

That's why I focused on an incremental, hands-on approach. *Coffee with AI* introduces AI tools one at a time, ensuring proper training, and offering continued support. This gradual shift has transformed our organization, making us more agile, efficient, and forward-thinking in how we operate.

Once AI became part of our DNA, the numbers spoke for themselves:

- *Productivity:* Tasks that took days now took hours. We streamlined processes, cutting out repetitive work and freeing up time for creativity.
- *Velocity:* Campaign timelines shrank. Need a video for a new product launch? Done in half the time. Our speed to market gave us a competitive edge.
- *Quality:* AI didn't just make us faster; it made us better. We refined our outputs with AI-driven insights, ensuring each piece of content hit the mark.
- *Savings:* By reducing reliance on third-party vendors and automating processes, we saved on costs without sacrificing quality.

The numbers were impressive, but the feeling of seeing the team's work shine brighter than ever? Priceless.





Catalyzing Change and Shaping the Future

We all knew AI has the potential to revolutionize our productivity, but potential means nothing without action. So, we leaned in hard.

Continuous Training: We introduced regular AI training sessions. Not the boring kind—we called them “Coffee with AI” because caffeine and curiosity are a potent mix.

Shared Learning: We made it a team sport. Wins, flops, discoveries—we shared it all. Our Engineering & Markets SMEs joined us to provide insights and hands-on demos, bridging the gap between theory and practice.

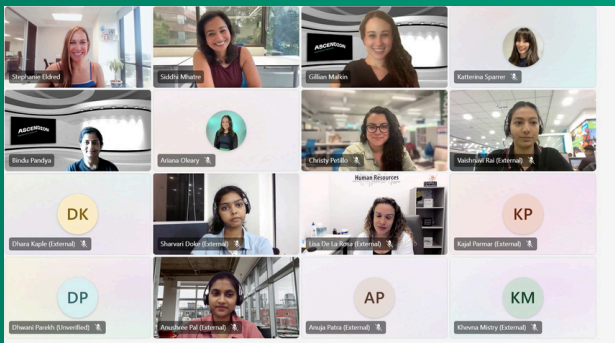
Persistent Encouragement: Change is hard, but encouragement helps. We created a culture where trying (and failing) with AI was celebrated.

What started as an experiment, has become a cornerstone of how we work, learn, and innovate at Ascendion. Ascenders have embraced AI, not as a distant concept, but as an everyday enabler, leading to a culture shift that prioritizes experimentation, learning, and cross-functional problem-solving. I'm incredibly proud of the way this initiative has empowered my colleagues and driven meaningful change. But more importantly, I'm excited about what's ahead. AI isn't just shaping the future of technology—it's shaping the future of work. And as we continue to lean into AI, we're not reacting to change, we're leading it.

Empowering Women Through AI

As we celebrate Women's History Month, I reflect on how *Coffee with AI* extended beyond our immediate teams. When leaders ([Stephanie Eldred](#)) one of our Women's Leadership Advisory Board (WLAB) learned about *Coffee with AI*, they saw its potential for a broader audience. They invited me to share the initiative with WLAB, a global community within Ascendion, focused on empowering women leaders.

What started as a small introduction quickly gained momentum, with over 350 women across the organization joining the session. These discussions emphasized how AI could serve as an equalizer, offering women a competitive edge in career growth and leadership opportunities. AI enables women to work smarter, automate time-consuming tasks, and focus on strategic problem-solving, helping them thrive in traditionally male-dominated industry. By leveraging AI, women can accelerate productivity, gain visibility, and drive innovation—ensuring they have a seat at the table in shaping the future of technology.



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ASCENDION

Technology Series

Before long, we were using AI for everything: content creation, video production, image generation, and animations.

The results? Well, let's talk about those.

In our ongoing evolution, *Coffee with AI* will remain a space where we experiment, learn, and grow together. My hope is that more organizations will create similar forums for AI exploration, ensuring that advancements are not limited to a select few, but accessible to all.



Ascendion is an AI-powered software engineering leader. We serve over 400 global clients with software engineering, cloud, data, experience design, and workforce transformation solutions. Powered by +11,000 Ascenders around the world, a bold culture, and our proprietary Engineering^{AI} (Engineering to the Power of AI) approach, we help businesses unlock value, accelerate growth, and impact lives. Headquartered in New Jersey, Ascendion combines scale, agility, and ingenuity to engineer what's next. Learn more at ascendion.com.

