



AI and the future of work: how De Agostini Publishing is improving operational efficiency



- Accelerates access to business information
- Reduces volume of IT support tickets
- Built on flexible, scalable as-a-service model

COMPANY & CHALLENGE

The adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) is more than just a strategic decision. It is also a necessity for companies that want to remain competitive in an increasingly complex and dynamic business environment. AI holds the potential to improve operational efficiency, reduce costs, and can help to better meet customer needs, making organisations more agile and ready to navigate future challenges.

Often, though, a lack of specialist skills, technological complexity, and difficulties in identifying priority use cases slow down progress, and can even prevent adoption of AI within businesses.

So, what is the right approach to follow when implementing AI? And how can you generate competitive advantage from AI? Davide Ardizio, Chief Information Officer at De Agostini Publishing, explains the motivations and expectations for Daisy, a multi-agent document intelligence platform developed and implemented with leading AI systems integrator Mauden, a Ricoh company.



De Agostini Publishing is part of the Italian multinational De Agostini group, which operates in over 20 countries and specialises in the design, production, and distribution of collectibles, serialised literature, and hobby and educational products. The company's business model is based on product innovation and broad international distribution. For some time, De Agostini Publishing has engaged in a business transformation process that involves expanding its product portfolio, reaching global markets, and strengthening its ecommerce channel, without leaving its traditional retail presence.

"The ongoing company transformation is impacting various departments, including sales, marketing, and supply chain, increasing workloads and operational activities," explains Davide Ardizio. "In this context, technology enables us to streamline business processes and lift productivity in the short term, and to support decision-making and enable predictive decisions in the medium to long term. Introducing AI can deliver additional strategic value if approached and applied in the right way."

SOLUTION

Daisy, the virtual agent for business users

The virtual agent Daisy (De Agostini Artificial Intelligence Support Yield) was created to consult the De Agostini Publishing corporate knowledge base and provide quick, simple answers to



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DANIELE NATALI
TECHNOLOGY LEADER, AI LAB
MAUDEN

business users. This not only improves access to information, but also helps users to understand corporate systems and internal processes and procedures.

“We chose Mauden not simply for their technical and consulting expertise, but also because they presented concrete use cases that perfectly matched our needs,” continues Davide Ardizio. “Mauden’s support was crucial during the design phase and, even before this, when we were evaluating the best service delivery method. We considered the potential number of requests per user and usage levels, as part of our evaluation of the potential return on investment.”

Daniele Natali, Technology Leader, AI Lab at Mauden, continues: “For Daisy’s architecture, the client opted for an infrastructure-as-a-service approach. This provides a pay-per-use solution that offers flexibility, versatility, and scalability. The delivery model aligns with the client’s objective to gradually introduce AI, while assessing costs and understanding actual user engagement. The collaboration with De Agostini Publishing is a classic example of the ‘journey to AI’ methodology, using tailored components to address specific requirements.”

Daisy can access the entire company knowledge base, covering supply chain, marketing, and sales processes, plus IT security and corporate HR procedures, and all processes governing sales channels, support systems, functionality, and user codes. Developed as a single virtual agent, Daisy

continues to learn as new documents are added to the knowledge base. Furthermore, Daisy will progressively reduce the number and repetitiveness of IT support tickets, helping to improve efficiency and cut support costs.

BENEFITS

Tech innovation supporting the business

Daisy was developed as natively multilingual. The primary languages for business needs are Italian, English, Spanish, and Japanese, but the virtual agent can respond in all languages, regardless of the language of the specific document in the knowledge base.

Proactive steps are essential to maintain high engagement with Daisy and to prevent the initial “wow” factor fading into lower usage levels, and ultimately the failure of the project. For Davide Ardizio, this means “investing in training to prepare for proper use of Daisy and to set appropriate expectations. Actively engaging users through a feedback system implemented within the platform becomes strategic.”

Currently, Daisy is implemented within De Agostini Publishing. The next step will be to extend the virtual agent to other corporate areas and entities within the wider group.

Furthermore, configurable access profiles are ready to be added to the platform. “In the future, we will be able to create new Daisy applications with specific access profiles for different



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user groups,” explains Davide Ardizio. “In the multi-agent model, each virtual agent will be dedicated to a specific topic, with permissions based on the role of the user. Also, each agent will be able to interact with others to offer coordinated responses, based on the information that the user is authorised to access.”



Founded in 1987, Mauden has been supporting companies in evolving their IT toward secure, efficient, and sustainable models. The company employs 180 people across three sites in Rome, Milan, and Turin, plus a further 220 specialists on-site at client locations. Its offering is structured around four pillars: Hybrid Cloud, Data Protection, Artificial Intelligence, and Mainframe Management. It leverages long-standing partnerships with leading technology vendors to deliver tailored, enterprise-focused solutions aligned with clients’ specific needs.

Since 2020, Mauden has been part of the Ricoh Group, combining the solidity of a global leader with the same innovative drive that has accompanied it since day one.

ABOUT RICOH

Ricoh is a leading provider of integrated digital services and print and imaging solutions designed to support digital transformation of workplaces, workspaces and optimise business performance. Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh’s global operation reaches customers in approximately 200 countries and regions, supported by cultivated knowledge, technologies, and organisational capabilities nurtured over its 85-year history. In the financial year ended March 2025, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 2,527 billion yen (approx. 16.8 billion USD). It is Ricoh’s mission and vision to empower individuals to find Fulfillment through Work by understanding and transforming how people work so we can unleash their potential and creativity to realise a sustainable future. For further information, please visit: www.ricoh.com

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