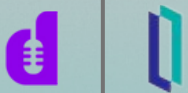


DATA LEADERS WHO'S WHO

DRIVING INNOVATION WITH DATA

Featured in this week's interview

Su Jella,
Director Data & Insights
Tennis Australia



TECHNOLOGY

Editors note

Data has become the core of how we operate as a society, and is central to business success. Data-driven businesses are finding new ways to compete by letting their data uncover unique points of differentiation. The value of data can't be overstated; it has been referred to as the new currency. We are proud to bring you the latest Data Leader's Who's Who and support the increasingly critical role that these emerging and established data leaders play both now and into the future.

The insights these leaders provide will be pivotal in strengthening the position of data in the business community and we thank them for sharing their valuable experiences.

Andrew Aho, Regional Director Data Platforms, InterSystems | Felipe Flores, Founder, Data Futurology

IGNITING INNOVATION THROUGH EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP



Su Jella

Director Data & Insights

Tennis Australia

Su is the Director of Data and Insights at Tennis Australia, an established leader with over 12 years experience in the field of Data and Analytics. She's lead various teams and corporates at the departmental, practice and organisational level to help them tackle data challenges and build solutions that transform and mature data practices by analysing and retiring legacy systems and establishing forward thinking processes and frameworks based on real time information. These processes and frameworks align with business strategies to deliver insights that clearly define customers by directing communications, customer experience, organisational structure and enabling organisations to build relationships, teams and systems for the future. Su leads organisations on an evolution with their customers and the market utilising transformational techniques and solutions that help to achieve current and future data demands. She's delivered end-to-end solutions in analytics for corporates and teams by delivering insights and strategies aligned with business goals for greater profit and customer experience. Su was recognised as Australia's Top 25 Analytics Leaders in 2022 by IAPA.

What are the essential qualities of a data leader?

The environment we live in is constantly changing. To harness opportunities presented to us in data-driven environments, I believe a leader should have:

- Transparency and inclusiveness
- Emotional Intelligence, empathy and be personable
- Energy
- Motivation
- Ability to coach and lead change
- Understand the trends and demands of changing ecosystems
- Keeping up with technical changes and advances

Leaders must take a holistic view of data, its ecosystem and all the elements that help to deliver data-driven strategies and decisions, such as technology, capability, processes, people, and the needs of executive management as well as the broader business. You need a vision that can be delivered into a strategy and execution that

motivates the team. Part of this leadership involves being able to serve the needs of the organisation and be able to translate these requirements that can help service our customers. Today's data leaders need to be able to innovate and encourage innovation in their teams to deliver outcomes that meet the demands and trends of environmental and customer landscapes. This can be provided by carrying some of these attributes such as: shared leadership, developing people and processes, driving transformational outcomes and opportunities, being a change advocate, communicating the vision and enabling a strong data culture.

How do you determine which projects to use AI for and how do you prioritise your projects?

When it comes to AI, I investigate the needs of the business and assess the common activities and tasks performed by myself and the team that consume time and

impacts our time to strategise and solve the data problem.

Through automation and refined processes my team can focus on deeper insights, recommendations and management of data.

A part of my leadership in data involved voice-of-the-customer (VOC) activities, review of feedback and automating responses to feedback. Utilising benefits and processes delivered by AI and automation, data could be classified and prioritised enabling the organisation to create services and capabilities that serviced customer needs.

This AI and NLP capability created a pipeline of work that enhanced, measured and reported on customer satisfaction and categories of feedback that provided solutions to the organisation as well as the customer. This level of bot training also created new product categories and opportunities that wouldn't have been possible in the past.

What are some of the lessons learned you've encountered when getting AI products into production?

- Being Agile is ever more prominent in building AI capabilities and enhancing processes. It's important to be able to have a growth mindset that supports constant and evolving learning.
- Having historical context or information that trains AI models, or improves processes always helps to create context and the architectural capability to deliver outcomes.
- Ensure you understand tools, techniques and methodologies that support use cases and the organisational environment. A transformational approach, change management and adoption capability when using AI needs to be driven at an enterprise level.
- Documentation is essential in understanding and delivering the AI footprint and capability in your environment.
- Work closely with legal and privacy teams to build AI policies and ethics to support initiatives.
- Understand the code that's being deployed, the way in which data is being processed, and how information from AI processes will be delivered to relevant audiences.
- Find opportunities to optimise the code that is being generated to drive AI outcomes.
- Stress test your security and data processes.
- Test, test, test, and test again.

For those who are hiring on potential, what skillsets are most important to be able to build on?

Hire for a growth mindset and ability to adapt to changing environments. In Data and Analytics, some core skills are required, but those with the greatest potential will also have the 'soft' social and emotional skills to build stronger teams. Don't limit the scope of the candidate or the role - I've hired candidates who delivered a personal style and ability that wasn't based only on selection criteria.



"BEING AGILE IS EVER MORE PROMINENT IN BUILDING AI CAPABILITIES AND ENHANCING PROCESSES."

Hiring a for a personal uniqueness leads to innovation, new ways of thinking and working in dynamic environments. A key area in the hiring process that I've felt delivers value is hiring with diversity and inclusivity even within technical roles.

What would be your recommendations to leaders looking to attract diverse talent to their teams?

My experience in attracting talent involves sourcing talent with a growth mindset and adaptability to managing change. Unicorns don't really exist, and if they did, organisations wouldn't be able to afford them. A potential candidate does not need to tick all the boxes, selection criteria is developed to help guide the process of recruitment. We should hire with the intention to coach and develop talent, whilst supporting experimentation and innovation. Identify your most essential skills

and hire candidates who are able to stretch, adapt, deal with ambiguity and most importantly changing landscapes. Tech skills alone are not sufficient to drive efficiencies and stronger teams. It is important to know what the market is able to deliver and build job descriptions according to affordability and talent, be realistic about your 3-5 year goals and hire according to that. I find reviewing position descriptions every 18 months also helps to upskill and grow existing team members, whilst surveying market trends. This approach helps to create flexibility and an opportunity to either grow existing team members or expand teams to welcome fresh thinking. Considering this approach in teams can help to build diversity by addressing gaps and leveraging various strengths of teams and that changes the dialogue on "how" to achieve outcomes.



- Unstructured and hybrid data sources are increasing in demand with an elevated need to deliver insights and recommendations to executive teams
- Virtual Assistants that mimic human responses and are less robotic (Chatbots) and conversational
- Voice-enabled technology and insights derived from these capabilities will be a part of most organisations' strategies
- AI will be used more broadly adopted across organisations to deliver optimised and efficient processes that can be tailored to organisational needs
- AI will be a key driver in personalising experiences for customers from real world to digital interactions and content delivery and management
- Augmented Reality and the combination of data points supporting this innovation will continue to take more prominence in our lives, from entertainment, retail, accessing news and information
- Governance and Ethical policies across security, data and AI will be the biggest drivers in enabling these strategies and embedding practices in organisations

"I WOULD LIKE TO BE KNOWN FOR DELIVERING TRANSFORMATIONAL STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES IN ORGANISATIONS THAT ARE HARNESSING THE POWER OF DATA TO GROW REVENUE AND ENGAGEMENT."

What new technology and innovations do you see as being the most critical to the industry over the next 18 months?

Many of these areas are already in play and exist in strong data organisations. I think these areas will continue to spread into organisations that are building their data maturity. These areas include:

- Machine Learning and Auto Machine Learning
- Increased self-serve reporting, data literacy across non-technical stakeholders, easily accessible data repositories
- Humanised Natural Language Processing (NLP) and responses

What legacy do you hope to leave behind you at your organisation?

I would like to be known for delivering transformational strategies and initiatives in organisations that are harnessing the power of data to grow revenue and engagement.

Using my experience across various areas of data utilisation, I deliver and advocate the benefits realisation of data across organisations using a consultative approach that supports data use across various teams.

Data is not only about leveraging a revenue benefit but also delivering the value of data for social good. Ultimately just as we have social responsibilities for our strategic endeavours, I aim to drive the use of data for social good as well.