

FEATURING MELANIE WINIGER, CHARLOTTE LYNNGAARD & PHILIPP KEEL

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The Future Is Bright?

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What are the 3 issues that are at the front of your mind at present and are challenging you?

First and foremost, the lack of recognition of how AI can contribute to tackling our challenges around the world, be it from our personal lives to climate change. I feel that we are too slow at recognising what this technology can and could do for us. Although, if we look back in history, at the end of the day, industrial revolutions generally brought positive changes with them. And this time, we're not just talking about industrial revolution alone, but also about answers to urgent global questions.

Second, and continuing on the same train of thought, although the assets are already there for us to ensure that we take off with AI, yet there is not enough attention going into it. With that, focusing now only on Switzerland, this country is known for its financial industry, pharma, watches and chocolate. Even though Switzerland has been in a very comfortable situation for decades, we cannot just lay back and take our welfare for granted. Now it is high time to add a more sustainable and economically competitive advantage. Every generation needs to stand up for themselves and invest their part into a sustainable workplace. I see it as our responsibility today to spotlight what is happening in the Swiss AI ecosystem and start putting more resources into it.

Finally, the need of diversity in the development and implementation of cognitive technologies is indispensable. If we want to further develop welfare, we need to take advantage of the entire available workforce – regardless of culture, colour and gender. To be truly innovative and sustainable, diversity is fundamental.

Why are these 3 issues so key for you and your industry and how do you try to face them?

Switzerland has always been a master at combining its only natural resource – the brain – with technology. Therefore, we must take care of our SMEs, which form the backbone of our economy.

Being active in the global AI ecosystem opens my eyes to see cross-industry successes, challenges, and potentials. I see the previously mentioned issues appearing again and again. How I face these, is certainly not alone. We do it with the power of the global AI network of SwissCognitive. It is a world-leading AI network that I co-founded with Andy Fitze in 2016, which in five years grew into a global highly respected network of over half a million AI experts, leaders, thought-leaders, and enthusiasts in around 100 countries.

We need to keep positioning Switzerland to become one of the top 5 AI competence centres globally. Additionally, it is our passion to put a lot of effort into the young generation – encouraging them to get into the topic of cognitive technologies, which is a game-changer in almost any industry.

What are the most disruptive things that you expect to happen in the near future?

The development of business models is becoming more and more disruptive and is no longer linear. Our world, customer behaviour, preferences and needs are changing. Parallel to that, to keep up, our businesses and business models also need to be adapted, if not fully reinvented. It is going to be the smart combination of technologies and human intelligence which will enable businesses to stay innovative. AI is driving our innovation, accelerating our innovation cycles, sifting through trillions of possibilities in milliseconds. In this sense, tectonic plates are shifting and at the end of the day, no one wants to wake up realising that they are standing on the wrong plate.

Therefore, it is crucial to stay up to beat and invest resources into the development and implementation of cognitive technologies. Hand in hand with all that, the three key areas that I believe will be impacted the most in the near future are the health industry, access to education, and solving climate issues.

What is your personal vision of a future you would like to live in with your loved ones?

Even though I am in the field of cognitive technologies, and I am driven by the potentials of AI, I envision a future where we have more time for interpersonal relationships, both in our private and business lives. I would like to see AI to gain an enormous role in this – enabling humans to become human again. Cognitive technologies not only have the potential to free us from repetitive tasks, make sense of our thousands of years' worth of data, but they also make our lives healthier and safer, and enable us to have more quality time to be spent with our loved ones.

What should we do to create a future together that is bright?

I see huge potential in collaboration, diversity, and sharing for success. Building strong ecosystems together, where we have as many disciplines, organisations, and industries involved as possible. At SwissCognitive, this is what I wake up for every day – keep building connections, building bridges, finding answers, and allow the global network to unfold the powerful combination of human and technology.

How can we overcome a collective trauma as a society and as individuals – as leaders and role models?

This again, I believe comes down to collaboration. This pandemic really showed us that we need to work together to be able to overcome challenges. It is not enough to put efforts into finding solutions in one country or in one industry. To be able to tackle challenges and come forward, we need to join forces, be responsible and care.

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**“The development
of business models
is no longer linear”**



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