

COLUMNS

# AI in fashion recruiting: Good, bad or ugly?

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By **Rania V. Sedhom**

The response to the title question is a typical lawyer response: It depends.

AI is everywhere and we are all likely using it in some capacity even if we are not aware we are doing so. AI drives several algorithms in search engines, research software and the like.

It is no surprise that it is being utilized in recruitment efforts.

## **Fashion forward**

Regardless of industry, recruiting qualified candidates is likely a company's most difficult job.

Any tool that can help streamline the process may seem like a great idea. In the fashion industry, what is AI's impact and what should luxury brands acknowledge throughout its utilization of it?

Employee recruitment is more than simply culling through resumes to find keywords that are important to the hiring manager. It has an emphasis on personal attributes and cultural fit.

Luxury fashion is complex, and demands a level of perspicacity and consideration to the work and its customers that AI currently cannot understand, let alone provide.

## **AI is a historian**

Humans bring an irreplaceable insight into the candidate and the moral considerations inherent in luxury fashion.

What I often hear is that AI will be utilized to eradicate, or lessen, biases that may be inherent in the current recruiting model. However, AI is a historian.

By that, I mean that AI uses previous decisions to predict future ones.

If that is true, how will it be used to ameliorate bias?

## **AI is a first step**

In addition to being a historian, it is programmed.

How are the programmers changing the screening process? For example, if AI is being used as an initial step to review hundreds

or thousands of applications to determine whether candidates are qualified at the surface, the AI will certainly be able to do that more quickly than an individual.

However, any biases that may be present will remain.

Just like a traditional recruiter who will ask a hiring manager at a luxury company for the parameters of a candidate, so too will the AI.

### **Can AI eliminate bias?**

In my field, lawyers have come to realize that it is sometimes the parameters, or must-have lists, that create the bias.

Other times, a bias can occur during an interview where the candidate does not present as the employer hoped. While many are focused on AI in recruiting, a more compelling discussion is the use of AI in fashion and how many luxury jobs will be eliminated.

Next month, that will be the focus of the discussion, as we explore how brands are utilizing AI for marketing, patternmaking, inventory management, virtual showrooms, customer service and other bespoke offerings.

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