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THE AI TECHNOLOGY QUESTION

BUILD, BUY, OR PARTNER

At **Opptly**, we're proud of the fact that our Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology is proprietary—that is, we built it and we own it. It's the approach our leadership team decided to pursue from the outset. But it's certainly not the only option for a company, and the decision of whether to build your own technology or use a third-party's—either buying an existing product or entering a partnership agreement—is one that requires careful consideration.

Why We Built It

From the beginning, **Opptly** was as purpose-driven as the technology we would ultimately build. We wanted to provide a solution that we knew we were in the best position to create. Without a doubt, there are other options in the market that can find talent for hiring companies. But we've always taken to heart the principle 'don't let good be the enemy of great.' Purposeful, efficient, targeted, quality, engaging, and cost-effective—these were the baseline attributes we were aiming for.

But building AI technology is not an undertaking that should be taken lightly and obviously, doing so requires highly specialized knowledge and skills.

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However, a proprietary build offers significant long-term benefits, including absolute control over the technology blueprint—one that our customers' input can influence as the product evolves.

Beyond that, there were a host of reasons for **Opptly's** decision to build our own AI. First and foremost was our existing domain expertise; thanks to the fact that many on the leadership team had already spent 20 or more years in the workforce-solutions industry, our team knew the ins and outs firsthand. We also understood the criticality of AI and the need to seed and train our AI. So, we set out to create a built-for-purpose solution rather than choosing something in the market that needed to be retrofitted.

Starting from scratch allowed us to plan and sequence our product development in a way that made the most sense. We knew customers would initially leverage their existing hiring platforms, so aspects like a designed interface were secondary. Instead, we put the highest priority on building a core, proprietary AI that could handle the complexity of the problems we were solving.

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One of those key problems was the inherent flaw with traditional sourcing. If a single job requisite attracts 100 candidates, the hiring experience is great for the one candidate that gets the job, but what about the other 99 who are metaphorically left out in the cold? The **Opptly** team knew we could develop AI technology that was smart enough to identify just the top tier (e.g., 10), laser-targeted candidates, which in turn, would streamline and speed up the process for hiring companies, while respecting the time and effort of all other jobseekers.

A critical factor in **Opptly's** decision to build our own AI technology was the fact that we were able to seed our proprietary database with more than 10 million candidates. AI needs a large volume of data to train and learn from. Without it, the technology could never achieve the kind of sophistication our team was aiming for.
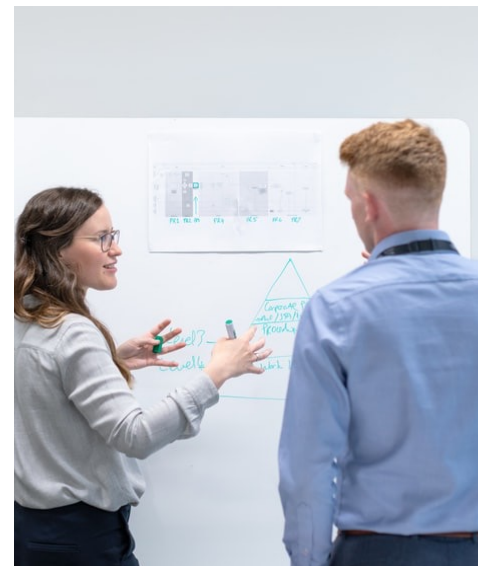
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While some direct sourcing providers chose the path of leveraging third-party technology, we viewed the AI endeavor as a marathon. **Opptly** knew that domain expertise, patience, pace, and discipline would yield the most substantial benefit, not just for our customers, but also for the jobseekers. We wanted to take a major innovative step forward in modernizing the entire workforce solutions industry.

Buyer Beware

Provided there could be a quality, proven solution that already exists, buying a technology may appear to be the fastest entry to market. Buying technology versus building your own is akin to buying a house already on the market instead of designing and constructing one. While this approach allows you to leverage existing product branding and potentially existing clients, it may require high upfront capital costs and retrofitting. Also, you'll want to be sure that what you're buying is true AI, not simply rules-based workflow technology.

The Partner Path

A partner strategy is another consideration that can allow for faster implementation. Further, a partnership may offer specialized knowledge and access to a larger ecosystem, expanding your geographic and/or industry reach. But it's critical to ensure the product alignment between you and your partner. This is often a challenging hurdle to overcome and generally, it takes time. Setting specific roles, responsibilities, and clear lines of IP ownership are paramount to success.

Why Proprietary Matters

Many companies use the word "proprietary" in their marketing materials. What this generally means is that their specific perspective on a product or service is only available through them. When **Opptly** uses "proprietary" to describe our AI technology, it means that we continually improve and evolve our own product based on what we learn about the needs of our customers, candidates, and the market. What's even more exciting is that we're already applying our AI technology to additional use cases that reach far beyond simply connecting jobseekers and work.

Having complete control over our technology doesn't just mean we provide the highest-quality solution in the present; it allows us to do big-picture thinking that will provide real, positive impacts into the future.

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