

# How artificial intelligence creates competitive advantage

E-BOOK

# Table of contents

From classical sales strategy to data-driven next best actions	5
Quality control en predictive maintenance in food production	9
AI chatbot and personalised website content for higher conversion	11
Smarter order planning with AI	13
more information	14

## INTRODUCTION

**Artificial intelligence or AI is far from being just about advanced algorithms in high-tech sectors.**

## Introduction

Artificial intelligence or AI is far from being just about advanced algorithms in high-tech sectors. Often, it is the classical organisations that benefit most from artificial intelligence in their business. The applications of AI can be very broad: from quality control of website conversion to smarter visit planning for sales teams.

This whitepaper contains a selection of practical AI cases in companies. We share the experiences of four organisations that rely on artificial intelligence to make their business more efficient and focused, and to lighten the workload of their staff.

The business cases show how AI plays a complementary role in today's business world. The power of artificial intelligence provides competitive advantage in a wide variety of ways.



## Case study

**From classical sales strategy to  
data-driven next best actions**

## Sales teams working smarter

Here we discuss an independent pharmaceutical producer with an extensive range of products of its own. The sales team consists of several dozen employees. They are in turn individually responsible for the sale of medicines to pharmacists in a particular region. Each member of the sales team works with strict sales targets, both at product and pharmacy level.

In a competitive sector like the pharma industry, sales targets are obviously a key business driver. Prior to the implementation of Trendskout, the sales targets were imposed top-down. A hundred or so products per pharmacy and per salesperson were the target for all sales staff.

It turned out to be a hopeless task to get the sales people to work in a targeted way on the basis of the very diffuse, difficult to access data from different systems. Which sales person could best visit which pharmacy, when and with which product? Experienced sales people could rely on their gut feeling, but often it was just guesswork. And that had to change.

## The standardised target proved problematic for several reasons:

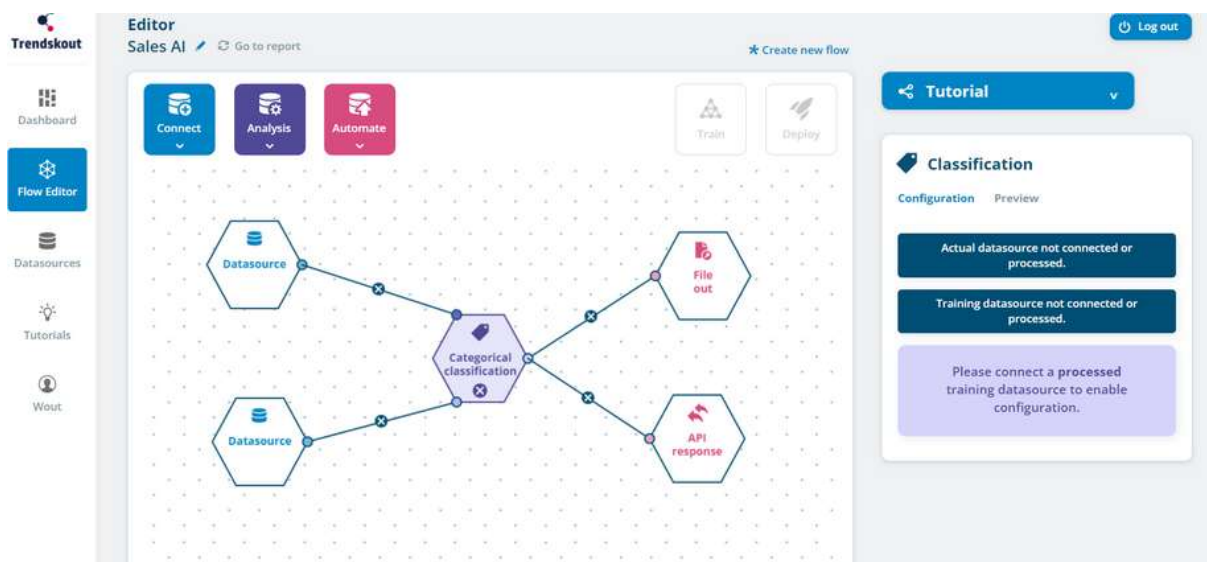
- The medicines that the company sells are, by definition, cyclical products. Cough medicines sell better during a national flu epidemic, while sunburn is inextricably linked to summer. However, the wide variety of products and product types in the company made it difficult to manually track relevant data, let alone draw relevant conclusions.
- let alone to draw relevant conclusions for sales targets.
- The available information was scattered in silos throughout the organisation. CRM, ERP, spreadsheets and sector information all contained valuable data.
- Buyer-pharmacists have different purchasing policies. Pharmacies buy their products according to their own schedule and focus on different categories.
- The time the sales team can spend on sales visits is limited. Each sales person serves a lot of pharmacies in a region and therefore has to make choices.
- Each product requires its own marketing and sales style. However, product-specific marketing proved impractical. The product portfolio was simply too extensive for the marketers to think up a communication strategy and positioning for each individual medicine that would suit the individual customers.

## The solution

The company turned to Trendskout to create order in the tangle of obscure and elusive parameters and then to interpret them automatically. In the first phase, the Trendskout platform was simply linked to the existing CRM, after which the data transfer could start automatically.

Based on input from the sales team, new data is continuously collected in the CRM. This data is then automatically merged with Trendskout Data Prepper.

The continuous flow of data is reprocessed every day by Trendskout software. It then suggests sales actions with the highest probability of a product sale. In practice, this means increased efficiency for the sales team. Trendskout analyses data and automatically fills in the sales staff's agenda, based on the success rate of a visit. The sales staff know that all possible factors have been taken into account and can blindly trust the visit suggestions.





## Immediate result

The automation immediately produced hard results: an average of 12% extra sales per product line, purely thanks to more targeted sales visits. In an internal survey, the employees in the sales team also reported higher job satisfaction, thanks to more efficient planning and more successful visits.





## Case study

**Quality control and predictive maintenance in food production**

## Quality control and machine maintenance

The customer in question is a food processing company. Every day, enormous quantities of fruit and vegetables roll off the conveyor belt. Quality inspection of the fruit is one of the most important processes in the processing chain. However, manual inspection of the fruit is a very monotonous task, so the risk of errors in the selection of fruit types and pieces to be rejected is relatively high. On top of that, it is a job that gives staff members little satisfaction.

A second crucial factor of the operational model is the machinery. Before the implementation of Trendskout, the company used a classical approach of periodic maintenance. In practice, this meant more frequent service than was strictly necessary due to internal safety margins.

This approach creates a classic double cost picture:

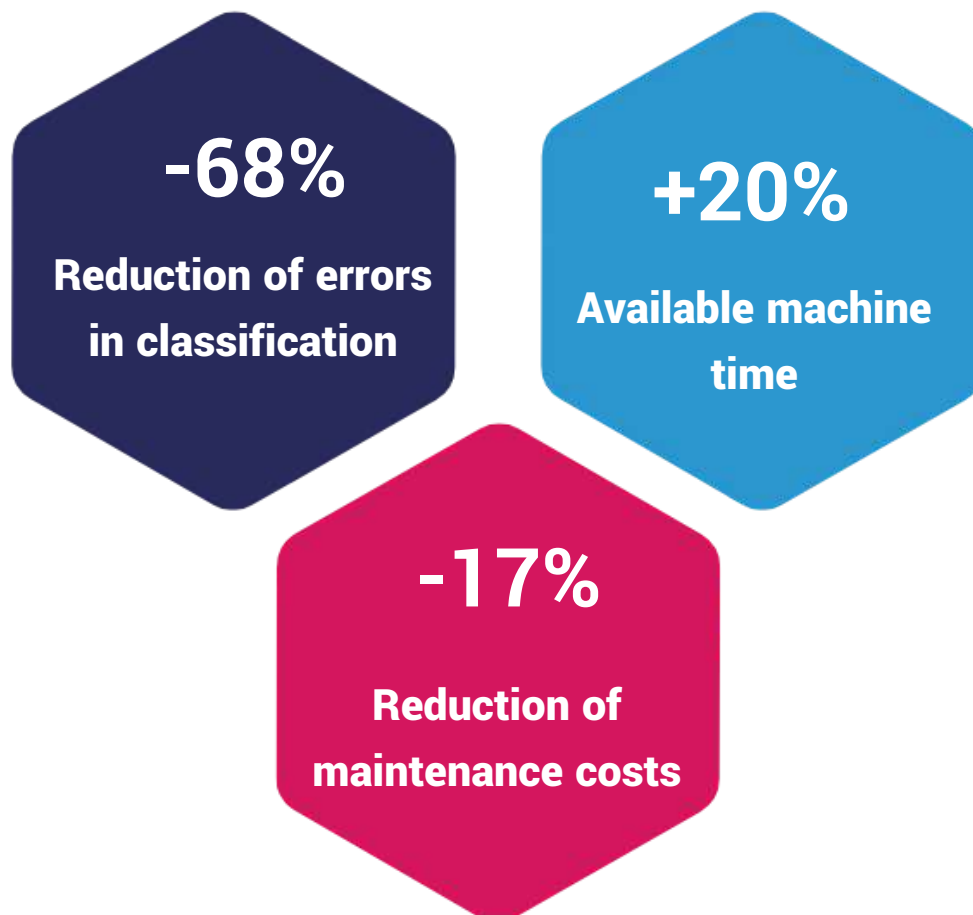
- Direct maintenance costs for the machines,
- Opportunity costs due to missed operating time during maintenance.

## The solution

We paired Trendskout with a computer vision system for image recognition. The conveyor belt is continuously filmed and Trendskout then detects the pieces of fruit that do not meet the strict quality standards. The coordinates of rejected fruit are sent to an automatic gripper arm, which removes the piece from the belt.

The direct maintenance costs of the machinery were addressed by introducing more targeted maintenance and frequency optimisation, using Trendskout's algorithms. This resulted in a significant increase in the operational availability of the machines.

## Result





## Case study

**AI chatbot and personalised website  
experience for higher conversions**

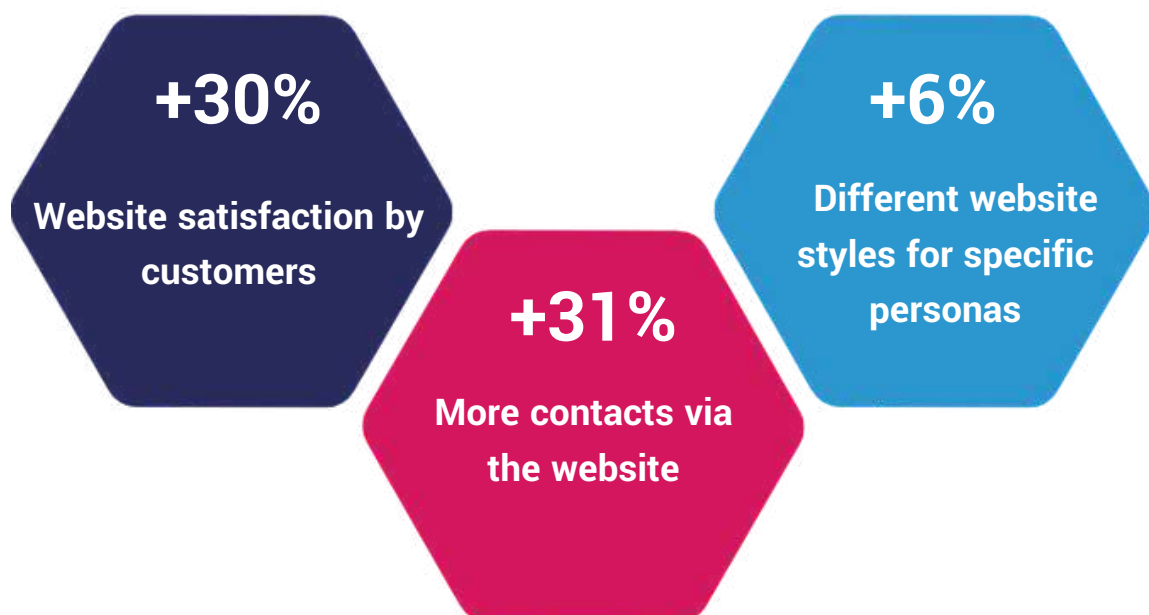
## Looking for a customer-centric surfing experience

This building contractor for residential projects is mainly active in the regions around Ghent and Leuven. The company's website received thousands of visitors a day, but conversion left much to be desired. Website visitors did not get to the information they were looking for quickly enough. The visitor profiles on the website were also very diverse: young families looking for information, experienced buyers with specific questions, senior citizens with less website knowledge, etc.

### Solution

In a first phase, a chatbot from Trendskout was implemented on the existing website. It could answer visitors' questions directly and point them in the right direction on the website. Next, the company had the Trendskout Pixel installed. This is a tracking code that makes it possible to map visitor behaviour. On the basis of this data, the Trendskout algorithm could automatically create different visitor personas. The different target groups are then presented with an adapted version of the website, tailored to their needs.

### Outcome





## Case study

**Smarter order planning with AI**

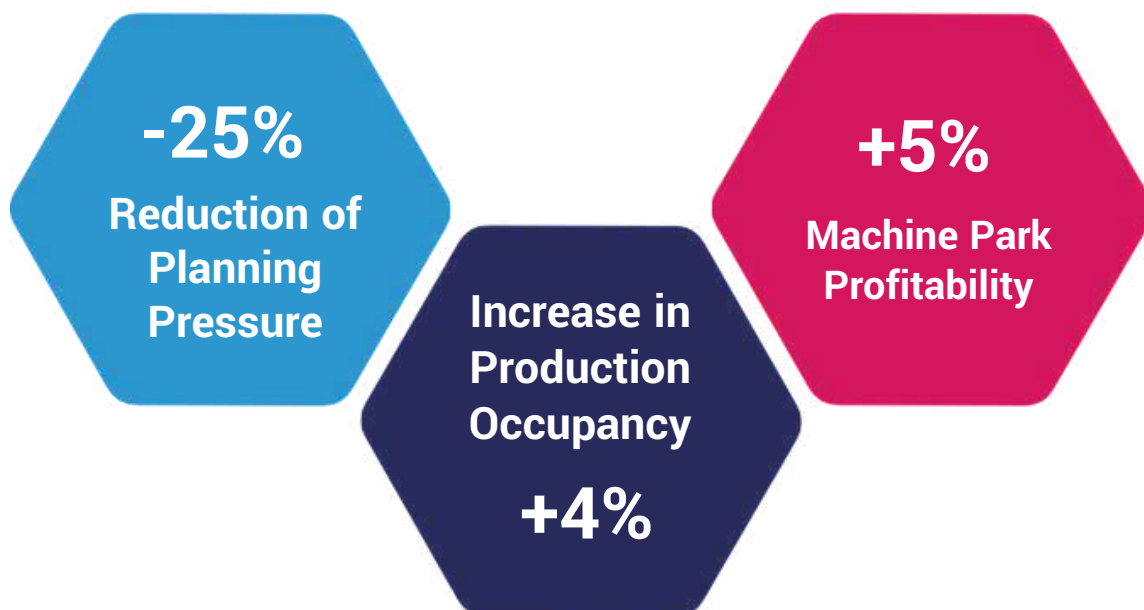
## Need for a planning assistant

The chemical giant in this case has a planning team of more than twenty people. Their job is to process and subsequently schedule incoming orders into an overall production schedule. Not every order can be produced by just any machine. Determining the optimal utilisation of the machinery is therefore quite a challenge for the planning team. This often put an unreasonable amount of work pressure on the employees who have to solve a difficult organisational puzzle every day.

## The Solution

The team turned to Trendskout's AI platform. The software is now used to triage incoming orders based on planability and profitability. Orders that successfully pass this initial screening are then forwarded to the planning team for further processing. This gives the planning team extra breathing space to plan the triaged orders more effectively. This resulted in a 24% increase in production utilisation, which in turn increased the overall profitability of the entire machine park by no less than 10%.

## Outcome







**Trendskout**

READY TO USE AI PLATFORM