

TO AI OR NOT TO AI: THAT IS THE QUESTION

The answers are not clear cut

By Dan Ditzler, President, Newton Associates



It is important for a garage door installer business to conduct extensive research on artificial intelligence (AI) before considering AI integration. If you listen to naysayers, you will be regaled with a myriad of overly dramatic cautionary anecdotes.

Here are two widely reported examples:

1. BuzzFeed News reported that AI researchers are upset with CBS and Google for a “60 Minutes” segment that suggested a Google-created AI had learned the Bengali language. It also suggested that AI technology is so mysterious in its scope of capabilities that even the people who work in the field don’t understand it. So, even a controversial take from the industry is tough to parse from the outside.
2. According to Fortune magazine, Anthropic’s Claude Opus 4 model AI allegedly threatened to blackmail its developers when they attempted to shut it down in a simulation exercise.

AI is here to stay

The researchable content on the advantages of AI integration dwarfs the negative AI tales and warnings mainly because it is well-funded by the AI industry (including related hardware manufacturers and software developers).

While this could be viewed as the education phase of a new industry, the truth is that providers have already invested too much money to not push the evolution of AI into overdrive.

The biggest unspoken issue is that AI is being heavily subsidized upfront to maximize its usage and commitment. At some

point, the piper will need to be paid, and that will likely come from expensive subscription fees and ancillary costs for the equipment and staff to manage it all.

AI integration: Pros and cons

This article presents a brief overview of the many ways garage door installers could integrate AI into their daily operations. It also outlines the short- and long-term advantages and the potential next steps that are available for companies that have had early success and want to expand their AI capabilities.

It is important to understand both the risks and rewards, then to go slow and benchmark progress. Start by reading as much as you can, but also talk with others in the industry who are already using AI in various capacities to capitalize on the efficiency that automation delivers.

AI case studies

One garage door installer is already so committed to AI that they have added useful insights about their experience with AI tools on their company website. RJ Garage Door Service out of Raleigh, N.C., has been around since 2013 and currently devotes a good part

of their online presence to their AI practices. Their website details how they are using AI to take advantage of smart home technologies to improve home security, maintenance, convenience, and to automate many functions.

RJ has also discovered how AI can address common customer pain

points. For example, traditional operators require manual adjustments to adapt to

weather changes. Newer models with AI integration can automatically adjust to rainy or cold weather conditions. It can also alert RJ to developing issues, such as wear of springs and motors.

Imagine being able to get in front of your customers before their door systems fail and emergency service is needed. AI can also increase door safety through better sensing of hazards for homeowners and their families while logging incidents for analysis later.

Another early AI adopter is Heavenly Garage Doors, based in Hendersonville, Tenn. They go a step beyond by investigating how customers are using AI to find garage door companies near them. That is where reviews, response time, and online presence are so important.

In this regard, you should conduct your own AI research of the garage door market in your territory to see how your own firm measures up. At the very least, AI can help you run a self-check of business practices and give you a sense of how your company appears to the greater market.

AI applications for garage door businesses

According to Google, key AI applications that are already being utilized in the garage door installation and service industry include: AI-powered 24/7 customer service chatbots, optimized technician routing, predictive maintenance diagnostics, and AI-integrated and voice-controlled smart doors. Specifically:

- **Predictive maintenance:** AI sensors monitor components, such as springs and motors, to analyze vibrations and cycle counts—predicting failures before they occur.
- **Intelligent dispatching:** Tools like Dispatch Pro analyze technician skills and location to minimize drive time and maximize revenue per call.

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- **24/7 customer service and lead generator:** AI chatbots handle booking, provide quotes, and answer customer queries, acting as virtual assistants for scheduling.
- **Enhanced security:** AI-enabled doors feature facial recognition and license plate scanning. AI also opens an easy path to participating in the smart home market.
- **Virtual showrooms:** AI allows customers to visualize new garage doors on their homes.
- **Route optimization:** Algorithms reduce technician idle time and fuel consumption, improving efficiency.

All eyes on AI


We are still in the early phase of AI opportunities for exploration and integration, but one thing is clear: No door business can afford to ignore the technological advantages that AI can deliver. While not all current applications of AI make sense for every company, learning as much as you can about it is a smart investment for your business. Early adopters are already committing significant resources to staying toward the leading edge. If you think you would prefer to err on the side of caution, then conduct your own research, talk with other door companies outside your market who are using AI effectively, and assess your own organization from within and against competitors in your territory.

Ironically, the overuse of AI to handle customer service by phone may create a depersonalized experience for your customers if not managed properly. That makes working with outside partners skilled in AI key to successful integration for your company. Also, business owners should conduct research to determine the ideal software for the tasks you want to use AI for. Once implemented, it is crucial to keep an eye on customer experience. AI is best used to free up time for your team so they can schedule higher-quality in-person visits and onsite customer service. It should NOT be used to replace customer interactions. ■

Newton Associates is a Philadelphia-based business-to-business advertising and PR agency with a long history in our industry of representing manufacturers of garage doors, door operators, gate operators, access control systems, radio controls, security and home technology systems, and related building products.


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