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Close your eyes and imagine a robot. Do you see C-3PO-like humanoid, metallic and shiny and with a quirky personality? Do you see Wall-E, with big puppy-dog eyes that make you feel less alone? Or maybe you see a more sinister, skeleton-like Terminator, with red lasers instead of disciples? Whatever you dream of, most likely, the robot has a face and some humanoid shape. So many robots that are in public or private spaces are designed to interact with humans in some way, especially social robots with cutesy names such as Kuri and Jibo. Even this coffee-making robot is a barista that consists only of a robot arm but has been designed to wave and test its environment with a human personality. There's a simple explanation for that. People tend to anthropomorphize all objects anyway, whether it's a pile of metal hard wired together or a series of geometric shapes. Putting a human face on a bot serves as one way to make our sci-fi reality seem much less menacing. This is why robots designed to welcome people into different spaces such as retail stores, hotels, transportation and other places are usually humanoid, using human expressions, gestures and language to inform guests that they are welcome in the environment. Image: courtesy of miLAB/IDC Herzliya But are their overly humanoid forms even necessary, especially when they can be difficult to design, manufacture and maintain? Do robots need faces? A new study conducted by researchers from the Media Innovation Lab (miLAB) at Israel's IDC Herzliya and Cornell is trying to answer this question, and flip the current paradigm that the easiest way to help people trust robots to make them seem as human as possible. Instead, the researchers show that you don't necessarily slap a human face on a robot in order to communicate effectively. This means that you can create robots that are aesthetically and mechanically simple, which can use barest gestures to interact with humans. What's more, the lack of a human face on the bot can help soften our respective expectations that the robot has some measure of human intelligence and our frustration when it is not. To see how humans would react to a completely abstract robot, the team had to build one first. They decided to focus their efforts on creating a robot that could perform a greeting, as you might see in a retail store. This proved to be more difficult than it seemed because the shape of the robot could not resemble any type of robot participants could recognize. As a result, the Welcome Machine, as they call it, is a small white sphere that can move freely across a larger white sphere, almost like a moon orbiting a planet. The curved edges of the bot were studies showing that people tend to view curved shapes as warmer and friendlier than shapes with difficult edges. To create movements that people would perceive as greetings, the team encouraged some experts - animator, puppeteer, choreographer, and comic book created four different gestures that researchers could test on participants to get their reactions. In two gestures the small ball moved to the participant. The team called these approaches. The other two were avoiding gestures where the ball moved away from the party. Although there was no explicit intention at all to these movements, the participants overwhelmingly perceived the gestures of approach as welcoming, positive and warm, while in regards to avoiding movements as a signal that the robot did not want to interact with them. Photo: courtesy of miLAB/IDC HerzliyaInteraction, which lasted a few seconds with an abstract robot performing minimal movement, led to a rich description of opening encounters both negative and positive. Adas Erel, a senior researcher and co-author of the paper, told IEEE Spectrum. People attributed intentions and emotions to the robot's gestures, and social interpretations were extremely consistent between the participants. In other words, a simple two-spheric robot can give a positive or negative first impression and even cause complex emotional reactions - just an abstract movement. One person responded to the gesture by saying, When I went in and it came face to face with me, it was like, I don't want to talk to you. It's weird because it's an object and it shouldn't make me feel anything, but it is. It's the same as if a person wouldn't want to talk to you. Research shows that we are doomed to see anthropomorphic intentions in everything, even if it is just code and metal. Designers don't have to slap a robot in the face so people can look at it socially. As Cornell professor Guy Hoffman points out, humanoid robot design does not follow the principle of Dieter Rams that good design is an honest design because a robot that looks like a human overpromises that this robot can actually do. With projects like the greeting machine, we're trying to oura the honest design of the robot, while also arguing that this minimal design can still allow a profound emotional, social and psychological effect. Hoffman tells IEEE Spectrum.The study opens the door to more creative ways to think about human-machine interactions beyond Google-by-eye, cute names. Even if the robot doesn't have a face, we'll still find humanity in it. August 6, 2015 5 min. Read the opinions expressed by entrepreneurs investors are their own. You're standing at the desk of a busy car rental agency. Do you have a car available? You'll ask. Related: As your startup grows, you have more explanations to do Let's see, says the agent by clicking on the keyboard. We are approaching the holiday weekend... and the system shows demand usually peaks tomorrow. However, weather conditions can upset reservations. I see a 20 percent chance of rain today. You're looking at your watch. Correct. Any car is fine. A what our orders are stable this year, despite the Mania. We believe that we serve a fundamentally different need in the market. Ok. Do you have a car available? We get almost 73 percent of our bookings online now, with only 5 percent cancellation. At this point, you're annoyed. You have one goal - to rent a car - and you don't get one answer that you need: is there a car to rent? I often see a similar dynamic in the game when it comes to communicating at the top of organizations. The CEO needs a certain type of information from the leadership team, but his or her supervisors bury that insight under layers of meaningless metrics and fluff. Confusion around results, prevention of execution and cooperation. Why do such scenarios occur? Too many managers overestimate the CEO's understanding of detailed functional data and the desire to obtain it. Many of the best leaders are generals who do not have deep knowledge in most functional areas. If they have climbed through the ranks of one department like marketing, sales or engineering, chances are they have experience only in this area. So the CEO relies on executives to analyze functional data and deliver their interpretation of it - don't send a batch of raw information and expect the omniscient CEO to understand it. Related: The leading cause of corporate disaster is leaders who don't listen to the executive branch, then, consider it part of your job to separate the signal from the noise and edit your messages to the CEO in a way that helps him or her lead. Here are three tips for this. Keep in mind the big picture. The CEO is responsible for the bigger picture, balancing the needs of shareholders, customers and employees. So don't be tempted to drag the CEO into the sausage making details about how your department functions. Instead, deliver a brief overview of how your department tracks its goals. Focus on how these goals support the company's common goals and how they integrate with the goals of other departments2. Focus on the future. Your CEO is focused or should be focused on the future. The job entails predicting the company's performance, and the CEO must go to the board of directors every quarter with short- and long-term plans. This means that the CEO wants to hear your predictions about future performance, not about the day-to-day minutiae of your department. Too often, however, the only information the CEO receives comes from the sales department, while other departments run the risk of making themselves irrelevant by delivering long historical reports that have no forward-looking understanding.3 Ask for support when you need it. Instead of Pass information to the CEO, go ahead and determine how he or she can help remove any barriers you encounter. While individuals may not fully understand the technical aspects of your department at this time, they can provide value. Only the CEO can mitigate conflicts between departments and allocate resources where they are most needed. In addition, Can use your connections to attract external experience or open doors for you. But if you're not clear what you need, even a CEO won't be able to help effectively. In general, when managers and leaders do not communicate well, the organization is in trouble. The Department's goals are elevated to higher corporate targets, leading to non-couiding and dispersed performance. After all, the CEO learns to measure sales with sales performance, marketing department with marketing ROI, product development team with product output, etc. Although these are important indicators, they don't capture the big picture. Each department becomes more disjointed, doing work that cannot support the broader company strategy. So in the next exchange with your CEO, use these tips to keep your communication focused and relevant. You will increase your value to the company and support its overall success. Related: The Secret Company That Gets Wildly High Domestic Posts Open Prices human communication 6th edition pearson pdf. human communication 6th edition pearson pdf free

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