Datacentrix graduates singled out as only Southern Hemisphere winners in IBM watsonx Generative AI Challenge

Datacentrix is proud to announce the outstanding achievements of two graduate teams. The two teams, each consisting of three members, entered the recent IBM watsonx Generative AI Challenge and achieved first and third place in the watsonx AI Assistant Challenge track.

The aim of the interactive, hands-on competition was to allow participants to transcend theoretical generative AI concepts and create practical, AI-infused solutions for real-world customer use cases.

Competing against teams from 44 different countries across the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region, Datacentrix's X-men group, composed of graduates from Cape Town and Johannesburg, secured first place, while the Quadbots, hailing from Durban, earned third place, marking a significant milestone for Datacentrix as the only winning teams from the Southern Hemisphere across the entire competition.

The IBM watsonx Generative AI Challenge focused on three key trials: using prompt engineering to analyse customer experience with watsonx.ai; automating repetitive manual tasks with watsonx Orchestrate; and creating a generative AI-powered virtual assistant with watsonx Assistant and watsonx Discovery.

> “The extraordinary success of our graduates in this challenge underlines Datacentrix's commitment not only to nurturing talent, but also to ensuring that, as a business, we continue to push the boundaries when it comes to driving innovation in AI.

The X-men team developed a bot that enhances Datacentrix's engagement processes with its clients. This bot efficiently accesses a data repository to provide accurate and up-to-date information, including use cases, brochures and cost estimates. In addition, the X-men created a

> We want to ensure strong skills retention within our business while also continuing to bolster local technical expertise and delivery capability levels.

ticket-handling bot capable of generating one-time passwords and resetting pins in real time. Quadbots built a brainstorming bot designed to capture and analyse ideas, providing valuable feedback to users.

Says Arno Hanekom, Digital Strategist at Datacentrix: “The extraordinary success of our graduates in this challenge underlines Datacentrix's commitment not only to nurturing talent, but also to ensuring that, as a business, we continue to push the boundaries when it comes to driving innovation in AI – to deliver solutions motivated by client use cases with tangible measurable benefits to their enterprises.

“We took a different approach to training this year's group of graduate learners, spending the past six months equipping them with relevant technology skillsets to assist with data and AI-specific client requests, while also understanding the current market landscape and the direction AI technology is moving towards in terms of pertinent client demand in South Africa enterprises. Our ultimate goal is to have these graduates become an extension of Datacentrix's AI capabilities, contributing to our intellectual property. We want to ensure strong skills retention within our business while also continuing to bolster local technical expertise and delivery capability levels.”

Since joining the Datacentrix graduate programme in April 2024, the eight graduates have undergone an intensive training regimen, including bi-weekly certifications, technical assessments and practical assignments. Their preparation culminated in mastering the full stack of IBM watsonx technologies, positioning them for success in the challenge.

"Congratulations to our incredible graduates for their dedication and hard work,” adds Shakeel Jhazbhay, General Manager: Digital Solutions at Datacentrix. “Their success in the IBM watsonx Challenge is a testament to the calibre of their skills and the robust graduate training programme at Datacentrix. We look forward to seeing their continued contributions to our AI capabilities and the broader business landscape.”

For more information contact Elzette du Preez on edupreez@datacentrix.co.za