

Gen AI: Asteroid or Opportunity?

From automating customer support to creating content, accelerating research, mining data or drafting proposals, Generative AI is already reshaping how SMEs operate – and the SME4DD project has a course to help you make the most of this game changing technology.

Generative AI has the potential to level the playing field, allowing SMEs to truly compete with larger firms. “Businesses that learn to integrate AI as a collaborator – not just a tool – are seeing new creative possibilities, faster learning loops, and more empowered teams,” says Iñaki Escudero, a behavioural psychologist turned educator and AI expert at [Hyper Island](#), one of the SME4DD project’s coordinating partners.

SME4DD is an EU-funded project under the [Digital Europe Programme](#) designed to train SMEs for the digital decade by delivering short-term learning programmes in three strategic digital technologies: Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, and Cybersecurity.

What's the catch?

According to Escudero, Generative AI’s benefits come with a catch.

“Many SMEs are implementing Gen AI without strategic clarity, treating it like a trendy add-on rather than a core capability,” adds Escudero.

However, steering AI without a strategy can cause an array of problems, including generic outputs and shallow engagement. There’s even a risk that its use will undermine trust, especially if customers realize they are not interacting with a real person when and where it matters.

“One of the most underrated skills right now is discernment,” explains Escudero. “Just because Gen AI can do something doesn’t mean it should.”

How can an SME determine the difference? Escudero recommends using a simple mantra: ‘Gen AI for scale, not soul’. In other words, if the task is repetitive, data-heavy or requires idea-starters, AI can excel. But if it involves trust, nuance, ethics, or your brand’s unique emotional voice, then human judgment should be considered non-negotiable.

Automate with awareness

To help SMEs ‘automate with awareness’, the SME4DD project has incorporated generative AI into its popular [AI for Business course](#), which is delivered by Hyper Island.

“Our course isn’t about mastering a tool, it’s about learning how to learn, how to ask the right questions, and how to build human-centred strategies in a machine-augmented world,” remarks Escudero.

The course will help SMEs develop a Gen AI workforce that is:

- **Prompt-literate:** knowing how to speak to machines in ways that unlock real value
- **Strategically curious:** seeing connections and asking better questions
- **Ethically grounded:** understanding where automation ends and accountability begins
- **Collaborative with AI:** co-creating instead of fearing replacement

“This course helps participants become more adaptive thinkers who know how to evaluate what the tech can and can’t do,” says Escudero. “It’s also designed to create confident collaborators who can pair human insight with machine speed, as well as narrative leaders who can translate change into opportunity – for themselves and their teams.”

Don’t be a dinosaur

SMEs that fail to leverage the power of Generative AI could soon find themselves on the sidelines watching as their competitors test faster, learn more, and rapidly adapt. Perhaps even worse, you risk appearing outdated and unresponsive in a world that’s quickly moving toward co-creation and personalisation.

In other words, you risk becoming a dinosaur.

But while dinosaurs went extinct, you don’t have too.

That’s because Generative AI isn’t an asteroid, it’s an opportunity. An opportunity that starts with [SMEDD](#).

As the SME4DD project’s AI Training Leader, Hyper Island uses its wealth of experience in human centred design, leadership and digital transformation to create engaging content and transformative training opportunities that help organisations grow and compete in an increasingly digital world. Like all [SME4DD project courses](#), the AI for Business course is designed to provide SME professionals with the essential skills and knowledge they need to navigate and leverage the digital innovations that are defining our future.