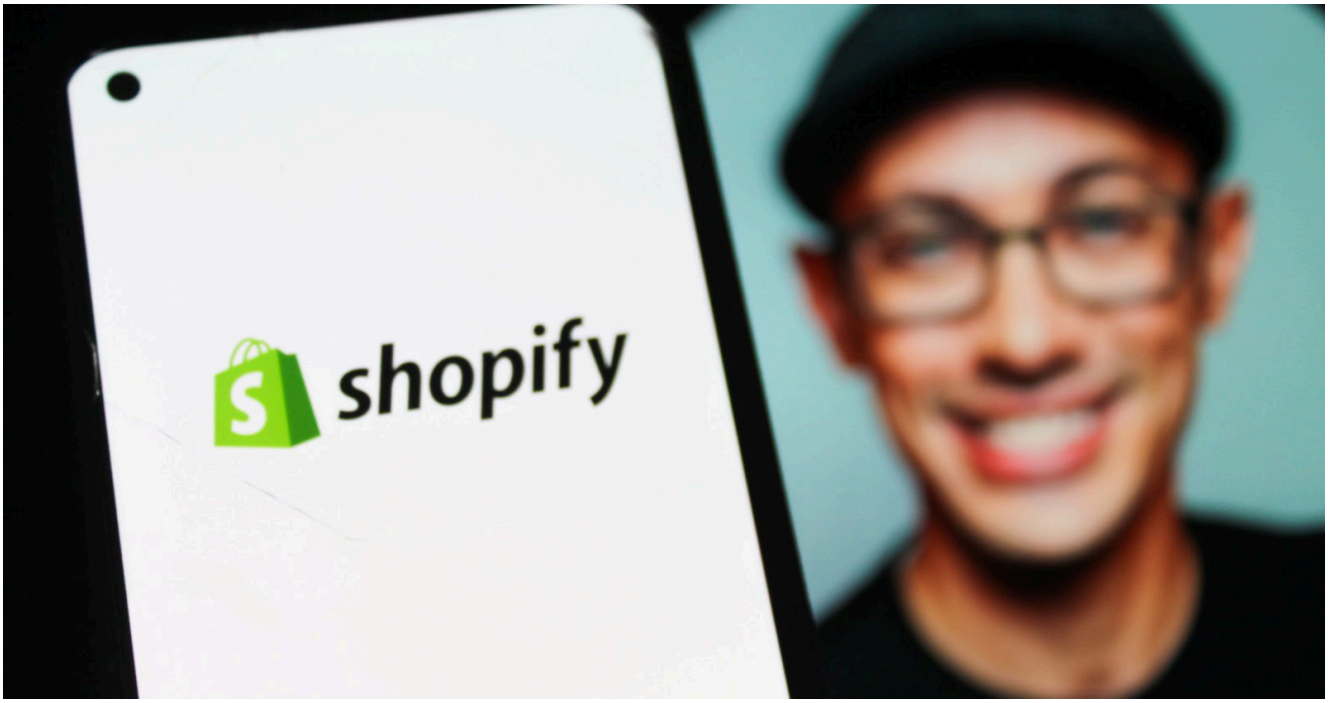
Shopify CEO: Peer Ratings On AI Use ‘Didn’t Matter’ via @sejournal, @MattGSouthern



Shopify CEO Tobi Lütke says it didn’t matter how employees answered the AI question his company added to its performance reviews. Having the question there, he said on the Sources podcast, can “give a company a reputation to live up to.”

The question came out of an April 2025 memo in which he told employees “reflexive AI usage is now a baseline expectation at Shopify.” The memo said, “We will add AI usage questions to our performance and peer review questionnaire.” It also said teams would have to show why AI couldn’t do the work before asking for more headcount and resources.

He made the comments to Alex Heath in an episode published Oct. 28 and recorded at Shopify’s Toronto office. He also said an AI skeptic who keeps their head down won’t become a top performer at a company where everyone around them works with AI agents.

Shopify’s 2025 AI Rules, A Year And A Half Later

Heath asked whether Shopify still had the AI review question and the headcount rule in place. Lütke said both now happen on their own. “I don’t have to enforce these kind of things,” he said.

He said the memo was seen as controversial outside Shopify but “really not inside of a firm.” More people there paid attention to it, he said, after the press “made a big deal out of it.” He took that as a sign Shopify had already made the transition.

He said he doesn’t know whether the AI question is in Shopify’s current review. He described it as a peer-rating question about how reflexively a colleague shows up with an AI prototype, and said “sometimes you play a little bit of tricks there.” The answer didn’t matter, he said.

AI Skeptics And Top Performers

Shopify’s CEO moved from the review question to people who resist AI. He pointed to open-source projects that have banned AI contributions and said he’s entertained by debates over whether code was “hand chiseled by humans or somehow computed by math.” His view was that good code should be accepted either way.

He said a company should decide who it’s for and who it isn’t, and that “heightening the misalignment with the people you don’t want is actually almost more important than having a good careers page.”

An AI skeptic who is “just kind of trying to lay low,” he said, will never be a top performer in a company where everyone around them uses AI agents to do their work.

He said companies should make that explicit, because everyone deserves to work somewhere they “either are or have a really good shot at becoming one of the top performers.” Once it’s clear that isn’t possible for someone, Shopify also wants to help them look for that kind of place elsewhere, he said.

His September Comments On ‘Slop Grenades’

In a Knowledge Project episode released Sept. 15, Lütke said AI had made one kind of lazy work worse at Shopify. Staff have a name for AI output that gets handed to a colleague without being read. They call it a slop grenade, and I covered those comments last month.

Why This Matters

Shopify’s CEO says the AI question in its reviews was there to give the company a reputation to live up to. The question he described is about how readily someone turns to AI. The slop grenades he talked about in September come after that, when AI output reaches a coworker unread.

A review question about adoption won’t tell a team lead whether anyone checks AI drafts before they go to an editor or a client.

Looking Ahead

Earlier in the interview, Shopify’s CEO said he doesn’t expect public pessimism about AI to last long, because more people will use it themselves. He said the stories from that use will wash it away.

He didn’t say in the interview whether the AI question will be in Shopify’s next review cycle.

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https://www.searchenginejournal.com/shopify-ceo-ai-peer-review-ratings/595379/