

AI Expert Helps Small Businesses Adapt to the New AI-Powered Economy

*Veteran Technology Leader & AI Advocate Rene Clayton
Partners with the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce
to Help Local Businesses Navigate AI Revolution*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- While large corporations race to integrate artificial intelligence into nearly every aspect of their operations, many small business owners are still trying to answer one question: Where do we even start?

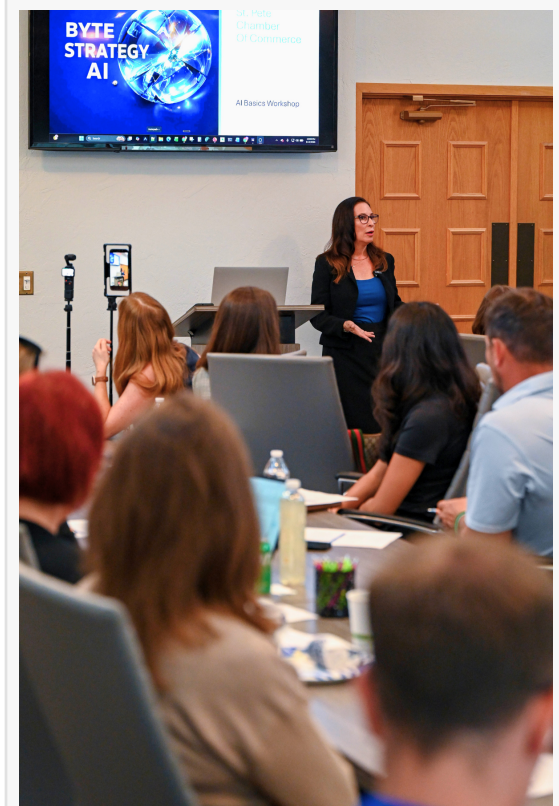
That uncertainty is exactly what longtime technology leader and AI strategist Rene Clayton, Founder and CEO of Byte Strategy AI LLC, is working to change.

With more than 25 years of experience in technology and digital transformation, Clayton is helping businesses understand both the enormous opportunities and very real risks that artificial intelligence presents. Her message is simple: AI is not just a trend for Fortune 500 companies, it is rapidly becoming a survival tool for businesses of every size.

To help local entrepreneurs better understand the rapidly evolving AI landscape, Clayton recently partnered with the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce to host a free AI lunch and learn seminar for almost 50 local small business owners. The event marked the first AI-focused program ever hosted by the Chamber in its 127-year history.

"Our business community kept hearing about AI, but many owners didn't know how it actually applied to their businesses or where to begin," said Candace Hulcher, Vice President, Investor & Membership Development of the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce.

The seminar introduced attendees to practical, accessible ways AI can immediately improve operations, marketing, customer service, productivity, and decision-making - without requiring



AI expert Rene Clayton at the St. Pete Chamber of Commerce teaching local entrepreneurs how to leverage AI to enhance their businesses.

large budgets or technical expertise.

Topics included:

- A clear framework for AI strategy and governance
- Practical ways to move from experimentation to implementation
- Risk-reduction strategies for compliance-driven industries
- Real-world examples of AI creating measurable business results
- An execution-ready roadmap you can take back to your team

According to Clayton, one of the greatest dangers facing small businesses is not adopting AI incorrectly, but waiting too long to adopt it at all.

"AI is already changing how businesses operate, compete, and connect with customers," said Clayton. "The businesses that thrive won't necessarily be the ones with the biggest budgets. They'll be the ones willing to learn, adapt, and strategically integrate AI while still keeping the human element at the center of their business. Technology may be accelerating, but trust, creativity, empathy, and human judgment are still the real competitive advantage."

The St. Pete Chamber of Commerce says the event was created in response to growing concerns from local business owners who feel overwhelmed by the pace of technological change.

"We felt it was important to create a space where local businesses could learn about AI in a practical, approachable, and non-intimidating way. The response was incredible, and it showed us just how important these conversations are for the future success of small businesses," Hulcher said.

Attendees described the seminar as eye-opening, actionable, and empowering.

"I walked into the event feeling intimidated by AI and left feeling excited about the possibilities," said Hani Bakir, World Franchise Group Inc. "The session made AI feel understandable and practical instead of overwhelming. I'm already implementing some of the strategies we learned. I'm incredibly thankful to the Chamber and Rene for creating something so valuable for local business owners."

As AI continues reshaping industries worldwide, Clayton believes education will be one of the most important factors determining which businesses successfully adapt - and which get left behind.

Her focus moving forward is helping organizations embrace AI strategically, ethically, and responsibly while ensuring that people remain at the heart of innovation.

About Rene Clayton

Rene Clayton is the Founder & CEO of Byte Strategy AI LLC. She has over 25 years of experience in technology and more than a decade of hands-on expertise in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and natural language systems. She holds the MIT Sloan Executive Certificate in AI and Digital Leadership, and the Google Generative AI Leader certification.

Clayton works with organizations where AI adoption involves significant operational, regulatory, and reputational considerations. Her clients span industries including credit unions, fintech, telecom, and real estate - sectors where trust, compliance, and strategic execution are critical.

Clayton is a published author, keynote speaker, on the advisory board for Amplify Tampa Bay Women, and an advocate for advancing women in AI and technology leadership. For more information visit: ByteStrategy.ai.

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