

THE AI-FIRST ENTERPRISE

THE NEW RULES OF JOBS AND ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN



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What will be possible for your organization in 2030, when AI touches every system, employee and decision?

*It depends on **what you do** to prepare your people and your culture **today**.*

INTRODUCTION

Agentic AI is reshaping how organizations operate, changing not just their technological capabilities, but the ways people work and interact with each other.

This paper examines AI's impacts on workplace structures and dynamics, focusing on the necessary shifts in jobs, workflows, and organizational culture that companies must navigate to successfully adapt and win.

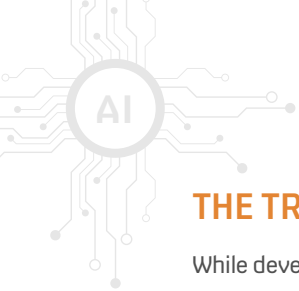
Though it is written by a futurist, its horizons are near-term, because the AI inflection—the biggest disruption the business world will experience since the rise of personal computers, the Internet, mobility, and very possibly, the steam engine—is already upon us.

By 2028, U.S. spending on AI is projected to surpass \$632 billion¹, exceeding investments in roads and bridges. The scale and speed are unprecedented.

TRANSFORMATION QUESTIONS BUSINESS LEADERS MUST ASK

- 1. What workplace barriers might hinder successful AI adoption?*
- 2. How can we build a culture that embraces AI-driven change?*
- 3. What should we be doing now to prepare?*





THE TRUTH ABOUT AI

While developers are pouring resources into building AI models and the infrastructure to support them, the software itself will be relatively modest for most enterprise customers. The real cost will be the substantial investment required to transform their systems and cultures, as AI renders current management structures and work methods obsolete.

Within the next several years, AI-powered digital assistants will provide even junior managers with real-time decision support that is at least as well-informed and even more strategically sound than what a typical CEO relies on today. Jobs will become less focused on routine administrative tasks and more on active problem-solving and entrepreneurship.

AI WILL CHANGE, NOT SHRINK THE WORKFORCE

In reality, AI will drive most industries to transform and expand their workforces, as evolving job roles adapt to meet new demands. Think of truck drivers. Ten years ago, when self-driving cars became a real possibility, the media was filled with stories about truck drivers' imminent obsolescence.

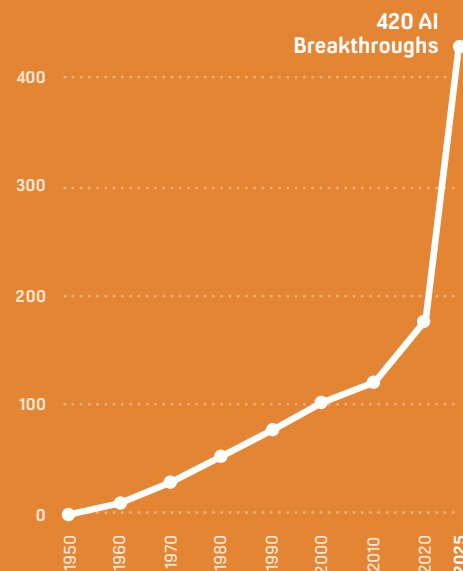
What those stories missed was the fact that a truck driver's value does not reside solely in their ability to turn a steering wheel.



Even as trucks become capable of navigating themselves, human beings will be needed to maintain them and take care of things if they break down, and to carry deliveries from the street to the customer and interact with them when necessary. Truck drivers' jobs will not disappear; they will evolve and likely improve as they generate more value. The same will be true for most professions.

AI IS ACCELERATING AT AN ASTONISHING RATE

Cumulative number of AI breakthroughs 1950 to 2025



*Where will you
optimize?*

*What will you
create?*

Source: PwC analysis based on European Commission and Epoch AI's data for AI breakthroughs over time, January 2025
<https://www.pwc.com/us/en/tech-effect/ai-analytics/competing-in-age-of-ai.html>

*Companies obsess
about technology debt.
Organizational debt
is the real threat.*

ORGANIZATIONAL DEBT

While technology debt, outdated systems and software, is a well-recognized challenge, organizational debt poses an even greater threat to AI adoption. Like interest on a loan, underinvestment in cultural and human processes compound, making it difficult for companies to adapt to rapid technological changes.



AI offers exponential productivity gains, but to realize them, businesses must rethink processes once considered too complex to change. The payoff: managers will gain the time and capacity to focus on the creative, high-value work only humans can do.

Successful implementation requires changes in operations, governance, and talent. Organizations that try to bolt AI onto their existing ways of working will only achieve a fraction of their potential.

ASSESS YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL DEBT:

- 1. Could your teams pursue an AI-based game-changing opportunity immediately?*
- 2. How many approval layers does a good idea need to navigate before it becomes real?*
- 3. Do your employees spend more time creating or approving solutions?*

TRANSFORMING TO HARNESS POTENTIAL

To harness AI's true potential, organizations must be willing to challenge and reshape existing structures and processes.

Consider a typical large corporation. Even minor decisions frequently need to pass through multiple layers of approval and departmental silos hinder cross-functional collaboration. Innovative ideas are stifled by risk-averse cultures.

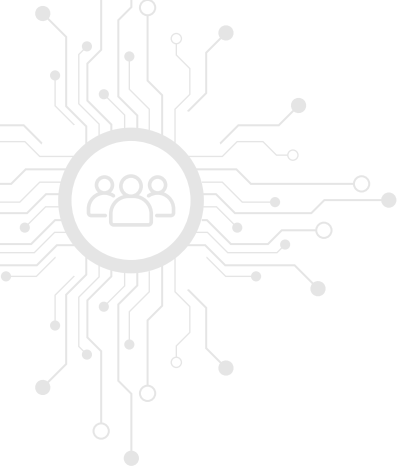
Firms must replace the traditional management pyramid with a more networked model—one where cross-functional, AI-powered teams are free to experiment, and leaders focus on setting guardrails and strategic direction.

Such organizations can move on many fronts simultaneously, evolving continuously instead of in fits and starts as they crawl through stage gates.

Adapting to AI means more than updating org charts—it requires reimagining how work gets done.

In this new model, decision-making is decentralized, innovation is democratized, and leadership shifts from command-and-control to enablement.





When opportunity beckons or trouble strikes, distributed intelligence empowers teams to act before they receive instructions.



THE OCTOPUS ORGANIZATION

Imagine an organization that works more like a living network than a rigid hierarchy—flexible, fast, and intelligent in every part. That's the idea behind the Octopus Organization. Inspired by how an octopus thinks and acts—with intelligence distributed across its body—this model helps us understand how AI-enabled businesses will work.

HOW OCTOPUS ORGANIZATIONS WIN

CLEARLY-DEFINED INTERFACES BETWEEN TEAMS

As AI agents share data within and between teams, functions, companies, and geographies, many of the barriers that prevent solutions from being scaled across enterprises will naturally fall.

CLEARLY-DEFINED MISSIONS AND REMITS

Each small, semi-autonomous team has a designated decision maker, an explicit purpose, and KPIs that it is expected to meet

CUSTOMER-CENTRIC MECHANISMS

The focus of innovation should always be on users' needs.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Employees who question assumptions and push boundaries in constructive ways should feel valued rather than threatened. Employees who work on new product development should be confident that they won't be punished for unavoidable failures.

CONTINUOUS ITERATION

Teams should be able to pivot quickly based on feedback and data. On the other side, they are incentivized to admit defeat and end projects that fail to meet targets.

JABIL'S AI TRANSFORMATION

Jabil, a global engineering, supply chain, and manufacturing solutions provider with more than 140,000 employees in 25-plus countries, is using AI to enhance rather than replace human capabilities.

"The broader aim of digital transformation is not just to eliminate tasks and cut costs, but to create value, safer workplaces, and meaningful work for people," notes May Yap, Jabil's Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer. "We started by taking an employee-first approach and putting people at the heart of the transformation. Data literacy training workshops enable employees at all levels of the organization to understand and interpret data more effectively. Training helps demystify complex data concepts and technologies, making them more accessible and understandable to a broader audience..."

Adaptability and continuous learning are crucial mindsets that set employees apart in an AI-driven organization. As AI evolves rapidly, those who embrace new processes and tools, and are willing to change their ways of working, will drive greater organizational efficiencies and fully realize the benefits of AI."



Since junior leaders will face increasing complexity and uncertainty, they'll need clear risk bands. When the U.S. Military sends teams into the field to carry out missions it does this with OpOrds, five-paragraph directives that specify mission parameters and set out clear guidelines that specify when junior officers should act on their own and when they must escalate to a higher level.

In the context of the Octopus Organization, these risk bands function like the neural clusters in an octopus' arms, allowing for local decision-making within defined parameters. This approach balances autonomy with accountability, enabling rapid responses to local conditions while maintaining overall strategic alignment.

Because the scope of their responsibilities will become so much broader, junior leaders will have to develop their emotional intelligence, resilience, and strategic thinking. Leaders at all levels must be equipped to navigate the complex, AI-augmented environment, balancing human insights with machine intelligence.



IMPLEMENTING TRANSFORMATION

While AI's potential is immense, realizing its full benefits requires more than just technological deployment. Organizations must navigate three critical challenges simultaneously:

Launching
successful AI
Initiatives

Transforming
culture to embrace
AI-driven change

Evolving
future workforce
capabilities

The org charts of digitally native startups and mature enterprises like Amazon offer models for flatter, more networked organizations. However, business cultures are inherently conservative—so even with intentional efforts to restructure, employees often revert to familiar habits that resist change.

Try to change too much too quickly, and failure becomes likely. That's why companies shouldn't attempt to overhaul entire systems at once, but they also can't afford to delay laying the groundwork.

AMAZON'S HIDDEN OCTOPUS ENGINES

ONE-WAY/ TWO-WAY DOORS

A simple tool that helps teams when to decide when to innovate and when to escalate.



LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Sixteen mantras encode judgment, acting as the neural necklace that synchronizes thousands of arms without direct coordination.



BLAMELESS COE LOOPS

Written postmortems that drive rapid, enterprise-wide learning.





LAUNCHING SUCCESSFUL AI INITIATIVES

A phased approach is essential, balancing quick wins with long-term transformation. Launch a portfolio of pilots, but here is how to start your first:

- **IDENTIFY** a high-value use-case that will deliver a strong ROI
- **EMPOWER** a team to launch a pilot that targets it directly
- **CONTAIN** downstream impacts on processes and workforce
- **QUANTIFY** cost savings and revenue generation

TRANSFORMING CULTURE TO EMBRACE AI-DRIVEN CHANGE

Dauntingly large numbers of tech-enabled transformations have failed because they ignored the relationship between people and machines. Decoding your organization's cultural DNA—how people work, make decisions, and respond to change—is a critical first step, as the unwritten rules of emotion infuse the unwritten rules of culture. All of them exist for reasons, which may be outmoded but made sense at one time.

Building psychological safety requires more than just sending reassuring messages about job security. Organizations must take concrete actions to show that AI will enhance rather than replace human work. This includes creating "AI sandboxes" in which employees can experiment with new tools without fear of negative consequences. It's also wise to let peers define "what good looks like" so teams align without hierarchy. Use those signals to map work, divide tasks between AI and people, and target upskilling.

Instead of centralizing control, AI will empower teams across the company to make smart, fast decisions. Non-technical employees will be able to build simple software tools. Marketers, legal teams, and finance professionals will use AI to plan campaigns, draft contracts, and forecast profits. Frontline managers will tailor strategies in real time, guided by AI insights.

In this model, decision-making shifts from the center to the edges. Everyone, at every level, becomes a decision-maker—supported by AI and aligned through a shared strategy. The result is a more adaptive, innovative, and responsive organization.

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Recognition is how peers tell the network what matters; recognition data shows where it's taking hold — helping leaders make better decisions about people, skills, and how to build stronger AI-human teaming”

KeyAnna Schmiedel, Chief Human Experience Officer, Workhuman

Fostering AI adoption requires a balanced approach to autonomy and accountability. Organizations must explicitly define the parameters within which individuals and teams can experiment with AI, risk bands that clearly specify what decisions can be made autonomously, what requires review, and what needs escalation. For example, customer service representatives might have autonomy to use AI for routine inquiries but need supervision for complex cases or high-value transactions. Engineers should similarly specify AI agents' boundaries via algorithms.

HOW TO BUILD BUY IN

- Launch AI tools that solve immediate pain points in employees' daily work, such as meeting summarization or routine document creation.
- Make AI's benefits tangible through hands-on experiences, labs, and prototype walkthroughs.
- Create psychological safety by sharing leaders' learning experiences, including mistakes and lessons learned.
- Hold regular forums for open dialogue about AI's impact
- Develop AI-augmented skill development and career advancement opportunities and recognize those who help others learn.

USING AI TO REDUCE TURNOVER IN THE CONTACT CENTER: A CHXO-CTO STORY

When attrition spiked in the Workhuman contact center, KeyAnna Schmiedel (CHXO) and Jonathan Hyland (CTO) agreed it wasn't just an HR problem or a tech problem. It was a systems and behavior problem. AI was reshaping the work and workflows at the same time, so they chose to co-own one experiment.

Their first step was analyzing human behavioral signals. By monitoring changes in peer recognition, award patterns, communication tone, and team contributions, they identified signs of disengagement well before traditional metrics revealed problems. A quick pulse and floor interviews confirmed the biggest frictions: time-consuming post-call documentation and the challenge of accessing relevant account history during calls.

To address these challenges, they stood up a small AI council, named frontline ambassadors, and ran a one-day hackathon. Two AI and human-in-the-loop fixes won: an in-call context assist to surface history in real time and a call-summary assist to draft notes and next steps for agents to review. Guardrails were set up front and recognition spotlighted peers who proposed solutions and helped others adopt the new workflow.

They didn't try to boil the ocean. Two teams piloted the solutions for 60 days, with weekly huddles to tune prompts and make handoffs. Early outcomes included shorter handle/wrap time, lighter cognitive load, faster week-one confidence, higher CSAT, and clearer career pathways for overlooked talent.

With that playbook in hand, KeyAnna and Jonathan are expanding the model to the next set of teams.

How to run this playbook:

- *Co-sponsor AI-human teaming with HR and Technology leaders (CHRO/CHXO/CPO + CTO/CIO).*
- *Run a fast pulse and a floor-led hackathon to source solutions and build buy-in.*
- *Define the splits: Automate, Assist, Human-only vs. humans in the loop.*
- *Name team ambassadors and recognize contributions, alignment, coaching and cross-team help.*
- *Review adoption and outcomes weekly; capture learnings and scale.*

EVOLVING WORKFORCE CAPABILITIES

The transition to AI-enabled work represents the most significant shift in workforce capabilities since the digital revolution. Even non-technical workers will need to be trained in data management and governance so they can act as AI's managers—prompting, reviewing, and refining its outputs.

Every employee, regardless of role, needs to develop "AI literacy"—the ability to understand AI's capabilities, limitations, and appropriate use cases. This includes not just technical skills but also critical thinking and the ability to effectively collaborate with AI systems. The impact on roles will vary across organizational levels but follow common patterns.

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Organizations that embed AI effectively can see workforce productivity gains of nearly 40 percent on some tasks.¹ However, freeing up so much time inevitably leads to uneasy questions: how do we rethink employee roles, and which tasks should be automated versus left to human ingenuity?

Taimur Rashid, Head of AWS Gen AI Innovation Center

AI LEADERSHIP PRIORITIES

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS

Analytical tasks increase as AI does more rote work.

Develop skills in
AI tool interaction

Output
validation

Basic data
interpretation

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

The focus on mentorship increases as AI does more quality control.

Align and
motivate line
workers

Encourage
Human-AI
collaboration

Work with
AI to build QA
processes

SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Vision setting and alignment becomes more central as
AI provides more oversight and intelligence.

Architect AI tools to
dynamically govern
resources

Collaborate with
AI decision support
tools

Design AI systems
for future growth
and resilience

¹Navigating the Jagged Technological Frontier: Field Experimental Evidence of the Effects of AI on Knowledge Worker Productivity and Quality, Fabrizio Dell'Acqua, et. al

Successful workforce evolution requires constant attention to the human element. While AI will automate many tasks, it will also create new opportunities for human creativity, judgment, and interpersonal skills. Organizations that guide their workforces through this transition—while sustaining engagement and a sense of purpose—will be best positioned to unlock AI's full transformative potential.

BRIDGING THE AI SKILLS GAP: HOW INFORMATICA CREATED A SUSTAINABLE TALENT PIPELINE

In today's rapidly evolving tech landscape, the shortage of cloud talent poses a significant challenge for businesses undergoing digital transformation. Informatica, a leader in AI-powered cloud data management, tackled this challenge through their partnership with the AWS Skills to Jobs Tech Alliance.

The solution centered on creating a comprehensive talent development ecosystem. By integrating Informatica's tools directly into the training curriculum, the program provided learners with practical, hands-on experience addressing real-world use cases. This approach helped bridge critical skill gaps through:

- **Targeted Skill Development:** Implemented programs focusing on essential AI and cloud technologies
- **Hands-on Experience:** Integrated Informatica's own tools into practical training
- **Industry Alignment:** Ensured training content matched real-world industry needs and challenges



The results demonstrated the program's effectiveness in creating a sustainable talent pipeline. Notably, Informatica achieved 32% women representation in their workforce, while successfully securing the cloud expertise needed to drive their digital initiatives forward.

CONCLUSION

AI's ultimate power lies in the human potential it will unleash. "Agentic AI isn't just about replicating existing processes—it's a chance to rethink them entirely. When you realize a process wasn't optimal to begin with, that's your moment to reimagine and truly transform," says AWS's Director of AI/ML Product Marketing, Susanne Seitinger.

AI can liberate workers at every level from the tedium of carrying out rote tasks in vertical silos and empower them to build new connections, gain new knowledge, and develop breakthrough products and strategies. But local empowerment must be balanced with enterprise-wide orchestration and formal mechanisms that align teams around clear goals and metrics. Implementing and orchestrating these cultural and organizational shifts is a multi-year process, so early movers gain significant advantages.

By aligning their technology strategies with organizational reinvention, companies can future-proof their business and cultivate the resilient, high-impact teams they will need to thrive in 2030 and beyond.

So, designate a challenge, set up a team, and get to work. The clock is ticking.

KEY ACTIONS

Rewire decision rights

Set explicit "risk bands" and arm frontline teams with AI assistants; leaders provide guardrails and resources, not approvals.

Erase organizational debt

Map silos, layers, and redundant workflows; eliminate or refactor them before AI multiplies the friction.

Pilot, document, replicate

Fund a 90-day, P&L-linked AI pilot; capture ROI and playbook, then roll it out to new units each quarter.



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Ranked the #1 Futurist in the World by Forbes and "The world's leading transformation architect" by Harvard Business Review. Brill is also the Executive Chairman of the Center for Radical Change. Rogue Waves and his upcoming book about AI and the Octopus Organization have reinvented the way organizations innovate. Brill was the Global Futurist at HP and Lab Chief for tech, food and real estate firms. His teams have generated 325 inventions worth \$27 Billion. He is a special advisor to the founder at Frost & Sullivan, one of the world's largest private global intelligence agencies and Senior Fellow at HBR's China New Growth Institute. When not speaking, he is on ABC News, CNBC, CNN, CBS, teaching at Harvard, Duke, CERN and Stanford, and advising Verizon, KPMG and the US Secret Service.

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