

AI Is Moving Faster Than Your Managers

Three recent stories. One leadership problem.

THE PROBLEM IS NOT THAT PEOPLE ARE RESISTING AI.

The problem is that companies are buying tools, setting expectations, and pushing for speed before managers know how to lead the work differently. Employees are experimenting. Leaders are asking for results. Quality, accountability, and trust are getting caught in the middle.

3%

of leaders surveyed were "highly prepared" to lead through AI adoption.

43%

of managers felt poorly equipped or not equipped to lead AI-skilled employees.

10%

of CFOs said their organization had realized financial value from AI.

WHAT I SEE

AI is being treated like a software rollout. It is not. It changes how work moves, what managers review, what employees are expected to know, and who answers when the output is wrong. That is a leadership change wearing a technology label.

WHY THIS MATTERS

If managers cannot explain where AI belongs, employees will make the decision themselves. Some will avoid it. Some will overuse it. Some will send polished work nobody can defend. The company will have plenty of activity and no shared standard for what good looks like.

MY TAKE

You cannot build an AI-ready workforce with managers who are learning in private.

AI adoption is a people decision before it is a technology decision.

What the Three Stories Are Really Saying

Not a recap of headlines. The leadership pattern underneath them.

01 MANAGER TRAINING MAY BE THE KEY

JULY 28, 2026

THE RECAP

Only 3% of leaders surveyed by ManpowerGroup Talent Solutions said their leaders were highly prepared to lead through AI adoption. The article argues managers need more than technical knowledge. They need communication, adaptability, and the ability to help employees learn while the work is changing.

JOHN'S TAKE

Do not train managers only on the tool. Train them to set expectations, question the output, coach different skill levels, and explain where human judgment still matters.

02 MANAGERS DO NOT FEEL READY

JULY 28, 2026

THE RECAP

Indeed and YouGov found 43% of managers felt poorly equipped or not equipped at all to lead AI-skilled employees. More than half of workers said they were not receiving the AI training they needed. Employers that were recruiting AI-native talent and training managers reported far stronger manager confidence.

JOHN'S TAKE

Your strongest AI user may know the tool better than the manager. That does not make the employee the leader. Managers still have to define the standard, protect the team, and own the result.

03 AI WORKSLOP IS DRAINING PERFORMANCE

JULY 17, 2026

THE RECAP

Gartner describes workslop as low-quality AI output that creates little or negative value and requires human cleanup. The pressure to produce more work faster can weaken decisions, create workarounds, and exhaust the people checking everything afterward. Only 10% of CFOs surveyed said their organization had realized financial value from AI.

JOHN'S TAKE

If AI makes one employee faster and three coworkers busier, it did not improve productivity. Measure the cleanup, not just the output.

THE PATTERN

The tool is moving faster than the leadership around it. That gap is where wasted investment, weak work, and frustrated people show up.

What Business Owners Should Take From This

Four conclusions I would put on the leadership agenda.

01

STOP CALLING THIS A TOOL PROBLEM.

The tool may be new. The leadership questions are not. Who owns the work? What does good look like? How will mistakes be caught? What changes for the team? Those belong to management.

02

TRAIN THE MANAGER BEFORE YOU PRESSURE THE TEAM.

Employees should not be expected to invent the company's AI standards one prompt at a time. Managers need enough confidence to coach the work, question the output, and admit what they do not know.

03

REWARD VALUE, NOT VOLUME.

More emails, reports, presentations, and summaries do not automatically create a better business. If AI is measured only by speed or usage, people will produce more whether the work deserves to exist or not.

04

KEEP A PERSON RESPONSIBLE.

AI can draft, organize, analyze, and automate. It cannot take accountability. Every AI-supported process still needs a named person who can explain the answer, correct it, and own the consequence.

THE QUESTION I WOULD ASK

Are we helping our managers lead AI-supported work - or simply expecting them to clean up whatever happens next?

SOURCES

HR Dive: Why manager training may be the key to AI integration - July 28, 2026

HR Dive: Managers say they do not feel ready to lead an AI-fluent workforce - July 28, 2026

HR Dive: How AI workslop is undermining your organization's performance - July 17, 2026