

How can you work alongside AI to become a Super Leader?

When an AI-driven future arrives faster than ever, Terence Mauri, a world-leading expert on the future of leadership and Thinkers50 author, argues that we always overestimate the risk of trying something new and underestimate the risk of standing still.

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The Consumer Electronics Show (CES) celebrates all that tech offers and sets the technology narrative for the year ahead. Every year, over one hundred thousand people arrive at the Las Vegas Convention Center to discover the latest innovation trends across the future of consumer tech: AI, robotics, mobile, gaming, and many other tech themes that will reshape how we live, work, and play. I saw an all-electric flying car prototype and a new personal assistant to perform your tasks during my visit.

The Rabbit R1 AI device swaps out apps for an operating system that can learn how to use apps on your behalf and shows how an AI co-pilot could work if you've dreamed of a personal assistant. As I experimented with the device, a man beside me smiled and said, "Cool product. I'm interested in this kind of innovation for my industry." Curious to understand more, I replied, "It's a useful device. Which industry are you working in?" He smiled, "I work in the funeral industry. I'm a Funeral Director. Our clients want us to be more innovative. We become history if we don't embrace the future and work alongside AI." After my surprise, we spoke for thirty minutes about how the \$20 billion a year US funeral industry is evolving from live streaming and space burials to eco-friendly

and digital memorials. As we said our goodbyes, I felt nothing but respect for the Funeral Director. No industry or function is immune from AI-led disruption – not even death.

One of the most significant risks to the long-term vitality of most leaders isn't tech or talent disruption. It's a lack of courage to evolve. Hack Future Lab's research shows that a 'lack of boldness' is the number one barrier to long-term impact for leaders and a top three internal challenge alongside bureaucracy and talent scarcity. Future-fit leaders must learn to work alongside AI in this new era of perpetual business upheaval and shocks upon shocks.

The emergence of AI as a Super Leader can be terrifying and exciting, but times of rapid change also give you a unique opportunity to rethink and emerge more innovative and better. For example, the leadership team of a 1000-plus organization sent a personalized "thank you" message to every individual worldwide using their first name and local language. AI made creating and editing these messages much easier and quicker than usual, compressing the cost and time it would take from weeks to minutes. The stunt was intended to highlight the need to learn at the speed of AI because no vertical will be left unaffected by AI-driven disruption, and those firms that renew their lease on the future will be the ones that can turn tectonic changes into learning and growth. Over the last three years, one truth has emerged with undeniable clarity: All firms are now AI-centric. AI will change the nature of everything, but the story of AI is still being written. What are the promises and perils of AI, and will it be an enabler or a threat that risks putting entire professions out of a job? Will the future be automated or augmented, or will a dystopian AI golem mine us of our humanity? Imagine this scenario. Rather than paying hundreds of thousands of dollars for consultants to recommend a new growth strategy, a CEO could ask an AI Co-Leader for the three best strategic options and select the best.

The upside is not a given when working alongside AI as a Super Leader. On the one hand, technology has the potential to automate the boring parts of our jobs and free up time to deliver more meaningful and higher-value work. Science fiction has become a science fact: AI will change everything about how we do everything, including how we lead, how we work, how we create, and how we compete. The waves of disruptions we see today, which we assume are moving fast, are likely only the start because AI is the first tool in history that can:

1. Create new things by itself
2. Make decisions by itself

AI will upend our assumptions about intelligence and productivity, creating a multiplier effect as the time to complete tasks collapses, but it's more than hyper-efficiency. For instance, the curve is almost tilted straight up if you consider the productivity journey from railroads to AI (measured by GDP per hour worked). As AI researcher Geoffrey Hinton says, "Generative AI is not just a faster way to find or assemble information." It will herald a new intelligence and productivity age where leaders have human superpowers.

Working alongside AI means that every leader is now operating at light speed. Still, you will need human maximization to stand out in a sea of sameness: a return on imagination and the courage skills of contrarianism, proactive resilience, and risk-taking. The difference will be human ingenuity over what historian Yuval Harari calls 'artificial intimacy' or, worse, 'artificial idiocy.' Leadership will become increasingly decentralized, dispersed, and algorithmically driven. The leaders who unlock the vast untapped potential of their talent will allocate more time and resources to frontier leadership: a mindset of improvising, adapting, and harnessing AI not just as another tool but as a platform for thriving. Working alongside AI is more than a new chapter for leaders to navigate. It's an entirely new story, and there's no one-size-fits-all strategy. What

steps will you take to work alongside AI as a Super Leader?

Terence Mauri is a leading expert on the future of leadership, artificial intelligence, and disruption and the author of *The Upside of Disruption: The Path to Leading and Thriving in the Unknown.*

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