

Leadership Training in an AI World and Why Human Skills Are Still Key - hrnews.co.uk

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Executive Summary

This article addresses the question of what role human-centred leadership development plays in an increasingly AI-driven workplace. The author argues that as artificial intelligence automates more operational tasks, the distinctly human dimensions of leadership — emotional intelligence, empathy, conflict resolution, and trust-building — become more rather than less essential. The article presents no original research or cited studies, relying instead on generalised assertions and rhetorical framing to make its case. Key claims include that employees leave managers rather than organisations, that leadership training creates cultural transformation, and that effective training must prioritise behaviour change over knowledge transfer. The article also outlines characteristics of ineffective training, such as lack of contextual relevance and absence of follow-up. The conclusions drawn are that organisations investing in human-skills-focused leadership development will be better positioned to navigate AI-driven workplace change. The piece functions primarily as a promotional argument for experiential, human-led leadership training over AI-delivered learning content.

Key Insights

1. The article argues that AI can deliver informational content and simulate scenarios but cannot replicate the human nuance required for genuine leadership development, such as coaching through real team dynamics or recognising eroding confidence.
2. Effective leadership training is characterised as requiring behaviour change rather than knowledge transfer, with in-person, experiential, and coaching-based formats positioned as superior to static e-learning.
3. The article frames emotional intelligence, active listening, and psychological safety not as supplementary 'soft skills' but as core operational competencies in AI-augmented workplaces.

Practical Takeaways

- The article identifies lack of contextual relevance and absence of post-training reinforcement as primary reasons leadership training fails to produce lasting impact.
- The article suggests that involving employees in defining what leadership looks like within their organisation increases buy-in and cultural alignment with leadership development initiatives.

Critical Analysis

Strengths: The article identifies a genuine and debated tension in the field — the relationship between AI capability and human leadership skills — and articulates it accessibly for a practitioner audience. The argument that behaviour change, rather than knowledge acquisition, is the true goal of effective training aligns with established learning theory. **Limitations:** The article contains no citations, referenced studies, or empirical data. Claims such as 'research consistently shows that employees don't leave companies, they leave managers' are presented as established fact without attribution. The piece does not engage with counterarguments, such as AI tools that do support emotional development or evidence that some leadership skills can be effectively developed through digital formats. The framing is consistently one-sided, positioning human-led experiential training as categorically superior without nuance. **Biases:** The article appears on an HR news platform and reads as promotional content aligned with the interests of leadership training providers. The repeated phrase 'leadership training for managers' is consistent with SEO-driven content marketing. There is no authorial attribution or organisational affiliation disclosed, limiting the ability to assess potential conflicts of interest.

Organizational Practice

The article describes organisations structuring leadership training programmes that combine hard skills (budgeting, planning) with soft skills (emotional intelligence, resilience, collaboration). It references in-person workshops, immersive experiences, coaching sessions, and peer discussions as training delivery formats. The article also describes organisations involving employees in shaping leadership expectations as part of a broader cultural alignment process.

Strategic Implications

The article reflects a broader trend in HR commentary positioning human-centred leadership capability as a differentiating organisational asset in response to AI-driven automation. If this perspective gains traction, it implies increased organisational investment in experiential and coaching-based development formats over scalable digital content delivery. The framing also suggests a possible reorientation in how PMS effectiveness is measured — moving emphasis from output metrics toward relational and cultural indicators.

Validation Status: passed