

The New Rules of Work: What AI Should Do, What Humans Should Own



Erin Chow
SVP of People
BALSAM
BRANDS



Kat Williamson
VP Talent Development
GONG



Michelle King
Facilitation Manager
LifeLabs⁷
Learning



Rachel Finch
Senior Manager, Enterprise Learning
Solutions at HP

How Balsam Brands, HP, and Gong are deciding where AI helps and where people still matter.

AI is changing how work gets done, but deciding what to hand over takes more than knowing what the tools can do. Leaders from Balsam Brands, HP, and Gong share how they're building confidence, managing risk, and keeping human judgment in the work.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

AI's usefulness depends on the task and its stakes

AI can help with some work and create risk in other situations. The level of human judgment and review needed depends on the task, the information involved, and its potential consequences.

AI can support, but people own the conversation

AI tools can help managers prepare for performance and career conversations. The manager still brings the judgment, makes the decision, and speaks with the employee in their own voice.

Confidence and judgment don't always grow at the same pace

Some employees are ready to experiment; others are more cautious. Enthusiasm alone doesn't ensure sound judgment, and caution doesn't mean someone can't learn to use AI well.

Automation can change how employees build experience

When AI takes on foundational tasks, early-career employees may lose opportunities to learn through doing. Organizations can help build those skills and judgment.

AI learning has to keep pace

Employees bring different levels of experience, and new use cases keep emerging. Learning resources and guidance need regular updates to stay useful.

Shared learning helps adoption scale

When teams experiment in separate pockets, they can duplicate effort. Governance can help people share discoveries, solve common problems together, and spread what works.

AI changes how employees gain experience

If AI takes on the lower-risk tasks where people traditionally learn through doing, organizations need to consider how employees will build those skills.

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ACTION ITEMS



Choose one or two workstreams

Ask each function to select one or two workstreams to overhaul. Break the work into tasks and decide where AI can take the lead, assist, or stay out. Use champions to surface team needs and share what's working.



Set review standards based on risk

Define who checks AI output for accuracy, bias, and context, and who owns the final decision. Apply this especially to performance and career conversations, and to work involving sensitive employee information.



Prepare managers to guide AI use

Use realistic role-plays or AI coaching tools to help managers prepare for performance and career conversations. Keep the manager responsible for the decision and for using their own voice in the conversation.



Track impact and protect skill-building

Compare time, work quality, and relevant business outcomes before and after a pilot. Identify tasks AI may take away from employees, then create other ways for them to build those skills and judgment.

[Kat Williamson explains how managers can apply judgment, guide teams, and decide where to experiment with AI.](#)



“The new rules of work aren’t really about figuring out everything AI can do. They’re about being much more intentional about what we ask it to do, what we design differently because of it, and what we should continue to ask humans to own.”

Michelle King
Facilitation Manager
LifeLabs Learning

Help managers lead as work changes.

LifeLabs gives managers skills they can use right away to guide teams through change, coach with confidence, and make thoughtful decisions about AI.

[Explore the AI Transformation Program](#)

