

AI Has Changed My Business. It Has Not Changed How I Lead.



Over the past 18 months, AI has materially changed how I operate. Not conceptually. Operationally.

As a business owner, consultant, and executive coach, I use AI daily to prepare for meetings, synthesize research, pressure-test strategic decisions, structure reports, and redesign workshop material. I have also invested time in multiple AI workshops with senior operators and leaders to understand how this is reshaping how we work.

I am not an AI expert.

I am a business owner and leadership practitioner focused on performance, and AI is now part of that operating reality. In my own business, AI has reduced the time I spend on preparation, drafting, and structural tasks by roughly 20–30 percent. That applies to specific categories of work, not my entire workload. It has not replaced judgment, experience, or relationships. It has created capacity. What matters is where that capacity goes.

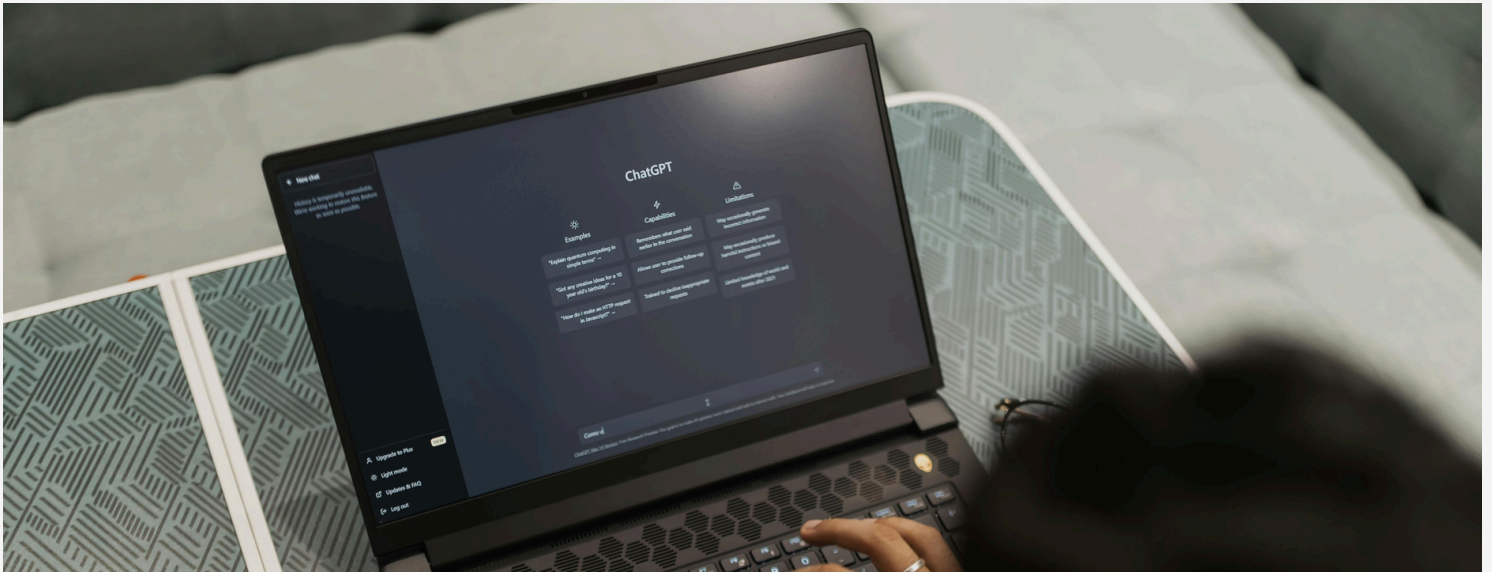
AI is no longer optional. In many organizations, it is already embedded in daily workflow. It also does not matter which tool you prefer. Whether someone is using ChatGPT, Copilot, Claude, Gemini, Perplexity, or another system, the underlying shift is the same. Access is not the differentiator. Judgment is.

The technology is now widely available. Leadership discipline is not. The leaders who will separate themselves are those who use AI to elevate standards and think more rigorously, not those who move faster.

Happy reading.

Jenny Reilly, MBA





Use AI to Prepare. Not to Decide.

AI is a force multiplier. It is also a force diluter if you allow it to think for you. Most leaders use it transactionally. High-performing leaders use it structurally. Speed feels productive. Standards require discipline.

If you are serious about integrating AI into your leadership practice, stop using it as a series of disconnected prompts. Create one project thread per strategic initiative. Define objectives, constraints, stakeholders, and decision standards. Upload relevant background documents to compound the context. Clarify tone and scope before generating anything.

AI without context guesses. AI with context compounds.

Use AI to interrogate your thinking, not to draft your conclusions. Instead of asking it to “write a memo,” paste your draft and ask: Where is this vague? What assumptions am I making? What counterarguments might I face? Where does this lack observable standards?

If your direction sounds abstract, improve communication, take more ownership, be more strategic and ask the AI tool to rewrite it in terms of measurable standards and observable behaviours. If it still feels generic, your expectations are unclear. Your leadership lives in specificity.

Protect discretion. In my own practice, I remove identifying details when testing scenarios and do not input confidential client information into public AI tools. I operate in a professional-grade environment that aligns with my security standards.

AI can improve preparation. It cannot replace judgment.

Before you act, ask: ***Did I make this decision, or did I accept what was generated?***

The Hidden Cost of Speed

AI compresses the time required to produce structured work. Research summaries, option sets, and draft recommendations can now be generated in minutes rather than hours. That speed is powerful.

It also creates a new leadership risk: decisions can begin to feel complete before they have been properly examined. The risk is not efficiency. The risk is unquestioned output.

AI produces polished drafts, structured options, and coherent arguments quickly. The work can look finished even when the thinking behind it is still incomplete.

Disciplined leaders resist that illusion. They slow the decision down long enough to test the logic behind the recommendation.

When reviewing AI-generated options, strong leaders ask harder questions like:

- *What assumptions underpin this recommendation?*
- *What second-order consequences are not visible yet?*
- *What conditions would invalidate this conclusion?*
- *Who absorbs the downside if this fails?*

AI can generate options. It does not carry the consequences of the decision. That responsibility remains yours. Speed is valuable. Depth is decisive.

The leaders who outperform in an accelerated environment will be those who use AI to expand their thinking, not replace it.

Leadership Still Happens in the Room

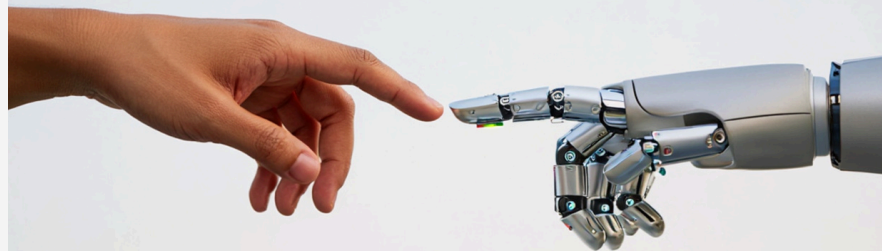
As AI accelerates preparation and drafting, the value of human leadership increases.

The moments that define your credibility are not the structured draft. They are the live conversations where the stakes are real: correcting underperformance, communicating difficult decisions, navigating tension, and setting expectations in uncertainty.

AI can help you prepare for those moments. It cannot execute them for you. Trust is built in real time. It shows up in clarity under pressure, steadiness when others react, and consistency between what you say and what you enforce.

If AI reduces preparation time, reinvest that time where leadership actually happens: better one-to-one conversations, clearer standards, and stronger follow-through.

Technology accelerates output. Leadership compounds through presence.





Final Thought

AI has changed how I work. It has not changed what effective leadership requires.

Clarity. Judgment. Accountability. Courage.

Serious leaders are experimenting with AI right now. They should be. Leaders who ignore it will fall behind. But the advantage will not go to those who adopt AI the fastest. It will go to the leaders who integrate it without lowering their standards.

AI can increase your speed.

Performance still comes from the quality of your thinking after the machine stops talking.

Jenny Reilly