



2026 GLOBAL CONFERENCE

LEADING IN A NEW ERA



ABUNDANCE AND DISRUPTION: RETHINKING THE FUTURE OF WORK

Announcer 00:00

Thank you for joining us. Please welcome the panel to the stage.

Gadi Schwartz 00:00:12

Welcome, everybody. Hello, and welcome to “Bridging the Technology Advancement Gap.” Is that us? No, I think ours is “All About Abundance.” It’s all about abundance, and the reason why you guys are here, if I could take a guess, is either you are worried that AI is going to take your job, you are worried about the people that are going to be mad at you because AI is going to take their job, or you’re very close to retirement and you want to see what abundance looks like as you leave the workforce, and maybe a lot of other people leave the workforce. We have an incredible panel here. We’re going to be talking about everything from the disruption side, to how people feel about it, to some of the solutions that we see here in California and all across the world. But John, from The Harris Poll, I want you to set the table for us here because people feel very strongly about AI these days.

John Gerzema 00:01:06

Absolutely, Gadi. I think let’s start first with a little bit of data. We released a report here yesterday morning in the Harris Poll. And we talked to Americans, we talked to American workers, and we talked to business leaders of \$200 billion-plus revenue companies. And when you get in and you start to see the data, it’s pretty stark. What we’re seeing is a significant optimism gap between leaders and workers across America. This is American data only. So you’re looking here at a 41 percent gap when they start to think about the fact that they’ll be better off in five years, right? Leaders are focused there versus workers. We see this across the board with differences in gaps between how much they focus on practicing AI skills. Leaders are far more adept versus workers. But you’re going to get deeper into it, and you’re going to start to see an emerging concern. This is really a huge issue right now. The main question that came out of the

data was American workers feel like, "AI, am I training my replacement?" Right? 46 percent of workers. That extends to 56 percent of Gen Z workers. The reason why that's so important is Gen Z have also told us in this study and in others, the numbers get as high as 60 percent, that they have FOBO, fear of being obsolete. That is completely counterintuitive for a 20-something to have fear of being obsolete in the workforce. You're just starting your career. So when we start to look at this, you start to then feel that workers are feeling this concern that, "I'll be on my own." 64 percent say across the board, all generations, "If I lose my job to AI, I'll be on my own." Now, last thing where it gets really interesting is sort of what's happening between the workers and the leaders. So you have on one side the workers saying that they feel alone in the transition. 68 percent feel like, "I'm navigating it alone." They also don't know what skills to invest in for the future. And yet, they're optimistic. 69 percent believe that, "I could create more opportunity than eliminates with AI, but only with the right approach." Problem is, we just don't know what that right approach is because everything is moving so fast. Let's look at leaders. Now, we just said previously that leaders are more confident. They've got this more optimistic outlook. Let's just see. 85 percent are actually telling us there's pressure to sort of fake it until you make it. They're pressuring because of the street or for other reasons to appear further along than they are. They also say, 80 percent, "We talk a good game, but we believe behind the scenes we're still figuring it out." But notably, 81 percent, eight in 10 of these business leaders at these large companies say most companies in their industry would be caught AI washing if investigated.

Gadi Schwartz 00:03:55

AI washing. So saying AI-powered bug spraying, but it's really just an Orkin man going around spraying a house.

John Gerzema 00:04:03

Exactly.

Gadi Schwartz 00:04:04

If you're of those that are seeing this and like, "Okay, maybe this is great. Maybe our jobs are safe. Maybe it's all just being AI washed," Tallis, you have been truly disruptive in Brazil. You've built some of the biggest companies in Latin America, and you are at the forefront of all of this. Is it as some people might think, all being AI washed, or is it truly going to get as bad as some people think in terms of job disruption?

Tallis Gomes 00:04:39

That's very interesting data. I saw this data on Sunday, actually, when in the panel that I were part of it. To be honest, a lot of the companies that's coming out to the market saying that they are disrupting everything with AI, they are just a wrap of something. There are a few companies that are really

transformative for the humanity, just like the LLMs. They are doing great work over there. And other companies related to those LLMs. Some of these companies that I'm talking about, they are already invested by another companies who are creating the LLMs as well. So you have this group of a very disruptive technology that can change the society. And to be honest, as we have almost 100,000 companies as clients in Brazil, and we are actually providing AI to these companies and teaching these companies how to use AI—which is one point very important here, guys. One thing is to have an LLM and work with this LLM at your company. And another thing is to change the architecture of work. How the information flows. How the management will take out the productivity out of this. And I want to tell you guys a quick history here. In 1881, Thomas Edison opened the first commercial power station in New York in Pearl Street. It took the American industry 40 years until they could get productivity out of this. They were basically working in an architecture that was providing a force through steam-powered motors. So what they did is that they changed the steam-powered motor to an electricity-powered motor, but without changing the architecture of production. Forty years after, they changed the architecture of production, and then we had exponential gains in productivity. What we are doing right now, and that's why I truly believe in this data, that is a great deal of the things that we are seeing that it is actually AI washing, is that people are getting an exponential technology, using this in a way that they used to work like 10, 15, 20 years ago. We are doing the same mistake that we did as humanity in the end of the nineteenth century. So the talk today is not just about AI, but to change the architecture and how we're going to apply AI to extract productivity out of this.

Gadi Schwartz 00:07:17

Oh, and talking about the extraction productivity, in my personal life, all of a sudden, with the help of AI, as a journalist, I'm getting context much faster. I'm like, "Wow, I've become a really great journalist." It's a lot easier. I ask for something, it's there. I'm looking to book somebody. All of a sudden, all the information is there, and I'm like, "Hmm, I have a little bit more time." And then we had a pre-call—

Tallis Gomes 00:07:42

Yes

Gadi Schwartz 00:07:42

—and you said something that blew my mind, and it was basically that this may be the easiest that work is because right now we are very productive. But when managers start to realize how productive somebody can be with AI at their side, it's like, "Yeah, I know you can be productive. I need 10 times more productivity." Is that where we're headed?

Tallis Gomes 00:08:03

Definitely. We saw Jensen saying that two days ago, or yesterday, I don't remember. He said, "Get your drinks, multiply by 100. You're going to get things done on that." And I truly believe in that. We, as G4, we multiplied our FCF by 11.5 in three years, raising only 10 percent of the workforce. Why we did that? Because in 2022, my co-founder, João, who is here, MIT guy, he introduced me to AI one month after OpenAI launched ChatGPT, and we created the first playbook to implement AI in the company. And then together, we changed the architecture of work within our company, and we could extract productivity before other companies did. And then as we have this educational part of my business—we sell software, AI, but we do sell education as well—what we did is that we got these hundreds of thousands of founders that we mentor in the business, and we decided to teach them how to change the architecture of the business, and afterwards, giving them the software, after then giving AI, so they could extract productivity out of this. What we saw is that we've been seeing something from 0 to 85 percent productivity gain in the companies that are using G4 OS, which is basically a Perplexity competitor, just to give you guys a context here. So 0 to 85 percent in productivity gains. And when we compared the cohorts in similar markets, what is different between those who extracted nothing in productivity to those who extracted 85 percent in gains, it's the founders that enter in the forefront in the innovation, and they did that themselves, changed the way they work, and changed the way information flows in the company. And another data is, those companies who's gained over 45 percent in productivity, they started to move the way that the middle manager works in the company. So I'm going to be honest with you guys. I think the first victim of AI is going to be the middle managers because those guys, basically, they have one job, to move information between top to bottom. We don't need those guys anymore to do this job. They can do another job. And I truly believe, and we can talk about this later about job displacement and so on, but I truly believe that this is not going to be the big issue in AI. But yes, people have to have the courage to change the way they work. We have to admit that we've been doing things in a way that now everything has changed, and we have an exponential technology to extract productivity out of this, so we have to change the way we work.

Gadi Schwartz 00:10:56

When you say middle managers, I think of how far that can extend. Middlemen is the bulk—I would argue—of the entire workforce, from the people at the grocery store, the cashier, to the people that are telling you information from the source all the way to the audience. And the scale all of a sudden gets very scary. And I think that we all in this room can probably agree: the AI, those who are the early adopters, this is very clearly the fast lane. And everybody is quick to be like, "Well, productivity, profit's up. Who's responsible? Obviously over here." And yet when it comes to who's responsible for the job displacement, for the societal angst, and for the uncertainty, there are no hands that go up. But Lisa, I want to ask you, the things that you are doing at Google are incredible, and at true scale, and yet this fundamental question, those hands that are going up, we kind of see that from tech. We kind of see tech being like, "We'll help in this way," or, "We'll help in that way." But first of all, existentially, who is responsible for this type of job displacement?

Lisa Gevelber 00:12:13

Yeah. So hi, everyone. So good to see so many people interested in this topic. So I started and run a program called Grow with Google, and the fundamental premise of Grow with Google is that the opportunities that are created by technology should be truly available to everyone. And we've been doing this work for over 10 years. It's not new because of AI. And the fundamental premise of the work is that we need to help people get the skills needed to grow their personal careers and their businesses. We do a lot of work with small business in particular as well. And AI might be now and coming fast, but actually the skills needed for work have been changing for a while. And what we all need to realize, I think, is that AI itself is not a tech skill. It's become a professional skill. And it's a professional skill that we all need to know. And 70 percent of managers say it's now an essential skill for hiring, but those employers aren't yet doing enough to help people learn how to use it. And I think there's two big opportunities here. One is teaching people to become what we call AI fluent. And two is helping people get some guardrails and really understand how you should or shouldn't be using these tools. So at the end of the day, we've created a bunch of programs on—have taken on responsibility to say we want to help make sure that everyone can easily learn to be both effective and responsible in using these tools. So our most recent effort on this is the Google AI Professional Certificate. I kind of call it AI for work. And basically what we did is we went to top employers and we said, “What do you need people to know how to do? What does your dream employee look like relative to using AI?” And then we cross-referenced what we learned from those employers with some research with the Burning Glass Institute. And we came up with a fundamental list of skills that anyone using AI for work should have. And then we built this Google AI Professional Certificate for that purpose. And so it's designed to meet that need. And it's really exciting to see some employers embracing their responsibility to help employees get these skills. We're so proud that Walmart, for example, is offering our certificate to every one of their employees, from the frontline folks you see in the stores, to the people who are in their distribution centers, all the way up to their executive suites. And so is Verizon, and so is Deloitte, and so is Colgate-Palmolive, and on and on. They're reaching out to their own employees and saying, “We have tools for you. Use the Google AI Professional Certificate. Learn the core skills that we want you to have.” And because we know it's important not just for the country's biggest employers to have those resources, we are also making that certificate training available for free to every small business in America. And I think that is really essential. I hope we get time on this panel to talk about small businesses. What we see AI empowering small businesses to do is absolutely incredible. We also believe that now there's going to be a massive growth in small businesses, and that AI is going to be a big enabler of this. So hopefully we'll get to talk more about it. And then I just also want to add, it's not just people who work in companies that we're helping. One of the things I'm most proud of, and one of the very first things we did at Google, was create AI training for schoolteachers. We've announced that we will provide free AI training to every schoolteacher in America, all six million of them. And we're finding that teachers who embrace these tools are not only mastering their administrative tasks much more quickly, because guess what? Teachers spend over half of their time on those administrative tasks, and it takes time away from what they can do to help students learn. It also takes incredible time out of their personal life. I know many of us know and love teachers. There's lots of teachers in my family. And I'm so glad that this AI tool can help them get rid of that stuff, and also is really enhancing some of the creativity that our teachers already have in terms of enhancing lesson plans, creating assets for the classroom, and so much more. So, so many things to talk about on this panel. But I just want to say we're excited because I think what we see happening is when people have these skills, what they're doing is incredible, and the excitement just builds.

Gadi Schwartz 00:17:04

Promise to bookmark teachers and classrooms because that's a huge component of all of that and also small businesses, for sure. But I do want to, again, start very big picture here. Donald, you have a unique experience. You're on the frontline of so much of the retraining and the uplifting of those that have had their jobs displaced or are finding trouble working here in California, a place where we have seen Silicon Valley change everything all around the world. Outside of tech, what responsibility do you think that the tech companies have? Because we keep looking at CEOs that are my age, and I don't know anything about how the society should be held together and this great wisdom of how philosophically we can all find happiness and meaning in a job. And yet we're looking to these tech founders to give us some sort of roadmap, or if they don't have a roadmap, we kind of get mad about it. What responsibility do you think that tech has in creating a framework for abundance that may transcend things like government, or may transcend things like the structure of work as we know?

Donald Howard 00:18:20

I'm going to come back to that question because I want to set the stage just a little bit. For those who don't know The Irvine Foundation, our singular focus is ensuring that all low-income California workers have the power to advance economically, and the word power in there and economic advancement are quite important. So I think a lot of our conversations, too many in fact, focus on white-collar knowledge workers. And for low-income workers, the situation's going to be, I think, significantly different. So there's a saying that a lot of folks have been throwing around the last couple of days that AI won't take your job, but someone who knows AI will. That's just not going to be true for low-income workers. There's a whole category of folks who are going to lose their jobs. Research from the SF Fed and from Brookings shows that the most exposed jobs that are low-income jobs to AI are office, clerical, customer support in health and human services. Those jobs could be eliminated effectively by AI. One of our grantees, let me see if I can get her quote right, Molly Kinder from Brookings says, "Generative AI may do to high school-educated women what de-industrialization did to men." So these office clerical jobs, they're on-ramps to good jobs for folks with a high school degree but no college degree. So that on-ramp to the economy, to upward mobility, is going to go away. Some jobs are just going to get worse. So think about things like robo bosses telling you what to say, telling you what to do on your job. Think about surveillance technologies that tell you how fast to work or what you're doing wrong. Or think about AI making decisions about who gets hired and who gets fired. So the effects net on low-income workers weigh heavily on me because I think the risk there is quite negative. And what's going to happen to those folks who do get displaced? Some will go into retraining. We can talk more about—I really love the models that you're proposing, but our real scalable workforce development system is the California community colleges plus nonprofits, plus public sector resources like the workforce investment dollars that come through the state. That's where the bulk of folks are getting trained, and they're not getting trained well. We know that those programs have not typically done a great job of training people for jobs that are going to be available versus training jobs from the past. They've not done a good job of getting folks into jobs to get to stay in jobs. So that system has not worked well. It's brittle. There's some bright spots I can share later of folks who are doing some interesting work, but I don't put a lot of hope in the current workforce development system. That system's going to need, by some estimates, four times the funding that it currently has. So for me, a big component of this is how do we reform our fiscal system in order to raise the resources to do the training that's got to be done, and then how do we revamp our workforce system to meet the needs of the future and to really help folks with that kind of repeat training that's going to be needed in this economy.

Donald Howard 00:21:17

The other folks who don't get retraining are going to fall into the safety net. These are folks who are going to need unemployment or they're going to need food assistance. We know our safety net is insufficient. If the pandemic taught us anything, is that system is insufficient, it's brittle, and it's open to fraud and abuse in big ways. So again, a resource problem. Folks are going to need resources to persist maybe between jobs or maybe through extended unemployment. Some of those folks are going to end up in even worse jobs. They're going to be the ones bringing food to our doorsteps when we're frankly not willing to go out of our house and go to the restaurant. And those jobs pay poorly. They have no benefits. They're just on all dimensions bad jobs. So I have a lot of concerns. What we're doing at Irvine is we're funding advocacy groups. One of the ones you could know about is TechEquity, who are putting together policy proposals to protect workers from AI, to make sure there was a No Robo Bosses Act that passed in California. It was vetoed by the governor unfortunately. A transparency act did go through requiring AI companies to make transparent the safety features or safety incidents. We're funding workforce development boards. There's a cluster who want to innovate, who want to do this differently. There's a great workforce development board in San Mateo that is using both AI to deliver training and then training on AI skills, and then lifting up their model, the reforms they're doing, so that the state can replicate that in other places. We're also funding worker centers. So part of, I said power was an important word in our North Star. We believe workers need to be organized to have power to advance their interests in the economy, that the playing field isn't level, and that worker organizing needs to expand. I think if you look at the history of worker organizing, as unionization has declined, income inequality has grown. I think those things have been shown to be inversely related. So we're funding worker centers, nonprofit models, bringing workers together, groups like restaurant workers, domestic care workers, day laborers, warehouse workers. They're doing interesting things with AI, both empowering their members to know about AI, also to organize them in AI campaigns, but also doing things like developing tools that help them organize and educate and empower members that are AI-powered tools, which is kind of an AI for good component to that. So, last thing I'll say is we're funding apprenticeship intermediaries. Apprenticeships are growing from the skilled trades into a lot of other professions. Some folks are hypothesizing that a version of apprenticeships will be the way we kind of address the funnel narrowing with fewer entry level positions being available, but with the need to still create senior folks, that an apprenticeship model could be one of the solutions for revamping our workforce system. So on the job, earn and learn, employer-ready skills, a job at the back end, that those could be ways that the workforce system could be revamped. Your question was what can technology do—

Gadi Schwartz 00:24:24

You just launched like 10 other questions in my head. So let me just stop you right there real fast because now *[Crosstalk]* I'm feeling like the apocalypse is upon us.

Donald Howard 00:24:33

Yeah. I'm definitely the skunk at most garden parties.

Gadi Schwartz 00:24:35

Well, with all due respect, and I think this is kind of what you're hitting at here—what you're describing is so noble and yet such a hodgepodge of different organizations—some governmental, some philanthropic, others maybe it aligns with their bottom line, or maybe it doesn't, but coming from the private sector. That's a hodgepodge, a big mess of, okay, here's how we're going to help. Here's the system. And it's not necessarily competing, but on the other track is the most efficient thing humans have ever come up with, right? That moves at lightning speed, that is making jobs obsolete every second of the day. And so you have this thing that's moving so quickly, and you have this other thing that we all know very well that, again, is a noble pursuit and is moving very, very slowly. It's like here in LA. It's a G-Wagon zooming by in the fast lane, and then we're all just stuck in traffic eventually hoping to get to where we're going. But that description, it makes me wonder if there is any way to expedite the abundance or the retraining or whatever comes next to a speed that is even, I don't know, a quarter of what we're seeing in AI. Dalila, that's an impossible question for you, but I do think—

Donald Howard 00:26:04

But he's going to give it to you.

Gadi Schwartz 00:26:06

One of the—

Dalila Wilson-Scott 00:26:06

Lucky me.

Gadi Schwartz 00:26:07

One of the things that I find so interesting about your work, Comcast, shout out. We are doing amazing things, and thank you so much. It makes me so proud to be a part of the Comcast organization when it comes to empowering communities, connecting people. But prior to Comcast, this fear of being obsolete, that we're like, “Oh, yeah, that's a new word for what I feel right now.” People have been feeling that for some time in different places, and I know that you've done some incredible work before Comcast in Detroit, a place that saw all kinds of disruption and then a collapse of the economy. And now we're starting to see, with maybe no AI directly involved here, but communities coming back together, and I'm wondering if in that rubble, there are roadmaps that you see potentially.

Dalila Wilson-Scott 00:26:54

Absolutely, and I want to come back to place, and I know Harris Poll focused on this as well, which I think is important. But I also just want to—we've been talking about the future of work for some time now, and the pace of technology and innovation has always been faster than the pace of the adaptability of education and training systems, and we've accepted that. But if you look at the past, we've had periods of stability following that disruption. So whether it was the industrial era, or the knowledge economy, automation, you name it, it starts with a lot of fear and anger, some displacement, and then people increase their level of comfort and trust and understanding of how that technology benefits them, how they actively engage in a way that they can really hold tangible. And then, there's some space and time before the next innovation. Well, those cycles of stability are getting shorter and shorter every day. So there is no credential, there's no three-hour course that's going to change anybody's life outcome, and I think we have to recognize that. So this is about how do we, as people, become more adaptable, and how do training systems become more adaptable? We heard it from everybody on the panel, whether you're in the C-suite, a middle manager, and it's true, most people are middle managers, but nobody calls themselves a middle manager. Nobody introduces themselves up as a middle manager—just so we're clear.

[Speaker unclear] 00:28:21

Assistant to the regional manager. Yeah.

Dalila Wilson-Scott 00:28:24

Frontline worker or completely disconnected from traditional education and workforce systems, we need to rethink that reskilling across the board. We've talked about continuous learning. We've never had to actually face it and accept it and acknowledge it. So there is no one actor, one company, one platform, one sector that will get to the solution. I want to be clear about that. Obviously, in the space I play in, I'm excited about what's possible in the philanthropic sector in particular. Right? We talk about the ideas that we're learning faster, or we were talking about this before. We need to accelerate learning, but it's also how we learn. In this technology era, we've accepted that, yes, we have to fail fast and keep trying and learn from failure. But I think what place gives you, which is a little bit different, is if you're learning from failure, but you don't care about the individual people and communities that are impacted, that's not necessarily a way that we all will succeed. So when you're investing in a place, when you're investing in your backyard, when you're making decisions about your child, you think differently about the types of informed risks you will take to advance. And I think that's what we have to think about when it comes down to economic mobility. We certainly want people to benefit from the opportunities, but we also want them to see the opportunities. But I don't think it's enough for us to say, "Oh, we should take the lower income populations, and they should just be able to survive this era." We need them to be able to win in this era because that's not a moral imperative. That's an economic imperative that affects all of us. The trust gap is far larger than the skills gap. Let's be clear. And so even some of the things that people might view as safety net exercises, basic digital literacy skills, that's about increasing trust, and then that person should get the same type of training and exposure to opportunity as someone in the C-suite. It's almost like, if I can just liken it—we're Wednesday at Milken, so we're all tired, just so we're clear. But how many of it is your first Milken? Yes, you have several first-timers. Milken is a marathon. You come in here and you're not prepared, the way you navigate Milken is all about what you know before you get here. So you

have to be able to look at this landscape and say, “What are the opportunities? How can I benefit?” If you're not connected to people in this room before you get here, if you weren't exposed to any skills or training before you get here, if you have no ability to navigate the space, it'll be three days later, and you're not necessarily further along. That's the type of training we need to think about. How does somebody who's never been to Milken, not connected to anybody in this room, benefit from the opportunities here? This is like a microcosm of what we're talking about. We need to make these opportunities plain and clear for everybody, and accessible. Not just get through day three and see what happens, but how are you maximizing the opportunity? We have to do that with AI.

Gadi Schwartz 00:31:20

I'm so glad you brought that up because in this room—was anybody in here for the Bumble love talk? Okay, there are some people. I came in. It was a fascinating conversation. I didn't expect to come in and learn quite so much about the human brain and falling in love and all the things that happen physically to ourselves when we fall in love. And one of the things that they were talking about was how Bumble is working on all this user data, and how you may not know what you want. You may not know what you want in a partner. You think you know, but what you actually need is different from what you want. And when we're thinking about the future of work, when we're thinking about what we're good at, what we think our careers should be, it's this, and it may be that. And it's so funny that you bring up trust because it's such an important component in all this.

Dalila Wilson-Scott 00:32:14

But let's remember, though, we think about what do we all want at the end of the day? Regardless of whatever we hear, whatever we think is success. Most people don't have a fundamental fear of AI. They have a fear of losing my livelihood, the only one I know. Not being able to tell my kids or my family what choices they should make. Not being able to get to next week. These are things that all of us care about. We all want a better life at the end of the day. And I think, again, a lot of noise around that, but we want the best chance for us to succeed, and we want the people we care about to be exposed and to be able to benefit from that.

Gadi Schwartz 00:32:54

And in this day and age, oddly enough, one of the things that some people turn to when they're feeling stressed about this is ChatGPT, or Claude, or Gemini, and they're like, “Oh, I'm feeling so stressed.” And then you have a weird conversation that happens after that. And so it's like, “I don't trust the corporate overlords. I don't trust AI, but also help me navigate all this.” The trust factor here is really interesting because trust used to be human to human, right? Do you think AI has a role in helping lead us to some sort of solution here, or?

John Gerzema 00:33:30

Well, it's already existing, Gadi, with young people. Gen Z in our data, 62 percent of them have used ChatGPT.

Gadi Schwartz 00:33:38

And they were the most freaked out.

John Gerzema 00:33:39

Yeah, well, they're the most freaked out, and they're also going to be your AI natives. So I don't know what we're doing here with leaders to be not having and investing in young people. In our data, a few things, but Gen Z right now, 57 percent say—of graduates over the last 18 months—are either unemployed or underemployed. But they're also the ones that are AI native. We saw in our data, 65 percent have used them for, to your point about difficult conversations. So they're looking to agents to help them express their emotions. And they're also worried about dependence on that. But I think when you really step back and you think about leadership and trust, what we have to do here is really acknowledge the elephant in the room, which is that workers are scared. This has been five years of a stacked crisis in America since COVID. In our Harris Poll data, anxiety around losing your job, economic anxiety, inflation, it's basically an anxiety flambé. Things just get stacked and stacked and stacked, and that's how people feel. So when AI comes in, people are like, "Okay, AI." It's like when we go to the beach and keep getting hit by a wave. That's just how ordinary people feel. So my job is to represent ordinary people. So what we have to do, this whole theme of this conference is Leading in a New Era, is where is that conversation? 61 percent of American employees say that leaders will not talk to them, have not talked to them in the last 12 months about AI. So, they're not dumb. So there, in that vacuum of no communication, is this sense of despondency. They also feel like they lack mobility. In our data, they felt like there was more equal leverage about five years ago. It was about 51/49, something like that, about my employer needs me more than I need my employer. Now it's 80/20 roughly. So this is a time when we got to actually turn this around. We can't think just commercial. We have to think cultural. How are we going to think about the values of our company, our next generation of workforce? And truly, there's going to be incredible things that are going to come out of AI, but we're not having that conversation to say how are we going to empower individual people to have a brilliant career with it? How are we going to redeploy roles?

Gadi Schwartz 00:35:46

It's difficult because we have different power spheres for leadership. We've got corporate leadership, and then we've got thought leaders and then we have the government.

John Gerzema 00:35:55

But we're talking cost cutting right now. What we're not talking about is what you guys are talking about, which is about culture and about employees. I think HR, that's the new form of innovation. That's the most important job in the company for the next three years.

Gadi Schwartz 00:36:08

One that is infinitely scalable. Tallis, I want to ask your take on leadership. What is leadership? What does leadership look like in this day and age? The way that I see it, it's kind of like rip the Band-Aid off, figure this out on your own, and yes, there's all these AI tools or, hey, we know that this is a time of disruption. We're going to help you all along the way.

Tallis Gomes 00:36:35

Well, at the end of the day, leadership always was about to get the right people to the right place and polish these people so they can achieve their best self. Right? At the end of the day, that was always about this. But I feel like—and I saw in your data, John—those guys are not talking about AI because they didn't understand AI. That's the reality. How are you going to talk to your employee about something that you don't even know, right? So the problem is, Aristotle used to say that the courage is the base of all the other virtues, right? It's the one that allow you to have the other virtues. I think we are missing courage, most of the leaders. And I see that in most of our clients. I would say that we don't want to jump in the pool that we don't know how to swim, because I'm having this afraid of get drowned in this pool. But guess what? If I want to learn how to swim, I got to jump in the pool and try to learn how to swim. Of course, I need support. At the end of the day, I think leaders should spend a couple nights without sleep, vibe coding, understand the solution, talking to young people, investing in companies, like a seed money investor. So this is the way I learned AI. I'm lucky because I have a co-founder who is AI native. This guy's developing one of the most relevant platforms in Latin America to get [inaudible] G4. So I learned it from him. But I needed to do the first step and jump in this pool and say, "Hey, man, I don't know. I have no idea what vibe code is. How do I do it?" And he say, "Dude, just install this thing here in your terminal, and go for it." And the first thing that I did, I vibe coded a game so I could learn something how to do it. And afterwards, the one thing that I did, I asked my COO, "What was the most relevant problem that we were facing in G4?" And he told me, "Well, this is the problem here." Okay, I'm going to solve this vibe coding myself. And I say to João, I say, "João, I'm going to solve this myself. Have my back. Don't let me do anything wrong, but I'm going to have to connect to the CRM, to the ERP, to everything that we have in the company. Help me out here, but don't tell me what to do. Let me do it." And I went to the front of my office, 460 people that I have over there, and say, "Hey, guys, this is the most relevant problem that we have in the company. I'm going to solve that myself. Give me 15 days." And then I spent a couple nights—my wife was not very happy with me about it. So unslept nights, like vibe coding the thing, talking to the guys in the sector there. I was solving the problem. Then I solved the problem, and I extracted the data out of this and showed to the guys in the area how to use the solution that I vibe coded myself, and then I presented this to the whole company.

Tallis Gomes 00:39:48

I'm the CEO of the company. So if I found time to do this, I can obviously asking to other people to do the same, and that was exactly what I asked people. I say, "Hey, guys, I truly believe that everyone here can find 20 percent of your agenda and try to write code a solution to save that time. Because if we save 20 percent of your agenda, one day out of five of work, you're going to have more time to do more things." And this is how we strike productivity out of this. And this is how we multiplied the company by 11.5 in three years, by raising only 10 percent of the workforce. So leadership, first of all, is having the courage to do what you're asking your people to do in front.

[crosstalk]

Donald Howard 00:40:35

Yeah. Let me jump in on the leadership front. I agree with all of that, and I want to tie in the corporate role. Workers don't trust employers, and as your data show, workers are afraid they're going to be AI'd out of their jobs, and AI is going to be done to them. I think some leaders could come along who try to do AI with workers and engage workers in the deployment of AI, which I think the studies show leads to greater ROI when you do it. It builds trust. We—and we are not low-income workers, as I remind my staff frequently—we've let folks know they will not be let go because of AI being deployed in their job. We've just made that commitment. Now, we're in a unique position financially to do that. But I think that kind of partnership between a leader and a worker, and their workers saying, "Let's do this together, better for the company, better for the outcome," and builds trust in this context of there being a lot of change. So I think a place that the tech companies could play a role in this is creating those kind of constructs where collaboration can happen between workers, leaders, to deploy. I've wondered, for instance, we've talked to Anthropic a few times. What's a role that can be played in terms of creating these examples or pilots of where collaborations have happened? How can you document the benefits of doing that on all of these dimensions, trust, ROI, et cetera, and then bring that to the world and say, "Hey, other leaders, this is the way to go about doing it. We're not going to do AI to you, we're going to do AI with you."

Gadi Schwartz 00:42:10

And when it comes to the sectors that will be disrupted, there are many sectors where it'll take fewer humans to do the job. There are many other places where we are underfunded, understaffed, chronically so. At least I promise to come back to education. Education is the first one I think of. Every time I go into my daughter's classroom, I'm like, we always talk about ratios, 20 to one or 25 to one. It should be 3 to 1, right? You cannot put enough teachers in a classroom. How do you see the creation or the supplementation of other jobs happening at the same time as some of this disruption?

Lisa Gevelber 00:42:53

Yeah. I think education actually is a good example, because obviously at first, teachers were super resistant to AI. AI's very useful for cheating, and no teacher wants their kids cheating. None of us as parents want our kids cheating either. So understandably, teachers initially were like, "Wait, this is bad. It's all bad." But over time, I think what people are coming to realize is that there's actually some good. And we need to protect against the bad, but we also need to realize that at its best, AI is an incredible personal

tutor. And at its best, AI is an incredible teaching assistant. So I think even just taking the teacher's perspective for a moment, I said over half of our teachers' time is spent not with students and not focused on actually the classroom. It's administrative stuff. It's things like writing the class newsletter or summarizing the week's lesson for the kid who was out sick, and all of those things are important. And guess what? AI is a terrific helper in getting those things done in much less time. But let's take the side of actually helping improve learning outcomes and the ways kids can learn. Well, guess what? Teachers only have so much bandwidth. I think you said 30 to 1. Let's say I have a class of 30 different kids. Those kids learn in different ways. They have different interests. They have different abilities maybe when they start the year as well. Well, guess what? AI is terrific at helping you adapt your lesson plans. Creative things we see teachers doing, like, "Take this science lesson and help me teach it using sports analogies." Or, "Hey, take this lesson plan that I've been using for years and customize it for actually the three different ability levels that I currently have in my classroom so it's approachable to everyone." Or, "Help me design new, fun, engaging exercises in these five different ways." Those things would've taken teachers extraordinary amounts of time. Now they can do them much more quickly. And I think those lead to more engaging experiences for students. They lead to more time back for teachers so that teacher can spend more time directly with students. So I do think it's a journey in education, and it's going to take a bit of time for everyone to adapt. But when we can all put it to work, when students use it responsibly, and when teachers use it for both administrative help and for better learning outcomes, I actually think there'll be tons of benefit.

Gadi Schwartz 00:45:35

And yet so often we take so much of that for granted, the access to education, the access to the internet. It's the best of times and the worst of times in so many places across the world, and including here in the United States. Dalila, I know that you've spent a little bit of time working on that problem as well. None of this matters if you can't connect people to the solution, right?

Dalila Wilson-Scott 00:45:59

And it's also, though, giving them spaces to explore that solution. I think all the past few answers in particular have talked about fear breeds paralysis. Uncertainty breeds paralysis. The only thing that changes that is giving people a pathway to action. So, Tallis talked about—he can be a better CEO if he's using it himself because now he's asking his workers to do something he himself has taken time to do. And I do think when you're working with partners, just thinking about the nonprofit sector, CodePath is one of our partners. We're working with Milken to get deeper into their work. They work to produce AI native engineers, which is completely different than it was just five, 10 years ago, where when people started talking about AI at scale, it was like, "Oh, then I know I need to get a computer science degree." We already know there's drops in entry-level computer science because that initial type of coding is not necessarily in as high demand when you see the benefits of AI. So I think it's just something we have to think about, that creating ways for people to use AI consistently, it makes a big difference. What I love about CodePath is CodePath uses AI—Michael Ellison is here as their leader—to run the organization, so it makes his instructors more effective. It helps him analyze his partnerships with—whether it's a college provider or someone else. And so he's a trusted partner that we can say, "This is somebody who's using AI

in everything he does,” not something he learned three years ago and then has now created a curriculum that he's sharing with others. So I think we just have to figure out how to make that loop work faster, which I think is important for people that are accessing some of these training pieces. But that basic issue of, “Am I even connected to technology?” We still have many pockets—not just rural pockets—in this country where people don't have easy access to technology. Everybody in this room is not who we're talking about. But it's more people that don't have access to that basic foundational skill set. Almost every single job, whatever it looks like, requires a technological skill, a digital skill today. Over 92 percent of a few years ago, and I'm sure it's going to be pretty quick to get to 100 percent. And we need to think about that. And building that trust level.

Gadi Schwartz 00:48:24

So often we forget. We totally forget that people have to pay their telephone bills. People have to pay their cable bills. That is tough to do for so many in today's modern society, and that is overlooked so often.

Dalila Wilson-Scott 00:48:40

And even if AI might enable me to do that faster, if I can't afford it, it's not really helpful. So it's just not about connection to the internet or to technology, it's that entire system that we all live in. Right? So how are my financial decisions made? Who are the people around me? While employers might not be sharing a lot of detail about AI, I bet you all employers are saying AI is a priority. The question is, do I feel like I have access to know how I'm supposed to benefit and leverage that priority for my future? And that's bigger than just any one company.

Gadi Schwartz 00:49:15

And we're going to have a little bit of time for questions, so I think there's a QR code. You guys can send them straight through. But Donald, let's just get real Pollyanna about all of this. Let's say that all of a sudden we can figure out the abundance side of things, and we can funnel that money where it needs to go. What are the most fertile grounds that you see, the first places that we should be investing that money?

Donald Howard 00:49:40

Well, if the premise of the question is that there's such wealth creation that we can afford to do things we couldn't afford to do before—

Gadi Schwartz 00:49:46

Everybody that has got a heart of gold is a billionaire, and they're putting the money in the right places.

Donald Howard 00:49:51

Well, and the resources—we've all read about the potential for economic inequality to just be dramatically increased as a result of AI, the gains going to the capital providers, not the labor providers, et cetera. Let's just say there's a way to—people talk about a sovereign wealth fund, this kind of notion that we're going to—I think investments in education, clearly, and some creation of a lifelong education system. I think we have to—sorry, I don't know if this is live streamed, right? Some of our grantees might be watching. I hate to say this, but we kind of need to blow up our workforce development system and start over again. And I think that takes an incredible amount of resources to do, to rethink how educational institutions, nonprofits, career and technical assistance providers come together with employers over time and anchor that in the economic development pathways that communities want to take to increase the value of the jobs that are there. So I think this place-based piece is not to be lost. I think economies are local, and I think a place where businesses can be involved as well is coming together with local leaders to plan for their future economy, tie that to a workforce system that trains folks at the right time for the right jobs, and continues to train them as the jobs evolve. Those are the kind of investments—I do think we're also going to need a safety net. I don't want to blow by the idea that some coal miners didn't make it. Some steelworkers didn't make it. Some autoworkers didn't make it. Because we don't have a sufficient safety net, they became aggrieved. And I could chart that with some of the divisive politics we have today. So I think the—I'm not Pollyannish today at all, am I? Sorry. But a downside risk is that we increase the polarization because of the downside to folks who can't find their way into the next job. So if I had all the money in the world, I'd create the pathways into the next jobs, higher value jobs, and the jobs after that.

Tallis Gomes 00:51:48

Can I just add, quick add on that? Just to give you guys context, 15 years ago, I literally lived in a favela. I came from a very humble beginning. So 15 years ago, I created this company called Easy Taxi, which was Uber for South America, that I expanded through 35 countries. It was worth \$500 million. Then I sold the company, and I completely changed my life and my family's life. Why am I saying that? It's because in this era that we live in, the era of AI, the cost of starting a business was decreased by an order of magnitude. So 15 years ago, the only resource that I had was internet. And I had to learn how to code, and I had to learn how to do marketing, and I had to learn how to do sales, how to create products, all of this, but I had the internet and a very powerful will to change my reality. Nowadays, I could do the same thing that I did that cost me like a year trying, I could do in a night without having to spend a penny, just, of course, a subscription to ChatGPT or Claude or Gemini. This is very important to the era that we live in because what really transformed the society, it's not the countries, the state. It's the entrepreneurs and people like we are here that want change realities, that want to do something, that want to create projects, right? And what AI is doing is that allowing us a way easier way to start something. So I do believe that we're going to have job displacement. I'm sorry. I do believe that we're going to have a huge and massive job displacement. But I also believe that we're going to live in the year that people are going to be able to create prosperity for themselves, for their family, for the region that they are without need to go to, I don't know, maybe an investment fund and say, "Hey, I need \$10 million so I can create my MVP and try to do

my beta test and put my product in the market,” and all of this stuff. I believe that we're going to be able to do this with just the will to change things. And once these people are going to lose their jobs, they're also going to create another companies out of this. And just to give a quick reflection here, this thing that we have, corporate jobs, is very young. It's only 200 years old. Before the industrialization, we used to have the barber's chair, the bakery man, the journal man. We used to be more entrepreneurial. When I look at the data, in the US, you have one entrepreneur for each 10 inhabitants. In Brazil, it's two and a half to each 10. So as we live in a country that we have a lot of poverty, we force ourselves to be an entrepreneur to change our reality. In countries that they don't need to force themselves, they tend to not be that entrepreneurial. Of course, those who are entrepreneurs, they usually do better business than the other countries because they have more resources. But which resource is that? And that's my whole point here. Access to funding. So if you want to change the reality, if you want change poverty, give people access to funding and education. And by education as well—Aristotle mentored Alexander the Great. The guy, by his twenties, he conquered the whole world, right? And we can do the same with AI nowadays. And we actually have a school here in the US doing this. The name is Alpha School. They are tutoring kids by using AI. Imagining the favelas, if you could expand the Alpha School all over the world. So I think this is where we should put our money right now.

Gadi Schwartz 00:55:56

It's so funny. That dovetails perfectly. I promise to circle back to small businesses and hearing that one to 10, two to 10 ratio in Brazil, how do we increase that here in the United States and inspire courage in this very complicated time? And we're running short on time, so sorry to put you on the spot there, Lisa, but—

Lisa Gevelber 00:56:16

Yeah. I love the example of what an entrepreneur can do now. You were talking about mostly tech entrepreneurs, but we actually see this happening already in all kinds of small businesses. One of my favorite examples is seeing how it's revolutionizing construction businesses, like small construction businesses. What we all don't realize, probably, if we're not in that business, is that it's incredibly hard to spec a job well, for example. But guess what? AI is super useful at helping you spec a job, and based on that spec, order the right amount of inventory materials so there's not a lot of waste. It helps you then also better schedule your employees, and it's essentially making a lot of jobs that would've previously been unprofitable into profitable jobs. Well, guess what happens when you have profitable jobs? You can do more jobs, and you can hire more people. And so we've been spending a lot of time with small business owners, really understanding how people are deploying AI and the difference it's making. And like I said, construction businesses aren't historically one that we all think of as tech-based businesses, but if it can really change the absolute outcome of whether your work is profitable or not profitable, it can actually affect your ability to grow your business and hire more people. And this is exactly what we're seeing in data from the US Chamber of Commerce that shows that those businesses who are really deploying AI into their business, 80 percent of them are seeing growth in revenue and profits. Right? So obviously, not everyone is doing this yet, but I think the potential is outstanding, and we see it with even small consumer products businesses, people that make stuff in their own homes or have very small manufacturing. They're coming up with new products using AI. They're naming those products using AI. They're designing the

packaging using AI. They're designing the website and the materials about those products using AI. They're targeting their customers differently using AI. Every bit from start of creation of the product to bringing that product to market, for those businesses becoming more effective because they're using AI to help them run their business. And I just am so optimistic about what that looks like when more and more businesses really start putting it to work.

Gadi Schwartz 00:58:32

And I'm hoping that somebody in the audience has a seed that will grow into a business, into an idea after this. This has been an illuminating conversation, and one that I hope inspires some courage in these uncertain times. But thank you guys so very much. The panel has been amazing. Thank you guys so much.

[Crosstalk]

Announcer 00:58:50

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