

Guide AI: A Tool to Increase Competency while Using AI in the Workplace Mauria

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ABSTRACT

As artificial intelligence (AI) technologies become increasingly prevalent, their integration into workplace environments is rapidly increasing. The purpose of this autoethnography is to explore ways employers can enhance the competency of employees in the workplace while utilizing generative AI to support them. While generative AI promises enhanced productivity and automation of repetitive tasks, concerns exist regarding job displacement, employee resistance to AI, and the ethical implications of AI decision-making processes.

The solution will be a user-centered AI Assistant, better integrating Generative AI into training and productivity, thereby enhancing organizational-employee dynamics and satisfaction. This study aims to provide a potential prototype that aids companies in retaining talent by utilizing an AI assistant to help them navigate the hurdles they face while others are out of the office.

Problem Statement

As artificial intelligence (AI) technologies become increasingly prevalent, their integration into workplace environments is rapidly increasing. While AI promises enhanced productivity and automation of repetitive tasks, concerns exist regarding job displacement, employee resistance to AI, and the ethical implications of AI decision-making processes.

Framework

The approach combines user-centered design and constructivist learning theory. Placing the users first while building from the foundations of personal experiences to construct new ways of navigating the use of generative AI in the workplace (McLeod, 2025; Medium, 2024)

Background

As AI technology, particularly Generative AI, has rapidly emerged, we have seen an increase in companies implementing these tools for employee use. However, many organizations remain hesitant due to a lack of understanding of data governance and privacy expectations when these products are deployed (Vanderford, 2024).

Additionally, employees across various industries are concerned about the impact of AI on their future career mobility and employment prospects. Many are nervous and concerned that the growing functionality of AI will lead to workforce reductions (Lin & Parker, 2025). This concern was addressed, in part, during contract negotiations for writers and actors during their strikes in 2023 and 2024 (Scherer, 2024). AI's ability to reduce personnel costs in production, such as through AI-driven scriptwriting, has fueled concerns across multiple industries (Coyle, 2023).

So, what does job security look like for employees seeking to enhance efficiency and effectiveness without being replaced by the technology they are utilizing? How can companies reassure their workforce that AI is to augment, not replace, human roles?

Review of Literature

Employee Fears

Companies increasingly invest in AI to streamline operations, optimize efficiency, and reduce costs (McKinsey & Company, 2024). However, while businesses emphasize the benefits of AI, employees are expressing growing concerns about job security, workplace autonomy, and ethical governance (Hamirani, 2024; Lin & Parker, 2025a).

The advent of generative AI in the workplace has sparked a range of employee concerns, from job displacement to ethical dilemmas. A sizable portion of the workforce expresses concerns about the impact of AI on their roles and career trajectories.

A Pew Research Center (2025a) survey indicates that 52% of workers are worried about the future use of AI in the workplace, with 32% believing it will lead to fewer job opportunities in the long run. Conversely, only 6% of employees view AI as a tool for job creation.

These anxieties are not unwarranted. A growing body of literature emphasizes that automation and AI-driven decision-making alter traditional job structures, often reducing the human component in task execution (2024; McKinsey, 2023). Additionally, a study by Ernst & Young (2024) reveals that 65% of employees are anxious about AI replacing their jobs, and 72% fear it will negatively impact their salaries or promotions. While AI can increase efficiency, it often leads to restructuring human roles, especially in administrative, data entry, and routine analytical tasks (Tambe et al., 2019). Workers in such roles are often among the first to be impacted, facing either redundancy or significant transformation of their job functions.

The lack of adequate training opportunities compounds this fear. According to the Pew Research Center (2025b), only a minority, roughly 37%, of workers exposed to AI in their jobs have received any formal training related to AI. A significant gap exists in AI training, with only 39% of employees globally who use AI at work having received formal training—further fueling uncertainty, not just about their work, but also about what may replace them.

As AI systems automate increasingly complex tasks, workers feel unprepared to adapt, raising the risk of skill obsolescence. Tambe et al. (2019) further argue that while AI integration promises efficiency gains, it creates a widened gap between digital skill requirements and current workforce capabilities. Moreover, employees desire more ethical guidance, with 80% favoring AI responsibility training and 77% supporting the creation of an AI ethical task force. (Ernst & Young, 2023) However, many organizations have yet to institutionalize structured retraining programs despite a broad acknowledgment of their importance.

Adding to concerns over displacement, many fear the broader societal and ethical implications of AI. Ethical apprehensions are especially acute in settings where AI is deployed with little transparency or input from employees, further eroding trust in organizational leadership. Employees remain skeptical about AI replacing human decisionmaking. Vanderford's study on the ethical use of AI (2024) found that workers are most resistant to AI-driven decision-making in fields that require creativity, emotional intelligence, and complex problem-solving—reinforcing the belief that AI should function as an augmentation tool rather than a replacement.

Many employees also worry about data governance and privacy concerns. Pew Research (2025) highlights that businesses rushing to adopt AI often fail to establish clear ethical policies, creating tension around data usage, transparency in decision-making, and accountability. AI training programs that emphasize ethical guidelines could help mitigate these concerns.

Organizational Shifts

Organizations are undergoing transformative changes to integrate generative AI, aiming to enhance productivity and maintain competitiveness, streamline tasks, improve decision-making, and boost overall efficiency (McKinsey Global Institute, 2023). However, these shifts need strategic planning and adaptation. According to McKinsey (2023), generative AI is expected to add trillions of dollars in economic value globally, with the most significant impact seen in marketing, customer service, and software engineering.

These changes often result in the reallocation of human labor toward higher-order, strategic functions. However, this assumes the workforce has the necessary skills and training to adapt, which is often not the case. Successful integration requires technical readiness and governance structures that address transparency, accountability, and fairness (Sidhu et al., 2024).

Forward-thinking organizations recognize the importance of investing in human capital to ensure the successful integration of AI. Companies that fail to implement responsible AI practices risk employee disengagement and damage to their reputation. A key organizational shift involves increased reliance on AI for high-volume, repetitive tasks, enabling humans to focus on strategic or creative functions (Tambe et al., 2023).

Despite this potential, few organizations are adequately investing in employee re-skilling. Furthermore, there is growing recognition of the need to build a culture of psychological safety and digital confidence. Employees are more likely to embrace AI tools when included in the transition process and given the autonomy to explore these tools in meaningful ways.

Methodology

“... subjectivity came to be acknowledged rather than minimized” (Drew, 2023).

Research often requires objectivity rather than subjectivity. To justify pursuing a solution, large sample sizes, quantitative data to support both the problem and the proposed solution, and a touch of qualitative data to maintain a human-centric approach is typically required.

However, collective instances and qualitative observations provide depth to the problem and offer insight into how users will genuinely interact with the solution. My experiences and observations at Mastercard (MC) have provided me with clarity—not just on the state of Generative AI, but more importantly, on how it can be utilized most effectively.

During my time at MC, I arrived at a few key conclusions. First, while there is an abundance of training paths available in the learning center, a noticeable gap exists in targeted knowledge of Generative AI, particularly in how it can be leveraged for routine tasks. Second, there is a lack of standardized operating procedures for handling out-of-office situations, whether planned or unexpected, especially for specialized teams.

My former team was one of those specialized teams. I was brought on as a designer—focusing on both graphic and UX/UI design. While some aspects of our roles overlapped, there was no one else on the team who performed the same tasks as I did. Additionally, as is common in large corporate environments, I had to learn new programs to carry out my responsibilities effectively. Unfortunately, access to training materials was often hindered by outdated naming conventions and folders that were buried deep within the server. Training modules in the learning center were categorized by job roles rather than by content, making searches frustratingly inefficient.

So, what was supposed to happen when I went on maternity leave? There could not be a stall for four months. I created training documents and instructional videos—only for them to end up buried under revised naming conventions and forgotten folders.

However, this experience has been the driving force behind a potential solution that could alleviate employees' concerns about Generative AI replacing their jobs. Rather than viewing AI as a threat, we should utilize it as a tool for skill development. Generative AI can enhance workforce development by streamlining access to training materials related to unfamiliar tasks—ultimately improving the learning experience by reducing search inefficiencies.

Research Review

A previous research survey I conducted in IDS 407 Information and Content Strategy, provides base insight of the feelings regarding AI and how they are being integrated into their work life. The survey contained 19 questions was sent out. There were 6 demographic questions, 3 base knowledge of Generative AI question, 9 quantitative

question and 1 qualitative question. 21 participants responded.

The objectives assessed were to evaluate the impact of AI on workplace productivity and to understand employee attitudes towards AI. This provides a baseline for the level of ideation to develop a product that would help shift employee perspectives on the use of AI.

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The majority of participants graduated with postgraduate degrees at the master's level or higher and worked in the private sector. A few worked in public/ civil service, but their responses did not indicate how they use AI. Surprisingly, the majority of them are very open to AI. Regarding objectives, over 52.9% of respondents stated that they are satisfied with the AI tools they use to help in their jobs (Figure 1). Additionally, over 45% of participants reported that using AI enhances their job satisfaction (Figure 2). They do not feel that the use of AI in their roles will have any negative impacts on their jobs (Tomlin, 2025).

Respondents made it noticeably clear that "the use case and the type of AI is important," which is true. If those who work in corporate spaces are mostly using generative AI to "write emails or summarize long email chains" they would not have any fear over the implementation of AI (Tomlin, 2025).

Many were open to working with AI in the future. Over half face restrictions in their work related to implementing AI, and they are hoping for changes. As one respondent shared, "My career will be impacted by AI and the technology we use to produce deliveries. Therefore, as a technical leader, I will have to know about AI and how it will be used to further advance the quality of what I produce."

Understanding how we can utilize AI without replacing human-centered thinking in all aspects is crucial for job security. This small sample of the public provides a glimpse into the public's openness to AI. According to the results, many users employ Generative AI tools to streamline their work, thereby increasing productivity. It has the potential to keep humans centered. It can also provide companies with a space that allows employees to lean into the use of AI without the stigma of fear.

Research Survey

To gather more information, a 15-question survey was sent out. There were 4 demographic questions, 1 base knowledge of Generative AI question, 7 quantitative questions, and 3 qualitative questions. 10 participants responded. 3 participants were interviewed in a structured 5 question interview. All participants have degrees in higher education. All participants are familiar with Generative AI and have utilized AI in some capacity.

When asked about situations where a team member is out of the office and incurs inconvenience, participants provide colorful agreements of 'yes.' Over 50% of participants reported that their biggest challenges are a lack of communication and restrictions on accessing work tasks and workload (Figure 3). For instance, over 60% of participants report experiencing significant gaps in information gathering and a bottleneck in knowledge and productivity (Figure 4). Also, there is a lack of historical knowledge on the projects and information that is now missing. Participants express that many of their coworkers are specialists, and their absence puts a pause on the progress of projects.

Although participants have used Generative AI, there are mixed feelings about implementing an AI assistant to help employees when a coworker is out of the office. On a scale of 1 to 10, 45% of participants believe that it would be mostly helpful to have an AI assistant (Figure 5); however, the capabilities of the AI assistant matter. The majority would prefer that the AI assistant retrieve information, such as documented FAQs and project statuses, from the system and have the ability to retrieve documents for general help without requiring the entry of specialized data (Figure 6). Overwhelmingly, they are all concerned with the nuances and reliability of AI. Based on qualitative answers, 30% of participants believe AI is not nuanced nor complex enough in its machine learning models to understand certain instances that they may face in their businesses.

Participants are cautious about what continuous implementation of Generative AI would mean for human contribution in the workforce. There is great concern about the capacity to understand information and gather knowledge. One participant practically expressed their disbelief in the long-term use of Generative AI, emphasizing that "...there aren't enough

business cases" to truly understand the impact on the social, political, emotional, and cognitive aspects of humanity. A similar hesitancy is evident throughout the survey responses. 45% are interested in using an AI assistant, but usage is task-dependent (Figure 7). Over 65% of participants believe that constant human monitoring is required to ensure they feel that this AI is safe and provides reliable information. With that oversight, over 80% of participants believe that if AI assistants could accurately automate routine tasks, they would be happy to use them (Figure 8).

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with three individuals. Individual One works in PR and is a vice president. Individual Two is a high-level project manager who works in the pharmaceutical industry. Individual Three is a deputy chief engineer and works in aerospace, specifically in defense.

The interviews were structured with five questions designed to gauge their feelings about the use of AI and the trajectory of their roles with the use of Generative AI. To mitigate potential bias and risk, it is worth noting that all individuals are from at least one minority group, and two identify with more than one minority status in the United States.

When asked about their feelings regarding generative AI, two of the individuals expressed limited knowledge regarding the use of generative AI that could not impact their work. From what they have seen, generative AI could put them in a state of instability in their jobs. The remaining individual emphasized the excitement over the use of generative AI and how it could lead to a better structure around routine tasks in the office, allowing more time for ideation and product development.

When asked to discuss any fears regarding AI in the workplace, all emphasize that AI is not human and have noticed a push by organizations to implement this new technology without providing adequate training or considering the impact on their employees. To emphasize this point, Participant One referenced the potential need for humans to initiate ideas and properly formulate public statements. They notice that people use AI to conduct statements, and they tend to lack human empathy, as well as expertise in grammar and subject matter. Participant Two emphasized that in pharmaceuticals, accuracy is crucial to certainty. The introduction of generative AI into documentation can lead to catastrophic problems. Individual Three emphasized that generative AI may help provide a baseline for formatting documentation. The final two questions focused on the use of Chatbots and AI Assistants to increase the productivity of the workday. All three participants emphasized that they would be happy to use an AI chatbot or assistant to help with their routine tasks. However, they emphasized that without accuracy and proper data governance in place, they fear that ethical implications are not clear, and they are unsure how they would feel about it. Participant Two made a point to elaborate that part of the failings of organizations is the lack of implementation due to inadequate training and education.

Solution

Organizations are increasingly restructuring their workflows, management strategies, and hiring processes to accommodate AI-driven efficiencies (Hamirani, 2024).

Research identifies three primary areas of AI integration in business environments (Ellingrud et al., 2023): automated customer interactions, predictive analytics and decision

support, and strategic AI-assisted decision-making. These shifts indicate that AI functions best as an augmentative tool, supporting professionals rather than replacing them.

Additionally, businesses are now exploring strategic AI workforce planning to ensure that AI enhances efficiency without causing large-scale layoffs. AI experts and policymakers emphasize three key areas for successful integration: transparent communication, re-skilling and up-skilling, and establishing ethical AI guidelines. This includes establishing governance policies that protect workers from discriminatory or unethical AI practices.

With the solution presented, the focus will be on the use of predictive analytics and decision support, strategic AI-driven decision-making, and up-skilling and re-skilling.

Guide AI

Presented as a data scheme (Figure 8), customer journey (Figure 9), and user flow (Figure 10), this research will inform the design of an AI assistant intended to help employees bridge gaps when a coworker is unavailable. It requires a thoughtful approach to usability, automation, and contextual understanding. It is named Guide AI.

The core functionality of the assistant would include knowledge retrieval, task assistance, decision support, and adaptive learning. By providing instant access to FAQs, project updates, historical data, and relevant documents, the assistant enables employees to continue working seamlessly despite a colleague's absence. The AI offers suggestions based on previous workflows, historical data, and best practices, enhancing informed decision-making. The assistant's adaptive learning feature continuously refines responses based on team feedback and evolving work patterns, improving its effectiveness over time.

(Sajja et al., 2024).

Integration and accessibility are essential for a seamless experience, enabling employees to interact with AI across multiple platforms, including email, Slack, Microsoft Teams, and internal databases. Context-aware processing ensures the assistant understands roles, permissions, and situational context to provide tailored support. Furthermore, human-AI collaboration is vital, as employees should be able to override AI-generated insights when necessary, allowing for more nuanced and situational decision-making (Gkinko & Elbanna, 2023).

The communication and interaction capabilities of the AI assistant play a critical role in usability. A conversational interface powered by natural language processing (NLP) ensures intuitive responses, making interactions feel natural and efficient. Proactive alerts notify employees about key updates when relevant personnel are unavailable, ensuring uninterrupted workflows. Multi-modal input support, including voice commands, text input, and document scanning, enhances accessibility and streamlines operations (Casheekar et al., 2024).

Trust, security, and compliance are fundamental considerations in AI-driven workplace solutions. Ethical AI governance ensures that the assistant's operations align with company policies, preventing misinformation and biased decision-making. Employee customization options enable users to tailor AI settings to their specific workflows, thereby enhancing usability and relevance (Binns, 2018).

The adaptive learning feature enables continuous improvement through feedback mechanisms, allowing employees to rate responses or provide corrections when inaccuracies occur. The AI would refine its knowledge base accordingly to enhance future interactions.

Contextual awareness supports personalization by learning user preferences while adapting to department-specific terminology and operational procedures (Stieglitz et al., 2018). Pattern recognition enables task optimization by identifying recurring workplace challenges, proactively offering solutions, and recognizing frequently asked questions before employees request assistance.

Dynamic decision support enables the tracking of historical responses, allowing employees to make context-aware decisions. If an individual prefers a specific problemsolving method, the AI adjusts its recommendations accordingly. Cross-team knowledge sharing facilitates the capture of institutional knowledge, bridging information gaps between teams and enabling the development of more intelligent automation workflows based on previous task-handling methods (Khan et al., 2024). **Use Case Example Case 1**

I would like to share an instance I encountered while working at Mastercard. During my tenure, I was part of a cross-functional team responsible for organizing executive events. Although I served as the graphic designer for my team, we collaborated with additional graphic designers from another team within our department to create assets for a global conference, as I was assigned other tasks.

One of the cross-functional assignments involved creating an electronic billboard (EBB) in Adobe After Effects. I had no prior experience with this program, but I was able to provide the necessary copy and direction. Our team worked well together. However, during the North American leg of the conference in Orlando, the team decided to use additional EBBs at the conference hall. These new EBBs required resizing, and the asset needed adjustments to fit properly. If I had been proficient in Adobe After Effects, I could have made these changes onsite

within a few hours (post-rendering). Instead, I had to send the work to a team member for completion by the next day, leaving little time to test the updated EBB.

A similar issue occurred during the global leg of the conference in Ireland. We needed a still version of the asset. Although this was a more straightforward fix, there was still a delay in completion.

There are multiple solutions to the situations outlined above. One approach would have been leveraging my skills in other Adobe creative products to assist. Additionally, if I had received access to all relevant files, delays could have been avoided. However, for the sake of this proposed solution, let's consider how Guide AI could have helped.

Had Guide AI been implemented, I could have entered a few prompts to receive proper instructions for making the copy changes or locating the necessary files. Figure 10 illustrates a customer journey with a similar situation. This would have allowed me to develop new skills in real-time while mitigating delays caused by the absence of a peripheral team member.

After the conference concluded, I took training courses to teach myself Adobe After Effects. The situation provided an opportunity to develop new skills, yet it was delayed. I believe that using an AI assistant would have enabled me to complete the task more efficiently. See Figure 11 for the EBB in question.

Case 2

Additionally, during my tenure, I was developing a website for the same global conference discussed earlier. While working on this project, I became pregnant and knew that I would soon need to take leave. To ensure continuity, I created training materials so that the work could proceed in my absence.

Many of my team members did not have the same experience with website development that I did. Mastercard had developed its internal web platform (DXP), powered by Adobe Experience Manager, to design and manage its websites. I had to learn how to use this tool independently, as the provided training resources were outdated and difficult to locate. In searching for guidance, I made numerous calls to those managing Mastercard's leading websites and reviewed documentation from previous years. Eventually, I taught myself the Mastercard DXP platform and created task-oriented training materials that my team could reference to update, modify, and maintain the project.

If I had access to a tool that could streamline my training process, the transition would have been much smoother for my team. Having the ability to locate the correct training materials would have prevented me from taking outdated courses and mistakenly following general Adobe Experience Manager guidelines instead of the customized approach used at MasterCard. Additionally, access to MasterCard's databases would have allowed me to efficiently search for the appropriate contacts to receive guidance on issues I encountered while working on the site.

An adequately designed AI assistant could have helped my team members access relevant training resources and complete necessary tasks in my absence without requiring me to manually create additional instructional materials.

Next Steps: Implementation and Development

The following steps involve presenting a plan for implementing and developing the chatbot. Its integration will require a desktop application with access to relevant files, as previously outlined regarding cross-functionality and data needs for an AI assistant.

While the use of this chatbot is not mandatory, it is strongly recommended for new hires and cross-functional training purposes. To ensure effective adoption and utilization, I suggest incorporating a structured communication plan that includes a designated training period. This plan would outline the necessary training sessions, feedback collection, and recommendations for optimization. See Figures 12 and 13 for the timeline of suggested implementation strategies.

Conclusion

The goal is not to replace the human element but to enhance it. Understanding and utilizing generative AI should not be about complacency or dependency; it should be about leveraging technological advancements to drive efficiency and innovation. Additionally, AI can provide employees with valuable opportunities to elevate their skill sets and develop beyond conventional training methods.

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Note: Generative AI. – Copilot and ChatGPT – was used in the writing of this paper.

Prompt: Please edit for grammar and clarity

Additionally, Grammarly was used for editing and formatting. Most suggestions were accepted.