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## AI and business leadership



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AI is reshaping leadership, strategic planning, and business management.<sup>[1]</sup> The *IBM's Global AI Adoption Index (2023)* asserts that most Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) consider AI to be essential for maintaining competitiveness and making sound decisions. In an international survey conducted in 2024, one-third of the 4,701 CEOs consulted acknowledged that generative AI has had a positive impact on increasing revenue and profitability in their companies. Furthermore, 56% indicated that this technology has significantly contributed to improving work efficiency. Over 40%

warned that without AI, their organizations might cease to be viable within a decade.

In this evolving context, AI is accelerating the shift from a traditional leadership model, largely based on personal intuition and experience, toward approaches guided by data analysis and digital tools. Some experts suggest that, in the future, AI could potentially replace human leadership.

## **AI and the risk of weakening intrinsic motivations**

Many companies have adopted AI to optimize processes and reduce operating costs. While such initiatives may enhance efficiency, this predominantly mechanistic and instrumental approach often marginalizes personal development and employee autonomy, thereby diminishing intrinsic motivations. Employees will obviously feel demotivated if AI takes charge of defining the company's objectives and making strategic decisions.

AI use in leadership can reduce direct human interaction, privileging algorithmic decision-making. It can also monitor the performance of each worker, thereby reducing their autonomy and prioritizing external compliance over creativity or commitment. This shift risks depersonalizing management and fostering authoritarian, controlling, and transactional leadership styles. It is difficult for workers to feel emotionally involved with the company if they feel like anonymous cogs in an automated system.

## **How to enhance intrinsic motivations with AI**

While there are legitimate concerns about AI's negative impact on employee motivation, it is important to avoid "catastrophic interpretations."<sup>[2]</sup> When implemented thoughtfully, AI can in fact produce the opposite effect. By automating routine tasks, leaders are afforded greater time and cognitive resources to focus on the human aspects of management, paying greater attention to employee well-being, autonomy, interpersonal involvement, and development.

Liberated from ordinary and repetitive tasks, leaders can focus on fostering everyone's participation in carrying out the company's purpose and innovation. This would create a fairer, more equitable, and inclusive work environment that enhances creativity and collaboration.

AI can promote more participative and democratic governance models, decentralizing decision-making processes and supporting more cooperative organizational structures. It can also strengthen mutual trust by creating spaces for generating open dialogue and feedback, sometimes even anonymously, thus reducing the risk of retaliation and encouraging a culture of transparency. Additionally, it can support continuous learning and adaptability to evolving work

models, while also mitigating the risk of professional burnout caused by excessive workloads

## Conclusion

AI cannot be the ultimate decision-maker but only a tool that facilitates well-informed decisions, never replacing ethical and human judgment. Its use must be guided by social justice, worker well-being, and environmental sustainability, rather than subordinating everything to economic profit. Leaders, therefore, must understand how AI works in order to critically assess its results, detect possible biases, and avoid discriminatory consequences.

AI must assist and empower human beings, not replace them. It is “above all else a tool” at our service, not a substitute. Therefore, “acknowledging and respecting what is uniquely characteristic of the human person is essential to the discussion of any adequate ethical framework for the governance of AI.”<sup>[3]</sup>

It is up to humans to make the final decisions, as only they have the capacity to guide organizations in a spirit of service and to exercise authority according to ethical values such as intuition, empathy, and moral reasoning.

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<sup>[1]</sup> These paragraphs are taken from our article: Carbajo-Núñez Martín, «Artificial intelligence and leadership: A Franciscan Perspective», in *Collectanea Franciscana* 96 (2026) [printing].

<sup>[2]</sup> Francis, «Message for the 58th World Communications Day (Jan. 24, 2024)», in *OR* 19 (Jan. 24, 2024) 8.

<sup>[3]</sup> Leo XIV, «Message to participants in the second annual conference on artificial intelligence, ethics, and corporate governance», Vatican City, 17.06.2025, in <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/pont-messages/2025/documents/20250617-messaggio-ia.pdf>.

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Nessun commento 