

The AI Adoption Gap

LinkedIn Post (March 11, 2026)

By Barry Marshall



Instructions

Please read / listen to the LinkedIn post and prepare the discussion questions for class.

* **The audio file** of this post is available via email.

[Here](#) is the original LinkedIn Post.

About the Author



Barry Marshall is founder and CEO of P5 - a business consulting firm in New York City that serves SaaS startups and small and medium sized businesses. He and his firm help clients with leadership, strategy and adopting and utilizing tech and AI.

Discussion Questions

1. How does this LinkedIn post fit with the Japan context?
2. Describe how your organization thinks about, trains, or adopts AI.
3. Describe the feelings many people have about AI depending on their generation and industry? (Younger, older, tech, education, blue collar, white collar)
4. What emotions and motivations have you experienced with your own AI adoption?
5. How have your views about AI changed over time?
6. Besides how AI is implemented, are there other parts of organizations that should be reframed or changed to be more strategic and adaptable?

Summary

Companies struggle with AI adoption because they treat it as a technology problem instead of a people and change problem. The article argues that HR leaders should help lead AI adoption, because success depends on supporting people and building trust as they adapt to new tools.

LinkedIn Post

46% of managers are experimenting with AI. Only 26% of employees are. (USA data)

That gap isn't a training problem. It's a change management problem. And right now, most companies are treating AI **rollout** (*introduction, launch*) like a software upgrade: install, train, done. Except people aren't software.

Gartner just published data showing that only 14% of managers report no challenges getting their teams to adopt AI. Eighty-six percent are struggling. And the typical organizational response? More tutorials. More toolkits. More "here's a prompt library, go figure it out."

Here's what most **C-suites** (*top leaders - "chief" of something*) are missing: you already have someone in your **org** (*organization*) who knows how to solve this. Your CHRO (Chief Human Resource Officer). Your Chief People Officer. The person who actually understands how humans process change. But in most companies, they're not being **leveraged** (*fully utilized / maximized*) as a core part of AI transformation. That's a leadership failure, not a people failure.

Companies that treat AI adoption as a technology rollout are the ones watching it **stall** (*take a long time*). The ones where the CEO or CTO has pulled their people leader (HR leader) into the room from day one, treating it as a people transformation with psychological safety to experiment, honest conversations about what's actually changing, and managers who feel equipped instead of threatened? Those are the ones seeing real **traction** (*movement, progress*).

There's a phrase I keep coming back to: "emotional infrastructure." It showed up in a Startups Magazine piece this week and it **landed** (*connected, resonated, had an impact*) for me. Because that's exactly what's missing. You can build the technical stack perfectly and still fail if people don't feel safe enough to use it. If they feel like the org is doing AI

to them instead of *with* them, they'll **comply** (*follow, agree, cooperate*) on the surface and resist underneath. We've all seen that **movie** (*story*) before. Your CHRO is the one who knows how to build that infrastructure. Let them.

And the adoption gaps aren't even. Women are adopting generative AI at roughly 25% lower rates than men across multiple studies covering 140,000+ workers. That's not a preference issue. It's a signal that your rollout isn't reaching everyone equally. If your change strategy doesn't account for that, you don't really have a change strategy. This is exactly the kind of blind spot your people leader will **catch** (*notice, spot*) that your tech team won't.

So here's my challenge to every CEO and CTO reading this: if your CHRO isn't co-leading your AI adoption effort right now, you're **leaving your most important asset on the bench** (*not utilizing it's potential*). *IT can handle the infrastructure. Procurement* (*department that buy things for their company*) can handle the *licensing*. *But nobody else in your org is* **wired** (*designed*) *to think about how humans actually move through change.*

Stop treating AI adoption as a technology problem.

Empower the person who makes your people strategy work.