

Working With Digital Labor

A Practical Guide for Employees Navigating AI-Enabled Work

UNDERSTAND What digital labor changes in your work

CHALLENGE When human judgment must re-enter

GROW How to protect learning and career value

Dr. Timothy J. Giardino

Founder, myWorkforceAgents.ai | Creator of The Responsible AI Transition Framework

I build AI to keep work human.

00

START HERE

How To Use This Guide

A practical path through AI-enabled work

This guide is designed to be read in sequence or used as a reference when a specific workplace issue appears. It translates advanced Hybrid Intelligence concepts into employee-specific questions, examples, and actions.

PART I	Understand the System Digital labor, Four Types of Work, Task Mapping, and Responsibility Clarity
PART II	Work Safely Approved Use, Personal AI Agents, Output Review, Handoffs, Exception Judgment, and Hidden Work
PART III	Protect Your Value Judgment, Role Change, Performance Fairness, Algorithmic Management, Trust, Psychological Safety, and Continuity
PART IV	Act and Adapt Management expectations, employee questions, and a 30-day personal plan

USE THE WORKSHEETS

Complete the role map, hidden-work log, responsibility review, and 30-day plan using organization-approved methods. Do not place sensitive or confidential information into a personal copy of this guide.

IMPORTANT BOUNDARY

This guide helps employees navigate AI-enabled work. It does not transfer responsibility for safe system design, governance, workload, legal compliance, performance fairness, or continuity from the organization to individual employees.

The actions in this guide are constructive ways to work within your role and available procedures. They do not create legal rights, guarantee protection against retaliation, or authorize you to disable a technical system.

01

PART I • UNDERSTAND THE SYSTEM

Why This Guide Exists

The dashboard may show time saved. Your workday may tell a more complicated story.

Your organization introduces a new AI assistant. By lunchtime, it has summarized meetings, drafted several messages, organized a customer request, and created a list of next actions. Management may view that as time saved.

The reality is that the new AI assistant has also relied on an outdated policy, assigned one task to the wrong team, and sent you an exception without enough context to resolve it, creating additional work.

This is the reality many employees are entering. AI is moving beyond standalone tools that answer questions. It is beginning to perform assigned parts of real workflows. It may draft, classify, route, monitor, recommend, update records, communicate, or act within defined limits.

When AI begins performing work, it functions as digital labor.

That transformation can create meaningful benefits: less repetitive administration, faster access to information, improved accessibility and translation, better preparation for decisions, greater capacity to serve customers, and more time for human judgment and relationships.

It can also create new problems: unclear responsibility, hidden correction work, unequal access to AI support, reduced learning opportunities, excessive monitoring, weak handoffs, exception overload, and pressure to produce at machine speed.

EVIDENCE NOTE The ILO's 2025 occupational-exposure study estimates that one in four workers worldwide is in an occupation with some exposure to generative AI. It identifies job transformation as the most likely overall effect. Exposure is not a prediction that an individual job will disappear. [Read the ILO analysis.](#)

Three Truths to Carry Forward

- 1 AI can improve work without every AI-enabled change being beneficial.
- 2 Your concerns about workload, fairness, trust, or job impact are legitimate operating feedback for system designers.
- 3 You are not personally responsible for fixing an AI system that the organization has not designed or governed properly.

EDUCATIONAL NOTE

This guide does not replace your employer's policies, collective bargaining agreement, works-council process, employment rights, professional standards, cybersecurity rules, or applicable law. Requirements differ across roles, organizations, sectors, and jurisdictions.

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT NOTE Deloitte's [Tech Trends 2026](#) illustrates an AI investment imbalance of 93% toward technology and 7% toward people, citing its 2025 research on allocation patterns. For employees, the practical question is whether training, review time, and support accompany the technology.

02

PART I • UNDERSTAND THE SYSTEM

What Digital Labor Actually Means

AI-enabled productive capacity performing assigned work under human accountability

Digital labor is AI-enabled productive capacity that performs assigned work inside or on behalf of an organization under human oversight and accountability.

Digital labor may:

- prepare a first draft
- summarize a conversation
- classify a request
- search approved knowledge
- recommend a decision
- update a system
- monitor a condition
- route an exception
- communicate with a customer
- coordinate tasks
- take a bounded action

OPERATIONAL CATEGORY

Digital labor does not mean that AI is a legal employee, a person, a moral decision-maker, or a substitute for human accountability.

Four Ways AI May Appear in Your Work**AI AS A TOOL**

You actively use AI to help complete a task, such as drafting, translating, comparing, or summarizing.

AI AS AN ASSISTANT

The system prepares work, recommendations, or analysis for you to review.

AI AS DIGITAL LABOR

The system performs assigned work within a workflow, sometimes without waiting for you to initiate every action.

AI INSIDE A HYBRID INTELLIGENCE WORK SYSTEM

A Hybrid Intelligence Work System is the complete arrangement of people, digital labor, software, sources, vendors, handoffs, controls, and accountable decisions that work together to produce trusted outcomes.

You do not need to become an AI engineer. You do need enough role-specific understanding to work safely and effectively inside the system AI has entered.

03

PART I • UNDERSTAND THE SYSTEM

Start With the Four Types of Work

Most jobs contain more than one kind of value

A job should not be treated as one block. Understanding the difference among work types helps you see what AI may change and where your human contribution remains most essential.

Before deciding who or what should perform a task, ask whether the task still needs to exist. A clearer policy, simpler handoff, or ordinary rule-based process may solve the problem without adding AI. Suggest improvements through the appropriate owner rather than removing required steps on your own.

Work Type	What It Means	Examples
Automation	Bounded, repeatable work that can often be performed through rules, conventional automation, or AI.	Moving information, routine reminders, standard formatting, approved logging, bounded scheduling.
Augmentation	Work you perform with AI support while retaining responsibility for interpretation, review, or final action.	First drafts, comparisons, meeting summaries, trend preparation, question generation.
Judgment	Work requiring context, interpretation, ethics, consequence awareness, exception handling, or accountable decisions.	Policy exceptions, incomplete evidence, risk decisions, fairness review, changing the normal process.
Relationship	Work where trust, empathy, influence, care, negotiation, dignity, or human presence contributes to the outcome.	Trust repair, coaching, emotional support, negotiation, helping someone feel heard.

One Role Can Contain All Four

Consider a **Customer Support Role**: AI may log the request automatically. AI may draft a possible response. The human employee may judge whether the policy fits the situation. The human employee or higher human leadership may repair trust with an upset customer.

***Note:** Automating the first task does not eliminate the value of the others.*

TAKEAWAY

Ask what kind of work this is and where human judgment or relationship value matters most.

04

PART I • UNDERSTAND THE SYSTEM

Worksheet: Map Your Work

Choose one recurring workflow and break it into its actual parts

Use this worksheet to distinguish the work AI may perform from the judgment, relationship, and learning value that still needs deliberate protection.

Task or Activity	Work Type	How AI is Involved	Human Judgment	Relationship Value	Learning Value
	Automation / Augmentation / Judgment / Relationship				
	Automation / Augmentation / Judgment / Relationship				
	Automation / Augmentation / Judgment / Relationship				
	Automation / Augmentation / Judgment / Relationship				

Look for Five Things

- **Work you would gladly stop doing.** Which repetitive or low-value tasks create strain without building useful skill?
- **Work you want AI to support.** Where could AI help you prepare, organize, compare, translate, or find information?
- **Work you should continue to own.** Which decisions require your context, ethics, accountability, or understanding of consequence?
- **Work people value because a human performs it.** Where do trust, empathy, negotiation, reassurance, or relationship history matter?
- **Work that helps you learn.** Which routine assignments, first drafts, observations, or lower-risk decisions are helping you build expertise?

A USEFUL WARNING

Do not assume routine work has no value. Some routine work is unnecessary. Some routine work is how people learn the business, observe patterns, build confidence, and develop judgment needed to assess digital labor work.

Before AI absorbs a task, ask: What did this work teach me, and how will I develop that capability in the new workflow?

05

PART I • UNDERSTAND THE SYSTEM

Clarify the Division of Responsibility

AI capability is not the same as AI authority

A system may be capable of drafting a refund, changing a record, ranking applicants, or contacting a customer. That does not mean the organization has authorized it to do so independently.

Question	The clarity you need
<i>What work does the AI perform?</i>	Its assigned role and purpose
<i>What can it draft or recommend?</i>	Activities that still require human review
<i>What can it execute?</i>	Actions permitted within defined limits
<i>What must it never do?</i>	Prohibited actions and boundaries
<i>What must a person approve?</i>	Human decision or consent points
<i>What am I expected to review?</i>	Your specific oversight responsibility
<i>Who owns the final outcome?</i>	The named accountable human or role
<i>When should work escalate?</i>	Conditions that require additional judgment
<i>Who can pause or restrict the system?</i>	Stop-work and incident authority

Do Not Accept Vague Oversight

Being told that you are 'the human in the loop' is not enough. Meaningful oversight requires access to relevant information, enough time to review, an understanding of the AI's role and limitations, authority to correct or stop the action, clear escalation pathways, and a manageable workload.

Before You Approve Consequential Work

Clarify what you are being asked to evaluate and what your approval means. Checking tone, verifying evidence, resolving an exception, and authorizing an action are different responsibilities. You may need the original source, the applicable policy, an explanation of missing information, enough review time, or someone with authority to resolve a conflict.

Do not describe work as verified when you have not completed the required review. Use the approved escalation process when evidence, time, competence, or authority is insufficient. Ask who owns the decision while that gap is resolved.

Ask where the approved description of the digital worker's role, sources, permissions, limits, and human owner is maintained. This may be a Digital Worker Handbook or an equivalent controlled record. An AI-generated description of its own authority is not a substitute for that record.

Conversation Starter: *"I can review this, but I need to understand what my approval covers and see the evidence required to make that judgment. Who should handle the decision while that information is missing?"*

Key Questions: *What exactly am I expected to evaluate, and what authority do I have if the output should not proceed?*

ACCOUNTABILITY SHOULD FOLLOW CONTROL

You should not be held responsible for decisions you cannot understand, challenge, or influence. The organization remains responsible for designing the workflow, assigning ownership, defining AI authority, and giving people enough context and capacity to perform their roles.

06

PART II • WORK SAFELY

Use Approved AI Safely

The fastest tool is not always the right tool for the work

AI can be helpful without every AI tool being appropriate for work. Before entering information into any AI system, ask the following questions:

IS THIS TOOL APPROVED?

A personal AI account, browser extension, public chatbot, or unapproved automation may handle information differently from an organization-approved system. Approval should apply to the specific work use, account, data, connected systems, and actions involved. An approved vendor or product does not automatically mean every personal account, plug-in, memory feature, connector, or agent configuration is approved.

IS THIS INFORMATION PERMITTED?

Do not enter employee, customer, candidate, patient, financial, legal, proprietary, security, regulated, or other confidential information **unless the tool and use have been explicitly approved.**

IS ALL OF THE INFORMATION NECESSARY?

Use the minimum amount of information required. Remove names, identifying details, account numbers, health data, or sensitive context where possible and appropriate.

IS THE SOURCE AUTHORITATIVE?

An AI-generated answer is not automatically an approved organizational answer. Confirm which policy, system, document, or record represents the current source of truth.

DOES THE OUTPUT REQUIRE DISCLOSURE?

Follow organizational rules about disclosing AI-generated or AI-assisted work.

COULD THIS CREATE SHADOW AI OR A HIDDEN WORKFLOW?

If approved tools do not meet the need, raise the unmet work requirement rather than quietly building a shadow process with a personal AI tool, agent, automation, or connected service.

WHEN THE APPROVED ROUTE DOES NOT WORK

An authorized assignment does not authorize every method of completing it. If an AI proposes a different account, recipient, file-sharing service, connection, or workaround, confirm that the route is permitted before using it. Ask for an approved alternative, missing information, or an accountable decision to defer or escalate the affected step. Do not bypass a safeguard to make the task appear complete. See Section 07 for personal-agent boundaries.

POLICY NOTE The European Commission's AI literacy guidance reflects a role- and context-specific approach: organizations should consider people's technical knowledge, experience, education, training, and the context in which AI is used. [Read the AI literacy Q&A.](#)

TAKEAWAY

You need enough knowledge to understand the AI you use, the people it affects, the risks in your work, and the actions for which you remain responsible.

07

PART II • WORK SAFELY

Personal AI Agents and Shadow AI

A tool can be personal and still create organizational risk

Personal AI agents may prepare text or act across connected applications. Some can keep working after a conversation ends, schedule later actions, contact other people, or ask another system to act. Bring Your Own AI, sometimes called a “BYO-Agent,” therefore requires clarity about the specific tool, data, account connections, permissions, and activity, not only the product name.

The fact that you pay for, configure, or access an AI tool through a personal account does not make workplace data, records, decisions, or responsibilities personal.

BEFORE A PERSONAL AI TOOL TOUCHES WORK

Ask:

IS THIS SPECIFIC USE APPROVED?

Approval of one AI product does not necessarily approve every personal account, model, plug-in, browser extension, meeting bot, connector, or agent configuration.

WHAT INFORMATION CAN IT RECEIVE?

Do not assume that removing a name makes confidential, regulated, proprietary, customer, employee, or security information safe to share.

WHAT SYSTEMS CAN IT ACCESS?

Connecting a personal agent to work email, calendars, files, messaging platforms, CRM systems, or other applications can expose more information than a single prompt.

WHAT DOES IT REMEMBER?

Understand whether prompts, files, conversations, memory, or generated content may be stored and whether organizational rules permit that use.

CAN IT ACT?

An agent that can send messages, schedule meetings, modify records, move files, or trigger another system needs approval for those specific actions. Permission to prepare a draft does not become permission to send it because another agent performs the final step.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN APPROVAL ENDS?

Ask how access is removed and what happens to scheduled, pending, or delegated work when approval ends, your role changes, or the agent is retired. Closing a conversation is not evidence that every background action has stopped. The responsible owner should confirm the required restrictions and follow-up.

CAN THE WORK BE RECONSTRUCTED?

Important organizational work may need to remain visible through approved records, systems, logs, or communication channels.

IF APPROVED TOOLS DO NOT MEET THE NEED

Raise the work requirement rather than hiding the workaround. Explain what capability you need, where the approved tool falls short, and why the capability would improve the work.

Conversation Starter: *“This agent could help with [work requirement]. What approval is needed for the tool, its account connections, and the actions it would take? What approved alternative should I use while that decision is pending?”*

SHADOW AI WARNING

Do not solve an approval gap by quietly routing work through a personal AI account or agent. A helpful shortcut can create privacy, security, confidentiality, records, intellectual-property, compliance, or accountability problems that are difficult to see from the employee side of the workflow.

If you discover unapproved agent activity or a possible information exposure, report it promptly through the approved security or incident channel. Follow the authorized containment procedure and keep relevant records in approved systems. Do not assume that removing the visible conversation resolves the consequences.

RESEARCH NOTE Deloitte UK's [2026 GenAI Workforce Survey](#) of 25,000 UK workers found that 31% of those using GenAI at work did so without their employer's knowledge. This is a UK survey finding, not a global prevalence estimate.

TAKEAWAY

Once personal AI touches organizational work, organizational rules matter. When the approved technology does not meet the work requirement, surface the gap rather than creating an invisible workaround.

08

PART II • WORK SAFELY

Review the Work, Not Just the Writing

Polished output can still be wrong

Before relying on an important output, review six areas:

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|--|
| 1 | Accuracy | Are the facts, figures, names, dates, calculations, and claims correct? |
| 2 | Sources | Where did the information come from? Is the source approved, current, and relevant? What happens if sources disagree? Which source has priority? |
| 3 | Context | Does the AI understand the customer, employee, situation, jurisdiction, timing, history, and purpose of the work? |
| 4 | Authority | Is the AI permitted to make this recommendation or take this action? Are you permitted to approve it? |
| 5 | Consequence | Who could be affected if the output is wrong? Is the action reversible? Would a person need to explain or defend the result? |
| 6 | Uncertainty | What is missing, assumed, inferred, or unclear? Should the AI say it does not have enough trusted information? |

WHAT COULD CHANGE THE RECOMMENDATION?

A recommendation can sound reasonable while leaving out information that would change the decision. Ask what was not considered, which facts remain uncertain, and whether the alternatives rely on the same source. Several AI tools repeating one claim do not necessarily provide independent confirmation. For consequential work, check the relevant approved source and use qualified human support where your role requires it.

Human review also needs evidence. Accepting an AI recommendation is not automatically careless, and overriding it is not automatically correct. Explain what supports your decision, what remains uncertain, and why the conclusion fits the work. Agreement with AI, disagreement with AI, and approval speed are not substitutes for sound judgment.

Conversation Starter: “What information could change this recommendation, and where can I check it? I want to understand the case before I approve the conclusion.”

Key Questions: Can I explain where this came from, why it is appropriate, and what would happen if it were wrong?

GOVERNANCE NOTE NIST's AI Risk Management Framework emphasizes clearly defining and differentiating human and AI roles, responsibilities, and oversight. [Explore NIST's human-AI guidance.](#)

USE MORE REVIEW WHERE CONSEQUENCE IS HIGHER

A meeting summary does not require the same scrutiny as an employment recommendation, medical or legal communication, financial action, safety decision, eligibility determination, disciplinary action, or customer commitment.

09

PART II • WORK SAFELY

A Handoff Should Give You Intelligence

A task can arrive while responsibility still fails

A Weak Handoff

CUSTOMER BILLING ISSUE. PLEASE REVIEW.

You do not know what happened, what the customer was told, which information was checked, what remains uncertain, what action is expected, or how urgent the case is.

A Stronger Handoff

DUPLICATE CHARGE DISPUTE — HUMAN REVIEW REQUIRED

Customer disputes a duplicate charge of \$184. Both transactions appear in the billing system. The current refund policy conflicts with a newer finance instruction, so no refund was issued. The customer is frustrated and requested a human response today. Please confirm the authoritative policy, determine the appropriate remedy, and document the decision. Owner: Billing Specialist. Priority: High.

The stronger handoff transfers two kinds of information:

Work State	Management State
What is the task? What has happened? What is complete? What remains open? What records or artifacts exist?	Why does this matter? What is known? What is uncertain? What authority has already been used? What decision is required? Who owns the next action? When should the work escalate? What is the next best step?

Before accepting a consequential handoff, check:

- ☐ Do I understand the current state?
- ☐ Do I have the relevant sources?
- ☐ Is uncertainty visible?
- ☐ Is my authority clear?
- ☐ Do I know what decision is required?
- ☐ Is timing or urgency clear?
- ☐ Do I know who owns recovery if the handoff fails?
- ☐ Has the next responsible person or team accepted the handoff, or is the fallback owner clear?

TAKEAWAY

When the handoff is incomplete, do not guess silently. Ask for the missing intelligence and report recurring failures as a workflow problem.

Correct the Consequences, Not Only the Answer

When you discover a material error, consider whether other work may already rely on it. Through the approved reporting channel, identify the affected case or record, explain the issue, and tell the appropriate owner where you know the information may have been reused. Do not copy confidential records into a personal log or contact unauthorized recipients.

The organization should decide which outputs, pending actions, or completed decisions need correction or reconsideration. Your role is to make the concern visible, not to investigate the whole system alone.

A handoff also does not expand authority by itself. A message from another agent, team, or organization is not automatic permission to disclose information, change a rule, or make a commitment outside your role.

Conversation Starter: “The source in this case appears to be outdated. Who will check whether the same information affected other replies or decisions?”

10

PART II • WORK SAFELY

Know When the Normal Process Should Stop

A workflow can be process-compliant and outcome-wrong

Policies and workflows usually describe the normal path. **Human judgment becomes especially important when the normal path no longer protects the intended outcome.**

Consider a patient arriving for spine surgery who physically cannot remain seated due to their injuries. The patient requires a bed to lie flat for relief. However, the intake process requires a normal patient to sit in a lobby, complete forms, and wait for a request to move through the normal IT system sequence, where a digital message is sent so a bed from the surgery team can then be provided to relieve the patient's pre-surgery pain at intake.

The staff may follow the documented process exactly. The process can still produce an unintended outcome when quality patient care is the goal. The intended outcome is not merely completed paperwork or process. In this case, it is safe, humane preparation for surgery.

Within their role, safety requirements, and escalation authority, employees should recognize the legitimate exception, protect the person, and route or accommodate the issue appropriately.

This lesson applies across industries. AI may intensify the problem because it can execute a rigid process quickly and consistently without recognizing when the process itself has become harmful. In many cases, human judgment can ask: *Is this considered a normal case? If not, how can you reasonably accommodate the exception while still trying to accomplish the process?*

AI risk is not only that a system may make the wrong decision. It may execute the wrong process perfectly.

Signals that Human Judgment Should Enter

- The facts do not fit the normal case.
- Following the process may create avoidable harm.
- Policy sources conflict.
- A customer, employee, or candidate is distressed.
- An accessibility or accommodation need is present.
- The AI appears outside its authority.
- The action is difficult to reverse.
- The output may be discriminatory, unsafe, unlawful, or unfair.
- The technically correct answer produces the wrong human outcome.
- Trust or relationship work is involved.

GOOD-FAITH CHALLENGE IS OPERATING INFORMATION

A responsible organization should define how employees can question, pause, override, or escalate consequential AI-enabled work in good faith when consequence, context, fairness, trust, or dignity require it.

Know What Happens After You Raise a Concern

A useful reporting process should tell you who owns the concern, what happens next, and how you will hear the outcome. When you raise a material issue, ask for the case reference or approved way to follow up. Describe the facts, the possible consequence, and any action already taken within your authority. Keep sensitive information in approved systems.

Ask what should happen to the affected work while the concern is reviewed. If the normal contact is unavailable or involved in the concern, use the designated alternate channel or appropriate representative. An immediate safety issue should follow the relevant emergency procedure.

Reporting a concern is different from authorization to stop a technical service. Use the pause, restriction, or emergency authority assigned to your role. The organization should provide a reachable decision-maker when action exceeds that authority.

Conversation Starter: *"Who is responsible for reviewing this concern, what should happen to the work meanwhile, and how will I know whether it has been resolved?"*

11

PART II • WORK SAFELY

Hidden Work is Still Work

AI may reduce visible task time while creating new or more work elsewhere

Hidden work includes checking sources, rewriting messages, correcting records, regenerating outputs, monitoring queues, explaining AI decisions, handling escalations, repairing trust, reviewing exceptions, reconciling duplicate actions, documenting incidents, and emotionally recovering after receiving only the most difficult cases.

WHEN WORK BECOMES HIDDEN

Work is hidden when it is required for the AI-enabled workflow to function but is not included in productivity calculations, job expectations, staffing decisions, or performance measures.

What AI Did	What You Did Afterward	Time	Why	Repeat?
Drafted customer reply	Corrected policy and rewrote tone	12 min	Outdated source	Yes

Use Existing Approved Records

Where useful, add a case reference, issue or missing support, approximate added time, possible effect, responsible contact, agreed next step, and follow-up status to an existing approved record. These are optional prompts, not a requirement to create a second reporting system. Use references rather than sensitive details. Distinguish new or increased work from review that already existed, and avoid counting the same time twice.

When the Review Queue Becomes Unmanageable

Report the amount and urgency of work you can reasonably review, including difficult cases and responsibilities outside the AI queue. If several teams or systems rely on you, make those competing demands visible together. The same hour cannot provide separate coverage to several workflows at once.

Ask your manager to set priorities, adjust intake or coverage, and explain what should happen when required review cannot be completed. Working faster is not an adequate substitute for a review the workflow requires.

Conversation Starter: *“The incoming review work exceeds the time available today. Which cases take priority, and who can adjust the intake or provide qualified coverage?”*

When the Same Problem Keeps Returning

Some exceptions are legitimate work requiring human judgment. Others repeat because a source, instruction, handoff, authority rule, or capacity problem remains unresolved. Describe the recurring cause, not only the latest repair, and ask who owns the improvement. Repeatedly keeping a flawed workflow running should not become an invisible permanent assignment.

Watch the Emotional Residue

When AI absorbs routine work, people may receive a **higher concentration of** angry customers, unusual cases, conflict, ambiguity, and high-consequence decisions. A role is not necessarily easier because it contains fewer tasks. The type and concentration of work should be considered.

Also note useful time returned to learning, customer support, better quality, or backlog reduction. Reinvested capacity is not the same as avoidable correction work, and time saved on one task does not by itself show that a role is unnecessary.

YOUR OBSERVATIONS ARE EVIDENCE

Raise concerns when the remaining work becomes constantly exception-heavy, emotionally unsustainable, cognitively fragmented, inadequately staffed, or disconnected from recognition, recovery time, training, and support.

12

PART III • PROTECT YOUR VALUE

Protect Your Judgment While AI Gets Better

The career advantage is knowing when an answer deserves trust

AI can make you faster. It can also weaken your expertise if it performs too much of the work through which you once learned.

Professional judgment develops through practice, repetition, mistakes, feedback, observation, first drafts, lower-risk decisions, and progressively harder situations. That means sometimes having to get into the details.

SKILLS NOTE covering more than 6,000 mid-level managers in six countries found widespread use of algorithmic management tools, alongside reported concerns about accountability, understanding the tools' logic, and worker well-being. These tools include software used to instruct, monitor, or evaluate workers and are not limited to generative AI. [Review the Future of Jobs skills outlook.](#)

Strengthen Your Judgment With Supported Practice

Ask for opportunities to practice the work behind the AI output, with feedback from someone qualified. These may include supervised first drafts, simulations, approved exercises without AI, expert shadowing, selected exception reviews, and recovery practice. Agree on learning time and coverage. You should not have to take on unlimited difficult cases or use personal time to replace a missing development pathway.

For a selected, approved practice case, try five steps:

1. **Originate.** Review the approved evidence before seeing the AI recommendation. Frame the problem, identify assumptions and unknowns, and form an initial view.
2. **Compare.** Examine the AI output and identify where either approach missed relevant information.
3. **Verify.** Explain the final conclusion and what you accepted, changed, rejected, or still need to know.
4. **Calibrate.** Review the judgment against qualified feedback, applicable standards, and relevant outcome evidence.
5. **Develop.** Agree on the next practice, coaching, or source-learning need.

This is a selective learning exercise, not a requirement to duplicate every AI task. Keep practice within approved training and safety arrangements. Reviewed lessons can improve shared guidance, training, or digital-labor instructions through the authorized change process; a useful suggestion does not approve its own release.

Conversation Starter: *"This task used to help me learn the business. What practice or feedback will replace that experience as the AI takes more of it on?"*

The goal is not to become better at asking AI for answers. It is to become better at knowing whether the answer deserves to be trusted.

13

PART III • PROTECT YOUR VALUE

Your Role May Change Before Your Title Does

Track new responsibilities, not only removed tasks

Digital labor often changes responsibilities before formal roles, job descriptions, workload models, or compensation catch up.

New work may include:

- reviewing AI output
- validating sources
- managing exceptions
- correcting handoffs
- monitoring quality
- escalating incidents
- protecting customer trust
- maintaining knowledge
- training coworkers
- providing calibration feedback
- coordinating human-AI workflows
- recovering work when AI fails

CAREER OPPORTUNITY OR ROLE OVERLOAD?

These responsibilities can be meaningful career-building work. As responsibilities materially change, job descriptions, workload expectations, development pathways, and compensation may need to be reviewed as well.

Protect the Work You Can Grow Into

A role can keep its title while losing the work through which you create, practice a craft, build relationships, or take pride in your expertise. If your work is becoming mainly monitoring and correction, discuss what meaningful contribution and future mastery the redesigned role should offer.

Ask which decisions you will genuinely own, which expertise you will deepen, and what learning, support, and recognition will accompany the change. The goal is not to preserve unnecessary tasks. It is to make the future role meaningful, learnable, and sustainable.

If a new assignment or redeployment is discussed, clarify whether it is an exploratory option or an approved, resourced opportunity. Ask about the role, training, timing, decision owner, and next review.

Conversation Starter: *“What will I be able to create, decide, improve, or become expert in as this role changes, and what support will help me get there?”*

Previous Responsibility	AI-Related Change	New Responsibility	Time	Training or Authority Needed

Questions to Discuss with Your Manager

- Which of my tasks have actually been reduced?
- Which new responsibilities have appeared?
- How much review or exception work is expected?
- What training supports the new work?
- What authority do I have?
- How will this affect my goals and performance measures?
- Is the role still sustainable?
- Should my job description, title, development plan, or compensation be reviewed?

TAKEAWAY

AI-related work should eventually become visible through role clarity, capacity planning, performance expectations, learning support, career pathways, and appropriate recognition.

14

PART III • PROTECT YOUR VALUE

AI Access Becomes a Performance Fairness Issue

Equal talent can look unequal when digital leverage differs

Two equally capable employees may produce different results because one has better AI tools, stronger data access, more useful training, clearer permission to experiment, an AI-supportive manager, more time to learn, better accessibility support, or a digital workflow built around their role.

That difference is digital leverage.

Access	Enablement
You can open the tool.	You have the training, data, workflow support, time, confidence, accessibility, and manager guidance needed to benefit from it.

Questions Employees Can Raise

- *Do comparable roles receive comparable AI support?*
- *Has training been provided before expectations changed?*
- *Are language, disability, and accessibility needs supported?*
- *Do frontline workers receive tools that help them, or only systems that monitor them?*
- *Are employees using different tools being compared as though their work conditions are equal?*
- *Can inaccurate AI-generated performance information be corrected?*
- *Is a human responsible for consequential employment decisions?*

When AI Evaluates or Manages Work

AI may influence scheduling, task assignment, productivity monitoring, performance ratings, promotion recommendations, coaching, discipline, compensation, or workforce planning. If AI-generated data, flags, scores, or recommendations affect you, ask what is being measured, which data informs it, what context may be missing, how errors can be corrected, and where meaningful human review occurs.

An automated measure should not become unquestionable simply because software produced it. Connect performance expectations to the responsibilities described in Section 13. Section 15 explains how to question monitoring information, supply relevant context, and request meaningful review.

KNOW THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Applicable rights vary by location, sector, represented status, and employment context. Use organizational channels, HR, employee representatives, unions, works councils, professional bodies, or appropriate legal resources when a consequential concern requires additional review.

15

PART III • PROTECT YOUR VALUE

When AI Measures You

A performance signal is evidence, not the whole story

Algorithmic management is the use of software to help assign, monitor, evaluate, or manage work. These systems may analyze activity, throughput, response time, quality measures, schedules, customer interactions, task completion, or other information.

They can help managers see patterns that would otherwise be difficult to identify. They can also reduce complex human work to incomplete measures when important context is missing.

Ask How Monitoring Information Will Be Used

Information collected to operate or monitor an AI workflow may not tell the whole story about your contribution. Review time, overrides, correction requests, and exception volume can reflect case difficulty, system quality, and the support available to you.

Ask what is collected, why, who can access it, and whether it will influence performance or employment decisions. Information gathered for system improvement should not silently become a new employee-evaluation measure. The organization should review its relevance, context, and correction arrangements before using it for that purpose.

Where your judgment is reviewed, ask what evidence and standard will be used, how missing information and working conditions will be considered, and what feedback or support follows. The goal should be justified decisions, not a target agreement or override rate.

Conversation Starter: *“Will these AI activity measures be used in performance decisions? How will difficult cases, correction work, and differences in tool access be taken into account?”*

WHEN A METRIC, FLAG, SCORE, OR RECOMMENDATION LOOKS WRONG OR INCOMPLETE

1. **Identify the specific issue:** *What metric, flag, score, recommendation, or underlying data appears inaccurate or incomplete? What decision did it affect?*
2. **Ask what information was used:** *What period, activities, systems, records, or data contributed to the measure? Was the source information accurate?*
3. **Make missing context visible:** Document relevant circumstances such as unusually complex cases, exception work, system outages, approved accommodations, training responsibilities, customer recovery, safety requirements, relationship work, or assignments that the metric does not capture.
4. **Request meaningful human review:** Use the organization's available manager, HR, employee-representative, union, works-council, ethics, compliance, or other review channel. Ask for review by a person who has enough context and authority to evaluate the issue rather than simply restating the automated result.
5. **Ask how the record can be corrected:** If source data, attribution, or context is wrong, ask how the error and any resulting performance information can be corrected or appropriately documented. Ask who owns any correction to related ratings or decisions and how you will receive the outcome through an approved channel. Share only the context necessary for review and keep sensitive information in the designated process.

AN ACCURATE NUMBER CAN STILL BE A POOR MEASURE

A response-time measure may not capture a complex customer case. Keyboard activity may not reflect coaching, relationship work, judgment, or thinking. Throughput may not capture quality, accessibility, safety, or the time required to resolve exceptions. The question is not only whether the number is accurate. It is whether the measure fairly represents the work it is being used to evaluate.

Conversation Starter: *“I would like a human review of this performance information because the measure may not reflect [specific context]. Please help me understand the data used, the period covered, how the measure influenced the decision, who can review it, and how an error or missing context can be corrected.”*

RESEARCH NOTE [OECD research](#) finds algorithmic management is already widely used and identifies concerns including unclear accountability, difficulty following the logic of automated decisions, and protection of worker well-being.

TAKEAWAY

Do not reject a performance measure merely because AI contributed to it. Do not assume it is complete merely because software produced it. Consequential performance information should be accurate, contextualized, and subject to an accountable review process.

16

PART III • PROTECT YOUR VALUE

Trust Begins with How AI is Introduced

People experience the transition before they fully understand the technology

Employees hear the announcement, see the demonstration, hear that the company will 'do more with less,' and wonder whether the work they are known for will still matter. How AI enters the workplace affects trust, adoption, psychological safety, and willingness to raise problems.

A responsible introduction should explain:

- why the AI is being used
- what work it will perform
- what work remains human-led
- what data it uses
- whether it affects performance decisions
- what training will be provided
- how concerns can be raised
- who owns the workflow
- what workforce consequences are being considered

RESEARCH NOTE OECD research recommends worker consultation when algorithmic management tools are introduced because consultation can support adoption and safeguard worker well-being. [Read the OECD findings.](#)

AI Form Factors Also Matter

AI may appear through a voice, avatar, synthetic presenter, name, digital coworker interface, or embodied system. Those choices can communicate who appears authoritative, technical, helpful, subordinate, caring, or emotionally available.

REPRESENTATION NOTE UNESCO has highlighted how feminized voice assistants can reinforce stereotypes of women as compliant or subservient helpers. Individual user preference does not by itself resolve the design question; organizations should still examine whether repeated form-factor choices reinforce occupational, gender, authority, or service stereotypes. [Read UNESCO's analysis.](#)

A diverse-looking interface alone is not sufficient. Employees should be able to raise concerns about stereotypes, cultural fit, language and accent, accessibility, disclosure, dignity, discomfort, or the absence of a human pathway.

Trust also depends on follow-through. Employees should know who responds to concerns and how to learn the outcome through the process described in Section 10. When the tool, sources, permitted actions, staffing, or workflow changes materially, ask what has changed in your responsibilities, support, and escalation arrangements. A familiar interface does not mean the operating conditions are unchanged.

Psychological safety does not mean unquestioning trust. It means people can report what the system is doing to the work and to the people affected by it without being dismissed as resistant to change.

17

PART III • PROTECT YOUR VALUE

Know What Happens When Digital Labor Fails

Stopping the AI is not the same as recovering the work

AI may become unavailable because of a system outage, degraded performance, an untrusted data source, security event, vendor disruption, policy change, legal restriction, failed integration, or operational decision to pause the workflow.

Employees should know:

- ☐ What work must continue?
- ☐ What work can pause?
- ☐ Who activates the fallback process?
- ☐ Where are the underlying records or raw queues?
- ☐ Which source remains authoritative?
- ☐ Who assumes decision authority?
- ☐ What reduced service level applies?
- ☐ How are customers, employees, or candidates informed?
- ☐ How is work completed manually recorded?
- ☐ What must be reconciled before AI resumes?

DO NOT CONFUSE FALLBACK WITH HEROICS

A continuity plan should not assume that employees can instantly absorb machine-scale volume through overtime, stress, or improvisation. The organization should establish priorities, realistic manual capacity, trained backup coverage, clear authority, current procedures, access to required systems, and a safe route back to normal operation.

Confirm the Authorized Fallback

Before using a fallback, confirm that it has been authorized and that you can access the necessary records and procedures. Know which work must continue, which work should wait, and what reduced service level applies. Record manual actions through the approved method so they are not repeated when the AI returns.

Do not reconnect accounts, bypass safeguards, or restart automated actions on your own unless your role authorizes it. Resumption should follow the organization's reconciliation and approval process.

If you are named as backup for several teams or systems, ask how competing demands will be prioritized. Being listed in more than one recovery plan does not create additional capacity.

Conversation Starter: *"Which work are we prioritizing during the outage, where should I record manual actions, and who confirms that it is safe to resume the automated workflow?"*

Documentation preserves instructions. Practice preserves capability.

For important workflows, the organization should provide supported opportunities for employees to practice locating source records, performing essential steps, handling exceptions, operating at a reduced service level, and reconciling manual work after AI returns.

TAKEAWAY

The goal is not to preserve every old process. It is to retain enough human knowledge and authority to protect the outcome when the intelligent layer cannot be applied.

18

PART IV • ACT AND ADAPT

What Good Management Should Provide

Responsible Hybrid Intelligence should not depend on employee improvisation

Company Commitment	What It Should Mean in Practice
Clarity and review support	You know what the AI does, what your approval means, and who owns the outcome. Your assigned review has the evidence, competence, time, authority, and backup it requires.
Approved tools and boundaries	You have an approved way to perform expected work, including clear limits for personal AI, data, connections, memory, actions, and what happens when approval ends.
Role-specific training	Training and qualified feedback reflect your role, workflow, risks, and responsibilities. Important learning experiences removed by AI are preserved or replaced.
Time to learn	Practice, coaching, coverage, and recovery time are planned. Development is not left to personal time or unlimited additional exception work.
Reliable sources	You can identify and access the current approved policies, records, and operating instructions needed for your responsibility.
Meaningful challenge	You have a defined reporting route, an alternate contact, and clarity about your authority to correct, pause, or escalate affected work.
Manageable oversight	Review, correction, escalation, and recovery are included in capacity decisions. Competing demands across workflows are considered together.
Fair performance measures	Evaluation considers AI access, support, case difficulty, hidden work, and context. New uses of monitoring data are reviewed, with an available route for correction and meaningful human review.
Human support	A qualified person remains reachable when consequence, uncertainty, accessibility, trust, or relationship needs exceed the AI's role.
Supported continuity	Fallback is authorized, practiced, realistically staffed, and prioritized. Manual work is reconciled before the organization approves resumption.
Correction and feedback closure	Material concerns and corrections have an owner. Affected work is assessed, and employees can follow the response and agreed next step through an approved channel.

Constructive Ways to Begin the Conversation

- “Can we clarify what the AI performs, what my approval covers, and what evidence, time, and authority I need?”
- “I am seeing recurring correction work that is not reflected in the time-savings estimate.”
- “This handoff is reaching me without the source, uncertainty, or decision authority I need.”
- “I need approved guidance on what information can be entered into this tool.”
- “The remaining human cases are becoming more emotionally intense. Can we review workload and recovery support?”
- “What is the fallback process if this system becomes unavailable or cannot be trusted?”
- “Can we confirm whether personal AIs are permitted for this workflow and what data, connections, or actions are off limits?”
- “This performance flag may not reflect the work. Who can review the context, correct affected information, and tell me the outcome?”

19

PART IV • ACT AND ADAPT

Twelve Questions Every Employee Can Ask

Use these when AI enters your role or workflow

1. *What trusted outcome is this work meant to produce, and what work does the AI perform?*
2. *Which decisions remain mine, and what does my approval mean?*
3. *What should remain human-led because of judgment, consequence, trust, or relationship value?*
4. *Which sources, tools, accounts, methods, data, and connected systems are approved?*
5. *May a personal agent work on this task, what happens to its access, scheduled work, or delegated actions when approval ends?*
6. *What evidence, time, training, authority, and backup do I need to review the work responsibly?*
7. *Who can act when evidence is missing, review capacity is exceeded, or conditions have materially changed?*
8. *What context and acceptance should accompany a handoff, and who checks work affected by a correction?*
9. *How do I report recurring hidden work or raise a concern, and how will I hear the outcome?*
10. *Will AI activity data affect my evaluation, and how can I request correction or meaningful human review?*
11. *What supported practice, meaningful work, recognition, and career opportunities will accompany changes to my role?*
12. *What fallback is authorized, what work takes priority, and who approves resumption after reconciliation?*

A RESPONSIBLE MANAGER MAY NOT HAVE EVERY ANSWER IMMEDIATELY

The organization should have a process and accountable owner for finding them. These questions can also help organizations develop job-specific guidance, employee FAQs, AI-use rules, and management practices.

Good questions are not resistance. They are part of governing work that now moves across humans and digital labor.

20

PART IV • ACT AND ADAPT

Your 30-Day Personal Adaptation Plan

*Gather enough information to work more confidently and participate constructively***BOUNDARY**

This plan does not ask you to redesign the organization. It helps you understand your work, surface evidence, strengthen judgment, and prepare for a productive discussion with your manager.

Week 1: Understand the Work

- ☐ List the AI systems that affect your work, including personal AI tools or agents you use for work.
- ☐ Confirm which tools, accounts, data uses, connections, and actions are approved.
- ☐ Map one workflow using the four types of work.
- ☐ Clarify what the AI performs, what you still own, and what any approval means. Locate the approved role and authority guidance.
- ☐ Identify the named human owner or escalation contact.

WEEK 1 OUTPUT

Map one workflow from its intended outcome. Identify a possible simplification and distinguish its four types of work.

Week 2: Practice Responsible Use

- ☐ Confirm which tools and data uses are approved.
- ☐ Review important outputs for accuracy, sources, context, authority, consequence, and uncertainty.
- ☐ Arrange one supported practice case with qualified feedback, including an initial judgment before seeing the AI recommendation.
- ☐ Review one handoff through an approved method. Note missing context, acceptance, or correction ownership without copying PII.
- ☐ Practice explaining why you accepted, changed, or rejected an AI output.

WEEK 2 OUTPUT

A short list of reliable use cases, caution areas, and review requirements.

21

PART IV • ACT AND ADAPT

Complete the 30-Day Plan

Make invisible work visible and prepare for the next version of your role

Week 3: Make Invisible Work Visible

- ☐ Use an existing approved record to note one recurring issue, approximate added time, competing demands, and missing support.
- ☐ Note where AI has reduced work and where it has moved or intensified it.
- ☐ Identify new responsibilities that have entered your role.
- ☐ Consider whether the remaining human work is sustainable.
- ☐ Identify one learning or craft experience at risk of disappearing and a supported way to preserve its value.
- ☐ If AI-generated data, monitoring, flags, or performance measures affect you, confirm how you can raise an error, add relevant context, or request appropriate human review.

WEEK 3 OUTPUT

A hidden-work and role-change summary.

Week 4: Prepare for the Next Version of Your Role

- ☐ Discuss role clarity, training, workload, and AI access with your manager.
- ☐ Request a learning opportunity that strengthens judgment.
- ☐ Identify one higher-value responsibility you could grow into.
- ☐ Confirm the reporting and review pathway, its alternate contact, and how you will follow the outcome, including for AI-generated performance information.
- ☐ Review what happens if the AI becomes unavailable.
- ☐ Agree on one practical improvement, its owner, next step, review point, and how you will know whether it helped.
- ☐ Raise any unmet AI capability need through the approved channel rather than creating a shadow workflow.

WEEK 4 OUTPUT

A supported development plan and one agreed improvement with an owner, follow-up point, and a practical way to assess whether it helped.

Choose one recurring issue and use the approved process to discuss it with your manager. Your contribution is useful operating information. You are not responsible for auditing the entire AI system or resolving problems outside your role and authority.

22

PART IV • ACT AND ADAPT

My 30-Day Summary

Capture what you learned and what you need next

Keep this summary proportionate. Use non-sensitive reflections in a personal copy and approved case references in workplace records. These prompts do not require a separate database of confidential information.

Reflection Prompt	My Notes
Work AI performs	
Work I continue to own	
Judgment or craft I need supported practice to strengthen	
Hidden work I need to surface	
Personal AI or approval question I need clarified	
AI monitoring or performance measure I need to understand	
Training or authority I need	
My next development opportunity	
One agreed improvement and its responsible contact	
Agreed next step, review point, and follow-up status	

Human Contribution Still Matters

Working with digital labor is not a contest between human speed and machine speed. AI will often be faster at producing a draft, searching a large information set, categorizing routine work, or executing a repeatable process.

Your value includes what happens around that capability: understanding context, recognizing consequence, protecting dignity, interpreting ambiguity, challenging unsupported conclusions, preserving trust, handling exceptions, learning from failure, and remaining accountable for decisions that affect people.

DO NOT CARRY THE TRANSITION THROUGH PERSONAL HEROICS

Those responsibilities should become visible, supported, developed, and valued parts of the future of work. They should not become excuses for overloading employees with every difficult case or asking people to repair poorly designed systems indefinitely.

The future of work will be determined by whether people can work with AI without losing the judgment, trust, dignity, learning, and human connection that make work worth doing well.

23

CONTINUE THE WORK

Resources and Research Foundation

Go deeper when your role, workflow, or organization requires more structure

Companion Resources

Responsible AI Transition Framework

The free executive governance framework for introducing AI and digital labor responsibly.

Hybrid Intelligence Organizations: A Field Manual for Managing Human and Digital Work

The deeper operating reference for leaders, managers, practitioners, and transformation teams.

Research Foundation

International Labour Organization. [Generative AI and Jobs: A Refined Global Index of Occupational Exposure](#)

World Economic Forum. [Future of Jobs Report 2025 — Skills Outlook](#)

OECD. [How Widespread Is Algorithmic Management in Workplaces?](#)

NIST. [AI Risk Management Framework and Human-AI Interaction Guidance](#)

European Commission. [AI Literacy — Questions and Answers](#)

UNESCO. [I'd Blush If I Could: Closing Gender Divides in Digital Skills Through Education](#)

Microsoft and LinkedIn. [2024 Work Trend Index — Bring Your Own AI \(BYOAI\)](#)

Deloitte UK. [GenAI Workforce Survey 2026 — Shadow AI](#)

Deloitte. [Tech Trends 2026 — AI Investment and Workforce Readiness](#)

About the Author

Dr. Timothy J. Giardino is the founder of [myWorkforceAgents.ai](#) and creator of The Responsible AI Transition (TRAIT) Pledge and Framework. His work focuses on Managing Hybrid Intelligence, responsible digital-labor adoption, workforce transition, human judgment, organizational trust, and the design of work systems where people and AI operate together.

[myWorkforceAgents.ai](#) | *I build AI to keep work human.*

DOCUMENT STATUS

Version 1.2 | October 2026 edition. Released October 1, 2026. This revision adds practical guidance on meaningful review, personal-agent boundaries, correction follow-through, review capacity, supported judgment development, role meaning, monitoring fairness, and authorized fallback.

This guide is an educational resource. It does not establish legal, contractual, or employment rights, guarantee protection against retaliation, or authorize actions outside your role. Organizations remain responsible for safe system design, governance, workload, compliance, fair evaluation, and continuity. Apply relevant law, professional standards, agreements, and authorized workplace procedures.

For managers, team leaders, and practitioners ready to move from individual adaptation to organizational implementation, use the open-source [Responsible AI Transition \(TRAIT\) Framework](#) to assess and govern AI-enabled work at the work-system level.