AI Is Already in Your Workplace

Edited interview transcript | October 28, 2026 | Interviewer: Rich Morahan |

Guest: Amanda Haddaway

[Editorial note: All exchanges have been edited for clarity, concision and readability rather than presented as a verbatim transcript.]

1. **What are the three most critical issues around AI and human resources today?**

RICH MORAHAN:

What would you say are the three most critical issues around AI and human resources today? [Question reconstructed; recording began after the initial response.]

AMANDA HADDAWAY:

I would put three issues at the top of the list: establishing clear AI guidelines and guardrails, protecting data privacy and confidentiality, and addressing bias and accountability in employment decisions. These are not just technology issues. They are leadership, HR and governance issues.

AMANDA HADDAWAY:

First, organizations need to define what tools employees may use, what information they may enter and what level of human review is required. Without those expectations, employees are making their own decisions about how to use AI, often with good intentions but without fully understanding the risks.

Second, there are significant data privacy concerns. Employees may enter proprietary information, trade secrets, employee records or other confidential material into personal AI accounts. What happens to that information depends on the tool, the account type, its settings and the provider's terms. Employers need to understand those differences and establish safeguards before sensitive information is shared.

Third is bias and accountability. AI can be useful in recruiting, screening and compensation analysis, but it is not always right or neutral. Employers need to evaluate and employment decisions. You cannot outsource your legal obligations or your judgment to an algorithm.

RICH MORAHAN:

The results can look so polished and neutral that someone in leadership may assume they are correct simply because they came from an outside system. Are there other AI issues beyond personal information that companies should consider?

2. **What other AI issues do not involve personal information?**

AMANDA HADDAWAY:
Absolutely. Intellectual property and trade secrets are major concerns. Employees often have legitimate access to proprietary business information in the course of their work. But if they upload that information into an AI tool, employers need to know where it goes, who can access it and how it may be used.

There are also concerns about accuracy and reputational damage. We use AI because we think it will make us faster and more efficient, but speed is not always the same as quality. Is the information accurate? Does it reflect the organization's standards and reputation? And are we relying too heavily on what technology vendors tell us without independently evaluating their claims?

RICH MORAHAN:
Even when we hire experts, we need a healthy degree of skepticism. What concrete steps should companies take?

3. **What should companies implement?**

AMANDA HADDAWAY:
I keep coming back to guardrails: clear procedures, approved tools and practical guidance about what is and is not acceptable. An employer might designate Microsoft Copilot as its preferred tool, for example, and specify that employees must use the approved work account rather than a personal account. Other organizations may approve a suite of tools for different purposes.

And there must be training. Sending employees a policy is not enough. I have written hundreds of employee handbooks, and I have come to terms with the fact that my beautiful creations are read by very few people! We need to explain the rules, demonstrate safe use and give employees opportunities to ask questions.

RICH MORAHAN: So simply telling employees which tool to use without training them or explaining why is not enough.

AMANDA HADDAWAY:
Exactly. And this is not a one-and-done exercise. AI tools and practices are evolving rapidly. Organizations should revisit their guidance regularly, at least annually and sooner when significant changes occur. What made sense six months ago may need to be updated.

4. **How can companies integrate AI with their goals?**

RICH MORAHAN:
Beyond guardrails, how can organizations integrate AI into their plans and goals creatively and flexibly?

AMANDA HADDAWAY:
We need to be careful not to confuse more output with better output. More is not better if the work is inaccurate, inconsistent, incomplete or unnecessary. The starting point should be the organization's goals, not simply the availability of a new tool.

I am teaching an employment law course at a local college this semester. The college requires an AI usage statement in our syllabus. I tell students I do not object to using AI to support their assignments, but they must fact-check it. In my own testing, I have seen inconsistencies and outright errors in AI-generated employment law information. Human expertise and judgment remain essential.

From an HR standpoint, we also need to protect workplace culture and employee experience. Technology should help us accomplish our mission without undermining the relationships, trust and human interaction that make organizations successful.

RICH MORAHAN:
That flexibility and respect for people are what help organizations thrive. How do clear AI guidelines benefit a company?

5. What are the benefits of clear AI usage guidelines?

AMANDA HADDAWAY:
Risk reduction is the first benefit. When employees know what is expected, everyone can work from the same set of standards. Guidelines also promote consistency across the organization.

Think about Dunkin'. Each location is different, but customers still have certain expectations whether they visit a store in Maryland or Rhode Island. Employees and managers should have that same consistency when it comes to AI practices.

Trust and accountability are important, too. Guidelines alone will not prevent every problem, but they create a framework for responsible use, management oversight and better decisions. Good guidelines are not just about restricting employees. They also givepeople confidence to use approved tools appropriately.

6. Is there a danger from lone-wolf AI experts?

RICH MORAHAN:
What about someone who decides independently to use an unapproved tool and brings the results into the organization without explaining how they were produced?

AMANDA HADDAWAY:

That lone-wolf approach is a real concern. Every organization has early adopters, and their curiosity can be a tremendous asset. But enthusiasm can sometimes outpace judgment or organizational oversight.

I have tried a number of AI tools myself, and some are better suited to particular tasks than others. A company may reasonably approve different tools for different purposes. The challenge is when an individual employee makes those decisions without the proper security, compliance or leadership review.

Someone can be very good at using AI without being the right person to establish the organization's compliance requirements, policies or governance. We should encourage innovation while making sure authority and accountability remain clear.

7. What have we missed?

RICH MORAHAN: What else should organizations be thinking about?

AMANDA HADDAWAY: We have talked about early adopters, but we also have employees who are slower to adopt technology or are resistant to it. If an organization is implementing AI, it needs to make sure those employees are not left behind. Some will need additional training and opportunities to build their skills.

AI is changing how people perform work, but it does not eliminate our responsibilities to customers and clients. We cannot become so fascinated by technology that we forget our mission, vision, goals and the people we serve.

And finally, AI is already in your workplace. Assuming it is not being used is not a strategy. Leaders need to understand how employees are using these tools now and then establish a thoughtful approach that balances innovation, safety, accountability and the human side of work.

RICH MORAHAN:
That is a strong point to end on. AI is already here, and organizations are still learning how deeply it affects their work. Thank you, Amanda.

AMANDA HADDAWAY: My pleasure. Thank you for having me.