

Faster People, Same P&L

A personal leadership reflection built around one cited data point. The CEO admits a misjudgment, which builds credibility and invites peers into the conversation.

Format: LinkedIn post · **Voice:** CEO of a global electronic components distributor (fictional)



Chief Executive Officer

Global electronic components distributor

A year ago, I told our leadership team that AI would pay for itself by spring.

I was wrong. Not about AI, but about how.

We rolled out AI tools across the company: quoting, customer service, demand forecasting. People loved them. Our reps were answering questions faster. Our planners were building forecasts in hours instead of days. Every team had a story.

What we didn't have was a change in the P&L.

It turns out we're not alone. McKinsey's latest State of AI survey found that 80% of respondents say AI has improved their individual productivity. Only 37% attribute any EBIT impact to it.

That gap is where we were living. We had made individual people faster without changing how the work flowed between them. A quote that took 10 minutes instead of 30 still sat in the same approval queue for two days.

So we stopped asking "where can we add AI?" and started asking "what would this process look like if we designed it today?" That question is harder. It means changing roles, handoffs and sometimes org charts. It's also where the returns showed up.

The lesson I keep coming back to: AI isn't a tool you hand out. It's a reason to rethink how you work.

Leaders, where has AI made your people faster but not changed your business, at least not yet?

Source for statistics: McKinsey & Company, "The State of AI in 2026: On the Road to ROI" (August 2026).

Written by Katharine English. The executive, company and anecdotes are fictional; this post was created as a portfolio sample.