LUMO INSIGHTS

Thursday, 30 April 2026

AI’s impact at work: surprising new shifts every leader should know

Executive Summary

Emerging evidence in the last 48 hours challenges assumptions about how AI is changing jobs. While fears of an “AI job apocalypse” haven’t materialised at a macro level, new analyses reveal a more nuanced reality: AI is creating new roles and boosting productivity even as it accelerates shifts in job content and puts pressure on certain groups of workers. In response, leading organisations - along with governments and labour groups - are starting to redesign work, invest in skills, and address employee anxieties to ensure AI-driven transformation succeeds without leaving people behind.

AI’s true impact on Jobs: gains, not just losses

Amid widespread anxiety about robots taking jobs, the latest data paints a more complex picture than simple mass unemployment. Contrary to dystopian predictions, there is no sign of an immediate AI-driven jobs apocalypse on a broad scale. In fact, global labour market data suggests stability - and even growth in new kinds of work - despite the rapid rise of generative AI. LinkedIn’s worldwide analysis shows that AI has actually added around 1.3 /million new jobs in recent years (www.weforum.org [1]). Roles such as AI engineers, data analysts, and machine learning specialists are booming, with AI Engineer ranking among the fastest-growing job titles on the platform (www.weforum.org [2]). Major investments in AI are creating demand for skills and services that didn’t exist a few years ago.

At the same time, there are clear signs that AI is beginning to reshape the job market unevenly. A landmark Stanford Digital Economy Lab study indicates that early-career workers in highly AI-exposed occupations - fields like software development, customer support, and marketing - have experienced a significant employment decline since late 2022 (time.com [3]). In these roles, employment for 22- to 25-year-olds dropped roughly 16% relative to less-exposed peers (time.com [4]). Meanwhile, many hands-on or physically intensive jobs, from healthcare aides to mechanics and drivers, have seen steady or even rising employment (time.com [5]). Overall, total employment has grown in the post-ChatGPT era, and job losses remain concentrated in particular tasks or entry-level positions rather than across the board (www.brookings.edu [6]). This pattern suggests that AI’s impact so far is more about shifting which jobs - and which tasks within jobs - are growing or declining, rather than eliminating work outright.

Perhaps most striking is the boost in productivity accompanying these shifts. In sectors that are aggressively adopting AI, labour productivity growth rates have surged, roughly quadrupling since 2022 in industries most exposed to AI advances. This means companies effectively get more output per employee by automating repetitive tasks and augmenting human capabilities. Additionally, workers who have expertise in AI are reaping rewards. New analysis finds that professionals with

advanced AI skills command a 56% higher wage on average than their peers in similar roles without those skills (gloat.com [7]). In short, rather than a simple story of human jobs being replaced, the real-world data points to a more complicated transformation: AI is driving significant efficiency gains and even overall job creation, but it's also changing the distribution of work and putting new pressures on parts of the workforce.

References:
[1] www.weforum.org — https://www.weforum.org/stories/2026/01/ai-has-already-added-1-3-million-new-jobs-according-to-linkedin-data/#:~:text=of%3A%20World%20Economic%20Forum%20Annual,on%20upskilling%20staff%20with%20AI
[2] www.weforum.org — https://www.weforum.org/stories/2026/01/ai-has-already-added-1-3-million-new-jobs-according-to-linkedin-data/#:~:text=data%20centre%20jobs%20and%201,of%20AI%20to%20Machine%20Learning
[3] time.com — https://time.com/7312205/ai-jobs-stanford/#:~:text=paths%20%E2%80%94%20The%20data%20shows,directly%20saying%20that%20AI%20was
[4] time.com — https://time.com/7312205/ai-jobs-stanford/#:~:text=paths%20%E2%80%94%20The%20data%20shows,directly%20saying%20that%20AI%20was
[5] time.com — https://time.com/7312205/ai-jobs-stanford/#:~:text=the%20most%20AI,the%20changes%20were%20being%20driven
[6] www.brookings.edu — https://www.brookings.edu/articles/new-data-show-no-ai-jobs-apocalypse-for-now/#:~:text=found%20the%20opposite,month%20moving
[7] gloat.com — https://gloat.com/blog/ai-workforce-trends/#:~:text=professionals%20in%202026%20will%20combine,5

Redesigning roles and workflows around AI

Forward-looking organisations are not treating AI as just another IT project - they're reinventing how work gets done. The companies succeeding with AI are redesigning roles and workflows to combine human strengths with AI capabilities (gloat.com [1]). For example, tasks that AI handles well (data processing, drafting content, routine analysis) are being offloaded to algorithms, freeing employees to focus on the more strategic, creative, and complex aspects of their jobs. Job titles and team structures are evolving: new roles like AI prompt engineer, AI ethicist, and AI auditor are emerging, while many existing positions are being redefined. A customer service representative might now act as an "AI+human" supervisor, overseeing AI-driven chatbots and stepping in for nuanced human touchpoints, rather than manually handling every inquiry. In effect, AI is becoming less a tool and more a collaborative colleague - shifting from simply providing recommendations to autonomously executing multi-step tasks as an agent (www.forbes.com [2]). The organisations that thrive are those actively designing these human-AI partnerships instead of just trying to plug AI into old processes.

Some bold examples highlight how reimagining work with AI can unlock tremendous value - but also raise tough questions. OpenAI itself made waves by proposing that the productivity gains from AI be shared with workers as an "efficiency dividend," even suggesting a four-day (32-hour) work week at full pay (www.forbes.com [3]). This idea, while exploratory, underscores a counterintuitive possibility: AI could lead to shorter workweeks and better work-life balance if its benefits are distributed, rather than simply using it to cut jobs. Meanwhile, startup founders and small businesses are showing what's possible when a team fully embraces automation. In one striking case, a healthcare startup launched by two brothers is reportedly on track to generate $1.8 /billion in annual revenue with only those two people on payroll - after leveraging a dozen AI tools to handle everything from customer acquisition to service delivery (www.forbes.com [4]). The founder notes that the lesson isn't to lay off your workforce, but to recognise that AI has dramatically raised the ceiling on what a small, empowered team can achieve (www.forbes.com [5]). Established companies are taking cues from these pioneers by flattening hierarchies and encouraging more agile, cross-functional teams that use AI to multiply their output.

Crucially, redesigning work for the AI age isn't just a technical challenge - it's a human one. New research out of Eindhoven University of Technology demonstrates that when employees are trained in "job crafting" with AI, they can proactively reshape their own tasks and workflows to integrate AI in ways that enhance their effectiveness and job satisfaction (www.tue.nl [6]). The study found that such

training led to more alignment between human tasks and technology, sparking greater initiative and innovation among workers (www.tue.nl [7]). The implication is clear: meaningful work need not disappear with AI's rise; it can be actively redefined. By placing employees at the centre of AI integration, companies ensure technology serves to support people rather than render them obsolete (www.tue.nl [8]). This human-centric redesign of roles - where AI takes over the tedious grunt work and employees take on higher-value, more fulfilling responsibilities - helps maintain morale and performance. It's a strong antidote to the fear that introducing AI means a less engaging or more alienating workplace.

References:
[1] gloat.com — https://gloat.com/blog/ai-workforce-trends/#:~:text=expected%20to%20launch%20agentic%20AI,The%20most%20valuable
[2] www.forbes.com — https://www.forbes.com/sites/jodiecook/2026/04/28/openai-just-proposed-a-4-day-work-week-what-aprils-ai-news-means-for-you/#:~:text=Stanford%20numbers%20next%20time%20someone,now%20choose%20between%20AI%20that
[3] www.forbes.com — https://www.forbes.com/sites/jodiecook/2026/04/28/openai-just-proposed-a-4-day-work-week-what-aprils-ai-news-means-for-you/#:~:text=month%20and%20what%20they%20mean,Audit%20your
[4] www.forbes.com — https://www.forbes.com/sites/jodiecook/2026/04/28/openai-just-proposed-a-4-day-work-week-what-aprils-ai-news-means-for-you/#:~:text=two,fire%20your%20team
[5] www.forbes.com — https://www.forbes.com/sites/jodiecook/2026/04/28/openai-just-proposed-a-4-day-work-week-what-aprils-ai-news-means-for-you/#:~:text=There%20are%20exactly%20two%20humans,they%20would%20pay%20you%2010
[6] www.tue.nl — https://www.tue.nl/en/news-and-events/news-overview/24-04-2026-shaping-the-future-of-work-with-ai#:~:text=developed%20a%20fourteen%20day%20online,reducing%20employees%20to%20executors%20of
[7] www.tue.nl — https://www.tue.nl/en/news-and-events/news-overview/24-04-2026-shaping-the-future-of-work-with-ai#:~:text=developed%20a%20fourteen%20day%20online,reducing%20employees%20to%20executors%20of
[8] www.tue.nl — https://www.tue.nl/en/news-and-events/news-overview/24-04-2026-shaping-the-future-of-work-with-ai#:~:text=of%20this%20research%20lies%20in,Lennep%20Master%E2%80%99s%20Thesis%20Award%20is

Mind the gap: skills and capabilities in an AI world

While technology advances at breakneck speed, many workforces are struggling to keep up. A startling gap is emerging between the AI capabilities companies need and the skills their employees currently have. In fact, a recent McKinsey-informed analysis reports that although 89% of business leaders acknowledge their people must develop AI skills, a mere 6% of organisations have actually begun upskilling their staff in a meaningful way. This chasm between intent and action is one of the most urgent challenges of 2026. It suggests that many companies are forging ahead with AI investments without adequately preparing their workforce - or perhaps not moving on AI at all because they lack confidence in their people's readiness.

Leading organisations are responding by treating AI-related training and change management as strategic priorities, not afterthoughts. They recognise that the return on AI capital depends on human capital. Some firms are investing heavily in comprehensive AI education for employees at all levels, offering everything from formal courses on prompt engineering and data literacy to hackathons and hands-on experiments with new AI tools. A common theme is to tie training directly to employees' day-to-day work, so that new skills translate into real productivity boosts. For example, global bank HSBC recently introduced an AI training programme for all its 240,000 staff, focusing on practical applications in their specific roles (source). Similarly, the government of Singapore, in partnership with employer groups and unions, just launched a Tripartite Jobs Council aimed at making AI skills "as pervasive as possible" across the workforce (www.channelnewsasia.com [1]). This includes curating some 1,600 AI-related courses under a national SkillsFuture initiative and even subsidising premium AI tool subscriptions for workers to practice using these technologies (www.channelnewsasia.com [2]). These efforts acknowledge that empowering existing employees with new competencies is far more sustainable - and socially responsible - than hoping to hire your way out of an AI talent shortage.

The payoff for closing the skills gap can be significant. Companies that successfully build what one report calls a "human premium" - the unique advantages unlocked when skilled people work hand-in-hand with AI - are seeing measurable gains in innovation and output (www.udacity.com [3]) (gloat.com

[4]). They also mitigate the risk of burnout and job dissatisfaction by giving employees the tools and training to make AI an asset rather than a threat. In contrast, when organisations neglect upskilling, they not only fail to capture AI's full productivity potential, but also risk eroding morale and engagement. Workers who aren't given opportunities to grow may become anxious or resistant, slowing down transformation efforts. In short, bridging the capability gap isn't just a nice-to-have - it's becoming a make-or-break factor in whether AI initiatives actually deliver value.

References:
[1] www.channelnewsasia.com — https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/tripartite-jobs-council-ai-impact-work-industry-business-employment-ntuc-mom-snef-6089891#:~:text=providing%20targeted%20transition%20support%20for,to%20use%20it%20like%20a
[2] www.channelnewsasia.com — https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/tripartite-jobs-council-ai-impact-work-industry-business-employment-ntuc-mom-snef-6089891#:~:text=practical%20in%20action%2C,in%20the%20workforce%20and
[3] www.udacity.com — https://www.udacity.com/report/state-of-ai-at-work-report-2026#:~:text=success%20depends%20less%20on%20tools,Premium%2C%E2%80%9D%20the%20unique%20advantage%20created
[4] gloat.com — https://gloat.com/blog/ai-workforce-trends/#:~:text=,AI%20fluency%20with%20distinctly%20human

Leading through AI: trust, transparency and transformation

As AI-driven change accelerates, leadership and culture are proving as important as technology in determining outcomes. Many employees are excited about AI's potential, but they also harbor deep anxieties about job security, fairness, and the pace of change (businessplus.ie [1]). In a recent U.S. survey, over half of workers said they're worried about AI's long-term impact on their job prospects (www.pewresearch.org [2]). Workplace surveys show fear and uncertainty rising, especially when people don't understand how new AI tools will affect them. That means change management around AI needs a heavy dose of empathy and clarity. The companies navigating this well are communicating early and often about why they're adopting AI, how roles will evolve, and what support employees can expect. They're also listening to employees' concerns. For instance, some organisations are involving staff in selecting and testing AI tools before they are rolled out, ensuring the technology truly helps rather than frustrates the workforce.

Ignoring these human factors can lead to active resistance - or even public conflict. Earlier this month, the union at non-profit newsroom ProPublica went on a 24-hour strike, primarily over the organisation's refusal to agree on "just cause" layoff protections and guardrails around AI use in editorial work (www.poynter.org [3]) (www.poynter.org [4]). Union representatives argued that the rapid incorporation of artificial intelligence in journalism could jeopardise jobs and editorial integrity, and they demanded a voice in how AI is implemented - including the right for journalists to decline using certain AI tools that might introduce errors or ethical issues (www.poynter.org [5]). Similarly, tech giant Amazon, which let go of 30,000 employees in late 2025 and early 2026 citing AI-driven efficiencies, faced a backlash from its staff. Over 1,000 Amazon workers signed an open letter calling for transparency into how AI algorithms were used to decide who was laid off, reflecting a deep mistrust of opaque "black box" systems making high-stakes personnel decisions.

These incidents underscore a critical lesson: successful AI integration requires trust and shared purpose between leadership and the workforce. Legal and policy frameworks are beginning to catch up as well - from calls in Australia for new laws and an AI taskforce to prevent unchecked workplace surveillance and job insecurity (www.abc.net.au [6]) (www.abc.net.au [7]), to Singapore's just-announced council bringing together government, employers, and unions to guide an "inclusive, forward-thinking" AI transition (www.channelnewsasia.com [8]) (www.channelnewsasia.com [9]). Progressive business leaders aren't waiting for regulations to dictate their moves; they are proactively establishing ethical AI guidelines, investing in robust governance (some boards are even adding AI oversight committees), and engaging employees and stakeholders in co-creating an AI strategy. The gap between those who flourish in the AI era and those who falter often comes down to this people-

centric leadership. Companies that blend innovation with transparency, worker involvement, and continuous learning are not only avoiding backlash - they're cultivating a more adaptable, motivated workforce ready to capture AI's benefits. Those that focus narrowly on cost-cutting or technology for its own sake, on the other hand, risk eroding trust and undermining the very productivity gains they hope to achieve.

References:
[1] businessplus.ie — https://businessplus.ie/jobs/ai-job-loss-fears-employees/#:~:text=Nearly%20half%20of%20employees%20fear,increasing%20workplace%20surveillance%20and%20monitoring
[2] www.pewresearch.org — https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2025/02/25/u-s-workers-are-more-worried-than-hopeful-about-future-ai-use-in-the-workplace/#:~:text=in%20the%20future,about%20how%20AI%20may%20be
[3] www.poynter.org — https://www.poynter.org/business-work/2026/propublica-strike-artificial-intelligence-layoffs-wages/#:~:text=naive%20enough%20to%20believe%20that,wire%20service%E2%80%99s%20union%20representing%20workers
[4] www.poynter.org — https://www.poynter.org/business-work/2026/propublica-strike-artificial-intelligence-layoffs-wages/#:~:text=consulting%20the%20union,%E2%80%9CIt%E2%80%99s%20too%20soon
[5] www.poynter.org — https://www.poynter.org/business-work/2026/propublica-strike-artificial-intelligence-layoffs-wages/#:~:text=consulting%20the%20union,%E2%80%9CIt%E2%80%99s%20too%20soon
[6] www.abc.net.au — https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-04-29/ai-workplace-regulation-federal-government/106611684#:~:text=workplace%2C%20according%20to%20a%20new,The%20report%20says%20it%27s
[7] www.abc.net.au — https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-04-29/ai-workplace-regulation-federal-government/106611684#:~:text=market%20since%20ChatGPT%27s%20launch%20in,consult%20with%20workers%20and%20unions
[8] www.channelnewsasia.com — https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/tripartite-jobs-council-ai-impact-work-industry-business-employment-ntuc-mom-snef-6089891#:~:text=new%20council%20will%20support%20the,all%20collars%2C%20especially%20PMEs%20and
[9] www.channelnewsasia.com — https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/tripartite-jobs-council-ai-impact-work-industry-business-employment-ntuc-mom-snef-6089891#:~:text=adopted%20AI,engaged%20more%20than%20420%20companies

Key Statistics

- AI has created ~1.3 /million new jobs globally, even as hiring remains 20% below pre-pandemic levels ([www.weforum.org](https://www.weforum.org/stories/2026/01/ai-has-already-added-1-3-million-new-jobs-according-to-linkedin-data/#:~:text=of%3A%20World%20Economic%20Forum%20Annual,on%20upskilling%20staff%20with%20AI)).
- Employment for 22 - 25-year-olds in highly AI-exposed jobs has fallen roughly 16% since late 2022 ([time.com](https://time.com/7312205/ai-jobs-stanford/#:~:text=paths%20%E2%80%94%20The%20data%20shows,directly%20saying%20that%20AI%20was)).
- Advanced AI skills carry a ~56% wage premium over similar roles without those skills ([gloat.com](https://gloat.com/blog/ai-workforce-trends/#:~:text=professionals%20in%202026%20will%20combine,5)).

KEY TAKEAWAY

AI is transforming work faster - and differently - than many expected. Rather than a sudden mass automation, we see huge productivity gains and new roles alongside targeted job shifts and rising employee anxieties. For leaders, the lesson is clear: success hinges on pairing bold technology adoption with equally bold people strategies. That means investing in upskilling, redefining jobs around human-AI collaboration, and building trust through transparency and worker engagement. Businesses that focus on empowering their people to thrive with AI are leaping ahead, while those that ignore the human factor risk stagnation, resistance, and loss of talent.

Sources

OpenAI Just Proposed A 4-Day Work Week (What April's AI News Means For You) – Forbes
https://www.forbes.com/sites/jodiecook/2026/04/28/openai-just-proposed-a-4-day-work-week-what-aprils-ai-news-means-for-you/
AI has already added 1.3 million new jobs, according to LinkedIn data – World Economic Forum

https://www.weforum.org/stories/2026/01/ai-has-already-added-1-3-million-new-jobs-according-to-linkedin-data/

Who’s Losing Jobs to AI? New Stanford Analysis Breaks It Down – TIME
https://time.com/7312205/ai-jobs-stanford/

ProPublica’s union staged a 24-hour strike over AI, job protections – Poynter
https://www.poynter.org/business-work/2026/propublica-strike-artificial-intelligence-layoffs-wages/

Australia lacks national strategy to regulate AI spread in workplace, report states – ABC News
https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-04-29/ai-workplace-regulation-federal-government/106611684

New tripartite council on jobs to help workers, businesses make AI skills 'as pervasive as possible' – Channel NewsAsia
https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/tripartite-jobs-council-ai-impact-work-industry-business-employment-ntuc-mom-snef-6089891