

# Bridging Confidence Gaps in Leadership

How AI-Enabled Coaching Transforms  
Performance and Psychological Readiness

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# About Me



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Focus: Leadership confidence, impostor  
syndrome, AI-enabled development

# Why This Conversation Matters Now

## Leadership today is defined by:

- Accelerating AI adoption
- Rising complexity and ambiguity
- Constant visibility and scrutiny
- Fewer clear answers, more judgment calls



# Why This Matters Globally (Not Just in Tech-Forward Markets)



- AI adoption is uneven across regions and sectors
- Leadership visibility is increasing everywhere
- Confidence gaps widen when capability growth is non-linear
- HR leaders are expected to lead without uniform readiness

# The Hidden Risk in Digital Transformation



## What stalls transformation most often:

- Hesitation disguised as caution
- Over-reliance on data to avoid judgment
- Fear of being exposed as 'not ready'
- Leaders waiting for certainty that never comes

# Confidence Is Not a Soft Concept

## Leadership confidence directly influences:

- Decision speed and quality
- Willingness to experiment
- Adoption of AI and analytics
- Team trust and psychological safety



# When Capability Outpaces Identity



**A common leadership experience today:**

- ‘I understand the tools...’
- ‘I can explain the strategy...’
- ‘But I’m not sure I trust myself yet.’

# The Confidence Gap Has a Name

- Often described as impostor syndrome
- Not a personality flaw
- A predictable response to rapid change
- Intensified by AI-driven decision environments



# The HR Decision Point

## What HR is often asked to deliver:

- AI readiness
- Leadership capability
- Ethical governance
- Culture and trust

**The gap  
between  
expectation  
and  
support is  
where  
confidence  
erodes**

## What HR is rarely given:

- Time for leaders to build confidence
- Safe practice environments
- Coaching at the moment of decision
- Psychological readiness metrics

# What Traditional Leadership Development Misses



## Traditional models focus on:

- Knowledge transfer
- Competency checklists
- One-time training events

## What they often overlook:

- Psychological readiness
- Confidence under pressure
- Ongoing sense-making



# Reframing the Role of AI

## AI fails when positioned as:

- Authority
- Evaluator
- Replacement for judgment

## AI succeeds when positioned as:

- Coach
- Thought partner
- Sense-making support



# Introducing AI-Enabled Coaching



**AI-enabled coaching supports leaders by:**

- Creating reflection moments
- Testing decisions safely
- Providing context, not answers
- Reducing isolation in leadership

# The Confidence–Capability Readiness Model

Leadership readiness emerges when:

- Skills are visible
- Expectations are clear
- Coaching is embedded
- Psychological safety is reinforced
- Confidence grows through practice



# What This Looks Like in Practice

## In practice, organizations are:

- Embedding coaching into leadership programs
- Using skills intelligence to reduce ambiguity
- Creating micro-learning and reflection loops
- Supporting leaders through real decisions



# What Leaders Actually Experience



## Leaders report:

- Less isolation
- Better questions
- Faster judgment
- Greater willingness to act

# Measurable Impact of Coaching-Centered Design



## Observed outcomes include:

- Stronger team functioning
- Faster role transitions
- Greater confidence in decision-making
- Higher adoption of digital tools

# Why AI Without Confidence Is a Risk

## Without confidence:

- Leaders defer responsibility
- Judgment becomes automated
- Accountability erodes
- Trust declines



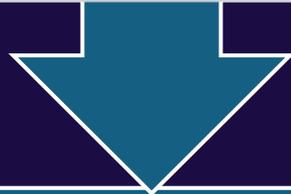
# When Confidence Gaps Go Unaddressed

## What leaders often see

AI tools introduced with efficiency promises

Adoption stalls or stays superficial

Quiet resistance labeled as “change fatigue”



## What’s actually happening

Fear of role erosion or obsolescence

Tools perceived as evaluators, not partners

Confidence erodes before capability can grow

## What changes when confidence is designed in:

- Safer experimentation and faster adoption
- Time reclaimed for judgment, creativity, and relationships
- Teams shift from resisting change to leading it

**This is not a technology failure  
It’s a confidence design failure**

# HR as Ethical System Designer

## HR can lead by:

- Designing confidence into leadership systems
- Aligning AI, learning, and culture
- Acting as ethical stewards of AI adoption
- Shaping psychologically ready organizations



# A Global Leadership Imperative



**The future favors leaders who can:**

- Think clearly under pressure
- Partner effectively with AI
- Lead with confidence, not absolute certainty
- Create trust in complex systems

Design for confidence.  
Performance will follow.

# If This Resonated...

**Many organizations I work with are asking:**

- Where are our leaders hesitating?
- Where is confidence silently breaking down?
- How ready are we *psychologically*, not just technically?

**If you're exploring these questions, I'm always open to a conversation after the conference.**

**I work with HR and leadership teams through advisory and executive engagements.**

**Let's connect:** [linkedin.com/in/lancebradshaw](https://www.linkedin.com/in/lancebradshaw)

# Thank you!

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