



2026 HR Conference
Tech Enabled. People Centered.

Welcome!

Dr. Cheryl Richards

President & CEO | Catapult





CATAPULT

Welcome!

HR CONFERENCE 20

Tech Enabled. People Centered. 26

May 5-6, 2026 | Online + Raleigh, NC



Our Mission:

We provide employers with the confidence to navigate everyday operational challenges, making workplaces more effective and employees more successful.

CATAPULT

Everything HR. One partner.

From day-one compliance to executive coaching — every service Catapult offers, on one team.



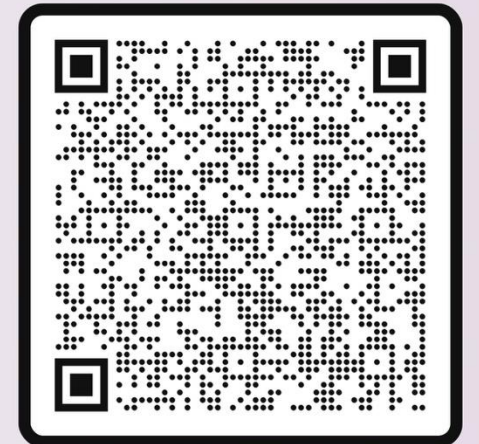
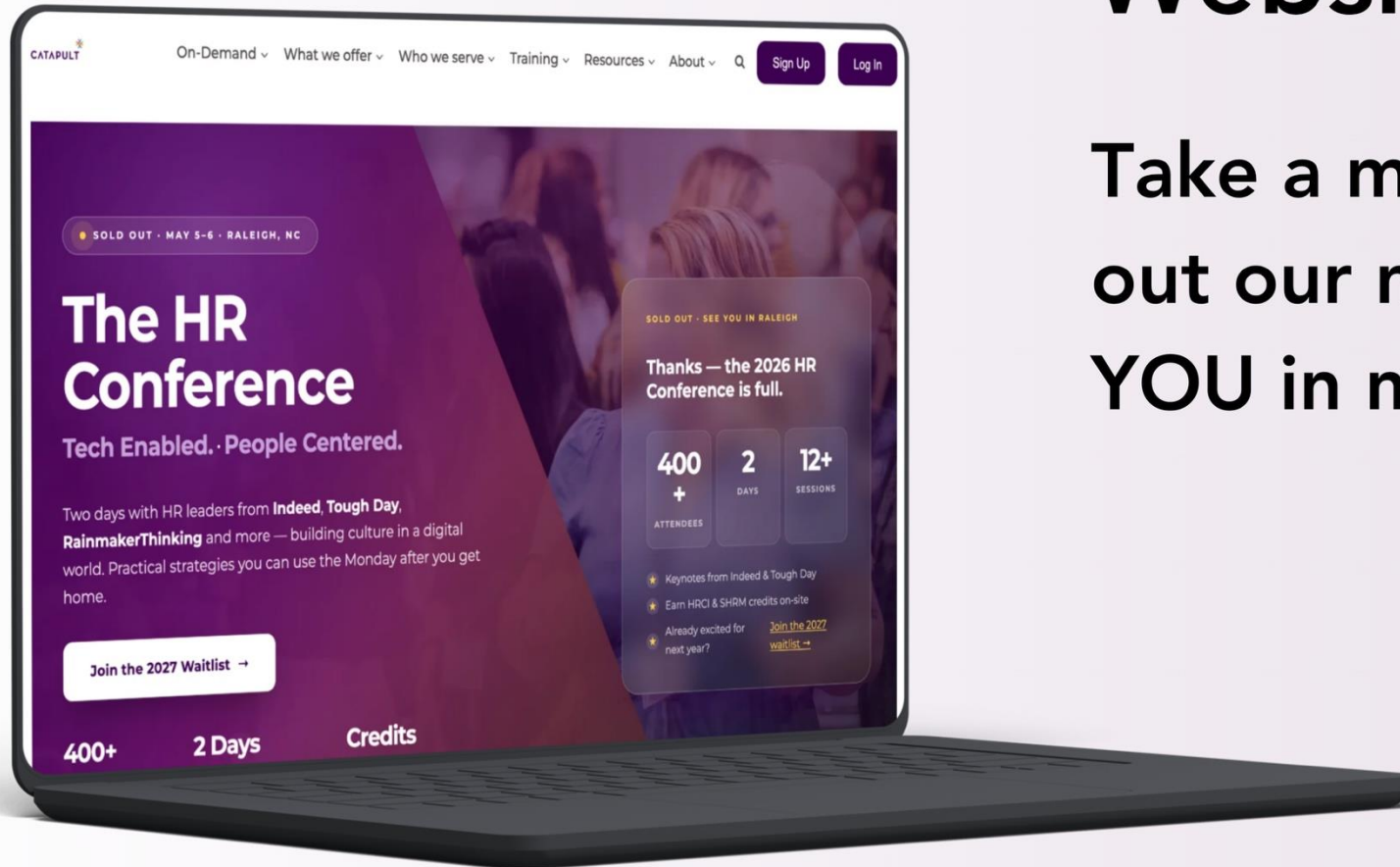


The HR team, behind your HR team.

- HR Compliance
- Fractional HR Leadership
- Recruiting & Talent Acquisition
- HR Data & Insights
- Learning & Development
- Strategic HR Consulting
- 50-State Coverage

Our New Website is Live!

Take a moment to check out our new site, built with YOU in mind.



COMING SOON

Human Resources Certificate Series

Three certificates. One clear path from HR generalist to people strategist.

✓
**HR Core Certificate:
From Basics to Confidence**

✓
**Strategic HR Certificate:
From Practitioner to
Business Partner**

✓
**HR Leadership Certificate:
From HR Operator to
People Strategist**

Instructor-led

In-Person or Virtual

3-Hour Modules

Each Module = Individual Course

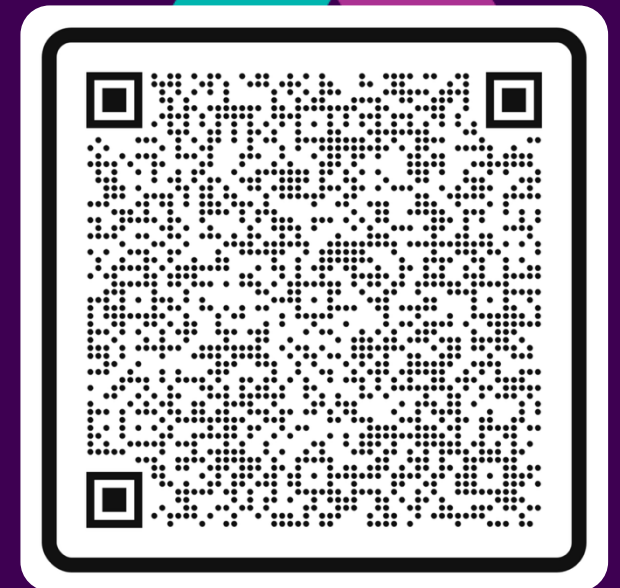
FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY

Get **\$100 off Class Pass** with
promo code:

Members: HRCONF2026

Non-Members: HRMEMB2026

SCAN to redeem.



Find Sparky and Win!

Sparky is everywhere. As you go through the conference, look for him and take photos. Whoever can find the most by lunch on day two **wins a prize!**



SCAN the QR Code on your badge, and share your photos, experiences, and thoughts throughout the event!



✕ ↶ - 🌐 **Publish**

Welcome to our 2026 HR Conference!



ALT + Photos 🗑️

Add a caption

These next two days have so much in store!
Share your photos, thoughts, and experience here with everyone.

White ▾

+ Post



JOIN US!

Day 1 Reception

May 5 | 4:30 - 6:00 PM

Play • Network • Win

**Caricature
Artist**



**Happy Hour +
Networking**



**Raffle
Prizes**



Join our waitlist



**SCAN TO JOIN THE WAITLIST FOR OUR 2027
HR CONFERENCE — AND SAVE 20%.**



**The 2027 HR Conference will be hosted in
Charlotte, NC, next March!**

Thank You To Our Sponsors!

When we set out to create an unforgettable conference experience, we knew it would take a community.

On behalf of Catapult, we extend our deepest gratitude to our incredible partners and sponsors—your support and commitment were instrumental in bringing this event to life.





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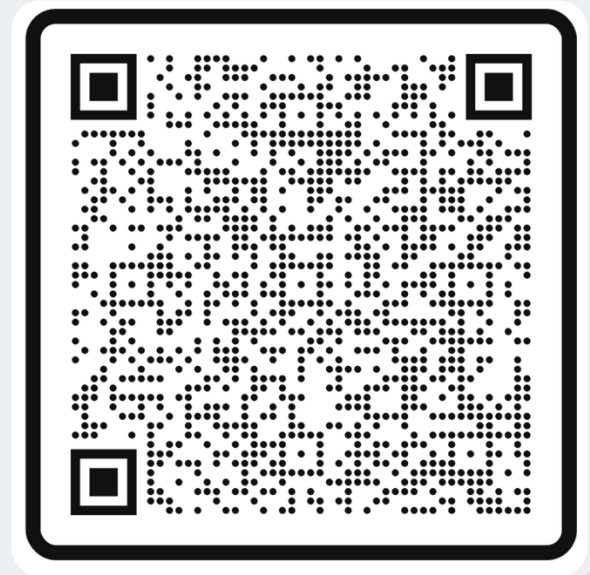
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Let's solve your people problems.

letscatapult.org



Scan to talk to our team



Bruce Tulgan

Founder & CEO

RainmakerThinking

Katherine von Jan

Co-Founder

Tough Day

Rod Gray

National Corporate
Accounts Director

Drylock Technologies

Dr. Laura Ullrich

Director of Economic
Research

Indeed

**Meet the Keynotes Who Are Changing
the Culture + Tech Conversation**



Building Culture in a Digital World

Bruce Tulgan

Founder & CEO | *RainmakerThinking*

**Change fatigue isn't the problem.
Unclear process is.**

AdonisPARTNERS™
Creating Value Through Business Excellence

Coffee Break Sponsor | Find Us During the Break



The Great Generational Shift

Bruce Tulgan

Founder & CEO | *RainmakerThinking*



Legal Update

Charlotte Smith

Labor and Employment Law Attorney,
Ogletree Deakins

2026 Catapult HR Conference | **Breakout** Session

Legal Update

Presenter

Charlotte Smith, Labor & Employment, Ogletree Deakins (Raleigh)

About the Presenter

Charlotte Smith

Labor & Employment Attorney

Ogletree Deakins – Raleigh, NC

- Defends employers in collective/class wage-and-hour matters and claims of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation
- Counsels employers and HR teams on hiring, discipline, accommodations, leaves, and terminations
- Drafts policies and delivers training on federal and state employment law compliance

Agenda

Section 1: AI in the Workplace

- AI adoption, acceptable use policies, employer liability for AI decisions

Section 2: DEI & Employee Relations in the Tech-Enabled Era

- AI bias in recruiting, ChatGPT-drafted complaints, AI in litigation

Section 3: Wage & Hour in the Digital Workplace

- Off-the-clock work, remote/hybrid compliance, multistate issues

Section 4: Building a People-Centered Culture

- Human-in-the-loop, digital communications, Action items

Section 1: AI in the Workplace

AI Is Already in Your Workplace

Adoption Outpacing Governance

AI tools deployed across HR, IT, compliance, and operations – often before legal review.

Shadow AI Risks

Employees using ChatGPT, Copilot, and other tools without oversight or policy.

Where It Shows Up

Recruiting, performance management, employee communications, compliance reporting.

The Bottom Line

If you don't have AI governance, you still have AI – you just don't know how it's being used.

Why You Need an AI Acceptable Use Policy

Legal & Regulatory Exposure

Data privacy violations, regulatory non-compliance, discovery & privilege risks.

Consistency & Defensibility

Guardrails ensure AI-assisted decisions are explainable, auditable, and defensible.

Getting Business to “Yes”

A practical AI policy allows innovation while legal manages risk – say “yes” with guardrails.

Core Elements of an Effective AI Use Policy

Permitted & Prohibited Uses

Define where AI can and cannot be used – especially for sensitive data and employment decisions.

Data Protection & Confidentiality

Address handling of personal, proprietary, and privileged information in AI tools.

Human Oversight & Accountability

Require human review for high-impact outputs; assign clear ownership for AI decisions.

Training, Monitoring & Updates

Educate employees; revisit the policy as technology and regulations evolve.

Employer Liability for AI-Driven Decisions

Bias in Screening & Promotion Tools

- AI can embed or amplify historical bias in hiring, promotion, and performance evaluation

EEOC Guidance

- Technical guidance on Title VII and AI in employment selection procedures
- Employers liable for vendor AI tools that produce disparate impact

Vendor Due Diligence & Audit Trails

- Request bias audits and accuracy data from vendors; contractually allocate risk
- Maintain audit trails for AI-driven employment decisions
- Human-in-the-loop review required for high-stakes decisions

Section 2: DEI & Employee Relations in the Tech-Enabled Era

AI-Assisted Candidate Screening: Bias Risks

Disparate Impact & Accessibility

- AI screening tools may produce disparate impact on protected classes
- ADA issues with video interviewing and AI-scored assessments

State Laws Are Moving Fast

- NYC Local Law 144: Bias audit + notice for automated employment decision tools
- Illinois AIVIA & HB 3773 (eff. Jan. 1, 2026): AI in employment under Human Rights Act
- Colorado AI Act (SB 24-205, eff. Feb. 2026): High-risk AI systems incl. employment
- California Civil Rights Council regs on automated-decision systems

Notice & Audit Obligations

- Vendor due diligence: request bias audits, contractually allocate risk

When Your Employee Is Represented by ChatGPT, Esq.

Recognizing AI-Drafted Complaints

- Sudden shift from informal emails to Shakespearean legalese
- Phrases like “hostile and offensive work environment,” “adverse employment action”
- Vague generalizations lacking specifics; bullet-pointed format with headings

Response Strategy

- Focus on substance, not AI language – ask for who/what/when/where
- Permissible to ask: “Did you use AI to write this?”
- No legal protection for AI use itself, but underlying content may be protected activity for retaliation purposes

AI in Litigation & Investigations

Rule 11 Reasonable Inquiry

- Fed. R. Civ. P. 11(b) requires attorneys to conduct a “reasonable inquiry” into filings
- Inform court “upon information and belief” if opposing party using AI

Recent Sanctions Cases

- *Future Field Solutions v. Van Norstrand* (D. Md. Jan. 23, 2026): AI-drafted filings without reasonable inquiry are sanctionable
- *Powhatan Cnty. School Bd. v. Skinger* (E.D. Va. June 2, 2025): Filings struck for citing “utterly irrelevant cases”
- *Flowz Digital LLC v. Dalal* (C.D. Cal. May 30, 2025): \$3,500 sanction for AI brief citing irrelevant/nonexistent cases

Section 3: Wage & Hour in the Digital Workplace

Top Wage & Hour Pitfalls

#1 Exempt Misclassification

- Assuming salaried = exempt. Must meet salary AND duties tests. Audit actual duties, not just titles.

#2 Contractor Misclassification

- Labels don't control; economic reality does. Apply the legal tests, not convenience.

#3 Overtime Miscalculations

- Forgetting to include bonuses, shift differentials, and commissions in the regular rate.

#4 Off-the-Clock Work

- Pre/post-shift tasks, working lunches, rounding policies that favor the employer.

Why It Matters: Plaintiff-friendly, expensive. Collective/class actions multiply exposure. Liquidated damages (double back pay) + plaintiff's attorneys' fees.

Off-the-Clock Work in the Digital Workplace

The Digital Creep

- After-hours email, Slack, and Teams messages
- Mobile timekeeping apps and employer-required platforms
- “De minimis” doctrine eroding – courts increasingly skeptical
- Remote login data as evidence of uncompensated work time

Mitigation Strategies

- Written policy prohibiting off-the-clock work
- Supervisor training and enforcement
- Disable after-hours access for non-exempt employees where possible

Remote & Hybrid Wage-Hour Compliance

- Track all hours worked for non-exempt remote employees
- No off-the-clock email checking – even “quick” responses count
- Ensure meal and rest break compliance even at home
- Expense reimbursement required in CA, IL, and other states for internet, phone, and supplies
- Written remote work policy with clear expectations and timekeeping procedures

Bottom Line: Remote work does not change wage and hour obligations – it just makes compliance harder to monitor.

Multistate Headaches

Remote Employee in CA, NY, IL, etc.?

- That state's wage, leave, expense reimbursement, and pay-transparency laws likely apply

Tax & Registration Triggers

- Tax withholding, unemployment insurance, and business registration obligations

Pay Frequency & Final Pay

- States vary widely on pay frequency rules and final-pay timing requirements

Remember: Out-of-state remote workers bring the other state's laws with them.

Proactive Measures

- Train supervisors
- Conduct periodic self-audits of classifications and pay practices
- Audit payroll for anyone earning bonuses + OT
- Update policies and job descriptions regularly
- Document remote work arrangements and timekeeping procedures

An ounce of prevention beats a costly lawsuit every time.

Section 4: Building a People-Centered Culture

Tech Enables, People Decide

Automation Frees Capacity

- Administrative HR tasks (scheduling, benefits enrollment, onboarding paperwork) can be automated
- Free HR professionals for human-centered work: coaching, conflict resolution, culture building

Keep Humans in the Loop

- Hiring decisions: AI can screen, but humans must decide
- Discipline and termination: context and judgment matter
- Accommodations: interactive process requires genuine human engagement

Technology is the tool. People are the strategy.

Digital Communications & Workplace Culture

Async Communication Norms

- Set Slack/Teams etiquette guidelines: response time expectations, appropriate channels
- Recognition platforms can boost culture – but balance with off-the-clock concerns for non-exempt

Monitoring & NLRA Considerations

- NLRA protects employee communications about working conditions – even on company platforms
- Monitoring policies must be transparent and not chill protected activity

Connection vs. Compliance

- Digital tools build connection, but must be designed with wage-hour and privacy guardrails

Action Items

- 1. Adopt or refresh your AI Acceptable Use Policy**
- 2. Audit recruiting/HR vendor AI tools for bias and notice/audit compliance**
- 3. Develop a plan to audit classifications and payroll calculations**
- 4. Audit remote/hybrid timekeeping and after-hours access**
- 5. Map your multistate footprint and confirm state-specific compliance**
- 6. Train supervisors on timekeeping, AI use, and off-the-clock work prevention**

Questions & Answers



The Practical Power of AI: Breaking Through Your Biggest Challenges

Katherine von Jan

Co-Founder | Tough Day

CATAPULT SUMMIT

The Practical Power of AI: Breaking through your Biggest Challenges

Katherine von Jan

Tough Day Co-founder & CEO

May 5, 2026



The AI shift: Tactical Tool to Strategic Opportunity

2012

Narrative Science

Automated Writing (NLP)

Google Brain

Image Recognition

Industry AI Advances: Transportation & Healthcare

Tesla Autopilot Self-Driving Car

Amazon Air Drone delivery

2015

OpenAI founded
\$1B nonprofit for safe AGI

AlphaGo defeats Fan Hui
Go champion (5-0)

NVIDIA
shifts focus to AI chips

Google TPU
Tensor Processing AI-specific chip

Zipline Drones
First drone medical deliveries Rwanda

2018

Attention is All You Need
Paper by Google

AlphaGo Zero
AI learns from self-play (100-0)

Anduril Industries
"Killer Robots"

OpenAI GPT-1
unsupervised pretraining LLMs

CRISPR x AI
AI improves accuracy for gene editing

The AI shift: Tactical Tool to Strategic Opportunity

2019

GPT-3 fluent human-like text

Waymo Taxi
Launches in Phoenix, AZ

AlphaFold
Protein folding

DALL-E Text-to-image generation

Anthropic founded (left OpenAI over Safety Concens)

Orchid Health
Embryo selection & engineering

2022

ChatGPT human-like conversations—1M users in 5 days and 100M in 2 months

GPT-4
100x better

Claude
By Athropic with AI Safety

Google Gemini
Agents with autonomous action capabilities and beats GPT-4 on benchmarks

Waymo Robotaxi
reaches 10M+ miles

AlphaFold 3
Understands all of life's molecules, DNA, RNA

2025

78% OF ALL ORGANIZATION S TRY AI

ClawdBot
autonomous agents decide and act

The AI shift: The Future Now

2026

2027

Rent-a-Human AI

Autonomous agents hire humans for real world tasks

AI Companions

2 out of 3 Gen Alpha Boys 12-16 say AI relationships are easier; 1 in 5 date an AI; 1 in 4 prefer an AI girlfriend over a real girl

Clone robotics

indistinguishable from humans using synthetic muscles and bones

AGI

Predicted to surpasses human cognitive performance across meaningful tasks

Flock Safety

Surveillance drones 1M+ Crimes/Year with

Palantir Maven AI

Data-centric warfare and AI deterrence

Anthropic Mythos

Cyber-security hacking model too dangerous to release

Synthetic Wombs

Colossal AI for early gestation (IVF) and Vitara Biomedical fetuses 22-26 weeks

AI economy expected to reach \$3.33 trillion

(Gartner) exceeding many countries' GDPs

Mercor Medical AI

Human doctors training frontier AI models to do their jobs

Absci

Antibody Design AI accelerates biologics time-to-market to months



The Future Needs You.

By 2030, 50% of current HR activities will be AI-automated or performed by AI agents.
What will HR be then?

Gartner March 2026



CHALLENGE ONE

Align your team around your company's new vision & purpose

Redefine what your company is
becoming with AI and the
workforce needed to achieve it.

GUIDANCE

Become an AI-savvy Strategic Advisor



Beginner: Learn

Ask AI to be your AI coach.

Ask AI to create a *playlist* of daily podcasts, articles, and hot new AI startups.

Join an AI group. Learn together with **Doma** or **Slack**.
Post one thing every day with a takeaway and question.

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Intermediate: Build

Ask AI to build an *agent* to take something off your plate:

Read my LI feed and draft a comment for one of them.

Read my email and calendar and tell me 3 things I need to prioritize that day.

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Ask AI to build an *agent* to take something off your plate:

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Read my email and calendar and tell me 3 things I need to prioritize that day.



Advanced: Advise

Invite Discourse. Talk about AI at parties, work events, or even the PTA.

Encourage debate on AI's impact on work.

Report recommendations to your company or team.



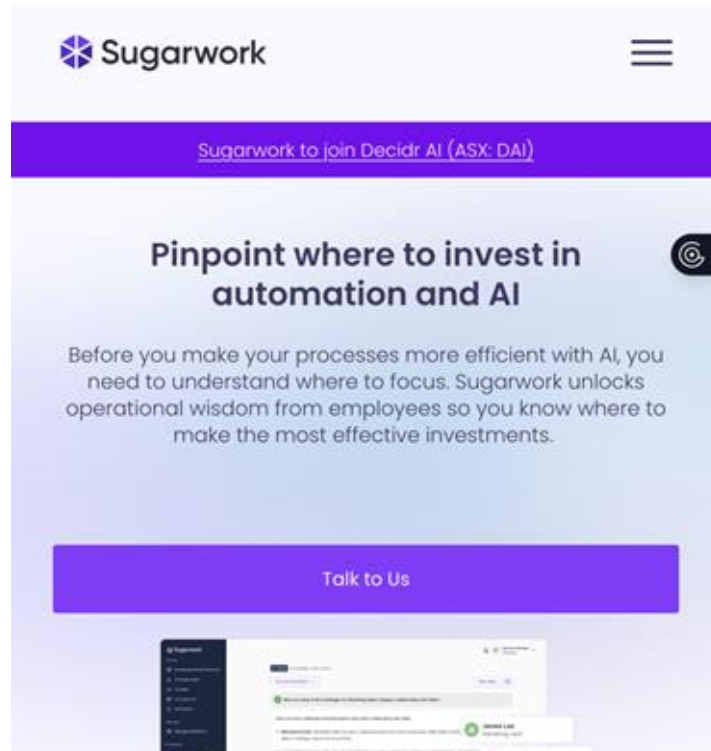
CHALLENGE TWO

Inventory Existing Internal Capabilities

You can't evolve what you don't understand. Clarify how work really gets done and who is doing it.

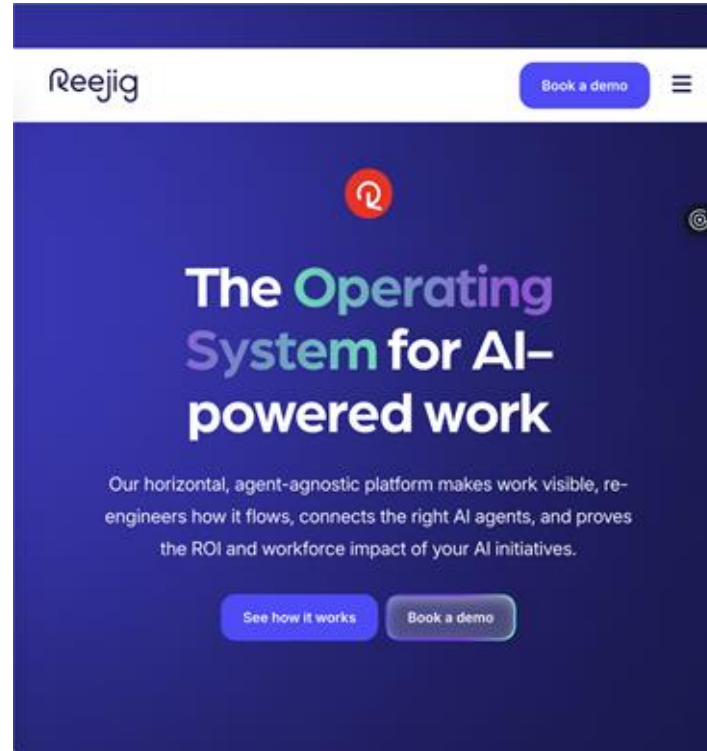
GUIDANCE

Map process, skills, and expertise



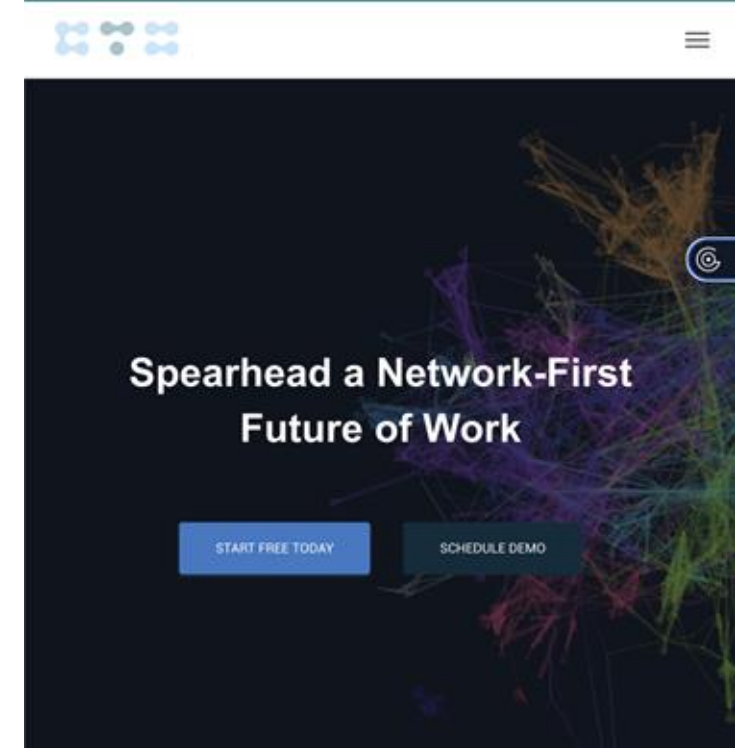
SugarWork AI (Decidr)

AI for Tacit Knowledge Mapping



Reejig Workforce Intelligence

Ethical Profiling & Redeployment AI



Cognitive Network Analyzer

Ethical Collaboration Pattern Analysis

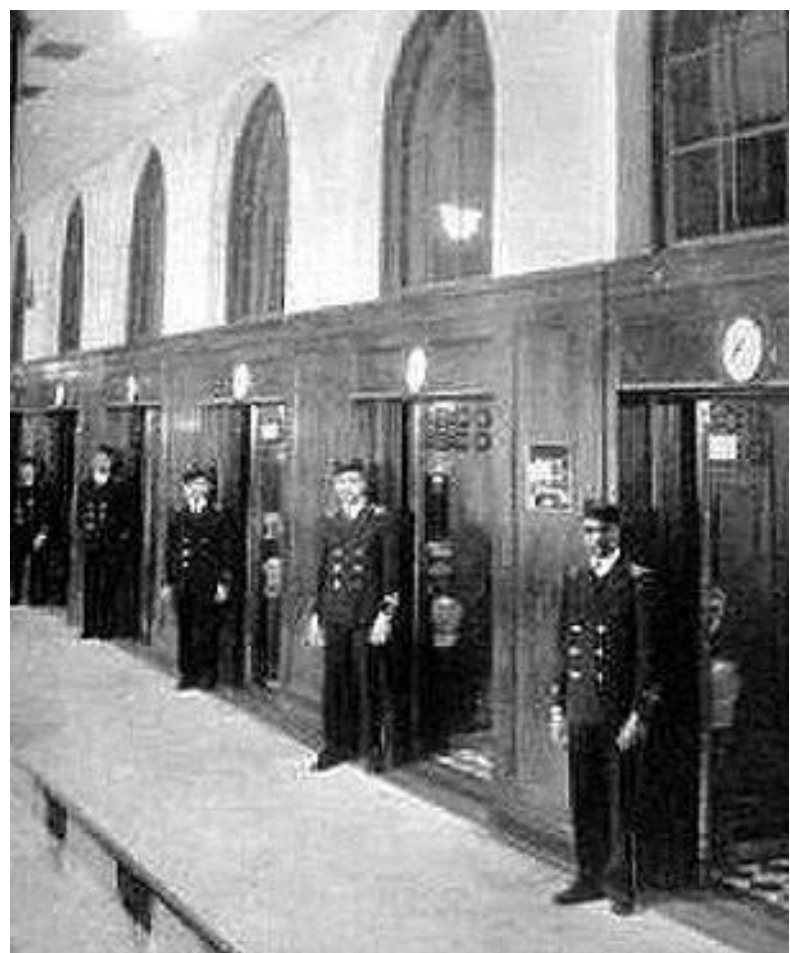


CHALLENGE THREE

Right-size the Workforce to “Do more with more”

Decisions need to be made about which roles, decisions and workflows stay human, and what AI augments or replaces.

We've been here before.

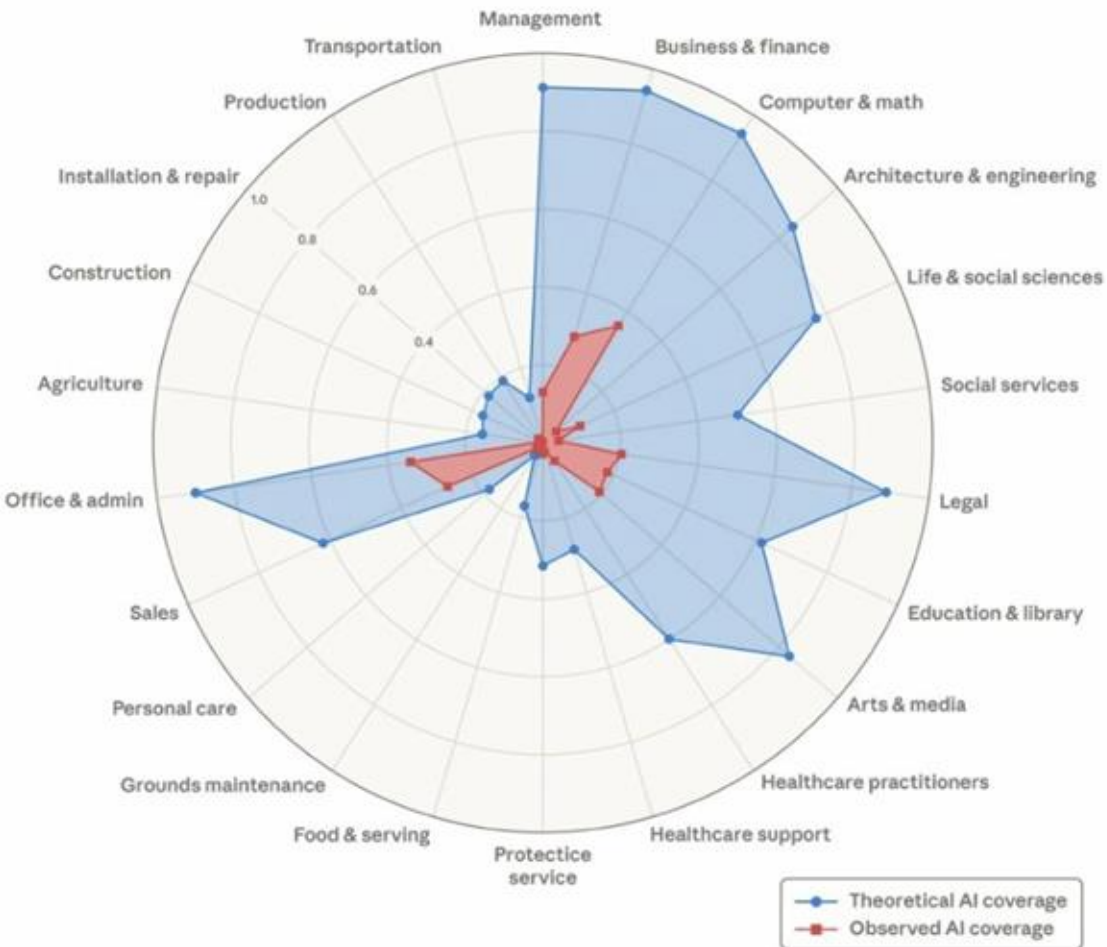


ANTHROPIC AI EXPOSURE INDEX

Labor market impacts of AI



Theoretical capability and observed usage by occupational category



**And yet,
this scale, speed, and
competition from AI co-
workers is new.**

The most requested co-workers:
AI Workplace Advisor for self-service—
And even a *managerless future*.

AI HR Business Partners.

GUIDANCE

Redefine modern Jobs

1) Uncover Functional Needs

Identify all the outcomes and tasks required:

When we (*situation*), we want to (*motivation*), so that we (*expectation*)

2) Compile Tasks into Roles

Combine tasks into new or existing roles.

Which tasks can be best done by AI, Humans, or both together?

3) Write Job Descriptions for Roles

Include responsibilities, measurable outcomes, and ideal requirements.

Whether you hire humans, AI or both.



Title: Employee Success Partner

The Opportunity (About the Role)

We believe every employee deserves a trusted thought partner—someone in their corner, helping them navigate challenges, build skills, and do their best work. We're investing in a new kind of role to make that possible at scale: an Employee Success Partner who can meet every employee in the moments that matter, with personalized, expert guidance when they need it.

Part of our HR Team, this role will serve as our organization's first-line resource for employee support and development—ensuring no employee question goes unanswered, no growth opportunity is missed, and no challenge is faced alone.

This is not a traditional role. It requires deep expertise in management, HR, organizational knowledge, as well as individuals' strengths and styles, as well as extraordinary capacity, perfect discretion to be there for employees across every team and time zone. If you can offer unlimited availability, unwavering confidentiality, and personalized expert guidance at scale, we want to talk.

What You'll Do (Responsibilities)

- **Serve as the First Stop for Employee Questions and Challenges.** Be the trusted, confidential resource employees turn to before asking their manager,





CHALLENGE FOUR

Build vs. Buy Solutions

Ready to “hire” AI?
It’s time for you and IT to decide:

- 1) Can our team build it with AI?
- 2) Does a vendor provide something *close enough*?

GUIDANCE

Choose your AI Approach with Intention

Vibe-Coding with LLMs

Superpowers:

- Creating Prototypes Fast
- Deep Integration
- Build IP Ownership

Limitations:

- Functional Expertise
- Functional Guardrails
- Functional Knowledge
- Security Risk (BYO)
- Maintenance Cost

*depends on team

Existing Tech Vendor AI

Superpowers:

- Current Functional Knowledge
- Friction-Lite Buying & Access
- Frictionless Security

Limitations:

- New Tech on Old Process
- Low Control (Black Box)
- Integration Limited
- Sensitivity Data Exposure
- High Switching Cost

AI Startup (Use Case Specific)

Superpowers:

- Functional Knowledge*
- Functional Guardrails*
- AI-Native Modern Processes

Limitations:

- Pilots Need Support
- Resource Constrained
- Custom Integrations
- Managing Multiple Vendors
- Risk of Start-Up Survival

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Ethical leadership required



**SAM ALTMAN MAY
CONTROL OUR FUTURE
—CAN HE BE TRUSTED?**

*New interviews and closely guarded documents shed light on
the persistent doubts about the head of OpenAI.*

By Ronan Farrow and Andrew Marantz

April 6, 2026



GUIDANCE

Human-Positive AI Litmus Test

Human Dignity at Work

Considerations:

- ❑ Representation Balance
“Barista to Board Room”
- ❑ Fair Pay & Benefits
- ❑ Profit Sharing/Ownership
- ❑ Upskilling & Development
- ❑ Internal Mobility
- ❑ Responsible RIF Decisions
- ❑ Transition/Exit Support

Operational Pluralism

Considerations:

- ❑ Content & IP Integrity
- ❑ Information Accessibility
- ❑ Agency/Distributed Decisioning
- ❑ Stakeholder Alignment
- ❑ Antitrust Record
- ❑ Lobbying Transparency
- ❑ Interoperability & Partnership
- ❑ Narrative Control (Trust)

AI Guardrails

Considerations:

- ❑ Published Responsible AI Framework
- ❑ Board-Level AI Governance
- ❑ Users Involved Pre-Deployment
- ❑ AI Explainability
- ❑ Legal Compliance (GDPR, etc.)
- ❑ AI Bias & Fairness Auditing
- ❑ Mental Health Protections
- ❑ Prohibition on Surveillance, Social Scoring, Inhumane Use (Killing)



CHALLENGE FIVE

Engaging and Caring for your People

Employees, including managers and HR are burned out, struggling with uncertainty, change fatigue, and a host of other pressures and unmet needs.

GUIDANCE

SCALE employee success

Exploration

Agency & Innovation

Insight, foresight, creativity, and leadership

Learning

Resilience & Growth

Feedback, learning & development, mastery, and adaptability

Achievement

Performance & Accountability

Goal setting and tracking, sharing responsibilities and success

Connection

Culture & Working Relationships

Fostering shared values and behaviors, navigating team dynamics and conflict

Safety

Clarity, Trust, & Wellbeing

Understanding policies and processes, consistency, self-care and self-regulation

SOLUTION

Tough Day AI-powered Employee Success OS



[Click Image or Link for Demo](#)

Improve Capacity

Remove friction and resolve issues faster

Grow Capability

Build and apply skills in real-time, in context

Cultivate Agency

Empower self-direction and accountability

Boost Performance

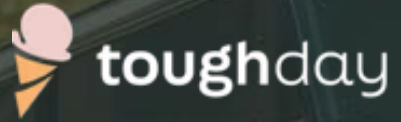
Drive output and impact at every level





The Future Needs You.

Human flourishing at
work depends on you.



Thank you!

Katherine von Jan
"KVJ"
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in/kvonjan



Bruce Tulgan

Founder & CEO

RainmakerThinking

Katherine von Jan

Co-Founder

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Drylock Technologies

Dr. Laura Ullrich

Director of Economic
Research

Indeed

**Meet the Keynotes Who Are Changing
the Culture + Tech Conversation**

Find Sparky and Win!

Sparky is everywhere.

Look for him and take photos.

Collect as many as you can by tomorrow at lunch.

PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED!!



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ELLU 2026

Employment + Labor Law Update

Catapult's flagship legal update conference, presented in partnership with Ogletree Deakins.

CHARLOTTE

Aug 6–7

RALEIGH & VIRTUAL

Sept 1–2





JOIN US!

Day 1 Reception

May 5 | 4:30 - 6:00 PM

Play • Network • Win

**Caricature
Artist**



**Happy Hour +
Networking**



**Raffle
Prizes**

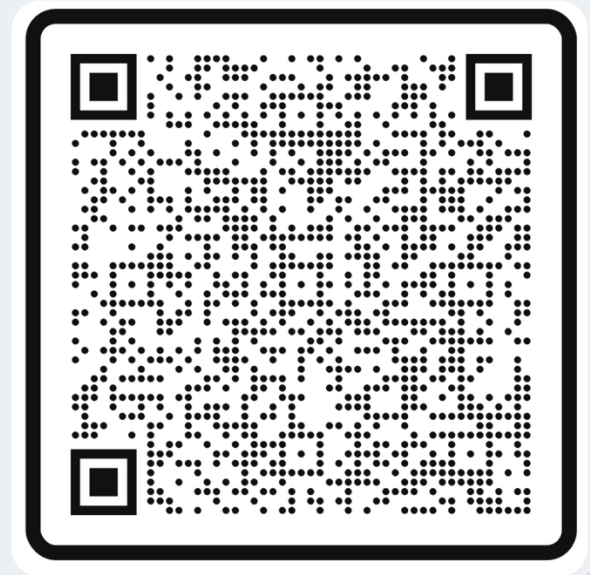




Let's solve your people problems.

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Or visit us at the Catapult booth — we'd love to meet you.



Scan to talk to our team