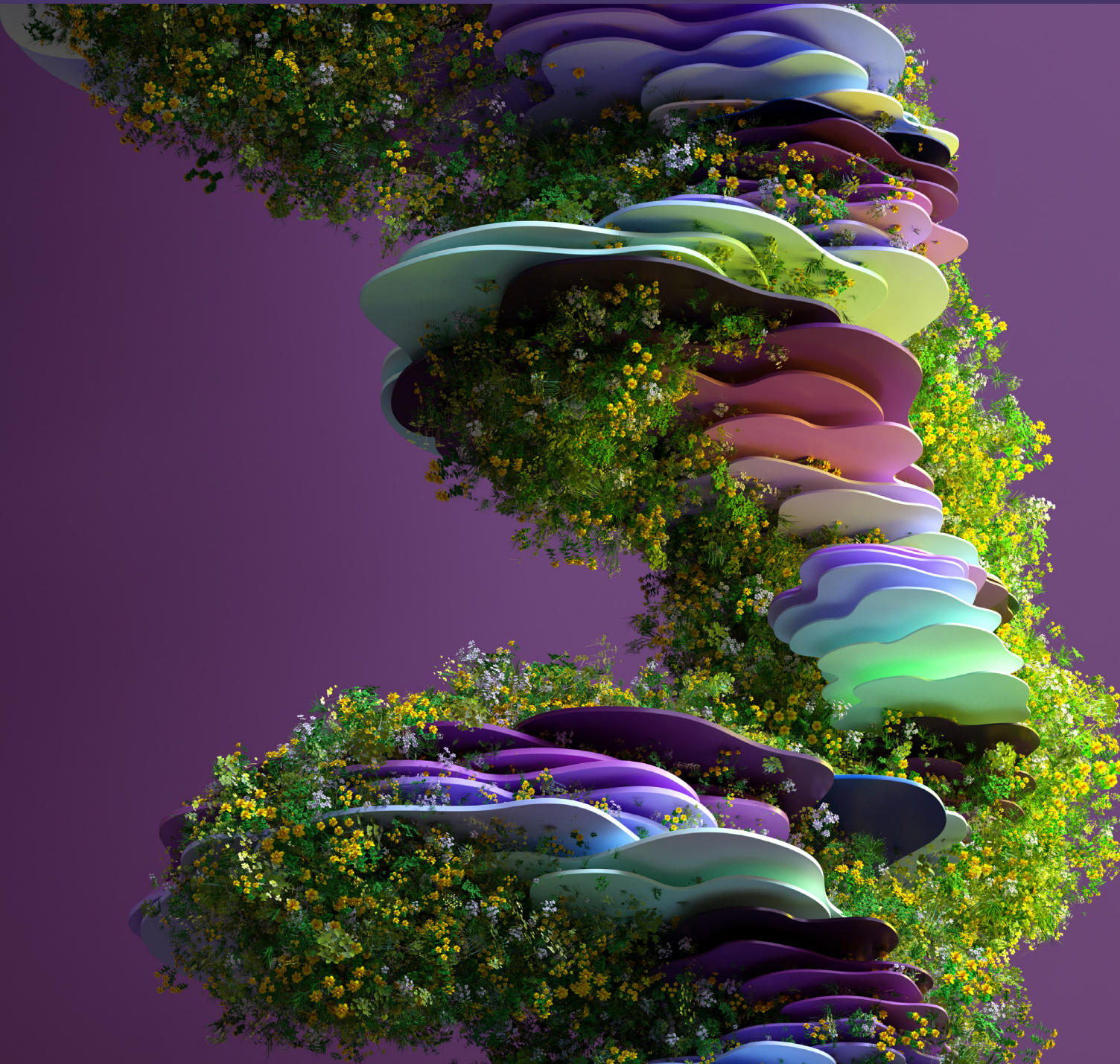


E-book



# Preparing your culture for AI



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# 01 / Improving the present, shaping the future

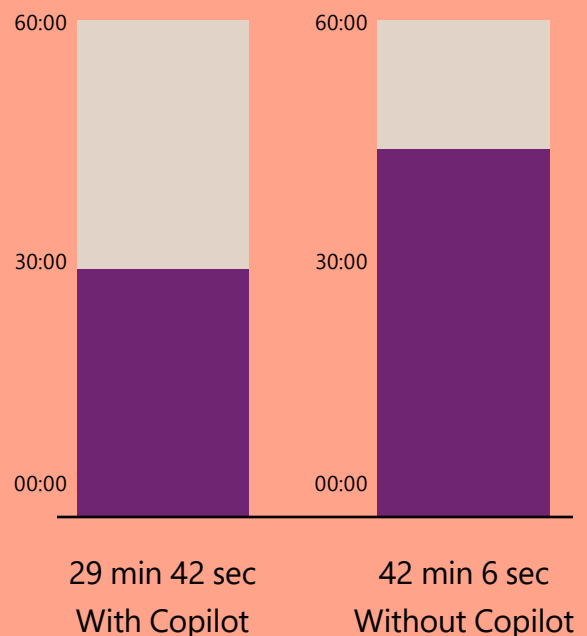
Although the current evidence is somewhat limited, it is increasingly clear that AI is fundamentally going to change the way people work. We know this for two reasons. First, by the impact it has already had, even at a relatively small scale. Second, by imagining that impact across entire industries and economic systems.

## Transforming processes and productivity

Whether you're talking about delegating everyday tasks to AI, streamlining processes, or automating routine decisions, one of the most measurable benefits of AI is clearly going to be in terms of productivity and efficiency.

To cite one example, recent Microsoft research has shown that **Copilot for Microsoft 365 users were 29 percent faster than users without Copilot** in completing a series of tasks, including searching for information, summarizing a meeting, and drafting a blog post.

### Copilot users work faster



Sources  
[What Can Copilot's Earliest Users Teach Us About Generative AI at Work?](#)

## Transforming creativity

While the impact on productivity is expected to be impressive, AI users report comparable positive effects on their ability to be creative.

From jump-starting the creative process to helping people generate ideas, AI solutions typically work in a collaborative, iterative, conversational way. This gives AI a unique ability to stimulate new thought and lead users to connect concepts in ways they may not have done on their own.

## Copilot users say it helps them:

- Generate ideas while writing.

72%

- Jump-start the creative process.

68%

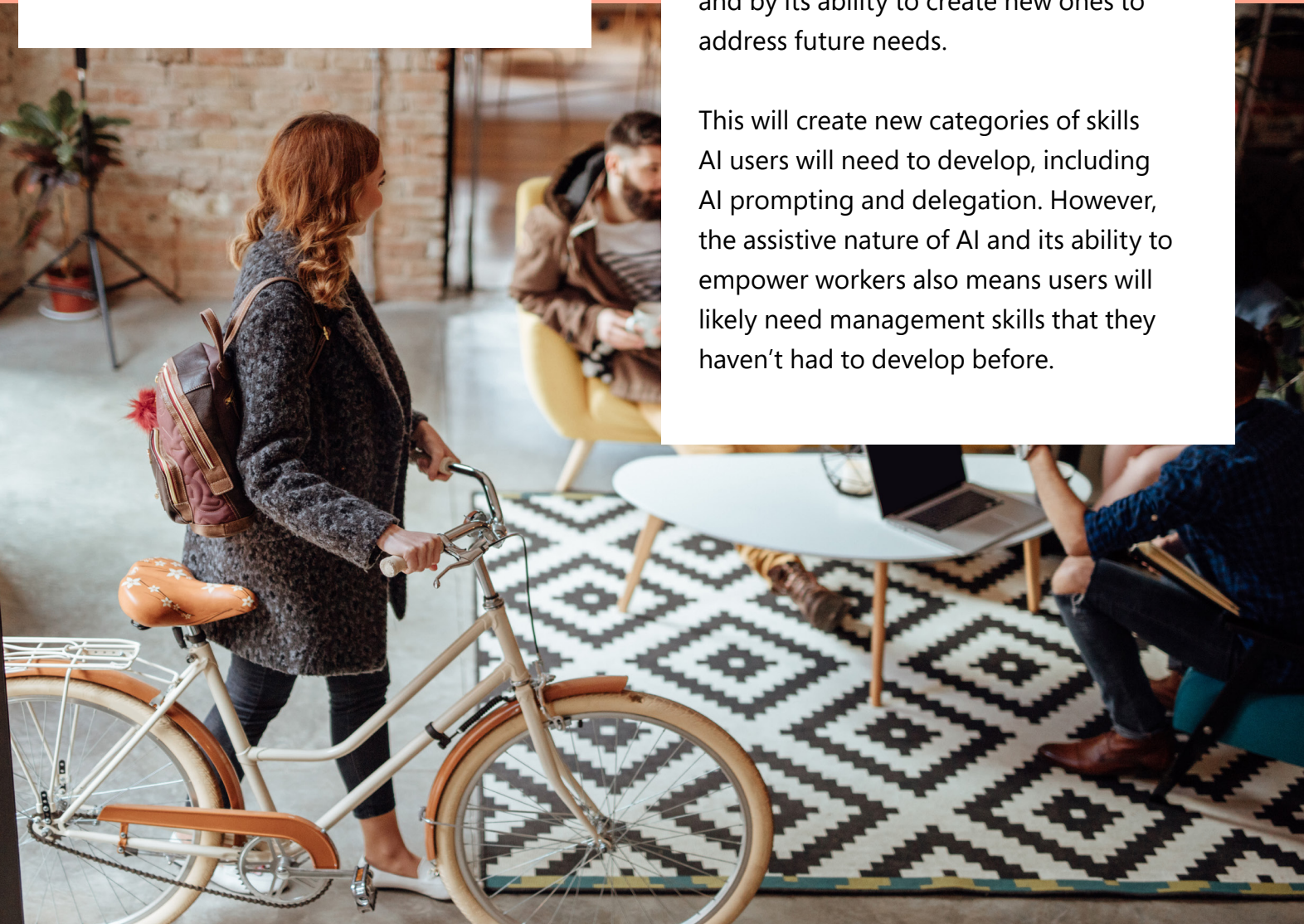
Sources

[What Can Copilot's Earliest Users Teach Us About Generative AI at Work?](#)

## Developing new skills

We expect AI to transform work in two other important ways: by improving the processes and workflows people use now and by its ability to create new ones to address future needs.

This will create new categories of skills AI users will need to develop, including AI prompting and delegation. However, the assistive nature of AI and its ability to empower workers also means users will likely need management skills that they haven't had to develop before.



## Enabling cultural change

The sum of these impacts will mean your organization can be more agile and decisive, testing, piloting, and learning from its interactions with AI, and then adjusting to what it learns.

These impacts mean that current managers will need to improve their communication and coordination skills, and other employees will need more manager-level skills as well. Using AI to perform routine tasks can help people focus on developing the skills that are most helpful at driving performance.

## Addressing performance hurdles

Our research indicates that there are four challenges that leaders cite most frequently as barriers to performance:

- Burned-out or disengaged employees.
- Inefficient work culture, specifically including endless meetings and overly extended work hours.
- Overburdened managers.
- Accumulation of tedious tasks.

AI solutions such as Copilot help address these hurdles in three ways: transformation, amplification, and optimization.

**Transformation.** AI can enable transformative shifts by helping managers become more effective at empowering their teams, communicating effectively, and setting clear performance expectations.

**Amplification.** You can use AI to extend the benefits of best practices by inspiring more engaged leadership, supporting a culture of inclusion, and demonstrating a focus on employee wellbeing.

**Optimization.** Use AI to augment or automate tasks, make processes more efficient, empower employees, and use data more effectively to guide actions and decisions.

That's a lot of information about what AI can do and how it can affect your company. Now let's take a look at what to do about it.

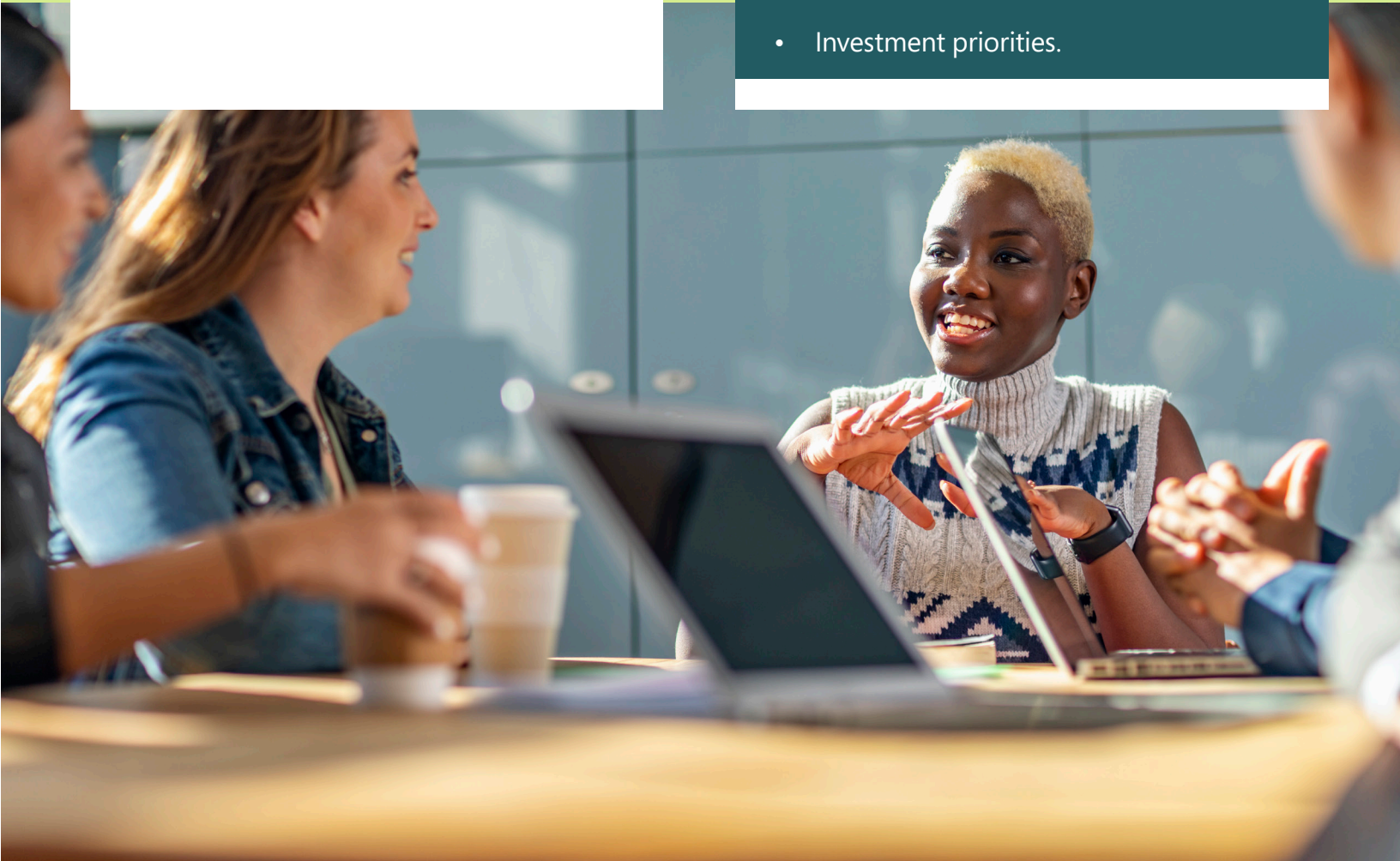
## 02 / Establish your AI vision

One of the most important pillars in your response to the opportunity of AI is to establish and communicate a clear company vision. This is an important chance to start defining business goals, address any concerns, and set benchmarks you can use to assess your progress.

### Vision topics

Examples of topics you may want your vision to include:

- What role you expect AI to play for individuals generally, as well as specific roles or functions.
- Strategic objectives you've identified, such as enhancing customer experiences and driving innovation.
- Definitions of and commitments to ethical AI principles, such as transparency and accountability.
- Investment priorities.



## Be company-specific

Your vision should be as specific to your organization as possible. Thus, there are as many possible approaches as there are companies. However, considering the following questions can help you thinking about which of the following general approaches you want to pursue may help you align your vision with your culture.

Is your end goal to optimize something specific or solve a business problem? For instance, do you want to use AI to improve a certain aspect of your business, such as sales or customer service?

Alternatively, is your goal a digital transformation effort that could be enabled and even led by AI?

There is no single right answer. What's important is to identify the best answer for your business, and use that as the drive shaft for your AI vision.

## Through other people's eyes

Part of preparing for the impact of AI is understanding how your coworkers currently feel about it.

Are they excited or antagonistic? Do they expect it to help them be more productive or do they seem threatened by its potential? Do the answers to these questions vary significantly by role?

Part of the cultural impact you should expect is that as AI changes how your organization functions, how your people feel about AI will likely evolve and change as well.

There's no way to know ahead of time which changes will be positive or negative, so you need to be aware of anything you might need to mitigate, as well as changes you want to amplify.



## 03 / Develop AI- critical skills

Another way to prepare your workforce, and your culture, for AI is ensuring your people understand the importance of skill development. This is not only a vital part of your AI strategy, it can be an effective way of helping empower employees.

Rather than feeling like AI is something that is “happening” to them, strong training resources show employees you are investing in their futures alongside your investment in AI.

### Build core AI competencies

There are of course skills that will be essential for virtually all employees, not just technical roles or AI experts. These include critical thinking and analytical judgment, complex problem solving, creative ideation, and lateral thinking.

Critical thinking

Analytical judgment

Problem solving

Creativity

More specifically, training in these areas will be most beneficial if it teaches employees:

- When to use AI (and when not to).
- How to evaluate creative work.
- How to check for bias.



## Hone essential skills

For many knowledge workers, working with AI will be a relatively small adjustment in terms of technical skills. Integration with existing apps, some familiarity with natural language prompts, and an understanding of AI's current limitations will all help.

Other workers, however, may benefit from general training on engaging with AI, the importance of checking AI outputs, and how to refine their AI results.

## Prompts, context, and iteration

If there is one area of skill development that is most critical to working with AI, it is understanding how to write effective prompts. To get the most out of AI, your people need to know that a prompt is not just a fancier search query. It is the start of a conversation.

Thus, they need to know the importance of context. For instance, they could ask AI to write an email about a certain topic. But they will get much more value if they ask it to write the same email and tailor it for a specific audience.

Lastly, they should understand the importance of AI's ability to refine its own results. They don't need to simply accept the first output they see. Adding more context and asking Copilot to try again is another way to get the most out of what it can do.

Start with the end in mind:



Add context:



Define any parameters:



Tailor the delivery:

Generate 3-5 bullet points...

...to prepare me for a meeting with Client X to discuss their Phase 3+ brand campaign.

Focus on email and Teams chats since June.

Please use simple language so I can get up to speed quickly.

## Everyone needs to be a manager

As AI frees workers from the most routine tasks, they are able to focus on higher value, more complex work. However, even more workers will need a manager mindset and related skills to integrate the output of AI assistance into their own work.

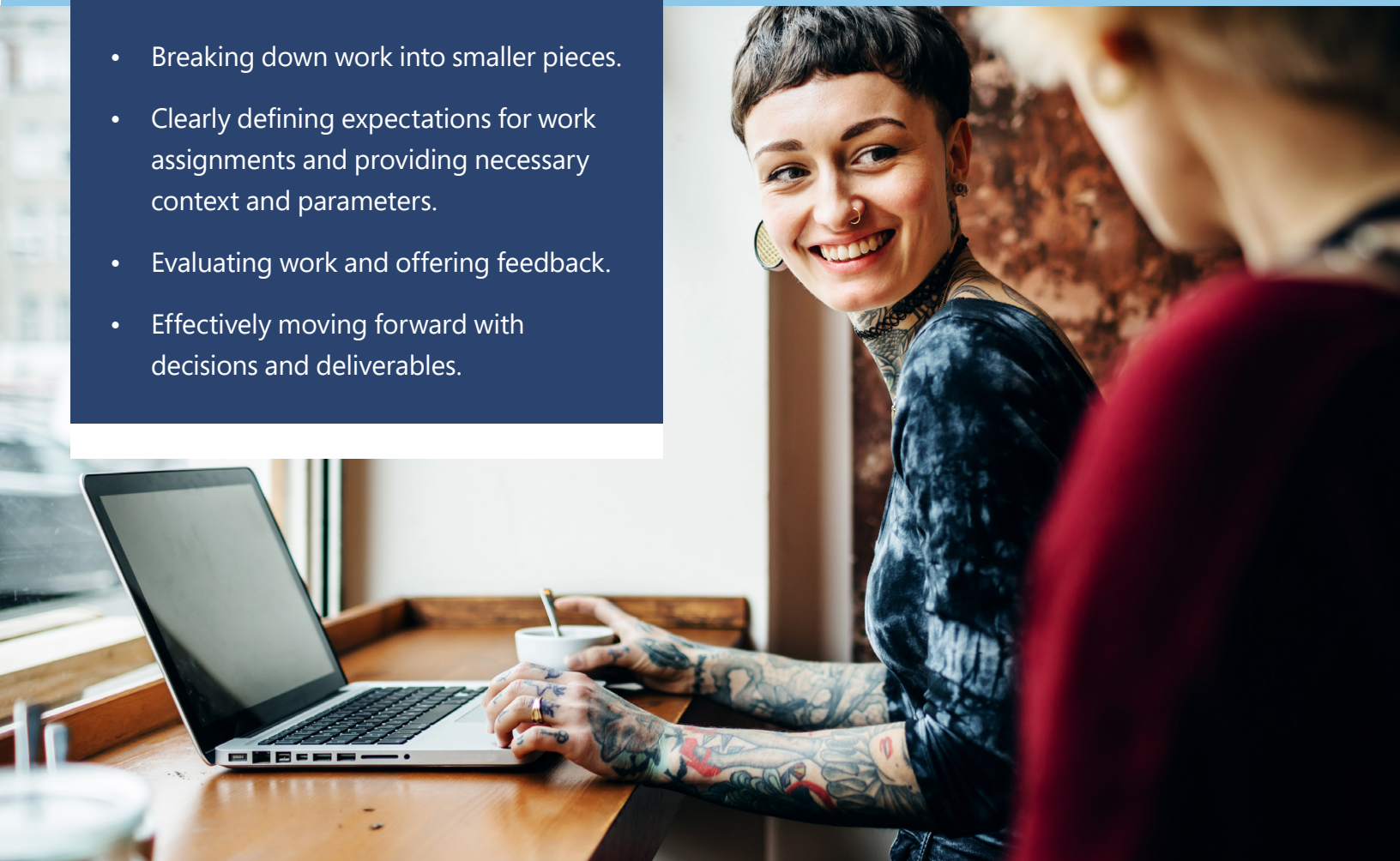
## People skills build tech skills

Our research has found that more senior workers with people management experience get more out of AI more quickly than those without that background. That's because they typically have more experience that includes:

- Breaking down work into smaller pieces.
- Clearly defining expectations for work assignments and providing necessary context and parameters.
- Evaluating work and offering feedback.
- Effectively moving forward with decisions and deliverables.

So, ironically, it's the employees who need manager-level skills the most who don't have them. Even more ironic, they need people skills in leadership and management to get the most out of their relationship with AI.

You can look to provide this with training sessions, how-to guides, as well as formal or informal leadership opportunities.



## 04 / AI adoption in practice

Copilot is not just another software rollout, it is an entirely new way to work. Thus, people, teams, and organizations need to be intentional about that process and how to build adoption momentum.

As the creator of Copilot, Microsoft has been learning in real time, from itself as well as other companies, what is working and what isn't when it comes to adopting an AI solution.

### An approach to consider

In general, for Copilot we've found a three-pronged approach to be effective.

- In the early stages, deploy your solution to entire teams within a business function, such as customer service or sales.
- Distribute any remaining seats to a variety of roles, from senior leadership to IT admins or project managers.
- Define clear objectives for each team.



## Cultivate champions

As more people in your organization become familiar with AI, consider how you will identify user champions who can help advocate and facilitate AI use organically. Power users from various early adopting teams can also be helpful in developing training resources and even leading training sessions.

## Build your knowledge base

Speaking of training, one of the best ways to build on formal sessions is to make sure there are communication channels where everyone, power user or not, can share tips, ask questions, and find resources.



### Sharing tip:

Encourage people to share their most effective AI prompts with their teams.



## 05 / Ask the right questions

In terms of overall readiness for AI, preparing for the impact on culture is one of the areas where organizations currently rate themselves the lowest. This is obviously a broad topic, but some preliminary thinking can help you jumpstart the process.

### Check your readiness

The following questions can help you get a better idea about your company's readiness for AI, as well as where you may want to focus your efforts.

- How clear is your AI vision? Do you know who owns it?
- Can your org's infrastructure support AI?
- Do your people have adequate skill levels to achieve your AI goals? If not, is there a plan to address this?
- Is your vision for AI being communicated effectively?
- Do you know how receptive various parts of the company will be to the changes AI brings?

### Start shaping your future

The more your organizational culture can support and encourage cultural adaptations, the more your business will be ready for the changes that working with AI will bring while realizing more of the benefits.

Microsoft is ready to help you strategically implement and drive AI adoption so you can make the most of Copilot's promise.



[Learn more about  
Microsoft Copilot for Work.](#)

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# Preparing for AI Checklist

Ready to start preparing for the cultural impact of AI in your organization? The following checklist summarizes the key points of the e-book in a concise, actionable format.

## 01 Establish your vision

One of the most important pillars in your response to the opportunity of AI is to establish and communicate a clear company vision, which may include:

- What role you expect AI to play for individuals generally, as well as specific roles or functions.
- Strategic objectives you've identified, such as enhancing customer experiences and driving innovation.
- Definitions of and commitments to ethical AI principles, such as transparency and accountability.
- Investment priorities.

## 02 Develop AI-critical skills

Empower your people through skill development. Strong training resources show employees you are investing in their futures as part of your investment in AI.

### Build core AI competencies

There are of course skills that will be essential for virtually all employees, not just technical roles or AI experts. These include:

- Critical thinking.
- Analytical judgment.
- Complex problem solving.
- Creative ideation and lateral thinking.

## Building a prompt

Start with the end in mind:



Add context:



Define any parameters:



Tailor the delivery:

Generate 3-5 bullet points...

...to prepare me for a meeting with Client X to discuss their Phase 3+ brand campaign.

Focus on email and Teams chats since June.

Please use simple language so I can get up to speed quickly.

### Manager-level skills

Our research has found employees who are earlier in their careers or who work in more functional roles are precisely the ones who will need more manager-level people skills to get the most out of AI. Those skills include:

- Breaking down work into smaller pieces.
- Clearly defining expectations for work assignments and providing necessary context and parameters.
- Evaluating work and offering feedback.
- Effectively moving forward with decisions and deliverables.

Training sessions, how-to guides, as well as formal or informal leadership opportunities can be great resources to address this.

### 03 AI adoption framework

In general, for Copilot we've found the following approach to be effective.

- In the early stages, deploy to entire teams within a business function, such as customer service or sales.
- Distribute remaining seats to a variety of roles, from senior leadership to IT admins or project managers.
- Define clear objectives for each team.
- Identify user champions who can help advocate and facilitate AI use organically.
- Build your knowledge base with resource channels to share tips and ask questions.

### 04 Ask the right questions

The following questions can help you get a better idea about your company's readiness for AI, as well as where you may want to focus your efforts.

- How clear is your AI vision? Do you know who owns it?
- Can your org's infrastructure support AI?
- Is the quality of internal and external data that your AI will use adequate? Is it centralized so AI can use it easily?
- Do your people have adequate skill levels to achieve your AI goals? If not, is there a plan to address this?
- Is your vision for AI being communicated effectively?
- Do you know how receptive various parts of the company will be to the changes AI brings?

### Start shaping your future

Microsoft is ready to help you strategically implement and drive AI adoption so you can make the most of Copilot's promise.



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