



Whitepaper

The Human Algorithm

Behavioural leadership in the AI age



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Archana Iyer

Director
People & Operational Performance, Davies

“

A whitepaper for leaders
who know the future
belongs to those who
make humans and
machines hum together.

”

Introduction

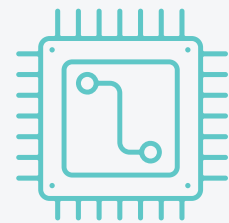
The plot twist nobody saw coming

While everyone's frantically figuring out which jobs AI will steal, the smartest leaders are quietly doing something else: Focusing on what makes us uniquely human.

Here's the counterintuitive truth - in an AI-powered world, technical skills become commoditized. What won't? The messy, beautiful, human elements that make technology meaningful: building trust in uncertainty, creating psychological safety in chaos, and inspiring teams to chase ambitious dreams.

If AI is the engine, behavioural leadership is the driver that decides where we're going and why the journey matters.

This paper centres around five essential behavioural capabilities, showing us how the most forward-thinking leaders can use them to create trust, drive collaboration and govern AI ethically. You will find real-world insights combined with simple, easy-to-use everyday application to help leaders act, not just plan - to thrive in this fast-paced, AI world.



The great behavioural shift

The command-and-control playbook just got deleted. Today's leaders aren't information hoarders - they're connection catalysts.

In other words, Today's leaders don't keep information to themselves - they facilitate employee collaboration and idea-sharing.

This requires a complete behavioural upgrade. From having answers to asking better questions, from being right to being curious, from controlling outcomes to creating conditions, and from managing tasks to nurturing humans.

It's like switching from chess grandmaster and controlling every piece, to becoming an orchestra conductor, creating conditions for beautiful improvisation.



Five behavioural superpowers for AI-era leaders

Empathy:

The secret weapon for AI integration

✓ **The behaviour:** Understand and share others' feelings and use these insights to drive better decision-making.

✓ **In action:** Acknowledge any colleague hesitancy or concerns around AI and create concrete reskilling plans. Instead of talking about how AI will facilitate productivity optimization, focus on how it'll give your team more time for work that energises them. Design rollouts around engagements, not just features.

The hack:

Before implementing any AI tool, understand the human components and emotions attached to current workflows and prioritise transparency and education among your teams.

Integrity:

The trust algorithm that never fails

✓ **The behaviour:** Being transparent and honest with your team is crucial for maintaining employee engagement. So, share what you know, but also share what you don't know and are still figuring out.

✓ **In action:** Share your decisions with the team before implementing them, but also the decision-making process. When you get something wrong, use this as an opportunity to share your learnings and safeguards. Hunt for your own biases, especially with AI systems.

The hack:

Create a transparency template for big decisions that details what, why, what you considered, what you're worried about, and how you'll know if you were right.

Collaborative facilitation:

Orchestrating magic

✓ **The behaviour:** Create conditions where diverse perspectives are celebrated and encouraged to drive innovation.

✓ **In action:** Craft questions that unlock collective wisdom and look for opportunities to bring together people who see the world differently. Establish psychological safety so entrenched in the system that people feel comfortable to even share half-baked ideas.

The hack:

Try "Yes, and..." instead of "But..." for one week. Watch creativity shift.

Resilience:

The bounce-back superpower

✓ **The behaviour:** Work on being flexible - being able to adapt quickly and sustainably as circumstances change, all while supporting others.

✓ **In action:** Fall in love with version 2.0, not perfection. When things go wrong, pivot your focus to finding the learning curve by asking "what did this teach us?". During peaks and changes, work on managing energy and resources to keep your teams motivated.

The hack:

Create an adaptability checklist, listing how you bounced back each time things did not go the way you planned.

Curiosity:

The superpower that thrives on the unknown

✓ **The behaviour:** Let the unknown guide you and turn it into a competitive advantage.

✓ **In action:** Ask the questions everyone's thinking but doesn't want to ask. Turn failures into learning opportunities and publicly admit when you don't understand something - it creates a safe space for others to do the same.

The hack:

Start meetings with "what surprised us this week?" to create an open, judgement-free learning zone.



Encouraging Behavioural Change

Leadership behaviours are literally contagious thanks to mirror neurons - the neurons that activate both when we act in a certain way, and when we see the same action performed by another. When leaders model these five superpowers, observational learning takes place, meaning your colleagues start to elicit the same behaviours they've seen from you, spreading through organizations like beneficial viruses.

When trying to establish behavioural change, it helps to have structure and frameworks in place. For example, by scaling through rituals:

✓ Monday Curiosity Check-ins

Encourage your team to share surprising learnings from the previous week.

✓ Failure Fridays

Celebrate intelligent failures, focusing on what was learnt, rather than what went wrong.

✓ Empathy interviews

Talk to people with questions around AI to create a safe space for teams to be built on.

✓ Collaboration sprints

Mix people who've never worked together to unearth new perspectives.

✓ Change through stories

Share transformation narratives, not just the statistics behind these. Talk about how curiosity led to breakthrough innovation or integrity during crisis built unshakeable trust.

Implementation that works

Week 1-2

The behavioural mirror

Get 360-degree feedback on your current behavioural patterns by asking your team how your behaviours affect their willingness to experiment and take risks. Keep a journal for your important decisions and actions to evaluate your thinking patterns.

Week 3-8

The behavioural experiment

Choose one superpower to explore in depth. If curiosity, start asking the questions to open up learning opportunities. If integrity, commit to sharing decision-making criteria publicly.

Week 9-16

The behavioural scale

Identify behavioural champions. Create regular practices. Build behaviours into performance reviews. Share success stories regularly.

Measuring what matters

Track behavioural KPIs alongside business metrics:

Curiosity

Learning velocity, experiment frequency, question quality

Empathy

Psychological safety scores, emotional engagement

Integrity

Trust scores, transparency metrics, ethical consistency

Resilience

Adaptation speed, learning from failure rate

Collaboration

Cross-team project success, track frequency of updates given to shared knowledge bases or in mentorship/peer learning sessions

The future is behavioural

Technical skills will commoditise. Human capabilities won't. The leaders who thrive won't know the most about AI - they'll know the most about humans. They'll create conditions where humans and AI don't just move together, but dance together.

The most sophisticated algorithm in your organisation isn't running on servers - it's running in the hearts and minds of your people. It's the algorithm of human behaviour that determines whether AI amplifies your capabilities or automates your limitations.

Your challenge

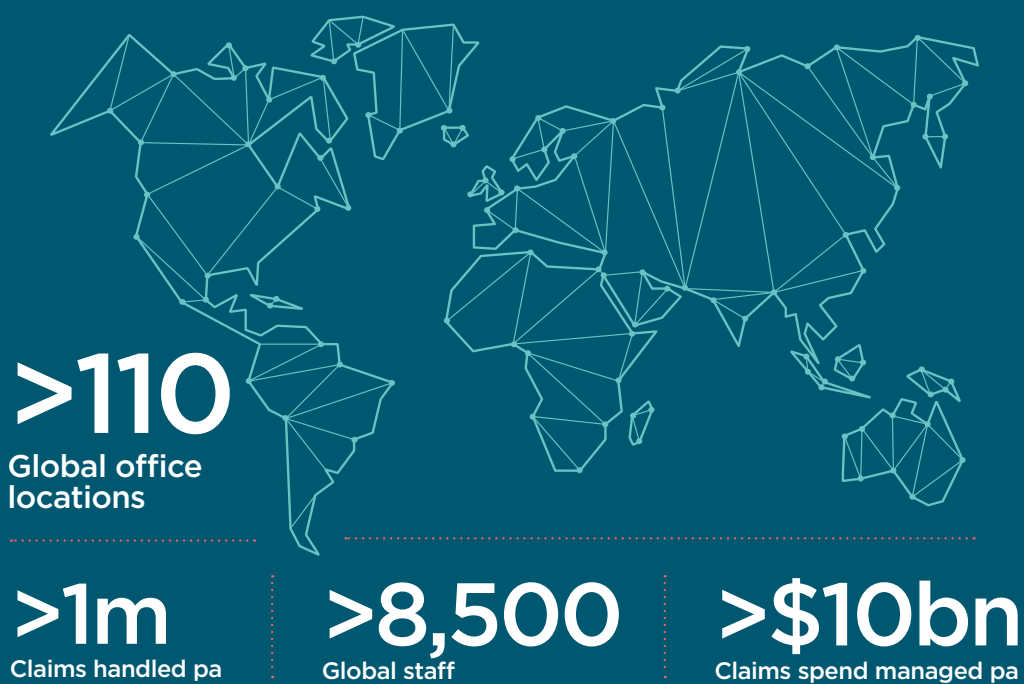
Stop trying to keep up with AI and start focusing on what AI can't replicate - authentic, empathetic, curious, resilient human leadership.

The machines are getting smarter every day. The question is: Are you getting more human? Because in the end, that's what will make all the difference.

The future isn't human versus AI.

It's human + AI. And the plus sign?
That's behavioural leadership.





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