TEAMRADERIE & EXECONLINE PRESENT

Team & Leadership Excellence in the Age of AI

What 2026 Taught Us, What 2027 Demands

November 5, 2026



EXECONLINE · WELCOME

Mark Ozer

Co-Founder & Chief Commercial Officer

20+ years advising Fortune 500 leaders and top business schools

execonline®

Learn by Doing with ExecOnline

Every ExecOnline leader learns by working on a real business challenge, not a case study.

Market-driven programs

Built from client and alumni input, co-created with the world's top business schools.

Learning applied to a real challenge

Each leader works a live business challenge or project, so learning turns into results.

Measurable impact

Reporting tracks each leader's progress and measures enterprise impact.

UC Berkeley Exec Ed

Duke Corporate Education

Columbia Business School Executive Education

MIT Management Executive Education

University of Virginia Darden Executive Education & Lifelong Learning

IMD

Stanford Graduate School of Business Executive Education

Yale School of Management Executive Education

Ivey Business School Western University · Canada

Tuck Executive Education at Dartmouth

TEAM & LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE IN THE AGE OF AI

Agenda

01 **AI Raises the Floor, Leaders and Teams Raise the Ceiling**

02 **Outthink the Algorithm: A Live Creativity Challenge**
Anja Svetina Nabergoj, Stanford d.school

03 **Surprising Insights from 2026**
Teamraderie & Anja Svetina Nabergoj, Stanford

04 **2027 Peer Bets: Leaders and Teams as One System**
Mark Ozer, ExecOnline

05 **EI in a World of AI**
Dr. Nik Lewis, USC Marshall School of Business

06 **Inside the Teams That Made AI Stick**
Dr. Paul Leonardi, UC Santa Barbara

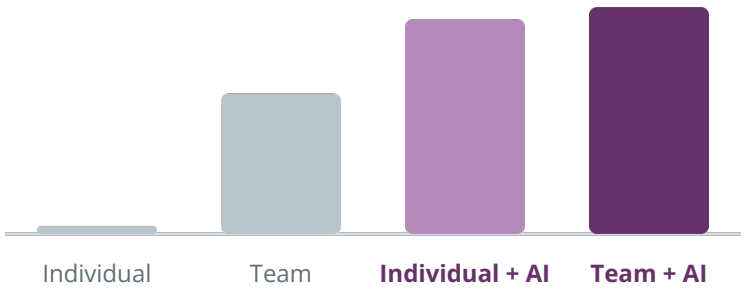
07 **Your One Move for 2027**

HARVARD & WHARTON FIELD EXPERIMENT · 700+ PROFESSIONALS

AI raises the floor. Teams raise the ceiling.

THE FLOOR

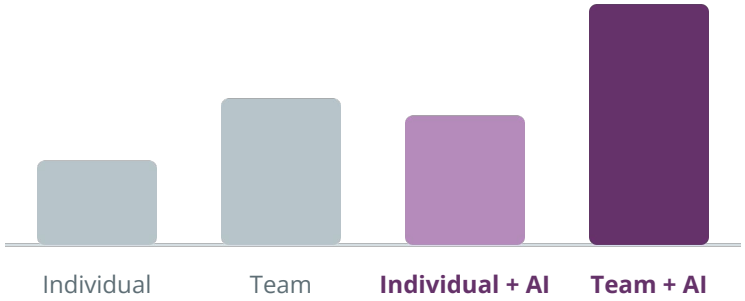
Average quality of solutions



With AI, one person performs like a team.

THE CEILING

Share of top-10% solutions



The best ideas still come from teams using AI together.

Source: Dell'Acqua, Mollick, Lakhani et al., "The Cybernetic Teammate," Harvard Business School & Wharton (2025). Field experiment at Procter & Gamble.

WHAT IT TAKES TO REACH THE CEILING

Teams still win. They run on human skills and strong leaders.

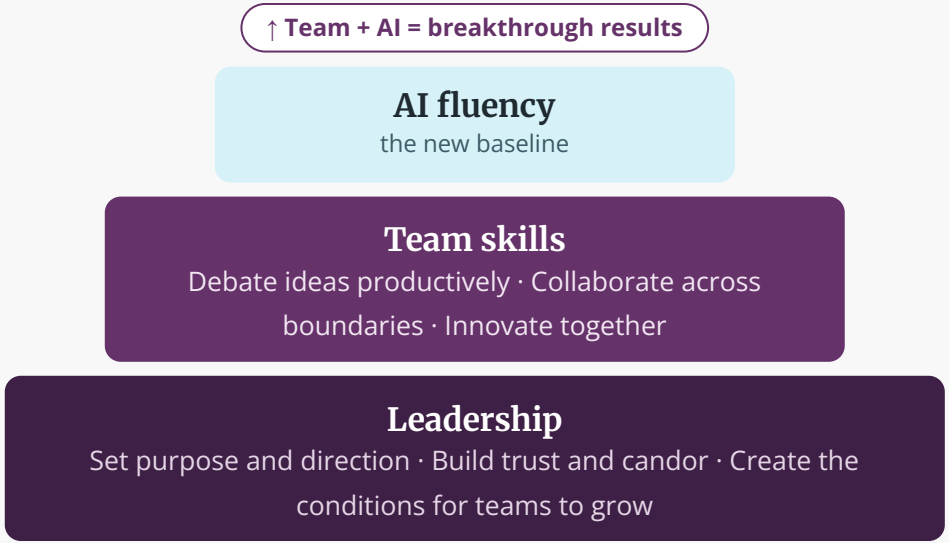
THE LATEST RESEARCH

–22% team coordination and trust when people turn to AI **instead of** their colleagues

2× more likely to bypass teammates for AI when the team lacks psychological safety

"Ultimately, it's up to CEOs to create the conditions for productive conflict."

Rebecca Newton, HBR (2026)



Sources: Niederhoffer et al., "Team Dynamics Weaken When Employees Turn to AI Instead of Colleagues," HBR, Oct 2026 (1,033 U.S. desk workers); Newton, "Your Executive Team Needs More Productive Conflict," HBR, Oct 2026.

CREATIVITY CHALLENGE

Outthink the Algorithm

AI raises the floor. Can your team raise the ceiling?

Teamraderie & ExecOnline · November 5, 2026

THE CHALLENGE

How might we make a new teammate feel they truly belong in their first week, when the team is spread across time zones?

THE CHALLENGE

How might we make a new teammate feel they truly belong in their first week, when the team is spread across time zones?

Here's what AI suggested. This is the floor.

1

Onboarding buddy

A peer to guide them for 30 days

2

Welcome video wall

Each teammate records a short hello

3

Virtual coffee chats

15-minute 1:1s with each teammate

4

Welcome kit

Branded swag shipped home

5

First-week roadmap

A day-by-day plan with early wins

BREAKOUT · 4.5 MINUTES

Raise the ceiling

1. **Pick**
   Choose the AI idea your group likes most (30 seconds).

2. **Make it human**
   Add what only people who've been the new person would know.

3. **Name it**
   Give it a max 5-word name.

5:00

Be ready to share out

SHARE

Drop your idea in the chat

Spokespeople
Post your team's to idea now

Everyone else
React to your favorites

THE REVEAL

When AI improved its own ideas, it stayed in the same lane

AI, ROUND 1		AI, "MORE CREATIVE"
Onboarding buddy	→	**Time-zone buddy duo**
Welcome video wall	→	**Interactive welcome board**
Virtual coffee chats	→	**Coffee roulette**
Welcome kit	→	**Personalized kit**
First-week roadmap	→	**Onboarding quest with badges**

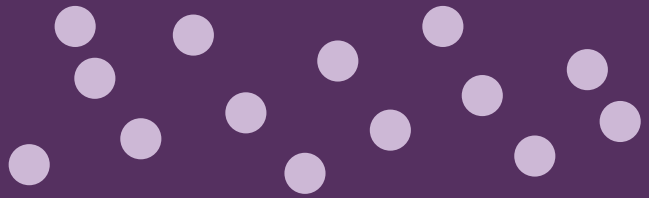
YOUR IDEAS

See the chat

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

With AI ideas, stories got better, and more alike

Writers on their own



Some great stories, some weak ones. All different.

Writers given AI ideas



Better on average, but they started to sound the same.

AI raises the floor. Teams keep the variety and raise the ceiling.

Doshi & Hauser (2024), Science Advances. Short-story experiment, ~300 writers.

TEAM & LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE IN THE AGE OF AI

Three Surprises from 2026

What our program data says about how teams and leaders changed this year

01 · HIGH-PERFORMANCE CULTURE

Teams got better at almost everything, except prioritizing

02 · AI ADOPTION

The biggest AI gain wasn't a tool. It was experimenting together

03 · INNOVATIVE CULTURES

Teams embrace the fun half of innovation and skip the hard half

Teamraderie · November 5, 2026

SURPRISE 1 · HIGH-PERFORMANCE CULTURE

Teams got better at almost everything, except prioritizing



6 of 7 behaviors got stronger

Teams starting with us in 2026 outscored 2025 teams on six of seven dimensions. Biggest jumps: **discussing difficult issues constructively** and **shared goals across functions**.

The exception: Prioritization

38% name it their team's weakest area

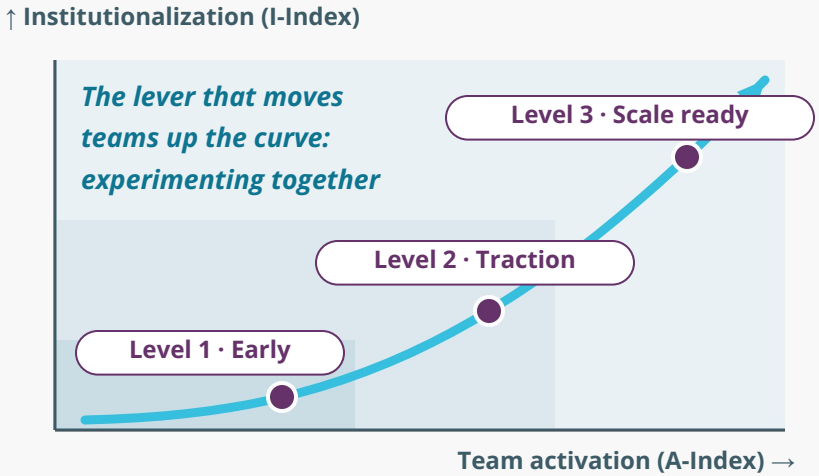
60% say their team is spread too thin

44% of AI program teams cite competing priorities as their #1 barrier

Why: AI intensifies work, with more parallel threads, task-switching and fatigue (Berkeley Haas, HBR, Feb 2026). Data: Teamraderie HPC Scan, 2026 vs. 2025 team baselines (6-pt scale; chart axis starts at 3.0); AI program, 98 teams.

SURPRISE 2 · AI ADOPTION

The biggest AI gain wasn't a tool. It was experimenting together



"Our team's use of AI is more intentional and aligned, moving beyond individual use to shared use cases." — Team leader

1.1 → 2.2

"How often does your team run an AI experiment and review it together?" Scores doubled, the **biggest gain of 9** AI maturity questions.

Teams that learned to experiment together vs. teams that didn't

After the program	Together	Didn't
Gain in AI sophistication	+1.52	+0.40
Teams that moved forward	100%	74%
Leader says AI use improved	81%	52%

Research: in a Harvard–Wharton field experiment, teams using AI were the most likely to produce top-10% solutions (Dell'Acqua et al.). Data: Teamraderie AI program, 55 teams, pre/post Team AI Adoption Index (0–5 scale).

SURPRISE 3 · INNOVATIVE CULTURES

Teams embrace the fun half of innovation and skip the hard half

THE APPEALING SIDE		GAP	THE HARD SIDE	
Willingness to experiment	5.14	+0.76	Rigorous discipline	4.38
Psychological safety	5.32	+0.67	Brutal candor	4.65
Collaboration	5.37	+0.61	Individual accountability	4.76
Tolerance for failure	5.00	+0.53	Intolerance for incompetence	4.47
Flatness	4.35	−1.08	Strong leadership	5.43

82%
are comfortable experimenting with new approaches

35%
have a rigorous process to pick which ideas to try

The exception: ideas wait in line

Leadership is strong, and 72% feel empowered to push ideas forward. Yet 65% say proposals must still be vetted by senior leaders first.

"A willingness to experiment requires rigorous discipline." — Gary Pisano, Harvard Business School

Framework: Gary Pisano, "The Hard Truth About Innovative Cultures," HBR (2019). Data: Teamraderie Innovative Cultures Scan, 2026; scores on a 7-pt scale, percentages = agree (5+).

EXECONLINE · PEER INSIGHTS FOR 2027

2027 Peer Bets

Leaders and Teams as One System

Where peers are investing in leaders and teams, and what that means for your 2027 plan.

15,455
real leader projects reviewed

210
client organizations

18 months
January 2025 to June 2026

Where Peers Are Investing

WHAT LEADERS CHOSE TO WORK ON

44.7%

of leader projects focus on their own people and teams

WHAT THAT WORK LOOKS LIKE

- Team development
- Communication
- Alignment

Nearly half of leaders, from individual contributors to executives, chose their own people and teams as the challenge to work on.

Source: ExecOnline analysis of 15,455 leader projects, 210 organizations, Jan 2025 to Jun 2026

What the Strongest Leaders Do

01

Define success before the work starts

Ask: Does every people and team goal have a number and a baseline?

02

Build the plan with the people it needs

Ask: Who must agree for this team change to stick, and are they in?

03

Tie teamwork to business strategy

Ask: Which business priority will a stronger team move in 2027?

88% of leaders expect to implement their project. The strongest plans back that intent with a measure, the right people and a clear link to strategy.

Source: ExecOnline leader projects, 2026-Q2 snapshot: 15,448 projects from leaders graduating Jan 2025 to Jun 2026. Figures cover all leaders. Highest-scoring = AI review score of 3.6+ out of 5 (about the top third). Expect to implement: 12,252 responses.

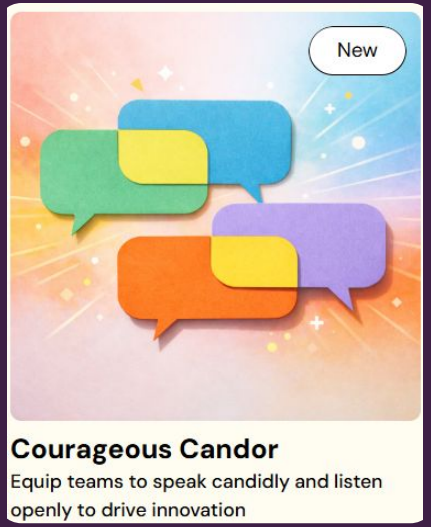
Dr. Nik Lewis

USC Professor | Executive Education | Leadership Development



- **USC Marshall Professor**
  Management & Organization Department
- **Leadership Development Consultant**
  Leadership & Team Development
- **Former DoD Branch Head**
  Led 20+ project management employees

TEAMRADERIE EXPERIENCE



Research focus: emotional intelligence, psychological safety, and AI

EI Skills Behind Effective AI Use

How does emotional intelligence support AI skill development in early career professionals?



Courageous Candor: practice speaking up and responding openly

Dr. Paul Leonardi

Chair, Technology Management, UC Santa Barbara



Author of *The Digital Mindset*. More than a decade of field research on how teams change when new technology arrives.

TEAMRADERIE AI EXPERIENCES

- Get to Know Gen AI
  Demystify AI and build confidence with a world-renowned expert
- Scaling Up with Gen AI
  Turn scattered wins into strategy with a Harvard-published framework
- Disruptive Innovation with AI
  Reimagine your workflows and spark bold ideas with a leading AI strategist

AI RAISES THE FLOOR. LEADERS AND TEAMS RAISE THE CEILING.

Your one move for 2027

1

YOUR LEADERS

Which norm will they model, not just mention?

For example: candor in meetings, curiosity, or how they use AI themselves

2

YOUR TEAMS

What will they stop doing to make room for what matters?

For example: a status meeting, a report nobody reads, a project that has lost its "why"

3

YOUR NEXT EXPERIMENT

What will your teams test together in the first 90 days?

For example: a shared AI pilot, a new way to make decisions, a debrief after every project

Let’s plan 2027 together.

Thanks for joining us today!
We will reach out to connect directly in the coming weeks.

execonline®