



Trust-First AI Playbook



The Trust-First AI Adoption Playbook

Strategic tools for HR and L&D leaders guiding adoption from alignment to action

AI is advancing faster than most organizations are ready for. While 66% of employees already use AI at work, only 41% trust how it's being implemented.

This isn't a systems gap. It's a leadership opportunity.

The Trust-First AI Adoption Playbook helps HR, People, and L&D leaders bridge that gap using strategic frameworks, actionable checklists, and messaging that builds alignment and readiness across the business.

Purpose of this playbook

- Align People, Tech, and Learning teams
- Launch trust-first pilots that reduce risk
- Equip managers and employees to navigate change with confidence
- Prepare for internal planning, QBRs, or board-level conversations

What's inside

1. Executive Briefing: The Future of L&D

Why it matters: Aligns stakeholders around a clear leadership point of view on AI adoption

Outcome: Helps CHROs, CLOs, and business leaders act with a shared lens

2. Pilot Program Playbook

Why it matters: Demonstrates success before scaling

Outcome: Helps launch a story-worthy AI pilot with minimal lift

4. 30/60/90-Day Rollout Plan

Why it matters: Leaders need clear sequencing, not scattered ideas

Outcome: Use this to plan or present your first 90 days of trust-first enablement

5. AI Messaging Templates

Why it matters: The language you use shapes trust

Outcome: Ready-to-use messages to align employees, managers, and leadership

6. Governance Model Overview

Why it matters: Prevents fragmented ownership by clarifying roles across different functions

Outcome: Use this to propose shared accountability between HR, IT, Legal, and Compliance



Only 41% of employees trust their company's use of AI, yet 66% use it anyway.

SOURCE: [KPMG, 2025](#)

Trust, readiness, and the real risk in AI adoption

A briefing for CHROs, CLOs, and learning executives

When trust lags behind AI usage, risks grow: errors, resistance, and fatigue. Most leaders don't realize it's already happening inside their organizations.

Why it matters

- Successful AI adoption depends on trust, not your tech stack
- High-trust organizations are 2.6x more likely to achieve successful AI outcomes, like greater productivity, innovation, and business impact ([Deloitte](#))
- HR, People, and L&D leaders shape the behaviors, communication, and confidence that determine success

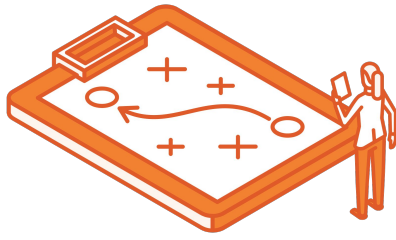
Your role has changed

It's no longer about training or policy. HR, People, and L&D leaders are now expected to:

- Align leaders around a shared message
- Enable manager adoption
- Build trust through learning, communication, and support

What to do now

- ✓ Sponsor a trust-first strategy led by HR, People, and L&D teams
- ✓ Audit skills, messaging, and readiness
- ✓ Prepare leaders to communicate clearly and confidently
- ✓ Shift enablement from transactional delivery to strategic transformation



Pilot Program Playbook

A strategic guide to launching trust-first AI pilots

Purpose of this playbook

This playbook equips HR, People, and L&D leaders to design and run focused, low-risk AI pilots. These pilots build internal alignment, demonstrate early value, and create momentum for broader adoption. At every step, they reinforce trust and transparency.

It's built for teams ready to move from curiosity to capability. No need to wait for perfect conditions or risk overwhelming the organization.

When to use this

Use this playbook when:



There's interest in AI, but readiness varies across teams



You need quick wins to build credibility and buy-in



You want to demonstrate value before scaling investment



Employees or managers are concerned about how AI is being introduced

Step-by-step guide

Step 1: Choose the right use case

Start small. Prioritize tasks that are:

- Low risk, such as internal-facing or compliance-safe work
- Manual or repetitive, with clear time-saving potential
- Measurable, with visible outcomes and improvement
- Trust-building, supporting clarity and confidence

Example use cases:

- Draft onboarding or compliance communications
- Recommend training modules for new hires
- Auto-generate course descriptions
- Summarize survey feedback or usage analytics
- Curate learning paths for specific roles

Step 2: Define the scope and outcome

Keep it simple and measurable.

- Duration: 30 to 45 days
- Participants: One team, role group, or region
- Tools: Use tech that's already vetted or pre-approved
- Support: Identify who will coach, check in, or enable
- Outcome: Define success, such as time saved, task completion, or an increase in trust

Sample goal:

- Pilot onboarding content generation with 10 hiring managers.
- Success means more than 75% report reduced workload and improved clarity.

Step 3: Frame the pilot with transparency

Trust starts with communication. Before launching:

- Brief participants on what the pilot is, why it matters, and how it works
- Clarify what is being tested and what is not
- Invite questions and offer opt-out options
- Reinforce that this is a learning initiative, not a performance review

Recommended assets:

- Email from a respected leader
- Three-question pre-pilot pulse survey
- FAQ covering AI use, privacy, and expectations

Step 4: Launch and support the pilot

During the pilot:

- Check in weekly with participants
- Share prompts, reminders, or sample use cases
- Encourage honest feedback, especially when trust is challenged
- Track both usage data and participant experience

Support should be visible. Don't assume adoption happens on its own.

Step 5: Evaluate and share results

After the pilot:

- Gather both data, such as usage and time saved, and stories, such as quotes and reactions
- Run a post-pilot survey focused on trust, ease of use, and perceived value
- Build a one-page or one-slide summary to share with leaders

Suggested format:

Outcome	Result
Adoption rate	85% of managers completed pilot tasks
Time saved	60% reported saving at least 1 hour per week
Confidence shift	40% increase in confidence using AI tools
Quote	This was the first AI tool I actually wanted to use."

What to do next

- ✓ Use the pilot as a launchpad for your 30/60/90 rollout
- ✓ Share results in leadership meetings to advocate for broader use
- ✓ Scale your enablement and communications, keeping what worked and improving what didn't
- ✓ Offer support to teams designing their own next-phase pilots



30/60/90-Day Framework for Leading Trust-First AI Adoption

A leadership approach for HR and L&D executives guiding strategic adoption across the business

This framework is designed for HR and L&D leaders who are shaping how AI shows up in the organization. It helps you drive trust, enable communication, and align change agents without needing to own the technology itself.

Days 1 to 30: Align and frame the narrative

► **Your role:** Set the tone. Position AI adoption as a cultural shift, not just a technical rollout. Frame trust as a leadership responsibility.

► **Outcome:** You've created early clarity, positioned your team as a proactive partner, and opened a low-stakes feedback loop.

Priority	What to do
Frame the "Why now"	Use the Executive Briefing to align with peers and set expectations
Name a pilot lead	Appoint someone to run a 30 to 45-day pilot within one team or function
Announce internally	Share a brief message or video that outlines the opportunity and invites input
Start listening	Ask your People or L&D team to run a short sentiment pulse survey (3 questions)

Days 31 to 60: Support enablement and signal progress

► **Your role:** Stay visible while letting your team lead the charge. Focus on building confidence, surfacing wins, and modeling transparency.

► **Outcome:** You've demonstrated executive-level endorsement and helped generate organic momentum for AI enablement.

Priority	What to do
Sponsor a story	Share a strong quote or result from the pilot in a meeting or internal channel
Keep communication flowing	Encourage your team to share learnings and amplify their updates
Clear roadblocks	Resolve friction points between People, IT, and Legal that slow progress
Encourage coaching	Empower managers to guide conversations about change and trust

Days 61 to 90: Scale what works and secure buy-in

► **Your role:** Focus on momentum and strategic alignment. Connect early wins to business goals and broader planning.

► **Outcome:** You've built credibility, shared evidence of impact, and positioned your team as a key driver of trust-based AI adoption.

Priority	What to do
Review results	Request a one-slide recap of pilot outcomes, sentiment, and usage
Bring it to leadership	Share a 5-minute summary with ELT or your direct reports
Refine the narrative	Tailor messaging for different teams and stakeholders
Prepare for planning cycles	Use the playbook to frame enablement in QBRs or strategic roadmaps

You don't need to own the rollout. You just need to lead the change.

This framework helps you lead with confidence and influence. It is most effective when paired with:

Executive Briefing

for strategic alignment

Pilot Program Playbook

for team-level execution

Change Management Checklist

for visibility into readiness

Messaging Templates

to reinforce trust across every touchpoint



Messaging templates for executives

Communicate AI adoption with clarity and credibility

Lead with the right words and the right tone

AI adoption isn't just a technology conversation. It's a leadership one.

These templates help CHROs, CLOs, and CPOs speak to the opportunity of AI with trust and intention. Each message reflects real-world leadership moments, whether you're aligning with a CTO, guiding company-wide change, or briefing the board.

What's inside

This set includes executive-ready messages designed to support:

- Early alignment with tech, compliance, and risk partners
- Trust-building communication across the organization
- Post-pilot recaps that drive momentum and clarity
- ELT and board-level talking points
- Proposals that promote shared ownership and governance

1. Email from CHRO to CTO

Subject: Aligning our AI strategy across People and Tech

Hi [Name],

As your team explores AI tooling, I wanted to share how we're approaching adoption from a cultural and behavioral lens. Our focus is on trust, communication, and manager enablement, not just access or usage.

I've attached a short briefing that outlines how we're framing this internally. Let's align on timing, pilot criteria, and messaging.

Best,
[Your Name]

 [Attach: Executive Briefing]

2. Company-wide kickoff message (Email or Slack)

We're beginning a focused internal initiative to explore AI thoughtfully and responsibly. This is not just a tech rollout. It's a trust-first effort to test what works, surface where clarity is needed, and understand how people experience the change.

We'll start with a few small use cases, including onboarding and internal communications. We'll share what we learn, move intentionally, and prioritize transparency throughout.

If you're part of this pilot, thank you. If you have questions, I'm here.

3. Post-pilot recap email to ELT

Subject: AI pilot outcomes and next steps

Hi all,

We just completed a x-day AI pilot with [Team Name]. Highlights include:

x% of participants reported time savings

Manager confidence in responsible AI use increased by x%

Communication effectiveness scored higher than any previous rollout

We plan to build on this in [designated quarter] with refined messaging and scaled enablement. Thanks for your continued support.

[Your Name]

4. Talking points for QBR or board update

Use these in slides, offsites, or executive-level briefings:

We've positioned AI adoption as a cultural opportunity, not just a tooling decision

Trust-first pilots confirmed our approach across two business functions

Manager enablement has increased clarity and adoption readiness

Our next phase focuses on scale: regional communications, shared governance, and integrated training

Pro tips for getting the most value

- Share with executive assistants or comms partners for faster execution
- Pair with the **Executive Briefing** or **Pilot Program Playbook** to provide context
- Use board talking points in QBR slides or at executive off-sites

5. Governance alignment email

Subject: Proposal for shared ownership of enterprise AI adoption

Hi [Name],

We're seeing strong momentum around AI experimentation, but also early signs of fragmentation. I recommend forming a cross-functional working group to guide adoption across HR, IT, Legal, and Risk, with each owning key responsibilities.

I'm happy to draft a lightweight proposal that outlines shared goals and ownership areas. Let me know if you'd like to discuss or suggest others to include.

Best,

[Your Name]

Governance model overview

Clarify ownership early to build trust
and avoid fragmentation

Why this matters

In large organizations, AI adoption often starts with experimentation. But without clear and shared ownership, it can quickly become fragmented, inconsistent, or misaligned with your culture and compliance standards.

This governance model helps HR, People, and Learning leaders initiate or support a cross-functional structure that brings clarity to decision-making, accountability, and collaboration across functions.

Shared ownership framework

The matrix below outlines who should lead, support, or stay informed across five core workstreams of a trust-first AI strategy:

Function	Define strategy	Own comms	Build enablement	Manage risk	Implement tools
HR / People	✓ Lead	✓ Lead	✓ Lead	↻ Support	↻ Informed
L&D / Enablement	↻ Support	↻ Support	✓ Lead	↻ Informed	↻ Informed
IT / Technology	↻ Support	↻ Informed	↻ Informed	↻ Support	✓ Lead
Legal / Risk / Compliance	↻ Informed	↻ Support	↻ Informed	✓ Lead	↻ Support
Internal Comms / Brand	↻ Support	✓ Lead	↻ Informed	↻ Informed	↻ Informed

LEGEND

- ✓ Lead = Primary owner
- ↻ Support = Actively involved
- ↻ Informed = Needs visibility, not approval

How to use this model



Start a conversation

Use this chart to initiate a cross-functional working group or to clarify roles when ownership is unclear.



Avoid confusion or duplication

Spot overlaps before they slow you down, such as multiple teams creating separate playbooks or messaging tracks.



Frame it for executives

Include the model in your rollout plans, pilot proposals, or off-site presentations to align expectations early.



Adapt to your organization

This structure is scalable and flexible. Adjust roles as needed by business unit, region, or internal structure.

Suggested talking point for leadership



If we don't define shared ownership now, we risk reacting to AI adoption rather than guiding it. **This model keeps us aligned, compliant, and focused on building trust as we scale.**





From Playbook to Practice

You have seen the frameworks. Now let's make them real. In just 30 minutes, we will help you map your first pilot, align cross-functional ownership, and build a roadmap you can present with confidence.

[Book a 30-minute strategy session](#)