THE BIG FIVE

Five roles only you can play — a leadership diagnostic for the age of AI

Score each role 0–3. Be honest. Then compare at your table.

0 = Not started 1 = Aware, no action 2 = In progress 3 = Operationalized and measurable

Role	Diagnostic Question	Score
Head Coach of Your Team	Have I directly addressed manager fear, changed incentives, and redefined roles for the AI era?	
Board, Investors, or Your Mirror	Can I explain our AI strategy, risk, governance, and ROI in language they understand?	
Culture of the Organization	Have I set clear norms for responsible AI use or is shadow AI our default culture?	
External Partners and Customers	Do we have at least one AI use case our customers or partners can actually feel?	
Your Unique Ability	Is AI freeing my time for the work only I can do or pulling me into operator mode?	

Total: ____ / 15

NIST QUICK CHECK

Four questions every leader should be able to answer.

NIST Function	Question	Check
Govern	Do we have a clear owner for AI decisions, risk, and accountability?	Y / N
Map	Do we have a complete inventory of where AI is being used: approved and shadow?	Y / N
Measure	Do we know whether our AI tools actually work: accuracy, bias, ROI?	Y / N
Manage	Do we have a plan for when AI gets it wrong: incident response, monitoring, human oversight?	Y / N

TABLE DISCUSSION

1. Which role is your lowest score? Why?
2. What's the real issue – skill, fear, incentives, governance, data, or focus?
3. If you treated this as a leadership-capacity issue, not a technology rollout, what would you do differently in the next 90 days?

YOUR 90-DAY MOVE

I will raise the lid by:

Owned by: _____ **Proof by:** _____

SCORING GUIDE

Score	What It Means	What to Do
0–5	**AI Theater**	Adoption without transformation. Pick the single lowest-scoring role and start there. Don't try to fix all five at once. If the gap is readiness rather than will (your data, your processes, your infrastructure), that's usually a sign it's worth bringing in outside expertise before investing further in the technology itself.
6–10	**Pilot Trap**	You have activity, not scale. Put governance in place before you add another pilot. That's what lets you trust results enough to expand them. Change the incentives for whoever owns adoption on your team and pick one use case customers or partners can actually see - not just an internal process win. If the gap is structural rather than effort, outside expertise can close it faster than another internal pilot.
11–15	**Ready to Scale**	You have the leadership discipline in place. The job now is protecting it. Push through the J-curve rather than declaring victory at the first sign of results. Keep protecting time for your own unique ability as the organization scales around you. And don't let governance lag just because things are working. The risks are evolving rapidly.

THE DATA BEHIND THIS EXERCISE

- 91% of mid-market companies use AI. 2% have operationalized it at scale.
  (RSM 2025; PR Newswire)
- 88% of organizations report AI use. 18% of firms have meaningfully adopted it.
  (Stanford AI Index 2026; Federal Reserve)
- 39% of managers prohibit or discourage AI use among their teams.
  (Section 2025 AI Proficiency Report)
- 74% of organizations have limited AI governance coverage. Only 14% of small firms know the NIST AI RMF exists.
  (IBM 2025; CIO.com)
- The majority of employees use AI tools their employer hasn't approved.
  (WitnessAI; Lenovo)

The lid on your business is leadership capacity.
The models will never by worse than today.
What has to change to raise the lid?