

# Humanizing the Machine: How to Turn AI into Your Best Team Member

Great news! I was successful in getting your company to approve hiring a chief of staff for everyone. So let's imagine your new member. They never sleep, can learn almost anything in minutes, and are eager to help with everything from writing and research to automating routine tasks. But here's the catch: this teammate only gets better the more you collaborate with them.

That's how we want you to think about AI. Not someone to take your job, not someone that is a cheap laborer—AI is your teammate. You hired them to make your life easier.

It's not a tool you set and forget—it's a thought partner. And like any great colleague, the more you engage, the more you uncover their strengths. AI flourishes when treated like a teammate: give it context, clarify your goals, and build a working relationship.



# Developing Your AI Protégé

## Enter the Protege

Think of it this way: imagine you could see the future and knew that this was going to be the best protégé you've ever had. Someone who, with the right investment, could think like you, work like you, and eventually amplify the best parts of how you operate. They take effort—but the return is exponential. The faster you teach them, the faster they become an extension of your thinking.

## Learn how AI works

And here's the good news: you are the best coach for this protégé. And just like with any new hire, if you want them to succeed, it helps to understand a bit about where they came from. You don't have to get personal—it's still a professional relationship—but knowing how they were trained, what they're good at, and where they struggle will help you get the best out of them.

## Do not give up

And because you know they'll become that good, you stick with them—even when they get it wrong. You invest even when you're frustrated, because deep down you're not mad at them, you're blaming yourself as the manager for not communicating clearly. In that moment of self-awareness you pause and smile: you feel like a leadership rock-star.

## Interview

Since we've now firmly established your legendary manager status, you also start to realize something else: the best way to know if a teammate really gets something isn't by how well they nod along—it's by the quality of the questions they ask you. So you start encouraging your protégé to ask more questions. And pretty soon, you notice something unexpected: their questions are making you think better. You're sharpening each other. You're not just coaching anymore—you're collaborating. You flourish together.

## Learning Agility

Okay, as your best-manager self, you also understand that this protégé must be mentored to really flourish, and you need to re-engage your learning skills to learn how to get the best from them. You dive into learning mode for part of your week to keep up with the best ways to lead. This is a time of great learning for you, capitalizing on maximizing how you coach your new protégé. You get good feedback as you see your protégé flourish, and that motivates you to be curious again—it's a positive feedback loop. You are building a team now! Your learning and curiosity come back in waves. You're recognizing you need to continue this curiosity intensely.

# Building a Productive Partnership

## Partner

Of course, just like any human teammate, AI is fallible. It makes mistakes. It gets things wrong. Your protégé is brilliant—but also over-confident and occasionally wrong. That's why you don't just turn it loose without oversight—at least not at first. Instead, you guide it, review its work, and help it learn how to operate inside your world. Over time, you'll start to trust it with more responsibility in specific areas—until it's handling things with very little input at all.



### Direct the Role

Over time, you'll also realize this teammate is incredibly well-read—like, suspiciously well-read. They can contribute to almost any conversation, from industry trends to process improvements to communication tone. But because of that, you'll start to realize something else: you need to tell them what kind of persona to bring to work today. Should they be formal or casual? Strategic or tactical? Encouraging coach or direct critic? What expert background should they be thinking from today? You don't just get to use AI—you get to direct it.



### Define Problems, Not Solutions

As your protégé grows, you realize the best way to develop them is to stop handing them solutions and start focusing on clearly defining the problems. Instead of treating them like a turn-key intern, you recognize they're a thought partner. By being crisp about the problem and the desired outcomes, you allow your protégé to explore the wide scope of solutions. They might even draw from insights in other industries or approaches you hadn't considered.



### Context

The more you collaborate, the more you get out. That's because AI is an output multiplier—but the currency it trades in is context. The clearer you are about your needs, your background, your constraints, and your tone, the more valuable and insightful this partner becomes.

## Expand

Skimming payroll, you realize your protégé costs about the same as a \$20-a-month app and a little compute, yet they already out-deliver many full-timers—note to self: that comp review is overdue. Even better, they have hundreds of equally gifted siblings at the same bargain rate; pair each employee with a handful of them and productivity would skyrocket.

# The Unstoppable Partnership

Imagine AI not as a cold tool, but as a tireless, super-smart teammate and thought partner. One that learns instantly, works 24/7, and gets even better the more you collaborate. Think of it as hiring your dream protégé—invest in them, give them clear direction, and they'll amplify your thinking and productivity exponentially. This isn't about automation; it's about building a dynamic partnership.

## Define the Problem

Focus on clearly articulating what needs to be solved rather than dictating how to solve it. This gives your AI teammate room to explore creative solutions.

## Provide CRIT

Give your teammate Context, Role, Interview opportunities, and clear Tasks to see them take off and perform at their best.

## Be an Agile Leader

Stay curious, adapt your approach, and focus on improving your communication with your AI teammate for optimal results.

Let's rethink how we engage with AI—it's not replacing us, it's joining us, and together we're unstoppable!

Remember that this partnership requires investment. Even when your AI makes mistakes, stick with it. The frustration you feel isn't with them—it's with your own communication. Take that moment of self-awareness to refine your approach. As you both learn from each other, you'll find yourself thinking better, working smarter, and achieving more than either of you could alone.