KEYNOTE

AI-Powered Productivity for Management Support Professionals

How the assistant role is evolving to protect time, judgement, and impact in the age of AI.

Lucy Brazier, OBE

CEO, Marcham Publishing

If you came here expecting…

- ~~Productivity hacks~~
- ~~The latest AI tools~~
- ~~How to be more efficient~~

This morning is none of those things.

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WARNING

This presentation will either freak you out or excite you.

How you react to what comes could change everything…



Meet your speaker



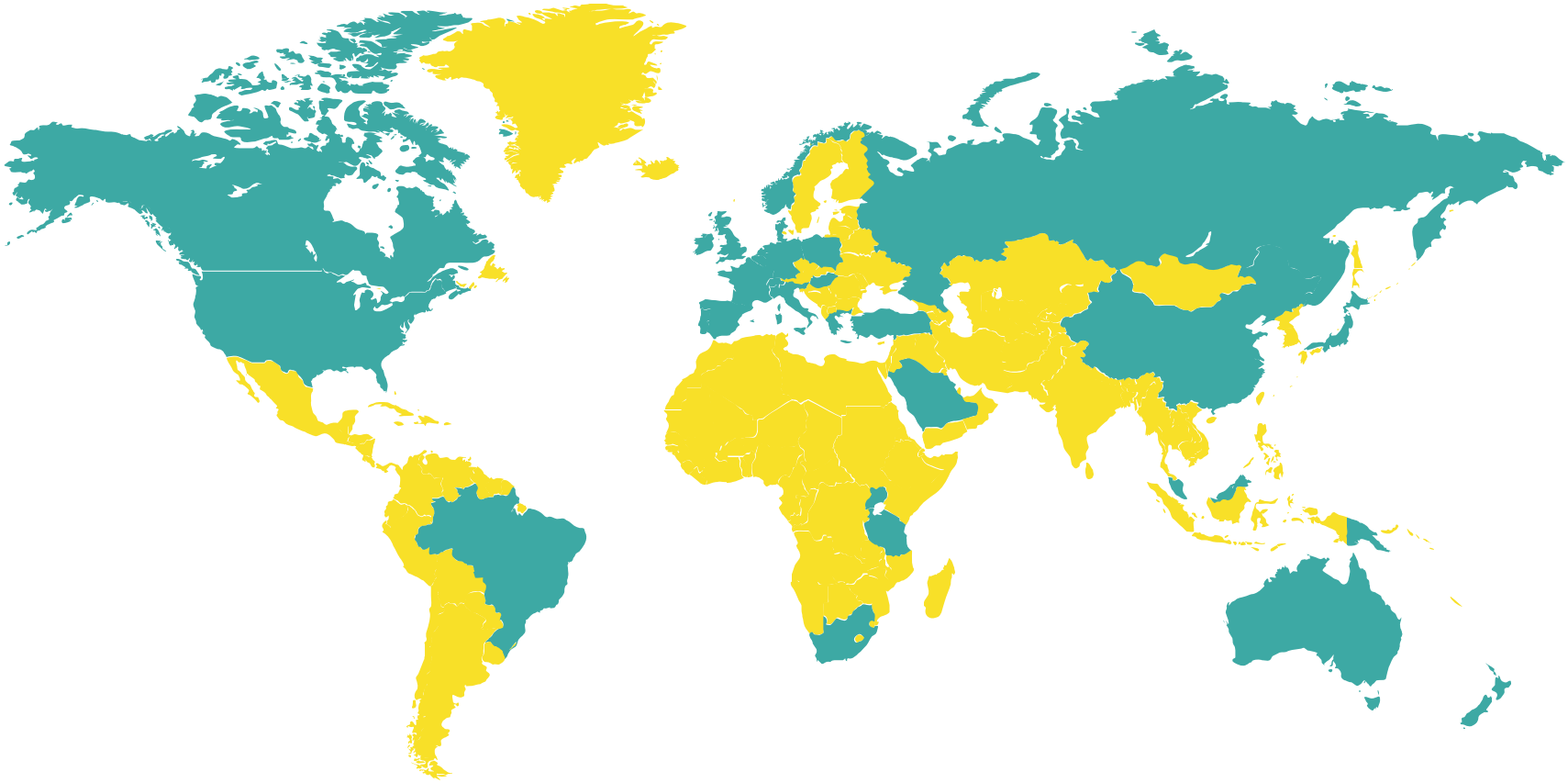
Lucy Brazier, OBE

CEO, Marcham Publishing

Executive Support

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MY JOURNEY SO FAR






2024 INTERNATIONAL BOOK AWARDS
WINNER
BUSINESS: CAREERS CATEGORY
The Modern-Day Assistant
Build your influence and boost your potential
Lucy Brazier
International Book Awards
AWARD WINNER
2024
InternationalBookAwards.com
EXECUTIVESUPPORTMEDIA.COM

Some questions to ask yourself before we start!

01 What are your professional ambitions?

02 What are your current boundaries & authority?

03 What are your current strengths?

04 How much do you know about your business?

05 When was the last time you felt highly motivated?

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CHANGE.



“

A ship in port is safe, but that’s not what ships are built for.

— GRACE HOPPER



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Do not edit
How to change the design



What are the defining words of the 21st century so far?

ⓘ The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from

slido

THE WORDS

01

Connectivity

02

Disruption

03

Uncertainty

04

Anxiety

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THE WORDS

01

Connectivity

02

Disruption

03

Uncertainty

04

Anxiety

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You are better at change than you think.

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RESET.

IT HAS ALREADY HAPPENED

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THE REFRAME

AI has not replaced the profession.

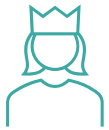
It has clarified it.

The evidence was always there. The tools just made it visible.

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TWO ASSISTANTS, SAME JOB TITLE

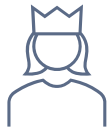
Same company. Same level. Same workload.



ANNA

Sits in the strategy meeting.

The CEO works with her before the quarterly plan goes out. She is invited to the strategy launch. Her name is on the invite list for the meeting, and not to take the notes. Her opinion is valued as part of the team.



MARIA

Being asked to justify themselves as headcount.

She project managed the launch, chose the catering, organised the travel, but it wouldn't occur to leadership to invite her. She is preparing a business case showing a list of tasks completed and hours saved, hoping the numbers are loud enough to keep her seat because there are rumours AI will take their job.

One difference. Not effort. Not output. Not loyalty. ***Visibility and understanding of the work itself.***

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THE QUESTION

How do you stop being invisible?

The work is seen when the worker is.



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Busyness is no longer protection.

The leaders who notice you now are looking for **alignment**, not *noise.*

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THE REFRAME

Infrastructure is a **category of value**.

A classification shift, not a rename.

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THE IMPLEMENTATION LAYER

You are the **implementation layer of leadership.**

STRATEGY

Vision • Priorities • Decisions

I M P L E M E N T A T I O N L A Y E R

Where strategy becomes reality

This is where you operate

Interpret • Align • Drive • Follow through

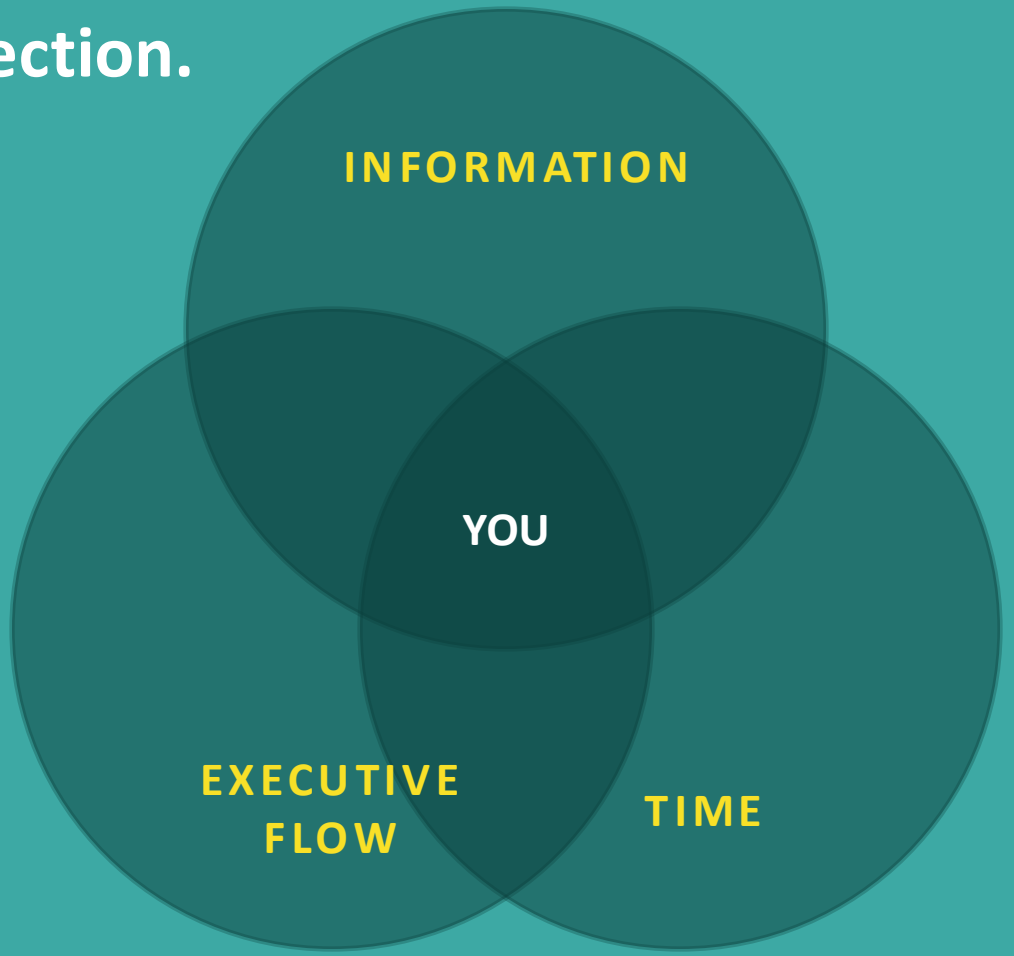
EXECUTION

Delivery • Ownership • Results

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THE INTERSECTION

You sit at the intersection.



No one else holds all three. That's the leverage.

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INFORMATION

What you know that nobody else has access to.

This is institutional intelligence.



Cross-functional sightlines
You see across departments

Board context
You know what leadership cares about

Knowledge
You often hold the history

Political awareness
You read the room when others can't

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TIME

The hours you give back that never show up on a timesheet.

This is executive bandwidth.

Calendar architecture
You design the week before it happens

Triage and filtering
You decide what reaches the executive

Prioritisation
You sequence competing demands

Time recovery
You create margin where there was none

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EXECUTIVE FLOW

The rhythm you protect so they can think at their best.

This is cognitive infrastructure.



Distraction removal
You absorb the noise before it becomes a problem

Anticipation
You solve problems before they surface

Pattern recognition
You see what repeats and intervene early

Context continuity
You hold the thread across meetings

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VISIBILITY

What this means for visibility.

The shift

AI absorbs the work that wrongly defined the profession.

What remains

The work that was always the most valuable, that you were always doing, but nobody ever saw.

Your move

Operate at the right level.
Name the value.
Own the narrative.

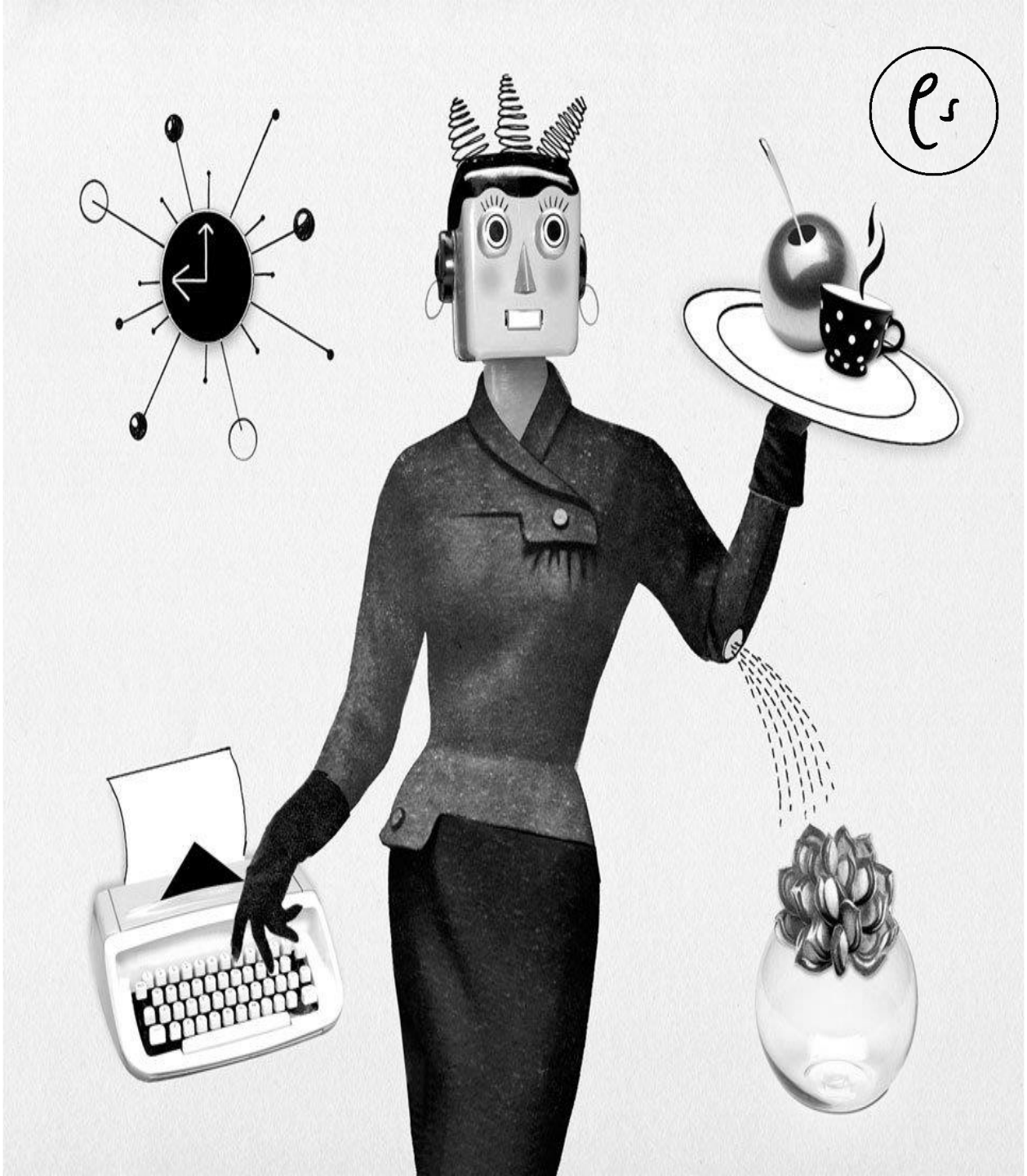
*You are about to become **more visible, not less** — if you change your mindset and stop being invisible.*

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THE BIG QUESTION

The robots are coming. And they want your job.

Spoiler: not the way you think.



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Future of Jobs Report 2025

Largest growing and declining jobs by 2030

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

	Top largest growing jobs		Top largest declining jobs
1	Farmworkers, labourers and other agricultural workers	1	Cashiers and ticket clerks
2	Light truck or delivery services drivers	2	Administrative assistants and executive secretaries
3	Software and applications developers	3	Building caretakers, cleaners and housekeepers
4	Building framers, finishers and related trades workers	4	Material-recording and stock-keeping clerks
5	Shop salespersons	5	Printing and related trades workers
6	Food processing and related trades workers	6	Accounting, bookkeeping and payroll clerks
7	Car, van and motorcycle drivers	7	Accountants and auditors
8	Nursing professionals	8	Transportation attendants and conductors
9	Food and beverage serving workers	9	Security guards
10	General and operations managers	10	Bank tellers and related clerks
11	Social work and counselling professionals	11	Data entry clerks
12	Project managers	12	Client information and customer service workers
13	University and higher education teachers	13	Graphic designers
14	Secondary education teachers	14	Business services and administration managers
15	Personal care aides	15	Claims adjusters, examiners, and investigators

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Future of Jobs Report 2025

Core skills in 2025

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

1. Analytical thinking
2. Resilience, flexibility and agility
3. Leadership and social influence
4. Creative thinking
5. Motivation and self-awareness
6. Technological literacy
7. Empathy and active listening
8. Curiosity and lifelong learning
9. Talent management
10. Service orientation and customer service

Cognitive skills · Self-efficacy · Working with others · Management skills · Technology skills · Engagement skills

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Top 10 skills on the rise



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Soft skills becoming core skills

- creativity
- originality
- initiative
- critical thinking
- persuasion
- negotiation
- attention to detail
- resilience
- flexibility
- complex problem-solving
- emotional intelligence
- leadership
- social influence
- service orientation

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MICROSOFT WORK TREND INDEX 2026

The world's biggest workplace report just made the case for assistants.

> *"Coordinate competing priorities. Manage information flow. Make judgement calls. Escalate issues. Protect leadership attention." — Microsoft just called it a strategic capability.*

The "Agent Boss"

Microsoft's headline concept: direct AI agents, coordinate outputs, exercise judgement. That's your job description today.

The Split

Routine admin is being automated. Strategic operational partnership is becoming more valuable. Both are happening now.

The Bottleneck

Organisational design, not technology, not the people is the bottleneck. Assistants have been living inside that bottleneck their entire careers.

*You are not being disrupted by AI. You are being **validated** by it.*

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FRONTIER PROFESSIONALS

Many of you already are what Microsoft just announced.

16%

of AI users are **"Frontier Professionals"**

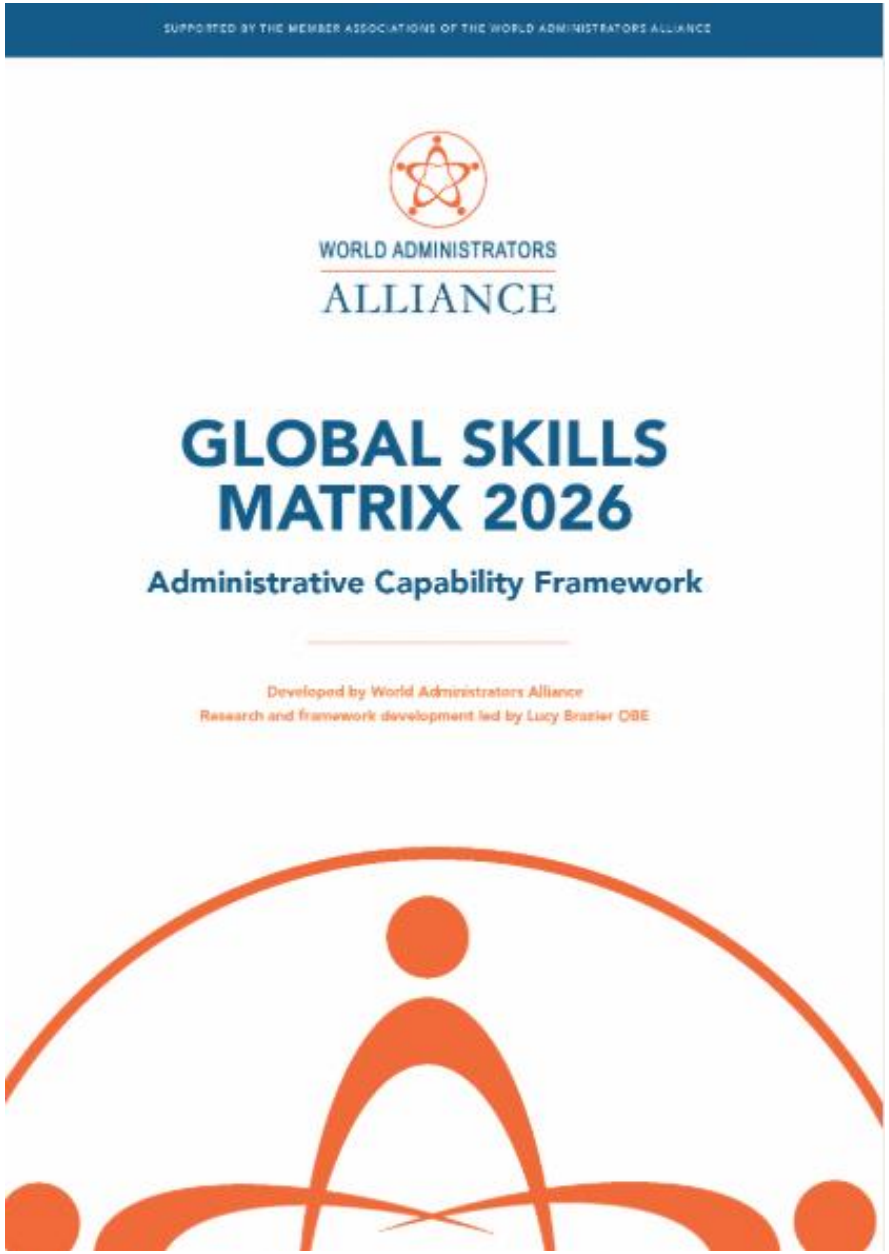
What separates them?

- Integrate AI into **whole workflows**, not individual tasks
- Coordinate **multiple systems**
- Apply **critical judgement** to outputs
- Redesign **how work gets done**

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*The profession that has been doing this work **invisibly** now needs to make itself **visible**. Quickly*

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1992

First summit held in the USA

2015

Need for GSM recognized at Ninth summit in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Work begins.

2018

Task force created at Tenth summit in Frankfurt, Germany.

2021

First Global Skills Matrix launched.

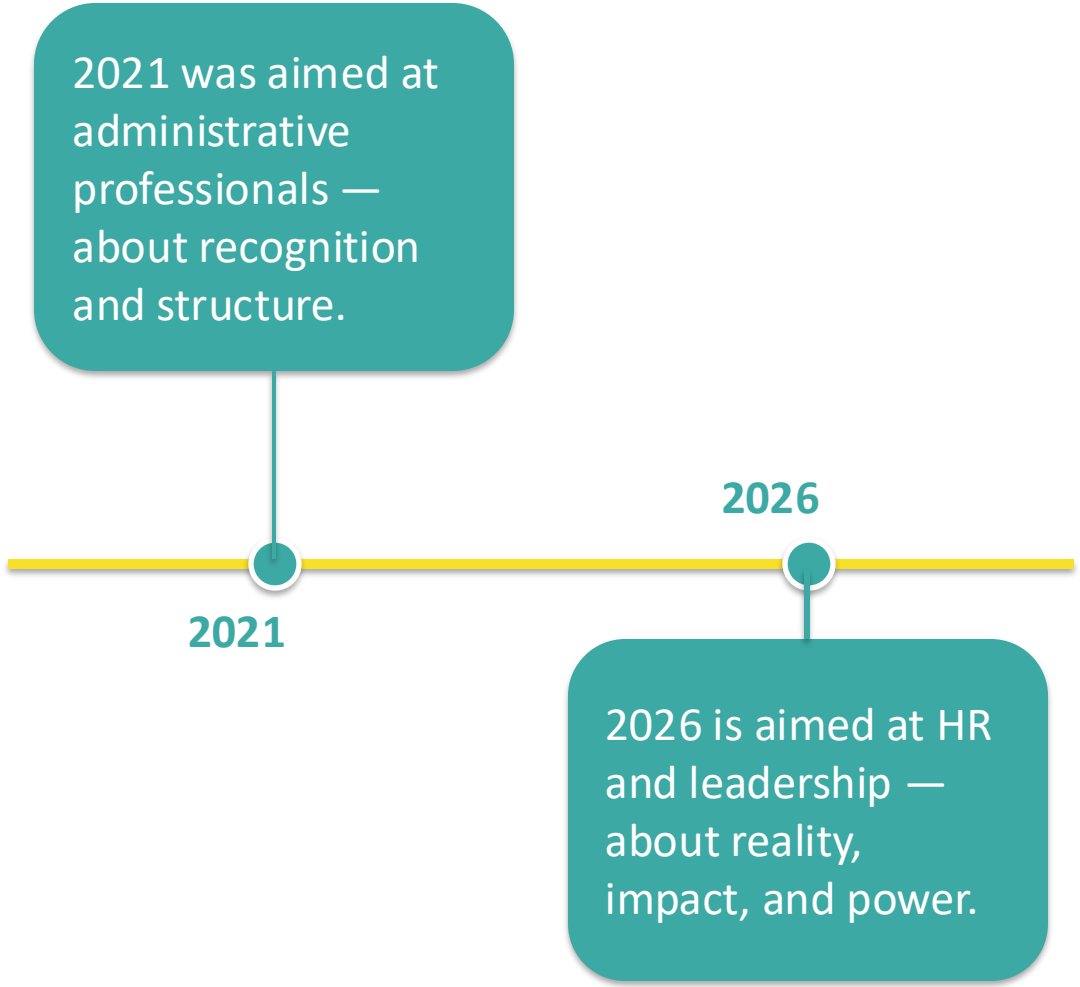
2026

New Global Skills Matrix launched 22nd April.

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The Big Picture Shift

- The 2021 Global Skills Matrix legitimised the profession.
- The 2026 Global Skills Matrix repositions it as operational leadership infrastructure.



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Global Skills Matrix Overview

Five levels of contribution & capability.

Clear roadmap from foundational to leadership levels.

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THE DATA

The state of the profession.

43%

say their job title doesn't reflect the work they do

51%

say there's no career pathway for the profession

72%

say their responsibilities have changed in the last 3 years

53%

receive no paid development or only take free training

The role has changed. The systems around it haven't.

Source
Global Skills Matrix Report 2026

WORLD ADMINISTRATORS ALLIANCE

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Global Skills Matrix — Levels

Each level builds on the last.

Each level builds on the previous, incorporating and extending all prior capabilities.

Progression is defined by increasing judgement, accountability and organisational impact, not tenure, title or proximity to leadership.

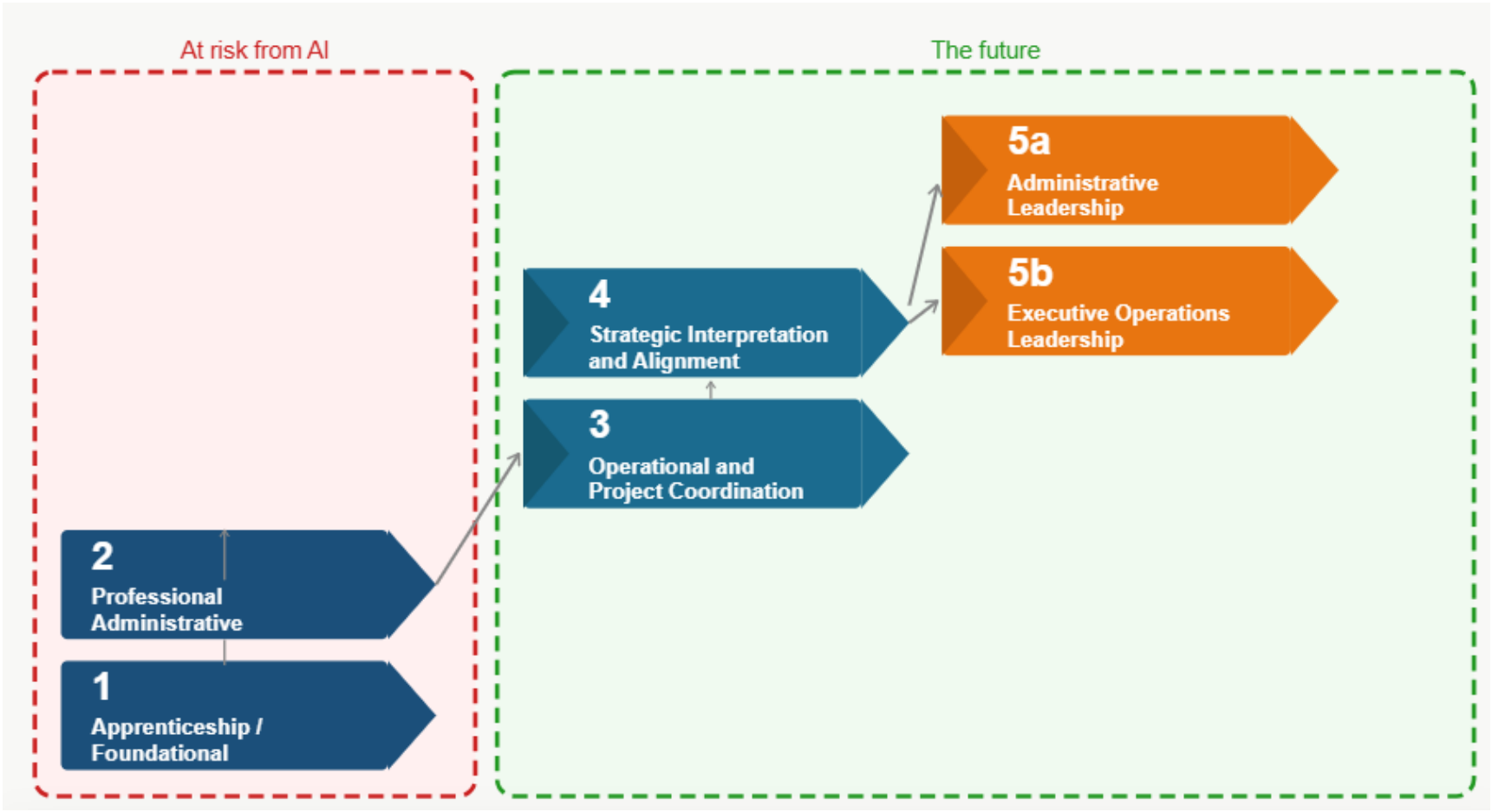


FIGURE 1. GLOBAL SKILLS MATRIX 2026 – LEVELS OF CONTRIBUTION

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Global Skills Matrix — Levels

What's at risk — and what's the future.



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WORLD ADMINISTRATORS ALLIANCE

THE GLOBAL SKILLS MATRIX

The Global Skills Matrix defines the core capabilities associated with each level of contribution. Skills are cumulative. Each level incorporates and extends the skills of the preceding level.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5A	Level 5B
APPRENTICESHIP / FOUNDATIONAL	PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE	OPERATIONAL AND PROJECT COORDINATION	STRATEGIC INTERPRETATION AND ALIGNMENT	ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP	EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS LEADERSHIP
Professional written and verbal communication	Knowledge of administrative procedures and processes	Multi-stakeholder coordination	Executive-level communication	Functional strategy development	Integrating cross-functional execution across the organisation
Foundational digital literacy	Calendar and meeting governance	Cross-functional workflow orchestration	Advanced stakeholder influence and negotiation	Organisational and job family design	Enterprise strategic insight
Hybrid collaboration awareness	Time management and prioritisation	Project and programme administration	Governance oversight	Governance and policy leadership	Political and relational intelligence
Organisational and planning fundamentals	Decision-making within defined frameworks	Change initiative support	Executive decision sequencing	Workforce and succession planning	Governance and enterprise risk oversight
Accuracy and attention to detail	Stakeholder coordination	Data interpretation and dashboard preparation	Risk anticipation and mitigation	Digital and AI transformation leadership	Programme and transformation leadership
Confidential information handling	Ethical and cultural awareness	Governance awareness and documentation control	Business and financial awareness	Financial and resource management	Systems thinking
Adaptability and willingness to learn	Basic data literacy	Operational risk flagging	Strategic adaptability	Capability benchmarking	Executive influence without formal authority
Teamwork and reliability	Digital collaboration fluency	Influencing without authority	AI-enabled insight generation	Senior stakeholder engagement	Crisis and continuity planning
Awareness of AI-assisted tools	Assisted use of AI for drafting and research	Coaching and peer support	Often operating in direct partnership with senior leadership at C-Suite or Board Level, although this is not a prerequisite.	Enterprise-level judgement	Enterprise-level prioritisation
		Applied AI-enabled reporting			AI-enabled executive analysis

OR

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WORLD ADMINISTRATORS ALLIANCE

THE TASKS MATRIX

The Tasks Matrix outlines illustrative responsibilities associated with each level of contribution. These tasks are cumulative and indicative rather than exhaustive.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5A (OR)	Level 5B (OR)
APPRENTICESHIP / FOUNDATIONAL	PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE	OPERATIONAL AND PROJECT COORDINATION	STRATEGIC INTERPRETATION AND ALIGNMENT	ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP	EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS LEADERSHIP
Answering and directing calls	Managing executive or team calendars	Coordinating cross-functional workstreams	Preparing executive and board briefings	Leading the administrative function	Managing executive office operating rhythm
Data entry and document filing	Preparing agendas and recording minutes	Managing complex and competing priorities	Managing executive information flow and filtration	Designing progression pathways and job architecture	Coordinating enterprise-level priorities
Preparing basic documents and presentations	Coordinating travel and logistics	Leading defined projects or initiatives	Leading governance preparation	Overseeing governance frameworks	Overseeing board and governance reporting structures
Managing incoming and outgoing correspondence	Processing expenses	Supporting change and transformation programmes	Coordinating strategic initiatives	Leading digital transformation within administrative teams	Leading cross-functional enterprise initiatives
Booking meeting rooms	Maintaining trackers and shared databases	Preparing briefs, reports and action logs	Leading cross-functional programmes	Managing budgets and workforce allocation	Acting as executive decision integrator
Supporting reception and office cover	Supporting hybrid meetings	Conducting research and structured data analysis	Producing executive decision-support dashboards	Presenting capability insights to executive leadership	Mediating high-level stakeholder priorities
Monitoring office supplies	Coordinating multi-executive logistics	Producing dashboards and operational insights	Advising on operational risk and sequencing	Developing talent pipelines and succession plans	Managing organisational risk and crisis response
Supporting digital collaboration tools	Drafting communications using AI assistance	Implementing workflow automations	Representing executives in senior meetings	Establishing structured development programmes	Coordinating succession and continuity frameworks
		Supporting governance and compliance documentation	Supporting enterprise-level change initiatives		Overseeing enterprise performance tracking
		Monitoring KPIs and operational metrics			
		Representing leaders in defined forums			

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CGSM

CERTIFIED GLOBAL SKILLS MATRIX

The Global Professional Standard for Administration

New from the **World Administrators Alliance**

COMING IN 2027

The career pathway built on the Global Skills Matrix, with independently accredited certification at every level.

Where is your work really spent?

?

TASK EXECUTION

What share of your week is spent completing defined tasks, following process, and delivering routine output?

?

JUDGEMENT-BASED WORK

What share of your week is spent making decisions, solving problems, designing workflows, working cross-functionally and applying judgement?

?

LEVEL GAP

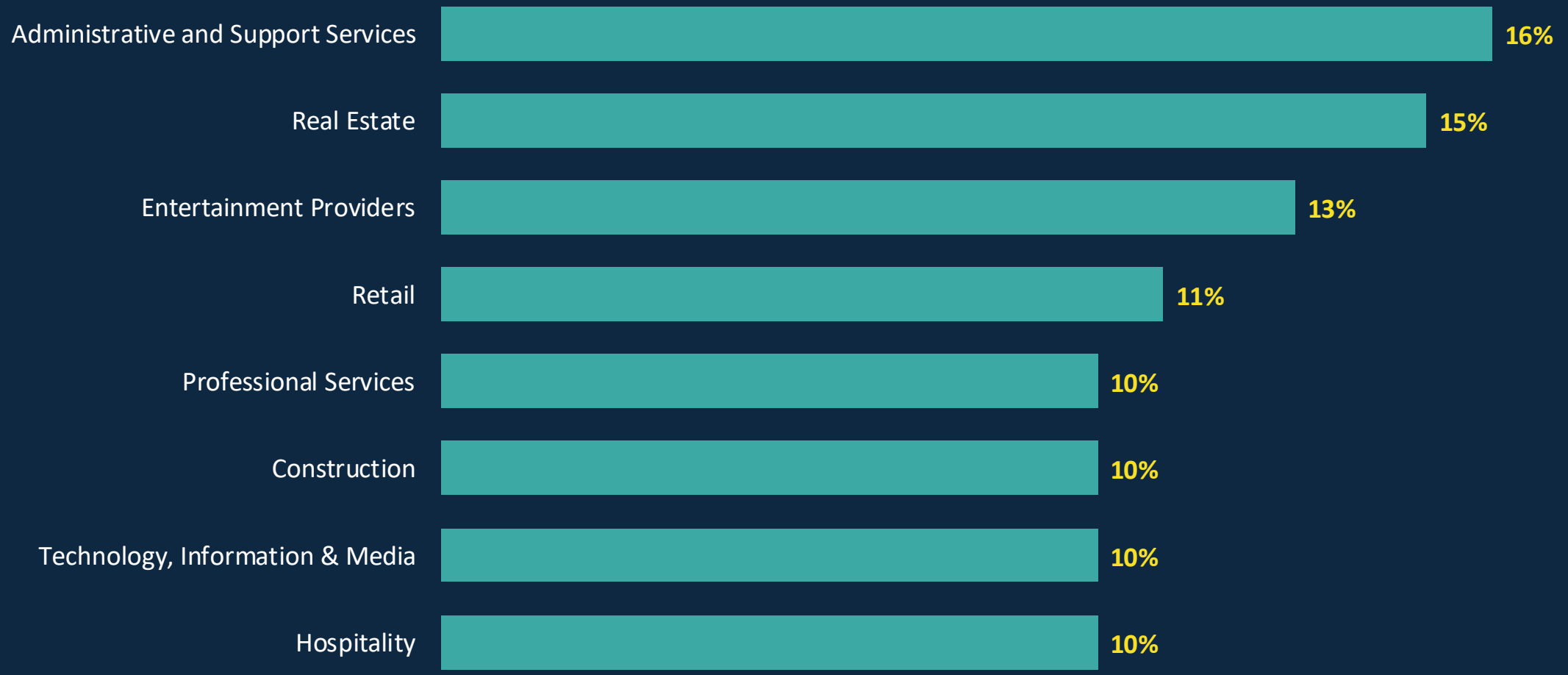
At what level are you recognised today, and at what level are you consistently operating through your day-to-day contribution?

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AI will not replace humans,
but humans with AI will
replace humans without AI.

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Industries with the highest projected admin role growth



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Assistants are stepping out of the shadows to become more influential than ever before

Real numbers behind the new assistant role

30%

more strategic work than three years ago

59%

report increased responsibility since 2021

60%

are running projects

38%

support governance & board-level prep

The new go-to for executive decision support — leading initiatives, managing stakeholders, interpreting data, conducting research.

Source: LinkedIn Workforce Report & GSM Research Report 2025

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With AI in the mix, that influence can go further, faster, and deeper.



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DELEGATE TO RECLAIM TIME

Five things AI can do — so you can do more.

Hand off the routine.
Keep the strategic.

01

Email Management

AI organises and prioritises your inbox, streamlining communication.

02

Scheduling

Schedule meetings, manage appointments, optimise calendar arrangements.

03

Data Entry

Automate data entry, ensuring accuracy and efficiency.

04

Document Drafting

Drafts emails, reports, and other documents to enhance productivity.

05

Transcripts & Summaries

Transcribes meetings and generates summaries for sharing.

The Strategic Influencer in action.

Six concrete ways the role shows up in the work.

01

Calendar as Strategy

Align executive time with business priorities and protect strategic thinking time.

02

Information Flow

Manage information and meetings to maximise executive focus and impact.

03

Cross-functional Bridge

Identify inefficiencies and promote cross-functional collaboration.

04

Initiative Lead

Lead internal initiatives using smart tools and dashboards that drive change.

05

Decision Support

Prepare briefings and reports that support data-driven decision-making. Comparing documents, summarising research.

06

Process Designer

Design and improve internal processes using workflow tools and automation.

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RECLAIM. REINVEST. RISE.

Think of all that time **saved.**

And how much more **valuable you become.**



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YOUR POSITIONING PLAYBOOK

Position yourself as indispensable.

01 **Be AI-literate**

Learn the tools.

02 **Be proactive**

Suggest AI solutions before being asked.

03 **Be strategic**

Focus on outcomes, not just outputs.

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Change your mindset.

- Reactive asks "How will next year be different?"
- Survive
- Follower
- Travelling without a map
- What next?
- Limited choice
- Problem Solving
- Overwhelmed
- Them
- I

- Proactive asks "What must we do differently?"
- Thrive
- Leader
- A clear direction
- What if?
- Endless possibilities
- Raising the bar
- Focused Action
- Us
- We

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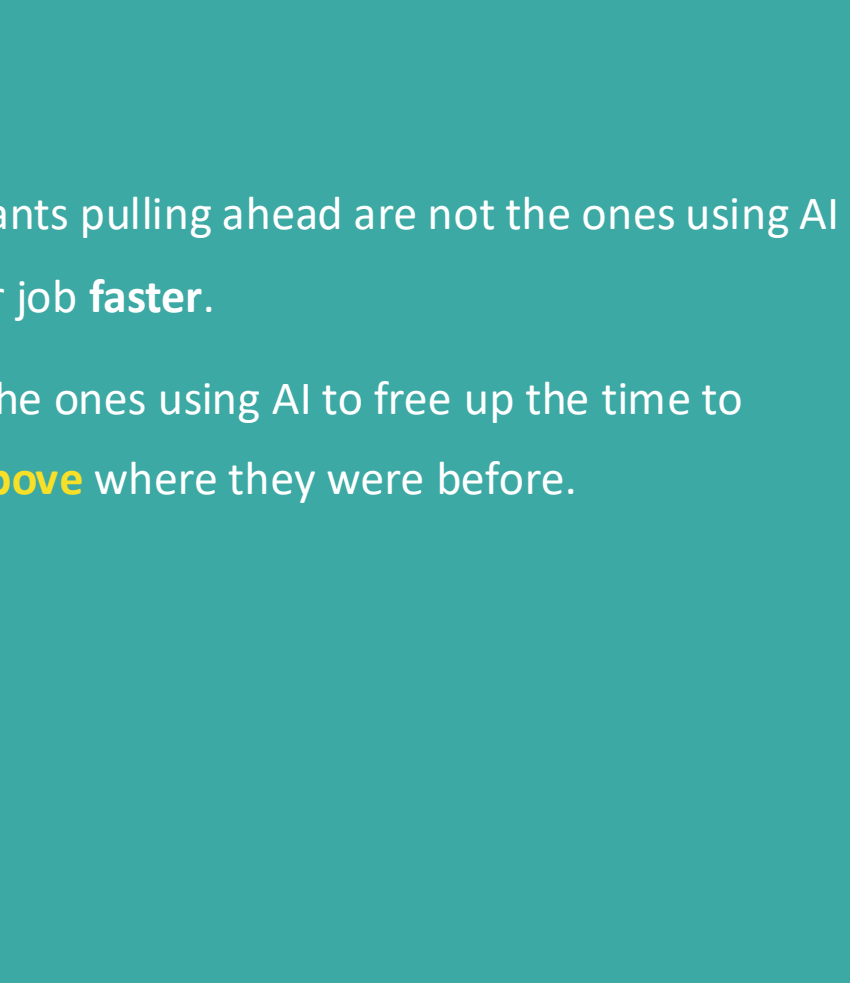
For employees, AI raises the bar and breaks the career ceiling.

LinkedIn, Future of Work Report 2025

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AI AS A LEVEL MULTIPLIER

Not an eraser. A ladder.



The assistants pulling ahead are not the ones using AI to do their job **faster**.

They are the ones using AI to free up the time to operate **above** where they were before.

*AI is not the replacement. It is **transformative.***

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THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

The capabilities that will **matter most.**

- **Judgement**
- **Commercial awareness**
- **Risk mitigation**
- **Cross-functional influence**
- **Thinking alongside leadership** — rather than responding to it

*The job is not disappearing. It is **elevating**.*

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WHAT YOU DO NEXT

The next 90 days.

Three practical actions.

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1

ACTION ONE

Audit your week against the GSM.

Track for **two weeks**. Categorise every hour.

Where are you operating? Task level? Workflow level? Strategic level?

You cannot redesign the level you operate at if you **cannot see it**.

Measurement first. ***Strategy second.***

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2

ACTION TWO

Make one piece of executive flow visible.

Identify one piece of executive flow you currently handle.

Document it. Brief your principal on it.

Move it from invisible to **recognised infrastructure**.

*If they cannot see it, they **cannot value it**.*

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3

ACTION THREE

Choose one capability. Build it.

Pick one capability from the list and build it **deliberately** over 90 days.

Not all of them. **One.**

Depth, not breadth.

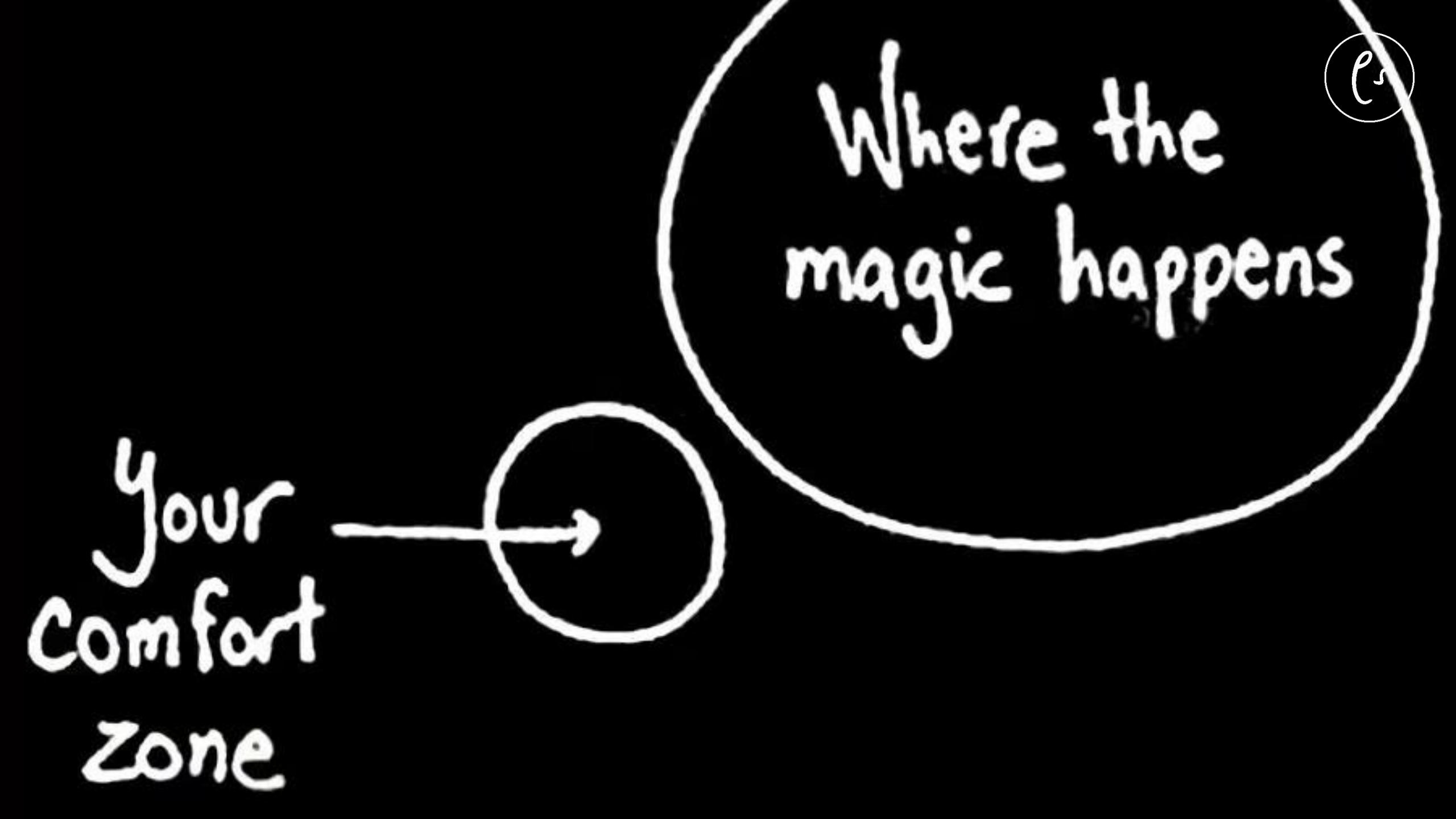
Mastery compounds. ***Dabbling does not.***

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The profession has evolved.

The question is whether you will.

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Where the magic happens
Your comfort zone

THE CALL TO ACTION

Be the change.

Don’t wait for the change. You are it.
Are you going to be a passenger or a participant?
Operate at the level the work actually requires.



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Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do.

Throw off the bowlines. Sail away. Catch the trade winds. Explore. Dream. Discover.

Mark Twain



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STAY CONNECTED

Let's stay in touch.

Follow me on LinkedIn for the latest in the assistant profession — research, perspectives, and tools.

Scan the code →

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CEO, Marcham Publishing

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