AI IN THE ENTERPRISE

Organisational Implications

Suleyman · Mollick · Davenport

PAPER 04 / 04

A Furtherance reference compendium on the intellectual traditions behind organisational design, leadership, execution, and culture.

IN THIS PAPER

The series closes where a fractional operating leader actually works: turning AI capability, safety and governance into organisational reality. This paper covers the containment challenge at the top, practical human–AI collaboration at the front line, and the unglamorous work of data, process and deployment in between. The question it answers: what does an organisation have to *do* to capture AI's value responsibly?

Suleyman frames the leadership and containment problem; Mollick gives the grounded, individual-level playbook for working with AI; Davenport supplies the enterprise discipline that decides whether any of it pays off. Together they translate the whole series into operating practice.

Mustafa Suleyman The Coming Wave, 2023

AI leadership · the containment problem

CORE THESIS

AI, alongside synthetic biology, is part of a **coming wave** of technologies that are unusually hard to contain – they are cheap to copy, fast to improve, general in use, and increasingly autonomous. The central task is **containment**: steering between the twin failure modes of catastrophe and dystopia along a "narrow path".

FRAMEWORK

Feature of the wave	Why it resists control
Asymmetry	Small actors can wield outsized power
Hyper-evolution	Capability improves faster than governance
Omni-use	The same tools serve benign and harmful ends
Autonomy	Systems increasingly act without direct human control

METHODOLOGY

A synthesis from an industry insider – a co-founder of leading AI labs – arguing for containment through technical safety, audits, choke points, regulation and culture.

SIGNIFICANCE AND CRITIQUE

An influential framing of AI risk and governance from someone building the technology. The critique: it is broad, and there is inherent tension between the author's warnings and his role in accelerating the very wave he describes.

Ethan Mollick Co-Intelligence, 2024

Practical AI adoption · Wharton

CORE THESIS

Treat AI as a **co-intelligence** – a collaborator to work *with*, not merely a tool to operate. Its abilities form a **jagged frontier**: unpredictably excellent at some tasks and surprisingly poor at neighbouring ones, so the only way to learn the boundary is to use it constantly and keep a human in the loop.

FRAMEWORK

Working rule	In practice
Invite AI to the table	Try it on nearly every task to find where it helps
Be the human in the loop	Keep judgement, verification and accountability with people
Treat it like a person (but say which)	Give it a role and context; converse, don't command
Assume it is the worst you'll use	Capability is only improving – design for that

METHODOLOGY

A practitioner-academic account grounded in field experiments – including studies showing sizeable productivity and quality gains for knowledge workers using AI within the frontier.

SIGNIFICANCE AND CRITIQUE

The most practical, grounded guide to individual and team AI use, and a corrective to both hype and dismissal. The critique: the field moves so fast that specific capabilities and examples date quickly.

Thomas Davenport All-in on AI, 2023

Enterprise analytics and AI · Babson College

CORE THESIS

Successful enterprise AI is mostly an **organisational** achievement, not a technical one. The value comes less from moonshots than from **widely deployed, often unglamorous** production applications, from a bias toward **augmentation** over replacement, and from the hard work of data, process redesign, talent and governance.

FRAMEWORK

Lever	What it requires
Deployment over piloting	Value comes from production at scale, not proofs of concept
Augmentation	Redesign roles so people and AI each do what they do best
Data and process	Clean data and re-engineered workflows, not AI bolted on
Talent and culture	Capability, literacy and a deployment mindset across the firm

METHODOLOGY

Decades of enterprise research and surveys on analytics and AI adoption, focused on what distinguishes firms that get value from those that stall in pilots.

SIGNIFICANCE AND CRITIQUE

The seasoned, pragmatic enterprise lens – grounded in what actually works rather than in frontier speculation. The critique: its centre of gravity is analytical and production AI, with comparatively less on the fast-moving generative frontier.

Synthesis

Contribution	Altitude	Core message	Register
Suleyman	Society and leadership	Contain a hard-to-contain wave	Insider synthesis
Mollick	The individual and team	Work with AI as co-intelligence	Practitioner-academic
Davenport	The enterprise	Value is organisational, not technical	Enterprise research

FOR THE OPERATOR

The organisational implications land squarely where a fractional operating leader works: containment and responsibility at the top (Suleyman), practical human–AI collaboration at the front line (Mollick), and the unglamorous discipline of data, process, talent and deployment that decides whether AI pays off (Davenport). For the operator, the conclusion of the whole series is plain: AI advantage is an operating-model problem, not a technology purchase – augment rather than replace, redesign the work, govern to the risk-based spine, and treat adoption as change management. That closes the AI in the Enterprise series.