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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN BUSINESS – FROM BASICS TO IMPLEMENTATION: A WORKSHOP AGENDA FOR MANAGERS

Abstract: This paper presents a comprehensive analysis of the syllabus for a two-day executive workshop titled "Artificial Intelligence in Business – From Basics to Implementation". Developed for middle and senior-level managers, the syllabus is designed as a structured and practical guide for understanding, adopting, and managing AI technologies within various business environments. It offers a step-by-step approach to AI integration, combining foundational knowledge with applied learning, tailored specifically to decision-makers who are responsible for driving innovation and organizational change. The workshop agenda covers a range of key topics, including the basic principles of AI, its capabilities and limitations, and the most relevant legal and ethical frameworks — such as the EU AI Act, GDPR, and emerging global standards. In addition, the syllabus emphasizes AI governance, risk management, and responsible use of AI tools. Through interactive sessions and case-based learning, participants are introduced to practical tools like ChatGPT, Copilot, Midjourney, and Jasper, with hands-on opportunities to explore their application in domains such as operations, finance, marketing, HR, and product development. A special focus is placed on guiding managers through the process of preparing their teams and organizations for AI-driven transformation. The syllabus includes frameworks for change management, strategies for overcoming internal resistance, and methodologies for aligning AI tools with business goals. The final part of the workshop explores the future of AI and its expected impact over the next 1, 5, and 10 years, encouraging participants to build forward-looking strategies. By analyzing the content, structure, and intended outcomes of the workshop syllabus, this paper contributes to the ongoing discussion on how to effectively educate business leaders in the age of AI. The syllabus is presented as a replicable and adaptable model for executive training, with the potential to accelerate responsible and strategic AI adoption across industries.

Keywords: AI workshop syllabus, artificial intelligence, business transformation, AI governance, strategic management, digital tools, executive training

1. INTRODUCTION

How can we design an effective and practical AI workshop syllabus that prepares business leaders to face the challenges of the AI era? This paper addresses that very question by presenting the structure, logic, and goals of a two-day executive workshop titled "Artificial Intelligence in Business – From Basics to Implementation." The workshop is aimed at middle and senior-level managers and is built around a carefully developed syllabus that combines foundational AI knowledge, legal and ethical frameworks, practical exercises, and future-oriented strategy building.

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to reshape industries and redefine how decisions are made, organizations increasingly expect their leadership to drive innovation, efficiency, and transformation through data and algorithms. However, despite growing AI adoption, many decision-makers lack a structured framework to understand and lead AI-driven initiatives effectively (Bughin et al., 2018; Davenport & Ronanki, 2018). Research shows that successful digital transformation depends not just on technology, but on capable leadership, cross-functional collaboration, and a strategic vision (Westerman et al., 2020).

The syllabus presented in this paper is positioned as more than just a training agenda — it is a strategic blueprint for AI capacity building within organizations. It blends conceptual learning with real-world application and includes critical themes such as AI governance, GDPR compliance, organizational readiness, change management, and applied innovation. Participants are guided through interactive sessions using tools like ChatGPT, Copilot, and Jasper, while also developing their own AI integration strategies tailored to their business environment.

By outlining the content, structure, and rationale of this syllabus, the paper contributes to the ongoing conversation on how to equip business leaders for responsible and forward-looking AI adoption. The proposed format can serve as a replicable model for executive education in AI across industries.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The design of a syllabus for executive education in artificial intelligence must be grounded in a clear understanding of the strategic, organizational, and regulatory contexts in which AI operates. Numerous studies have highlighted a persistent gap between the technical capabilities of AI and the actual readiness of organizations to implement it effectively (Peric, 2023; Tanasijevic, 2022). Bridging this gap requires more than access to technology — it requires a new type of leadership, strategic literacy, and cultural readiness.

AI governance frameworks, such as the European Union's **AI Act**, **GDPR**, and the **Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI** (European Commission, 2021), emphasize transparency, fairness, accountability, and risk management. These frameworks are essential references when designing content for a workshop syllabus that aims to foster responsible implementation in real business environments.

The theoretical foundation for this syllabus draws from three major domains: **strategic management**, **change management**, and **digital transformation**. These principles help structure the learning outcomes and define how participants will engage with AI both conceptually and operationally. Institutions like **MIT Sloan School of Management** and **INSEAD** have pioneered executive programs that blend these areas with AI-specific knowledge, confirming the importance of a multidisciplinary and application-driven approach. Recent literature and reports further underline the urgency and opportunity of equipping business leaders with AI knowledge. Harvard Business School Online (2024) identifies the development of an AI strategy as a core competency for long-term competitiveness. In the legal domain, Business Insider (2025) documents how firms are under pressure to adopt AI tools for efficiency and risk reduction. IBM (2024) stresses governance and internal alignment as central components of successful AI projects, while Microsoft (2024) offers concrete pathways for SMEs to begin implementation. On the operational side, Financial Times (2025) reports that AI is already being used to reduce theft and improve logistics in the retail sector.

Taken together, these sources shape the theoretical grounding for the proposed workshop syllabus — not only in terms of **what topics must be included**, but also in defining **how they are delivered**, **to whom**, and **with what expected impact**. The goal is to ensure that the syllabus supports managers not just in understanding AI, but in applying it confidently and ethically within their specific business contexts.

3. WORKSHOP STRUCTURE AGENDA

The workshop is structured as a two-day, 16-hour program, designed to provide a balanced combination of theoretical understanding, case-based discussion, practical tool usage, and strategic planning. Each session builds progressively on the previous one, guiding participants from foundational awareness of AI concepts toward applied thinking and personalized implementation strategies.

The structure of the workshop syllabus reflects the theoretical principles discussed in the previous section. It integrates key elements from strategic management (e.g., goal alignment, competitive advantage), change management (e.g., stakeholder engagement, overcoming resistance), and digital transformation (e.g., technology adoption cycles, organizational agility). These principles are woven into the agenda through interactive formats, peer collaboration, real-world examples, and scenario-based simulations.

The daily agenda follows a logical sequence that helps participants move from **understanding** to **action**:

- **Day 1** is focused on understanding the nature of AI, correcting misconceptions, exploring governance and ethics, and experimenting with tools that improve productivity and operational efficiency. The day concludes with an analysis of AI's impact across business functions.
- **Day 2** shifts toward decision-making, product and service innovation, organizational preparation, and future thinking. Managers are encouraged to design AI implementation strategies relevant to their contexts, considering both immediate actions and long-term adaptation.

Each session is crafted to include a mix of short lectures, live demonstrations, group work, and feedback-driven tasks. Participants are encouraged to reflect on their own companies, share experiences with peers, and leave with a concrete action plan.

In total, the agenda includes **8 sessions**, each 90 minutes long, with appropriate breaks and time for networking. By the end of the workshop, participants are expected to have not only gained new knowledge but also developed a personalized roadmap for AI adoption within their organizational roles.

3.1. Day 1: Understanding AI and Its Business Applications

The first day of the workshop is designed to build a foundational understanding of Artificial Intelligence, correct common misconceptions, and establish a responsible and business-relevant perspective on AI technologies. The agenda follows a logical flow from conceptual awareness to hands-on tool exposure and sector-specific applications.

Table 1: Syllabus – Day 1

Time	Session Title	Focus Areas
09:00 – 10:30	Interactive Kickoff: Debunking AI Myths	AI capabilities vs limitations, myths, live polls, exercises
10:45 – 12:15	AI Governance, Ethics, and Legal Aspects	EU AI Act, GDPR, bias, case studies, group discussions
13:45 – 15:15	Practical AI Tools for Managers	Tool demos, AI for automation/analytics, group exercises
15:30 – 17:00	Sectoral Impact of AI	Industry case analysis (HR, marketing, finance, operations)

Source: Author

3.1.1. Interactive Kickoff: Debunking AI Myths

This session is designed to challenge and correct common misconceptions about AI. Participants begin by identifying myths they have encountered in their industries, such as "AI will replace all human jobs" or "AI is always objective." These are contrasted with real-world limitations and capabilities of current AI technologies.

Interactive polling tools are used to engage participants, followed by facilitated discussion to align perceptions with facts. This exercise builds psychological readiness and opens space for critical thinking, which is essential before engaging with more technical or strategic content (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018).

3.1.2. AI Governance, Ethics, and Legal Aspects

This session explores the key frameworks that guide responsible AI implementation. It introduces participants to the **EU AI Act**, the **GDPR**, and the **AI Bill of Rights**, focusing on principles such as transparency, fairness, and accountability. Through case studies and discussion groups, participants examine dilemmas around bias in hiring algorithms or data privacy in customer service automation. These scenarios help them understand the real-world impact of AI regulation and ethics, aligning with the European Commission's Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI (2021) and IBM (2024) guidance on AI governance.

3.1.3. Practical AI Tools for Managers

In this hands-on session, participants engage with a curated set of AI tools relevant for business managers. Tools like **Jasper** (text generation), **Midjourney** (creative content), and **ChatGPT** (knowledge assistance and automation) are demonstrated in live scenarios.

Participants are then divided into groups and tasked with choosing a tool, testing its potential use in a business context, and reflecting on its value and risks. This session emphasizes usability, creativity, and critical thinking in tool adoption — echoing the need for "AI literacy" in management, as highlighted by Harvard Business Review (2023).

3.1.4. Sectoral Impact of AI

The final session of the day explores how AI is already transforming key business functions. Case examples are presented from HR (resume screening), marketing (customer segmentation), finance (fraud detection), and customer support (chatbots).

Participants work in roundtable groups by sector, analyze a case, and then present how AI might enhance or disrupt their current workflows. This format not only contextualizes AI adoption but also encourages cross-sectoral learning — a method used in programs at INSEAD and MIT Sloan (Westerman et al., 2020).

3.2. Day 2: Implementing AI and Future Strategy

The second day of the workshop builds on the foundational understanding from Day 1 and shifts the focus toward strategic implementation and forward-looking leadership. Participants are guided through data-driven decision-making, innovation in AI-driven products and services, organizational readiness, and anticipating future shifts in the business landscape.

Table 2: Syllabus – Day 2

Time	Session Title	Focus Areas
09:00 – 10:30	AI in Strategic Decision-Making	Predictive modeling, simulations, business intelligence
10:45 – 12:15	AI in Product, Service, and Advisory Innovation	AI in CX and design, creative group work on AI-powered solutions
13:45 – 15:15	Preparing Teams for AI Transition	Change management, upskilling, overcoming resistance
15:30 – 17:00	Future of AI: 1, 5, and 10-Year Outlook	AI trends, labor market impact, strategic foresight

Source: Author

3.2.1. AI in Strategic Decision-Making

This session introduces participants to the use of AI in enhancing strategic decision-making. Using tools such as Power BI, Tableau, and Excel with AI plugins (e.g., Copilot), managers learn how predictive modeling and business intelligence can improve planning and operational outcomes.

Participants engage in data-driven simulations based on real-world business scenarios, helping them understand how to evaluate risk, detect trends, and optimize resource allocation. As highlighted by Davenport & Ronanki (2018), AI's value lies not only in automation but in augmenting executive judgment.

3.2.2. AI in Product, Service, and Advisory Innovation

This creative session explores how AI can drive innovation in both customer experience and internal advisory services. Participants work in teams to ideate new product or service concepts powered by AI — using tools like ChatGPT for prototyping and DALL-E or Midjourney for design inputs.

By the end of the session, each group presents a concept that integrates AI into a business value proposition. This exercise is grounded in design thinking methodology and encourages cross-functional creativity — an approach aligned with current innovation practices in leading tech firms (Harvard Business School Online, 2024).

3.2.3. Preparing Teams for AI Transition

Organizational readiness is often a bottleneck in successful AI implementation. This session introduces participants to practical frameworks for managing change and upskilling teams. Drawing on change management theory and real company examples, participants develop an internal action plan that includes training, communication strategies, and resistance mitigation.

Harvard Business Review (2023) emphasizes that organizations successful in AI adoption focus heavily on internal capability-building and clear leadership narratives. This session helps participants translate those insights into concrete, organization-specific plans.

3.2.4. Future of AI: 1, 5, and 10-Year Outlook

The final session looks ahead. Participants are introduced to macro-level trends in AI, such as the evolution of generative AI, labor market disruptions, and the emergence of hybrid human-AI roles. Using foresight techniques, participants explore scenarios for the future of their industry.

A moderated discussion and expert panel (live or recorded) help synthesize insights and encourage strategic visioning. This closing session reinforces the mindset that AI is not a one-off initiative, but a long-term transformational force (Bughin et al., 2018; IBM, 2024).

4. WORKSHOP DELIVERY APPROACH

The workshop is designed using a blended learning approach tailored for executive audiences. It combines structured content delivery, experiential learning, and collaborative problem-solving — all mapped to the practical needs of managers leading or supporting AI adoption within their organizations.

The methodological design draws on contemporary practices in executive education, including action-based learning, peer coaching, tool-based experimentation, and structured reflection. This aligns with recent findings that emphasize interactive and applied formats as the most effective for adult learners in complex domains like AI (Westerman et al., 2020; Harvard Business Review, 2023; Ransbotham et al., 2022).

The delivery format is built around five main components:

- **Short lectures for theoretical framing -** These provide the foundational understanding needed to engage with AI in a business context. Each topic begins with a concise lecture (15–20 minutes) supported by visuals and business examples to clarify abstract concepts such as governance models, algorithmic bias, or strategy frameworks. The goal is to equip participants with just enough theory to support further hands-on learning, following the "explain-show-do" model (Salas et al., 2022).

- **Interactive activities (polls, Q&A, group discussions)**
  To maintain engagement and provoke critical thinking, sessions regularly include live polls, open-ended questions, and moderated group conversations. These are used to surface participant assumptions, contrast perspectives, and contextualize content within different industries. According to LinkedIn Learning (2023), executive learners retain more when encouraged to contribute personal experience.

- **Case studies from diverse industries -** Each day includes structured case discussions based on real examples from finance, healthcare, logistics, or consulting sectors. Participants analyze how AI was applied, what barriers were encountered, and what outcomes were achieved. Case-based learning encourages cross-sectoral thinking and has been shown to improve strategic decision-making in executive contexts (IESE Business School, 2023).

- **Hands-on testing of AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Jasper, Midjourney)** Rather than discussing tools abstractly, participants are invited to experiment with a curated set of AI tools using predefined business tasks. For example, they generate a product pitch using Jasper, analyze a client scenario using ChatGPT, or co-design a social media visual using Midjourney. This segment builds confidence and skills for tool integration — a step that is often missing in theoretical programs (McKinsey & Company, 2024).

- **Action planning and peer feedback sessions** The final portion of each day is dedicated to applying learned concepts to participants' own business contexts. Using structured templates, they outline how AI could be introduced in their domain, what challenges they foresee, and what support they would need. Plans are peer-reviewed in groups, which encourages accountability and collective learning. This approach supports transfer of knowledge into real change initiatives (Deloitte, 2024).

This multi-method approach ensures the learning experience is **not only informative but also immediately applicable**, allowing participants to leave the workshop with both insight and implementation direction. By aligning content, delivery style, and participant experience, the workshop adheres to the best practices of executive development in dynamic technological domains.

5. EXPECED OUTCOMES

The expected outcomes of the workshop are aligned with its learning objectives, pedagogical design, and executive audience profile. They are formulated to ensure that participants not only acquire knowledge, but also develop applicable strategies, tools, and mindsets for AI-driven transformation in their specific organizational contexts. Each outcome is measurable, actionable, and relevant to the role of a manager or business leader.

5.1 Foundational understanding of AI principles

Participants will gain a clear conceptual understanding of how AI systems function, including their capabilities, limitations, and business relevance. This foundation allows them to evaluate AI initiatives with critical thinking, and to participate in technical discussions with confidence and clarity.

5.2 Practical application of AI tools in daily management

Managers will learn how to integrate tools such as ChatGPT, Jasper, Copilot, and Midjourney into their workflow for tasks like content creation, analysis, communication, or ideation. Practical application is key to overcoming resistance and building internal momentum for broader AI adoption (McKinsey & Company, 2024).

5.3 Awareness of ethical and regulatory considerations

Through exposure to GDPR, the EU AI Act, and real-world ethical dilemmas, participants will be able to identify and address the legal, reputational, and societal risks associated with AI use. This aligns with current expectations for AI accountability and responsible leadership (European Commission, 2021; IBM, 2024).

5.4 Development of a personal or organizational AI adoption plan

Each participant will leave the workshop with a draft roadmap for implementing AI in their team, department, or company. This includes identifying business priorities, tools, barriers, and change enablers. The plans are peer-reviewed and refined during the sessions, ensuring practical value.

5.5 Insight into future AI trends and labor market shifts

The final session provides a strategic foresight lens on how AI will likely reshape the workplace, business models, and leadership over the next 1, 5, and 10 years. Participants will be better prepared to anticipate disruption, reskill teams, and lead through uncertainty (Harvard Business Review, 2023; Financial Times, 2025).

6. CONCLUTION

Artificial Intelligence is no longer a distant technological possibility — it has become a central force in shaping business strategy, operations, and leadership. In this context, the capacity of managers to understand, evaluate, and implement AI solutions is not optional, but critical.

This paper has presented a detailed syllabus for a two-day executive workshop designed to address the practical and strategic needs of middle and senior-level managers. Through a carefully structured combination of theoretical framing, applied tools, interactive methods, and scenario-based learning, the syllabus equips participants with the mindset and methodology required to lead AI initiatives within their organizations.

The structure of the workshop reflects current research and best practices in executive education, with emphasis on responsible AI use, regulatory compliance, and long-term strategic thinking. By integrating content across business functions and combining it with industry-relevant examples and hands-on exploration, the workshop provides both clarity and confidence to its participants.

As a model, this syllabus is scalable and adaptable — it can be implemented across different industries, cultural contexts, and organizational sizes. Moreover, it contributes to the broader conversation about how to bridge the gap between technical innovation and business leadership through targeted, action-oriented education.
In a time of accelerating AI adoption and growing societal expectations for ethical and effective use of technology, such educational formats are not only useful — they are essential.

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