



Leading Your Team Through AI Adoption

How to bring people along when the technology is new and the anxiety is real

The four fears — and how to answer them

What your people are worried about	What actually works
"Will this replace me?"	Say explicitly, early, and often that AI is an assistant, not a replacement. Silence on this question gets filled with worst-case assumptions.
"What's it collecting about me?"	Explain plainly what data is gathered, who sees it, and how it's protected. Vague reassurance reads as evasion.
"I'm not a tech person."	Offer more than one way to learn, and pair confident users with hesitant ones. Anxiety about complexity is a training problem, not a person problem.
"It won't work where I work."	If your teams work in the field or in low-connectivity settings, make offline capability a requirement, not an afterthought.

Four communication strategies that hold up

1. Lead with what your people get — not what the organization gets. Time back, less administrative burden, support available around the clock.

"This will help you spend more time with the people you serve and less on paperwork."

2. Be honest about what the tool can't do. State the limitations, keep humans in final authority, and acknowledge the learning curve out loud.

"You'll always have final approval over any suggestion this system makes."

3. Answer the replacement fear directly — don't wait to be asked. Make explicit statements about job security and explain why the organization is investing.

"We're investing in this technology because we're investing in you."

4. Give people more than one way to raise a hand. Multiple support channels, real feedback mechanisms, and leaders who are visibly reachable.

"We want your feedback throughout this process — and here's exactly where it goes."

The Tech Buddy structure

- Pair confident users with hesitant ones — about one buddy for every three colleagues
- Check-ins: daily during the first week, weekly after that
- Give buddies dedicated time (2–3 hours a week) — goodwill isn't a staffing plan
- Recognize effective buddies publicly; the role should be a credential, not a chore

Phase the rollout — don't flip a switch

Phase	Focus	Duration	What makes it work
1 • Quick win	One high-value feature with visible, immediate benefit	4–6 weeks	Enhanced support; celebrate the win loudly
2 • Expansion	Related features, more teams	4–8 weeks	Build on momentum; fold in feedback; keep measuring
3 • Integration	Full feature set, embedded in workflow	6–10 weeks	Connect to real processes; document cumulative benefits

Train like people actually learn

- Short in-person sessions scheduled around real shifts
- 3–5 minute video tutorials, one task each
- Quick-reference guides with screenshots
- Mobile-friendly materials for field staff
- Virtual office hours for questions
- **Essential skills:** everyone, 60–90 minutes
- **Advanced features:** opt-in, 45 minutes
- **Super users:** the people who'll support everyone else, 3–4 hours

Early warning signs — and what to do about them

Watch for:

- Missed training sessions
- Limited or declining system use
- Rising error rates
- Negative side-comments in meetings
- Manual workarounds quietly appearing

Intervene with:

- One-on-one coaching, not group callouts
- A simplified feature set to rebuild confidence
- Custom quick-reference materials
- Peer demonstration of real benefits
- Temporary workload relief during the learning curve

Want this as a session for your team or conference? This guide pairs with "AI Without the Anxiety: Making Technology Work FOR Your Team" — a plain-spoken session for leaders who don't need a tech background, just a clearer head and a starting point. heatherlambert.speaker@gmail.com · 615.434.5180