

Characteristics of AI-Enabled, Trust-Building Leaders

As AI becomes part of everyday leadership, the leaders who stand out are those who use it to strengthen trust, clarity and connection—not replace them. When applied thoughtfully, AI helps leaders communicate more effectively, make more informed decisions, and support their teams with greater consistency. This checklist highlights the behaviors that build trust in an AI-enabled workplace.

They Do	They Don't
Use AI to <i>enhance</i> relationships, not replace them	Delegate all communication or decision-making to AI
Are transparent about when and how AI is used	Hide AI use or present AI-generated work as solely their own
Show they understand their people's needs before introducing AI tools	Force AI tools on teams without context or support
Use AI to create clarity, reduce noise and support better thinking	Overwhelm teams with unnecessary tools or data
Demonstrate consistency in how AI supports workflows and decisions	Change AI expectations frequently or without explanation
Help teams separate facts, assumptions and emotions using AI-supported insights	Use AI outputs as unquestioned "truth"
Critique and correct AI outputs gently and model healthy skepticism	Panic when AI makes mistakes or overreact to inaccuracies
Stay committed to long-term learning with AI	Treat AI as a one-time implementation or quick fix
Use AI to spark fresh perspectives and creative options	Rely only on past practices or personal preference
Give teams choices in how AI supports their work	Mandate rigid AI processes with no flexibility
Build team capability by teaching how to evaluate AI outputs	Keep AI knowledge to themselves or gatekeep expertise
Challenge assumptions by comparing human judgment with AI insights	Default to AI recommendations without critical thinking
Act like a caring human first, leader second — AI is a tool, not an identity	Hide behind AI to avoid difficult conversations
Use AI to remember commitments, follow-ups and context	Miss deadlines or forget agreements despite AI support
Use stories, metaphors and examples to help teams understand AI's role	Use technical jargon that confuses or intimidates others
Speak from experience and ongoing learning about AI	Pretend to be an AI expert or oversell their competence
Use AI to diffuse tension by offering neutral framing or options	Use AI outputs to "win" arguments or shut down dialogue
Offer valuable AI-supported resources that make work easier	Introduce tools that add complexity without benefit
Keep people at the center — AI augments, humans decide	Prioritize efficiency over trust, connection or ethics