

THE HD TECH WAY

Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Smoother, and More Profitably

SEPTEMBER 2026-THE AI ISSUE

YOU DON'T BUY AI. YOU LEARN AI.

Your monthly newsletter,
written for humans not geeks.

By now, you've probably experimented with AI in some form.

Maybe you've used it to draft documents, summarize meetings, analyze spreadsheets, or respond to customers faster. The results can be impressive. You immediately see the potential.

But then something happens: the excitement wears off.

A few people continue using AI every day. Others use it once or twice and never come back to it. Suddenly the "AI transformation" everyone was talking about seems to stall.

Many companies assume the problem is the technology. **It usually isn't.**

The reality is that you don't buy AI adoption. You learn it.

Just because an organization purchases an AI platform doesn't mean employees automatically change the way they work. Like any new skill, AI becomes valuable only through repeated practice and real-world application.

Think about when spreadsheets first entered the workplace. Companies didn't become data-driven the day they purchased Excel. People had to learn it, experiment with it, make mistakes, and discover how it could improve their work.

AI is no different.

The businesses seeing the biggest gains aren't necessarily the ones spending the

most money. They're the ones creating a culture where employees use AI consistently enough to build confidence and develop new habits.

That's where many organizations struggle.

Employees are often told to "try AI," but they're still measured exactly as they were before. They're expected to work quickly, avoid mistakes, and stick to established processes. Under those conditions, most people naturally fall back on familiar methods instead of investing time in learning a new tool.

At the same time, many employees aren't sure where the boundaries are. What tools are approved? What information can be shared? What's considered acceptable use?

Without clear guidance, some employees become overly cautious while others...

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create their own rules.

The result is predictable: isolated success stories instead of company-wide transformation.

Successful AI adoption requires more than new software. It requires new behaviors. Leadership must create an environment where experimentation is encouraged, learning is visible, and AI becomes part of everyday workflows rather than an optional extra.

A Simple Way to Build Momentum: The 30-Day AI Challenge

If you want AI adoption to accelerate, don't start with another software purchase. Start with a habit.

Challenge every employee to use AI every day for the next 30 days. The goal isn't perfection. The goal is consistent usage.

During weekly operations meetings, ask each

team member to share:

- One way they used AI that week
- One lesson they learned
- One result they achieved

Celebrate wins publicly, even the small ones.

As people share ideas, others begin to try them. Confidence grows. New use cases emerge. Momentum builds.

Most importantly, AI champions naturally reveal themselves.

These are the employees who are curious, creative, and eager to help others learn. They often become the leaders who drive AI transformation across the organization.

The companies that succeed with AI won't be the ones that simply buy the best tools. They'll be the ones that create the best learning culture.

Because in the end, you don't buy AI adoption.

You learn it through consistent use.

Pro Tip:

Launch a company-wide 30-Day AI Challenge.

- What gets measured gets discussed, and what gets discussed gets adopted.
- A simple weekly conversation about how people are using AI can do more to drive transformation than any software implementation plan.

Want help starting or implementing the 30 Day Challenge?
Get in Touch!



ANSWERS BY: TOM HERMSTAD, YOUR CYBER LIFEGUARD

Q: How long should a business laptop realistically last?

A: Most businesses replace laptops every 4-5 years to balance performance, reliability, and security.

Q: What's the difference between backing up files & syncing files?

A: Syncing copies changes between devices. Backups protect you if files are deleted, corrupted, or encrypted by ransomware. Never forget backups.

Q: What happens to our data if we change IT providers?

A: Your data always remains yours. A good handover process should give you a smooth transition with minimal disruption. Your data is stored on 'your' OneDrive on 'your' servers.



Technology Update

Windows opens the door a little wider to Linux

Microsoft is making it easier for developers to run Linux software directly inside Windows.

A new preview feature lets Linux applications and containers run more naturally alongside Windows apps, without needing separate systems or complicated setups.

You may never use these features, but they make Windows a more flexible platform for the tools your business relies on every day.

STRATEGIC EXECUTION SERIES

PART 5: LEADING THROUGH THE LENS OF EXECUTION

GREAT STRATEGIES ARE EXECUTED ONE PERSON AT A TIME



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Leadership Is Where Execution Becomes Reality

Peter Drucker famously observed:

“Only three things happen naturally in organizations: one is friction, two is confusion, and three is underperformance. Everything else requires leadership.”

Whether or not you agree with every leadership philosophy, the underlying point is powerful: **execution requires leadership.**

There are many leadership styles—autocratic, servant, coaching, and transformational, among others. The most effective leaders recognize that no single style works in every situation. They adapt their approach to what their people and organization need. We believe leadership can be defined simply as **influencing people to commit to the vision and mission and to become the best they are capable of becoming.** That mindset is essential for building a culture of execution.

Three Critical Tasks of an Execution-Focused Leader

1. Eliminate Friction

Teams naturally move through the stages of forming, storming, norming, and performing. Effective leaders anticipate where friction is likely to occur, establish clear ways of working, and remove obstacles that slow progress. The goal isn't to eliminate every disagreement. It's to help the team work through challenges quickly and stay focused on results.

2. Provide Clarity

Jim Collins and Jerry Porras coined the term **BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal)** in *Built to Last*. Big goals can inspire people, but they can also create confusion if employees don't understand what they need to do to achieve them. As we discussed in Part 4, **clarity creates alignment, and alignment drives execution.** Leaders must translate big, long-term goals into meaningful priorities, specific actions, and measurable milestones so people know where to focus today.

3. Drive Performance and Accountability

Jamie Dimon, CEO of JPMorgan Chase, has said, **“I'd rather have a first-rate execution and second-rate strategy any time than a brilliant idea and mediocre management.”** Execution-focused leaders create the habits that turn plans into results. They establish clear ownership, monitor progress, address issues early, and hold people accountable for commitments.

The Takeaway

Leading through the lens of execution means more than setting direction. It means **removing obstacles, creating clarity, and driving accountability.** Great leaders don't simply ask, *“Do we have a good strategy?”* They ask, **“What will it take to turn this strategy into results—and what can I do to help my team get there?”**

That is where leadership and execution come together.

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Be passionate and bold. Always keep learning.”

Satya Nadella,
Microsoft CEO.

DID YOU KNOW...

there's a flaw in
Hide My Email?



Apple's Hide My Email feature was designed to let people sign up for websites and services without revealing their real email address. It's to help protect privacy and reduce spam.

But a recently discovered flaw could let cybercriminals uncover the real email address hidden behind an anonymous one.

Apple is aware, and is working on a fix, but don't treat any technology as completely foolproof.

TECH UPDATE

AI:

HAVE YOUR EMPLOYEES BECOME "MIDDLEWARE?"

AI was supposed to eliminate repetitive work.

Instead, many businesses are creating a new kind of job: **human middleware**. People spend their day moving information between systems so AI can function properly. Copying data, validating outputs, reformatting information, and bridging gaps between tools that don't integrate well.

AI is helping people work faster. Emails get drafted quicker, reports take less time, and information is easier to find. But for many organizations, it's also creating new layers of administrative work that weren't there before.

The problem usually isn't the AI itself.

It's disconnected systems, inconsistent data, and manual processes that force employees to act as the translator between technologies.

That's where the real opportunity lies.

Before adding another AI tool, look at how information moves through your business. Where does data live? How many manual handoffs exist? How often are employees fixing, checking, or re-entering information that should be flowing automatically?

At H&D Technologies, we help businesses identify those bottlenecks, connect systems, improve data flow, and reduce the manual work hiding behind AI initiatives.

Your people shouldn't be spending their day helping software talk to software. They should be creating the value that grows your business.



Your IT Helpdesk Just Got Smarter

AI is changing the way businesses work — and the way you get IT support.

HD Tech has deployed an AI-powered Helpdesk Assistant that combines ChatGPT's conversational capabilities with knowledge built from your organization's actual support history. Unlike public AI tools that draw from the internet, ours connects directly to our helpdesk platform and ticket knowledge base — learning from past requests, documented resolutions, and recurring issues.

Think of it as ChatGPT — trained specifically on your environment.

When you open a support request, the AI starts gathering information and walking you through troubleshooting immediately. In some cases, it resolves the issue on the spot. Over time it will get even better! If a technician is needed, everything the AI collected transfers automatically — no repeating yourself — meaning a faster diagnosis.

The real edge is institutional knowledge. The platform references historical tickets, recognizes recurring issues, and surfaces proven fixes. Technicians arrive already knowing what's been tried and how similar problems were solved.

No Request Falls Through the Cracks

Every incoming request is visible to all engineers at once — just like a Teams chat — so any available engineer can pick it up immediately. It's not routed to a single person and left waiting. Our dispatcher also monitors every ticket in real time from a live dashboard, adding another layer of visibility and accountability.

Benefits for End Users

- Start troubleshooting immediately — no waiting for a callback
- Get answers to common issues in real time
- Technicians already have context before they talk with you
- Track current and past tickets directly in the chat window

Benefits for Your Business

- Less downtime
- Faster ticket resolution
- More consistent support experiences
- Better use of technician expertise
- Clearer visibility into support activity

AI isn't replacing the people at HD Tech. It's giving everyone — users and technicians alike — instant access to years of support knowledge. Faster resolutions, fewer interruptions, and more time for your team to focus on running your business and achieving your goals.