# Ai coaching bots reshape workplace support for untrained managers



The Financial Times reports on the increasing adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) coaching tools in the workplace, highlighting their growing role as a support mechanism for managers. Amid widespread challenges faced by managers, including a significant proportion—44%—who have reportedly received no formal training, AI coach bots are emerging as a valuable resource to provide guidance and skill development.

One notable example is Valence, a company founded in 2018 by Parker Mitchell, which originally focused on enhancing teamwork through technology. With the advent of large language models, Valence pivoted towards developing AI coaching solutions designed to act as personal assistants that understand users by engaging them through questions rather than merely dispensing answers. This approach aims to offer personalised and confidential support accessible at any time.

Valence’s AI coach, named Nadia, is deployed by global organisations such as WPP, the advertising group, where several thousand employees use the tool for a variety of purposes, including career planning, role-playing challenging conversations, managing teams, and handling interpersonal relationships. Lindsay Pattison, WPP’s chief people officer, noted that Nadia is viewed as a "very personal, safe space to ask questions," with users appreciating its confidentiality, always-available access, and tailored support. Nadia is available in about 70 languages, accommodating diverse linguistic backgrounds, which is particularly valuable for global employers. Parker Mitchell highlighted that AI coaching can benefit those without traditional educational credentials, who might feel more comfortable interacting with an AI coach.

Users often turn to AI coaches for real-time assistance, such as preparing for difficult meetings or quick coaching sessions during commutes. While initially envisioned as cost-effective alternatives to executive coaching, these AI tools are proving valuable for immediate, situational help.

The broader impact of AI on workplace structures is also under discussion. Kevin Delaney, editor-in-chief of Charter, a future-of-work research company, and Alexia Cambon, a senior research director at Microsoft, have suggested that AI agents capable of autonomously completing complex tasks could challenge traditional organisational charts. Cambon proposed a shift towards a “work chart” model, where tasks may be assigned to either AI or human agents based on expertise, akin to the project-based team assembly seen in Hollywood productions.

Concerns from academics and human coaches about the potential over-reliance on AI coaching have been voiced, particularly regarding the limitations of AI in supporting senior leaders who typically require more comprehensive and nuanced coaching. Nonetheless, current trends indicate that high-level executive coaching remains beyond the reach of AI solutions.

Separately, the newsletter features an editorial segment addressing workplace culture and management advice, including a reader query about improving a boss’s professional appearance to enhance his chances of promotion within a non-profit organisation. Isabel Berwick's advice, supplemented by insights from FT’s deputy fashion editor Carola Long, recommends focusing on accessories such as smart glasses, a suitable bag, and modern shoes, and selecting a blue suit over grey or black for interviews.

Additionally, the Financial Times highlights the Fair Shot initiative in London’s Covent Garden, which trains young adults with autism and/or learning disabilities as baristas and café assistants, subsequently supporting their transition into sustainable employment, often in hospitality. The programme is recruiting its next cohort for September, offering opportunities for young people aged 16 to 25.

In a broader media announcement, The Observer, the world's oldest Sunday newspaper, has been sold to Tortoise Media, which plans to rebrand under The Observer banner following significant staff redundancies.

This extensive coverage reflects ongoing developments in workplace management, AI integration, and social initiatives aimed at improving inclusivity and professionalism in various work environments.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.ft.com/content/1c4edde0-4681-45f8-845c-571cd233bd9b> - This Financial Times article discusses the increasing adoption of AI coaching tools in the workplace, highlighting their role in supporting managers who often lack formal training.
2. <https://www.valence.co/blog/ai-coach-for-frontline-managers> - Valence's blog post details how their AI coach, Nadia, is designed to provide personalized, always-available support to frontline managers, addressing the challenges they face.
3. <https://www.valence.co/charter-report> - This report, co-produced by Valence and Charter, explores how AI can enhance cognitive apprenticeship, offering scalable, personalized mentorship for managers.
4. <https://www.fairshot.co.uk/> - Fair Shot is a London-based café and training center that provides young adults with learning disabilities and/or autism the opportunity to gain real-life work experience and transition into sustainable employment.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/london-cafe-gives-workers-with-learning-disabilities-fair-shot-2025-01-22/> - This Reuters article highlights the Fair Shot initiative in London's Covent Garden, which trains young adults with learning disabilities as baristas and café assistants, supporting their transition into sustainable employment.
6. <https://www.charterworks.com/ai-coaching-parker-mitchell-valence/> - This webinar discusses how generative AI is transforming manager development, featuring insights from Parker Mitchell, CEO of Valence, on the role of AI coaches in supporting managers.
7. <https://www.ft.com/content/1c4edde0-4681-45f8-845c-571cd233bd9b> - Please view link - unable to able to access data