# AI coaching reshapes management support as WPP adopts Valence’s multilingual assistant



The Financial Times is reporting on the emerging trend of generative AI coaches being deployed to support managers overwhelmed by people management responsibilities. According to research cited, 44 per cent of managers have received no formal training, highlighting a significant challenge for organisations aiming to develop effective leadership.

One prominent player in this space is Valence, a company founded in 2018 by Parker Mitchell. Initially dedicated to tools for improving teamwork by focusing on the team as the unit of creative work, Valence pivoted to AI coaching with the development of large language models. Parker Mitchell explained that their AI coach aims to act like a personal assistant that understands individual users by engaging them with questions, rather than merely providing answers.

The advertising group WPP has adopted Valence’s AI coach, named Nadia, which is used by several thousand employees for a range of needs including career planning, practising challenging conversations, team management, and handling interpersonal relationships. Lindsay Pattison, WPP’s chief people officer, said: “Nadia, despite being AI, is seen as very personal, a safe space to ask questions, and people particularly liked the confidentiality, always-on access and personalisation.” Nadia is available to WPP employees in 36 languages, part of Valence’s offering in about 70 languages, demonstrating the appeal of AI coaching to global workforces. Parker Mitchell noted the benefit for employees who may lack traditional educational credentials and feel more comfortable interacting with an AI coach in their native language.

While originally conceived as a cost-effective alternative to executive coaching, Valence has found that their AI coach is often used for immediate, practical support in real-time scenarios, such as preparing for a difficult meeting or getting ready for the workday during commutes.

The rise of AI coaches also has implications for organisational structure. Kevin Delaney, editor-in-chief of the future of work media company Charter, suggests that AI performing tasks traditionally done by humans may challenge the typical organisational chart. Microsoft senior research director Alexia Cambon proposes a shift towards a “work chart” model, where work is allocated between humans and AI agents, likening it to the Hollywood industry’s project-based team formation.

Alongside the AI coaching developments, the Financial Times also addressed a more traditional workplace concern: appropriate professional presentation for career advancement. A reader asked for advice on how to help a boss who is applying for a CEO role and whose style is considered outdated. FT fashion editor Carola Long recommended starting with accessories such as glasses, bags, and shoes to elevate the look, suggesting frames from stores like Cubitts and modern footwear such as loafers or suede desert boots. For clothing, she advised favouring navy suits over grey or black for interviews requiring formal dress.

In addition, the Financial Times highlighted a social enterprise in London named Fair Shot, which provides supported internships and training for young adults with autism or learning disabilities, aiming to help them secure employment in hospitality and other sectors. The programme is recruiting participants aged 16-25 for its September intake.

These developments reflect wider conversations about the future of work, leadership, training, and inclusion, with technology and social initiatives both playing key roles.

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

## References

* <https://www.ft.com/content/1c4edde0-4681-45f8-845c-571cd233bd9b> - This Financial Times article discusses the rise of AI coaches like Nadia, highlighting their role in supporting managers who lack formal training, with 44% of managers having received no formal training.
* <https://www.valence.co/?ref=w3use> - Valence's official website provides information about their AI coach, Nadia, which offers personalized, always-available coaching grounded in company culture and values, addressing the challenge of managers lacking formal training.
* <https://www.valence.co/ai-coach-recruiting> - Valence's AI coach, Nadia, is used by several thousand employees at WPP for various needs, including career planning, practicing challenging conversations, team management, and handling interpersonal relationships.
* <https://www.valence.co/charter-report> - This report discusses how AI can support each stage of cognitive apprenticeship in manager training, including modeling, coaching, scaffolding, articulation, reflection, and exploration, aligning with the article's mention of AI's implications for organizational structure.
* <https://www.valence.co/blog/introducing-nadia> - Valence's blog introduces Nadia, an AI-powered coach designed to provide personalized support at scale across organizations, reflecting the trend of AI coaches being deployed to support managers.
* <https://www.valence.co/blog/ai-coach-for-frontline-managers> - This blog post highlights how Nadia, Valence's AI coach, is purpose-built to support frontline managers, offering personalized coaching to help them navigate challenges and improve performance.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/1c4edde0-4681-45f8-845c-571cd233bd9b> - Please view link - unable to able to access data