



C-SUITE PERSPECTIVE: WHERE TO
USE AI AND WHERE TO RELY ONLY
ON HUMANS

AN INTERVIEW WITH KIERAN POWELL
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C-Suite Perspective On AI: Amit Patel Of *Mythos Group* On Where To Use AI And When To Rely Only On Humans

An Interview with Kieran Powell

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As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to advance and integrate into various aspects of business, decision-makers at the highest levels face the complex task of determining where AI can be most effectively utilized and where the human touch remains irreplaceable. This series seeks to explore the nuanced decisions made by C-Suite executives regarding the implementation of AI in their operations. As part of this series, we had the pleasure of interviewing Amit Patel.

Amit Patel is the Founder and Managing Director of Mythos Group, a boutique management consulting firm that specializes in Strategy, Digital, HR and Organizational Transformations, Leadership and Executive Coaching and Talent Management. He has broad-based expertise in building and leading strategic global transformations resulting in cost savings, enhanced organizational efficiency, and improved productivity. Amit has extensive experience helping clients reinvent themselves to take on new challenges and has enjoyed working with Fortune 500 organizations, start-ups and public institutions

Thank you so much for your time! I know that you are a very busy person. Our readers would love to “get to know you” a bit better. Can you tell us a bit about your ‘backstory’ and how you got started?

Soon after my immigration to the US, I worked as a computer programmer in the telecommunication field at a small software firm. My experience there included client collaboration, which led to my learning about, strategizing and implementing organizational design and development. Working closely with clients, I gained important insight into their pain points, motivating me to find more holistic and transformative solutions. I enjoyed this experience so much that I decided to further my studies at Johns Hopkins University's Carey Business School where I pursued a master's degree in management.

Since then, I've had the honor of consulting with clients ranging from modest startups to high profile Fortune 100 companies, across industries such as biopharma, consumer packaged goods (CPG), financials services, retail and technology. Through my work with these organizations, I've always endeavored to make strategic transformation a reality, by determining, acknowledging and seeking to overcome any weaknesses, while finding, encouraging, and leveraging the unique strengths of every company.

Keeping abreast of the latest innovations continues to play an integral role in my work. For this reason, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR) and other new emerging technologies are always considered carefully, with every organization's processes, teams, market, and current technology, mindfully considered to solve problems and achieve solutions, swiftly and harmoniously.

I've found initiating, developing and building long-term relationships with my clients while creating innovative solutions, is the key to true success. Today, I find my work to be profoundly



meaningful and fulfilling as every new challenge presents an opportunity for new inspiration, through new solutions.

It has been said that our mistakes can be our greatest teachers. Can you share a story about the funniest mistake you made when you were first starting? Can you tell us what lesson you learned from that?

Sure! For one of my first consulting jobs, I had to present a complex supply chain solution to a boardroom of executives. Feeling particularly confident, I reached into my computer backpack for a crucial piece of supporting data. As I pulled it out, I felt a strange sensation. Instead of a crisp report, my fingers wrapped around something sticky and stretchy.

To my surprise, I had accidentally grabbed a roll of duct tape. The room broke out into laughter as I held up the adhesive wonder. The CEO, a seasoned executive and a good-natured guy, chuckled, "Well, at least you're creative with your problem-solving!"

From that day on, I learned a valuable lesson: even in the most serious of meetings, a little humor can go a long way. And, perhaps more importantly, always double-check your pockets and computer backpack to ensure you have everything you need before making a presentation.

(And if you'd like to learn about how AI is revolutionizing supply chains, you can read more [here](#).)

Are you working on any exciting new projects now? How do you think that will help people?

Yes, I'm working on several exciting projects now! I'll tell you about one of them that I believe will be insightful. This is a large government healthcare organization in need of a major system update. In upscaling the organization's current technology with AI, we will be updating their library of drugs and treatment methods. As you can imagine, this will help expedite the process for healthcare workers to find valuable information and make these assets easier to disseminate to all relevant parties including hospitals, doctors, patients, and researchers.

Thank you for that. Let's now shift to the central focus of our discussion. In your experience, what have been the most challenging aspects of integrating AI into your business operations, and how have you balanced these with the need to preserve human-centric roles?

Integrating AI into a business *can* be tricky. Every team is unique, of course. And for this reason, we at Mythos Group approach every organization with respect to not only the specific personality or "branding" of their company, but to the personality of the individuals concerned. One great challenge, of course, is that people might be scared of losing their jobs, especially in the case of mergers and acquisitions with the integration of AI. From the onset, it's important to communicate and train employees so they understand how AI can *help* them, not *replace* them.



Another issue is data. It just can't be stated enough that we need high-quality data to train AI models. We also need to protect people's privacy. Poor data can only lead to poor results. Privacy breaches can damage trust.

AI can be read as biased or unfair by team members and can even make mistakes (based on poor data or inappropriate use), so ethics are a concern. We need to be careful about how we use it. It's important to have clear guidelines and governance to make sure AI is used ethically.

Technical skills are also important. Integrating AI requires a deep understanding of technology. Building a team with the right skills can be tough, especially for smaller companies.

Finally, we need to figure out how humans and AI can work together. Designing processes that facilitate collaboration is key.

To address these challenges and preserve human-centric roles, I've focused on reframing roles, investing in employee training, establishing ethical guidelines, involving humans in AI design, and communicating openly with employees about AI's impact.

Reframing roles helps team members who see AI as a threat to their jobs. To help ease their fears, we emphasize how AI can augment human capabilities. By automating routine tasks, AI can free up employees to focus on more strategic, creative, and fulfilling work. This can lead to increased job satisfaction and productivity. Once team members fully understand this, fears are allayed and attitudes lifted.

At Mythos Group, we emphasize investing in employee training to ensure employees are able to work effectively with AI. We prioritize training programs that focus on data literacy, problem-solving, and ethical decision-making. These skills are essential for navigating the complexities of AI and leveraging its potential.

Establishing ethical guidelines is essential as well. To mitigate risks and build trust, we work with organizations to develop clear guidelines for AI use and development. These guidelines address issues including bias, transparency, and accountability, ensuring AI is used responsibly.

Whenever possible, we involve humans in AI design. I believe AI solutions should be designed with humans in mind. By involving employees in the design process, we can ensure AI tools are intuitive, user-friendly, and aligned with the needs of the workforce.

Communication is key! Open communication with *everyone* on the team is essential for building trust and addressing concerns about AI's impact. Providing clear information about the benefits and risks of AI helps employees understand how it can improve their work and the organization as a whole.

By keeping these holistic policies, organizations can harness the power of AI while ensuring a positive and sustainable future for their workforce.



Can you share a specific instance where AI initially seemed like the optimal solution but ultimately proved less effective than human intervention? What did this experience teach you about the limitations of AI in your field?

With the emergence of AI, individuals across industries were eager to get on board. No one wanted to miss out on the potential of this remarkable new technology. This is completely understandable.

Unfortunately, AI isn't always the best choice as certain decisions are best handled by us humans! For instance, within the HR domain, the distinctly human abilities of judgment are simply essential. HR is inherently centered around human decision-making, making it less conducive to complete reliance on AI. In my experience, coordinating HR during the delicate process of mergers and acquisitions, the human qualities of empathy and perspective consideration are *essential*.

How do you navigate the ethical implications of implementing AI in your company, especially concerning potential job displacement and ensuring ethical AI usage?

As a management consultant, it's important to approach the implementation of AI in a company with a focus on ethical considerations. Here, especially a distinctly personal touch is needed, as team members need to feel "seen and heard" throughout the process. Through my experience, I have developed several effective strategies for navigating the ethics of using AI.

First, there's the essential; engaging with all stakeholders. Before implementing AI, we engage with all team members, to understand their concerns and get feedback. This ensures the use of AI takes into careful consideration the impact on everyone.

Next, we develop clear policies and guidelines. Establishing these for the use of AI in a company, including guidelines for data privacy, transparency, and accountability sets the course to ensure responsible AI use.

We also make sure training and support are in place and readily available. Employees will need help adapting to certain changes brought about by AI implementation. This education might include upskilling programs, retraining opportunities, and support for those who may be at risk of job displacement.

Continuing the process, we monitor and evaluate progress regularly. The impact of AI on employees and the company as a whole, must be taken into account and discussed with all humans involved. This helps identify any unforeseen ethical issues that may be lurking, and allow for adjustments to be made, *before* any one issue becomes a problem.

By taking a holistic approach, and by prioritizing ethical considerations in the implementation of AI, companies can navigate the potential job displacement and other ethical implications of AI in a responsible way.



Could you describe a successful instance in your company where AI and human skills were synergistically combined to achieve a result that neither could have accomplished alone?

Let's use the HR example I brought up earlier. AI can and does help with scheduling interviews, automating tasks like paperwork, and providing new hires with personalized onboarding experiences. These automated tasks make the process smoother and more efficient.

AI can be used to analyze employee data to identify performance trends and even provide a degree of personalized feedback, depending on the data. This could help employees improve and even assist with performance reviews, with the oversight of human HR.

To a certain degree, AI can track employee engagement levels and identify areas where improvements might be needed. This may help companies understand pain points or even areas of conflict and help create a more positive work environment. However, AI still has no real emotional grasp of human issues, so it is limited.

Emotional intelligence is the most obvious area where AI comes up short. HR professionals often have to rely on emotional intelligence to understand and navigate complex human interactions. This is just part of the job. AI understandably lacks the ability to interpret emotions in the same way humans do every day. This makes human judgment essential in HR decision-making.

AI lacks contextual understanding. HR decisions often require a deep understanding of the specific context and nuances of a situation, which can be challenging or even impossible for AI to accurately assess.

Human judgment allows HR professionals to take into account the unique circumstances and individual factors that may impact any important decision. After all, human dynamics are complex and storied, often requiring hours of research into personal histories which would be enigmatic or even incomprehensible to AI.

This leads us to ethical considerations. HR decisions can have significant ethical implications, such as hiring, firing, and performance evaluations. Human judgment is necessary to consider ethical considerations, values, and moral principles in their own specific contexts for accurate decision-making, which AI may not be able to fully comprehend.

AI – *so far at least!* – does not have empathy or compassion. HR professionals often need to demonstrate empathy and compassion when dealing with sensitive employee issues, such as conflicts, grievances, and disciplinary actions. These qualities are inherently human and are essential in building trust and fostering positive relationships within an organization. A machine simply cannot give comfort the way a human can.

As for adaptability and flexibility, HR decisions often require these in response to changing circumstances and evolving organizational needs. Human judgment allows HR professionals to



be responsive to dynamic situations, whereas AI may struggle to adapt to unexpected changes or may even resort to dangerous “hallucinations,” meaning it simply makes things up.

While AI can support HR processes by providing data insights, automating routine tasks, and enhancing efficiency, the field of human resources ultimately relies on human judgment to navigate the complexities of human interactions, emotions, ethics, and adaptability. Human judgment will continue to play a critical role in HR decision-making, ensuring that decisions are made with compassion, empathy, ethical considerations, and a deep understanding of the human element in organizations.

Ok, here is the main question of our discussion. Based on your experience and success, what are the “5 Things To Keep in Mind When Deciding Where to Use AI and Where to Rely Only on Humans, and Why?” How have these 5 things impacted your work or your career? Please share a story or an example for each.

1. Task Complexity. This would be the first thing to consider. AI is most efficient when used for repetitive, data-driven tasks. I've used AI to automate data analysis and reporting, freeing up time for more strategic and creative work.

Unfortunately, for complex problems requiring judgment, creativity, or nuanced understanding, like what we discussed in HR, human expertise is still indispensable. This has not been part of my personal experience, but I have heard stories of HR guided only by AI making age, sex or even race-based generalizations. Of course, these kinds of mistakes will prove AI to be the wrong choice.

2. Data Quality. A major factor to consider is the quality of data any AI platform will have access to, in any given situation. This can vary greatly, by the way! AI's performance depends heavily on the accuracy and reliability of the data it's trained on. So, if quality data is not available, it may be best to postpone the use of AI until this issue has been addressed. Shockingly, when AI can't access the data it needs to respond to a request, it may hallucinate its own answers, and of course, this is unacceptable. Garbage in – garbage out!

From my own personal experience, I've come across company data sets in desperate need of an update for any AI aided analysis. This step is crucial for accuracy before an AI solution is implemented.

3. Ethical Considerations. This, again, relates to the importance of accurate and unbiased data. AI will automatically perpetuate biases already present in the data it's trained on, so human oversight is essential to keep decision-making fair and responsible. But that's not all...

You've probably heard about facial recognition technology being used by law enforcement. While it might be helpful, there are also problems. For example, it sometimes targets people of color, unfairly. That's not OK.



Another ethical issue concerns privacy. AI systems often collect and process lots of personal data. If this data is not handled carefully and securely, it can lead to privacy breaches and identity theft.

Lastly, on the topic of ethics and AI is the problem of “Deepfakes.” These are fake images, videos or audio that can be made to look or sound real. They're a big problem because they can be used to spread misinformation and manipulate people.

By the way, more on this topic, if you're interested, is on our site, [here](#).

4. Cost/Benefit. Running a thorough cost/benefit analysis is always a good idea when an organization considers any new technology. AI is no different. While it can certainly automate tasks and reduce costs, there will be upfront costs associated with subscriptions to platforms and training team members for their use and best practices. Depending on the size and budget of the organization, AI may or may not be the best choice.

In my experience, most mid to large-sized companies will only benefit from the use of AI in some capacity, but again, this is a choice for *humans* to make. After all, AI, like any system, will always vie for its acceptance and growth.

5. Human/AI Collaboration: I've found that the most successful AI implementations almost always involve a human/AI partnership. Humans provide context, guidance, and ethical oversight, while AI can automate tasks and extend human capabilities.

For example, AI-powered chatbots can handle routine customer inquiries, freeing up human agents to focus on more complex issues. We're already seeing a lot of this. (And maybe a bit more than most customers would like.) If any of your readers are wondering if their organization might benefit from a chatbot, feel free to check out our deep dive [here](#). Live customer service continues to be a favorite among some humans!

In data analysis, AI can identify trends and patterns humans might miss, leading to more informed business decisions. And here, it's up to us humans to make sure the data is accurate and current.

The product development sector is using AI to generate new ideas, design prototypes, and test different configurations, accelerating the process from the beginning and cutting costs. It will be up to humanity to determine which ideas are ethical and sometimes even *feasible*, as AI can “dream big,” straying a bit from reality...

In healthcare, AI can analyze medical images, diagnose diseases, and even develop personalized treatment plans—with the cooperation of human doctors! In matters of life and death such as healthcare and police work, AI will need human oversight to avoid any awkward “West World” type events.



And in financial services, AI may be able to detect fraud, assess risk, and provide personalized advice, again with the oversight of a human advisor. By working together, humans and AI can achieve better results than either could on their own.

Looking towards the future, in which areas of your business do you foresee AI making the most significant impact, and conversely, in which areas do you believe a human touch will remain indispensable?

The most significant and – *I believe* – one of the most interesting examples of an industry that is and will continue to be positively impacted by AI is retail. AI is now reshaping the retail world with innovative solutions for all stakeholders. For customers, it can enhance and simplify the shopping experience. For companies, it can expedite repetitive processes and drive sales. Two key areas where AI is making an impact are personalized advertising and what I like to call “virtual concierge” services.

Through AI, tailored recommendations can be made to shoppers. AI algorithms can analyze vast amounts of customer data, including purchase history, browsing behavior, and demographics, to give more personalized product recommendations. This helps customers find items they actually want and leads to higher conversion rates for merchants.

Real-time offers are another option AI can help with. Certain platforms can send targeted offers and promotions to customers, based on their locations and buying behavior. We’ve all noticed how companies like Amazon give us recommendations for products the system sees us browsing. Now a customer browsing a specific product category on a mobile device might also receive a notification about a limited-time discount on that item.

As for the virtual concierge use case, let’s start with a familiar example. Amazon’s virtual assistant, Alexa, is used to search for products, place orders, and get product information, besides playing your favorite song or answering a trivia question that’s been haunting you.

But as they say in sales, “That’s not all!” AI can also help with brand comparison. AI-powered virtual concierges help customers compare brands, their features, and their prices. By analyzing product data and customer preferences, AI-powered virtual assistants can give bespoke recommendations, and even answer questions, in real time.

Lastly, AI can help customers find the right look, size and fit for makeup, jewelry, clothing and footwear. First, by analyzing customer measurements and purchase history, AI algorithms can recommend the most suitable options. Stitch Fix, the online clothing retailer, now uses AI to curate personalized clothing selections for customers, based on their style preferences and measurements.

Then through 3D imagery, a customer can “try on” makeup, a piece of jewelry or piece of clothing to see how it compliments (or doesn’t) their appearance. You might have already seen this on Amazon for buying furniture that fits your decor. Sephora’s “Beauty Advisor” tool lets customers virtually try on makeup and receive personalized recommendations.



By leveraging AI for personalized advertising and virtual concierge services, retailers can improve their customers' satisfaction while they drive sales. This is a win-win for the retail industry, as long as privacy issues are addressed and information is ethically and transparently sourced.

You are a person of great influence. If you could start a movement that would bring the most amount of good to the most amount of people, what would that be? You never know what your idea can trigger. :-)

I imagine a world where AI is used to solve the greatest problems facing humanity today. That's a worthy goal.

Before we dream big, we need to make sure AI is developed and used *ethically*. That means being fair, transparent, and accountable. The use of personal data must be by consent only. AI can help us solve complex problems, but we need to make sure it's used *responsibly* as well. We need to develop rules and regulations to guide its use.

Education, as in all new technology, is *key*. To that point, we all need not just access to AI education, but the inspiration to dig deeper, to learn more and to contribute to the ecosystem, so we can understand and benefit more from this great technology.

Ultimately, humanity should be using AI to tackle big problems like poverty, inequality, and the proliferation of peace. It's important for humans and AI to work together in harmony. By focusing on these principles, we can create a better future for everyone.

How can our readers further follow your work online?

I invite your readers to go online to the Mythos Group [website](#) to learn more about me and the services my firm provides. On our [Insights](#) page, you'll find a wealth of information, including articles, white papers, e-books, interviews, presentations and webinars, or you can check out our [blog posts](#) for timely discussions on what's happening in the business world. You can also connect with me directly on [LinkedIn](#).

This was very inspiring. Thank you so much for joining us!

Thank you. The interview was my pleasure!



About Mythos Group

Mythos Group is a management consulting firm. We partner with senior executives to solve complex issues across all industries and business functions.

From Fortune 500 companies to start-ups we collaborate with clients in formulating innovative strategies to design and implement impactful transformative business solutions.

Our home page is www.mythosgroupinc.com.

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