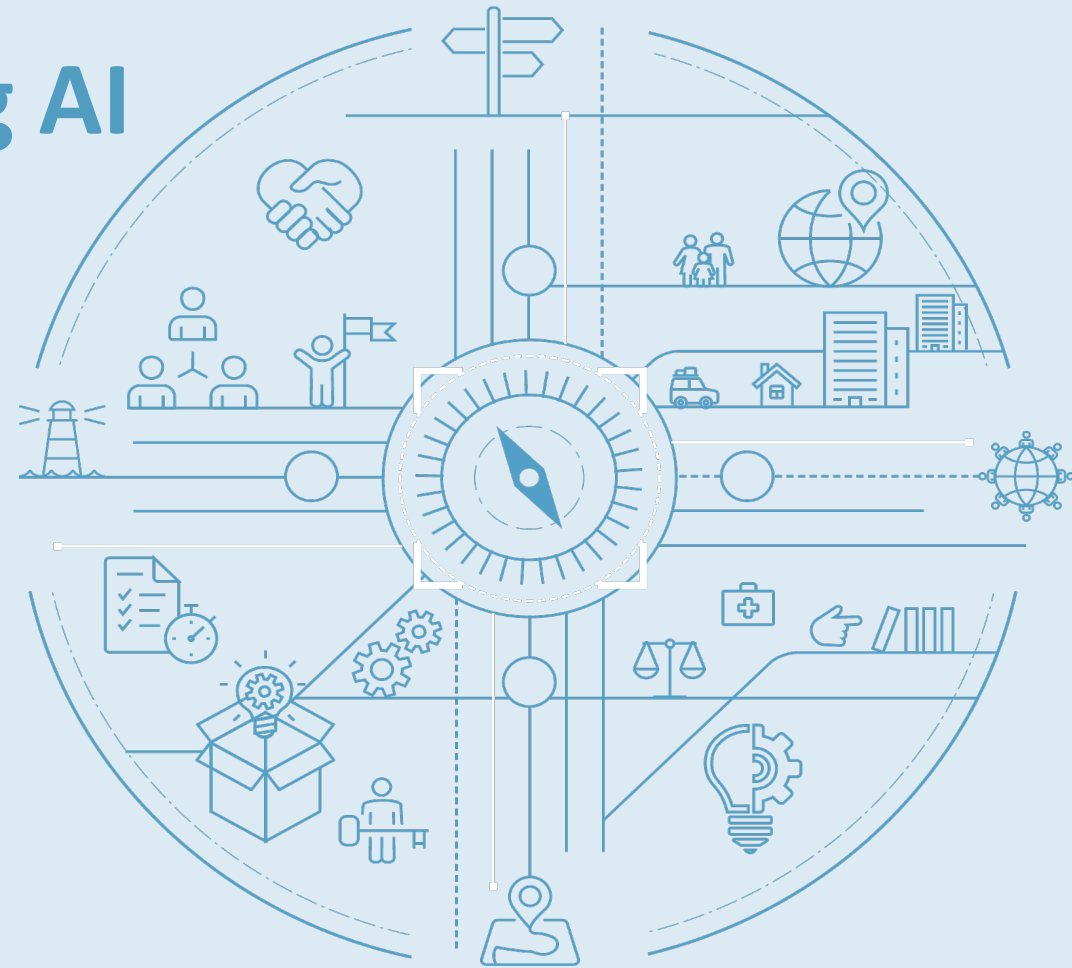


A Framework for using AI

A guide for purpose led business

March 2026





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Acknowledgements

This guide was created following a series of roundtables with businesses, academics and others to consider the question: How do we develop and deploy this paradigm-shifting technology, particularly by business, in a way that enhances our human dignity, satisfies our innate sense of fairness, and contributes to the common good?

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All participated in a personal capacity.

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What might help people in business to deploy AI in ways that enhances human dignity, satisfies our innate sense of fairness, and contributes to the common good?

Introduction

We live in extraordinary times – the rapid and continued development and deployment of AI will transform how we live and work – prompting both excitement and fear as the implications are unknowable and potentially far-reaching.

The focus of debate is often on the potential negative consequences of AI, with a great deal of discussion going on seeking to minimize unintended harms – how to avoid bias, protect privacy, ensure data is secure etc. The risks are clear and there is important work to do to minimize them. These are of course very important questions, but can overshadow other crucial discussions regarding the overarching goal for this technology:

What is the outcome that we're trying to move towards, and how can AI help?

In the accelerating race to adopt AI to avoid missing out on its potential benefits, or risk being out-maneuvered by competitors, many companies are asking themselves questions such as “How much can we automate?”. “How quickly can we roll it out?”. “How much cost can we save?” There is less focus on the opportunities for businesses to use AI as a force for good, in service of human flourishing and the good of society as a whole.

The gravitational pull of the current economic system is toward short-termism and extraction. An example of this would be the development of social media which began with a positive intention to create connection and community but was drawn by its economic model to addict users and increase outrage in order to maximize engagement, leading to isolation and lower societal trust. **What can we do to appeal to strong leadership in business to help chart a different, more purposeful course?**

In this paper we introduce a framework with suggested questions to encourage broader conversations inside organisations, inviting different perspectives and a more holistic exploration of the potential that widespread AI implementation might bring.

If you would like to be part of future conversations we are convening on this subject or are interested in speaking to us about how we might help you to use our framework please [contact us](#).



Underlying assumptions

In keeping with Blueprint's approach - challenging the underlying assumptions that shape business and society - we asked ourselves the following questions to help us reflect - not just on the impacts of AI, but on the assumptions that underpin our thinking:

- **When we ask how AI might impact the economy** - are we assuming the economy is simply a mechanism for efficiently delivering GDP? Or do we see it as a web of relationships that enable people to build meaningful lives, exercise agency, and form interdependent bonds with others?
- **When we ask what AI might do to jobs** - are we treating jobs as mere vehicles for wages—replaceable by Universal Basic Income in a future of AI-enabled abundance? Or do we recognize jobs as vital to human dignity, social contribution, and wellbeing, offering people a sense of purpose and belonging?
- **When we ask about the implications of AI for humanity** - are we viewing ourselves as rational, individualistic utility-maximisers? Or as complex beings with emotions, relationships, hopes and fears—driven not only by self-interest but also by concern for others?

How we frame and answer these questions will fundamentally shape how this technology is implemented, and how the benefits, and costs, will be shared.

We think that to truly realise the positive potential of this extraordinary technology, businesses must find the time and space to consider fundamental questions – ones that encourage a more imaginative, participatory and human-centered response that aims to promote the common good, human dignity and a sustainable relationship with the environment.

For instance:

- how might we use this technology to help us serve the broadest community and build societal cohesion?
- how might we build trusted relationships that we could not have imagined before through the use of this technology?
- how do we support and develop the capacity for critical thinking and wise judgement, and protect human agency and autonomy?



A framework for organisations using AI

An organisation is a product of peoples’ thinking and doing. Ways of thinking and their subsequent impact on others can enable or limit what any organisation can achieve for itself and society, including through new technology. Emerging technology, including AI, offers profound and transformative potential for people, business and society as a whole. This framework aims to steer the design and implementation of technology in ways that promote dignity and the value of people and the common good.

Foundational understanding (mind-set)

Each person is a someone, not a something (Dignity and value of people)	Delivering value by serving society (The common good)
How are we thinking about deploying AI as a tool to enable people to realize their full potential , retaining their agency and autonomy, and not reducing people to passive recipients of what AI can deliver?	How are we considering human flourishing, fairness and the good of society as a whole in designing new products and services and the way we interact with all of our stakeholders, and not simply financial return?

Evolving thinking which shapes habitual behaviour

Other people matter (Solidarity)	Freedom with responsibility (Subsidiarity)	Building trust and trusted relationships (Reciprocity)	Valuing diversity and building bridges (Plurality)	Stewardship, values and resources (Sustainability)
How are we actively seeking to design or deploy AI systems to enhance livelihoods and serve the broadest community?	How are we creating the conditions to enable people to develop wise judgement and to be accountable for both their own decisions and those made by AI?	How are we seeking to enhance social cohesion and build trusted relationships through the use of AI?	How are we actively seeking other perspectives , inviting, considering and responding to scrutiny and challenge , internally and externally?	How are we seeking to use our influence and collaborating with others for the benefit of all , including future generations and the planet?
How are we valuing our employees and seeking to use AI to enhance their capabilities and work and better serve our customers without bias?	How are we ensuring that people retain appropriate accountability for decisions made by AI?	How are we intending to create mutual value with key stakeholders through implementing AI?	How are we consulting and encouraging others to participate in decisions on AI deployment?	How are we seeking to understand and minimize any negative impacts of our organisation’s use of AI on people and the planet?
Are we only considering the financial case for using AI and seeking to automate as much as possible?	Are we simply seeking to automate decisions, without considering accountability?	Are we using our position to exploit AI for our self-interest alone?	Are we imposing our own views on AI deployment on others?	Are we using AI to maximize our profits leaving government to regulate for any negative impacts?

How to read the framework

The framework sets out questions for an organisation to consider at three levels of maturity – going from the bottom of the arrows and working up:

- The organisation considers the broader implications of how they use AI and how their use might promote human flourishing, the good of society as a whole and the impact on the planet
- The organisation seeks to minimize the negative consequences from their use of AI, particularly on their key stakeholders
- AI is used with little or no regard for human and environmental consequences

How to use the framework

We suggest the framework is used as a tool to facilitate discussion by Boards or leadership teams.

Here is a suggested workshop outline (60-90 minutes):

Welcome, context & aims (5 mins)	This is not a technical session, but a leadership-level conversation about purpose, ethics, and organisational choices. exploring not just what we can do with AI, but how our approach to AI affects our existing purpose and commitments made to stakeholders and ultimately how it might help us become a better. more sustainable business.
Big picture: AI as a paradigm shift (10 mins)	Reflection (pairs or small groups): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do we feel tension between speed, competitive pressure, and careful, human-centred deployment? • What is the outcome we are trying to move towards—and how can AI help?
Challenging underlying assumptions (10 mins)	Three facilitated questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy: are we assuming AI's role is GDP efficiency—or strengthening the web of human relationships? • Jobs: are jobs only wage mechanisms—or sources of dignity, contribution and belonging? • Humanity: are people rational utility-maximisers—or complex relational beings? <p>Ask participants to choose the assumption that most influences decision-making in this organisation today. What would change if we adopted the alternative assumption?</p>
Introducing the AI Framework and organisational assessment (5 mins)	Walk through the framework's three levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI with little/no regard for human or environmental consequences • AI that minimises negative consequences for key stakeholders • AI that actively promotes human flourishing, the common good, and a sustainable relationship with the planet <p>Where does our organisation currently sit? Where do we aspire to be?</p>
Main Discussion: Using the Framework (30-40 mins)	Break into 2 groups – more detailed discussions of moving between the levels in the framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What tensions (e.g., productivity vs. dignity, value extraction vs. proposition improvement) do we need to consciously manage? • What organisational capabilities do we need to steward AI wisely—judgement, critical thinking, ethical literacy? • How do we activate these capabilities by embedding this approach into processes and behaviours?
Implications for purpose, strategy, governance (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is our approach to AI consistent with our corporate purpose and values? • How is our approach to AI in the interests of our stakeholders and have we ascertained their views? • How is our approach to AI making our organisation more sustainable as a business and a better business in the long term? • Does the board have sufficient understanding of AI to provide meaningful oversight, and if not, what development is needed? • What governance mechanisms and controls (committees, review processes, principles) might be needed? • Where do we need more data or insight before deciding?
Closing reflection & next steps (5 mins)	What is the one commitment or question we will take forward from this session? Next steps?

How to use the framework

Many organisations are thinking about how they can use AI more responsibly, for example: seeking to reduce bias, thinking about how they upskill their employees to work alongside AI, considering the impact on their customers and thinking about the data that is collected. But many are not yet having broader conversations, internally and externally, that explore the longer-term impact of AI on society and what that might mean for the future resilience of their business.

The framework is intended to help catalyse those conversations and inform a "guiding mindset" that can help organisations navigate towards a better future. It is not a compliance framework, nor does it aim to address all the detailed considerations that need to be taken into account when implementing AI. The questions included are not intended to be an exhaustive list, but a way of starting discussions within businesses and across sectors. Those discussions should also involve voices from civil society, investors, government and regulators. It will take intentional effort from across society to steer a path through disruption towards a future that delivers long-term wellbeing for all people and the planet.

In having these discussions, it is of course important for organisations to recognise that many of the most significant impacts will come from their own buying power - the AI tools and platforms they purchase, the mandates they create for suppliers and how AI is integrated into their own customer-facing products. In the absence of global regulation on the development of AI, organisations can have a meaningful influence on how it is developed and deployed through what they choose to buy. Those organisations that spend time on these discussions now will be more likely to be trusted by stakeholders, more able to adapt to rapid change, and will be more resilient in an AI-enabled future.

Maximize profits mindset

AI is used with little or no regard for human and environmental consequences

Responsible mindset

Seeks to minimize the negative consequences from the use of AI, particularly on key stakeholders

Purpose led mindset

Considers the broader implications of how AI is used and how it might promote human flourishing, the good of society as a whole and the impact on the planet

The ideas that underpin the framework

The framework is designed to help businesses explore questions which encourage broader conversations inside organisations, inviting different perspectives and a more holistic exploration of the potential that widespread AI implementation might bring.

The framework is based on the foundational thinking of the charity A Blueprint for Better Business (Blueprint) which was developed over several years of discussions with business leaders, investors, philosophers and other academics.

This foundational thinking is encapsulated in the Blueprint Framework and the Blueprint Principles which are included in the [Appendix](#).

The two key ideas that underpin Blueprint's thinking are:

Dignity and value of people

The central premise is that people are not seen as merely a means of business success – they are not a 'something' but a 'someone' whose dignity is respected. AI systems could inadvertently turn people into a 'something'.

This includes respect for the 'whole' person in all their various roles in relation to a business – so goes beyond employees to customers, suppliers, investors, communities and also future generations – everyone who is affected directly or indirectly by the business.

This therefore highlights that business is essentially a series of relationships and if the dignity of the people in these relationships is respected, this will build trust between people and between business and society. But it also includes seeking outcomes that enable each person to reach their full potential.

For more on the dignity and value of people see [here](#)

The common good

The common good refers to the 'goods' that businesses create – both in the form of physical goods or services, but also how the business contributes to the shared / common good that we all share in as a society: the creation of jobs, contribution to public services, taxation, building communities and so on.

It also refers to the growth and development of people. In creating and delivering goods and services, businesses can help people realise their full potential or hinder them from reaching it. Contributing to the common good implies a responsibility to enable each person to be able to reach their full potential – and this includes ensuring fairness and distributive justice.

Finally, the common good is not about what is good for *most* people – it is the good for *all* people (thinking of this in a mathematical way – it is a multiplication rather than an addition – if one of the numbers is a zero, the total is zero).

For more on the common good see [here](#)

Appendix: Underlying thinking on which the framework draws: the Blueprint Principles

Five principles of a purpose driven business

The **Blueprint Principles** offer a picture of how a business might look if it genuinely benefits people and planet. The Principles were rigorously developed through a year long collaboration with a wide range of businesses, NGOs, investors, academics and others in 2013.



Appendix: Underlying thinking on which the framework draws: the Blueprint Framework

A framework to guide decision making

The **Blueprint Framework** sets out the thinking which underpins the Principles. It outlines how a purpose that respects the dignity and value of people and serves the common good should be defined and sets out the behaviours needed to sustain this purpose.

Defining purpose

Each person is a someone, not a something (Dignity and value of people)

Show respect for the dignity of each person and for the whole person; never use people merely as a means to achieving business objectives. Respecting the whole person includes thinking of people in all their various roles in relation to the business: as employees, customers, suppliers, investors and citizens. Demonstrating respect means setting a purpose and seeking outcomes that enable each person to reach his or her full potential, not least being able to contribute fully to building relationships and communities both within the workplace and beyond. Such purposes and such outcomes engender trust between people and between business and society.

Delivering value by serving society (The common good)

Genuinely aim to promote the good of society as a whole through the provision of goods and services that benefit society; never use stakeholders, and society as a whole, as a mere means to business success. This gives meaning to the purpose of the business within society and demands innovation to achieve that purpose alongside a financial return. Society and communities of people determine the licence, and freedoms, of business to operate and grow; these will be broader if business actively aims to reduce harm and produces goods that are truly good and services that truly serve.

Behaviours needed to build character and achieve purpose

Other people matter (Solidarity)

Judge decisions as good, or not, in the context of the best values, expectations and needs of those with whom we should seek to build relationships. Do not make decisions in a self interested, self determined, closed world that does not weigh sufficiently the impact on others. Make a fair contribution to society and avoid actions that cause inequality. Opportunities should be sought to serve the broadest community, including the underserved, the under-represented and the excluded; not to emphasise the divide but rather to bring people together, through new job opportunities, innovative goods and services, and new markets.

Freedom with responsibility (Subsidiarity)

Allow people to develop by being able to contribute to making decisions at all levels. Do not create dependency through reserving decisions unnecessarily to higher levels in the hierarchy, or lose accountability through inappropriate delegation. Give people the freedom, and support where necessary, to take on the risk of decision making and to have a voice in their work, thus fostering innovation, creativity and a sense of shared responsibility.

Building trust and trusted relationships (Reciprocity)

Start with basic honesty and integrity so that each and all receive what they are entitled to or can reasonably expect. This is the first stage of building trust. Then go beyond this minimum, using knowledge and capabilities to provide benefits that people desire and value but cannot expect or demand, in particular in situations of information asymmetry or power imbalance. Fair and efficient markets depend on trust and trusting relationships.

Valuing diversity and building bridges (Plurality)

Be clear as to who you are and what you stand for, combining this with an openness to enrichment from others, valuing diversity of thinking and cultures. Favour curiosity and inclusion over suspicion and exclusion of those who think differently. Maintain consistency of purpose and values whilst embracing diversity, encouraging closeness to people, markets, innovation and growth.

Stewardship of people, values and resources (Sustainability)

Acknowledge and seek to measure the impact the business has on people, values, resources, and the environment. Accept responsibility for those impacts. Then take steps to develop people, nurture values, preserve and restore existing resources and create new ones where possible so that others may enjoy their benefits. Use your knowledge, influence and experience in collaboration with others for the benefit of all.

A Blueprint for Better Business is an independent charity whose purpose is to create a better society through better business. Our work is a public good and we encourage anyone to use it widely. This booklet and all of the information and resources on our website is free and publicly available – all we ask is that you reference Blueprint if you use specific tools or workshops.

As an independent charity we rely on donations to make our work possible we therefore welcome ‘fair-use donations’ from any for-profit or not-for-profit entity that benefits financially or otherwise from using our work. This will really help us to continue our work.

If you would like to support our work with a voluntary donation [you can do so here](#). If you’d like to donate via bank transfer and/or would like a receipt for your donation please contact: soulla@blueprintforbusiness.org

Our purpose and work: We help business to be inspired and guided by a purpose that benefits society and respects people and planet. Our work is about stimulating and energising a different way of thinking and behaving in business. We believe businesses across all sectors and sizes can be a force for good. To maximize our impact we work primarily with senior people in large companies. We also convene forums and events, and work with investors and influencers from wider society, including NGOs, academics, business schools, coaches and advisors, to help create the environment for purpose-led business to thrive.

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