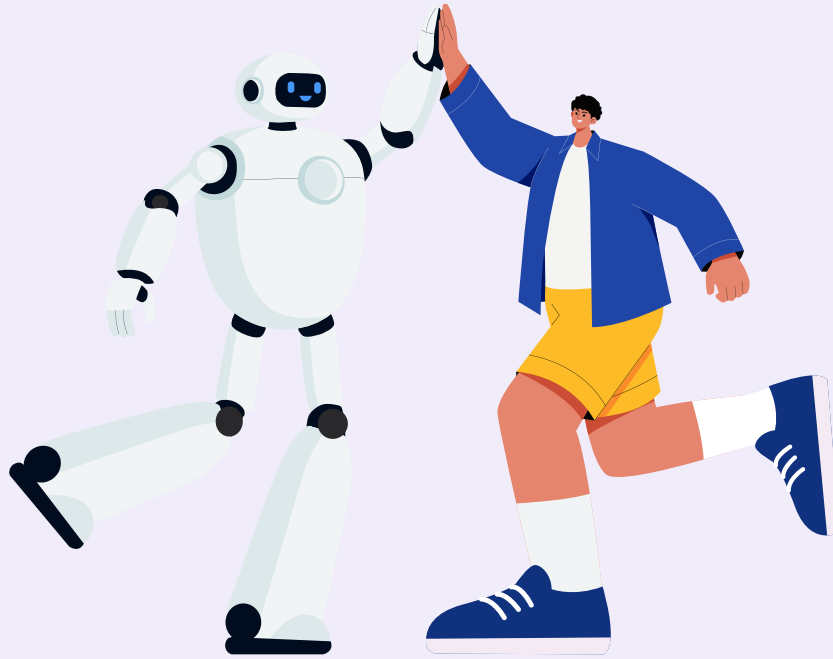


BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE TEAM GUIDING HR THROUGH THE AI SHIFT

AI in HR WEEK

Powered by **AAIM**



DAY 5 · FRIDAY, JULY 24

Yes — and. Where it goes next

Here's a lighter thought to end the week—and it starts with two words.

They come from improvisational comedy, but they belong in every room where people are trying to make sense of AI. They can change how you approach the technology, how you respond to the people worried about it, and how your organization moves through what comes next.

“Yes” names what’s real. “And” names what we’re going to build from it.

Today is about putting those two words to work—for you, for your people, and for the workforce you’re helping shape.



The Answer That Builds

Let's start with where these two words come from. In improv comedy, performers build entire scenes out of nothing by following a single rule: you never deny what your partner hands you. You take what they've put in front of you, and you add something to it that moves the scene forward. That's the whole discipline of **yes, and!**

The “yes” is acknowledgment.

It says this is real, this is here, this deserves an honest response. Read that carefully, because it's the part most people get wrong: **“yes” is not agreement**. You can acknowledge something you're worried about, skeptical of, or would never have chosen.

The “and” is what you add on top

This is the idea, the plan, the action that carries it forward. The “yes” names what's real; the “and” does something about it.

Now listen to how AI actually gets talked about inside most organizations. These might even sound like conversations you've already heard:

“We're not doing anything formal with AI right now. It's not really a fit for us.”

That's a **no — and a no with no follow-up**. Nothing to build on, nothing that moves. The conversation ends before it starts — and that's often where shadow AI, or ungoverned AI use, creeps in.

“We're going all in on AI. It's going to make us faster and more efficient.”

There's a yes in there — and even something that sounds like an “and.” But it only builds one side. It commits to the tool and quietly leaves out the people who have to work alongside it: **a “yes, and” with only half the follow-up**.

“We really need to get a handle on this whole AI thing.” ... and then nothing happens.

That's a **yes with no action behind it** — an acknowledgment that never becomes a contribution. Everyone agrees it matters, nobody moves, and “we should” quietly becomes “we never did.”

Hear the pattern? Not one of these is a real “yes, and.” One is a flat no. One builds only half of what it needs to. One acknowledges and then stalls. In every case the missing piece is the same — the **“and”**: the contribution and action that actually propels things forward. Acknowledging that AI is here is the easy part. The “and” is where the leadership lives.

One thing so it doesn't get lost: none of this means every idea about AI deserves a yes. It doesn't. Remember what the “yes” is — **acknowledgment, not agreement**. You can say “yes, I hear that this is real” and still land on no, or not yet, or not like that. The discipline was never about agreeing with everything. It's about refusing to let the conversation stop at acknowledgment — and always carrying it forward with an “and.”

You Don't Have to Choose

FOR YOU

Before you carry this posture into your organization, try turning it inward.

HR is living through two changes at once.

Your own work is changing — AI is already drafting communications, answering questions, screening information, summarizing documents, and reshaping service delivery. You aren't watching the disruption from a safe distance. You are standing inside it.

At the same time, people across your organization are looking to HR to help them navigate their version of the change: what it means for their jobs, what they'll need to learn, what the organization will expect, and whether anyone is thinking about the human consequences.

That is a lot to hold.

Here's the good news: you don't have to choose between protecting yourself and serving the workforce. You don't have to choose between learning the technology and holding onto the human judgment that makes your work matter. You can hold both realities at once:



*Yes, this is hard — **and** I can learn to lead through hard things.*

*Yes, my role is changing — **and** I can help shape what it becomes.*

*Yes, I'm still learning these tools — **and** learning is part of leading them well.*

*Yes, AI can take on more of the work — **and** I can be more intentional about the work that stays with me.*

"Yes, but" leaves you bracing against the change.

"Yes, and" gives you somewhere to stand within it — not because the uncertainty disappears, and not because you suddenly have every answer, but because you stop treating uncertainty as the end of the sentence.

That's the posture HR needs now. You understand the opportunity and the consequences. You can see the operational need and the human one. You can help the organization move forward and make sure the questions no one else is asking make it into the room. That's why your voice belongs wherever the future of work is being decided.

The Conversation You'll Lead

FOR YOUR ORG

Now take that same posture outward — to your people, and to the leaders above you. This is where “yes, and” stops being a mindset and enters into the important conversations you’ll lead this year.

Here’s what makes this the hard part — and the high-leverage one.

At the organizational level, “yes, and” isn’t a private mindset; it’s a language.

In most meetings, “yes, but” is the expected language — the default corporate code, the reflex that signals caution and quietly taps the brakes. “Yes, and” does the opposite. When you answer an idea with “and,” you tell everyone in the room that you’ve thought it through, that you’re building beyond what’s on the table, that your thinking is more encompassing and forward-reaching rather than regressive. That’s the real difference between “and” and “but” — one moves the conversation forward, the other pulls it back.

Make “yes, and” a habit in these rooms and it won’t just change your outcomes — it changes how people see you: as strategic, as a thought leader, as someone who walks in with a plan. And it reshapes your own communication into something more collaborative and generative. “Yes, and” stops being a phrase you use and becomes a philosophy — a way of leading the conversation instead of reacting to it.

It starts with how you talk to your people. When you tell them what’s changing, let every honest acknowledgment carry an “and”:

*Yes, AI will change some of the work people do — **and** we’ll be honest about what’s changing as we understand it.*

*Yes, people are worried about their jobs — **and** we’ll make room for their questions instead of treating concern as resistance.*

*Yes, employees will need new skills — **and** we’ll give them practical ways to build them.*

*Yes, AI can make us faster — **and** speed won’t replace judgment, accountability, or care.*

*Yes, some uses of AI create real risk — **and** we’ll put clear guardrails around how it’s used.*

Notice what the “and” does in each one: it doesn’t shut the hard part down — it turns it into a plan people can actually follow.

The Whole Week, in Two Words

FOR YOUR ORG

You spent this week building the knowledge for exactly these conversations. Put it together and it sounds like this —

Monday · The HR Tool Stack

*Yes, there are more AI tools than anyone can track — **and** you can choose by the work, not the hype.*

Tuesday · When AI Doesn't Do What You Want

*Yes, AI can be confidently wrong — **and** you can ground it, bound it, and check it.*

Wednesday · Compliance & Governance

*Yes, AI introduces real risk — **and** good guardrails let people move with greater confidence.*

Thursday · What's Yours to Carry

*Yes, tasks are moving from people to AI — **and** you can protect the judgment, creativity, and connection that need to stay human.*

That's what "yes, and" looks like in practice. Not optimism for optimism's sake — the decision to meet what's happening with honesty, judgment, and a willingness to build.

The "and" doesn't erase the hard part.
It turns the hard part into a responsibility.



A NOTE FROM AI GURU LAUREN PATEL

Here's a "yes, and" outcome I didn't see coming. As I've helped organizations bring AI into their operations — which often meant training their people to use it well — the thing that keeps surprising me isn't the productivity. It's the collaboration. People who don't normally connect end up in the same conversation. Departments finally learn what other departments do. You invest in the tools **and** you develop your people — and the tools start pulling everyone toward "yes, and" before they have a name for it. Call it a two-for-one: the AI you rolled out becomes the reason your people work together better!

Keep Going

YOUR MOVE TODAY — CATCH ONE “BUT”

Sometime today, catch one “but.” In a meeting: *“We want people to experiment with AI, but we’re worried about the risk.”* With an employee: *“I understand why you’re concerned, but this is where we’re going.”* Or the story you tell yourself: *“I know I need to learn this, but I don’t have time.”*

Don’t just swap a word — ask what responsibility belongs after the “and.” **...and we need to show them where the boundaries are. ...and I want to be honest about what we know, what we don’t, and how we’ll support you. ...and I can choose one small thing to practice today.**

Catch one. Rebuild it. See what becomes possible when the sentence stays open.

KEEP GOING — WHERE THIS GOES NEXT

★ **Prompt Camp ’26 — there’s still time.** Prompt Camp runs again virtually **Tuesday, July 28** — a hands-on session where you build a prompt playbook for your actual HR role. This week was the mindset; Camp is where you build the muscle. [Register for Tuesday →](#)

Keep building with AAIM’s AI classes. AI fluency comes from practice. AAIM’s hands-on courses help HR and business teams move from getting started to applying AI inside real work. [See the AI class lineup →](#)

Missed a day this week? The complete week is still here! It’s free, open to everyone, made to be shared. [Back to the week →](#)



A NOTE FROM LAUREN

If no one else has said it this week: you’re doing a really good job!

There’s no finish line where you suddenly know everything about AI — the technology will keep changing, and the questions will change with it. What matters is that you stay in the conversation: keep learning, ask better questions, protect what needs protecting, and help your people rise to meet what comes next. We won’t protect people by pretending AI away, and we won’t chase progress by treating people as an afterthought. Yes to the opportunity. Yes to our people. And we build what comes next — together.

Thank you for spending your week with us. Now go turn a “but” into an “and!”

— Lauren Patel