Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose and Partners Lead Cross-Sector Collaboration Empowering Companies to Build AI Ready Workforce

NEW YORK, September 9, 2025 – As the use of artificial intelligence (AI) grows and continues to reshape the workplace, companies are expressing optimism about building inclusive, AI-ready workforces. However, despite $30–40 billion in enterprise investment, a recent MIT study found 95% of corporate AI pilots deliver zero measurable business impact, meaning no discernible financial savings or uplift in profits. This is because the people who use the AI tools—the employees—are often not brought in during the development and implementation.

Which is why Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose (CECP), Provoc, and Partnership on AI (PAI), with support from the Ford Foundation, launched a two-year initiative to integrate employee voices when designing and developing large language models to ensure efficiency, productivity, and growth. During the first year, senior corporate responsibility and sustainability leaders who were part of the Responsible AI Community of Practice participated in learning sessions, provided feedback, and integrated changes to their companies. For example, a major tech firm turned the listening sessions into five new employee training programs, and a manufacturing leader created a company-wide AI baseline assessment.

"The value of this Responsible AI Community of Practice was the ability to speak with and learn from our peers and their experiences," said Ciara McMenamin, Assistant General Counsel, EXL. "Working with CECP, Provoc, and Partnership on AI ensured that we had an external sounding board and, in many instances, validation for the work we have done around our AI Governance framework. The one surprising output for us was that this was more than a learning opportunity, it was an additional change management tool to leverage in how we engage our employees on Responsible AI development."

Listening to employee concerns is not just a moral imperative—it's a strategic one. Employees know where the inefficiencies lie and where infusing AI will have the most significant impact in their outputs and the company's productivity. And recent data underscores this urgency. A Workday study found that two out of three employees feel unheard at work. These findings highlight the critical need for corporate leaders to demonstrate authenticity and transparency in their efforts to create best-in-class workplaces, or further risk disengagement and increased attrition, at great cost to the company.

Based on the Listen, Act, Be Accountable framework developed by Provoc and the Guidelines for AI and Shared Prosperity developed by PAI, CECP is releasing a new diagnostic tool that will enable organizations to assess how they are incorporating employee voice while adopting AI and digital innovations. This tool will help companies take point-in-time snapshots of listening performance and track progress year-over-year and improve their bottom line.

"Innovation should be an antidote for inequality, not an accelerant. We believe all workers should have a say in the technologies, policies and economic systems that impact their lives. This work cannot be done by one organization or company. We need collective action, evidence-based frameworks and case studies, as well as business leaders who are willing to lead the way with authentic action," said Ritse Erumi, Program Officer, Ford Foundation's Future of Work(ers) program.

The scorecard includes five main areas for companies to score themselves on: employee inclusion, employee safety, feedback design and communication, authenticity and accountability, and transparency and operationalization.

"AI adoption is not just a technological shift—it's an opportunity for us to have agency and bring humanity into the process," said Nandika Madgavkar, Chief Growth Officer and Principal Lead, CECP. "Companies that prioritize transparency and employee engagement will be the ones that thrive. This community of practice and tools like the scorecard gives leaders a practical way to ensure their workforce feels heard, valued, and prepared for the future."

By aligning innovation with inclusion and listening, companies can build trust, retain top talent, and maintain a competitive edge in an increasingly AI-driven world. CECP will be inviting a small group of senior corporate responsibility and sustainability leaders to the second year of the Responsible AI Community of Practice to learn how to use the framework and tool in the spring. Please reach out for more information at info@cecp.co.

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More than 200 of the world's leading companies seek to improve their return on purpose through access to CECP's solutions in insights and benchmarking. With our companies, we harness the power of purpose for business, stakeholders, and society.

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