

Transcription - Jim Stevenson Part 3

Welcome back, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn, and this is Inside Exec.

We're up to Part 3 of our discussion, our conversation, with Jim Stevenson, and this week we actually move on to question 2 of the questions that we sent. We're going to talk about AI and about ethics in organizations.

We've talked for just over half an hour and we're up to question 2! Doing really well. The next couple of questions are more about AI because we do have the listening group that are quite interested in introducing it and how they do it and what risks there are in terms of that. The question we sent you is about ethics, where do the leaders stand if they feel AI is ethically challenging for their organization?

Yeah, no, I fundamentally believe it's not ethically challenging for an organization. I think it's ethically challenging for society. (Right.) I've actually written a couple of articles on this, in fact I think there's a trilogy of articles on this. One of the challenges I have with all AI is that we are now getting used to using it or certain people, it's not obviously everyone, but we're getting used to using it and because of that we're now just trusting it. But we know absolutely guaranteed, it still hallucinates, it still lies, it still tells us the wrong information sometimes. It tries to be helpful and it makes things up because it's trying to be helpful, which is a lovely character in a human being, but I'm not sure I want it in my AI.

But the problem I have with all the AI at the moment, it's not all AI, and most AI that you will use so ChatGPT, Claude those ones, is we do not know how they've been trained. Because you don't know how they've been trained, what you end up with is an issue running about trust and transparency. It can have biases in it, in fact it absolutely has biases in it. I can live with bias because we all have bias, but I can only live with bias if I have transparency about those biases. So in news organizations, I'm really, really bad at identifying left politics and right politics in news organizations. The only newspaper that I actually pay a subscription for is the Financial Times because the bias is very clear. They don't care whether you're left or right wing, they're just clear how they make money, where the opportunity lies and that's something I can understand because I've got transparency in that. I think with AI that lack of transparency is a big, big issue. I think ultimately though, it will start to change and I think it's starting to change now with Deep Seek, which is open source. I don't know enough about Deep Seek to go in and understand the code behind it and how it's bias interacts. But I think as Deep Seek and other models become more open source, we're going to get to is what's called sovereign cloud or sovereign AI, which is a way of ring fencing the AI so that actually all of the documents inside my organization, my AI can have access to and can learn and understand. It can also have the core model so it's learned enough from the outside world but then I can actually start to influence the bias by the documents I'm sharing with it inside my own little world. And at that point, I think organizations will be able to trust it more and be able to have confidence in it more.

Ultimately, ethics isn't a technology issue. Ethics is a human issue, is a leadership issue. So I think that the challenge for leaders in ethics around AI, is the framework that they want the reality to work in and they need to be very clear. I don't think leaders in organizations are very good at creating frameworks. We all have our corporate values on a wall somewhere, but the

reality is we don't put anything in place to enforce them, to make them work, to encourage people. And the cultural piece is always been, at least in my experience in the US and the UK, predominantly Europe as well, it's always something that's kind of outsourced to the HR and it's never quite landed properly. Everyone can just say it is a word on a wall. So for me, it's getting that framework around about how you want your AI to work, what you want it to do, when you want a human being to intersect and actually do something.

We know in healthcare, I'm a chairman of a healthcare company, we know that AI is better, significantly better at diagnosing problems than a human doctor is, but no patient wants to get the information from an AI. So having AI support you, I can currently call it augmented AI because what you want is your AI to augment a human being and make the human being better. And then you have a point that will change, you know, just become one thing.

So for me that ethical issue is leadership. It's about understanding where the transparency is within your organization, within your AI itself. Just because you can do something doesn't mean you should. I don't think that's the right way to go so that augmented AI comes into play.

And then the other aspect of all of this is that it's almost like ethics is viewed as a hurdle. How do I need to get the tick in the box to be an ethical company? And it's no, ethics is who you are. It's a long term strategy, it's the core of what you believe, probably going to turn half your listeners off now. But DEI has a really bad name, especially in the US. There's a number of organizations in the US that are unwinding all the DEI programs because it's got a bad reputation. It's anti this, it's anti that, but the reality is that's just a label. I don't know any organization that does not value or has not benefited from understanding its customers, communities operates in and its employees better. And if you think about it in that kind of terms, it's an issue that everyone benefits from in a long term. I think AI is in a similar boat. I think everyone is thinking about it as, it's going to take away my job, it's going to take away this. I don't think it has to. I think it can augment us. I think jobs will change. Some of them will go away. Some of them will, well, new ones will arrive. But it's not ticking the box that you need to do. It's a core of your organization to go forward.

When you were talking about the medical side of things, what occurs to me, I do floral design competition wise as part of what I do outside of these podcasts. In my business that's associated with that, I've introduced an AI judge so that people can do a design and they can upload the image, it gets fed to the AI who gives an analysis based on the principles and elements of design, which is how we should be judged by a human judge. The uptake of it has been quite slow and not because people don't want the feedback, but because, I think, a lot of it is because it's going to give far more detailed feedback. The human judge, and we still have human judges who review what comes out, but the human judge will pat them on the head and say, "Yeah, it's a nice design. You could have done these things." Whereas AI just says, "Well, the line wasn't right, or the colors don't match" or those sorts of things. It's just been interesting. In that sense, because it's a creative field, and the judging has always been an element of human like/dislike in it.

We're looking at some industries where AI is going to be better for them than the human interaction. But to your example of floral design, I think if you've got a very rigid set of criteria, then great. But if I think about who's the better painter Picasso or Monet, they're incredibly

different. They're both amazing painters in their own right, and some people will love one and not the other in vice versa. So that subjectivity is always there, whereas AI tends not to have subjectivity. It falls in rows and it gives you a very clear and sometimes brutally honest feedback that allows it to do things. I think there are fields that AI will excel in. Will AI be able to become creative? I don't know that it will become creative anytime soon. I think in the same way as a human being does though, our creativity, at least in my mind, and I'm not a psychologist or whatever I need to be for this, but our creativity comes from all of our lived experience. If I put A next to Y next to H, then I mesh something up of three things I've had experience of before, I create a new thing. I think AI can do that or will be able to do that and that's a level of creativity. I'm not sure that it's going to be good at it for a while, though.

I hear what you're saying and I think about my own experience. I think, well, when I do my own designs, I've learned over 20 years that I can't use roses. They just don't talk to me. They just, it's just a flower, whereas the Australian native stuff, that tells me a story. I can see the art, I can see what I need to do with it. It's just interesting that we still need to have that personal input to that.

Yeah, completely. And that's why I can like augmented individuals. So before you jump in, I'm just curious if you don't like roses, what does your partner do on Valentine's Day? It's only four days away. He's going to be challenged.

He's a technology freak, so generally for any kind of celebration, I will get something that's technology based. I know not to expect flowers. Sometimes chocolates, but never flowers.

My thinking is about, okay, if we use the floral art and Kim with all your depth of experience and all of that, you use AI and you'll get a certain result. I know nothing about that world. I'll go and use AI and I get something. What worries me is, yes, I'll get something, but where is that missing experience and the personal input and what you learned over the years? You know what I mean? At the end of the day, if anybody can use AI to do anything, wouldn't it end up being the same or am I off the track?

No, I think, I think ultimately you're kind of right, but I think it's like most things. I think once we iterate enough, everything becomes similar because we've found the ideal of the optimal things. So if you look at your mobile phone, it's an iPhone or an Android, very much that all look the same because you know the design that works best. We've optimized it. We've had them for 20 years. We've optimized all that things. I think we will get there with AI whereby it doesn't really matter what you say to AI, it will give you the best most optimal result back at the moment. There's a big thing that lots of people call prompt engineering and you need to learn how to do prompt engineering, you need to learn all of these things. But I like the fact that the prompt or my ask of AI will be different to your ask of AI and I'll get different results to what you will. You need me and I bring my own flavor to what I do when I'm using AI because I do ask a different question and I ask you to think at different point. If I think I'm asking it something bland, I'll ask like actually ask AI to help me read it better or whatever you want, to tell me what I want to ask you. I should have asked you because I'm stupid and I should have asked something. So there's also different ways of doing that at the moment, but in the same way with phones, I think we will get to the point where AI probably is super intelligent and AI will just kind of step in and say, Jim, you've asked me a stupid question. Here's the question that you should have asked me and therefore here's the

answer. But we're not there. We're not there yet.

Once again, we've got lots of things to think about after this discussion with Jim Stevenson. Join us for part four, the final part of our discussion. For now, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.