

Stop Hiring Humans

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While walking through Silicon Valley, a phrase on buses and bus stops caught my attention: *“Stop hiring humans. The era of AI employees is here.”*

It may sound like just another provocative advertisement. But it is not a signal to dismiss: in the first quarter of 2026, nearly 80% of global venture capital went to AI — and in Silicon Valley, the concentration is even higher. Many companies are redesigning entire organizations around intelligent agents, reducing human layers across full business functions.

In several conversations, one key concept emerged: **headless AI**. In technology, the term describes systems where intelligence operates without a visible interface. But what is truly disruptive is its leap into organizational design. A headless organization operates without traditional middle-management layers, using agents to coordinate operations that once required entire teams. This is not simple automation; it is an entirely new organizational architecture.

The human reaction did not take long. Recently, former Google CEO Eric Schmidt was booed while speaking about AI at the University of Arizona’s graduation ceremony. It was not an isolated case: students reacted similarly at other university ceremonies. A generation suspects that the career ladder is being dismantled just as they are trying to step onto its first rung.

And the fear is understandable. Entry-level jobs — where we learned by observing, making mistakes, and developing judgment — may be among the most exposed. AI is transforming something we once took for granted: the relationship between knowledge and experience. For centuries, knowing required living. Today, that sequence is beginning to break.

Societies do not need productivity alone. They need a new social contract. What happens when the market needs fewer people precisely in the places where people learn and build their futures?

History offers some clues. Just as the Industrial Revolution forced societies to create mass secondary education, AI will require an equivalent response. Some are already acting: China has set a legal precedent against AI-driven dismissals; Singapore has decided to provide AI training and tools to its entire population. These are different responses to the same dilemma: how do we protect and develop the human in the age of AI?

In a world where AI will become increasingly abundant, what will be scarce are societies capable of developing people with judgment, experience, and purpose. The challenge goes far beyond building and adopting ever more powerful algorithms; it is about designing societies intelligent enough to coexist with them.

Are we already acting accordingly — in our organizations, in our countries — or are we still designing the future with the assumptions of the past, even as we debate new laws?