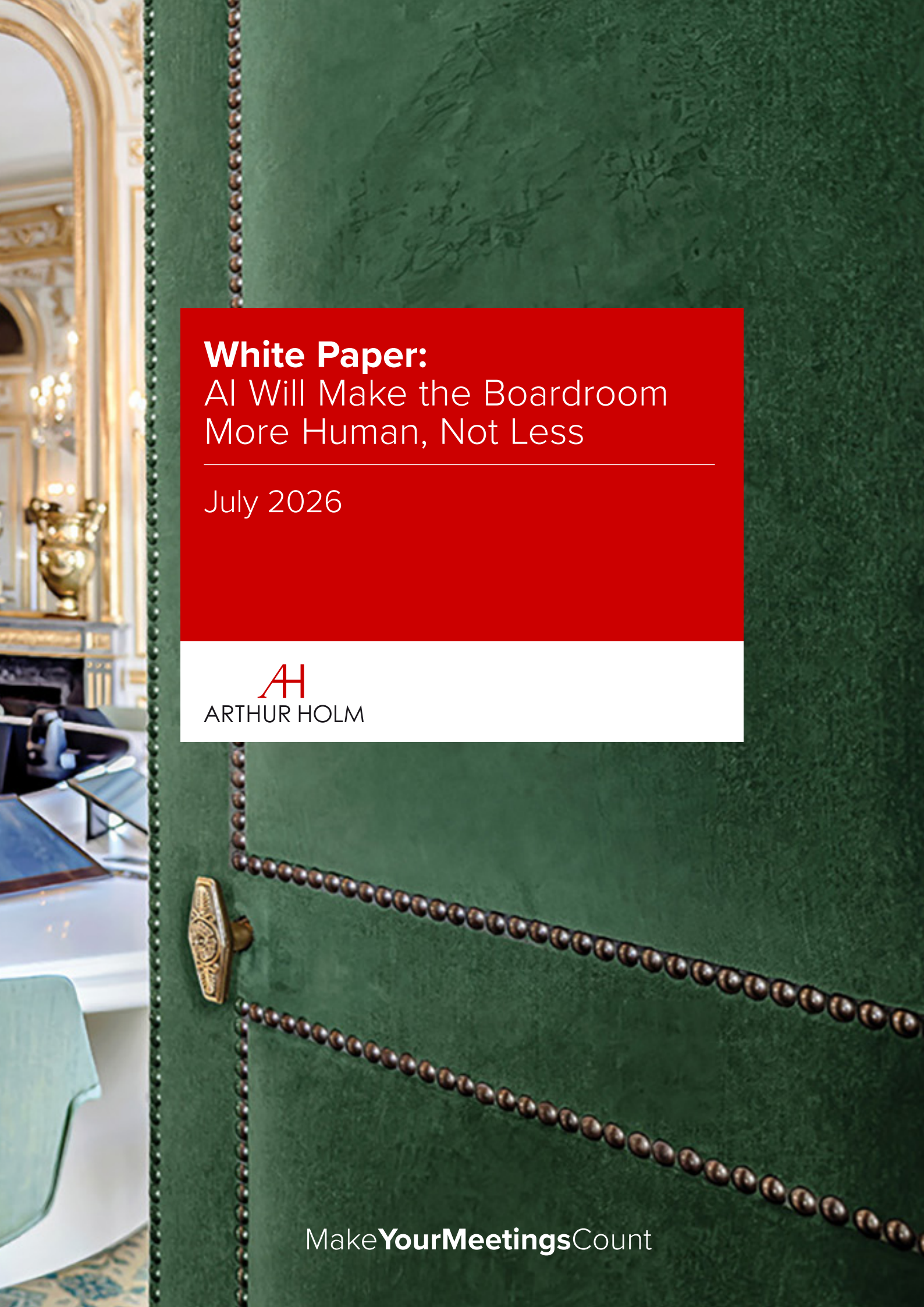




White Paper: AI Will Make the Boardroom More Human, Not Less

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AH
ARTHUR HOLM

Make**YourMeetings**Count



AI Will Make the Boardroom More Human, Not Less

For decades, technological progress has been measured by its ability to reduce human effort. From industrial automation to enterprise software, each innovation promised greater efficiency by minimizing the need for human intervention. Artificial intelligence appears to be the culmination of that trajectory. It writes reports, summarizes meetings, analyzes markets, drafts presentations, and increasingly supports decision-making itself.

Yet there is a paradox emerging at the heart of the AI economy.

The more capable artificial intelligence becomes, the more valuable distinctly human interaction becomes.

This is not simply a philosophical observation. It is the conclusion reached—implicitly or explicitly—by economists, workplace researchers, architects and business strategists who are examining the future of work from different perspectives. While AI is rapidly lowering the cost of producing information, it is simultaneously increasing the strategic importance of interpretation, judgment, trust and collaboration.

The result is reshaping not only jobs, but also the spaces where organizations make their most important decisions.



The New Scarcity Is Human Judgment

Throughout history, technological revolutions have rarely eliminated work altogether. Instead, they have shifted the economic value of different kinds of work.

Economist David Autor argues that AI should be understood less as a replacement for human labor than as a force that redistributes it. As machines assume routine cognitive tasks, the value of complementary human capabilities increases. Judgment, creativity, ethical reasoning and interpersonal communication become more—not less—important because they cannot be automated in the same way (Autor, 2025).

Researchers Isabel Loaiza and Roberto Rigobon at MIT Sloan extend this argument further. Rather than framing AI as a competition between humans and machines, they describe the emerging economy as one built on complementarity. The greatest productivity gains occur when artificial intelligence augments uniquely human strengths instead of attempting to replace them.



Even AI Companies Are Looking Beyond Engineering

Perhaps the strongest evidence that the future of AI is fundamentally human comes from the AI industry itself.

Leading AI laboratories—including OpenAI, Google DeepMind and Anthropic—are increasingly recruiting philosophers alongside computer scientists and engineers. As *The Economist* recently observed, frontier AI companies have realized that building increasingly capable systems is no longer solely an engineering challenge. It is also a philosophical one. Questions about ethics, human values, reasoning, responsibility and even consciousness have become central to the development of advanced AI systems.

This shift is telling.

For decades, philosophy was often viewed as an academic discipline with limited commercial relevance. Today, it is becoming one of the most sought-after forms of expertise in the world's most technologically advanced companies. Engineers can optimize algorithms, but philosophers ask a different set of questions: What should an intelligent system do? How should it balance competing values? What constitutes a good decision?

The implication extends far beyond AI laboratories.

If the companies creating artificial intelligence increasingly rely on disciplines dedicated to human reasoning, ethics and judgment, then organizations adopting AI should draw the same lesson. Competitive advantage will not come from replacing human thinking, but from enriching it.

In other words, the more sophisticated AI becomes, the more indispensable human wisdom becomes.

The organizations that thrive will not necessarily possess the most advanced algorithms. They will be the ones that consistently transform information into collective understanding and coordinated action.

That transformation happens through conversation.

Why Offices Are Becoming Social Infrastructure

For years, organizations struggled to justify the office in an increasingly digital world. Remote work proved that many individual tasks could be completed from virtually anywhere. But the debate has gradually shifted.

The question is no longer Where can employees work?

It is Why should they come together?

Gensler's latest workplace research suggests that the office's primary function is evolving away from individual productivity and toward culture, learning and collaboration. Employees increasingly view the workplace as a destination for interactions that cannot easily occur through digital channels: mentoring, innovation, relationship building and strategic problem-solving.

Steelcase reaches a similar conclusion through its research into human-centered workplaces. Physical environments are most valuable when they strengthen engagement, wellbeing and collaboration—not simply when they maximize occupancy or efficiency.

In other words, organizations are discovering that the office's greatest return on investment may not be measured in square meters, but in the quality of human relationships it enables.

AI Is Changing the Purpose of Meetings

Artificial intelligence is already transforming meetings.

It prepares agendas.

It transcribes conversations.

It summarizes discussions.

It identifies action items.

Soon, much of the administrative work surrounding meetings will disappear almost entirely.

One might assume this would make meetings themselves less important.

The opposite is likely to happen.

As AI absorbs the mechanics of meetings, the conversation itself becomes the primary source of value.

The meeting is no longer about recording information.

It becomes the place where ambiguity is explored, assumptions are challenged, competing perspectives are reconciled and collective confidence is built.

Economists often describe technology as reducing transaction costs. AI is reducing informational transaction costs.

But organizational success increasingly depends on reducing relational transaction costs: building trust, encouraging participation, creating psychological safety and enabling people to think together.

Those outcomes cannot be automated.



The Boardroom as a Strategic Asset

This shift carries significant implications for executive leadership.

Boardrooms have traditionally been designed as functional spaces equipped with increasingly sophisticated technology. Screens became larger. Connectivity became faster. Equipment became more visible.

Yet if the purpose of meetings is changing, perhaps the design philosophy should change as well.

If leadership increasingly depends on attention, dialogue and trust, then technology should support these interactions without competing for them.

Every visible cable, every complicated interface and every technical interruption divert cognitive attention away from people and toward devices.

These moments appear trivial individually.

Collectively, they shape the quality of executive conversations.

Behavioral science has repeatedly demonstrated that attention is a finite resource. The environments in which leaders meet inevitably influence how effectively they communicate, listen and decide. The most successful meeting rooms of the AI era may therefore contain more technology than ever before—but appear to contain less.



Invisible Technology Creates Visible Leadership

This is where workplace design intersects with organizational strategy.

The most effective technologies often become invisible precisely because they remove friction instead of introducing it.

Consider lighting, acoustics or climate control. Their success is measured by how rarely people notice them.

Meeting technology is evolving toward the same principle.

Rather than dominating executive spaces, it increasingly serves as quiet infrastructure that enables natural interaction.

This philosophy has long been central to Arthur Holm's approach to meeting environments.

Its motorized monitors, retractable microphones, retractable speakers, retractable cameras and connections are designed around a simple premise: technology should appear only when needed and disappear when it is not.

At first glance, this may seem like an aesthetic decision. But it reflects a deeper understanding of how human interaction works.



- ▶ **Eye contact encourages trust.**
- ▶ **Open sightlines foster participation.**
- ▶ **Uncluttered spaces reduce cognitive load.**
- ▶ **Conversations become more fluid when participants focus on one another rather than on the technology surrounding them.**

As AI becomes more prevalent, these qualities become increasingly valuable.

Ironically, the smarter our technology becomes, the less visible it should be.

The Competitive Advantage No Algorithm Can Replicate

The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025 identifies analytical thinking, resilience, leadership, collaboration, curiosity and influence among the capabilities expected to grow fastest over the coming decade.

None of these skills exist in isolation.

They emerge through interaction.

Organizations often invest heavily in digital transformation while overlooking the environments where transformation is ultimately translated into decisions.

Yet strategy is still debated across tables.

Trust is still established face to face.

Leadership is still exercised through conversation.

Artificial intelligence will undoubtedly redefine work.

But it is unlikely to redefine what makes organizations successful.

If anything, it clarifies it.

In a world where information is increasingly generated by machines, competitive advantage will belong to organizations that create the conditions for people to think better together.

The boardroom is no longer simply where decisions are made.

It is where the distinctly human capabilities that AI cannot reproduce become an organization's greatest strategic resource.

And that makes the design of those spaces—not just the technology within them—a matter of competitive advantage.

Across the world's most influential boardrooms—from presidential palaces and national parliaments to global financial institutions and corporate headquarters—a common design philosophy is emerging. The most sophisticated meeting spaces are not showcasing technology; they are making it disappear. As AI reshapes knowledge work, these environments are being designed around what technology cannot replace: human judgment, strategic dialogue and trust. Arthur Holm's solutions have become a defining feature of this new generation of executive spaces because they remove friction from the conversation, allowing people—not devices—to remain at the center of decision-making.

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