

LIFELONG LEARNING

Staying relevant in the age of AI

ZARIF FAIAZ

The rise of AI isn't a distant phenomenon confined to Silicon Valley boardrooms; it's here, woven into the fabric of Bangladesh's economy. Jobs once considered secure are evolving—or disappearing—while new roles, unimaginable a decade ago, are emerging at breakneck speed. In this shifting landscape, the question isn't just how AI will change the job market, but how we, as individuals, will adapt. The answer lies in embracing a mindset that is as dynamic as the technology itself: lifelong learning. This is not just a buzzword; it's the key to survival and success in a world where staying still means falling behind.

Artificial intelligence has become both a catalyst for progress and a source of disruption in the global job market. On one hand, it automates routine tasks, enhancing productivity and efficiency across industries. On the other, it threatens traditional roles, particularly those that rely heavily on repetitive tasks. A study by the International Monetary Fund predicts that AI will affect four in ten jobs globally, with advanced economies feeling the brunt of this transformation. However, AI is not merely a force of disruption; it also

underscores the urgent need for workers to adapt through continuous learning and skill development.

In this context, lifelong learning emerges as not just a personal choice but an economic necessity. It is the process of continuously acquiring new knowledge and skills throughout one's life to remain relevant in an ever-changing job market. Unlike traditional education, which often ends with a degree, lifelong learning is an ongoing commitment to personal and professional growth. It enables individuals to adapt to technological shifts, meet evolving job requirements, and seize new opportunities created by AI and other innovations.

The journey of lifelong learning begins with embracing continuous education. This doesn't necessarily mean enrolling in formal degree programs, although that remains an option. Online platforms like Coursera, edX, and Udemy have democratised education, offering courses in AI, data science, and other emerging fields. These platforms provide flexible learning opportunities, allowing individuals to acquire new skills at their own pace, regardless of geographical location or financial constraints. In Bangladesh, initiatives like government-supported digital learning platforms are helping bridge the gap, bringing high-quality education to urban and

by leveraging AI itself as a learning tool. AI-powered educational technologies can personalise learning experiences, adapting to the unique needs and preferences of each learner. These tools identify knowledge gaps, recommend tailored resources, and provide real-time feedback, making learning more efficient and engaging. In Bangladesh, the adoption of such technologies in schools and training centers is gradually transforming traditional education models, fostering a culture of continuous learning from an early age.

Networking also plays a vital role in lifelong learning. Engaging with professional communities, attending industry conferences, and participating in online forums provide valuable opportunities for knowledge exchange. In Bangladesh, the growing presence of tech hubs, co-working spaces, and professional associations creates vibrant ecosystems where individuals can collaborate, share insights, and stay informed about industry trends. These networks often serve as incubators for innovation and can lead to mentorship opportunities, partnerships, and career advancement.

Interdisciplinary knowledge is another cornerstone of lifelong learning. The convergence of AI with various sectors—such as healthcare, finance, agriculture, and education—has created new fields of study and career paths. For instance, understanding how AI can optimise agricultural practices in Bangladesh can lead to breakthroughs in food security and sustainability. Similarly, combining expertise in finance with knowledge of AI-driven analytics opens doors to roles in fintech, a rapidly growing industry in the country.

While the responsibility of lifelong learning largely falls on individuals, organisations and governments also play crucial roles in fostering a culture of continuous development. Companies must invest in employee training and development programs, recognising that a skilled workforce is essential for maintaining a competitive edge. This includes offering workshops, funding certifications, and creating learning-friendly environments that encourage curiosity and experimentation.

Government initiatives are equally important. Policies that promote education reform, support vocational training, and facilitate public-private partnerships can create an ecosystem where lifelong learning thrives. In Bangladesh, programs like the a2i initiative aim to leverage digital technologies to enhance education and workforce readiness, ensuring that the population is equipped to meet the demands of a rapidly changing job market.

Despite these efforts, several challenges persist. Access to quality education remains uneven, particularly in rural areas where infrastructure and resources are limited. Economic barriers also hinder many from pursuing further education, as financial constraints often force individuals to prioritise immediate income over long-term skill development. Moreover, there is a need to raise awareness about the importance of lifelong learning, as traditional mindsets may view education as a phase rather than a continuous process.

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach. Expanding internet connectivity, providing financial support for education, and creating community learning centers can help bridge the gap. Public awareness campaigns highlighting success stories of individuals who have benefited from lifelong learning can inspire others to follow suit.

Lifelong learning is not just a strategy for individual career growth; it is a national imperative for economic resilience and social progress. In an age where the only constant is change, the ability to learn, unlearn, and relearn will define the future—not just for individuals, but for the entire nation. The future belongs to those who are willing to adapt, and in the age of AI, that adaptation begins with a simple yet powerful commitment: to never stop learning.



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

creates new opportunities. The World Economic Forum anticipates that while AI may displace certain roles, it will simultaneously generate around 97 million new jobs by 2025, especially in areas like data analysis, machine learning, and digital marketing.

In Bangladesh, the impact of AI is slowly becoming apparent. The ready-made garments (RMG) sector, which accounts for nearly 80% of the country's export revenue, is experiencing a technological shift. AI-driven automation is enhancing efficiency in supply chain management, forecasting demand, and optimising inventory control. This transformation reduces costs and waste, allowing Bangladeshi manufacturers to remain competitive in the global market. Moreover, AI is impacting customer experiences through personalised fashion design and predictive analytics, catering to consumer preferences with unprecedented accuracy.

Yet, the flip side of this technological advancement is equally significant. The integration of AI threatens jobs, particularly among low-skilled workers who are vulnerable to automation. A study conducted by the Access to Information (a2i) Program in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) suggests that up to 60% of jobs in Bangladesh's apparel sector could be automated by 2041. This potential displacement

rural learners alike.

Developing technical skills is critical in an AI-driven economy. Proficiency in programming languages such as Python, an understanding of machine learning algorithms, and data analysis capabilities are highly sought after in the job market. Recognising this demand, educational institutions in Bangladesh are expanding their curricula to include courses on AI, robotics, and advanced data analytics. These programs aim to equip students with the skills needed to thrive in technology-centric roles, preparing them for careers that didn't exist just a few years ago.

However, technical expertise alone isn't enough. As machines become increasingly capable, the human qualities they can't replicate—creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and adaptability—are gaining prominence. These soft skills are essential for navigating complex work environments, fostering innovation, and leading diverse teams. They complement technical knowledge, enabling individuals to apply their skills effectively in real-world scenarios. For example, while an algorithm can analyse vast datasets, it takes human insight to interpret the results in meaningful ways and make strategic decisions based on that analysis.

The process of lifelong learning is further enriched

Nokia CEO Lundmark to be replaced by Intel AI chief Hotard



AFP

Finnish telecommunications equipment giant Nokia announced on Monday that chief executive Pekka Lundmark would step down and be replaced by Justin Hotard, the head of AI and data centres at US chip-maker Intel.

Lundmark, who has served as Nokia's CEO since 2020, will leave his position on March 31, the company said in a statement.

"I want to move on from executive roles to work in a different capacity, such as a board professional", said Lundmark, who has a career of more than 20 years of leading listed companies.

Justin Hotard currently serves as the executive vice president of Intel and as the general manager of the company's artificial intelligence and data centre group, according to Intel's website.

Hotard has previously "held several leadership roles at large technology companies" for more than 25 years, such as Hewlett Packard and NCR Corporation, Nokia said.

He will take over as Nokia CEO on April 1.

How to identify and brand your most marketable trait

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

Let's be real: the job market is crowded. Everyone's got a degree, a resume, and a LinkedIn profile. So, how do you stand out? The secret isn't just about having skills—it's about knowing which one is your 'superpower' and making sure everyone else knows it too.

Think of it like this: your standout trait is your personal brand's signature move. It's the thing people remember you for, whether it's your knack for solving problems, your ability to connect with people, or your expertise in a specific area. And once you've nailed it, you can weave it into everything—your resume, your LinkedIn profile, even how you introduce yourself at networking events.

Step 1: Figure out what makes you shine

The first step is all about self-reflection. Start by asking yourself: What do I consistently get praised for? Maybe it's your creativity, your leadership skills, or your ability to stay calm under pressure. If you're not sure, ask the people who know you best—your colleagues, friends, or mentors. Sometimes, others see our strengths more clearly than we do.

A 2023 Forbes article on marketable skills highlights the importance of looking at your past wins to spot patterns. What strengths kept showing up in those moments? Similarly, a 2023

article on career platform Indeed states the importance of understanding how your skills translate into the real world. In other words, it's not just about what you're good at—it's about how that skill makes you an asset.

Step 2: Zero in on your standout trait

Once you've got a list of your strengths,

your talent for building relationships, or your expertise in a niche area. Whatever it is, this is your secret sauce—the thing that makes you, you.

Step 3: Turn it into your personal brand

Now that you know your standout trait, it's time to use it for your own good. Start



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

it's time to narrow it down. What's the one thing that truly sets you apart? According to a Harvard Business Review article on self-awareness, combining self-reflection with feedback from others can help you pinpoint that golden trait. Maybe you can think outside the box,

by crafting an elevator pitch that sums up your unique value in a few sentences. For example: "I'm a project manager who specialises in turning chaotic workflows into streamlined processes, saving teams time and money." LinkedIn's official blogpost on

self-branding suggests weaving this narrative into every piece of professional communication. Your resume, cover letters, LinkedIn headline, and even your social media posts should all reinforce the same message. Consistency is key—when people see the same story everywhere, it sticks.

Step 4: Live your brand

Branding isn't just about what you say—it's about what you do. If your standout trait is your leadership skills, look for opportunities to lead projects or mentor others. If it's your creativity, share your ideas and solutions openly. And don't forget to keep learning and growing. The more you develop your skills, the stronger your brand becomes.

Why this matters

When you know what makes you exceptional and you communicate it clearly, you're not just another candidate—you're a memorable, compelling professional. You become the person people think of when they need someone with your specific skills. And that's how opportunities start coming your way.

So, take some time to reflect, gather feedback, and define your standout trait. Then, own it. Share it. Live it. Because when you know what makes you unique, you're not just building a career—you're building a brand that stands out in every room you walk into.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

BRAC

University

Assistant Manager,
Office of the Registrar

Deadline: February 22

Eligibility:

🔗 Bachelor's degree in Information Systems, Computer Science, Business Administration, or a related field from a reputed university with excellent academic credentials.

Minimum experience: 3 years



CARE

Bangladesh

Program Associate
- Knowledge
Management

Deadline: February 19

Eligibility:

🔗 Bachelor's degree in Disaster Management, Geography, Social Science, or a related field from a reputed university.

Minimum experience: 1-2 years



Embassy of
Denmark

Head of
Communications and
Political Officer

Deadline: February 24

Eligibility:

🔗 University degree in political science, law, journalism, or related fields with prior experience in communications, policy analysis, international development etc.

Minimum experience: 5 years



British High
Commission

Education Adviser

Deadline: February 17

Eligibility:

🔗 Demonstrable track record of delivering education outcomes at an expert level through strong capability in education technical competencies.

Minimum experience: 7 years



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perfection in the work.”

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