

How to futureproof your IT leadership career

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Technology leadership has never carried more influence, or more jeopardy. Artificial intelligence is rewriting job descriptions, regulation is tightening, and value is shifting from projects to enduring products and platforms. To prosper through the next decade, treat your career as a system with three compounding levers: capability, credibility and capital. Capability is the stack of skills you keep current, credibility is the trust you earn through outcomes, and capital is the network and goodwill that multiplies both. Titles will change and toolchains will churn, but these levers compound if you manage them with intent.

FROM DELIVERY TO VALUE
The first shift is philosophical. IT leaders who are judged only by what ships will struggle, while those measured by outcomes that sustain will endure. That means organising around products and platforms rather than functions, and setting goals that speak finance as fluently as they speak engineering. A release that reduces churn, lifts margin or cuts cost to serve is a strategic asset, not just a milestone. It also requires the courage to end work that no longer maps to strategy. Futureproof leaders are remembered as much for what they stop as for what they start, and they make the case in the language of customer impact and cash flow.

BECOMING AI NATIVE
You do not need to be a machine learning researcher to be AI native, but you do need fluency. Treat AI as a management system as well as a technology capability, use it to interrogate briefs, draft strategies, compare suppliers and pressure test scenarios, then coach your teams to do the same. Industrialising AI responsibly is now table stakes. Data provenance, model risk, prompt logging, evaluation and red teaming belong inside your operating model rather than in a slide deck. Upskilling should happen at two levels, a universal baseline across the workforce that emphasises safe use, verification and privacy, and a deeper track for specialists who will own MLOps and model governance. Above all, scale only when the value clears. Pilots

should be quick and disciplined, with clear measures such as cycle time reduction, error rates and customer metrics.

SECURITY AND RESILIENCE AS A SIGNATURE
Boards will forgive a late roadmap sooner than they will forgive an avoidable breach. Designing on the assumption of breach is no longer a posture, it is the default. Identity must be strong, privileges least, verification continuous. Resilience is engineered rather than hoped for, with chaos testing, immutable backups,

infrastructure layers, with wasted resources visible and removable. Data must be treated as a product, with ownership, documentation, lineage and privacy by design. At scale, federated models such as data mesh can keep autonomy and accountability in balance.

LEADING THE PEOPLE STRATEGY
Technology is a talent market as much as a tools market. Teams that combine deep expertise with collaborative breadth move faster and break less. Hiring should privilege learning velocity, systems thinking and influence

upstream in design, not as a costly retrofit. Storytelling is a leadership tool, distills complex trade offs into clear options, leads with the so what, and states a recommendation that a non technical board can act on.

SUSTAINABILITY AS AN ENGINEERING PROBLEM
Sustainability is moving from corporate narrative to operating constraint. Know the carbon intensity of your workloads and suppliers, architect for efficiency, and fold energy and emissions into the same dashboards that executives already trust. When

before you seek them.

A 12-MONTH ACTION STORY
Imagine the year as four chapters rather than a checklist. In the opening months, you reset the operating model to product lines, agree three outcome metrics per product and stand up a pragmatic FinOps rhythm, you also publish version one of your AI guardrails so experimentation begins safely. The second chapter sees you pilot an internal developer platform and run a red team exercise alongside an executive incident drill, turning security from policy into muscle memory, a catalogue for data as the product takes shape. Mid year, momentum shifts to simplification, you decommission legacy estates that no longer earn their keep, embed a sustainability by design standard and rotate top talent through platform and security so skills spread. The final chapter focuses on institutionalising gains, you present outcome improvements to the board, codify playbooks that survive leadership changes, recruit successors for key roles and take on an external advisory or non executive mandate to broaden your vantage point.

WHAT TO STOP AND WHY IT MATTERS
Futureproofing is as much subtraction as addition. When leaders stop owning every decision, product and platform owners step up and speed increases. When organisations stop measuring busyness and start counting outcomes, priorities sharpen and burnout recedes. When teams stop treating vendors as saviours and instead co design, benchmark and plan graceful exits, architectures outlive contracts and sovereignty returns to the enterprise.

THE MINDSET THAT LASTS
In the end, careers compound when learning is systematic, not sporadic. Ring fenced time for hands on exploration, small field experiments with real measures, and a trusted circle of peers who trade playbooks will keep you moving faster than the landscape shifts. The leaders who endure design operating systems that outlast hype cycles and earn trust when it matters most. Build for that, and your career will be built to last.

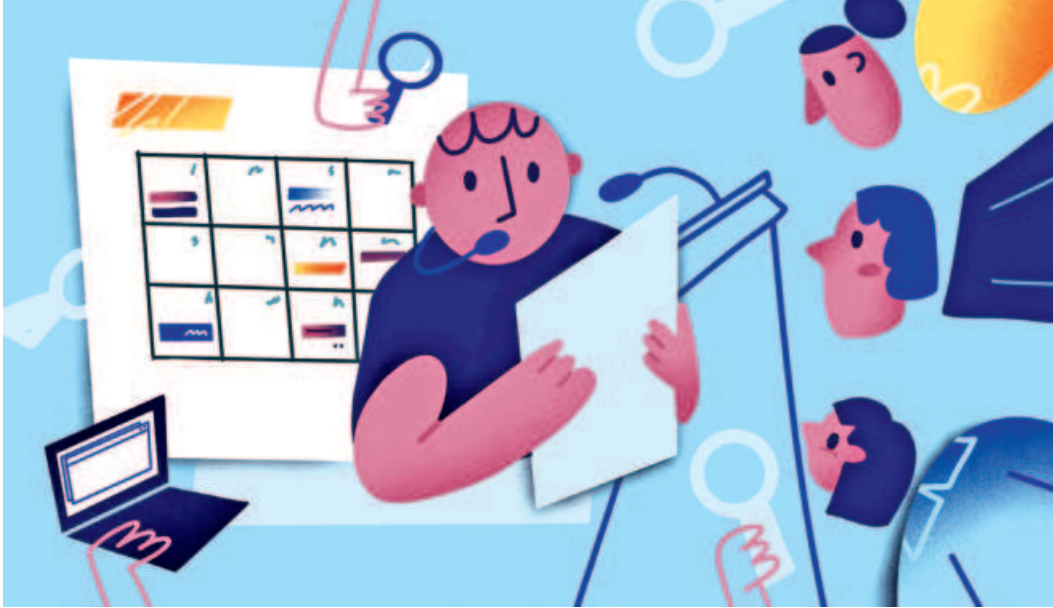


ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

segmentation and rehearsals that include executives who will make real decisions under pressure. The human layer is decisive, rewarding the reporting of near misses, writing runbooks in plain language and rehearsing cross functional incident roles. Leaders who make security cultural, not clerical, will carry their credibility into any market.

MASTERING THE PLATFORM ECONOMY
Winners do not only build applications, they build platforms that others can build on. Internal developer platforms, golden paths and strong APIs convert toil into paved roads and allow scarce talent to focus on higher order problems. Cloud spend requires the same commercial discipline as any other input cost. Finance should be tied to value streams and product lines, not to

over narrow tool familiarity, because the stack will change faster than your headcount. Mobility between product, platform and security roles helps capability compounds and prevents career cul de sacs. Incentives should reward customer impact and reliability. Few people are truly motivated by lines of code, most are motivated by meaningful outcomes and the chance to grow.

FLUENCY BEYOND THE IT SILO
The futureproof leader is bilingual, as comfortable with finance, risk and regulation as with code. Investment cases are defended in terms of free cash flow, payback, risk reduction and lifetime value, not merely on architectural elegance. Regulatory readiness on privacy, AI and sector rules belongs

efficiency is engineered, right sizing, scheduling compute, refactoring hot paths, choosing appropriate models, it is both greener and cheaper, which makes it durable in hard budget cycles.

BUILDING A BOARD READY PROFILE
The next jump for many IT leaders will cross into the C suite or the boardroom. Owning a profit and loss line, even a small one, proves commercial competence. Participation in governance forums, risk committees, data ethics boards and investment councils, widens perspective and influence. Publishing lessons from platform migrations, AI guardrails or incident management, with sensitive details removed, makes your thinking legible to the market and attracts opportunities

AI writes 90% of company code at Anthropic, says CEO

NEXT STEP DESK

Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei has recently revealed that artificial intelligence models now generate approximately 90% of the code used within his company.

Speaking at the Dreamforce conference in San Francisco, Amodei confirmed his prediction from earlier this year that most coding would be handled by AI within six

months had become reality at Anthropic and several partner companies.

When questioned about whether this reduced the need for human engineers, Amodei suggested the opposite might be true. "If Claude is writing 90% of the code, what that means, usually, is you need just as many software engineers. You might need more," he explained.

ANTHROPIC

He described the shift as a "rebalancing" that allows engineers to focus on the most challenging aspects of programming while supervising AI systems.

The trend appears to be spreading across the industry. According to a report by TechCrunch, Y Combinator CEO Garry Tan previously noted that about a quarter of current startups in the accelerator's

program use AI to write 95% or more of their code.

However, data suggests this transformation may be affecting employment patterns, with one study showing a nearly 20% decline in positions for developers aged 22-25 since ChatGPT's launch, while experienced engineers remain in demand.

Slack adds new developer tools for AI agents

NEXT STEP DESK

Slack has introduced new developer tools designed to let AI applications securely access and use data from workplace conversations. The platform now includes a real-time search API and a Model Context Protocol server that allow AI systems to retrieve specific messages and files while maintaining existing security permissions, without requiring bulk data downloads.

These tools are intended to enable AI agents to move beyond generic responses by providing context-aware information and automating tasks directly within workflows. According to Slack, this can help solve the problem of app fragmentation, where employees typically switch between over 1,000 different enterprise applications. The new real-time search API and protocol server are currently in closed beta, with general availability expected in early 2026.



Google Sheets can now handle complex AI commands

NEXT STEP DESK

Google has upgraded its Gemini AI in Sheets to now handle complex, multi-step tasks from a single instruction. According to an official blog post by Google regarding the upgraded feature, users no longer need to give several separate commands to complete a complicated job.

For example, a user can now ask Gemini to "delete all the old archived rows, add a new 'Team' column with a dropdown menu, and then create an 'Updated Due Date' column" - and Gemini will understand and perform all of these actions at once.

This allows for advanced data cleaning and formatting in plain language. Other tasks Gemini can now do in one go include building a project tracker with formulas and dropdowns, or cleaning a sales report by removing old data and highlighting top performers, says Google.

The tool has also been given more abilities, like creating pivot tables, adding filters, and filling cells with formulas, adds Google in the post. The feature is available for Google Workspace business and enterprise customers, as well as for educational users with the Google AI Pro add-on. Users can find Gemini in the side panel of Google Sheets.



“The best time for planning a book is while you’re doing the dishes.”

- AGATHA CHRISTIE