



THE AI EXECUTIVE EDGE

*AI Clarity for Leaders Who Have
Better Things to Do*

RICHARD ERSCHIK

Former CEO. Plain English. No Tech Jargon.

*For my father,
who never fully understood what I did
but never once stood in my way.*

*For my mother,
who left us when I was eighteen
and whose presence I have felt in every room I've ever
walked into.*

*For Karin and Tim,
who grew up shaped by my hard work
before they were old enough to know it.*

*For Laurie,
the love of my life,
who arrived in the later chapters,
encouraged everything I built,
and made it complete.*

*For my fellow veterans,
who answered when called
and carried the discipline of service
into everything that came after.*

*And for every person I have ever learned from
and every person I have ever taught —
thank you for your faith,
your patience,
and your confidence in my passion.*

— R.E.

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INTRODUCTION

The Nod

Why everyone's pretending and nobody's talking



INTRODUCTION

The Nod

Why Everyone's Pretending and Nobody's Talking

Let me paint you a picture. You're in a room with other executives. Someone brings up AI. Maybe it's at a board meeting. Maybe it's a dinner. Maybe it's a golf course conversation between the third and fourth hole.

And everybody nods.

They nod like they know exactly what's being talked about. They use the right words. They say "machine learning" and "large language models" and "disruption" like they've been studying this stuff for years. Someone mentions ChatGPT and three people chime in with something they heard on a podcast. The conversation moves fast, it sounds smart, and nobody stops to ask the obvious question.

"But what does it actually do?"

Nobody asks that. Because nobody wants to be the one person in the room who doesn't get it.

I've seen this pattern everywhere. In boardrooms. In country clubs. At community events here in Southwest Florida where I teach AI workshops to seniors. I see it in the companies I work with in India. I've watched a room full of sharp, accomplished people perform confidence they don't actually have — because the alternative is admitting they're confused, and that feels worse than staying confused.

Here's what I want you to know right now, before you read another page of this book.

You're not behind. You're not slow. You're not too old, too busy, or too set in your ways to understand any of this. You're just one of the millions of smart people who got handed a lot of noise and not much signal. The hype traveled faster than the explanation. The buzz arrived before the basics.

That's not your fault. That's just how this particular wave broke.

My job in this book is simple. I'm going to tell you what AI actually is, what it actually does, and what a leader like you actually needs to do about it — in plain English, with no jargon, and no judgment.

My name is Rich Erschik. I'm 81 years old. I'm a former CEO. I spent 22 years running a company I built from nothing, trained

over 45,000 professionals worldwide, and figured out AI late in life — which, as you're about to see, might be exactly what qualifies me to explain it to you.

Because I was sitting exactly where you're sitting not that long ago. Nodding along. Using the right words. Not really sure what any of it meant.

The difference is I decided to stop nodding and start learning. And then I decided to teach it.

This book is what I wish someone had handed me on day one.

Let's get into it.

CHAPTER ONE

Before the Boardroom

Army. Company. Lessons that last a lifetime.



CHAPTER 1

Before the Boardroom

What the Army Taught Me That Business School Never Could

I wasn't supposed to be a CEO.

Nobody handed me a roadmap. There was no family business waiting, no mentor pulling me up the ladder, no MBA from a school with a fancy name on the diploma. There was just a kid from the northeast who worked every odd job he could find, learned something from each one, and figured out pretty quickly that the real education happened in the doing — not the studying.

And then in 1965, the United States Army drafted me, and my education got serious.

I want to tell you about that — not because it's a war story, and not because I'm looking for credit. I want to tell you because

everything I eventually built in business, and everything I've learned about teaching complex things to regular people, traces directly back to what the Army drilled into me before I was twenty-two years old.

The Army doesn't care who you were before you showed up. Your last name doesn't matter. Neither does your neighborhood, your grades, or what your father did for a living. What matters is whether you can follow a system, execute under pressure, and be counted on when the person next to you needs you to do your job.

That's it. That's the whole curriculum.

Discipline. Systems. Execution. Accountability. No excuses.

Sound familiar? It should. Because those are also the only things that actually matter when you're running a company.

I came out of the Army with something most young men my age didn't have yet — a working understanding of how organizations function. How a clear mission and a defined process can take a group of completely different people, from completely different backgrounds, and turn them into something that works. Something that gets the job done.

I didn't know I was learning leadership. I thought I was just surviving.

But here's the thing about real experience — you don't always recognize it while it's happening. You only see it clearly when you look back. And when I look back at those years, and then at the twenty-two years I spent as a CEO, and then at the decade-plus I've spent teaching, one thread runs through all of it.

I've always been the person who figured out how something worked — and then figured out how to explain it to someone who had no idea.

That's not a talent I was born with. It's a skill I built. And the Army is where I started building it.

Building Something Nobody Else Was Building

In 1986 I founded my company. And like most businesses that actually work, it wasn't born from a brilliant idea I had sitting at a desk. It was born from a problem I watched happen over and over again — a problem that was costing companies serious money, that everyone in the industry knew existed, and that nobody had bothered to fix.

The problem was trade show leads.

Here's how the trade show world worked. A company would spend anywhere from \$50,000 to \$500,000 — sometimes more — to exhibit at a major trade show. They'd build the booth, ship the displays, fly in the sales team, put everyone up in a hotel for four days, and spend every waking hour on that

show floor talking to prospects, scanning badges, collecting business cards, and filling out lead forms.

Then the show ended. Everyone flew home exhausted. The leads sat in a box, or a bag, or a spreadsheet that someone promised to "get to next week."

Next week became next month. Next month became never.

Less than 20% of trade show leads ever got followed up on. More than 80% were simply abandoned. The companies lost. The salespeople lost. The prospects who actually wanted to buy something lost. Everyone was the victim – and nobody was doing anything about it.

I want to be clear about something. It wasn't the sales team's fault. That's the easy conclusion and it's the wrong one. The salespeople came home from four days on their feet, already behind on their regular territories, already buried in emails and calls that piled up while they were gone. The leads weren't being ignored out of laziness. They were being buried under the reality of how business actually operates.

The system was broken. Not the people.

That distinction mattered to me then and it matters to me now. Because the same mistake gets made every time a new technology arrives – including AI. When things aren't working, the instinct is to blame the people. But usually the problem is the process. Fix the process and the people perform.

So that's what I did. I built a complete lead handling process — from the moment a prospect walked into a booth to the moment a salesperson made meaningful contact after the show. A system that didn't rely on willpower or memory or someone getting around to it. A system that made follow-up automatic, accountable, and real.

Over twenty-two years, that process grew into a company that generated ten million dollars in sales — built entirely around solving a problem that everyone in the industry knew existed and nobody had bothered to fix.

Most problems that look like people problems are actually process problems. And most process problems can be solved if someone is willing to look at them clearly and build something better.

That's the CEO's real job. Not to have all the answers. To see the problem clearly. To build — or find — the right solution. And to execute without excuses.

When the Floor Drops Out

COVID didn't just slow the trade show industry down. It shut the lights off.

Overnight, every conference was canceled. Every convention center went dark. The entire ecosystem that my business depended on simply stopped existing. And the companies that survived did what companies do when they're forced to adapt.

They brought everything in-house. They stopped needing someone like me.

I sold my company. I pivoted to teaching. And I found out pretty quickly that the skill transfers completely. Doesn't matter if the subject is trade show lead handling or iPhone basics or artificial intelligence or teaching new Tesla owners how to actually drive the car they just bought — going right to their homes, sitting in their cars with them, walking them through every feature hands-on until they were comfortable.

Same gap. Same instinct. Same solution. Every single time.

I've now trained over 45,000 professionals across multiple countries. I teach AI workshops at community clubhouses here in Southwest Florida — and yes, I'm aware that an 81-year-old teaching seniors how to use ChatGPT is a little funny. But when I walk into a room and say "if you can use Google, you can use this" — and I mean it — something clicks for people that all the tech tutorials in the world never managed to click.

Experience has a way of doing that.

The leaders who figure this out now are not going to look back and think they learned it too early. The ones who wait are going to have a much harder conversation with themselves in about eighteen months.

CHAPTER TWO

What AI Actually Is

Google finds it. ChatGPT creates it.





create

CHAPTER 2

What AI Actually Is

Plain English. No Jargon. No Hype.

I want to start this chapter with the same line I use when I walk into a room full of people who have never touched AI in their lives.

It doesn't matter if it's a clubhouse in Southwest Florida packed with retirees, or a conference room in Mumbai full of business professionals. The reaction is always the same — a little skepticism, a little curiosity, and a lot of quiet anxiety that nobody wants to admit out loud.

So I say this:

"If you can use Google, you can use ChatGPT. It's the same idea. You type a question. You get an answer. The difference is what comes back."

The room always relaxes a little. Because I just took something that felt like a foreign language and connected it to something they already do every day without thinking about it.

The Six Words That Say Everything

I'll give you the shortest explanation you'll ever hear about the difference between Google and AI.

Google finds it. ChatGPT creates it.

Six words. That's the whole difference. When you type something into Google, it searches the web and points you to pages that already exist. When you type something into ChatGPT or Claude, it generates a brand new response just for you — right there, in real time, based on an enormous amount it has already learned.

Google is the world's best filing system. AI is the world's most well-read assistant — one who has absorbed more books, articles, reports, and research than any human being could read in a thousand lifetimes, and is ready to discuss any of it with you right now.

You don't need special commands. You don't need a new language. You just talk to it. Like you'd talk to a person.

The Three Tools You're Going to Hear About

ChatGPT is made by a company called OpenAI. It was the first one most people heard about — launched publicly in late 2022, it became the fastest growing consumer application in history. Conversational AI. You talk to it. It talks back. It can write, summarize, explain, brainstorm, translate, analyze, and a hundred other things.

Claude is made by a company called Anthropic. Same basic idea, different company, with some differences in how it handles complex reasoning and longer documents. I use both, and for business writing and analysis I often reach for Claude first.

Copilot is Microsoft's version, built directly into Microsoft 365. If your company uses Word, Excel, Outlook, or Teams, Copilot is either already there or coming very soon. Same capabilities, woven into the tools your people already use every day.

Three different products. Three different companies. One underlying idea: you talk to it in plain English, and it helps you think, write, analyze, and decide faster than you could on your own.

The Moment It Gets Real

Every time I teach a live workshop I do the same thing at a certain point. I stop talking. I open the screen. I type a question. And we all watch the answer come back together.

Every time, without exception, the energy in the room changes. People lean forward. Someone says "wait, do that again." A person who five minutes ago was convinced this technology wasn't for them is suddenly asking whether it can help them write their newsletter, summarize a report, or prepare talking points for a difficult conversation they've been putting off.

That moment – the moment of first contact – is where everything changes. Not because AI is magic. Because it's useful. Genuinely, immediately, practically useful in ways that are impossible to fully appreciate until you see it work.

What AI Is Not

Killing the fear and the fantasy at the same time



CHAPTER 3

What AI Is Not

Killing the Fear and the Fantasy at the Same Time

Every time I teach an AI workshop, I spend the first few minutes telling them what it can't do. I do it on purpose. Because the fastest way to build real confidence in something new is to be completely honest about its limits upfront.

In every room I've ever walked into I hear the same three misconceptions. Fear and fantasy. Both are wrong. Both are worth addressing directly.

Misconception One: It's Going to Replace All Your Employees Overnight

AI is not going to walk into your building on Monday morning and fire your staff. What it is going to do is change what certain jobs look like. That's real. But there is a massive difference

between "AI will eliminate some tasks" and "AI will replace all your people."

AI doesn't replace good people. It amplifies them. The employee you need to worry about isn't the one AI is going to replace. It's the one who refuses to learn how to use it – while their counterpart at your competitor is getting twice as much done in half the time.

Misconception Two: It Knows Everything and It's Always Right

AI gets things wrong. Sometimes confidently wrong. It can generate a response that sounds completely authoritative and still contain a factual error or something it essentially made up. The technical term is hallucination. I prefer to call it what it is – a mistake. A well-dressed mistake, but a mistake.

Think of AI like a brilliant new hire on their first week. Impressive range. Fast learner. Great with language. But you wouldn't sign off on their report without reading it first. Same rule applies here.

Misconception Three: It Can Run Your Business Without You

The judgment calls? The culture decisions? The moment when you have to look someone in the eye and make a hard call that

affects their livelihood? The instinct that comes from having been in the room when things went wrong?

That's you. That's always going to be you.

AI is a tool. Possibly the most powerful business tool most of us will see in our lifetimes. But a tool still needs someone experienced holding it. And in your organization, that someone is you.

The One Thing Worth Being Concerned About

Your competitors are not waiting. While you're deciding whether to take AI seriously, someone in your industry is already using these tools — producing more content, analyzing more data, responding to customers faster, and making decisions with better information.

The question isn't whether AI is going to matter to your business. It already does. The question is whether you're going to be ahead of that curve or behind it.

CHAPTER FOUR

How I Learned It at 80

Curiosity has no age limit



CHAPTER 4

How I Learned It at 80

And What That Means For You

I learned AI at eighty years old.

Not a surface level familiarity so I could sound informed at dinner parties. I mean I sat down, rolled up my sleeves, and figured out how these tools actually work — well enough to teach them to thousands of people across multiple countries, well enough to build an entire consulting practice around them, well enough to write this book.

At eighty.

You figure it out because the alternative — standing still while the world moves — has never once worked out well for anyone I've ever known.

How It Actually Started

I didn't wake up one morning and decide to become an AI educator. It happened the way most things in my life have happened — I noticed a problem, got curious about the solution, and couldn't leave it alone until I understood it.

I want to be honest about what learning it looked like at first. It wasn't graceful. I asked basic questions. I made mistakes. I got it wrong, adjusted, tried again.

It reminded me of 1983 when I first sat down in front of a PC. I saw it do something and immediately asked — wait, can it do this? It could. So I asked — what about this? And then this. And then this. Each answer led to another question. Each question led to another capability. That's not a learning method. That's just curiosity doing what curiosity does. And it works exactly the same way with AI.

The Tesla in the Driveway

While I was building my AI practice, something else was happening in my garage. I bought a Tesla. You pick up the car, the salesperson goes over everything, you drive home excited — and then you realize you retained about fifteen percent of what they told you and have no idea how half the car works.

So I did what I do. I figured it out. And then I started teaching other new Tesla owners — going directly to their homes, sitting

in their cars with them, walking them through every feature hands-on until they were comfortable.

Trade shows. iPhones. Teslas. AI. Different technologies. Same gap. Same solution. Every single time. The person who can bridge that gap – who can take something complicated and make it accessible – is worth their weight in gold.

What This Means For You Specifically

You are a CEO or senior executive. You have run organizations. You have managed people, navigated crises, made decisions with incomplete information under real pressure.

And you're telling me you can't figure out how to type a question into a chat box?

The leaders who are willing to say "I don't know this yet, and I'm going to learn it" earn more respect than the ones who pretend. Every time. Without exception.

Consider this chapter your permission slip. You don't need to know everything. You don't need to become a technologist. You just need to start.

Where AI Can Help

Real applications. Plain language. No hype.



CHAPTER 5

Where AI Can Help Your Business Right Now

Real Applications. Plain Language. No Hype.

I'm not going to give you a list of a hundred things AI can theoretically do someday. What I'm going to give you is a focused look at the areas where AI is delivering real, practical, measurable value to businesses right now — in ways that a leadership team can understand, evaluate, and act on without hiring a team of engineers or spending a fortune.

Communications and Writing

AI is an extraordinary writing partner. Emails. Proposals. Executive summaries. Press releases. Internal memos. Marketing copy. Presentations. Job descriptions. You type

what you want to say in plain language. AI gives you a professional, well-structured version of it. What used to take forty-five minutes takes ten. Multiply that across your entire organization and the productivity impact is significant.

Research and Summarization

Hand AI a twenty-page report and ask it to give you the five most important points in plain English. Paste in a long email thread and ask it to tell you what decision needs to be made. Ask it to compare two vendors or two strategies and get a clear breakdown in seconds.

The executives who have adopted this habit tell me the same thing. They feel more informed in less time. They walk into meetings better prepared. They ask sharper questions because they actually understood the briefing document.

Customer Communications and Service

Modern AI-powered customer service tools are genuinely helpful. They answer real questions. They route complex issues to the right people. They respond instantly at two in the morning when your office is closed. On the back end, AI helps your team craft better responses and handle complaints with consistent professionalism at a scale that would be impossible to do manually.

Operations and Decision Support

I think of it as the best sounding board I've ever had. It never gets tired. It doesn't have a political agenda in your organization. It doesn't tell you what you want to hear. It just works through the problem with you – honestly, thoroughly, and as fast as you can type.

Training and Onboarding

Training materials that used to take weeks to develop can be drafted in hours. Onboarding documents customized for specific roles. FAQs generated from existing company documentation. For companies that are growing, or dealing with high turnover, or operating in industries where regulations change frequently – a genuinely significant time and cost saver.

A Word About Where to Start

Don't try all five at once. Pick one. Get comfortable with it. See the results. Then expand. Start where the pain is biggest.

One win. Then another. Then another. That's exactly how I learned the PC in 1983 – one discovery leading to the next until I had real, practical, operational knowledge. AI works exactly the same way.

CHAPTER SIX

Where AI Can Hurt You

The honest chapter



CHAPTER 6

Where AI Can Hurt You If You're Not Careful

The Honest Chapter

I am not an AI salesman. I have no financial interest in whether you adopt these tools tomorrow or five years from now. My only interest is in giving you accurate, useful information. And that has to include the places where it can go wrong.

The Confidence Problem: When AI Gets It Wrong

AI can be wrong without sounding wrong. It can produce a response that sounds completely authoritative and still contain a fact that was outdated, a statistic that was misremembered, or something it essentially invented.

The rule is simple and non-negotiable: anything that matters – legal, financial, regulatory, medical, contractual – gets verified through a primary source before you act on it. AI is a starting point, not a final answer, for anything with real consequences.

The Privacy Problem: What You Should Never Type In

Confidential business strategies. Unreleased financial data. Personal employee information. Sensitive client details. Proprietary processes. None of that belongs in a public AI interface. Treat a public AI tool like a public conversation.

The Over-Reliance Problem: When Your Team Stops Thinking

AI should make your people more capable, not less. If you're implementing it in a way that's replacing judgment instead of supporting it, you're building a dependency that will eventually cost you more than it saves.

The Trust Problem: What Happens to Your Team

The way you introduce AI to your organization sends a message. Make sure it's the right one. 'We're doing this to

you' and 'we're doing this with you' produce very different outcomes.

The Legal and Compliance Problem

The legal and regulatory landscape around AI is developing fast and the rules are genuinely still being written. If your organization uses AI in ways that touch customer data, employment decisions, financial recommendations, or compliance-sensitive processes — you need qualified legal review before you scale.

The Bottom Line on Risk

The leaders who understand the risks and manage them intelligently are going to have a significant advantage over the ones who either ignore AI entirely or adopt it carelessly. You now know enough to be neither of those people.

CHAPTER SEVEN

What You Will Learn

60–90 minutes. Light to use.



CHAPTER 7

What You Will Learn When We Work Together

A Preview of What One Session Can Do

Context and capability are two different things. Reading about AI is like reading about golf. You can understand the rules, study the technique, and follow every tournament on television — and still have no idea what it actually feels like to stand on the first tee with a club in your hand.

What I do — what I have done with companies in India, with leadership teams across multiple industries, and with thousands of professionals who came to me knowing nothing — is bridge that gap. Here is exactly what you and your leadership team walk away with after we work together.

1. Prompting that actually works.

You will learn how to talk to AI the way it needs to be talked to. How to give it context. How to tell it who you are, what you need, and what format you want the answer in. How to push back when the first response misses the mark. How to use it as a genuine thinking partner rather than a fancy search engine. This skill alone transforms what you get out of every AI interaction from that point forward.

2. AI applied to your world, not someone else's.

In our session I work directly with your situation. We identify the two or three areas in your specific business where AI can deliver the fastest, most visible improvement. We demonstrate it live – not in theory, not in a slide deck, but right there on the screen with real examples from your industry and your context.

3. A leadership team that's aligned and ready to move.

Everyone leaves with the same baseline understanding, the same language, and the same clarity about where you're headed. No more half the room nodding while the other half quietly wonders what's going on.

4. A clear picture of who to bring in next.

I'll give you honest, specific guidance on what roles make sense for your organization, what those people should actually be able to do, and how to evaluate whether a vendor or consultant is the real deal or just riding the AI wave. You won't be flying blind when it's time to build your team.

What a Session With Me Actually Looks Like

I work with leadership teams in two formats. In person for organizations in Southwest Florida. Fully virtual for everyone else — geography is never a reason not to have this conversation.

A typical executive session runs sixty to ninety minutes. Not a half day. Not a full day. Not a long-term consulting engagement. Just enough time to light the fuse — and let the clarity that follows do the rest.

CEO to CEO. Plain English. No Tech Jargon. That's not just a tagline. It's exactly what happens in the room.

I also recommend that leadership and employee teams be briefed separately. Executives think about strategy and competitive positioning. Employees think about their jobs and their futures. Both conversations matter and both deserve their own space. Many executives bring me back a second time — not for themselves, but for their key people. Having the same voice

deliver both sessions means the whole organization starts from the same foundation with the same language.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Building Something That Lasts

Culture. People. Leadership.



CHAPTER 8

Building Something That Lasts

The Culture, the People, and the Mindset of an AI-Ready Organization

I've been in business long enough to watch a lot of technology waves roll through. The PC. Email. The internet. Mobile. The cloud. Each one arrived with its own wave of hype, its own army of consultants, its own roster of companies that got it right and companies that got it very wrong.

Every single time, the pattern was the same. The technology itself wasn't the hard part. The hard part was the people. The culture. The leadership. AI is no different.

It Starts With Curiosity at the Top

When your people see the CEO asking questions, trying things, and admitting when something surprised them – they give themselves permission to do the same. That permission is the most important thing you can give your organization right now.

Create Safety to Experiment – and Fail

The organizations that build real AI capability create an environment where experimentation is explicitly encouraged – including experiments that don't pan out.

The fastest way to kill your organization's AI capability before it gets started is to create an environment where people are afraid to try something and have it not work perfectly. Expect imperfection. Reward the trying.

Designate Someone to Own It

Shared responsibility is no responsibility. This is true in the Army and it is true in business. If AI is everyone's job, it will be no one's job.

Find that person in your organization. Give them the time, the mandate, and the support to build this capability seriously. Then get out of their way and let them do it.

Train Your People – Actually Train Them

Sending your team a link to a YouTube tutorial is not training. The single biggest factor in whether training sticks isn't the content. It's whether the person being trained believes the tool is actually going to make their life easier. Show people something genuinely useful to them personally and the adoption takes care of itself.

Build a Process, Not Just a Practice

Individual employees using AI on their own is a good start. But it's not a competitive advantage. A competitive advantage is when AI becomes embedded in how your organization operates – in your processes, your workflows, your standard operating procedures. The same lesson I applied to trade show lead handling in 1986.

Individual adoption is a start. Process integration is a strategy. The organizations that figure out the difference are the ones that build something their competitors can't easily copy.

The Long Game

The executives who approach this with patience and discipline are going to look back in five years and realize they built something genuinely valuable. The ones who chased the hype and lost interest when it got hard are going to be playing catch-up for a long time.

Start small. Get it right. Build on what works. Keep learning. Never stop.

Where This Is All Heading

The direction is already clear



CHAPTER 9

Where This Is All Heading

What's Coming, What It Means, and Why Right Now Matters

What I can tell you is what I see happening right now. The direction things are moving. The patterns that are already clear. And what they mean for a leader who is trying to make smart decisions today rather than wait for a future that hasn't been written yet.

The Speed Is Not Slowing Down

If there is one thing I can say with complete confidence about the future of AI it is this: the pace of development is not going to slow down. In early 2023 most business professionals had never heard of ChatGPT. By the end of that year it was in every boardroom conversation in the country.

The gap between where you are today and where you need to be is not fixed. It is growing. Every quarter you wait, the organizations that are moving are getting further ahead and the work of catching up is getting harder.

AI Is Moving Into Every Tool You Already Use

AI is not staying in separate apps you have to go out and find. It is moving directly into the software your organization already depends on. Microsoft is embedding AI across the entire Office 365 suite. Same story with Google Workspace, Salesforce, HubSpot, and virtually every major enterprise software platform.

The organizations that train their people now – before these tools become standard – are going to have a meaningful head start over the ones that wait until it's unavoidable and then scramble to catch up.

The Jobs Conversation Is Real – And More Nuanced Than the Headlines

AI is going to change what a lot of jobs look like. Some tasks that currently require a full-time employee will be handled more efficiently with less human time. This is not a catastrophe. It is a transition. And transitions can be managed well or badly depending entirely on whether leadership sees them coming

and plans for them deliberately. Both fear and denial produce bad outcomes. Knowledge produces options.

The Competitive Landscape Is Shifting Right Now

The companies that are moving on AI are not waiting for certainty. The companies that are waiting think of AI as a future problem rather than a present one. Until it doesn't feel that way anymore.

The moment it stops feeling like a future problem is usually not a gradual awakening. It tends to be a specific event. A competitor launches something that changes customer expectations. A key employee leaves. A client asks why your organization doesn't offer what the other firm does.

Don't wait for that moment. The leaders who engage with this now, on their own terms, with time to be thoughtful and deliberate, are going to have a much better experience than the ones who are forced into it by circumstances they didn't see coming.

What Staying Current Actually Looks Like

Staying current on AI does not mean reading every article or attending every conference. It means maintaining a baseline of informed awareness that lets you ask good questions and make good decisions. It means having advisors you trust. People who

will tell you the truth. Who do not have a financial interest in selling you a particular solution.

That is the role I play for the executives I work with. Not a technologist. Not a vendor. A trusted advisor who has been in the chair, who speaks your language, and who will give you straight answers to straight questions.

CHAPTER TEN

CEO to CEO

Plain English. No tech jargon. No pretense.



CHAPTER 10

CEO to CEO

Plain English. No Tech Jargon. No Pretense.

We've covered a lot of ground in this book. You know what AI is and what it isn't. You have more real, practical, applicable knowledge about this technology than most of the executives you'll sit across from this year.

But I want to take the last chapter to speak to you directly. Not as an author. Not as a trainer. As a former CEO who has been exactly where you are.

What I've Seen From the Chair

I ran my company for twenty-two years. I know what it feels like to be the person everyone looks to for direction on something you're still figuring out yourself. I know the weight of being responsible for people's livelihoods. I know the relief

of finding someone you can talk to honestly without performing confidence you don't have.

When I sit down with a CEO, I'm not there to impress them with what I know about AI. I'm there to help them figure out what they need to know – and what they need to do – given their specific situation, their specific team, and their specific moment in time.

Who I Am and Why It Matters

I am 81 years old. I was drafted into the United States Army in 1965. I founded my company in 1986, identified a problem the entire trade show industry had and nobody was solving, built a complete process around the solution, and grew it to ten million dollars in annual sales over twenty-two years.

I have written 15 books. I have made over 350 presentations internationally. I have trained more than 45,000 professionals across multiple countries. I teach AI workshops at community clubhouses here in Southwest Florida — seniors teaching seniors, no jargon, no condescension, just honest peer-to-peer education. And I work with companies in India that found me on LinkedIn because what I do travels well across borders and industries.

I learned AI the same way I learned the PC in 1983. I saw it do something, asked if it could do this, then this, then this — one discovery leading to the next until I had real, working,

operational knowledge. Then I turned around and taught it to everyone I could reach.

I am not a technologist. I am a former CEO who figured out AI and can explain it to another CEO in plain English without making them feel behind, overwhelmed, or talked down to. That is a specific thing. And it turns out it is a thing that a lot of executives need right now.

Let's Get to Work

If you've read this book and thought — yes, this is exactly what I need — here's what can happen next.

I offer a single one to one executive briefing session. Sixty to ninety minutes, live online via Zoom. \$795. That's the whole commitment. No retainer. No ongoing long-term commitment. No army of junior consultants billing hours in the background.

I walk you through a live presentation — real demonstrations of AI & ChatGPT in action, with examples that apply directly to your business. You leave with a clear picture of what AI and ChatGPT is, how it works, where it fits, and what to do next. Plain English No tech jargon. No theory.

One session. One price. One clear outcome.

Here is how to reach me.

***Richard Erschik Phone / Text: 630-642-6500 Email:
richard@techtutorusa.com Website: TechTutorUSA.com
LinkedIn: Search Richard Erschik***

Reach out. Tell me a little about your organization and what you're trying to figure out. We'll set up a presentation and go from there.

No pressure. No pitch. Just two experienced businesspeople talking about something that matters.

That's always been how I prefer to do it.

CONCLUSION

It's Not Too Late

Now go build something.



CONCLUSION

It's Not Too Late

The Last Thing I Want You to Carry Out of This Book

You picked up this book because AI kept coming up and you wanted to actually understand it rather than keep nodding along. That decision was the right one. And the fact that you read all the way to this page tells me something about the kind of leader you are.

You are the kind who does the work.

That is exactly the kind of leadership that builds organizations that last.

I learned AI at eighty years old. I didn't do it because I had to. I did it because I saw a gap — between what people understood and what they needed to understand — and I have never once

in my life been able to walk past a gap like that without wanting to fill it.

That instinct built my trade show company. It sent me to India to teach professionals who found me on LinkedIn. It puts me in Florida clubhouses explaining ChatGPT to people who were convinced it wasn't for them — right up until the moment they saw it work. It is the same instinct that wrote this book.

One Last Thing

I want to say something to the executive who is reading this and still feels uncertain. Who finished the book understanding more than they did but still wondering whether they're ready. Whether it's too late. Whether they have what it takes.

I have one answer for you and I mean every word of it.

You are not behind. You are not too old. You are not too set in your ways. You are not too busy, too technical, or too anything.

You are exactly who this technology needs on the other end of it. Someone with real experience, real judgment, and the kind of hard-won wisdom that no algorithm is ever going to replicate.

You have been that person your entire career. This is just the next chapter. And if you need someone to help you start it — you know where to find me.

It has been a genuine pleasure writing this for you.

If you want help knowing where to start, I made it simple. One conversational briefing session. Sixty to ninety minutes. \$795. Real demonstrations, plain English, no tech jargon – and you walk away ready knowing what this AI thing is all about.

Text me at 630-642-6500 or email richard@techtutorusa.com and we'll get it scheduled.

— **Richard Erschik**
Southwest Florida, 2026

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard Erschik

Former CEO. 15 books. 45,000+ trained.



Army vet. CEO. Author. Educator.

Plain English. Real results.

TechTutorUSA.com

About the Author

Richard Erschik — known to everyone who has ever sat in one of his workshops as Rich — is an 81-year-old entrepreneur, author, speaker, trainer, and AI educator based in Southwest Florida.

Rich was drafted into the United States Army in 1965. He came out with a systems mindset and a discipline that shaped everything he built in the decades that followed. He founded his company in 1986, identified a problem the entire trade show industry had and nobody was solving — poor lead follow-up — and built a complete process around the solution. Over twenty-two years he grew that company to ten million dollars in annual sales and became a featured speaker at the Exhibitor Show in Las Vegas for eighteen consecutive years. He made over 350 international presentations and trained tens of thousands of professionals worldwide.

When COVID reshaped the trade show world, Rich did what he has always done. He adapted. He pivoted to teaching. He has

since trained more than 45,000 professionals across multiple industries and countries, teaching everything from trade show strategy to iPhone basics to Tesla ownership to — most recently — AI and ChatGPT to audiences who had never touched any of it before.

Rich currently teaches "AI & ChatGPT Made Simple" workshops at HOA communities and clubhouses throughout Southwest Florida, positioned simply as a senior teaching seniors. He works virtually with four companies in India that found him on LinkedIn. And he consults with corporate leadership teams — CEOs and senior executives — who need a plain-English introduction to AI from someone who has actually been in the chair.

He is the author of 15 books, including Online Webinars that PAY! — a guide for speakers who want to build and monetize online training businesses. He publishes regularly on LinkedIn and Substack.

His consulting tagline says everything you need to know about how he works:

Former CEO. Plain English. No Tech Jargon.

Rich lives in the Fort Myers area of Southwest Florida with Laurie, the love of his life.

To Work With Rich

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