MANAGEMENT OF BUSINESS MANAGERS

When the time saved by AI is just used to create more hot air

Frédéric Le Pennec · 4 February 2026

AI saves time, but this gain can simply accelerate inefficient practices if nothing changes in the quality of work. For Business Managers, the challenge is not to produce more, but to improve what truly creates value.

AI already enables faster production of summaries, emails, reports, or proposals. But if the freed time is used only to multiply the same actions without improving their quality, the productivity gain may primarily accelerate bad habits.

THE STARTING POINT

AI is an accelerator. Before measuring the time saved, one must know what it accelerates: volume, value... or simply more noise.

Gaining time tells nothing about what we do with it

The promises surrounding artificial intelligence almost always start the same way: automate repetitive tasks, reduce preparation time, and free up several hours per week. These gains are real in many applications.

A Business Manager can obtain an account summary in a few minutes, prepare the outline of an email, summarize a meeting, or format a business proposal. What took forty minutes may sometimes only require ten.

But the thirty freed minutes do not disappear. They are reinvested. And in many organizations, they primarily serve to produce three additional emails, analyze more profiles, or send more proposals. The gain is immediately converted into volume.

This choice seems logical because volume is easily counted. One can see the number of messages sent, accounts reviewed, and documents produced. It is much harder to measure if the targeting has improved, if the meeting created more trust, or if the proposal better meets the real need.

A "better machine" can hide an "average human"

AI often enhances the visible part of the work. The report is clearer, the email more fluid, the proposal better structured. The result seems more professional and gives the impression that the entire process has progressed.

However, a flawless summary does not correct a poorly conducted meeting. A well-written email does not compensate for rough targeting. An elegant proposal does not become relevant if the client's need was superficially qualified.

Consider a prospecting meeting where the Business Manager presented their company a lot but explored the prospect's priorities little. AI could produce an excellent report of this exchange. It will not highlight the information that was never asked for. The document will be better; the knowledge of the client will remain poor.

The danger arises when the quality of the final production is mistaken for the quality of the preceding work. Because the deliverable seems better, it is assumed that the approach is too.

THE FALSE PROGRESS
Moving from a mediocre document written by a human to a good document produced with AI is progress. But this progress says nothing about the quality of targeting, reasoning, the relationship, or the decision behind it.

Doing more of an ineffective action also multiplies its effects

Increasing volume can produce results. Sending twice as many messages sometimes eventually generates more responses. But this logic also multiplies the consequences of a poorly conceived action.

Poorly targeted prospecting produces more rejections, more fatigue, and a reputation degradation with the solicited accounts. A mediocre proposal sent faster generates back-and-forths, engages teams, and gives the client more reasons to compare only prices.

Imagine a Business Manager typically dedicates two hours to preparing ten outreach efforts, only three of which are truly relevant. With AI, they can now prepare thirty. If the targeting method does not change, they do not create twenty additional useful outreach efforts: they mainly industrialize imprecision.

Effectiveness is therefore not about producing the maximum with the minimum time. It is about achieving more useful results with the available resources. The number of actions is only valuable if it improves the probability of reaching the expected outcome.

Activities that remain human still require work

Some aspects of the job can be assisted, but they cannot be delegated without loss. Understanding what a prospect does not clearly express, confronting a request with its real constraints, building trust, or deciding not to pursue an opportunity are still acts of judgment.

AI can prepare questions for a qualification meeting. The Business Manager must still listen to the answers, spot a contradiction, and choose to deviate from their framework to delve deeper into a subject. It can suggest a probable objection; they must perceive if the client hesitates at the core or is simply trying to negotiate.

These skills do not automatically improve because a tool saves time around them. If preparation takes ten minutes less but the meeting is conducted exactly the same way, the human performance remains unchanged.

THE TIME TRULY FREED
The time gained only creates value if it is made available for an activity that creates it: better preparation, better listening, better analysis, learning, practicing, or deciding.

The organizational reflex often remains: produce more

As soon as a tool improves productivity, the organization is tempted to increase expectations. If a report takes less time, more meetings can be documented. If prospect searches are accelerated, more accounts can be enriched. If emails are generated quickly, more people can be contacted.

This mechanism is not absurd. Some of the gains should be able to support growth. But if every saved minute immediately becomes a new expected production unit, AI frees nothing. It simply increases the pace.

The Business Manager may then have the paradoxical feeling of having more powerful tools while being more solicited. They produce more, receive more information, manage more follow-ups, and must control a growing volume of generated content. The time saved upstream reappears as a burden downstream.

For example, doubling the number of proposals sent also means more follow-ups, customer questions, versions to correct, and decisions to track. Automating one step does not necessarily reduce the cost of the whole process.

Start by identifying what really needs to improve

Before deploying a new use of AI, one must name the problem they seek to solve. Is it drafting time? The quality of targeting? The relevance of the questions asked? The conversion rate of proposals? The ability of Business Managers to learn from their meetings?

The distinction is important. If proposals take too long to produce, AI can directly help. If they convert poorly because they poorly address the need, reducing drafting time will not suffice. One must first improve qualification and response construction.

A productivity indicator measures what has been saved: minutes per report, preparation time, or number of documents produced. An efficiency indicator measures what has improved: quality of appointments obtained, progress rate to the next step, perceived relevance by the client, or reduction of rework.

frederic.lepennec@coact.fr · +33 6 03 06 05 02 · coact.fr

THE RIGHT QUESTION

Before asking how much time AI saves, ask which result needs to improve. Without a business objective, time saving easily becomes an objective in itself.

Doing better requires an approach, not just a tool

Improving a practice starts with observing it. One must identify what is not working well, understand why, and define a precise change. AI can help analyze situations, propose scenarios, or prepare training. It neither replaces the diagnosis nor the decision to change.

Consider a Business Manager whose meetings rarely lead to a clear next step. The objective is not to prepare their meetings twice as fast. They can first analyze several reports, spot unclear decisions, work on a way to conclude, test it over four weeks, and then compare the results.

In this sequence, AI can speed up the analysis, play the role of a prospect during a simulation, and help prepare a formulation. Progress, however, comes from taking action, feedback, and comparison with the previous situation.

Doing better therefore requires four movements: choosing what to improve, developing the necessary skill, experimenting in real work, and measuring the gap with before. Without this loop, the tool produces faster without advancing the practice.

Consciously reinvest the time saved

A team that saves two hours per week on its synthesis tasks can, for example, decide to reinvest one in more commercial actions and the other in a targeting review, a meeting simulation, or the analysis of a lost proposal. The gain does not disappear into the schedule: it supports a specific intention.

This choice is a management decision. If objectives only value the number of actions, teams will logically use AI to produce more. If the manager also expects an improvement in quality and observes the evidence of it, the time saved can become a lever for progress.

THE MANAGEMENT QUESTION

When AI frees up an hour, the organization must decide what it wants to buy with that hour: more activity, better quality, a new skill, or a stronger decision.

AI accelerates what the organization chooses to value

Artificial intelligence can improve preparation, analysis, and learning, but it also amplifies existing priorities.

In a volume-driven organization, it will primarily enable sending and producing more. In an organization attentive to value, it will free up time to better target, better qualify, and make better decisions.

AI saves time. It remains to be chosen whether this time industrializes the existing or improves what was insufficient. An accelerator never chooses the direction: this responsibility remains human and managerial.

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