Executive briefing vs team workshop for AI leadership training

When a leadership team decides to invest in AI, the first question is often about format. Should the senior team attend a concise executive briefing that sets direction, or is a hands-on team workshop the better route? Both approaches aim to build confidence and competence, but they serve different purposes and suit different stages of an organisation's journey.

The choice matters because getting the format right can accelerate adoption and avoid wasted time. A briefing that is too high-level may leave managers without the practical skills they need. A workshop that jumps into tools before clarifying strategy can feel chaotic. Understanding the strengths of each format helps leaders decide which one fits their current situation.

An executive briefing is typically a short, focused session designed to align decision-makers on the strategic implications of AI. It covers the landscape of what AI can and cannot do, the risks around data privacy and responsible use, and the organisational changes required for adoption. The tone is conversational but structured, with room for questions. The goal is to give leaders enough context to make informed choices about investment, policy, and team readiness.

This format works well when the leadership team is still developing its AI literacy and needs a shared baseline. It is also useful when a company is about to launch a new initiative or needs to update its usage policy. Because the session is compact, it respects busy schedules and can be completed in a few hours. The output is often a set of guiding principles or a decision framework that the leadership team can use to evaluate future opportunities.



A team workshop, on the other hand, is a longer, interactive session where participants work directly with AI tools and techniques. It might involve prompt design exercises, small group tasks, and discussions about real use cases within the company. The focus is on building practical skills and confidence, so team members can go back to their desks and start applying what they have learned. A workshop often includes time to draft a usage policy or outline a change adoption plan together.

Workshops are ideal when the organisation has already set its strategic direction and needs to equip teams to execute. They are especially valuable for cross-functional groups that will collaborate on AI projects. The hands-on nature means participants leave with tangible outputs, such as tested prompts or a list of priority use cases. This format also surfaces practical concerns around data privacy and responsible use that might not come up in a briefing.

The decision between the two often depends on the organisation's maturity with AI. A company that is just starting its AI journey may benefit from an executive briefing first, to build alignment and avoid false starts. Once the leadership has a clear vision, a team workshop can turn that vision into action. In some cases, the best approach is to run both: a briefing for executives, followed by a workshop for the teams who will implement the strategy.

Another factor is the size of the group. Executive briefings work well for smaller, senior groups, while workshops can accommodate larger teams if facilitated well. The briefing tends to be more lecture-style, whereas the workshop is collaborative and participatory. Both formats

should include time for discussion and Q&A, but the workshop leans heavily on hands-on activities.

There is also a middle ground worth considering. A hybrid session might start with a short briefing to set context, then move into a workshop where participants apply the concepts. This combination ensures that everyone has the same baseline before diving into practical work. It also allows the leadership team to observe how their teams engage with the material, which can inform future training decisions.



Regardless of the format, the content should be grounded in the organisation's actual needs. Generic AI training that does not connect to the company's workflows or data is unlikely to stick. The best sessions are those that use real examples from the business, address specific pain points, and leave participants with something they can use immediately. This is where

practical training for AI adoption becomes essential. It bridges the gap between theory and day-to-day application.

When planning either format, consider the following practical elements:

- Who needs to attend and what their current level of AI literacy is
- Whether the session should focus on strategy, skills, or both
- How the session will connect to existing change adoption efforts
- What follow-up support will be available after the session

Another consideration is the timing within the organisation's AI journey. Early on, a briefing helps set the direction. Later, a workshop builds momentum. If the company has already done some work with AI, a workshop can help refine processes and address emerging issues around data privacy and responsible use. A briefing might still be useful if new leaders join or if the strategy needs a reset.

The question of who facilitates the session also matters. An internal team may deliver the content, but external facilitators can bring a fresh perspective and deep expertise. The facilitator should understand both the technology and the organisational change required. They should be able to adapt the session to the group's energy and questions, rather than sticking rigidly to a script.



Ultimately, the goal of any AI leadership training is to create a shared understanding and the capability to act. An executive briefing provides the strategic clarity needed to make decisions. A team workshop provides the hands-on experience needed to execute. Neither is better in isolation; the right choice depends on where the organisation is and what it needs next.

For companies that are serious about embedding AI into their operations, investing in both formats at the right time can pay dividends. The briefing sets the compass, and the workshop provides the map. Together, they enable teams to move from awareness to action. This is why **practical training for AI adoption** should be at the heart of any AI leadership training plan. It ensures that learning translates into real-world results, not just theoretical knowledge.