



Executive Interview



Why Most Companies Can't Prove Their AI Is Working And How Work Intelligence Closes the Gap

2026



Ivan Petrovic
*Founder and CEO of
Insightful*



Dr. Marline C. Duroseau
*Managing Director of HR
and Leadership
Development at
Brandon Hall Group™*

About Insightful



Insightful is a workforce analytics company built around the emerging discipline of work intelligence, helping organizations understand how work actually gets done rather than simply tracking whether AI tools have been adopted. Founded in 2016, the company has grown into a global organization with offices in San Francisco, New York and Belgrade and its platform is used by thousands of organizations worldwide. Insightful's core technology captures objective, privacy first data on real workflows and its Work Intelligence offering builds on that foundation to help companies pinpoint where AI can automate manual work, close the gap between AI adoption and measurable business outcomes and give leaders visibility into how AI activity translates into productivity.

About Ivan Petrovic



Ivan Petrovic is founder and CEO of Insightful, a role he has held for nearly a decade. Based between San Francisco and Belgrade, Petrovic began as a self-taught coder with a background in cybersecurity before moving into building and scaling workforce analytics software. Under his leadership, Insightful has grown into a global team serving thousands of organizations and his perspective on productivity, distraction and the future of work has been featured in outlets including Forbes, Fortune and Fast Company. His current focus is helping HR and business leaders close what he calls the AI ROI gap by measuring adoption, activity, output and business outcomes within a single framework.

About Dr. Marline C. Duroseau



This interview was moderated by **Dr. Marline C. Duroseau**, Brandon Hall Group's Managing Director of HR and Leadership Development. She oversees the firm's portfolio of HR and leadership development solution providers and advises corporate clients on talent, culture and business strategy. She joined Brandon Hall Group™ in November 2025, bringing experience as chief financial officer of a 1,500-person healthcare organization, where she led enterprise transformation across finance, talent development and organizational culture. A Certified Public Accountant with a doctorate in organizational leadership, Duroseau focuses her research and advisory work on developing resilient leaders, advancing women in leadership and embedding inclusive practices into everyday business decisions. She is also a TEDx speaker and award winning author.

The AI ROI Gap

Q Marline

Why is measuring AI impact such a challenge today?

A Ivan

The whole implementation of AI is new for everyone and every organization starts by measuring a different part of it. Many companies begin by measuring adoption, then jump straight to trying to understand outcomes, without addressing everything in between. We use a framework that captures the full journey: first spend, meaning token usage and similar inputs, then activity, meaning how much people are using AI applications across the board, then what people are actually producing with AI and finally the business outcomes those efforts drive. From one end of that spectrum to the other, there is a long way to go and understanding every step is critical to optimizing and navigating AI inside the business. We call this the AI ROI gap. Companies start at one end and want to understand the impact at the other end, but they need to understand the whole story to get there.

Humans and Agents

We're living in a world where it isn't just humans doing the work anymore, we're seeing that work through agents as well.

Q Marline

What are the stakes for HR leaders specifically if they don't get this right?

A Ivan

It's genuinely complex. We're living in a world where it isn't just humans doing the work anymore, we're seeing that work through agents as well and HR needs to move closer to IT because organizations are now managing both humans and agents inside the same workforce. On top of that complexity there is shadow

HR Meets IT

AI, which might not be just a risk, it can also be a signal. Without understanding what is going on, it is hard to navigate that narrative from one end to the other and that is where HR needs to become the business partner that helps drive the outcome.

Q Marline

You use the term work intelligence, which sounds like a step beyond traditional analytics. How do you define it?

A Ivan

We've talked about the measurement framework, from adoption to outcomes and the gap we're trying to close is really understanding the work itself. It's not just about applying pure measures anymore, it's about understanding how work happens and how people participate in it and what they're using AI for. That is where work intelligence comes in. It lets us understand every step of a process and how people are doing it differently and that is where traditional workforce analytics doesn't have the capacity to support leaders through a change that is moving this fast.

Beyond Pure Measures

It's not just about applying pure measures anymore, it's about understanding how work happens and how people participate in it.

Q Marline

So this isn't just about monitoring employee performance, correct?

A Ivan

Correct. Even before this we were always in the business of understanding work from different perspectives, using proxies that were fuzzy but still powerful. Now we have the ability to fully

Time and Engagement

understand the work. We've proven one important correlation, between the time people invest in the business and their engagement. Not everyone believed that connection was direct, but we've proven it with many leaders and now HR has metrics they can use that are real proof rather than a fuzzy measure, proof they can bring to other business leaders to help navigate their departments, since HR always needs to partner with those leaders to impact the workforce. We've seen more advanced HR leaders prove this by correlating engagement metrics with time spent and focus on work, which directly shows how the time people put into work impacts both outcomes and engagement.

Q Marline

HR leaders are also going to need to communicate that effectively and clearly, because that builds the trust that determines whether employees actually embrace these tools to perform better. Why does AI make this visibility so much more critical now?

A Ivan

Navigating Blind

Without visibility you don't even know what you're navigating, you're trying to find a path you can't see.

The work of HR is complex because it touches so many parts of the business and the whole ecosystem of how an organization functions and it started becoming fragmented well before AI. Higher digitalization, which really accelerated with hybrid and remote work during COVID, fragmented work and made it more hectic, with constant notifications and meetings. AI has made that exponentially harder and more fragmented. Without visibility you don't even know what you're navigating, you're trying to find a path you can't see. AI is the exponential factor here, but we've been looking at this for a while. Before, the metrics were things like how many meetings we're having during the day and whether we have time to do our actual work. Now we're looking at how AI impacts those same problems and the solution is still visibility into all of it.

See It To Improve It

Q Marline

How does Insightful practically help an HR leader see this AI adoption?

A Ivan

We start with a framework, because you can't navigate what you cannot see and you cannot improve what you cannot measure. That's where we start, continuously mapping the work, the processes and the workflows to help a company identify every process and more importantly, every process where people are naturally already using AI. Our people, from individual contributors to managers, know their work best. They need help navigating it a bit better, but they show clear signals of how and where AI can help them. We then translate that into something more functional, because they may not be AI experts themselves and that is where HR sits in the middle, connecting IT, the actual human work, management and individual contributors.

Three Paths To Change

Some companies try to improve their processes in a traditional way, some try to automate a process and others try to make a process AI first from the start.

Q Marline

When you look at the different adoption patterns you're seeing, what do the more advanced organizations do differently with that information?

A Ivan

Usually it starts with how they work. Some companies try to improve their processes in a traditional way, some try to automate a process and others try to make a process AI first from the start. We see all of that and HR's role is to work with people to understand what

Risk and Signal

can be fully automated and where more human input is needed, whether that's because of compliance, another stakeholder, or simply because removing people from that task makes their day better and lets them focus on more important things.

Q Marline

There's also an aspect around unsanctioned tools, or shadow AI. Why is that such a focus for you?

A Ivan

Shadow AI matters from multiple angles. The first and most obvious is risk to the business. If people are using their personal accounts, that's important for a company to know, because there could be data being leaked. But it is also a really important signal. We call it shadow AI and I like the term because it isn't fully a risk, it is also showing us where people are implementing AI in their own process on their own. If you have people in the same role or similar departments, one person might be more advanced in using it for a task and that becomes the trigger to look deeper into that area, draw conclusions and implement it more broadly.

Q Marline

HR leaders are under more pressure than ever to prove ROI to the C-suite. How does this data help them earn a seat at the table with Insightful?

A Ivan

It's a transformative time for HR leaders. Even during COVID, HR gained more presence at the table and we've seen that improve

HR as the Skeleton

HR sits in between all of it, connecting everything like a skeleton.

No AI Poems

further. It is going to get even more complex now, because HR sits between departments but needs to prove how the business outcomes they're driving actually materialize. There are different stakeholders here. IT and security manage which tools are used and brought into the company, managers and individual contributors decide what they'll apply AI to and HR sits in between all of it, connecting everything like a skeleton, helping navigate how work gets done, understanding competency gaps across the company and bringing in more AI because the business will demand it. That's where we're seeing more advanced HR leaders bring people and agents together and make it easy for people to accept that.

Q Marline

You mentioned how work is done and filling the gaps around AI initiatives. Does that also extend to processes like documentation?

A Ivan

Yes, exactly. Work intelligence helps leaders see how work is happening, where it gets stuck, where it becomes repetitive and what the manual tasks are, which is probably what bothers most people the most. We don't want AI to write poems instead of us, we want AI to do the manual work nobody wants to do. That is what we surface to leaders pretty easily. Without that visibility, HR won't be able to create a better environment for people or prioritize effectively, because they need to understand every process to find the friction and remove it.

Measuring the Symptoms

Not everyone is objective about their own time and work... you can identify the early symptoms and measure them properly.

Q Marline

What do you think are some of the first signals leaders should look for when work is getting stuck?

A Frictionless Goal

A Ivan

It's hard for people to bring that up themselves, because not everyone is objective about their own time and work. Traditionally, surfacing that was manual and didn't scale. Now, with the technology behind it, you can identify the early symptoms and measure them properly, not just whether work is getting stuck, but how often, whether that's once a month or five times a day.

Q Marline

Looking ahead, what is the ultimate goal for organizations using work intelligence?

Outcomes for Everyone

So the whole system functions without friction and produces outcomes that are good for everyone.

A Ivan

Organizations using work intelligence are trying to understand and connect all the pieces to map the work, while HR carries the responsibility of asking what should remain human and what should be automated across the board. Their ultimate goal is to make work frictionless, understanding why productivity gaps happen and removing them so people can focus on high value work instead of everyday friction, so the whole system functions without friction and produces outcomes that are good for everyone.



Here are some ways to listen to the interview on Brandon Hall Group's Excellence at Work Podcast:

Spotify



Podcasts



Youtube





Shaping Excellence in the Future of Work

Our Vision

A world where every HR organization drives business transformation through human capital excellence.

Our Mission

To provide CHROs, CLOs, and workforce leaders with the intelligence, tools, and community they need to drive business transformation through human capital excellence.

What Organizations Gain

Organizations partner with Brandon Hall Group to:

- Make human capital decisions with greater confidence.
- Reduce risk in workforce transformation and strategic investments.
- Accelerate the execution of HR, talent, leadership, and learning initiatives.
- Build organizational capabilities that create lasting business value.
- Learn from proven practices of organizations recognized by the Excellence Awards Program.

Move Forward with Confidence

The Brandon Hall Group Eminence Program brings together the intelligence, guidance, and executive collaboration leaders need to navigate today's workforce challenges and prepare for what's next.

[Explore the Eminence Program](#)

Elevating the World of Work

institute.brandonhall.com

HCM Conference 2027 | Awards | Summits

