Creating a More Human-Centred Workplace

Tech Beyond Gender exists to create workplaces where people, regardless of gender or background, have fair opportunities to contribute, grow and realise their potential. Through research and shared experience, we explore what makes that possible. This study examines how people experience their workplaces, how those experiences shape their work, and what that means for organisational growth.

Who we heard from

21
Technology leaders

21
Business leaders

10
People and culture leaders

Four assumptions worth rethinking

1

COMMON ASSUMPTION
Saving time with AI makes work easier
WHAT THE INTERVIEWS SUGGEST
Automation may remove recovery breaks and opportunities to learn through work.

2

COMMON ASSUMPTION
A standard hybrid policy provides clarity and meets people's flexibility needs
WHAT THE INTERVIEWS SUGGEST
A consistent policy can provide clarity, but useful flexibility also depends on individual circumstances and the work, including hours, location and how roles are structured.

3

COMMON ASSUMPTION
People need confidence before taking on responsibility
WHAT THE INTERVIEWS SUGGEST
Supported responsibility can help confidence develop.

4

COMMON ASSUMPTION
Career growth means promotion into management
WHAT THE INTERVIEWS SUGGEST
Growth can also mean deeper expertise and greater contribution.

These interpretations highlight possibilities and tensions, rather than effects demonstrated across all workplaces.

Together, these insights invite a closer look at how workplaces recognise readiness, support growth and use technology. The following pages set out five findings, practical starting points and contrasting perspectives.

Five findings and practical actions

Everyday decisions shape how people contribute and develop. These actions offer starting points to adapt and review with the people affected.



1 Make support part of everyday work

People described support through practical help, useful feedback and follow-through.

In practice Ask targeted questions in one-to-one catch-ups. Agree the help needed and review it next time. With agreement, use an approved AI tool to track commitments.



2 Give people fair ways to demonstrate capability

Familiar backgrounds and interview presentation may leave relevant skills unseen.

In practice Use a realistic work task, shared job-relevant criteria and suitable adjustments. Check whether local experience is necessary.



3 Build confidence through supported opportunities

Being trusted with a new responsibility, with support, can help confidence develop.

In practice Offer a manageable assignment. Rehearse first, arrange a colleague's support and debrief before agreeing a next attempt.



4 Respond to team feedback in a structured and visible way

Listening includes explaining what happened next, even when a suggestion cannot be adopted.

In practice Agree an owner and update date. Use an approved AI tool to track agreed actions. Share team responses and keep personal concerns private.



5 Support career growth beyond promotion

Promotion into management is not the only path to career growth.

In practice Ask which problems someone wants to become an expert in. Make time for a specialist task and review its value after six weeks.

About the research

The 52 interview transcripts were analysed through an iterative qualitative coding process comprising descriptive coding, consolidation into a shared codebook and a second analytical pass. A focused review examined divergent and contrasting accounts. Interviewees were classified into three professional groups based on their described roles and experience. Quotations reproduce verbatim transcript excerpts. Contrasting accounts inform interpretation but do not establish prevalence or causal relationships. Proposed actions translate the findings into practical applications and have not been evaluated as interventions.

Contrasting perspectives

The interviews also challenged some expectations. These accounts help identify what organisations should consider when putting the findings into practice.



AI can save time while removing recovery and learning opportunities

AI can free capacity while removing natural recovery breaks. A separate account raised concern that automating entry-level work could reduce opportunities to gain experience. This was a concern about future capability, not an established outcome.

"[Prior to AI] throughout the day, your … effort and your pressure on your brain is up and down. So you get the time to … do a bit of a reset."

"but if we don't work out how we're going to get entry level talent in, we're gonna have a huge gap in generation of people actually in the workforce."

In practice Review recovery, task intensity and learning opportunities before increasing workload expectations. Plan how people will gain experience alongside AI.



A standard hybrid policy can provide clarity without meeting everyone's flexibility needs

A standard hybrid policy can appear flexible while missing what someone needs. Accounts described different working hours, caring commitments and fractional roles, alongside the value of purposeful in-person work.

"but offering the flexibility that's important for the individual."

In practice Agree individual needs and team requirements. Trial an arrangement and review contribution, collaboration and workload.



Confidence can develop through responsibility, rather than always coming first

Some interviewees received responsibility before feeling confident. Their accounts suggest that supported experience can help confidence develop.

"she could see my ability to do the work before I could see myself"

In practice Offer a manageable assignment based on skills and interest. Agree preparation, support and a review point.



Career growth can mean deeper expertise, rather than promotion into management

Interviewees described growth through specialist expertise and contribution, alongside different aspirations for management.

"not becoming a team leader, but go, for instance, for a staff engineer. So you still have room to grow."

In practice Agree a specialist development goal, assignment and feedback. Keep promotion available to those who want it.

Conclusion

A more human-centred workplace takes shape through everyday decisions about support, opportunity, feedback, growth and work design. Practices should respond to people's different needs and be reviewed with those affected. Creating conditions where people can contribute and develop offers a foundation for stronger organisational capability and sustainable growth.