

A DAILY ZINE ON WORK & AI

AI & WORK DAILY

RUN 001

SUNDAY
2026-05-24

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THE REFILL PROBLEM

AI hands the minutes back. It does not decide what goes in them. That call is still yours — which is the part worth getting right.

The pitch for AI at work has always been time. Let the machine draft the email, sort the spreadsheet, storyboard the idea, and you get your afternoon back. One designer told Lenovo that AI lets her storyboard in minutes what used to take days. That part is real.

The catch is what happens next. In an eight-month study, UC Berkeley Haas researchers Xingqi Maggie Ye and Aruna Ranganathan found the saved time did not turn into rest. It turned into more work: a wider range of tasks, a faster pace, a longer day — often unasked. The empty minutes refilled themselves.

So the honest version of the promise is smaller, and better for it. **AI removes the friction. It does not remove the choice.** The minutes it gives back are real minutes. Someone decides what fills them. Right now that someone is mostly the habit of staying busy.

This is less frightening than the headlines, not more. A tool that does the dull half of a task leaves you the half that needs a person. The skill rising in value, on the World Economic Forum's reading, is judgement: choosing what is worth doing at all.

Today's one move: when AI gives you twenty minutes back, name what they are for before the inbox names it for you.

- 1 AI saves real time.** A designer told Lenovo it storyboards in minutes what once took days. Believe that part.

- 2 The time refills.** Berkeley Haas watched people for 8 months: saved minutes became more tasks, faster, longer days.

- 3 The lever is still human.** The tool removes friction. It does not remove the choice of what to do next.

- 4 Busy is the default filler.** If you don't name what the spare minutes are for, the inbox names it for you.

- 5 Judgement is the rising skill.** The WEF lists creative thinking and decision-making above raw speed for 2030.

- 6 New skills, real money.** The IMF finds roles asking for new skills pay about 3% more — more if you stack them.

- 7 The net is jobs, not no jobs.** WEF: ~170m roles created, ~92m gone by 2030. Net positive, unevenly shared.

- 8 Today's move:** next time AI gives you 20 minutes, decide what they're for **before** you spend them.

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● FORTUNE / BERKELEY HAAS — FEB 2026

The 8-month study behind today's message: AI expanded scope and hours instead of freeing time.

fortune.com/2026/02/10/ai-future-of-work...uc-berkeley

● LENOVO STORYHUB — FEB 2026

The hopeful side: AI clearing the dull half so people get time back for creative work.

news.lenovo.com/my-tech-superpower...freeing-time-creativity

● WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM — JAN 2026

Which skills rise, which fall, and the ~170m created / ~92m displaced figures for 2030.

weforum.org/stories/2026/01/how-ai-will-affect-work

● IMF — JAN 2026

New-skill demand and the wage premium (~3%) for postings asking for at least one new skill.

imf.org/en/blogs/articles/2026/01/14/new-skills-and-ai

● TIME — MAY 2026

The 5-day week turns 100. A good frame for who decides what the saved time is for.

time.com/article/2026/05/01/5-day-workweek-turns-100

“There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all.”

PRODUCTIVITY QUOTE · PETER DRUCKER

OBLIQUE STRATEGY · REIMAGINED

Hand over the task you can describe. Keep the one you can't.

AFTER BRIAN ENO & PETER SCHMIDT, OBLIQUE STRATEGIES (1975)