TrainingConcepts

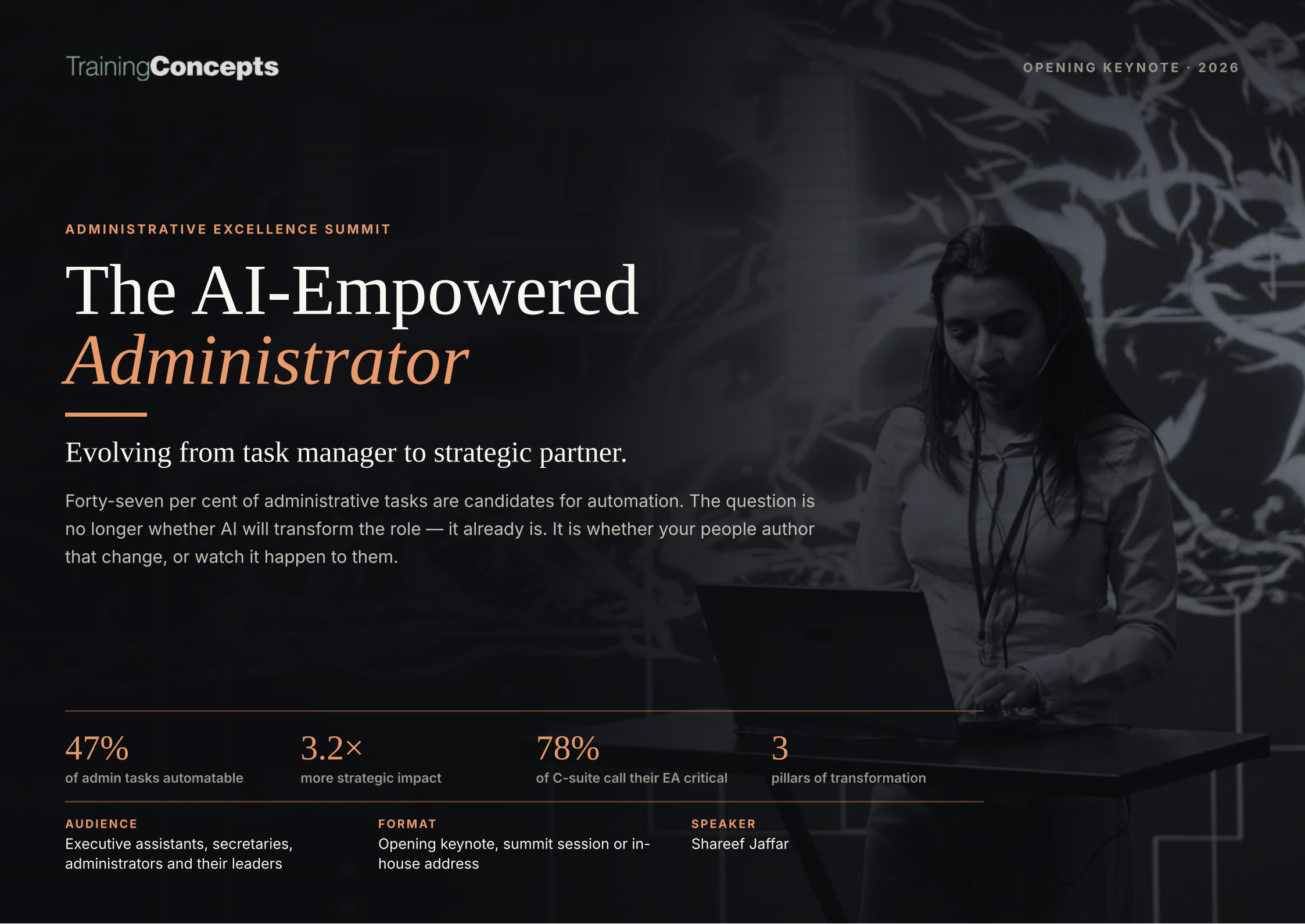
OPENING KEYNOTE · 2026

ADMINISTRATIVE EXCELLENCE SUMMIT

The AI-Empowered *Administrator*

Evolving from task manager to strategic partner.

Forty-seven per cent of administrative tasks are candidates for automation. The question is no longer whether AI will transform the role — it already is. It is whether your people author that change, or watch it happen to them.



47%	3.2×	78%	3
of admin tasks automatable	more strategic impact	of C-suite call their EA critical	pillars of transformation

AUDIENCE
Executive assistants, secretaries, administrators and their leaders

FORMAT
Opening keynote, summit session or in-house address

SPEAKER
Shareef Jaffar

01 The landscape is shifting

47%
of administrative tasks are candidates for automation — McKinsey, 2024

3.2×
more strategic impact when EAs shift from task-based to advisory roles — Deloitte

78%
of C-suite leaders say their EA is critical to their strategic effectiveness — PACE, 2024

Secretaries and administrators who embrace AI strategically are not losing their jobs to it — they are gaining the bandwidth to do the jobs that actually matter. This keynote gives a room full of administrative professionals the argument, the toolkit and the mandate to make that shift deliberately.

Built for a summit opening: it frames the day, stays specific enough to be useful on Monday, and ends with three commitments rather than three slides.

WHO IT IS FOR

- Executive assistants and personal assistants
- Company secretaries and board administrators
- Office managers and administrative leads
- Operations and business support teams
- HR and L&D leaders planning for the function
- Professional associations and summit programmes



THREE PILLARS OF TRANSFORMATION

PART 01
The changing paradigm
From reactive to proactive — becoming an indispensable strategic partner.

PART 02
Reclaiming your time
Practical AI tools to automate friction, free focus and amplify impact.

PART 03
The human advantage
Resilience, ethics and strategic thinking to thrive alongside intelligent systems.

DELIVERED AS

Summit opening keynote A 45 to 60-minute plenary that frames the day.	**Conference session** A focused session with Q&A, sized to the programme.
In-house address For an organisation's own administrative and support teams.	**Leadership briefing** For executives on how to redeploy the function.

> "AI will not replace humans — but humans who use AI will replace humans who don't."
>
> HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW, 2024

02 Part one — the changing paradigm

The session opens by making the shift concrete. Not a motivational appeal to “be more strategic”, but a side-by-side of what the two versions of the role actually look like in practice.

REACTIVE MODEL — BEFORE

- Responds to requests — always waiting for direction
- Calendar owner, but not a strategic planner
- Manages travel logistics, filing and formatting
- An information conduit, passing messages along
- Time consumed by repetitive, low-value tasks
- Largely invisible in the decision-making room

STRATEGIC PARTNER — AFTER

- Anticipates needs — brings solutions before being asked
- Curates the executive’s time with strategic intent
- Analyses data, prepares insights and briefing documents
- Manages stakeholder relationships with diplomacy
- Deploys AI to eliminate drudgery and think at scale
- Sits at the decision-making table as a trusted advisor

FOUR FORCES EVERY ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONAL MUST UNDERSTAND

AI proliferation

ChatGPT reached 100 million users in 60 days. AI is now embedded in Microsoft 365, Google Workspace and every major enterprise platform.

Data-driven decisions

Executives increasingly rely on analytics. Administrators who can interpret a dashboard and surface the insight become irreplaceable.

Hybrid work complexity

Coordinating across time zones, platforms and hybrid teams has made the role more complex — and more critical — than ever.

Digital governance

As AI handles sensitive data, administrators sit on the front line of information security, compliance and responsible use.

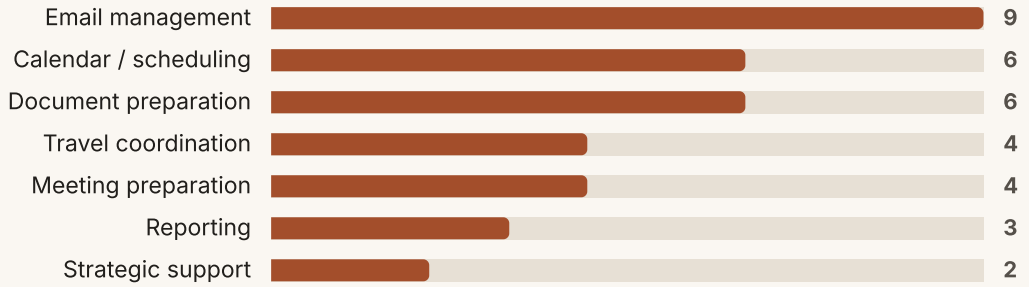






03 Part two — reclaiming your time

WHERE THE TIME ACTUALLY GOES — HOURS PER WEEK, TYPICAL ALLOCATION



Sources: McKinsey Global Institute (2024), MIT Digital Economy Lab (2023), Gartner Workforce Report (2024)

THE OPPORTUNITY

60%

of administrative time sits on automatable, repetitive tasks — McKinsey (2024)

2.5 hrs

saved per day with AI email management tools — MIT (2023)

30%

productivity gain for roles that adopt AI workflows — Gartner (2024)

THE PRACTICAL AI TOOLKIT — VETTED TOOLS, BY JOB

EMAIL & COMMUNICATION

- Microsoft Copilot — draft, summarise and prioritise
- Google Gemini — smart reply and meeting follow-ups
- Grammarly — real-time writing and tone correction
- Superhuman AI — inbox zero with AI prioritisation

SCHEDULING & CALENDAR

- Reclaim.ai — autonomous scheduling and habit blocking
- Calendly AI — smart availability and conflict resolution
- Motion — auto-reschedules the day by priority
- Microsoft 365 Scheduling Assistant

DOCUMENT & RESEARCH

- Notion AI — meeting notes, summaries, knowledge bases
- ChatGPT / Claude — research, briefings and drafting
- Otter.ai — live transcription and action items
- Adobe Acrobat AI — PDF and contract summarisation

GOVERNANCE & SECURITY

- Microsoft Purview — data classification and compliance
- LastPass / 1Password AI — credential management
- Vanta — automated compliance monitoring
- Aware — communication governance and risk

PRO TIP FROM THE STAGE

Start with ONE tool. Master it. Then expand. Adoption, not accumulation, creates transformation.

04 AI in action, and the resilience to sustain it

The session does not stay theoretical. Four real before-and-after scenarios, with the tool named and the hours counted.

TASK	BEFORE AI	AFTER AI — TIME SAVED
Board meeting preparation	4–6 hours compiling agendas, pre-reads and minutes manually	Otter.ai + Notion AI: 60-minute automated transcription, AI-generated minutes and smart action items
Executive inbox management	90 minutes a day triaging, routing and drafting replies	Microsoft Copilot categorises, summarises and drafts in 20 minutes — a 70% reduction
Travel coordination	45–90 minutes per trip across multiple sites and confirmations	TravelPerk AI: one-prompt itinerary, automatic policy compliance, instant confirmations
Research and briefings	2–3 hours researching, synthesising and formatting briefing packs	ChatGPT + Perplexity: a 30-minute researched, structured brief with source citations

GROW YOUR STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES

- Enrol in data literacy and AI fundamentals courses
- Seek cross-functional exposure in strategy, finance and operations meetings
- Build a personal knowledge management system
- Join professional bodies — EAPSA, PACE, IAAP
- Develop project management skills: PMP, PRINCE2 or Agile
- Request a quarterly strategic alignment conversation with your executive

PROTECT YOUR ENERGY AND WELLBEING

- Automate low-energy tasks first — protect cognitive resource for complex work
- Create non-negotiable daily focus blocks for deep work
- Set clear digital boundaries and response times outside work hours
- Build a peer support network — connection combats hybrid isolation
- Practise weekly reflection to prevent strategic drift and burnout
- Celebrate wins — use the output data AI surfaces to demonstrate value







05 Part three — the human advantage

The half of the keynote the room remembers. Six capabilities no model can replicate — and the governance framework that makes an administrator the organisation's ethical AI steward rather than its biggest exposure.

Relational intelligence Reading a room, managing difficult personalities, knowing when silence is more powerful than words. The politics of people.	**Contextual judgment** Knowing which rules to bend, when to escalate, and how to apply organisational wisdom no dataset can capture.	**Ethical discretion** Handling confidential information with integrity. Being the guardian of what should — and should never — be shared.
Creative problem solving Connecting dots across domains, innovating under pressure, finding elegant solutions to messy, ambiguous challenges.	**Executive presence** Representing the leader and the organisation with poise, gravitas and authentic personal brand — something AI cannot embody.	**Empathy and culture** Creating psychological safety, reading emotional undercurrents, sustaining the human bonds high-performance teams depend on.

THE CLEAR FRAMEWORK FOR ETHICAL AI USE

C	**Confidentiality first**	Never input sensitive personal data, financial records or proprietary IP into public AI tools without authorisation.
L	**Legitimacy of purpose**	Use AI only for sanctioned tasks, documented in line with the acceptable use policy.
E	**Error-check always**	AI generates plausible but sometimes incorrect content. Verify facts, figures and citations before sharing.
A	**Attribution and transparency**	Disclose AI involvement where appropriate. Build trust through honesty about how outputs were produced.
R	**Responsible storage**	Know where AI-generated content is stored, and apply retention policies consistently.

Referenced to ISO/IEC 42001 AI Management System Standard · GDPR Article 22 · POPIA Chapter 3

QUICK GOVERNANCE CHECKLIST

- Know your organisation's AI acceptable use policy
- Never paste confidential data into public LLMs
- Verify all AI-generated facts before publication
- Report AI-related security incidents promptly
- Store AI outputs by data classification
- Complete AI literacy training annually
- Understand the GDPR and POPIA implications



06 The strategic partner framework

The keynote closes on a roadmap each delegate takes away, and three commitments to carry beyond the room.

AUTOMATE

Eliminate the grind

- Map all recurring tasks
- Identify AI automation opportunities
- Implement 2–3 AI tools this quarter
- Track hours reclaimed per week

ELEVATE

Raise your value

- Request access to strategic meetings
- Develop briefing and analysis skills
- Become the team's AI champion
- Quantify your impact in numbers

CONNECT

Build your network

- Join EAPSA, PACE or IAAP
- Find a mentor in your organisation
- Attend at least two summits a year
- Share knowledge openly and generously

PROTECT

Guard your edge

- Master digital governance principles
- Complete AI ethics certification
- Document your AI workflows
- Build boundaries that sustain you

TAKEAWAY 01

Embrace the shift

AI is not your replacement — it is your superpower. Those who lead its adoption will define the next era of administrative excellence.

TAKEAWAY 02

Reclaim your hours

Name your most time-consuming repetitive task this week. Research one tool. Pilot it within 30 days. Measure it. Then share it.

TAKEAWAY 03

Lead with humanity

Empathy, judgment and relationships are the unassailable edge. Invest in them as vigorously as in technical skill.



Shareef Jaffar THE SPEAKER

Chartered Secretary and Chartered Governance Professional · MSc Strategic Planning · LLM Corporate Governance · Accredited Senior Director, Singapore Institute of Directors

Shareef has spoken to this audience for years — at Fortress Intelligence's Annual Secretaries' Summit and the Admin@Work conferences in Singapore, on the evolving role of the secretary, time management and leveraging technology. He is a Chartered Secretary himself, and sits on boards where he sees the strategic-partner relationship from the other side of the table.

WHY THIS SPEAKER

- A Chartered Secretary speaking to secretaries and administrators
- Secretary-General, Management Development Institute of Singapore
- 35+ years in training design across 16 countries

RELATED SESSIONS

- AI in Education — large language models and the challenges
- Strategic leadership and governance for boards
- Crisis prevention and management

BOOK THE KEYNOTE

"You did not enter this profession to push paper. You entered it to make people powerful."

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