

The Human Premium.

Clear thinking in complicated times.

A DECLARATION · 2026

In human hands.

On AI, judgement, and the future of human value. Six declarations, and four commitments.

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THE DECLARATIONS

What this practice holds.

ONE The prior question comes first.

Most sectors are asking how to adopt AI. Very few businesses are asking whether they should — whether, in this place, at this moment, with these people, it is the right thing to do. That question comes before every other one. Everything after it is implementation.

TWO Compliance is the floor.

Governance, policy, and procedure are the given. The guardrails are foundational, and they are also silent on the questions that arrive immediately afterwards: what an organisation should protect, what it should keep in human hands, and what it stands to lose if it automates the wrong thing. Regulation will tell you what you are permitted to do. It will never tell you what you ought to.

THREE Speed of adoption is not wisdom of adoption.

Some processes are slow because the slowness is doing work. It is where the thinking happens and where a decision earns its legitimacy. Efficiency is not always the right outcome. An organisation that mistakes velocity for value will discover, later than it would like, that it has optimised away the things that made it worth working in.

FOUR Automation is a moral question.

Every organisation that adopts AI without examination adds to a momentum almost nobody has chosen and fewer still are governing. Whether to automate is not only an operational matter. It settles who carries the consequence, who holds the judgement, and whether people remain at the centre of their own working lives.

People before profit. Accountability before velocity.

FIVE Offloading has a cost that arrives late.

Creativity does not come out of an optimised process. It comes from friction, from boredom, from a mind given nothing and made to build something from it. The evidence emerging from neuroscience is uncomfortable: handing cognition to a machine appears to wear away the very capacities organisations say they value most.

There is a quieter cost sitting beside that one. Remove the effort from work and you remove the sense of agency that made the work mean anything. Apathy is rarely idleness. It is what happens to a person who has been relieved, week by week, of the experience of mattering. Adopted without care, AI produces exactly this — quietly, and everywhere at once.

SIX Disclosure is ordinary.

This practice uses AI. This document was produced with some AI assistance. The thinking throughout is human; some of the articulation has been automated. That is the doctrine working rather than failing: adopt what genuinely helps, govern what genuinely risks, keep what only humans do.

Saying so plainly is not a confession. It is the standard doing its job.

Judgement is the last moat. This practice exists to help you hold it.

THE COMMITMENT

What this obliges me to.

A declaration that costs its author nothing is decoration. These are the four things the above commits me to, and the four things a client is entitled to hold me to.

I will ask *whether* before I ask *how*, including when the answer costs me the work. Some organisations that approach me should not automate the thing they came to automate, and I will say so.

I will name where AI has touched anything I produce for you, without being asked, and in terms specific enough to be useful.

I will not make outcome claims I cannot evidence, and I will not cite research I have not read to its source.

I will tell you the uncomfortable thing once, plainly, and then respect your decision — including when your decision is against my advice. Accuracy can be recovered from. Trust cannot.

IF THIS IS RECOGNISABLE

Three ways to go further.

If any of this describes a discomfort you already had, there are three next steps, and none of them is a sales process.

Take the readiness diagnostic. Twelve questions before you automate anything is a self-scored instrument — twelve questions, four bands, and an honest result. It takes about fifteen minutes, it is free, and you can download it from the homepage at thehumanpremium.co.uk.

Read Neural Pastoral, a weekly LinkedIn newsletter published by Adam Clarke. It is where this thinking is worked out at more length than the sector usually permits: philosophy, leadership, and technology, through a humanist lens.

Or write to me directly. Thirty minutes discovery call, no charge, no obligation, and a strategic answer about whether working together is likely a good fit, or not.

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Adopt what genuinely helps. Govern what genuinely risks. Keep what only humans do.

Built with AI. Thought by a human.