

The future is Built Around Us.

Chris Russel · October 2026

AI is moving into work faster than most organisations can think it through. I'm Chris Russel. I help leaders and their teams decide where AI belongs and who answers for it, while keeping the judgement that only people bring.

Why now

The jobs people start in are changing first. At **Anthropic**, junior roles fell from 27% to 9% of technical hires, and its hiring managers increasingly favour autonomy and judgement over specific technical expertise. In the UK, **graduate vacancies fell by 45.6%** in a year, to 8,383 in July 2026. **More than a third of UK employers** say they have cut entry-level jobs.

First jobs are where people learn judgement. Cut them, and a firm saves money this year and finds nobody ready to step up in five years' time. At the same time, AI tools are already part of the working day, often without approval, and the decisions about them are landing on leaders who never chose to make them.

What I believe

AI should be built around people. Everything I do starts there.

- Attention is the scarcest thing at work, and it deserves the same care as money.
- Consent comes before convenience, whether it is data, a likeness or someone's time.
- Every AI tool needs a named person who answers for it.
- The way in to work has to stay open for the people starting out.
- Where the data matters, open and local tools are often the better choice.

Why work with me

I have spent my career delivering change where mistakes are expensive and public. I learned consent as a police officer, on the street and in court. I learned judgement on public programmes, from the response to failing concrete in schools to Hinkley Point C, where I automated much of my own role and handed it on.

I don't sell AI or software, so there is no product behind my advice. Every piece of work has a fixed scope agreed at the start, and it gets my full attention until it is done.

How I help

Boards and leadership teams	Set a strategy for AI, people and the talent pipeline, with me as your fractional chief strategy officer or through focused sessions. Agree who decides what, so every use of AI has an owner. Write AI policies that people follow.
Investors and acquirers	Due diligence on the human side of AI: who owns and governs it, where it runs without approval, and whether the business is still growing its own talent.
Teams	A programme built on four steps: look up, ask, sort and sign. It starts with an anonymous check of how attention and AI are really used, and ends with each person teaching someone new.
Founders and independent practitioners	Ways of working where people and AI agents share the load with clear ownership from day one, plus help choosing and running open, local tools.
Programmes under pressure	An independent review and a plan to recover, from a Chartered Project Professional.

Where the work goes

Part of every fee pays for places for people starting out, taught by the professionals I work with. Each programme ends with every person teaching someone new. That is how the work keeps the way in open.

Start here

Web **builtaroundus.com**
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Sources

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