



C-TEN Executive Summary

February 12, 2026

Guest Speaker: Peter Cappelli, Director, Wharton Center for Human Resources

Topic: *The Implementation of AI — Real Examples Beyond the Hype*

Overview

Dr. Cappelli led a practical discussion on what it truly takes to implement AI successfully inside organizations. Rather than focusing on hype, the conversation centered on real-world case studies—primarily in healthcare—alongside candid member discussion about AI maturity, workforce impact, vendor complexity, and ROI pressures.

A consistent theme emerged: **AI success depends far more on operational redesign and HR leadership than on technology alone.**

Key Themes & Insights

1. AI Hype vs. Measurable Impact

- Recent research (including MIT studies) shows limited evidence so far of dramatic ROI or widespread job loss.
- Many organizations overstate AI adoption due to investor and board pressure.
- We may be entering the “trough” phase of the AI hype cycle as implementation realities surface.

Core message: The challenge is execution—not experimentation.

2. Healthcare Chatbot Case Study (Texas Physician-Owned Organization)

A physician-owned healthcare system implemented AI chatbots for patient scheduling with measurable results.

Preparation Required

- Mapped every appointment type and provider schedule
- Standardized previously autonomous office practices
- Conducted extensive workflow redesign before deployment

This was fundamentally an operational transformation project—not just a technology install.

Outcomes

- 24% increase in completed appointments and billings
- No additional physicians hired
- Reduced patient wait times and call abandonment
- Chatbots uncovered scheduling capacity that human staff routinely missed

Workforce Impact

- No layoffs required
- High call center turnover allowed headcount reduction through natural attrition
- 10% of patients request a human immediately
- Medical concerns trigger mandatory human handoff

Key takeaway: AI amplified operational discipline and surfaced hidden capacity.

3. Insurance Authorization & Bot-to-Bot Interactions

- Healthcare providers are deploying chatbots to manage long insurance hold times.
- Insurance carriers are deploying their own bots, leading to bot-to-bot interactions.
- Voice-based systems persist due to lack of data standardization across ~800 insurance providers.

AI is compensating for fragmented infrastructure rather than replacing it.

4. Vendor & Commercial Model Lessons

- NLP quality and voice realism vary widely across vendors.
- Pricing models matter:
 - Per-minute billing can unintentionally incentivize longer calls
 - Per-call pricing creates different optimization pressures
- Sandbox testing is essential prior to rollout.

Implementation risks often lie in vendor incentives and contract structure.

5. AI's Impact on Jobs

Member experiences reflected mixed outcomes:

- Offshore call center roles remain relatively stable
- Hospitality HR teams report workforce reductions due to self-service expansion
- Other organizations report AI freeing HR for more strategic work

So far, AI appears to be reshaping work more than eliminating it at scale.

6. AI Maturity & Organizational Readiness

Participants noted wide variation in chatbot sophistication:

- Some provide seamless conversational responses
- Others function as clunky decision-tree menus

Organizations expecting rapid AI maturity must invest in:

- Workflow redesign
- Rule development
- Ongoing tuning and governance

AI implementation is continuous, not one-and-done.

7. HR's Central Role in AI Deployment

Dr. Cappelli emphasized that AI implementation is fundamentally an HR-led transformation:

HR must lead:

- Workflow mapping
- Job and task analysis
- Identifying insertion points for AI agents
- Change management and employee buy-in

Employees can effectively “quiet quit” the bot if they resist adoption.

This work resembles industrial engineering and organizational design more than IT development.

8. Board Pressure & ROI Realities

- Boards often use “AI” as shorthand for hiring freezes or cost reduction.
- Leaders must educate boards on:
 - Upfront operational redesign costs
 - Long ramp-up periods
 - Realistic ROI timelines

Some AI projects show payback periods stretching decades due to heavy initial investment.

9. High-Potential Use Cases: Training & Coaching

One of the most promising areas discussed was AI-enabled skills training:

- Simulated customer or employee interactions
- Instant feedback
- Unlimited repetition at low cost
- Reduced reliance on paid actors (medical/customer-service training)

In some studies, patients rated chatbots as more empathetic than human callers—largely due to consistency and lack of fatigue.

10. Additional Member Insights

- VR and 3D modeling (via Meta platforms) are improving nursing training and accelerating skill proficiency.
- Centralized, AI-accessible employee handbooks significantly increased frontline engagement.
- Concerns remain in talent acquisition where over-automation may filter out strong candidates or weaken human connection.