

Manchester AI Guild newsletter · Issue 1 16 October 2026

Making AI work for Manchester

The Manchester AI Guild is a not-for-profit that brings together experienced practitioners to help small and medium-sized businesses grow, develop the next generation of AI solutions, and make sure the technology is used responsibly. We're a signpost, not a funnel, so we help a business find the right help wherever it sits, and if AI isn't the right answer to its problem, we'll say so.

This first newsletter is a short trailer for what's to come. From here we'll publish every fortnight on LinkedIn and our website, with news from the Guild, practical ideas from our members, and ways to get involved.

The Manchester Way: A Revolution Worth Making

Mihran Hovnanian, Chairman

When we founded the Manchester AI Guild in June, we began with a simple conviction: Manchester possesses all the talent, industry, ingenuity and history required to lead the world once again. We have long punched above our weight. Yet on the global stage of Artificial Intelligence, we have not quite claimed the place that ought to be ours.

Manchester has given the world great advances in manufacturing, industry, science, computing and music. Why should AI be any different? And what would it take for the Manchester Way to become as familiar a mark of excellence in AI as it has been in those other endeavours?

A fine ambition is a pleasant thing. But ambition without action is merely a dream with good manners.

Our dreams have now begun to acquire substance.

We are proud to have created the #ManchesterWay workshop, a practical means of turning the promise of AI into the prosperity of real businesses. Our first workshops have been warmly received, with participants astonished by how readily genuine transformation can be understood and applied, particularly when explained through the familiar metaphors of Manchester's extraordinary musical heritage.

For if a handful of musicians from Chorlton, Timperley, Oldham or Burnage can rise from modest beginnings to command the world's attention, why should a small Manchester enterprise not do likewise?

Talent is seldom the obstacle. Opportunity, confidence and the means to act are more often lacking.

This is the purpose of our #AISupernova: to give every SME the means to discover its strengths, overcome its weaknesses and achieve growth once thought beyond its reach.

Yet power without principle is a dangerous servant.

Our practitioners are bound by a Code of Conduct that places two questions above all others: For whom are we doing this? And to what good purpose?

AI transformation will come, whether we welcome it or resist it. Our duty is not to prevent the tide, but to ensure that it carries our businesses towards prosperity rather than washing away what makes them valuable.

We shall not exchange Manchester's rich variety of enterprise for a grey uniformity of machine-generated words. We shall not mistake the production of content for the creation of value. We shall reward ingenuity above imitation, and pursue growth rather than merely the reduction of cost.

For the object of progress is not to make humans unnecessary, but to make their endeavours more fruitful.

We shall take the Manchester Way into businesses themselves, helping each enterprise harness the extraordinary power of modern technology without sacrificing its character, its people or its purpose.

For a machine may multiply our abilities, but it must never diminish our humanity.

Manchester has never waited politely for the future to arrive. We have made a habit of inventing it.

And so our ambition remains as firm as the day we began:

Build capability. Create opportunity. Grow prosperity. Love people.

What's been happening so far

Guild members have been out across Manchester since our launch at Venture Cafe in September. Recent highlights include Manchester City Council's Tech for Good Catalyst event at DiSH and the recent University of Manchester Innovation Festival, and those conversations, along with our work with ADA College, have generated strong interest in the Guild.

Our President, Adrian Quayle, has spoken at several recent events, including Dot Net North and AI Cafe, and after every one the question he's asked most is the same: "How can I join? How can I get involved?"

Behind the scenes, we've been refining the Manchester Way, our practical approach to helping businesses grow with AI, and preparing more of our practitioners to deliver it, starting with a members' workshop later this month.

Get involved

Whether you run a business and want help with AI, you're a practitioner who'd like to join the Guild, or you'd like to support our workshops, the Get Involved form at manchesteraiguild.com is the place to start. You can meet the team there and sign up to receive this newsletter too.

This newsletter comes out every fortnight on LinkedIn and our website, and you can follow the Guild on LinkedIn.

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