

XChange Australia: How leadership will fare in the era of intelligence

Keynote speaker and Indigenous ceremonial man Brad Twynham on the value of human judgment.



Rosalyn Page

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Image:Brad Twynham at XChange Australia

AI is making intelligence abundant, and it's shifting the source of competitive advantage from knowledge to human judgement, according to Brad Twynham, keynote speaker at this year's [XChange Australia](#).

Speaking to attendees at the Intercontinental Sydney, he said, "When intelligence becomes abundant, what becomes of human leadership? I believe we can't fully answer that question today. But I also believe that we are the generation of leaders who have to figure it out."

Twynham draws on more than 25 years of building technology systems together with the timeless wisdom of his Indigenous Australian heritage to inform his thinking about how to navigate the present moment.

Until very recently, the technology industry has been built around the scarcity of knowledge, resources, know-how, and information to solve very complex problems,

as he noted.

But what happens when your clients now have immense intelligence in the palm of

their hands and the value you've built up for years and years and years is no longer what's going to provide value to your customers?"

Twynham predicts that as technology and increasingly AI owns intelligence, judgment becomes the competitive advantage.

"Whenever something that was scarce becomes abundant, value moves. It doesn't become redundant," he added.

Ancient songlines for modern times

In Indigenous Australian culture, a songline is a map of an entire system that charts the relationship with the landscape, its resources, the plants and animals, the sky and, most importantly, each other, Twynham explained.

"Human beings have always found ways to transmit intelligence across time," said Twynham.

In the same way, modern songlines are like human relationships, where connection and collaboration are the primary means of sharing information.

He called it 'ancestral intelligence', or human AI.

"An ancestral intelligence understands the songline because it's part of the system," he said.

In Indigenous Australian belief systems, there are five different 'brains' or sources of intelligence that we can draw on to inform our human intelligence.

The 'foot brain' is our connection with the Earth, the 'groin brain' is the source of creativity, 'gut brain' is deep knowing or intuition, 'heart brain' is interconnectedness between everything and everyone and 'head brain' is to draw on each source and make sense of the world.

 As we lean on more cognitive work, technology leaders need to rethink what human leadership means.

“We need to start remembering that our intelligence is so much more than just our knowledge and understanding. We need to start amplifying all of our intelligence,” he said.

Instead of just leading with the head brain, Twynham encouraged leaders to harness all of the sources of information available to them as humans. It starts with simple rituals.

“For a couple of minutes, three times a week, take your shoes and socks off. Find a nice beach, a rock platform, some grass or a bush track and just consciously walk. Reconnect yourself with the earth,” he said.

“You'll find after doing that for a few weeks, you will see more, you will hear more, and you will develop more understanding,” he ended.

XChange Australia was held at the Intercontinental Sydney on September 16, 2026. Learn more about the day [here](#).

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