



Upskilling 150 Leaders to Drive **Operational Excellence and Strategic Growth** at the AA

The AA partnered with Cambridge Spark to run an executive upskilling programme that turned strategic AI goals into practical operational results. By combining hands-on tool practice with clear security guardrails, the AA accelerated leadership skills and built strong business momentum.



150

senior leaders upskilled across 3 cohorts to lead AI change.

Multi-Million

pound value creation unlocked via deployed capstones.

High-Touch

member care focused on by automating routine admin.

Significant

surge in leadership confidence to pilot & lead AI.



Client Profile

As a leading UK driving services provider, the AA is committed to using modern technology to improve operations and customer care. In a fast-moving digital market, the company knows that true competitive advantage comes from training its own people. By building a shared AI vocabulary across senior management, the AA ensures its high-level strategy aligns with day-to-day execution.

Setting the Ambition: AI with a Human Touch

The AA set out with a clear goal: put AI at the heart of its vision for Digital Convenience, Human Care. The goal isn't to replace the human touch, but to make work faster and simpler so teams can focus on what makes the AA special - care, creativity, and connection. AI will change how the business works, but not who it is.

To turn this vision into reality, the AA launched the Leading with AI programme, investing directly in its people to build long-term, internal capability rather than relying on external fixes. By carving out mandatory learning time, the enterprise actively tackled hesitation and gave its executive tier the practical, actionable knowledge needed to lead change within their specific teams.

Rather than letting a lack of understanding breed risk-aversion, this initiative positioned leaders to become educated risk-acceptors, empowered to move quickly, test practical applications, and guide the business into a more adaptive, efficient future.

Architecting a Human-Centred Executive Programme

Cambridge Spark worked with the AA to design a custom 12-week executive course tailored for senior leaders, focusing on building sustainable internal capability rather than relying on off-the-shelf software. The goal wasn't to turn executives into software engineers, but to demystify AI and help them master the "art of the possible."

To safely bridge theoretical concepts with commercial utility, the tech team deployed a secure instance of ChatGPT Enterprise protected by robust organisational guardrails.

This safe environment gave leaders hands-on practice building 31 custom capstone prototypes grouped across five core operational frameworks:

- **Coaches & Co-pilots:** Assistants built to help frontline and operational staff in real time.
- **Decision Intelligence:** Data tools designed to improve strategic and financial choices.
- **Knowledge & Bid Intelligence:** Search tools that speed up documentation and communications.
- **Customer Guidance:** Tools focused on improving user experience and policy clarity.
- **Operational AI:** Workflows built to streamline high-impact business tasks and remove friction.



"Cambridge Spark has been amazing managing the top-down and the most senior leaders. Marrying up top-down upskilling with bottom-up initiatives ensures everyone feels equipped and capable around AI."

Louise Benford, Chief People Officer
The AA

Driving Value Creation, Capacity Creation, and Service Improvements

The programme culminated in live prototype presentations judged by a senior panel, demonstrating a rapid evolution from isolated task automation to complex, cross-department workflows. Moving beyond personal productivity gains, graduates designed high-value solutions that solved systemic operational friction, delivering immediate returns alongside long-term strategic value across five core pillars:

- **Value Creation:** Identified opportunities for efficiency gains, commercial growth, and operational savings to deliver a high-impact, measurable financial return.
- **Capacity Creation:** Streamlined everyday operations and automated routine admin tasks, freeing up valuable staff capacity so teams can focus on delivering great care to members.
- **Service Quality & Risk Mitigation:** Enhanced service reliability and member experience while strengthening risk management through smarter decision frameworks and automated checks.
- **Measurable Leadership Growth:** Recorded up to a +53% surge in confidence for running AI pilots and testing project viability, empowering executives to lead organisational change and make data-informed decisions with clarity.



"This is business transformation. It's cultural transformation, not just technology transformation. 12 weeks ago, there was a lot of trepidation in the room. 12 weeks on, there's an air of confidence that we can do this stuff."

Nick Edwards, Group Chief Technology Officer
The AA



The Road Ahead: Lasting Capability

By investing in 150 of its senior leaders, the AA built an internal engine for ongoing innovation. Combining structured education, safe trial environments, and real business projects created a repeatable model for growth.

As these AI prototypes move into full operational use, the AA continues to strengthen its market position, proving that real competitive edge happens when technology, security, and human-centred care work together.

Read more at [CambridgeSpark.com](https://www.cambridge-spark.com)