

The Three-Column Exercise

Bonus Material from *Team as Code*

Dmitry Matyukhin

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In Chapter 11 of *Team as Code*, we introduced the idea of classifying every role in your organization into one of three categories: **AI-Native**, **AI-Augmented**, or **Irreducibly Human**. This exercise walks you through that classification — and the results will reshape how you think about your team.

The Three Columns Explained

Column 1: AI-Native

Roles where an AI agent can handle the *entire* function with minimal human oversight. These roles have clear inputs, deterministic quality criteria, and benefit from speed and scale. They're stateless: give the agent the input and the specification, it produces the output.

Examples from the book: Data analysis, content generation, keyword research, compliance checking, report creation, translation, transcription, scheduling, data entry.

Column 2: AI-Augmented

Roles where a human leads but AI accelerates the work. AI generates options, drafts initial output, handles routine subtasks. The human's value shifts from *doing* to *deciding*.

Examples from the book: Design, strategy, project management, QA, engineering. "In creative production, AI generates visual options based on a codified style guide, and artists make the creative decisions."

Column 3: Irreducibly Human

Roles that require empathy, political awareness, contextual understanding, or complex judgment that AI doesn't have — yet. These roles *benefit most* from the time freed up by AI handling the other two columns.

Examples from the book: Leadership, stakeholder relationships, creative direction, team motivation, ethical judgment, complex negotiation, culture-building.

Key insight from Chapter 11: This classification *only works if your roles are codified as functions*. If “marketing” is a blob of undefined responsibilities, you can’t separate what’s AI-native from what’s irreducibly human. Decompose first, classify second.

Guided Classification Questions

For each role or function, work through these questions:

Question 1: Can you write down the exact steps? If yes → leans AI-Native. If the process requires improvisation at every step → leans Human.

Question 2: Are the quality criteria objective and measurable? “Report delivered by Friday with zero data errors” → AI-Native. “Client feels heard and valued” → Human.

Question 3: Does it require real-time empathy or emotional intelligence? Handling a grievance, motivating a struggling team member, navigating office politics → Irreducibly Human.

Question 4: Does the output require creative *judgment* (not just creative *generation*)? Generating 20 headline options → AI-Native. Choosing which headline reflects the brand’s evolving voice → Human or Augmented.

Question 5: Would the role benefit from 24/7 availability or superhuman speed? If yes → strong AI-Native or AI-Augmented candidate.

Question 6: Does the role require context that changes daily and lives in people’s heads? If the context can be documented → AI-Augmented. If it’s genuinely tacit and relationship-dependent → Human.

Question 7: What happens if the output is 80% right? If 80% is a useful starting point for a human to refine → AI-Augmented. If 80% right means 20% wrong and that’s catastrophic → needs Human oversight.

Scoring Rubric

Count the functions in each column and calculate the percentages.

Metric	Count
Total functions listed	_____
AI-Native	_____
AI-Augmented	_____
Irreducibly Human	_____

Interpretation

More than 40% AI-Native: Your organization has significant automation potential. Start here — these are quick wins that free up human capacity for higher-value work.

More than 50% AI-Augmented: You're in the sweet spot. Focus on building AI into existing workflows rather than replacing roles entirely. The human + AI combination will outperform either alone.

More than 50% Irreducibly Human: Your work is deeply relationship-driven. AI won't replace your core — but it can handle the administrative overhead that distracts your people from doing what only they can do.

Fewer than 10 functions listed: You probably haven't decomposed enough. Go back to Chapter 5 and break your roles down further. Most organizations have 15–30 distinct functions.

From the book: "The companies that win the next decade won't be the ones with the most people or the best AI. They'll be the ones with the cleanest interface between human and machine — the ones who treated their organization like well-designed software from the start."

Next Steps

1. For each AI-Native function, write a role definition an AI agent could execute today (use the Role Definition Template)
2. For each AI-Augmented function, identify the specific subtasks AI could handle
3. For Irreducibly Human functions, ask: what administrative burden can AI lift so these people can focus?
4. Revisit this exercise every quarter — the boundaries shift as AI capabilities evolve