

# WHEN YOU CANNOT PROMISE ANYONE THEIR JOB

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Three pieces from *Judgment Day*, for the manager who has to say something this week. The first is the argument. The second is the script. The third is the meeting that keeps it honest after the first conversation is over.

## 1 / THE ARGUMENT

Protecting relevance is the right goal. You should also be honest that it is not always on offer.

Mercer's 2026 research found that 99% of CEOs expect AI to reduce their workforce, while only 32% believe their teams can handle the transition. If you sit anywhere in the middle of an organization, there will be quarters when you cannot promise anyone their job, cannot promise the role will still exist, and are not permitted to speculate about either. Nearly every piece of advice written on this subject assumes a reassuring message is available to you. Often it is not, and the advice quietly stops being useful at the exact moment you need it.

Here is what to do when you have nothing reassuring to say. Say the true thing plainly and early, because the alternative is that your team learns it from a press release or a colleague in another department. Tell them what you know, what you do not know, and when you will know more. Then meet that date even when the answer has not changed, because showing up on schedule with no news is itself information: it tells people you are not hiding. Never trade a comforting sentence today for your credibility next quarter. Credibility is the only asset you will have left when the decision actually lands.

Then name what you can control and commit to it out loud. You may not be able to promise a job. You can promise that people hear about changes from you before they hear about them anywhere else. You can promise to spend real budget on their skills while they are still here rather than after a decision is made. You can promise that if a role goes away you will work the internal market for that person as hard as you would for yourself, and that you will put that in writing to whoever is deciding.

Then do those things. A leader who admits uncertainty and keeps three small promises will hold a team together through a bad year. A leader who offers reassurance they cannot back loses the room the first time reality contradicts them, and does not get it back.

## 2 / THE SCRIPT

Hey team, as you've probably noticed, AI is moving fast. Our job is not to panic, and not to pretend it's not happening. Our job is to lead.

Over the next 90 days, we're running a tactical readiness sprint. We're assessing where we stand, trying smart experiments, and learning together.

This is not a tech project. This is a leadership priority. Our goal is to protect what matters: our people, our clients, and our future.

You're not expected to be AI experts. You're expected to engage, ask smart questions, and show up with courage. Let's get to work.

## 3 / THE WEEKLY MEETING

Run this every week. Keep it short, make progress visible, repeat.

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Successes (What worked?)            | • Concerns (Where are we stuck?) |
| • AI Experiments (What did we try?)   | • Metrics (What moved?)          |
| • Goals (Next 7 days)                 | • Kudos (Recognize wins)         |
| • Tactical Decisions (Make them here) | • Key Takeaways + Next Meeting   |

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**The rest of it is in the book.** The 90-day sprint, the tactical briefing, the risk and role matrix, and the chapter on what to do when the decision has already been made. [goalboss.com/judgment-day](https://goalboss.com/judgment-day)