

# Teach Stanford to Build

## *A Hands-On AI-Readiness Workshop Pilot for Stanford GSB*

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### Executive Summary

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Stanford GSB already teaches students to *understand* artificial intelligence, and does it well — and through the student-led **AI@GSB** initiative, its students are already organizing to teach each other how to use these tools. The natural next layer — the one frontier companies are racing on right now — is teaching them to *build and ship* with it. This proposal is for a way to add that layer as an **enhancement to the curriculum, not a change to it.**

I'd suggest beginning with a pilot:

1. **The MBA Workshop Series (the pilot)** — a short series of practitioner-led, hands-on workshops that build on one another, where MBAs take concepts from the classroom and turn them into shipped, real artifacts. The fastest way to prove the idea, generate student demand, and let the faculty shape what it becomes.
2. **The Builder's MBA (where it grows)** — if the workshops resonate, a full elective, co-designed with faculty, in which every session ships an artifact and the arc ends with a live Demo Day.
3. **Executive Education (in parallel, complementary)** — should it be useful, a hands-on intensive offered *in support of* the Exec Ed team's existing work, never in competition with it.

**A note on scope.** Everything below is **representative** — it illustrates what I would teach and how, and serves as a menu the pilot would draw a few sessions from. The exact content, number of sessions, sequencing, length, format, and academic home would be designed jointly with Stanford GSB faculty and are easily tailored to the calendar and student constraints. The program home is intentionally left open for discussion.

I come to this as a practitioner doing the work at the frontier today — and as a **Stanford alum coming home to the Farm**. I am Head of Product for alexa.com, Amazon's consumer conversational-AI assistant and its answer to ChatGPT, and I lead the cultural shift inside Amazon's product organization that helps product managers move from writing requirements to building product directly. I hold a B.S. in Computer Science from Stanford and an MBA from Harvard — comfortable in both the code and the boardroom — and I live a short drive from campus in Menlo Park.

This document covers the market landscape, the core learnings and applications for students, the representative session arc, learning outcomes, the fit with Stanford GSB, and the proposed pilot.

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# 1. Market Landscape – Beyond the Obvious

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The faculty question is no longer *whether* to teach AI. It is *which* AI education compounds in value. Three observations worth weighing:

**The literacy tier is filling up — and Stanford already leads it.** Stanford Executive Education and Stanford Online offer a strong, deep catalog: *Harnessing AI for Breakthrough Innovation and Strategic Impact*, *AI-Driven Leadership: Strategies for the Future*, *Leading with AI: Strategy and Product Transformation*, plus the professional-education programs of the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered AI (HAI). These are excellent, largely online, and designed to teach leaders to understand, strategize about, and deploy AI. The market — HBS, Wharton, Kellogg, online platforms — is converging on this same "literacy" offering.

**Literacy is depreciating; fluency is appreciating.** The half-life of "AI awareness" is short. A 2026 MBA who can merely *describe* large language models has a skill the next cohort gets for free. What appreciates is the ability to *produce*: to take an idea and make it real — a deck, a working app, a film, a data analysis, an autonomous agent — alone, in hours, without an engineering team. This is a durable, hard-to-commoditize capability. Dean Sarah Soule has made the parallel point that as AI expands, the MBA's value rests on uniquely human judgment, creativity, and wisdom — and the fastest way to build that judgment about AI is to *build with it*.

**Inside frontier companies, the job itself is being rewritten.** At Amazon, I am living a shift that is only beginning to reach the classroom: the highest-leverage product people increasingly build the prototype, the tool, the analysis, the pitch themselves, with AI, in an afternoon. The constraint on a modern manager is less and less headcount — and more and more whether they personally know how to build. Programs that add hands-on *building* on top of literacy will be distinctive in the next decade of management education.

**Implication for Stanford GSB:** build on an existing strength. Stanford already leads on the literacy tier through Exec Ed, Stanford Online, HAI, and a faculty at the source of the technology — and the student-run AI@GSB initiative shows the demand is already bottom-up. A hands-on "build and ship" layer is a natural, additive complement — it differentiates the MBA experience and creates a recruiting and employer-branding asset, with no overlap or competition with the existing online programs. Starting as a pilot keeps the risk low and puts the faculty in the driver's seat.

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## 2. Key Learnings & Applications for Students

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The work is organized around a single promise: *students leave able to build, deploy, and own — not merely discuss*. Nine concrete capabilities, each tied to a hands-on deliverable a student ships:

Capability	What they ship
Decks & documents	A board-ready, narrative-first strategy deck
Landing pages	A live, deployed page that validates demand
Web applications	A working internal tool, spreadsheet → software
iOS & mobile	A tappable iPhone prototype
Video & motion	A produced 60-second film
Audio & podcasts	A published podcast episode
Brainstorming & strategy	A red-teamed recommendation with an AI "dissent memo"
Data & analysis	A dashboard answering a live business question
Agents & automation	A multi-step agent that runs recurring work

Wrapped around the building craft are two leadership capabilities that distinguish a *general manager* from a power user:

- **Leading adoption** — the change-management playbook for turning a skeptical team into builders, drawn directly from my work at Amazon.
- **Judgment, risk & ethics** — verifying, red-teaming, and governing AI output; knowing when "the AI said so" is malpractice.

### 3. The Pilot – An MBA Workshop Series

The right first step is not a new course. It is a **pilot**: a short series of practitioner-led workshops, designed *with* the faculty, that sit alongside the existing curriculum as an enhancement.

- **Shape.** A handful of hands-on workshops that build on one another — for example, *ship a board-ready deck*, then *stand up a live landing page*, then *build a working internal tool*, then *put an agent to work*. Each one ends with every student having shipped a real artifact.
- **Role.** I come in as an industry practitioner / guest, in support of the faculty — they steer the framing, the fit with their courses, and where it goes next.
- **Why a pilot.** It is low-risk and easy to say yes to. It tests demand directly, gives the faculty something concrete to react to and shape, and — if it resonates — creates a natural, student-driven case for growing it into something bigger. AI@GSB's existing student energy makes it likely to fill the room.
- **Timing.** Designed to respect the academic calendar; a workshop series inside an existing term is a realistic, lightweight entry point.
- **Home.** Intentionally open. A practitioner workshop track, a faculty member's elective, an MSx complement, or a partnership with AI@GSB are all natural fits — but the right home is a faculty decision.

The sections that follow show the *full* representative arc this pilot would draw from — included so faculty can see the depth behind it, not as the opening ask.

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## 4. The Full Arc – The Builder's MBA (what the pilot grows into)

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*The representative full elective the workshop pilot would draw a few sessions from. Length, session count, format, and academic home would all be designed jointly with the faculty; nothing here is fixed.*

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Build and deploy working artifacts — decks, landing pages, web and mobile apps, video, audio, dashboards, and agents — independently, without writing traditional code.
2. Diagnose where AI creates real leverage in a function and where it introduces risk, and make defensible build-vs-buy-vs-skip decisions.
3. Lead AI adoption inside an organization: redesign roles, drive behavior change, and overcome cultural resistance.
4. Apply executive judgment to AI outputs — verifying, red-teaming, and governing them rather than trusting them blindly.
5. Assemble a personal "AI operating system": a repeatable toolkit and workflow that compounds their leverage after the course ends.

### Representative Session Arc

*Illustrative sessions — sequence and count would be set jointly with the faculty.*

1. **The Builder's Mindset — From Managing the Work to Making It.** The shift from managing makers to making. *Build: your first AI-built one-pager, live.*
2. **Prompting as a Management Skill.** Context, constraints, examples, critique loops. *Build: a reusable brief library.*
3. **Decks That Persuade.** Narrative-first board-ready decks. *Build: a 12-slide strategy deck on a real decision.*
4. **Landing Pages & Brand.** Validate demand before funding it. *Build: a live landing page with analytics + signup.*
5. **Web Apps Without Engineers.** Spreadsheet → deployed application. *Build: a working internal tool.*
6. **Mobile in Your Pocket.** Concept → runnable iOS prototype. *Build: an interactive iOS prototype.*
7. **Video & Motion.** The 60-second story. *Build: a produced 60-second video.*
8. **Audio & Podcasts.** Owning the highest-trust channel. *Build: a published podcast episode.*
9. **Brainstorming & Strategy.** The model as sparring partner and red-teamer. *Build: a red-teamed recommendation + dissent memo.*
0. **Data Without a Data Team.** Messy data → defensible decision. *Build: an analysis + dashboard.*

1. **Agents & Automation.** Hiring software that works for you. *Build: a working multi-step agent.*
2. **Leading the Change.** The Amazon adoption playbook. *Build: a 90-day adoption plan.*
3. **Risk, Ethics & Judgment.** The responsible builder. *Build: a governance + risk memo.*
4. **Demo Day — Ship It.** Live capstone demos, judged by operators and investors.

### Assessment (Illustrative)

The course is portfolio-based: students graduate with shipped work, not just a grade. A representative weighting:

Component	Weight	What it proves
Build Sprints (each session)	40%	The muscle of building, repeated until reflexive
Capstone — "Ship It" Project	30%	A real, deployed product demoed live
Adoption Plan + Governance Memo	15%	Leadership and judgment, not just building
Build Journal & Peer Reviews	15%	Reflection and critique

## 5. Executive Education (in parallel, complementary)

*A representative in-person intensive for senior leaders — offered only if useful, and entirely in support of the Exec Ed team's existing work.*

Executive Education is its own track with its own rhythm, and Stanford already has real momentum here — from *Harnessing AI for Breakthrough Innovation and Strategic Impact* at the GSB to Stanford Online's AI-leadership programs. I mention this only as an optional, additive complement: a hands-on, build-something intensive where leaders personally ship real artifacts and leave with a 90-day plan. Whether, when, and how to do this would be entirely the Exec Ed team's call. A representative arc:

- **Unlearn & Reframe.** The leverage shift; a live idea → deployed build in under an hour; where the real leverage is.
- **Build the Core Four.** A board-ready deck; a live landing page; an internal web tool.
- **Voice, Story & Data.** Short-form video and a podcast; plain-English data analysis; AI as strategy sparring partner.
- **Agents & Automation.** Build an agent that runs a recurring task; guardrails; risk, IP, and duty of care.
- **Lead the Change.** The Amazon playbook; workshop a 90-day adoption plan; capstone demos and commitments.

**Deliverable:** a portfolio of shipped artifacts plus a 90-day adoption plan. Open-enrollment and custom in-company versions possible.

## 6. Why Now, Why Stanford GSB, Why Me

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- **A dean focused on exactly this seam.** Dean Sarah Soule — a scholar of organizational behavior and a public voice on AI, leadership, and the durable human skills the MBA must sharpen — and the student-led AI@GSB initiative she has championed make a hands-on "build with AI" pilot align naturally with the moment.
- **Stanford already leads on literacy.** HAI, Stanford Online, a deep Exec Ed AI catalog, and a faculty at the source of the technology provide the credibility and infrastructure to build on. This pilot adds to that foundation rather than competing with any of it.
- **Low-risk, faculty-led.** A workshop pilot is easy to try and easy to shape. If it earns student demand, there is a path to grow it — and if a formal teaching role ever made sense, Stanford GSB's lecturer and practitioner tracks exist for exactly this kind of industry contributor. That is a destination, not the opening ask.
- **Recruiting and brand upside.** "The MBA where you learn to build with AI" is an admissions and employer story that travels. Student-shipped work becomes the proof.
- **A practitioner, not a commentator — and an alum.** I don't just teach this shift, I lead it daily, as Head of Product for a frontier AI product and as the person helping Amazon PMs become builders. And I learned to build at Stanford; I'd be coming home to teach it.

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## 7. The Ask

I'd welcome a short conversation with the right faculty champion to scope a workshop pilot — a focused, hands-on first step that's easy to say yes to, with the faculty steering the shape and the home, and with a natural tie-in to AI@GSB. I'm glad to follow Stanford GSB's lead on format and timing, to bring a representative session plan and a sample of student-shippable output, and to provide references on request.

I'd love to help Stanford MBAs put their classroom learning into action.

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