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OPINION

The One Non-Negotiable Ingredient for AI Success

The successful use of AI requires something deeper and more universal than laws

By **Dominique Shelton Leipzig** | June 22, 2026

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Last week, I invited the CEO of a major cloud company to our [Digital Trust Summit](#), which will take place in Brussels on June 24. Business leaders and policymakers will discuss achieving AI success by preventing the known harms of artificial intelligence. He scrolled through the speaker list, looked up, and asked: "This gathering is about AI safety and trust?" I confirmed it.

His answer was decisive: "We will not be in our place. Safety is not our focus. Our priority is deploying AI."

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Dominique Shelton Leipzig is the founder and CEO of Global Data Innovation, where she advises CEOs and board members about successful AI deployment. Her fourth book, "TRUST: Responsible AI, Innovation, Privacy & Data Leadership" won the getAbstract 2024 Best Business Impact Book.

You might assume he was American. He was European. And he is not alone on either side of the Atlantic.

I am an attorney who has spent 35 years defending global companies through privacy, cybersecurity and now AI disasters. So when I read [Dario Amodè's recent call](#) for rapid adoption of AI legislation so society can focus on how [AI could transform the world for the better](#), I agreed. And I worried.

[AI laws and frameworks already exist in 100 countries](#) across six continents. But laws alone will not get us there. Because the successful use of AI requires something deeper and more universal than laws. It requires one non-negotiable ingredient: Trust.

When laws are treated as futile and risks as inevitable, leaders stop working to prevent problems and instead push governance to the margins of the business

rather than its core. Consider cyber: Global cyber laws have been on the books for a decade, and companies have [spent billions](#) on certifications, audits and tools. Yet cybercrime now costs the global economy [more than \\$10 trillion a year](#), triple what it was a decade ago.

Cyber was the warning for the untrustworthy AI future that's rushing toward us. I tell my clients: The AI incident waiting to happen in your company has already happened somewhere else. It can stop there, or you can repeat it.

Since 2023, [thousands of AI incidents have become public](#), including the med-tech company whose AI [allegedly botched over 100 cranial surgeries](#), and the restaurant chain whose AI exposure of [64 million records](#) knocked 7% off its stock.

In technical documents called model system cards, which unfortunately almost no executives read, AI companies publish their error rates, which range from roughly 23% to 79% on factual tests. See [OpenAI o3/o4-mini system card](#), [GPT-5 system card](#), [Gemini 2.5 Pro model card](#), [Claude system card](#).

At the low end, that is one wrong answer in four. No payroll or billing system on earth would survive that. Why are companies replacing employees with AI systems whose own manufacturers disclose disqualifying failure rates? Because the numbers live in documents no one in the boardroom has read, even though courts are starting to see complaints attempting to [hold board directors to personal account](#) for AI governance failures.

To the detriment of all of us, almost no one at the oversight level is paying the right kind of attention. Companies [have spent over \\$1 trillion on AI since 2023](#), yet [95% report no measurable earnings increase](#). Consumers notice: [68% lack confidence in AI customer interactions](#). Workers notice too: [More than half of Americans fear AI will take their household's jobs](#), and AI is now [the No. 1 stated reason for U.S. job cuts](#).

However, there is another side to the story, an optimistic side.

Companies leading with trust are winning. **Anthropic** made responsible [AI its differentiator and reached a \\$1 trillion valuation](#). **Schneider Electric** requires every [AI initiative to prove value and governance from inception](#); nine of its factories are now [World Economic Forum Lighthouses](#). **Maersk's** trust-governed AI [cut vessel downtime 30%](#), saving over \$300 million annually. Brussels' own **Collibra** [built AI governance into a \\$6 billion company](#). Trust first, unicorn second. That is the sequence that works.

Yes, let's call for legislation, as Mr. Amodoi does. But let's not wait for it. [Uninterrupted monitoring of accuracy standards](#) can catch hallucinations before they cause harm. [Guardian agents](#) can flag cyber vulnerabilities in agentic AI. [Registries now exist](#) to avoid training on protected material or [negotiate fair IP licenses](#), and there are [tools](#) to prompt employees to fact-check questionable AI-

generated responses. The AI incidents waiting to hit your company are preventable. The blueprint exists. What is missing is the decision to use it.

Above all, recognize this: AI can still scale to real success at lightning speed — at the speed of trust.

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