

# What Your Job Title Doesn't Capture

From The Next Move: An Honest Guide to AI and Your Career · Neil Addison · You & AI, 2026

*Abridged from the Working Picture, the book's self-assessment for working professionals.*

The first two parts of the Working Picture are analytical. You break your work down into its tasks, then place each task on a spectrum according to how exposed it is to automation. The categories are given to you; your job is to sort.

This part works differently. It asks you to look for things you may not know to look for: capabilities and knowledge your role has never asked you to name. They may not feel like professional skills, because no employer has treated them as such. They sit in the gap between what you're paid to do and what you can actually do, and for many people that gap is wider than they think.

The questions below are open on purpose. A framework can't anticipate the answers, because the answers are specific to you. Take them slowly. The answer that arrives after a minute's thought is often different from the first one.

## **What do people come to you for that isn't in your job description?**

Leave aside the formal requests: the tickets, the assignments, the agenda items. Think about the informal ones. The colleague who asks your view before a decision that technically has nothing to do with you. The person from another department who rings because you can explain something they need to understand. The junior member of staff who comes to you rather than their own manager because you make complicated things clear.

These conversations are evidence of a capability your organisation uses without recognising. They happen because people have learned that you can do something valuable that your title, grade and job description don't capture. Being informal doesn't make it less real. If anything it's more revealing, because people only ask for informal help from someone they trust to give it.

## **What would stop working smoothly if you disappeared tomorrow?**

Not the unfinished tasks. Those can be reassigned: someone else can write the report, attend the meeting, process the invoice. The question is about the function you serve rather than the work you do. The coordination that happens without being scheduled. The early warning when something is going wrong. The memory that stops the same mistake being made twice. The relationship with the difficult client that nobody else has managed to build.

This kind of contribution is easy to overlook, because it prevents problems rather than solving them, and a problem that never arrives goes unnoticed. The absence of the person who was preventing it is usually noticed within days, in ways that are hard to pin down because the contribution was never defined.

## **What do you know about your organisation, your sector or your clients that took years to learn and couldn't be written into a handover note?**

Some professional knowledge can only be gained by being present, over time, in one place. How decisions actually get made, as opposed to how the governance chart says they do. Which relationships have real influence and which only look as if they do. The sense that a market is turning before the figures confirm it. The ability to hear a client's real concern in the way they phrase a question.

To the person who has it, this doesn't feel like a skill. It feels like common sense, or experience, or knowing how things work. It isn't common. It comes from years of paying attention in a particular setting, and it is very hard to replicate, whether by a new hire, a consultant or an AI system. It sits at the least exposed end of the spectrum, and most people have more of it than they've ever had reason to count.

## **If someone who didn't know your job title watched you work for a week, what would they say you were good at?**

This question steps outside the professional frame altogether. Set aside what your employer values, what your industry recognises and what your CV says. What would an intelligent observer with no preconceptions identify as your particular abilities?

The answer often surprises people, because it strips away the categories that working life imposes. The observer wouldn't say "she's good at financial analysis". They'd describe the ability underneath: "she finds the pattern in complicated information and explains it so other people can act on it." Or "he gets people who disagree to common ground without anyone feeling they've given way." Or "she sees what's about to go wrong before anyone else does."

Those aren't job descriptions. They're capabilities, they travel with you, and they're often what matters most about you. They also tend to be missing from your annual review, and from your LinkedIn profile.

## **What this changes**

If you've given these questions time, the picture may have shifted. The exposure spectrum showed you where your current work sits. This shows you what else you have to offer. For some people the two pictures roughly match: the capabilities they have are the ones their role uses. For others the gap is large. They have judgment, knowledge and ability their role doesn't ask for, doesn't see and has never named, and it sits somewhere very different on the spectrum from the work that fills their week.

That isn't a guarantee of safety. If your role is highly exposed and it contracts, capabilities you've never named won't protect you, and they're hard to present to a new employer. But they change the picture. Decisions made on exposure alone are made with half the information, and the point of this exercise is to give you the other half.