

KEYNOTE SPEAKER • AUTHOR OF THE NEXT RUNG

Chris Simmance

AI realist, builder & author

I build the AI tools that displace knowledge workers, advise the firms adopting them, and wrote the book about what that costs.



A practitioner's honest read on AI and the future of knowledge work, with something an audience can actually do about it.

The Next Rung
Practical Inspiration Publishing
Out January 2027

The Builder's Dilemma

Chris builds AI tools that displace knowledge workers. He advises the firms adopting them. And he wrote a book about what that does to the people on the receiving end. **He leads with that tension rather than hiding it.**

He is the founder of **Orca**, an AI operations platform now used inside professional services firms, which is to say he builds the thing that prevents the next hire. He advises agency principals and firm owners through the **OMG Center**, where the honest conclusion is often “you need fewer people”. Then he goes home and writes **The Next Rung**, about the mid-career professionals those decisions land on.

That contradiction is the credibility, not something to apologise for. He is not a doom-monger and not an AI booster. He is the practitioner in the room who has done the thing, tells the audience the truth about it, and gives them a place to start.

About Chris

Chris Simmance builds the tools that displace knowledge work, advises the firms adopting them, and writes honestly about what that does to the people in the middle. He founded Orca, an AI operations platform used inside professional services firms, and advises agency principals and firm owners on AI adoption through the OMG Center. His book, *The Next Rung*, is out in January 2027 with Practical Inspiration Publishing. It argues that AI absorbs the orchestration layer of knowledge work first, that the old mechanism for moving displaced workers up the ladder is breaking, and that the people most exposed are mid-career professionals with mortgages and no memory of hardship. A Freeman of the City of London, he has spoken across Europe to thousands of people.

HOW CHRIS WORKS WITH EVENTS

Formats

- Keynote, 30 to 60 minutes
- Fireside chat or on-stage Q&A
- Leadership workshop or breakout
- Panel contributor or chair

Audiences

- Conference main stage
- Leadership teams and offsites
- Professional services firms
- Membership bodies and students

Practicalities

- UK-based, available internationally
- Topics: AI and the future of work
- Tailors the keynote to the audience
- Booking via Encore Speakers

Three talks

A natural arc across the three, or any one as a standalone keynote. Dilemma, then audit, then direction. Each is built to leave a room with something to do, not something to fear.

01

The Builder's Dilemma: what AI is really doing to knowledge work

The honest insider view, told by someone building the tools. Why this automation wave behaves differently from every one before it, and why the orchestration layer of knowledge work goes first. No scare, no sales pitch, just what he can see from where he is standing.

YOUR AUDIENCE WILL LEAVE ABLE TO

- Explain why the historical mechanism that re-employed displaced workers is breaking this time.
 - See which roles sit in the blast radius, and why the educated and well-paid are hit first.
 - Tell the difference between adopting AI and redesigning around it, and why only one changes the headcount.
-

02

The Honest Audit: your real exposure to AI displacement

Most people ask “could AI do my job”. That is the wrong question. The right one is whether the economics make it rational for your employer to replace what you do within your working life. Chris turns that into a practical audit you can run on a role, a team, or a whole firm, at the task level rather than the job title.

YOUR AUDIENCE WILL LEAVE ABLE TO

- Run a task-level audit that separates what AI absorbs from the judgement, context and relationships it does not.
 - Replace a gut feeling with a number they can act on.
 - Spot the dual-income and fixed-cost risks that turn a job loss into a household crisis.
-

03

Direction, Not Prediction: how to position for what's coming

Nobody can predict exactly how the next decade plays out, and betting on one outcome is how people get caught out. Positioning for several is how they stay safe. Chris sets out what survives, what does not, and the no-regrets moves that hold up whichever way the market breaks.

YOUR AUDIENCE WILL LEAVE ABLE TO

- Know which capabilities hold their value when credentials commoditise.
- Build runway: owned assets, trust networks, lower fixed costs, range over narrow specialism.
- Apply the navigator test that separates resilient positioning from optimising a dying process.
- Walk out with a short, ranked list of actions and a reason to start this week.

A clear read on AI and their own work, and a short list of things to do about it. Not vibes, not fear.

He has built the tools, sat in the boardrooms, and written the book. The credibility comes from doing the thing, not reading about it.

Plain-spoken and specific, carried with dry humour. He works to the audience in front of him and consistently over-delivers on the brief.

SPEAKING CREDITS

Keynote, Raleigh Lecture, Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs · Drapers' Hall · 2026

Pärnu Management Conference · Estonia · leadership keynote · 2024

Earlier and international range	· UnGagged (London, rated one of the highest-scoring sessions), inOrbit (Slovenia), 3XE Digital (Ireland), Booking Manager Summit, International Charter Expo
---------------------------------	---

Spoken across Europe to thousands of people.



WHAT PEOPLE SAY

From the people who have booked him

“More knowledge of how the internet works in his little finger than Brin, Page and Zuckerberg combined. See him now. Or don’t, and see sales suffer.”

Janusz Stabik · GYDA

“Chris is an entertaining, enthusiastic and informative speaker, who manages to fully engage the audience. Even with knowledge on the topic, I was furiously scribbling down notes during his presentation...”

Nick Wilsdon
Search Product Owner, Vodafone Group

“Chris always brings great actionable insights into his talks in a whirlwind flurry of humour, data and real-world examples... It’s always a pleasure working with Chris, on stage or on a project.”

Jennifer Hoffman
Marketing Director, DeepCrawl

“Chris is one of his kind, with his deep knowledge... and his familiar tone of voice. He will charm you from the beginning till the end of his presentations.”

Fernando Angulo
Head of International Partnerships, SEMrush

Chris was the perfect choice to deliver The 2026 Raleigh Lecture, the keynote of our prestigious conference for year 12 and 13 students. As part of our ‘AI for Good?’ theme Chris delivered an engaging and thought-provoking talk which had the audience on the edge of their seats at times. Delivered in his authentic and charismatic style, his content was stimulating and entertaining while being both challenging and reassuring for our young audience. - Tee Dobinson. Event Organiser & Education Committee Chair of The Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs

WATCH CHRIS SPEAK



Raleigh Lecture. Scan the code, or watch at omg.center/YT1.

Short-form clips, 8k+ views: omg.center/TK1, omg.center/TK2, omg.center/TK3.

THE BOOK

The Next Rung



PRACTICAL INSPIRATION PUBLISHING · OUT JANUARY 2027

A clear-eyed account of what AI is doing to mid-career knowledge work, written by someone building the tools that do it.

The Next Rung argues that AI absorbs the orchestration layer of knowledge work first, and that the old mechanism for moving displaced workers up to the next rung is breaking. The people in the blast radius are mid-career professionals with mortgages and no memory of hardship. Chris writes from inside the contradiction: making the tools, and counting the cost.

Pre-order and details: thenextrung.co

PRE-ORDER & STAY CLOSE TO THE LAUNCH

Pre-order at thenextrung.co. The Next Rung newsletter runs weekly on Substack, same voice as the book. Launch party 11 January 2027, on sale 18 January.