A TCS Company
octara
Trainings | Consultancy | Digital Transformation
Helping You Succeed!

octara.com

e-Newsletter November 2026 | Monthly Issue - 112



Jamil Janjua,
Chief Editor
janjua05@gmail.com

Dear Reader,

In our lead piece this edition the **Clayton Christensen Institute** celebrates the value of cross pollination when it comes to brainstorming strategy and tactics, and writes about the many learning that bloomed at its first Innovation Summit, epitomized by the question what does a candy bar, a college, and an AI startup have in common?

Leaders from more than 100 organizations filled Harvard's David Rubenstein Treehouse. Cross-field conversations happened all day, and the insights that hit hardest often came from someone else's market, letting people see their own challenges from the outside, with fresh eyes and fewer assumptions.

In our next piece, **Diane Brady** talks about what CEOs learned about AI, work, and legacy from their own Gen Z kids. He co-hosted a "Generations" dinner where CEOs from a broad range of industries each brought a Gen Z child. The goal was to have an informal conversation about life, leadership and the future of work. He was struck by the level headedness and thoughtfulness of the younger generation when it comes to topics like is AI going to change the world.

ESG may be fading, but moral leadership isn't, **Diane Brady** asserts in the third piece, and discusses Dov Seidman book called "HOW: Why HOW We Do Anything Means

Everything". He has built the case for creating a culture of moral leadership. Moral leadership has become increasingly important in an atmosphere of growing distrust, dishonesty, and divisiveness.

Back-of-the-book ToM brings attention to bear on the Super eL Nino and the scourge of wildfires across the world that have assumed pandemic proportions. "Clean air is not a favor" is a popular refrain in Singapore as it fights back against the acrid haze ☺

Explore JJ's curated articles for expert insights on emerging trends, managing people, business, and personal growth. Gain valuable knowledge and prepare for future challenges with confidence.

INSIDE:

Christensen Institute

What a candy bar, a college, and an AI startup have in common

The Christensen Institute | 40 min read



What CEOs learned about AI, work, and legacy from their own Gen Z kids

Diane Brady | 5 min read

ESG may be fading—but moral leadership isn't

Diane Brady | 5 min read

T.O.M Top-of-Mind

Singapore fights back against acrid haze

Adil Ahmad | 10 min read

*Editorial Compiled by **Adil Ahmad**, Special Correspondent, octara.com*
Articles selected by **Jamil Janjua***
*Creative & Design by **Jamil Janjua** & **Nazim Ansari***
Feedback: info@octara.com

October Newsletter:
What a candy bar, a college, and an AI startup have in common
(our first Innovation Summit!)



The Clayton Christensen Institute | 40 min read

You had to be there. (Here's the next best thing.)

Last month, we held our first-ever Christensen Institute Innovation Summit. Leaders from more than 100 organizations filled Harvard's David Rubenstein Treehouse: investors and educators, health care executives and software developers, philanthropists from Colombia and venture investors from Nigeria, leaders from The Home Depot, Medtronic, Live Nation, and NOAA, plus school districts, universities, and startups from more than a dozen sectors.

On paper, that's an unlikely room. A school district leader and a medtech strategist don't usually swap notes on their hardest problems. But at the Summit, cross-field conversations like that happened all day, and they led to one of the biggest takeaways we heard from attendees: the insights that hit hardest often came

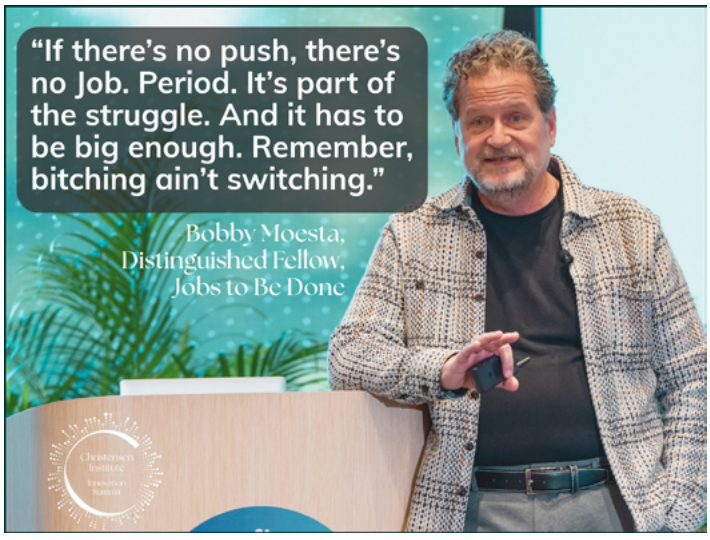
from someone else's market. Seeing the theory applied to a candy bar or a software company let people see their own challenges from the outside, with fresh eyes and fewer assumptions.

Clay always said the theories don't tell you what to think; they teach you how to think. Sometimes the clearest view of your own market is from inside someone else's.

If you were in the room, thank you, because your questions made the day. If you weren't, here's a taste of what you missed. And pencil in fall 2027: we'll be sharing the exact date for next year's Summit in the coming weeks.

From Snickers to SNHU: The keynote everyone keeps talking about

Why a candy bar, a software company, and a college have more in common than you'd think.



Bobby Moesta, distinguished fellow for Jobs to Be Done research at the Christensen Institute and founder and CEO of The Re-Wired Group, worked alongside Clay for almost three decades and has helped launch more than 3,500 products, services, and businesses. His morning keynote was the talk attendees discussed most, and it's drawing a crowd on our YouTube channel, too.

The reason was range. In a single hour, Bobby walked through why people choose a Snickers over a Milky Way, how QuickBooks found its real customers, how Intercom rebuilt itself for the AI era, and the five very different jobs students hire a college like Southern New Hampshire University to do. While they're fundamentally different markets, they all share the same underlying truth:

"People don't buy products. They hire them to make progress in their life."

Bobby is a born storyteller in the Clay tradition (one of our favorite lines: "The greatest lie I was ever told in college was build it and they will come"), and even at just over an hour, it's well worth the watch. But if you're short on time, jump to:

- 6:50 The struggling moment, and why it's the seed of every innovation
- 15:43 The Forces of Progress: push, pull, anxiety, and habit
- 27:10 Snickers vs. Milky Way
- 41:17 SNHU and the five jobs of choosing a college
- 52:20 Jobs to Be Done in the age of AI

Watch Bobby's keynote

Is AI Disruptive? Wrong Question.

The HBS seminar you didn't have to apply to.

After lunch, Michael B. Horn, co-founder and board chair of the Institute, sat



down with Rich Alton, strategic advisor on emerging research, for a conversation worthy of its Harvard address.

Rich set the tone early: "For a theory nerd, this is like a Super Bowl right now... Get your popcorn."

Their argument: the question everyone keeps asking, "Is AI disruptive?", can't be answered as asked. As Rich put it, you need three things before the theory even applies: a technological enabler, a business model, and a Job to Be Done. "When people ask, is such and such a disruptive technology? You need to better identify the context."

Michael brought the history: Kodak didn't miss digital photography; it used digital to sell photo paper for years before the world flipped on it. Steam spent its early life helping sailing ships limp along when the wind died, long before it replaced sail. "Almost every single technology that comes out has both a hybrid phase and a disruptive phase," he said. AI is following the same script.

At under 30 minutes, it's the perfect lunch-break watch. Jump to **11:20** for what actually makes an innovation disruptive, or **24:41** for whether AI will replace human workers.

Watch Michael and Rich

Three Questions from the Room

What our attendees wanted to know.



Bobby told the audience that Clay kept him around because he never stopped asking questions. Our attendees brought that same spirit, hunting for anomalies all day and sending in more questions for our closing Q&A than we had time to answer. However, three stood out for anyone working on innovation.

1. How can anyone stay competitive in the age of AI?

The market is flooding with supply-side products: more features, more tools, more "AI-powered" everything. Yet, the edge will go to whoever understands the demand side, or why people pull something into their lives in the first place.

Michael made the same case at lunch: the most enduring products "will be those that actually spend a lot of that time up front really understanding that struggling moment and purpose build around it." Rich pointed to one of Clay's favorite examples, IKEA, which sells commodity furniture yet runs a remarkably profitable business because it nails a single job: help me furnish my apartment today, in one trip.

So how do you actually see the demand side? Bobby closed his keynote with three tips drawn from the core tenets of Jobs to Be Done theory:

1. Find your customers' struggling moments. "The struggling moment is the seed for all innovation... Struggling moments are everywhere."
2. Think right to left. Start with the progress your customer is trying to make, and the forces pushing and pulling them (The Forces of Progress), then work backward to your product.
3. Choose what to suck at. "Knowing what you're not doing is just as important as what you are doing."

Or, as Bobby quoted from Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hansson's book Rework: you're better off with a kick-ass half than a half-ass whole.

2. Beyond Clay's books, what are you reading right now that's sharpening how you see markets and disruption?

Here are 10 must-reads on our shelf right now. (Bonus: one of these was co-written by two of our Summit speakers.)

- Co-Intelligence by Ethan Mollick. A Wharton professor's practical, clear-eyed guide to working alongside AI: where it genuinely helps, where it falls short, and why keeping a human in the loop matters more than ever.
- The Copyselling System by Joanna Wiebe. From the founder of Copyhackers, a step-by-step method for writing copy that sells by starting with what your customers actually think, feel, and say.
- Dual Transformation by Scott D. Anthony, Clark G. Gilbert, and Mark W. Johnson. A playbook for leaders who have to do two hard things at once: reposition today's core business while building the new one that will eventually replace it.
- Epic Disruptions by Scott D. Anthony. Disruption theory meets history: Anthony traces 11 innovations that shaped the modern world and what each one reveals about how disruption actually unfolds.
- HBR's 10 Must Reads on Business Model Innovation. Ten of HBR's best articles on rethinking how companies create and capture value, featuring "Reinventing Your Business Model" by Mark W. Johnson, Clay Christensen, and Henning Kagermann.
- The Invincible Company by Alexander Osterwalder, Yves Pigneur, Fred Etiemble, and Alan Smith. From the team behind Business Model Generation, a visual guide to running the business you have while continuously exploring the ones you'll need next.
- Job Moves by Ethan Bernstein, Michael B. Horn, and Bobby Moesta. Using Jobs to Be Done, it explains why people really switch jobs and lays out nine steps for making sure your next move is actual progress, not just a change of scenery.
- The Myth of Artificial Intelligence by Erik J. Larson. An AI researcher makes the case that today's AI, however impressive, still can't reason the way humans do, and why that gap matters more than the hype suggests.
- Obviously Awesome by April Dunford. A practical guide to product positioning: how to frame what you offer so customers immediately get why it matters to them.
- Seeing Around Corners by Rita McGrath. How to spot inflection points early, while the signals are still faint and long before they show up in the numbers.

3. Where is the Institute headed?

It's a great question, especially at a moment when generative AI can summarize nearly every big idea ever published in seconds. Summarize, yes...but discover, no.

AI can't do original research. It can't sit

down with the people we study, hear what they're actually experiencing, spot the anomaly no one has explained yet, and put the theory to the test against it. That's our work, and we're continuing to expand it.

We're also beginning to lean into something the theory suggests will become even more valuable in the age of AI. As Michael noted at lunch, whenever something becomes abundant in a value chain, the things next to it become scarce. Information is now abundant, but real connection is becoming scarcer, and more valuable. "There's a reason you all showed up here today and didn't just talk to an AI agent," he told the room.

So alongside our research, we want to bring more innovators together, in person, to work through how AI acceleration, shifting capital, and system-level constraints are changing the trajectory of disruption.
The Summit was our first step, and we're actively seeking and experimenting with new ways of growing the community from here.

Deeper Roots in 2027

Next year's Summit is already taking shape.

We'll announce the date for our 2027 Summit soon!



If you joined us this year, you're already shaping it. You told us you want more time to talk with each other, more hands-on work on real-world problems, and more on AI. We heard you, and we're already incorporating your feedback into next year's planning.

More than half of you also said you'd like to get more involved with the Institute, and we'd love that. Hit reply and tell us how, but be sure to also check out our Institute membership and programs.

If you didn't make it this year, watch the talks above, then come wrestle with these anomalies alongside us in person. You missed a good one...don't miss the next ;)

As we wrote in our Summit journal: The oldest trees in any forest reach farthest not because of where they grow, but because of how deep their roots go. In a landscape of constant disruption, the leaders who see furthest are the ones grounded in the most rigorous theory.

See you in 2027!

As always, connect with us, tag us on LinkedIn, or contact Meris Stansbury, vice president of communications: meris@christenseninstitute.org.

All our best,

The Clayton Christensen Institute Team

The Clayton Christensen Institute
<info@christenseninstitute.org>

What CEOs learned about AI, work, and legacy from their own Gen Z kids



Diane Brady | 5 min read

I recently co-hosted a "Generations" dinner at the Tribeca home of Cengage CEO Michael Hansen, where CEOs from a broad range of industries each brought a Gen Z child. The goal: to have an informal conversation about life, leadership and the future of work. Many CEOs have children at the starting point of their careers, which makes strategies around AI and talent feel both personal and professional.

Although this was a global group, it was not meant to be representative of a generation. Many of these young adults, much like my own, have grown up with opportunities and exposure to their parents' industries that others don't have. But they also have the shared experience of growing up in an era of AI, climate change, social media, geopolitical instability and opportunities our parents could never imagine.

The conversation was under the Chatham House rule, so I'll share some takeaways but not specific names or companies. There was a diversity of perspectives at the table, with some expressing deep concern about AI while others saw it as a tool. Their career choices ranged from working in a startup to managing workers on a construction site; from being the third generation to work in an industry to choosing a very different realm. We talked about legacy and values, the impact of rapid change and corrosive politics. The lessons were personal: respect for other people, giving back, humor, grit, humility.

Here are some takeaways from Hansen, who oversees a $1.6 billion-a-year global education technology company that provides content, platforms and services for learning from K-12 to higher education and workforce training. "I was struck by the level headedness and thoughtfulness of the younger generation when it comes to topics like is AI going to change the world. They were less panicked and more thoughtful than the older generation," said Hansen, who brought his two sons. "I do think that the conversation between the older generations and the CEOs became, in a way, more human and more real and less sort of this typical management jargon and lingo," he said.

I agree and look forward to having more of these dialogues, intergenerational or otherwise, through the Fortune CEO Initiative. These co-hosted dinners are just part of the editorial offerings in this fast-growing network. I love partnering on creative ideas. Reach out if you're interested to find out more ■

Source:
https://fortune.com/2026/07/29/what-ceos-learned-about-ai-from-their-gen-z-kids/

ESG may be fading—but moral leadership isn't

Diane Brady | 5 min read



Good morning. I first met Dov Seidman in 2007 when he published a book called HOW: Why **HOW We Do Anything Means Everything.** In it, he built the case for creating a culture of moral leadership, based on his philosophy and experience in building LRN, an ethics and compliance training company. As Seidman put it: "How we do anything means everything." The message resonated with leaders, especially as attention surged around "stakeholder capitalism." While interest in stakeholder capitalism ebbed amid an ESG backlash and other issues, moral leadership has become increasingly important in an atmosphere of growing distrust, dishonesty, and divisiveness. Seidman founded and chairs the How Institute for Society, which convened a group of leaders in business, academia, philanthropy and media yesterday to talk about the state of How in advance of Seidman being honored by 92NY. Because the conversation took place under the Chatham House Rule, I'll share some top-line takeaways:

Model behaviors, not values. One business leader pointed out what Seidman has long talked about with me: Generic values are meaningless in most contexts. Talk about the behaviors that you want to see modeled in interactions—in short, how people treat each other—and reward that.

Look to Minnesota. A few people mentioned the remarkable surge of civic engagement that we saw in Minnesota during the ICE raids and how that seemed to turn the tide on immigration policy. What anchored it was a sense of people being their neighbors' keeper. That hyper-local, hyper-personal sense of trust and the village green is becoming an important bulwark against the erosion of values in other realms. Several spoke about the hunger for a middle ground anchored in community.

AI requires a new type of How. We are creating synthetic workforces that have to have a moral model in which to operate. Yes, we need guidelines for humans and a way to keep us in the loop. But we also need principles, guardrails, and a stronger organizing structure for keeping agents and AI in check when the human is not there. And several shared views on what's lost when we direct AI to serve up an answer, denying ourselves the joy of discovery, education, curiosity, and the journey to reach that conclusion.

Share the light. This was the theme of the afternoon and the evening. Lots of people right now are grabbing the spotlight, redirecting the light and, in some cases, trying to turn it off. Great leaders—and I've seen this consistently over my career—make an effort to share the light so that it's a two-way conversation and others can benefit from the attention. Wise words and behavior that others notice ■

Source:

https://fortune.com/2026/05/19/how-institute-moral-leadership-ai-esg/



"Clean air is not a favor"

Singapore fights back against acrid haze

Premier Wong on the warpath

Singapore is threatening to prosecute companies responsible for some of the worst fires in years in neighboring Indonesia, as the region grows increasingly frustrated with a persistent, acrid haze that has frayed diplomatic relations (Oliver Holmes, South-east Asia correspondent, the Guardian on Google, Fri 16 Oct 2026).

"It's a man-made calamity produced by years of deliberate land clearing for cash crops, including timber and palm oil" – NYT, September 26-27, 2026

The government is distributing masks to vulnerable citizens and working with countries in the region to deal with the smoke. Clean air is not a favor is the popular refrain, with Indonesia's neighbors fed up with the acrid haze as millions are affected by smoke from the wildfires. Schools are closing, and respiratory illnesses soaring, causing diplomatic tensions to rise.

Taking corporations to task

Lawrence Wong, the Singaporean prime minister, is looking into which companies may be responsible for the fires, and exploring joint action with other countries. Singapore has no plantations or forests of its own, but several companies with concessions in Indonesia are reportedly based in the city-state.

"The powerful tribe of fossil fuel guzzling climate change deniers have been hazing Nature relentlessly, driven by an insatiable hunger for power and pelf. Well, Nature is hazing us right back" – author

The wildfires are burning through palm forests in Indonesia's West Kalimantan, with the smoke glowing orange and the fire haze affecting millions, with school closures, respiratory illness spiking and air pollution indexes reaching unhealthy levels. Haze is a persistent problem in Indonesia, but drier-than-usual conditions due to the super eL Nino mean the thick smoke has been drifting into nearby Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and Timor-Leste, and as far afield as the Philippines and Vietnam.

Man-made calamity

It's a man-made calamity produced by years of deliberate land clearing for cash crops, including timber and palm oil (NYT, September 26-27, 2026). Indonesia's West Kalimantan province contains millions of acres of peatland, a terrestrial wetland ecosystem where waterlogged, oxygen-poor (anoxic) conditions prevent plant material from fully decomposing, resulting in a net accumulation of organic matter called peat to a depth of at least 30 cm (12 in).

"We, as a species and as a planet, are now living in the future that climate scientists have been warning us about for more than half a century" – John Valiant

Across Indonesia, which shares Borneo with Malaysia and Brunei, the conversion of this peatland into farmland has dried them out and transformed them into tinder boxes, with tens of thousands of acres incinerated by wildfires so far this year in this province alone, fuelled by an unforgiving drought brought by a powerful eL Nino climate pattern.

"Slash-and-burn" agriculture

The Center of Economic and Law Studies, an Indonesian think-tank, estimates that the country's wildfires from January to August could inflict up to USD6.9 billion in economic and health care costs, a figure which is expected to climb if the burning continues through to the end of the year. Indonesia's president Prabowo Subianto has ordered a major crackdown on commercial "slash-and-burn" agriculture in which companies clear the forests and burn the fallen trees to make way for new fields, with the permits suspended of 26 companies engaged in this practice, with criminal charges and

massive fines in the offing. Policy enforcement has been weak, however, with previous moratoriums on forest clearing and mandates to protect and restore peatland.

Indigenous wisdom

Instead of going after companies pursuing cash crops, conservationists say the Indonesian government often blames indigenous communities for igniting blazes since they have traditionally practiced slash-and-burn farming methods. Members of the Indigenous Dayak communities say their method of clearing small plots of land and building firebreaks have served them for generations, and they never clear out flammable peatland. We miss breathing in fresh air and seeing clear sky, says Akoi, a Dayak. "All we can do is place our hope in God."

"They are the hazard lights of a heating climate, and they are flashing furiously. We are entering a new era of civilizational risk and retreat" – John Valiant, NYT, October 13, 2026

Nature's hazing, reaping the whirlwind

The acrid haze of wildfires brought to mind another application of the word haze. Wikipedia explains hazing as any intentional, knowing, or reckless act that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers a person as a condition of joining, staying in, or maintaining status in a group or organization—regardless of whether the person agrees or is willing to participate.

"We miss breathing in fresh air and seeing clear sky. All we can do is place our hope in God" – Mr. Akoi, Dayak indigenous community member

Donald the Denier and his powerful tribe of fossil fuel guzzling climate change deniers have been hazing Nature relentlessly, driven by an insatiable hunger for power and pelf. Well, Nature is hazing us right back.

New era of civilizational risk and retreat

As out-of-control wildfires burnt hundreds of home in British Columbia this August, Cliff Chapman, director of operations for the province's wildfire service, issued a sobering statement. "I cannot stress enough that the conditions we are facing right now are conditions we have never seen before." (John Valiant, NYT, October 13, 2026). He has been fighting wildfires for over twenty years and could have made the same statement from Washington State, Croatia, or many other places where similarly explosive wildfires have scorched neighborhoods and forced mass evacuations.

"The country's wildfires from January to August could inflict up to USD6.9 billion in economic and health care costs" – Center of Economic and Law Studies (Indonesian think-tank)

"Lethal combinations of velocity and ferocity have generated hundred-meter flames which are not uncommon anymore, nor are cyclonic winds with towering fire whirls corkscrewing skywards" – John Valiant

The fast moving, virtually irrepressible events are not the seasonal burns of decades past. "They are the hazard lights of a heating climate, and they are flashing furiously. We are entering a new era of civilizational risk and retreat." As of October 5, more than nine million acres had burnt across the USA, and much of the country is still primed to burn. Oregon has declared 2026 the worst fire season in state history. Utah, Ontario, France, Spain, Britain have either experienced their worst or are on track to do so.

Velocity and ferocity, the pyroCB

Lethal combinations of velocity and ferocity have generated hundred-meter flames which are not uncommon anymore, nor are cyclonic winds with towering fire whirls corkscrewing skywards. Both phenomena can be precursors for pyrocumulonimbus fire clouds. These are enormous, combustive weather systems that affect entire geographic regions, growing so big that it becomes a weather system unto itself, and so tall that it gyres like a hurricane, effectively controlling the entire air column of a region's lower atmosphere. The pyroCB as it is known, creates optimum conditions for self-perpetuation.

"Indonesia's president Prabowo Subianto has ordered a major crackdown on commercial "slash-and-burn" agriculture" – NYT, September 26-27, 2026

Since the early 2000s, when atmospheric carbon dioxide hit 370 parts per million, about 30 percent higher than pre-industrial levels, pyroCBs have grown increasingly common across Australia and the North American West. During Canada's record setting fire season of 2023, 142 pyroCB events were logged across the country. They're like rogue computers that have hijacked their power source.

"They're like rogue computers that have hijacked their power source" – John Valiant

Persistent droughts have brought water levels to historic lows from western Canada to Siberia. There is no getting around the fact that we, as a species and as a planet, are now living in the future that climate scientists have been warning us about for more than half a century. May Allah have mercy upon our souls and deliver us from evil, ameen ■

Column by Adil Ahmad, Correspondent, TCS Octara.Com