

The 1% Problem with Business Books. How AI Can Turn Ideas into Action

Most business books sell but don't change behavior. Bryan Cassady shows how AI shifts the focus from sales to real-world use and impact.

BRUSSELS, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, January 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Business books are everywhere: airport shelves, executive offices, conference swag bags. Yet despite strong sales and visibility, most business books fail to change what people actually do.

According to innovation professor and AI strategist Bryan Cassady, the problem is not a lack of interest or attention. It is a design failure.

"Even at the top end of the market, a business book that sells 15,000 copies is already considered a top seller, typically results in meaningful application by only about 1% of readers," Cassady explains. "That gap is the real story."

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Selling books is not the same as changing behavior. AI forces us to design business ideas for application, not just consumption”

Bryan Cassady

Traditional publishing optimizes for copies sold, rankings achieved, and reviews collected. These metrics reward visibility, not impact. A book can sell well, review well, and headline keynotes — and still produce almost no sustained behavior change.

This shortfall is often blamed on distraction or shrinking attention spans. Cassady argues that explanation is wrong. "The biggest drop doesn't happen at purchase or even at reading," he says. "It happens at use."

Business books are still designed for linear reading in a work environment defined by interruption, collaboration, and constant decision-making under constraints. They assume time,



memory, and solo execution — conditions modern work rarely provides.

Artificial intelligence exposes this flaw and makes a different model possible.

“AI didn’t kill the business book. It changed its job.”

When people work with AI, they don’t read front to back. They query content, extract what’s relevant, test ideas against real constraints, and turn concepts into plans in the middle of actual work. In this context, a business book becomes infrastructure: a reference system, a thinking tool, a decision aid, rather than a static narrative artifact.

To test this shift, Cassady has stopped optimizing for bestseller rankings and launched an experiment focused on usage and impact.

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Book content embedded into AI systems that translate ideas into concrete outputs

Success is measured by use, not sales

The goal is simple: increase real-world application by orders of magnitude. Early results suggest this model can produce almost 200 times more applied impact than the traditional book-as-product approach.

AI-augmented business book impact model

From visibility to usage. How AI turns business books into applied systems.

Free access, Cassady argues, does not devalue expertise. It gives it wings.

“When ideas are free, but usage is visible, weak thinking collapses quickly. Strong frameworks spread because they help people do real work.”

As AI reduces the cost of distribution to near zero, the value shifts to the application. In this model, the book is no longer the product. Impact is the product.

Cassady believes this signals a broader change ahead. The most valuable business books of the next decade may not be sold in the traditional sense. Instead, they will function like open systems free at the core, modular, AI-queryable, and supported by print, services, and deeper engagement.

"AI didn't create the execution gap," Cassady says. "It simply made it impossible to ignore." "AI won't be separate from in the future - it will be part of the package to deliver impact." Business books now face a choice.

Be read. Or be used.

About Bryan Cassady

Bryan Cassady is an innovation professor, AI strategist, and author of two award-winning

business books on innovation and AI. He works with leadership teams on practical AI adoption and decision-making and has founded multiple companies across Europe and beyond.

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