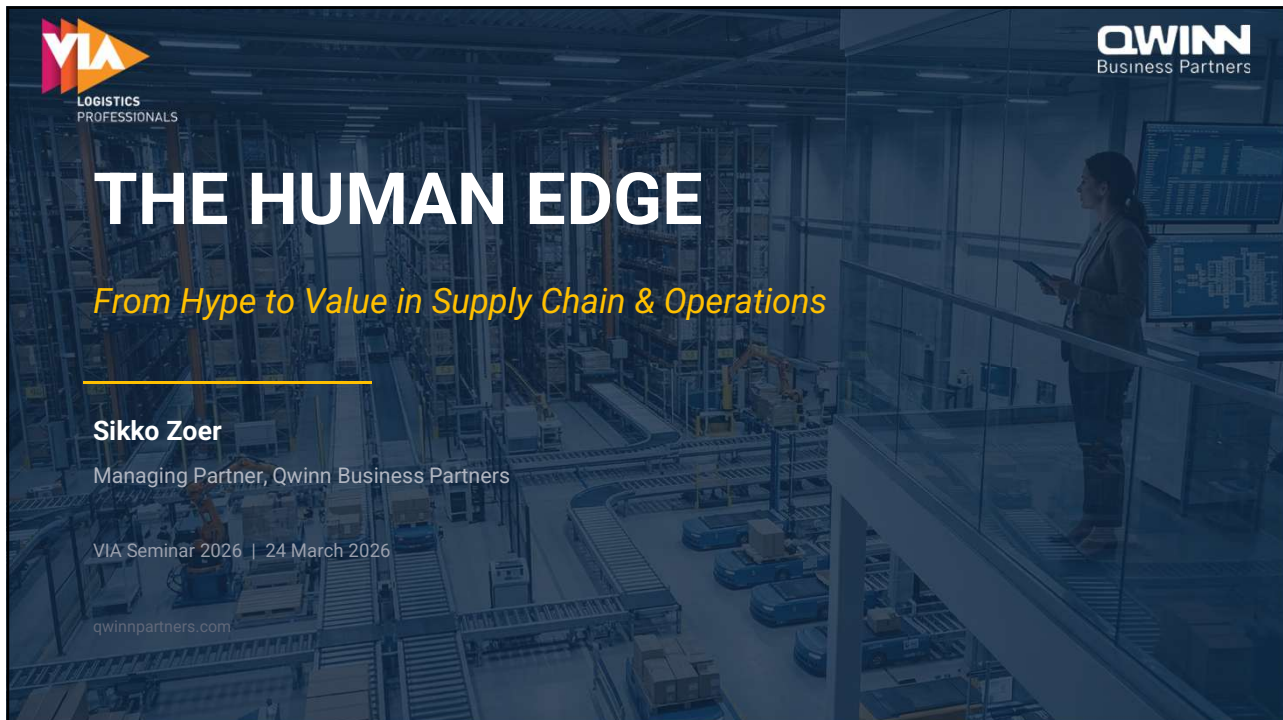




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THE HUMAN EDGE

From Hype to Value in Supply Chain & Operations

Sikko Zoer
Managing Partner, Qwin Business Partners

VIA Seminar 2026 | 24 March 2026
qwinpartners.com

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A €28,000,000 Lesson

1999 — THE DOT-COM ERA

"What is your e-business strategy?"

A project manager told my CEO:
"Money is not a problem.
I have €28 million to burn this year."

That was the level of hype.

2026 — THE AI ERA

"What is your AI strategy?"

Every executive meeting ends here.
The urgency is real.
The FOMO is real.

The patterns are identical.

Different technology, same mistake: investing without a clear customer problem.

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The Pattern is Predictable

Hype → Bubble → Crash → Value

WHAT DIED

Pets.com	Webvan	Kozmo.com
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Flashy solutions built on hype.
Technology without customer value.

WHAT SURVIVED

amazon	Google	NETFLIX
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Solved real problems.
Built sustainable economics.

The bubble burst, but the internet became the backbone of the modern economy.
The same will happen with AI.

3

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Should we worry?

As professionals in a world where AI can generate, analyze, and automate at unprecedented scale...

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The Answer Depends on You.

Yes.

If you become interchangeable.

When everyone uses AI the same way, the advantage disappears. You compete on speed alone.

No.

If you can differentiate yourself.

AI becomes a powerful amplifier of your unique value. You use it as a tool, not a crutch.

**The question isn't "Will AI take my job?"
It's "What makes me irreplaceable?"**

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The Differentiation Trap

TODAY

"I use AI – I'm ahead!"

You generate reports faster.
Your emails are polished.
Your analyses come quicker.
It feels like differentiation.

→

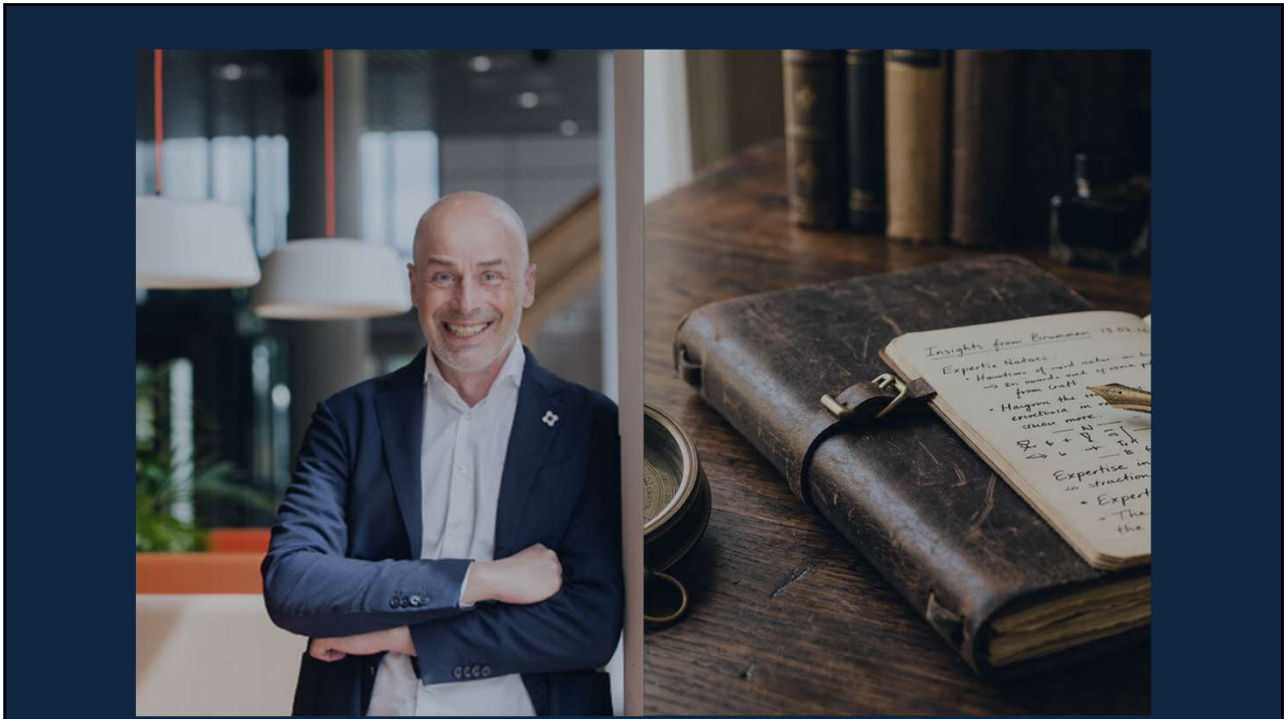
TOMORROW

"Everyone uses AI"

Same reports. Same polished emails.
Same quick analyses. From everyone.
Your advantage disappears.

**Using AI to do the same things faster is not a sustainable advantage.
It's the minimum requirement to stay relevant.**

6



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The Human Edge: Three Pillars

What AI cannot replicate. What makes you irreplaceable.

EXPERTISE

Knowing which questions to ask. The quality filter.

Deep domain knowledge that takes years to build. The judgment AI lacks.

EXPERIENCE

The wisdom that can't be downloaded.

Pattern recognition from real-world situations. Wisdom from failure and success.

AUTHENTICITY

Your competitive advantage in a world of AI sameness.

Your unique voice, perspective, and human connection. What people trust.

AI optimizes processes. Humans provide strategy, relationships, and judgment.

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Case Study: The Graphic Designer vs. AI

My son is a graphic designer. AI generates visuals in seconds. How does he compete?

EXPERTISE	EXPERIENCE	AUTHENTICITY
Typography, color theory, brand psychology. Knowing WHY a design works.	Years of client feedback. Knowing when to push back or adapt to a client's culture.	A distinctive visual voice and personal style. The human touch clients crave.
AI generates. Experts curate.	AI has no clients. No lessons.	AI is generic. You are not.

The future professional leverages AI while delivering what AI cannot: judgment, relationships, and creative vision.

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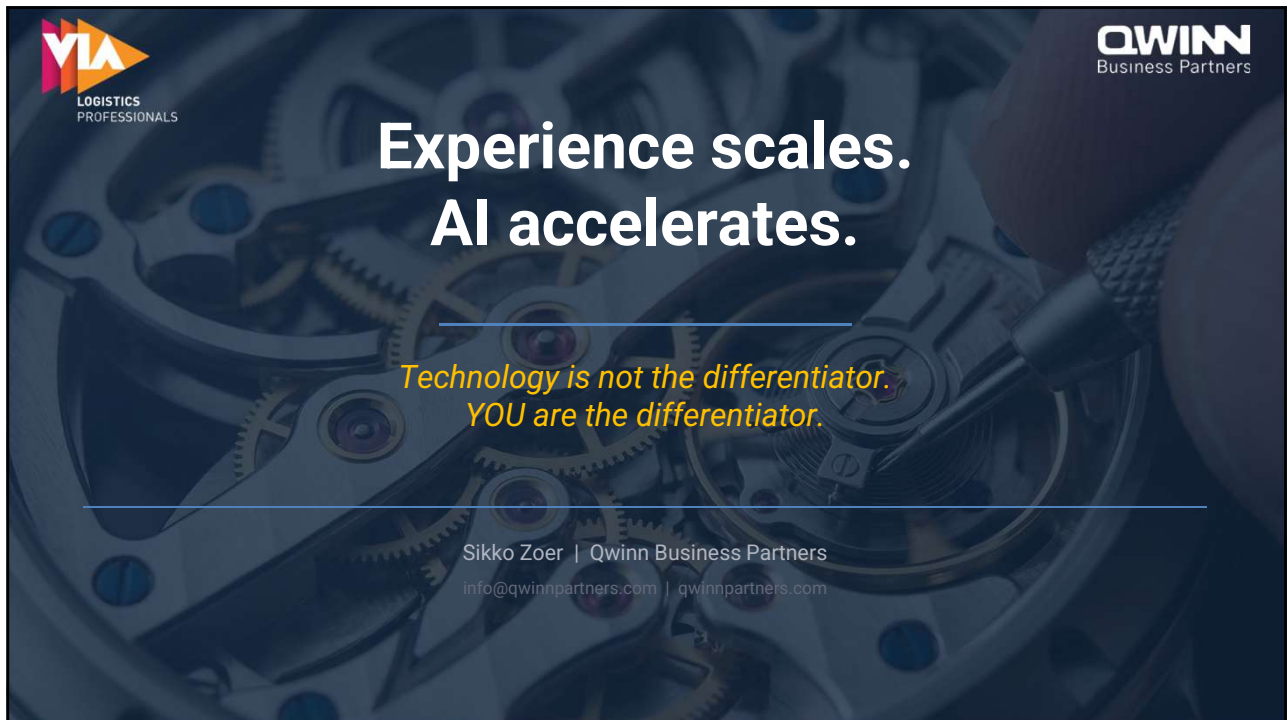
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Your Human Edge in Supply Chain

YOUR EXPERTISE	YOUR EXPERIENCE	YOUR AUTHENTICITY
Understanding end-to-end complexity	Managing a crisis when a port shuts down	The trusted network you can call in a crisis
Deep knowledge of supplier capabilities	Leading tough supplier negotiations	Your personal reputation for delivering
Mastery of regulatory & trade compliance	Building and mentoring teams	Your unique leadership style
Connecting technology to operational reality	Hard-won lessons from failed implementations	Real relationships that AI can't replicate

AI will optimize our processes. Your job shifts to what AI cannot do: strategy, relationships, and judgment under extreme uncertainty.

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Experience scales. AI accelerates.

*Technology is not the differentiator.
YOU are the differentiator.*

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