AI in Resource Management:
How to Stay Relevant (And Keep Your Job)

By Nick Cochran, RMCP®

"When your new coworker is a robot… and still asks for clean data before scheduling anything."

You've heard the term "AI," right? If not from your CEO in an all-hands meeting, then probably from your teenager who insists their paper wasn't *totally* written by ChatGPT. Either way, AI is everywhere, buzzing in boardrooms and TikTok feeds alike.

For some, Artificial Intelligence sparks excitement about new possibilities. For others, it triggers a mild panic attack: *"Is this the beginning of the end for Resource Managers?"* Spoiler alert: No, but things are changing, and fast.

The Conversation That Got Me Thinking

I was having a conversation about AI in an RMCP® class recently when a participant said something I've heard more than once: "We're talking about AI, but haven't really started using it… Eventually, AI is going to replace us all."

The room was full of nervous laughter. It's a common fear, but here's the truth: AI isn't here to steal your job, it's here to enhance it.

Where Are We Now?

At RMI Connect, more than half of attendees admitted their Resource Management function is trailing behind their organization's broader AI adoption. In other words, the company is sprinting (or maybe lightly jogging) toward AI while RM is still lacing up its shoes. And it's not just your organization moving fast; RM technology providers are racing to embed AI into their platforms. This means the tools you use today will likely look very different tomorrow.

What Does This Mean for Resource Managers?

Here's the reality:
- **Repetitive tasks?** AI will automate them.
- **Data crunching?** AI will do it faster.
- **Forecasting demand?** AI will predict it with greater accuracy.
- **Skill matching?** AI will optimize assignments based on capabilities and availability.

But, and this is a big but, the human element of this remains irreplaceable. Success in an AI-driven world will undoubtedly depend on Resource Managers who combine technology with human judgment, bringing context, empathy, and strategic thinking to every decision.

As Resource Managers, we must evolve from schedulers to Trusted Advisors who:
- Build strong relationships with stakeholders through trust and empathy
- Communicate clearly and persuasively to influence decisions
- Drive strategic conversations using insights, not just spreadsheets
- Frame recommendations in terms of business outcomes, not just resource availability
- Facilitate trade-off discussions that balance cost, capacity, and strategic goals

- Provide proactive guidance on workforce planning and skill development
- Translate data into actionable insights that support executive decision-making
- Adapt to change and guide stakeholders through uncertainty with confidence

AI Won't Fix Chaos, It Automates It

AI thrives on clean, structured data and well-defined processes. If your RM processes and data are messy, AI won't magically fix them, it'll just automate the chaos.

How to Stay Relevant (and become even more valuable!)

1. **Become More Consultative: Master Consultative Skills**
   Focus on improving your ability to communicate, build relationships and ultimately trust with key stakeholders.
2. **Champion Data Quality**
   AI is only as smart as the data you feed it. Garbage in = garbage out.
3. **Drive Process Adoption and Improvement**
   Identify bottlenecks and suggest process improvements while communicating and encouraging teammates to follow the process.
4. **Stay Curious About AI**
   Learn what tools your organization is adopting and how they can amplify (not replace) your role.

Bottom line: AI isn't the villain in this story. It's the sidekick that makes you look brilliant, if you know how to use it. So, sharpen those consultative skills, clean up your data, and lean into the future. Because in the age of AI, Resource Managers who evolve will not only survive…they'll thrive.

About the Author: Nick Cochran, RMCP®

Nick Cochran is a Director at the Resource Management Institute (RMI), bringing more than 15 years of experience in services strategy, operations, delivery and management. Nick was an early adopter of the Just-in-Time Resourcing® brand of resource management and participated in the first-ever RMCP® class in 2014. Today, he serves as a lead instructor for RMCP® and is a frequent speaker at RMGS and other industry events.

Prior to his current role, Nick led teams responsible for enterprise software implementations, consulting, training development and delivery, and managed services. His professional background includes driving operational excellence and resource management best practices across diverse service organizations. Nick holds an MBA and a BS in Business Management from Anderson University.