

Robot Resourcing: Can AI Replace My People?



The Scenario

How *mortifying*. You're the new vice president of university marketing and communications at the Iberian Institute of Technology (IIT), and you just made a major gaffe on a Zoom call with your full team. You'd been hoping to demo the exciting new mock-ups for IIT's website redesign, but instead you accidentally shared the wrong screen, showing your browser window that was open to an article titled ["20% of European Tech Firms to Cut Jobs Due to ChatGPT: Marketing and PR Jobs Are Most at Risk"](#) from AI Business.

It took a few moments for your team to interrupt and tell you that the wrong screen was showing. But those moments were long enough to launch the rumor mill in full force. Your team is worried; should they fear for their jobs?

In the meeting, you shrugged it off. You mentioned that you worked with many tech firms in your previous role at a digital marketing consultancy, so you were curious to learn how they were responding to the rapid arrival of generative AI tools that can rapidly produce creative content likes text, images, audio, code, and videos.

But the truth? You had been thinking about how the seeming superpowers of generative AI might mean you could eliminate several positions on your team.

Your team knows you were brought in by IIT senior leadership four months ago for your website design and rebranding expertise. You're new to higher education, but you're confident that your digital marketing prowess—honed for over 20 years while consulting for fashion retailers, car manufacturers, and tech firms—will seamlessly apply to your new surroundings.

What your team doesn't know is that you've also been brought in to keep an eye on marketing and communications costs in the face of rising financial pressure at IIT. This ask was cemented in an email you'd received two months ago from your boss, Provost Elena Carmona Vidal.

Fast Facts: Iberian Institute of Technology

- **University type:** Private research university
- **Location:** Málaga, Spain
- **Enrollment:** 3,500 undergraduate students (down 2% from prior year), 750 graduate students (down 4% from prior year)
- **Top majors:** Data analytics, computer science, engineering management

The Email

From: Elena Carmona Vidal
To: You
Subject: Cost concerns at IIT

Buenos días,

I hope you're settling into your role. It's been exciting to have your fresh perspective and new ideas at the table as we position IIT for growth and success in the years to come.

We have a tough road ahead of us. As you know, enrollments are down this year, and our fundraising campaign is underperforming. We remain committed to our website redesign, as it's the most public face of who we are and the value we offer our current and prospective students. But I also want us to think about sustainable operations and cost containment going forward. We need to be innovative yet efficient; I know that's a challenging combination.

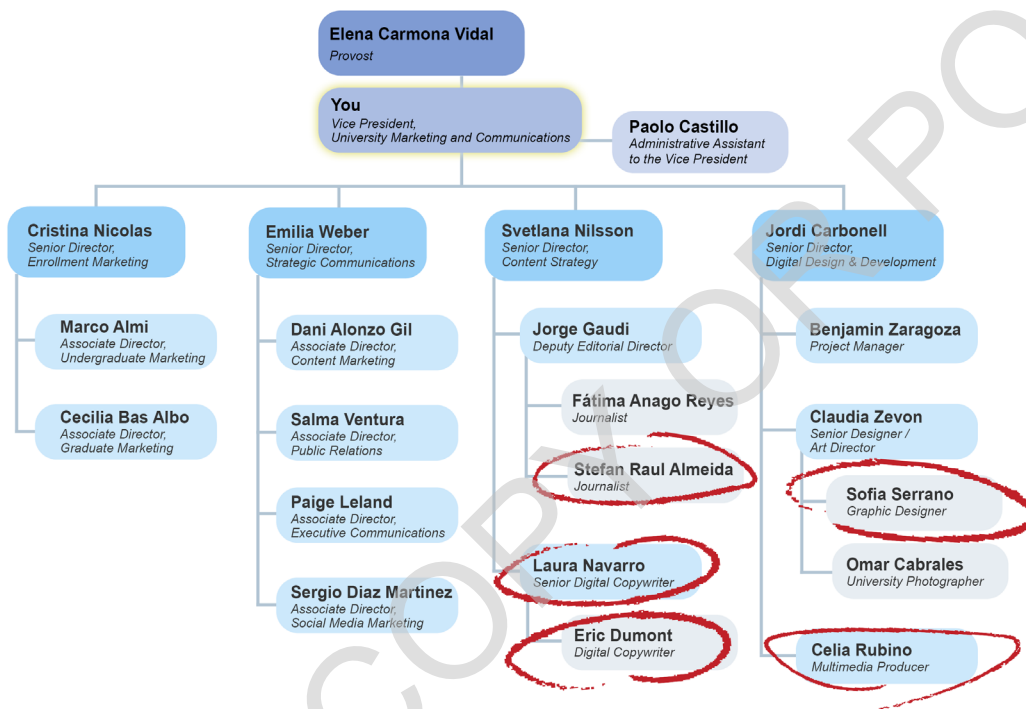
If you ever have ideas about how we might think differently about our future and our cost structure, I'd welcome them.

Gracias,
Elena

Elena Carmona Vidal
Provost
Iberian Institute of Technology

You've already reviewed your team org chart (see **Exhibit 1**), circling the positions you think could most reasonably be replaced by generative AI's capabilities. Adding up those salaries leads to a sizable amount of cost savings you could propose to Provost Vidal. Your monthly meeting with her is scheduled for next Wednesday.

Exhibit 1: IIT Marketing and Communications Team's Structure, Annotated



The Ask

1. Should you bring your job reduction plan to Provost Vidal? Explain your reasoning.

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