



Karl Lillrud

AUTHOR · TEDX SPEAKER

Boards have signed off on AI ambitions that the operating business has no idea how to execute. Pilots multiply, vendor decks pile up, and the gap between strategy slides and what customers actually experience keeps widening. The job leaders need help with is choosing where AI changes the commercial model, and where it is noise.

Karl Lillrud is an entrepreneur and AI advisor who helps boards and executive teams turn artificial intelligence from a strategy slide into a working part of the commercial model.

Karl Lillrud's 2026 Biography

Why organisations work with Karl Lillrud

- He speaks about AI from the seat of someone who has run digital commerce businesses since the late nineties and is currently building one. PodManager AI, his AI-driven podcast production platform, is shipping to paying customers as he speaks about AI to other operators.
- His work connects AI directly to revenue mechanics: pricing, conversion, retention, and customer acquisition, the parts of the P&L the C-suite is actually accountable for.
- Nine published books, including “You, Me and AI” and “AI, Your Second Brain: Evolve or Go Extinct”, give leadership teams a shared language for the second-order effects of AI on work, governance, and customer trust, beyond the productivity headlines.
- Membership of the Harvard Business Review Advisory Council and recognition in Thinkers360’s AI thought-leader rankings signal that the perspective travels at board level, not just at the developer conference.
- The client footprint, including Volvo, Spotify, Klarna, H&M, AstraZeneca, and 3, gives him pattern recognition across regulated and consumer-facing businesses that few AI speakers can match.

Biography highlights

- Founder of PodManager AI, an AI-driven podcast production platform he is currently building.
- Founder of Pricelizer, a Swedish e-commerce startup named to CNBC’s 20 hottest startups list in 2015.
- Author of nine books on AI and digital business, including “You, Me and AI” and “AI, Your Second Brain: Evolve or Go Extinct”.
- Member of the Harvard Business Review Advisory Council since August 2024.
- Two-time TEDx speaker.
- Recognised across multiple years in Thinkers360’s AI thought-leader

AVAILABLE FOR

- Coaching
- Consultancy
- Panel Participation
- Speaking
- Training and Workshops

KARL 'S SPEAKING THEMES

- AI Ethics & Responsible Technology
- Artificial Intelligence & Generative AI
- Customer Experience & Marketing
- Digital Transformation
- Entrepreneurship
- Future of Technology
- Innovation & Disruption
- Leadership

LANGUAGES: English

rankings and Global Gurus' Top 30 Motivational Speakers list.

- Public engagement footprint includes Volvo, Spotify, Klarna, H&M, AstraZeneca, Qliro, 3, Tele2, and TUI.

Biography

Most AI keynote speakers have never run a checkout flow at scale. Karl Lillrud has. He has been building digital businesses since the late nineties, founded Pricelizer in 2013 to solve the abandoned-cart problem he kept hitting as an operator, and watched it land on CNBC's 20 hottest startups list in 2015. He is now building PodManager AI, an AI-driven podcast production platform shipping to paying customers. That operator history, still in present tense, is the through-line for everything he says about artificial intelligence.

His books reflect the same instinct. "You, Me and AI" treats the technology across 54 chapters covering work, creativity, education, governance, and the human-machine boundary, rather than as a productivity story. "AI, Your Second Brain: Evolve or Go Extinct" focuses on how leaders and their teams should actually integrate the tools day to day. The two sit inside a wider catalogue of nine published books, written for people who have to make decisions, not people studying the field.

The institutional signals followed the work. Thinkers360 has recognised him across its AI thought-leader rankings. Global Gurus has placed him repeatedly in its Top 30 Motivational Speakers ranking. In August 2024 he joined the Harvard Business Review Advisory Council. Volvo, Spotify, Klarna, H&M, AstraZeneca, Qliro, and 3 sit on a public client list that runs across consumer retail, telecoms, and pharma.

What a buyer is paying for is the translation layer between board ambition and operating reality. Lillrud has been the person trying to ship the next quarter's numbers, and he is still in the chair, building an AI product while advising executives who have AI strategies they cannot yet execute. The argument lands because he has been on both sides of the table.

Key speaking topics

- Artificial intelligence and the C-suite agenda
- AI in retail and consumer experience
- Digital commerce and customer acquisition
- Innovation and business model reinvention
- Leadership in technology-driven organisations
- AI ethics and governance
- Future of work in the AI era

Ideal for

- Boards and executive committees moving from AI strategy approval to execution.
- CEOs, CMOs, and chief digital or commerce officers in retail, telecoms, and consumer brands.
- Innovation, transformation, and AI leads inside large enterprises building the operating model for AI.
- Founder and growth-stage leadership teams using AI as a commercial wedge.

Audience outcomes

- A sharper read on which AI use cases move commercial metrics and which are theatre.
- A vocabulary for discussing AI's second-order effects on customers, employees, and brand trust at board level.
- Concrete reference points from operators who have shipped AI inside consumer-facing businesses.
- A clearer view of where leadership attention should sit next versus where it can wait.
- Confidence to challenge vendor narratives and refocus internal AI portfolios on revenue impact.

Karl Lillrud's 2026 talks & topics

Leading in the AI Era: A Blueprint for Visionaries

A keynote on how senior leaders set direction for AI inside operating businesses without ceding strategy to vendors or technical teams.

Key takeaways:

- A working frame for separating AI bets that move the P&L from those that drain attention.
- Language for talking about AI risk and AI value with boards and customers in the same conversation.
- A model for sequencing AI initiatives across the next four to six quarters.

AI for the C-Suite: Steering the Ship in the AI Waters

A session built for executive committees translating AI ambition into accountable operating decisions.

Key takeaways:

- The questions a C-suite should be able to answer before approving the next AI investment.
- Where AI changes the commercial model, and where it only changes the cost line.
- How to read vendor pitches and internal proposals with a sharper filter.

AI in Retail: Revolutionizing Consumer Experiences

A talk on how AI is reshaping pricing, personalisation, and customer journeys in consumer-facing businesses.

Key takeaways:

- Specific points in the customer journey where AI is already shifting conversion and loyalty.

- The trade-offs between automation, brand voice, and customer trust.
- Lessons from operators who have run AI in live commerce environments.

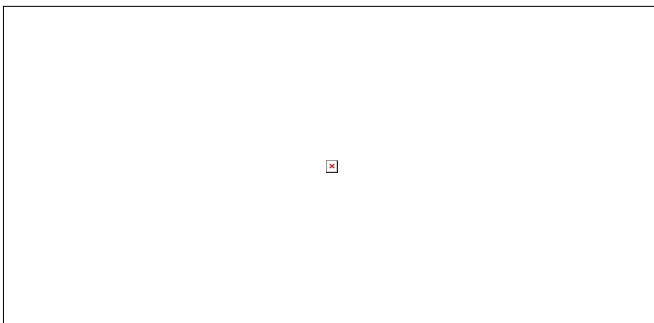
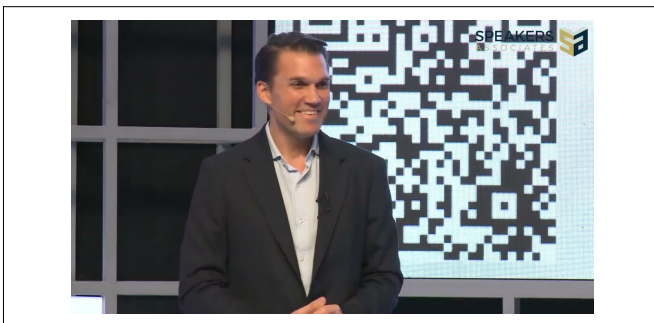
The Future of E-commerce

A keynote on where digital commerce is going next as AI, agents, and new buying behaviours collide.

Key takeaways:

- The structural shifts that are remaking acquisition and retention economics.
- What incumbents most often misread about AI-native commerce competitors.
- A view on the capabilities a serious commerce business needs to build now.

Karl Lillrud's Videos





What Karl Lillrud's clients say

Karl delivered an exceptional keynote at Seamless KSA. His ability to make AI practical and actionable for a diverse audience of retail and commerce leaders stood out. The session received outstanding feedback from attendees and our leadership team alike.

Seamless KSA

Karl Lillrud's keynote at Seamless KSA was nothing short of exceptional. His expertise, passion, and ability to inspire make him a standout speaker in the world of conferences and events. Highly recommend Karl as a keynote speaker to any event looking to provide its audience with a truly transformative experience.

Joseph Ridley

General Manager, Terrapin (Seamless KSA)

Karl's input into the Event went beyond the call of duty. He's not only a complete Professional, but to work with him was a great experience.

Dominika Mikurenda

TEDx

His expertise, passion, and ability to inspire make him a standout speaker in the world of conferences and events.

Joseph Ridley

General Manager Terrapin, Seamless KSA

His passion for the subject matter is highly noticeable, in just 15-minute, attendees gained a fresh perspective and valuable insight.

Sam Tidmarsh
CloserStill London

An excellent presentation, it was not good. It was Excellent! Simple yet comprehensive.

Majid Bin Abdullah Al Qasabi
Saudi Minister of Commerce

Working with Karl, is not only a great lesson on the future of e-commerce and retail, but also a pleasure.

Karl prepares very carefully for each workshop, explores the topic in depth, and each workshop is tailor-made for the particular client. The participants thanked us for a tremendous lesson and a discussion they didn't want to end

Ewa Lankiewicz
Digital University

I would recommend Karl to any group looking for an informative, e-commerce, entrepreneur no matter the audience. I just can't thank you enough for your inspiring keynote presentation on E-commerce, your presentation really stands out with real life examples.

Rana Algowaiz
Saudi Arabia Ministry of Commerce (E-Commerce Council)

Karl was a fantastic speaker with a great presence, packing out the room with an attendance of over 90% capacity.

Sam Tidmarsh
eCommerce Expo London

We have been working with Karl in the past and knew inviting him as a guest speaker to one of our events would be good. It actually turned out great. Karl talked about the future for e-commerce, a really current topic. He also brought in aspects as entrepreneurship and innovation which really made it interesting for the broader group. We will for sure ask Karl to come back again soon.

Axel Ödman
TEKTalk Stockholm

Karl Lillrud is truly an amazing, inspirational Speaker on many different topics around eCommerce. His range of knowledge of eCommerce is second to none and Karl's input into the Event went beyond the call of duty. He's not only a complete Professional, but to work with him was a great experience. The feedback we received from the audience on the day; and the other companies who participated in eCommerce eXpo Ireland was extremely positive. Karl's also one of the nicest guys I've met in my 20+ years of business! If you are considering working with him, I would recommend him highly.

Stephen Quin

E-Commerce eXpo Dublin

Karl Lillrud delivered a speech at TEDx PiotrkowskaStreet 2018 'ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE'. Karl is an engaging keynote speaker who caught attention and interest of the audience in his speech on the topic of 'Training Your Subconscious Mind on an Entrepreneurial Success.' His passion for the subject matter is highly noticeable, in just 15-minute, attendees gained a fresh perspective and valuable insight into challenging and influencing their own subconscious mind. It was a pleasure to include Karl as one of our speakers at TEDx PiotrkowskaStreet, and I would definitely recommend him to other conferences and events.

IDominika Mikurenda

TEDx PiotrkowskaStreet

Karl is an inspiring mentor. He exhibits strong interpersonal skills and a unique capacity for empathy. Working with Karl is both pleasant and beneficial. He excels in generating enthusiasm and motivating a team.

Ioannis Manesis

Karl has been an amazing help and guidance. He's great with communication, and it's amazing how he's always stayed in focus and so calmed, even when he had so many open fronts. If there is someone I look up to for inspiration, that is Karl.

Elena López

Karl is one of the nicest professional had worked with. He influences teams in a very positive way. He is among those people who lead by example and always keen to take new initiatives, willing to learn new things as and when required. He always introduces innovative ideas for improvement and growth. He seems to have never-ending energy and dedicated towards his work. It was a great learning experience.

Rahul Jain

His structure I think a lot of people including myself can learn from Karl. I would say that without Karl we would not have managed to reach our goal.

Andreas Matthiesen

Karl has a high capacity and a fast and accurate way of working. Karl is driven by his curiosity for new technology and how it can be adapted to improve its customer's situation. His style of communication and explaining things is really awesome. I strongly recommend him.

Matts Eklund

I highly recommend Karl for his motivating and professional skills in past, present and future.

Kenneth Nordin

Karls style of communicating and spreading knowledge cross multi-national teams in a holistic manner is very prominent. If you examined the streams of communication in a modern organization, you would hopefully see little, flowing in a top-down direction. Instead, the larger volume would flow between co-workers. Essential for organizational-wide entrepreneurship. People still need a sense of direction. But direction and management are two different things. A modern leader inspires his or her organization to collaborate by setting a clear and structured example. Karl is such a leader. I highly recommend Karl for anyone interested in how you can help your organization collaborate more and smarter, thus increasing entrepreneurship within your organization.

Robert Öberg

Karl is a very likeable person who has the ability to humbly get people to take their next step without remorse. If you are looking for a talent speaker you can happily choose Karl.

Peder Sønnergaard

Education leader, Jensen Education

Karl give you a holistic overview of the entire ecommerce landscape to better understand how to operate more efficiently.

Peter Teidahl

E-Commerce expert, Mathem.se

Extremely informative for anyone in the e-commerce landscape, takes the time to explain further when needed. Huge + for the pedagogy!

Boris Bumbic

Tech Specialist, Urkund

Karl is a true professional who treat every question perfectly.

Erik Florenova

E-Commerce expert, Florebit

Karl make you see the E-commerce world from a whole new perspective.

Shivani Kohli

Consular Section, Embassy of India

I really learned a lot, even if it was very much information that spun in my brain

Isabelle Bodini

E-Commerce expert, Iyuno Media Group

Karl empowered us with knowledge in several ways on the subject of E-commerce.

Ali Djengis Khan

E-Commerce Project manager, Redmind

Karl addressed various topics with real-life experiences and anecdotes, making it easy to acknowledge and relate to.

Chiryne Hammoud

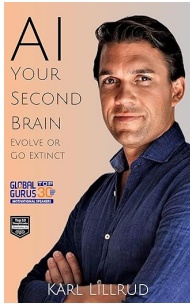
E-Commerce Expert, Jensen

Karl is a great speaker & mentor who has skills and real life experiences to go along with it

Gurjinder Singh

IT Project Manager, MTR

KARL 'S LATEST BOOKS



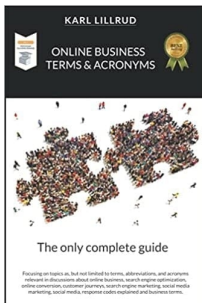
AI Your Second Brain: Evolve or Go Extinct



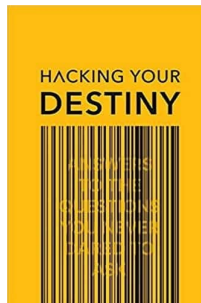
Become Innovative: Create the Future



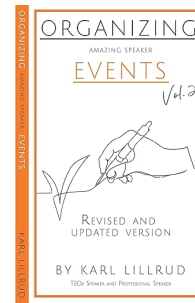
You, Me and AI: Your Comfort Zone Just Got Smaller



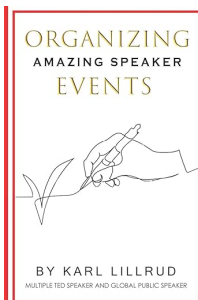
Online Business Terms and Acronyms: The Only Complete Guide



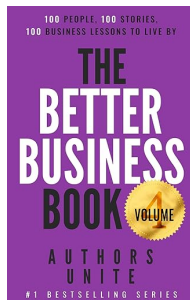
Hacking Your Destiny



Organizing Amazing Speaker Events - Volume 2



Organizing Amazing Speaker Events



The Better Business Book: 100 People, 100 Stories, 100 Business Lessons To Live By Volume 4