



**Luis Von Ahn**



### **Leadership Evolution at Duolingo**

Luis von Ahn describes how he evolved from a micromanager who oversaw every detail of Duolingo's early growth into a visionary leader. His company's ambition is to teach one billion people and the shift of his role towards culture-shaping and strategic vision rather than day-to-day control. This change allowed Duolingo to scale quickly and rely on empowered teams to drive innovation.

### **Organisational Culture & Innovation**

Under von Ahn's leadership Duolingo has cultivated a data-driven, experimental culture where rapid iteration, testing, and feedback are central. The video highlights how the company uses artificial intelligence to personalise learning and create new content — this kind of technological innovation is supported by the cultural mindset of continuous improvement and team autonomy.

### **Digital Transformation, AI & Workplace Tensions**

The shift to an "AI-first" model presents opportunity but also brings internal tensions. As Duolingo uses AI more extensively for content creation, student progression and even hiring, employees may worry about automation replacing roles or reducing creative input.

- 1. How did Luis von Ahn's leadership style change as Duolingo grew? What do you see as the difference between a manager and leader based on this?**
- 2. Explain how Duolingo's use of AI supports its digital transformation.**
- 3. What potential conflict might arise from Duolingo's AI-first approach?**
- 4. Discuss one way Duolingo's approach to AI could influence the future of education.**