



Idlif Executive Education Center

Early Bird: RM5,600*

(Ends 31 Aug 2026)

STRATEGIC & INNOVATIVE THINKING SEMINAR 2026

*AI-Augmented Leadership:
Driving Organizational Success Through Innovative Thinking*

6 & 7 October 2026 | 9:00 AM – 5:30 PM

Asia School of Business



Conference Fee *

RM7,000

** Before SST*

Fee excludes ASB Residential but can be arranged at additional cost

HRD Corp claimable amount per participant (Ringgit Malaysia):

- Claimable amount at RM3,500 per pax, inclusive of SST of 8%.
- Maximum 9 participants per company.
- All other Terms & Conditions are subject to HRD Corp's policy.

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The leaders who shape the next decade won't be the ones who understood AI first. They'll be the ones who brought their people with them.

Technology moves fast. Trust moves slowly. And in organisations - whether a ministry, a GLC, or a regional bank - change only sticks when people believe in the leader driving it.

Over two days, you'll work with ASB faculty, industry practitioners, and a carefully curated cohort of peers to answer the question that actually matters: not "what is AI?" but "how do I lead well in a world reshaped by it?"

ABOUT THE STRATEGIC & INNOVATIVE THINKING SEMINAR

You didn't rise to leadership to manage uncertainty - you rose to lead through it. But the AI moment is different. It isn't asking leaders to work harder. It's asking them to think differently.

SITS returns for its third year because that challenge hasn't gone away - it's deepened. What began in 2022 as a conversation about emerging technology has become something more urgent: a reckoning with how leaders build organisations that are faster, more human, and more resilient because of how they use technology - not in spite of it. Each year, the cohort gets sharper. The questions get harder. The stakes get higher.

SITS 2026 is built for leaders who are past the headlines and ready for the real work. Over two intensive days, you'll move from theory to practice - challenged, stretched, and equipped with a framework you can bring back to your team the following Monday.

This is not a lecture on algorithms. It's a leadership reckoning. And if you were in the room in 2024, you already know what we mean.

LEARNING OUTCOMES



Know how to identify where AI creates genuine value - and where it doesn't



Lead your team through the anxiety and resistance that comes with technological change



Build the psychological safety that turns disruption into a competitive edge



Walk away with a concrete Innovation Mindset framework you can apply immediately



Connect with a cohort of peers who are navigating exactly what you are

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

SITS is for leaders who carry real responsibility - and know that how they respond to change defines what their organisations become.

If you lead people, strategy, or transformation, this program was built for you.

PROGRAM AGENDA



DAY 1

6 October 2026 | Tuesday

0800	Breakfast and Registration	
0900	Welcome and Overview	Ross Stephenson Program Weaver
0915	The Leadership Paradigm Shift	Prof Joseph Cherian CEO, President, Dean & Distinguished Professor, ASB
1000	AI Unveiled: From Foundations to Frontiers	Prof Rong Sen Specially Appointed Professor, Tsinghua & Peking University Former NDRC-ADB Research Lead
1100	Morning Tea	Delegates
1115	What Do You See When You See AI?	Alexander Eng Associate Professor I of Organizational Behavior, ASB
1245	Lunch: Collaboration & Peer-to-Peer Discussions	Delegates
1345	A Strategic Intelligence Simulation - When AI Gives You What You Ask For	Scott Hensarling Delegates Facilitated Experience
1600	Afternoon Coffee	Delegates
1615	What Your Decisions Revealed	Scott Hensarling & Philip Whittaker
1730	End of Day 1	Ross Stephenson

DAY 2

7 October 2026 | Wednesday

0800	Breakfast and Networking	
0900	Connecting Day 1 to Day 2 Practice	Ross Stephenson
0930	The "Fail-Fast" Lab: Grit, Iteration and The Mindset That Builds	Dr Daphne Ng Sports Psychologist Nation Sports Award for Women's Innovation 2024 TEDxUKM Speaker Dr Lee Ching Hoe Director of Operations, NSW Automation Moderated by Nadia Zainuddin, Faculty ASB
1050	Morning Tea	Delegates
1100	Shooting the Stars: What Strategic Boldness Actually Looks Like	
1230	Lunch: Low-Hanging Fruit for Immediate AI Integration	Delegates
1330	Wonder by Design: The Art of Leading with Imagination	Shahredza Minhat Director of Investment, Bank Negara Malaysia Writer & Actor
1410	Decoding the Innovative Mindset using Magic	David Lai Mentalist & Magician
1440	Afternoon Coffee	Delegates
1500	The "Problem Solver" Sprint	Delegates
1540	Leadership in Harmony	Djoko Nugroho Music Intelligence & Organisational Performance
1700	Be The Architect of The New Era	
1730	Ends	

*Speakers listed are subject to change.

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SPEAKER PROFILES



PROF JOSEPH CHERIAN : The Leadership Paradigm Shift

CEO, President & Dean, Asia School of Business | Distinguished Professor

Joe Cherian has spent his career at the intersection of global markets, institutional leadership, and the education of the next generation of leaders. He has taught and researched at Cornell, NUS, and Boston University, and managed over US\$67 billion in client assets at Credit Suisse before returning to academia. At SITS 2026, he opens the seminar with a question that frames everything that follows: "What does it actually mean to lead when the ground keeps shifting?" This is not a theoretical question, but a personal one, for every leader in the room.



ALEXANDER ENG : What Do You See When You See AI?

Associate Professor I of Organizational Behavior, Asia School of Business

His research sits at the intersection of psychology and technology. Specifically, why people resist AI even when they know it works, how automation changes what employees value, and what happens emotionally when technology fails. He holds a PhD from NUS and has worked with organisations navigating exactly the kind of transitions SITS delegates are leading. His session on Day 1 doesn't ask you to understand AI. It asks you to understand yourself in relation to it. That's a harder, but perhaps more useful question.



PROF RONG SEN : AI Unveiled - From Foundations to Frontiers

Appointed Professor, Tsinghua University, Peking University & Shanghai Jiao Tong University | Former Deputy Leader, Financial Research Group, NDRC & ADB | Chevening Scholar

Prof Rong Sen approaches AI not as a technologist, but as an economist and policy architect who has operated at the highest levels of China's financial system - 18 years in financial institutions, 4 years in the City of London, and a career connecting China's domestic markets to global capital flows. His session anchors AI in the economic and geopolitical forces every leader here is already navigating. Most recently, he served as the intellectual backbone of the NEXTWAVE Leadership Programme - ASB's immersive executive education designed exclusively for Malaysia's most senior government leaders - he has proven that he can make complex ideas both accessible and immediately relevant to people who carry real institutional responsibility.



NADIA ZAINUDDIN : The Fail-Fast Lab

Faculty, Asia School of Business | Former Senior Leader, Securities Commission Malaysia | Former OECD Consultant on Corporate Governance Reform

Twenty years at the Securities Commission - including hands-on involvement in every revision of the Malaysian Code on Corporate Governance and a consultancy with the OECD advising on governance reform across Southeast Asia - gives Nadia a lens that neither practitioner in this session can offer. Her job as moderator is to push the conversation where it matters most for this room: not just how to fail fast, but how to govern the permission to fail inside institutions that are built for accountability. That is where the real leadership challenge lives..

SPEAKER PROFILES



DR DAPHNE NG: The Fail-Fast Lab

*Phd, Sports Psychologist | Nation Sports Award for Women's Innovation 2024
| TEDxUKM Speaker*

Dr Daphne has spent her career on one question: what separates people who perform when it counts from those who don't? Her answer, consistently, is psychology - not talent. A former national badminton player turned sports psychologist, she has proven it at the highest levels - Deaflympics Silver, 2019 SEA Games Gold. Her session draws on the mental architecture of elite athletes to build a practical framework for innovation under uncertainty. Champions don't wait for the perfect moment. They train themselves to commit before certainty arrives. In a world reshaped by AI, that is exactly the mindset this room needs.



DR LEE CHING HOE: The Fail-Fast Lab

Director, NSW Automation Sdn Bhd

Dr Lee doesn't just talk about operational excellence - he builds it from the ground up. As Director of Operations at NSW Automation, a Penang-based precision technology company that has spent two decades solving problems that most people didn't think were solvable, building automation systems precise enough to dispense materials at 80 micrometres, serving industries from semiconductors to aerospace across more than a dozen countries. That kind of engineering demands a particular mindset: one that treats failure as data, iteration as method, and constraints as creative fuel. In the Fail-Fast Lab on Day 2, Dr Lee brings that mindset into the room - not as theory, but as lived practice from one of Malaysia's most technically demanding manufacturing environments.



SHAHREDZA MINHATA: Wonder by Design-The Art of Leading with Imagination

Director of Investment, Bank Negara Malaysia | Writer | Actor

Redza lives what SITS 2026 is asking every leader to do: hold rigour and imagination in the same hand, at the same time. As a senior central banker by profession and a screenwriter and actor by conviction, he has spent his career proving these are not opposites, they are the combination that drives genuine breakthroughs. In an age where AI delivers more data and speed than any previous generation has had, the limiting factor is no longer information. It is imagination. Before your organisation can be transformed, someone has to picture what transformation looks like. That is a creative act before it is a strategic one, and it begins with you.



DAVID LAI - Decoding the Innovation Mindset Using Magic

Mentalist & Magician | 2012 Merlin Award, Best Magic Producer

David Lai was a petroleum engineer before he became one of Malaysia's most recognised mentalists. That career pivot alone tells you something about the innovation mindset. His craft - psychological theatre, misdirection, the mechanics of belief - is a masterclass in how people form assumptions, resist new information, and can be led to see things differently. In the context of SITS 2026, his session is less about magic and more about what happens in the mind when certainty breaks down. Which, for leaders navigating AI, is most of the time.

SPEAKER PROFILES



PHILIP J WHITTAKER: A Strategic Intelligence Simulation

Executive Strategist & Simulation Creator

Phil brings 25 years of corporate and entrepreneurial experience across retail, leisure, hospitality, sports, entertainment, media, and financial services in Australia and Southeast Asia. As former CEO - Attraction, Chief Commercial Officer of Themed Attractions Resorts & Hotels - a Khazanah Nasional subsidiary, and most recently CEO of Sim Leisure Group, a Singapore-listed leisure company, he has operated at the most senior levels of major Malaysian institutions. He knows what good decisions look like, what poor ones cost, and how to create the conditions where leaders discover the difference for themselves. This is exactly what this simulation does. Named Asia's Best Marketer by CMO Asia in 2016, Phil has called Malaysia home for 13 years.



SCOTT HENSARLING: A Strategic Intelligence Simulation

Lead Facilitator

Scott has spent more than 20 years advising, facilitating, coaching, and mentoring senior executives across a broad range of industries and geographies. He has worked across industrial, financial, life sciences, consumer, and technology sectors at board and C-suite level. His work includes supporting a global FMCG organisation through a multibillion-dollar US acquisition and leading an international organisation through a global culture transformation following a major demerger. Having lived in 10 countries and spent 35 years in APAC, Scott brings a deep understanding of people, culture, and the leadership conditions that determine whether an organization moves or stalls.



DJOKO NUGROHO: Leadership in Harmony

Music Intelligence & Organisational Performance

Djoko is back for his third SITS, and if you were in the room before, you already know why. Using musical instrument, he transforms a room of leaders into a single ensemble: each person holds one note, and the music only exists when everyone plays in time and in trust. No slide. No theory. Just leaders discovering what collective intelligence actually feels like.



ROSS STEPHENSON: Program Weaver

Emcee, Educator & Behavioural Communicator

Ross is back. If you were with us at SITS#2, you already know what that means - a room that moves, thinks, and laughs together, even when the ideas are hard. More than an emcee, Ross acts as a conference weaver synthesising insights across sessions, connecting threads between speakers, and ensuring each segment builds toward a coherent leadership narrative. His style is engaging without being performative, and provocative without being overwhelming the right balance for senior audiences. Over two days, he is the connective tissue between every session, every speaker, and every moment of reflection. His job is to make sure nothing gets lost between the keynotes, and that you leave with more than a folder of slides.



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Strategic & Innovative
Thinking Seminar 2026

