# AI Agents or Double Agents?
# Concepts, Practices & (Early Adoption) Lessons Learned

**Presentation to NE Government Finance Officers Association**
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# Topics

- AI Concepts & Evolution
- Trends in AI Adoption
- Administrative & Operational Use Cases
- Benefits and ROI Considerations
- Deployment Approaches, Navigating Risks & Governance
- Lessons Learned (from Early Adopters)
- Q&A

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# AI Concepts & Evolution

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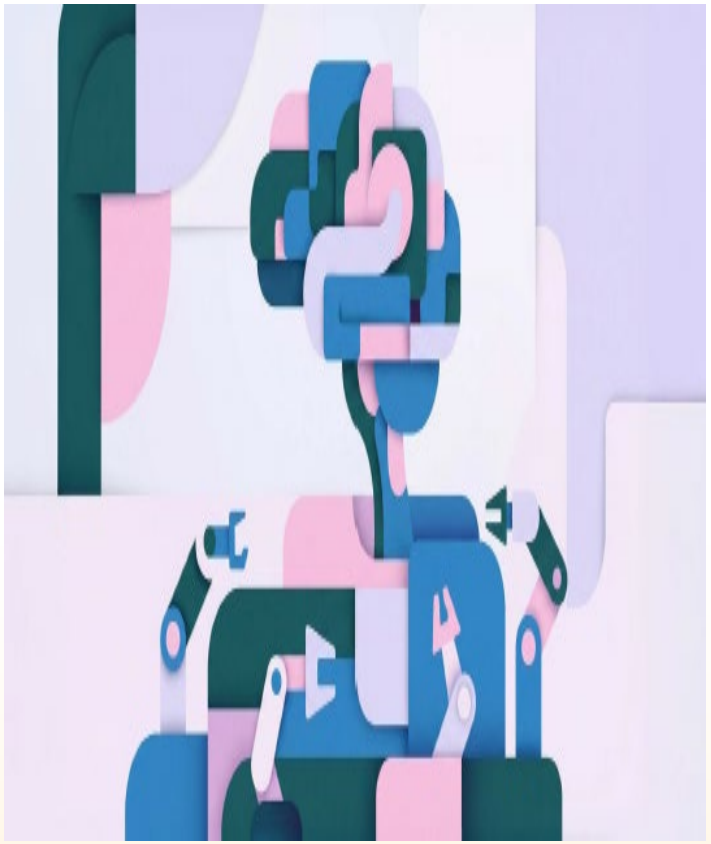
# Concepts and Evolution

- Automation and Workflow
- Robotic Process Automation (RPA)
- Artificial Intelligence
  - Machine Learning (ML) - (*Discriminative*)
  - Deep Learning (e.g. facial recognition using many layers of data)
  - Gen AI - (*Generative*) – ML is the “brain” of GenAI
  - Agentic AI
- Large Language Models (LLMs)
- Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) – The “Holy Grail”
- Evolution
  - Deep Learning Era (2016-2021)
  - Gen AI Era (2022-2025)
  - Agentic AI Era (2025-2026)



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# What is an Agent?

## Machine Learning

A computer trained on massive amounts of data to recognize patterns and continuously improve the accuracy of its predictions for highly specific applications.

## Artificial Intelligence

By analyzing given information to establish context, the system can use a probabilistic approach to reason and predict the most likely result across many different applications.

**Understand** | **Think** | **Act** | **Learn**

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# What Makes AI Agents Unique?

AI agents are a new form of **digital labor** operating with a fundamentally different economic model. They aren't a replacement for people, but a powerful tool to augment them.

| | | Humans | AI Agents |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Cost | **High and variable**, based on employee time. | **Low and fixed**, based on output. |
| 2 | Output | **Constrained by fixed capacity**, limited to 8 hr workday. | Virtually unconstrained capacity, operating 24/7. |
| 3 | Speed | Serial processing, with each task creating a bottleneck. | Parallel processing, which eliminates bottlenecks and compresses cycle times. |
| 4 | Elasticity | Rigid and linear where increasing capacity requires additional headcount. | Instant and dynamic where capacity can scale up or down on demand. |
| 5 | Consistency | Prone to error and variation, with tasks executed slightly differently every time. | Precise and repeatable, with tasks executed the exact same way every time. |

**Note:** AI agents also continuously learn and evolve, becoming more proactive and predictive over time. This improvement transforms them from simple automation tools into powerful engines for strategic growth and decision-making.

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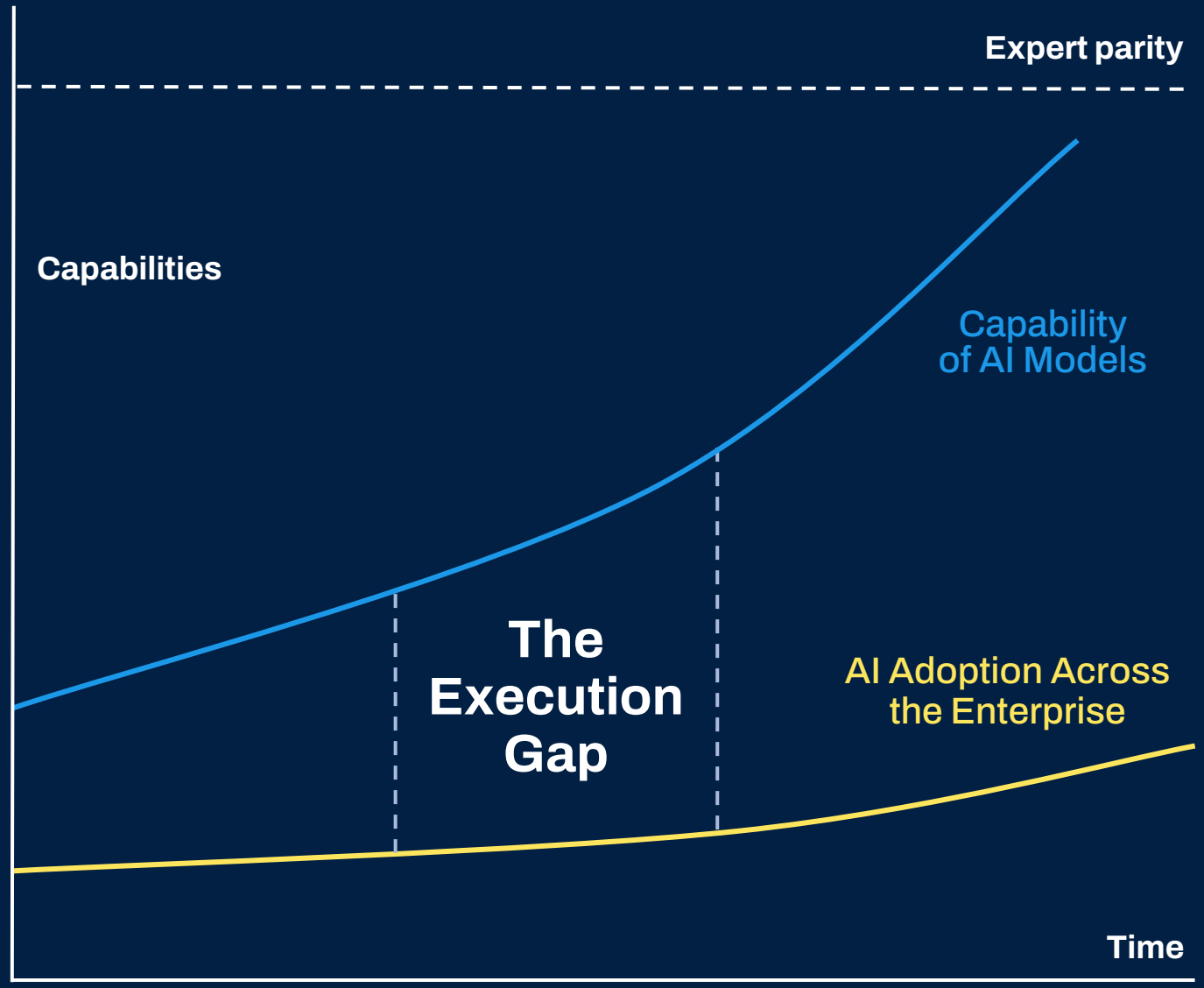
# AI is getting astonishingly close to human performance.

*So, why isn't it having a bigger impact across the enterprise?*

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# Trends in AI Adoption

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# Organizations in Every Industry Are Adopting Agentic AI

**The market has moved beyond asking *if* they should invest in AI to *how fast* they can deploy it and assess value.**

According to a 2025 PwC survey, 88% of senior executives plan to boost AI-related spending, with ....

**75%**

believing that AI agents will have a **larger impact than the Internet**, and

**73%**

believing their use of AI agents will confer **a significant competitive advantage.**

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# Trends in AI Adoption

- Recent Surveys
  - IDC-ICMA: 82 % of governments have adopted or piloting AI Agents
  - Salesforce: 74% of frontline government staff use AI in some manner
  - Gallup: 43% of all government employees use AI in some manner (personal or work)

- "Great AI Paradox" – Interest is high but issues around policy, staff impact, governance, long-term cost etc. remain

- Many elected officials are especially interested in being at forefront of adoption

- Top goals from using AI
  - Efficiency and Streamlining
  - Responsiveness to Citizens
  - Deal w/Staffing Capacity in Tight Labor Market

# Administrative & Operational Use Cases

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# Workday

## *A Platform to Manage People, Money and Agents*

SINGLE CODE LINE

BUSINESS PROCESS FRAMEWORK

IN-MEMORY OBJECTS

INTEGRATION CLOUD

REPORTING & ANALYTICS

SECURITY

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The Future of Work is

# Human + AI Collaboration

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# AI and LLMs know *almost everything*…

**A ton of the world's knowledge,** accessible instantly

**Ability to automate,** with unbelievable speed and scale

**Great at lower risk tasks** that can be easily corrected

# …but do they know *your business*?

**Your org structures,** rooted in how people work together

**Your workflows,** aligned to critical business processes

**Your decisions,** auditable and compliant — every single time

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# Superintelligence in action.

- Meeting Minutes
- Permits & Inspections
- Citizen Services/Work Orders
- Predictive Maintenance for Fleet

Moving from AI that can assist
to AI that can actually do the work.

Ability to Drive Real Outcomes

Enterprise
## Search
*Find it fast*

Instant, policy-aware answers
Federated search across apps
Knowledge in the flow of work

Conversational
## Assistant
*Walk me through it*

Explain next steps
Execute single-step actions
Guided HR/Finance tasks

Collaborative
## Agents
*Solve it for me*

Content Aware
Multi-step, E2E workflows
Agent Builder
Proactive remediation & audit

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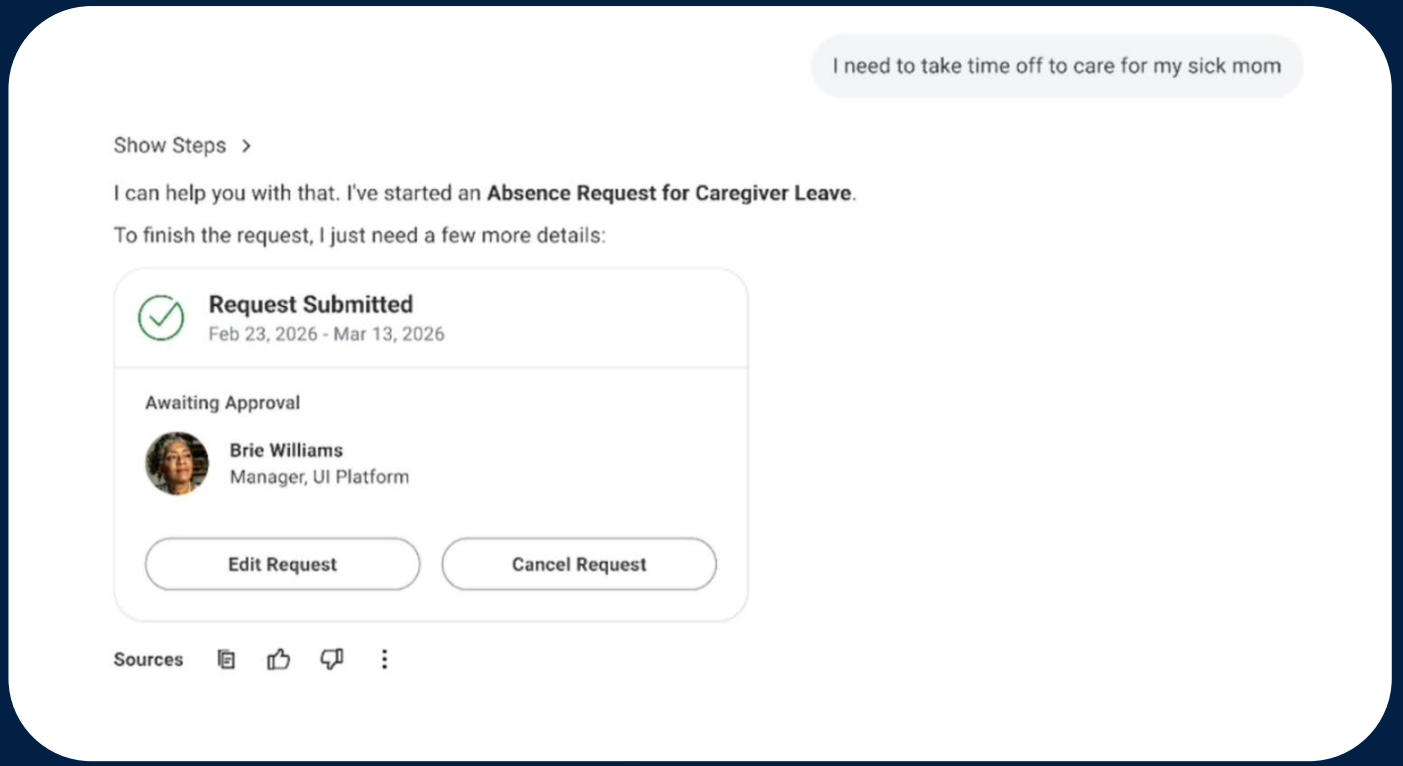
# Self-Service Agent

## Pain

High volume of support tickets and repetitive questions for HR and IT teams.

## Solution

**The Sana Self-Service** now offers instant, accurate answers and guides employees through complex work




**300+**

Different skills to help with self-service across Workday applications

**↑20%**

Increase in employee and manager productivity

**↓25%**

Decrease in HR case volume

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## Employees & Managers

For Employees, People Managers, Frontline Managers

- **Self-Service** — *Boost productivity/minimize cases*
- **Employee Sentiment** — *Surface workforce signals early*
- **Performance** — *Drive goals and growth*
- **Frontline** — *Support hourly/deskless workers*

## HR & Operations

For HR, Payroll and Comp Admins, Total Rewards Pros, Operations Specialists and Implementers

- **BP Optimize** — *Optimize business processes*
- **Compensation** — *Manage fair and compliant pay*
- **Job Architecture** — *Define roles, skills, job structures*
- **Adoption** — *Proactive Admin Assistant*
- **Case** — *Streamline intake to resolution*
- **Deployment** — *Manage implementation*
- **Payroll** — *Ensure accurate, compliant pay*

## Talent Acquisition & Onboarding

For Recruiters, L&D, Onboarding Specialists

- **Recruiting** — *Source, assess, and hire talent*
- **Talent Mobility** — *Enable internal mobility/growth*
- **Onboarding** — *Deliver personalized onboarding*
- **Candidate Sourcing** — *Match skills to short-term demand*
- **Candidate Experience** — *Deliver personalized hiring*

## Finance, Planning, Procurement & Legal Professionals

For Finance Managers, CLOs, FP&A, Controllers, Operations/Workforce Analysts, Accountants, Procurement Professionals

- **Cost & Profitability** — *Analyze costs and margin drivers*
- **Financial Close** — *Accelerate period close*
- **Supplier Contract** — *Manage agreements and risk*
- **Doc AI - Cont.Labor** — *Interpret labor documents*
- **Financial Audit** — *Coordinate period close*
- **Financial Test Suite** — *Validate financial controls*
- **Revenue Contract** — *Manage revenue agreements*
- **Planning** — *Model scenarios and forecast*
- **Contract Negotiation** — *Negotiate contracts with insight*
- **Contract Intelligence** — *Extract insights from contracts*

## Developers & Builders

For CIOs, Workday Developers, IT Management Professionals

- **Agent Builder Pro** — *Enterprise-ready agents*
- **Agent System of Record** — *Digital workforce management*

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# Benefits & ROI Considerations

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# Agentic AI will reduce the cost of repetitive work, but its full value runs much deeper

Let's first examine the challenges of how we work today, using a **Day in the Life for a Recruiter:**

**2**

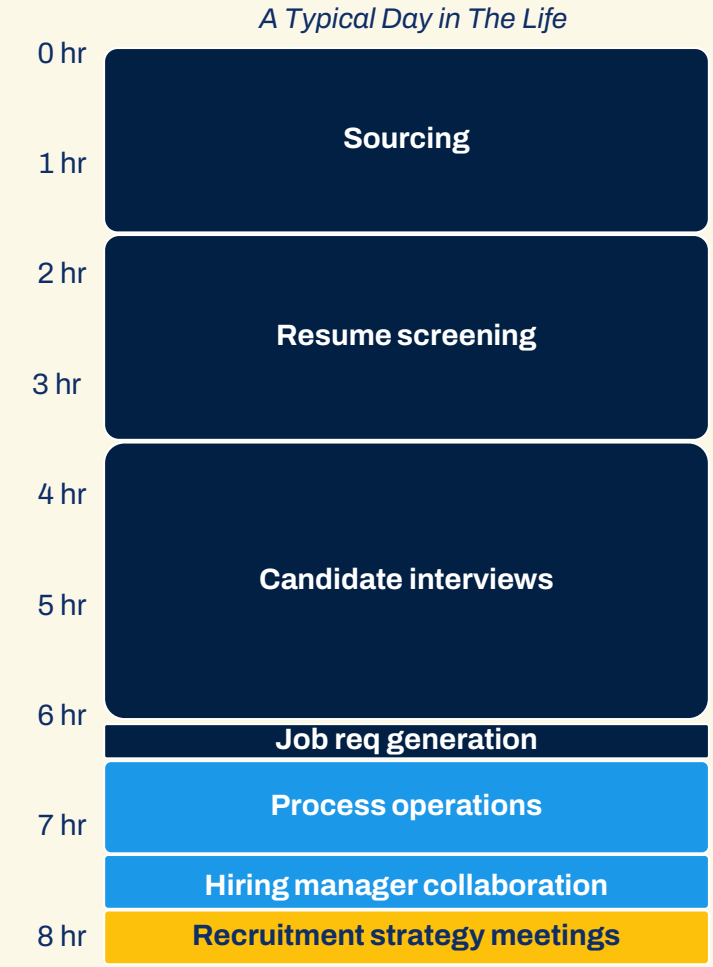
*Working hours represent a **capacity constraint.** What if a change in the business increases volumes by 10x?*

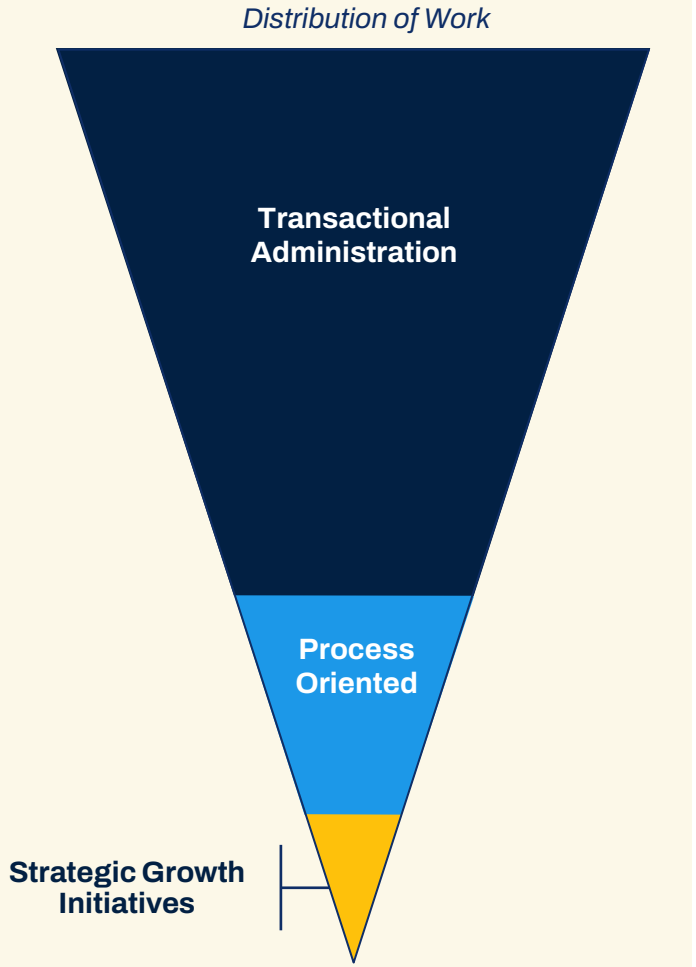
**3**

*People process one block of work at a time, & **context switching** disrupts productivity.*

**4**

***Output consistency**: do all Recruiters produce the same quality candidates?*




**1**

*Majority of day is transactional. These high-volume & repetitive tasks introduce:*

*- **Business risk** of human errors and compliance failures*

*- **Operational friction**: employees delay action due to cumbersome processes*

**5**

*Rest of work gets pushed to the margins. This **opportunity cost of strategic work** is particularly costly when business is undergoing transformation*

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# Agentic HR

How will superintelligent agents change how HR teams operate?

1 | Open roles filled in days, not weeks — with AI agents handling repetitive tasks

2 | Real-time understanding of skills gaps and turnover risks before they become problems

3 | Always-on HR support, where agentic teammates help employees 24/7

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# Agentic Finance

How will superintelligent agents change how Finance teams operate?

1 | Autonomous close run by AI agents to deliver continuous real-time results

2 | Budgeting & Planning that adapts daily—not annually or quarterly

3 | Spend governed in real-time, audited by AI agents with context of policies and budgets

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# Agentic IT

How can CIOs and IT teams build, deploy, and manage AI agents?

1 | Easily move data in and out, without heavy integration projects

2 | Quickly create low code/no code agents and orchestrate with third-party partner agents

3 | Build, run, and govern AI agents that inherit Workday's security and data models

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# Deployment Approaches, Navigating Risks & Governance

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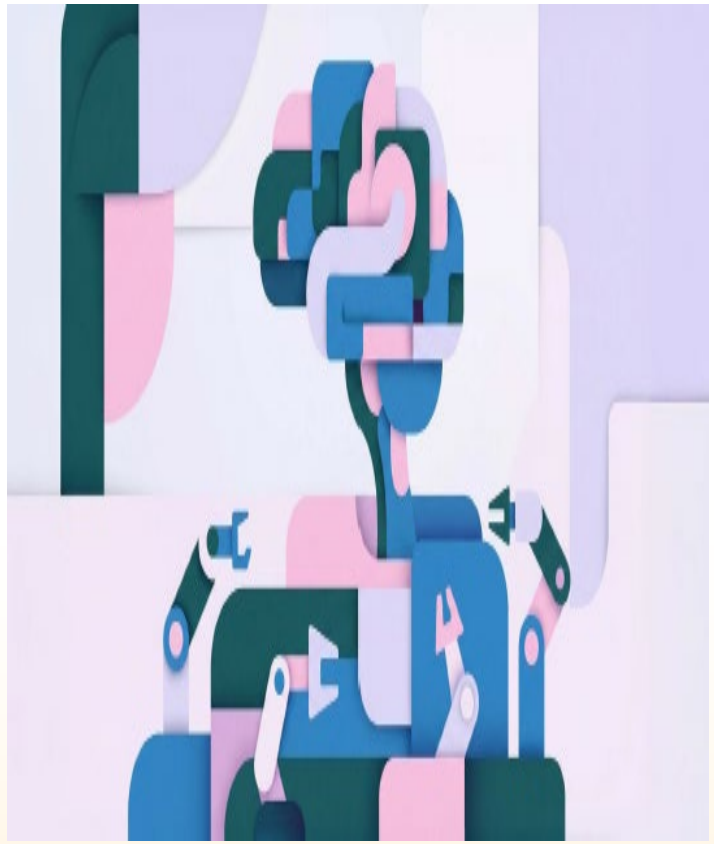
# Deployment, Risks and Governance

- “Low Regret” Pilots to Start
- Humans in the Loop for Medium to High-Risk Processes
- Policies in Place
- Risks
  - Agency Risk – unauthorized decisions
  - Bias & Equity
  - Solid Audit Trails
  - Cybersecurity
  - Who manages the Agents?
- Governance
  - Architectural Constraints/Hard Boundaries
  - Agent System of Record
  - Dual-Agent Architecture



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# AI Must Be Built with Responsibility and Trust

## Our Approach

### Principles
North Star values like Amplify Humans and Lead with Transparency

### Practices
Embedded governance in real-world development

### People
Expert oversight across disciplines

### Policies
Alignment with global and local regulation

## Why It Matters

### Maximize Your Investment
Maximize ROI through trusted user adoption

### Innovate with Confidence
Innovate faster without introducing unnecessary risk

### Reduce Compliance and Security Risk
Mitigate risk with a partner certified to the highest global standards

ISO

NIST National Institute of Standards and Technology U.S. Department of Commerce

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# Lessons Learned from Early Adopters

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# Lessons Learned from Early Adopters

- In some ways things haven't changed – need to think about how an Agent can improve a process holistically; don't apply it to bad processes and data.
- Agents should be workforce multipliers – final decision making still in the hands of humans
- Engage frontline workers early in deploying agents to improve processes and business functions
- Good software has audit trails for people – and it should have audit trails for agents
- Deploying Agents "layered on top" of antiquated core systems in unlikely to make things better
- Putting a framework in place to evaluate results and value to the public.

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# Humans Remain the Strategic Core of the Enterprise

By automating repetitive work, AI agents don't replace humans; they elevate them to focus on judgment, creativity, and relationships—the uniquely human advantages that drive competitive differentiation.

## 1 Judgment

**Strategic & Ethical Reasoning**
Humans can navigate ambiguity, mitigate risk, & ensure accountable, values-aligned decisions

*"AI cannot replicate the strategic courage required for leaders to commit to big, hard-to-reverse moves that **define a company's future**."*

McKinsey & Company

e.g., A Recruiter's value extends far beyond simply filling open positions. They serve as a **strategic partner to the business**, providing insights and direction that shape the company's talent landscape.

## 2 Creativity

**Divergent & Contextual Innovation**
Humans can drive true breakthrough innovation and solves unarticulated customer needs

*"Studies have found that human-human pairs consistently produce **more original and clever ideas** than human-AI pairs."*

JOURNAL OF Creative Behavior
Publication of the Creative Education Foundation™

e.g., A key function of a Recruiter is to apply creative, divergent thinking to solve **novel talent challenges**, particularly for hard-to-fill roles where standard methods and go-to candidate pools fail.

## 3 Relationships

**Empathy & Connection**
Humans can forge trust that drives loyalty, retention, and a resilient, high-performing culture

*"Teams with high engagement—a key outcome of emotionally intelligent leadership—exhibit **23% higher profitability**."*

GALLUP

e.g., In a competitive talent market, the **candidate experience** is a powerful differentiator. Recruiters are the primary drivers of this experience, building relationships and fostering deep connections.

**Sources:** "How AI is transforming strategy development," McKinsey, Feb 2025.""Who" Is the Best Creative Thinking Partner? An Experimental Investigation of Human–Human, Human–Internet, and Human–AI Co-Creation," Journal of Creative Behavior, Dec 2024. Jim Harter, "Employee Engagement vs. Employee Satisfaction and Organizational Culture," Gallup, July 2025.

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# Q&A

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