

REPORT

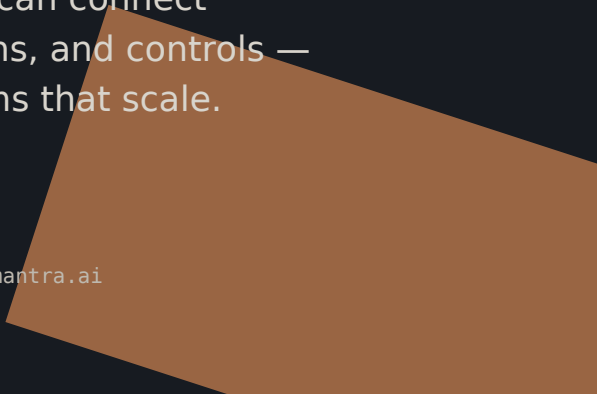


Building the Systems for Agentic Advantage

A field report on how enterprises can connect intelligence to workflows, decisions, and controls — and move from AI pilots to systems that scale.

Mantra Labs

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HOW TO USE THIS PUBLICATION

A decision aid, not a substitute for operating context.

Quantitative claims are tied to named sources in the report. Mantra analysis is presented as synthesis rather than proprietary benchmark data.

Use the models to structure a leadership conversation, identify the first workflow or system boundary worth examining, and define what evidence would be needed before committing to implementation.

Contents

- 01 The gap
- 02 Where it breaks
- 03 What has to exist
- 04 Where to start
- 05 How to measure

01 THE VALUE GAP

AI is everywhere. Advantage is still rare.

Enterprise AI has moved quickly from experiment to expectation. Tools are easier to deploy. Models are more capable. Boards are asking sharper questions.

But the harder problem has not changed: intelligence only matters when it alters how work moves.

Most enterprises are not short on AI activity. They are short on AI that changes the system.

The issue is no longer access to intelligence. The issue is whether the enterprise is built to use it.

Signal set

88% Organizations using AI in at least one business function.	~1/3 Organizations that have begun scaling AI programs.	23% Organizations scaling agentic AI somewhere in the enterprise.
39% Organizations still experimenting with agents.		

02 THE DESIGN ERROR

The agent is not the unit of advantage. The workflow is.

An agent can summarize, draft, search, recommend, and act. But enterprise value does not come from the agent in isolation.

It comes from the workflow around it: the trigger that starts the work, the context it can access, the rules it must follow, the systems it can touch, the decisions it can support, and the humans who supervise the outcome.

A weak workflow with an agent is still a weak workflow. It just moves faster.

Agents do not remove operating model debt. They expose it.

Context The agent needs the data, documents, history, policies, permissions, and operating signals required to reason.	Action The agent needs controlled access to the systems where work is created, updated, routed, approved, or closed.
Control The agent needs boundaries: what it can suggest, what it can prepare, what it can execute, and what must be escalated.	

03 WHY PILOTS BREAK

Most agentic AI failures start outside the model.

The model is rarely the first thing to break. The operating design breaks earlier.

The use case is too vague. The data is not decision-ready. The workflow has too many exceptions. The permission model is unresolved. The approval path is political. The integration layer is brittle. The risk controls arrive after the demo.

That is how agentic AI becomes another proof of concept: impressive in a controlled room, fragile in the business.

Vague value pool The project starts with a technology question instead of a business constraint.	Retrofitted workflow Agents are added to old processes without changing how work should move.
Thin context The system cannot reason well because the relevant evidence is scattered across tools, teams, and documents.	Unclear autonomy No one has decided what the agent can recommend, prepare, trigger, or complete.
No orchestration layer Point agents multiply. The handoffs remain. Complexity simply changes shape.	Late governance Controls are added after ambition, which means scale arrives with risk attached.

30-50% Potential process acceleration from effective AI agents.	40%+ Agentic AI projects expected to be canceled by end of 2027 because of cost, unclear value, or weak risk controls.	
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04 THE AGENTIC SYSTEMS STACK

Intelligence needs a system around it.

A useful agentic system is not a model with a task list. It is an operating architecture. It knows what outcome matters. It can see the right context. It can reason within business constraints. It can act through controlled pathways. It can explain what happened. It can learn from correction. And it can do all of this without breaking trust.

Intent Defines the outcome, user goal, business rule, or service moment the system is designed to move.	Context Connects the data, documents, policies, histories, and signals needed for intelligent action.
Reasoning Structures how options are compared, exceptions are handled, and recommendations are formed.	Action Gives the system controlled access to workflows, APIs, tools, tasks, and transaction paths.
Control Sets permissions, approval gates, escalation logic, audit trails, and human oversight.	Experience Designs how people brief, supervise, question, approve, correct, and trust agentic work.
Learning Captures outcomes, overrides, corrections, and exceptions so the system gets sharper over time.	

The model is a capability. The system is the advantage.

05 THE TRUST BOUNDARY

Autonomy scales only as far as trust allows.

Enterprise autonomy is not a binary switch. It is a boundary that must be designed.

The more an agent can see, decide, and do, the more the enterprise needs to know who owns it, what it touched, why it acted, where it stopped, and how the outcome can be reviewed.

Trust is not the brake on agentic AI. It is the condition that lets it scale.

In agentic systems, governance cannot sit outside the workflow. It has to travel with the work.

Identity Which agents exist, who owns them, and what credentials they use.	Permission Which tools, records, systems, and actions each agent can access.
Autonomy boundary What the agent can suggest, prepare, execute, or escalate.	Human oversight Where review, approval, correction, or override is required.
Observability What the agent saw, reasoned, decided, and did.	Auditability What evidence exists for compliance, risk, and review.
Resilience How the system handles ambiguity, misuse, failure, and attack.	

77% Executives saying AI benefits require a foundation of trust.	81% Executives saying trust strategy must evolve with technology strategy.	
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Start where the work already has friction.

The best agentic opportunities are not the flashiest. They are the workflows where volume is high, judgment is repeated, context is scattered, and the business already knows what delay costs.

A good starting point has five signals: a clear trigger, a measurable constraint, accessible context, defined actions, and a safe path for human oversight.

Do not start with the agent. Start with the work worth changing.

Customer operations Triage requests, summarize history, recommend next actions, and route exceptions. Resolution time · Cost-to-serve · First-contact resolution	Insurance servicing Handle document-heavy, rule-heavy workflows across servicing, claims, renewals, and exceptions. Turnaround time · Self-service completion · Exception rate
Healthcare access Support appointment teams, care coordinators, lab/report workflows, and follow-up journeys. Booking completion · Wait-time reduction · Call deflection	Sales and account intelligence Prepare briefs, surface risks, recommend next actions, and update relationship workflows. Prep time · Conversion · Next-best-action acceptance
Finance and procurement Review documents, detect anomalies, support approvals, and preserve audit evidence. Cycle time · Policy compliance · Approval latency	Internal knowledge operations Turn SOPs, tickets, documents, and policies into guided employee support. Search time · Ticket deflection · Answer quality

- Clear trigger
- Measurable constraint
- Accessible context

- Defined actions
- Human oversight path

If the workflow has no measurable constraint, it is not ready.

Agentic AI should not be measured by usage alone. Usage can rise while value remains thin.

The better question is whether the system changed the economics, speed, quality, or reliability of the work.

Speed

Cycle time	Response time
Decision latency	Handoff compression

Productivity

Work handled per team member	Manual steps removed
Workload absorbed	

Quality

First-time-right rate	Error rate
Rework	Escalation quality

Adoption

Active users	Repeat use
Recommendation acceptance	Override rate

Financial impact

Cost-to-serve	Leakage reduction
Conversion lift	Margin improvement

Governance

Approval compliance	Audit completeness
Unauthorized action attempts	

Learning

Feedback capture	Exception-to-rule conversion
Improvement velocity	

66% Companies adopting agents reporting productivity gains.	57% Companies adopting agents reporting cost savings.	55% Companies adopting agents reporting faster decision-making.
54% Companies adopting agents reporting improved customer experience.		

The enterprise needs to become agent-ready, not agent-first.

The wrong response is to create a swarm of disconnected agents.

The better response is to build the architecture that lets specialized agents work safely inside the enterprise: connected context, governed tools, observable actions, clear handoffs, and interfaces designed for human supervision.

The future is not one giant agent. It is a governed system of work.

01 Human experience	02 Agent orchestration
03 Context and memory	04 Tool and action layer
05 Policy and control layer	06 Observability and learning

SOURCES & EVIDENCE

The evidence behind the publication.

External claims are grounded in the sources below. Mantra frameworks and recommendations are identified as applied interpretation rather than original quantitative research.

01 Source

External source

02 Source

External source

03 Source

External source

04 Source

External source

05 AI risk framework

External source

06 Source

External source

07 Architecture context

External source

Continue the work

Find the workflow worth making intelligent.

Bring us one process where speed, visibility, judgment, or cost is constrained. We'll help map the system required to make intelligence useful.

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