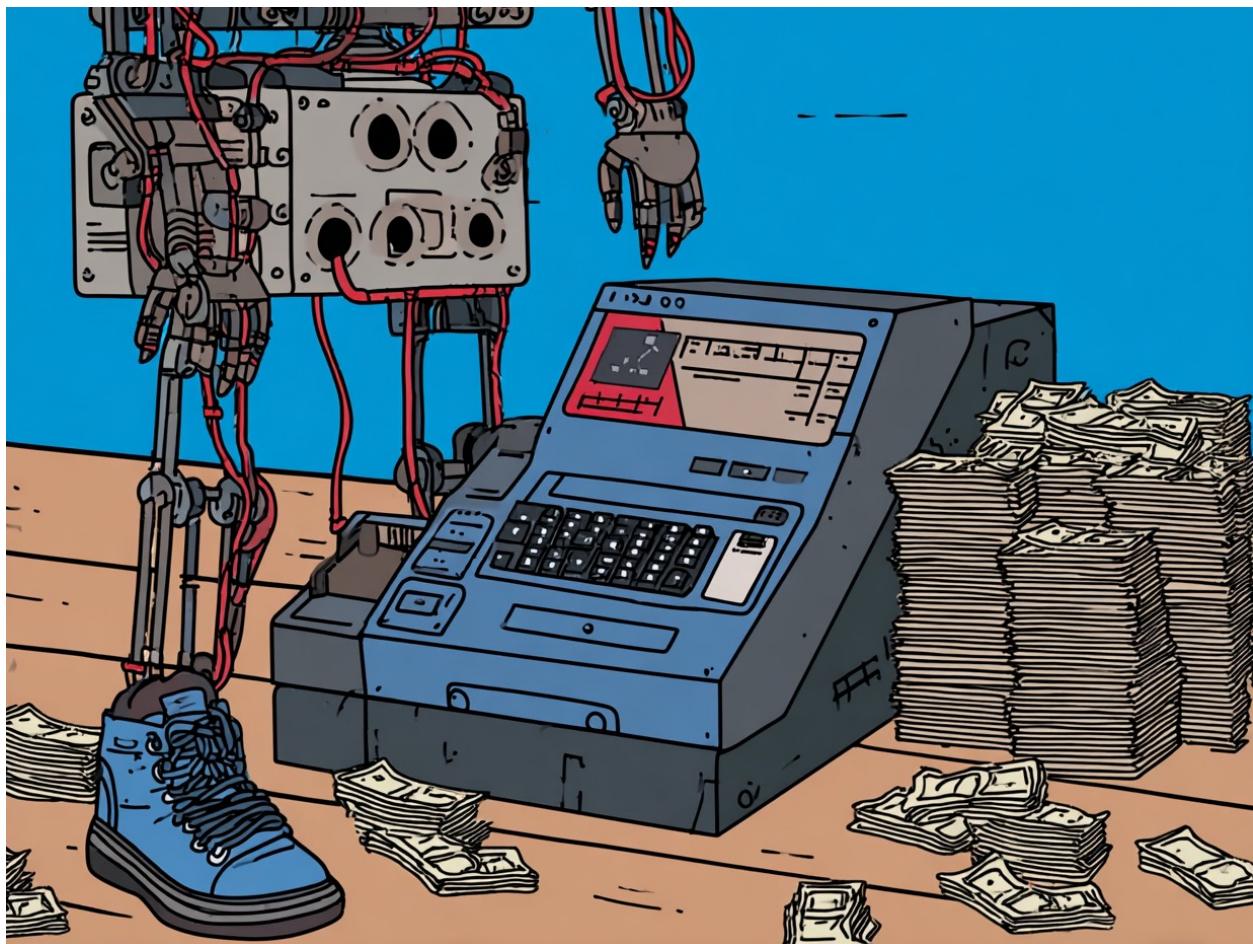


## The Most Overlooked Bottleneck in SME Marketing: Humans Running the Machines

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I've been observing something across auto retail, financial services boutiques, and even tech companies that should already know better: we're running 2025 marketing budgets on 2015 operating models.

Here's the pattern almost every team admits privately but rarely says out loud:

- PPC spend keeps rising, but operational visibility keeps shrinking
- Agencies hold the keys, while owners and CMOs get dashboards instead of answers

- CRM data, GA4 behavior signals, and paid media insights never end up in the same room
- “Optimization” often means chasing last month’s numbers, not shaping next month’s demand

When you zoom out, it becomes obvious:

**The problem isn’t Google or Meta. The problem is that the workflows around them are (manual) outdated?**

The irony is that *everyone* talks about AI, yet very few apply it where it actually moves revenue: in the feedback loops that influence how budgets shift, how customers move through funnels, and how fast teams can react to the market.

What I’m seeing now — especially in dealerships and financial services — is that the competitive gap no longer comes from better creatives or bigger budgets. It comes from the teams who automate the *decision layer* behind PPC, forecasting, and internal approvals.

That’s where performance and cost efficiency actually come from.

Over the next few months, I’ll be sharing more of what I’m testing and learning as the industry shifts toward AI-assisted operations. Not hype — just practical frameworks for teams that want less noise, more control, and systems that work even when people are busy selling.

If you’re in auto retail, financial brokerage, or growth leadership and you’ve been feeling this friction... you’re not alone. And the next wave is going to dramatically reward operators who move early. More to come!