

The ROI of AI: How agents are delivering for business

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Leading companies are moving beyond debating AI's possibilities and are now using AI agents to drive measurable business value and achieve significant ROI by automating complex workflows.

The AI conversation has moved from potential to performance. While many organizations are still debating AI's possibilities, the most competitive companies are already capturing measurable value from AI agents that can handle complex workflows with minimal human oversight. According to our [2025 ROI of AI Report](#), for the 52% of executives who report their organizations are now deploying AI agents in production, this represents a fundamental shift in how business gets done.

AI is delivering

- 74% of executives report achieving ROI within the first year
- 39% of executives report their organizations have already deployed more than 10 agents across their enterprise
- Among those executives who report productivity gains in their organizations, 39% have seen productivity at least double



The AI story is evolving

The story of enterprise AI is evolving rapidly. Last year, our discussions with customers centered primarily on large language models – questions about choice and capability, how to access the best models for specific tasks.

This progressed to platform conversations. Managing multiple models requires sophisticated infrastructure, and organizations need unified systems that deliver model choice while ensuring enterprise requirements like governance, security, and cost management.

Gemini's AI Summary

- **AI adoption is maturing from models to agents:** The focus of AI has shifted from debating the capabilities of individual large language models to deploying sophisticated, task-specific AI agents that automate complex business processes and deliver measurable ROI.
- **AI agents are driving significant business value:** Companies are achieving substantial benefits with AI agents, including a high return on investment within the first year, double productivity gains in some cases, and significant improvements in areas like customer service and security operations.
- **Strategic implementation is key for success:** The most successful organizations are not just experimenting with one-off projects; they are strategically scaling AI agent deployment, focusing on high-value use cases, building internal expertise, and treating AI as a core organizational capability rather than a simple technology project.

Today, we've moved beyond individual models to agentic workflows – highly customized, task-specific automation that fundamentally changes core business processes. We're seeing creative assistants transform

marketing operations, operational agents deliver efficiency gains, and coding assistants accelerate development cycles.

"A year ago, nobody was talking about AI agents," says Cristina Nitulescu, Head of Digital Transformation and IT, Bayer Consumer Health. "We have to rethink processes as people become aware of their disruptive force — prioritizing agentic AI is about setting ourselves up for the future."

And as we look to 2026, it's clear we are entering the next evolution, where the lines between models, platforms, and agents are blurring into integrated systems. This convergence creates three key advantages:

1. **Faster feedback loops** – insights from building agents immediately inform better model development
2. **Unified platforms** – complex, intertwined networks that combine models and agents in single systems
3. **New business models** – companies create integrated solutions rather than just building individual components

For developers and business leaders, this means thinking in terms of ecosystems rather than isolated tools. From customer service resolution to marketing campaign optimization, agents are delivering measurable business impact across industries. Rather than simply routing customer inquiries to human agents, leading organizations now deploy agents that independently handle common requests, access relevant account information, and resolve issues end-to-end. The sophistication varies by industry and use case, but the

pattern is consistent: autonomous agents managing complete workflows that previously required human intervention.

This business impact is resonating with executives across industries. As Fiona Tan, CTO at Wayfair, explained in our research: "AI agents can be applied to so many use cases, the number of businesses adopting them should be 100%. I can quickly point to dollars saved."



Strategic principles for the agentic era

The most successful organizations build their agent capabilities progressively. They begin by adding AI assistance to existing marketing workflows, then develop single-purpose agents for specific tasks, and finally integrate multiple agents into automated business processes. This methodical approach delivers value at each stage while building organizational confidence and capability.

After working with enterprises globally on AI agent implementations, clear patterns emerge among organizations achieving the strongest business value:

- **Start with proven use cases**, but choose strategically. Focus first on processes where autonomous decision-making creates immediate value — **customer service resolution, inventory**

optimization, or content personalization. These use cases provide clear ROI metrics and build organizational confidence for broader deployment.

- **Scale with purpose.** Successful organizations deploy multiple agents systematically rather than pursuing one-off experiments. They treat agent deployment as a strategic capability, not a technical project.
- **Invest in the capability, not just the technology.** The highest-performing organizations treat agent deployment as an organizational capability. They develop internal expertise, establish governance frameworks, and create feedback loops that continuously improve agent performance. Technology is just the starting point.



Transforming core business functions

The impact of AI agents extends far beyond simple automation. In marketing, organizations are seeing 32% quicker content editing and 46% faster content creation, enabling teams to focus on strategy rather than execution. As Zafar Chaudry, chief digital officer at Seattle Children's Hospital, explained: “Gen AI excels at marketing-related tasks that require extracting data from a large database, such as audience building, journey orchestration, content creation, and designing targeted, personalized campaigns.”

The potential here is so significant that Ian Hargreaves, Data Science Fellow at ATB Financial says, “I can’t think of a better technology to reimagine content creation and personalization workflows than AI.”

Customer service has been equally transformed, with 63% of executives reporting gen AI has resulted in improved customer experience. AI agents now handle complex customer inquiries end-to-end, with some organizations achieving 120 seconds saved per contact and generating \$2M in additional revenue from better routing and information management.

In security operations, AI agents are providing 70% reduction in breach risk and 50% faster mean time to respond to threats. As Chaudry noted: "Security is the perfect use case for gen AI. It can hunt down threats and even remediate them around the clock."



Your path to the agent advantage

The opportunity for early adoption advantages remains strong.

Organizations that act strategically now can position themselves among the leaders and establish operational advantages that compound over time.

Organizations that build agent capabilities today will have significantly more refined systems — and better business outcomes — than those starting later.

As agents become more sophisticated and widespread, the operational advantages they provide create lasting competitive differentiation.

For leaders ready to capture the agent advantage, the path forward is clear: begin with high-value use cases that deliver measurable results, secure executive sponsorship for systematic deployment, and build the organizational capability to scale successful implementations across the enterprise.

The agentic era isn't coming — it's here. The question isn't whether AI agents will reshape business operations, but whether your organization will lead that change or follow it.

Want to learn more about how organizations are approaching agentic AI? [Our ROI of AI 2025 Report](#) provides insights into early adopter strategies, implementation patterns, and business outcomes across industries.