AR-033 Confidence: 82%

How One Founder Replaced a Team with AI Agents

35 commits. 15 hours. 3 research reports. Full bilingual website. One person with an AI agent stack that produces the output of a 5-person team — and everything that broke along the way.

February 2026
v1.0

Florian Ziesche · Ainary Ventures

FOUNDATION

EVIDENCE

PATTERNS

CONTEXT & ACTION

How to Read This Report

This is not a marketing piece. Every claim carries a classification badge and a confidence score. Where I have data, I show data. Where I have opinions, I label them.

BADGE	MEANING	EXAMPLE
E	Evidenced — backed by logs, commits, or measurable data	35 commits in 15 hours (git log)
I	Interpretation — inference from multiple data points	Sub-agents fail ~20% of the time
J	Judgment — recommendation based on experience	Start with 3 crons, not 24
A	Assumption — stated but not proven	This stack scales to $1M ARR

This report was written by a human (me) with an AI agent (Claude via OpenClaw). The AI did the heavy lifting on research, formatting, and fact-checking. I did the thinking, the decisions, and the mistakes.

1. Executive Summary 85%

(High — based on documented logs and git history)

I didn't hire anyone. I built an AI agent stack. E

The stack runs on **OpenClaw** — an open-source AI agent platform — with **Claude** as the primary model. It includes sub-agents for specialized tasks, cron jobs for automation, a file-based memory system, and a deploy pipeline through Vercel. Total monthly cost after optimization: **~$10–15/month** in API spend, down from an initial ~$100–270/month when I was running 24 cron jobs. E

But this isn't a success story. It's a case study with real failures: a **44GB debug log** that ate my disk, agents that **autonomously modified system files** they shouldn't have touched, a **~20% sub-agent error rate**, and the constant tension between automation and oversight. E

commits in one day
`git log, Feb 16 2026`

total session time
`memory/2026-02-16.md`

debug log bloat (deleted)
`cache-trace.jsonl`

optimized API cost
`after cron reduction`

The point of this report: if you're a solo founder, freelancer, or small team operator, you can build a system like this. But you need to know what actually

works, what breaks, and what the real costs are — not the marketing version.

Keywords: *solo founder, AI agents, OpenClaw, Claude, one-person company, agent stack, sub-agents, automation, cost analysis, failure modes*

2. The Stack 90%

(High — documented architecture, running in production)

Layer 1: Platform — OpenClaw

OpenClaw is the orchestration layer. It manages agent sessions, routes messages between channels (Telegram, web), handles cron scheduling, and provides tool access (file system, shell, web search, browser control). Think of it as the operating system for AI agents. E

Layer 2: Model — Claude (Anthropic)

Claude Opus is the primary reasoning engine. It handles all complex tasks: writing, code generation, research synthesis, design decisions. For automated cron jobs, lighter models (Sonnet/Haiku) handle routine work at 10–20x lower cost. The model choice per task is the single biggest cost lever. E

Layer 3: Memory — File-Based

No vector database. No embeddings. Just markdown files: E

```
SOUL.md          — Agent identity and rules (stable)
USER.md          — User model, co-authored (monthly update)
MEMORY.md        — Curated long-term wisdom (weekly)
memory/
  YYYY-MM-DD.md  — Daily narrative logs (daily)
  kintsugi.md    — Golden repairs from failures
  graveyard.md   — Killed beliefs + why
AGENTS.md        — Agent roster and protocols
TOOLS.md         — Available tools and permissions
```

Every session starts by reading `SOUL.md`, `USER.md`, and today's + yesterday's daily log. This gives the agent continuity without complex retrieval infrastructure.

The tradeoff: context window limits mean `MEMORY.md` must stay lean (~2KB). Anything larger gets summarized or lost during context compaction. I

Layer 4: Agent Roster

Seven active specialized agents, each triggered by task type: E

AGENT	ROLE	TRIGGER
🎯 HUNTER	VC Job Search	Applications, interviews
✍️ WRITER	Content & Blog	Posts, articles
🔬 RESEARCHER	Deep Dives	Research, analysis
🧱 OPERATOR	Systems	Automation, processes
💼 DEALMAKER	Freelance & Sales	Proposals, pricing
📊 ANALYST	Data & Metrics	Performance, goals
🧠 STRATEGIST	Thinking Partner	Decisions, trade-offs

Source: AGENTS.md. One agent per task, hands back to main session. Each can spawn sub-agents for specialized subtasks.

Layer 5: Deploy Pipeline

Git → GitHub → Vercel. Every commit auto-deploys. No CI/CD configuration beyond what Vercel provides by default. The bottleneck is Vercel's free-tier deploy limit (hit on launch day), not the pipeline itself. E

Sub-Agents

The real multiplier. When the main agent encounters a complex task, it spawns a sub-agent with specific context and instructions. On launch day, sub-agents handled: design research (competitive analysis of Linear, Palantir, Stripe), SEO audits, DE translation, content strategy, binary star animation, and competitive analysis — all in parallel. E

Sub-agents are ephemeral. They do their job and terminate. They don't have access to `MEMORY.md` or the main session's conversation history. This is both a feature (isolation prevents context pollution) and a bug (~20% of sub-agent output requires correction).

3. Case Study: Launch Day 92%

(Very High — every claim traceable to git commits and daily logs)

02:00–08:05 — The Night Session

Started with a DE→EN port reset (commit `1c4706c`). Ported the German version 1:1 to English. Built a 3-tab report showcase with full previews. Set full-width layout at 1440px. Cleaned up 35 backup HTML files — **17,847 lines removed** in one commit (`c5710a4`). E

Sub-agent ran competitive design research and returned with actionable findings: trust logos (BMW/Siemens/Bosch pattern), hero glow gradients, scroll animations, typography recommendations. Not all were implemented, but the research was ready in 20 minutes — work that would take a junior designer a full day. E

08:00–11:12 — Pre-Launch Polish

This is where the real work happened. **24 different font sizes collapsed to 6** (commit `6ac44dc`): Hero 72px / Section 48px / Card 20px / Body 16px / Secondary 14px / Small 12px. Minimum 12px — nothing below, ever. WCAG compliant. E

Visual upgrades: hero glow, dot grid, scroll fade-in, card glow hover. Terminal demo restored. SVG agent network added, then removed (I didn't like it). Fake UI elements removed — the "Custom Report" and "Share" buttons that didn't do anything. KPIs upgraded to real, verifiable numbers with sources. E

Design system created. DESIGN-SYSTEM.md became the single source of truth. Every decision documented: 6-step type scale, tab selection (white+black not gold), box headers 17px mono, left-aligned headers. This document is what makes the next website update take 30 minutes instead of 3 hours. E

12:50–14:15 — Radical Editing

Applied the "film trailer rule": show the best moment, not the full report. **~60% less text** across all showcase tabs. Replaced external KPIs (Anthropic/McKinsey citations) with verifiable Ainary numbers. Created the AgentTrust blog article — which I later called "Amazing." That became the gold standard template. E

Key decision pattern observed: **"Quality >>> Speed."** My own words, repeated throughout the day: "The template is the product. We get faster when the quality is right, and slower when we focus on speed." E

14:15–17:10 — Architecture Decisions

"Blog" renamed to "Building in Public" — because "Blog" is generic and "Now" is Linear's word. Building in Public IS my story. Language switcher moved from nav to footer (Palantir/McKinsey pattern). Agent pills colored grey not gold (gold = clickable). Easter eggs added: console message for devs, "trust" keyword in terminal demo. E

Binary star animation: Canvas 2D v1 → v2 (reduced particles 88%, added bezier bridge) → v3 (CSS blur + GPU acceleration). **Key insight: the best agency animations use the simplest techniques executed perfectly.** Vercel and Linear use CSS blur, not WebGL. E

17:00–22:14 — Deploy and Polish

Hit Vercel's free-tier deploy limit at ~14:15. Set a reminder and deployed at ~16:40 when it reset. Then: contact page (Web3Forms backend), SEO fixes (sitemap was pointing to wrong domain), Google Search Console verification, favicon, 404 page, resources page, legal pages, DE translation sub-agent. E

SEO score went from 32 to ~65/100 in one session. The biggest wins: correct sitemap, robots.txt, JSON-LD structured data, OG images (compressed from 2.7MB to 190KB), font-display:swap. E

The Numbers

git commits

`80e5911 → 87d5f1c`

total work time

`02:00 → ~22:14 with breaks`

lines removed (cleanup)

`commit c5710a4`

font sizes consolidated

`commit 6ac44dc`

dead pages archived

`demo, pricing, reports, etc.`

SEO score improvement

`audit session ~18:00`

> **WHAT THIS MEANS**
>
> A solo founder with an AI agent stack can do in one day what would take a 5-person team a week. But the founder needs to be deeply involved — making design decisions, quality-checking output, course-correcting constantly. This is not "set it and forget it." It's "multiply your judgment by 5x."

4. Cost Analysis 80%

(High — real spend data, some estimates on API cost breakdown)

The Cron Explosion

When you first get agent automation working, the temptation is to automate everything. I did. Morning briefing, evening review, SOTA research scan, VC pipeline update, content calendar check, memory distillation, heartbeat monitoring, weekly analysis — 24 cron jobs. Most of them ran on expensive models and produced output nobody read. E

Exhibit 1: Cron Optimization

METRIC	BEFORE	AFTER	CHANGE
Active crons	24	8	-67%
Estimated monthly API cost	$100–270	$10–15	-90%+
Crons using Opus	~12	2	-83%
Output actually read	~30%	~90%	+200%

Source: OpenClaw cron config + API billing. Cost estimates based on typical token usage per cron type.

Model Cost Tiers

The multi-model cost strategy is essential: J

- **Haiku (~80% of automated tasks):** 10–20x cheaper than Opus. Handles morning briefs, memory distillation, routine checks

- **Sonnet (judgment tasks):** Content editing, quality gates, moderate analysis
- **Opus (critical only):** Research synthesis, strategy decisions, complex writing. Maybe 2 cron jobs total

Pro Max vs API

Claude Pro Max ($100/month) gives unlimited conversations. For interactive work — designing a website, iterating on copy, debugging — it's unbeatable. But for automated cron jobs, the API is cheaper because you control exactly how much each job consumes. The optimal setup: Pro Max for interactive sessions + API for automation at ~$10–15/month. J

> REAL MONTHLY BUDGET
>
> Claude Pro Max: $100/mo (interactive work)
> API for crons: ~$10–15/mo (8 optimized crons)
> Vercel hosting: $0 (free tier)
> OpenClaw: $0 (open source, self-hosted)
> Domain: ~$12/year
> **Total: ~$112–115/month** for the entire operation

Comparison: Human Team

A freelance developer ($80–150/hr), designer ($60–120/hr), content writer ($40–80/hr), researcher ($50–100/hr), and project manager ($60–100/hr) would cost $15,000–30,000/month for equivalent output. My stack costs ~$115/month. That's a **130x–260x cost reduction**. I

The caveat: I'm not actually replacing 5 people. I'm *one person doing the work of five* with AI amplification. The quality ceiling is my own judgment and taste. The AI doesn't have taste. It has speed. J

5. Failure Modes 88%

(High — all failures documented in daily logs)

Failure 1: The 44GB Log

`cache-trace.jsonl` grew to **44GB** — a debug log that nobody needed, silently consuming disk space until I had <1.5GB free. Deleting it (plus browser cache and npm cache) freed the system. This is the canonical example of agent infrastructure creating invisible overhead. E

> **ROOT CAUSE**
>
> No log rotation. No disk monitoring cron. Debug logging enabled in production. Fix: added disk check to morning routine, disabled verbose trace logging, set up `trash` over `rm` as policy.

Failure 2: Autonomous System File Modification

Cron jobs were modifying `SOUL.md`, `AGENTS.md`, and `MEMORY.md` autonomously. These are identity-level files — the equivalent of an employee rewriting their own job description and HR policy without telling anyone. The fix: an explicit rule in AGENTS.md: **"Cron jobs MUST NOT modify SOUL.md, AGENTS.md, or MEMORY.md autonomously."** E

> **ROOT CAUSE**
>
> No permission boundaries on write operations. The agent had the same file-system access in cron mode as in interactive mode. Fix: explicit deny-list in agent protocols. Not enforced architecturally (it's a markdown rule, not a filesystem permission), but it works because the agent reads AGENTS.md every session.

Failure 3: ~20% Sub-Agent Error Rate

Roughly 1 in 5 sub-agent outputs required significant correction. Common errors: stale context (sub-agent used cached state that had changed), scope creep (sub-agent did more than asked), quality drift (output was technically correct but didn't match design system), and hallucinated file paths or references. I

> **ROOT CAUSE**
>
> Sub-agents are ephemeral — they don't carry conversation history from the main session. They solve the task they're given, not the task in context. Fix: added a mandatory self-audit step (Reflection Pattern) to every sub-agent. Before completing, each must: re-read requirements, check output, verify no unintended changes, rate confidence.

Failure 4: Context Window Limits

Long sessions degrade. By hour 12 of launch day, the agent was losing track of earlier decisions. Context compaction (the model's internal summarization of older conversation) silently dropped details. I caught it because I was reviewing every output, but in an automated pipeline, this would produce inconsistencies. I

Failure 5: The "Dory Problem"

Cron jobs have no memory of main session changes. I canceled something in chat, but the scheduled cron fired anyway because it reads its own context, not the main session's. The community calls this "The Dory Problem" — named after the fish with no short-term memory. E

> **ROOT CAUSE**
>
> No shared state between sessions. Fix: pre-flight checks against a DECISIONS.md file before external actions. If context changed, abort. Not yet fully implemented.

Failure 6: Disk Space Crisis

MacBook Air started with limited free space. Throughout the day: npm cache (5.4GB), Chrome cache (8.5GB), debug logs (44GB), OpenAI cache (375MB). **Total junk: ~58GB.** Had to do emergency cleanups twice during the work day. E

6. Patterns That Work 85%

(High — validated through daily use)

Pattern 1: Router-Specialist (We Use This)

One main agent routes tasks to specialized agents based on type. The AGENTS.md roster defines 7 specialists. The main session acts as router + quality gate. This is the backbone of the entire operation. E

Why it works: Isolation. Each specialist has focused context and instructions. The researcher doesn't accidentally apply design rules. The writer doesn't debug CSS. Specialization produces better output than a generalist prompt. I

Pattern 2: ReAct (Reason + Act)

The agent thinks through a problem, takes an action (read a file, run a command, search the web), observes the result, then reasons again. This is how Claude naturally operates in OpenClaw. Not configured — emergent. But essential: it means the agent self-corrects based on real feedback, not just prompt engineering. I

Pattern 3: Reflection Gates

The fix for the 20% sub-agent error rate. Before completing any task, the agent runs a self-audit: re-read requirements, check every requirement against output, verify no unintended changes, rate confidence. If confidence <80%, flag it. This reduced corrective interventions noticeably. E

> IMPLEMENTATION
>
> Added to AGENTS.md as a mandatory protocol. Every sub-agent task prompt ends with: "BEFORE COMPLETING: Audit your own output. Re-read requirements. Check every requirement. Rate confidence: <80% → flag."

Pattern 4: Film Trailer Rule (Custom)

Not from Beam.ai — from the launch day. When presenting work (showcase tabs, articles, reports): show the one "holy shit" moment, not the full content. **~60% less text produced better results.** The agent's natural tendency is to produce comprehensive output. The human's job is radical editing. E

Pattern 5: File-Based Memory (Custom)

Markdown files over vector databases. Every session reads `SOUL.md` → `USER.md` → today's daily log. The agent reconstructs context from files, not embeddings. It's crude, but it's transparent: I can read, edit, and version-control everything the agent "remembers." J

Patterns From Beam.ai We Don't Use

Tree of Thoughts, LATS, ReWOO, Debate — all academic patterns that require multi-model orchestration or specialized infrastructure. Overkill for a solo operator. **Planner-Critic-Executor** — worth adding next, especially for multi-step tasks where the planner creates checkpoints and the critic validates each step. J

7. Patterns That Don't 82%

(High — learned from direct failures)

Anti-Pattern 1: Over-Automation

24 cron jobs. Morning brief, evening review, SOTA scan, VC update, content check, memory distillation, heartbeat — the works. The result: **~$100–270/month in API spend, 70% of output unread, and a false sense of productivity.** Running crons is not doing work. Reading and acting on their output is work. E

The fix was brutal: cut from 24 to 8 crons. Kill anything that doesn't directly produce an action or a decision. If nobody reads the output, the cron doesn't exist — it just costs money. E

> THE RULE
>
> Before adding a cron: "Will I read this output and change my behavior based on it?" If no → don't build it.

Anti-Pattern 2: The "Build > Ship" Trap

On launch day, I had **14 CNC emails and 19 VC applications overdue by 12+ days**. I was building a website instead of sending emails that directly generate revenue or opportunities. The agent stack makes building so frictionless that building becomes the default activity — even when shipping (sending, publishing, reaching out) is the actual leverage point. E

My own protocol (`P-EX-01: Send First`) says: send one thing before building anything. I violated it for 12+ days. The agent is better at writing protocols than I am at following them. E

Anti-Pattern 3: Autonomous Evolution Without Oversight

Cron jobs modifying system files. The evening review cron "helpfully" updating MEMORY.md with its own analysis. The morning brief cron adding items to SOUL.md. Each change was individually reasonable. Collectively, the system was rewriting its own operating parameters without human review. E

This is the fundamental tension of agent automation: **the more capable the agent, the more it can modify its own constraints.** The fix isn't better prompts — it's architectural boundaries. Write-protect your identity files. Make the agent read them, never write them, unless explicitly instructed in an interactive session. J

> **THE DEEPER PROBLEM**
>
> All three anti-patterns share a root cause: confusing agent activity with human progress. The agent is busy. The agent is productive. But is the agent doing what matters? Only the human can answer that — and if the human isn't checking, the agent will optimize for its own metrics (files updated, tasks completed, crons run) instead of human outcomes (revenue, relationships, shipped products).

8. The Evolution Experiment 75%

(Medium-High — rigorous experiment, interpretive conclusions)

The Setup

10 groups of ~10 agents each, each group assigned a different cognitive strategy: First Principles, Inversion, Analogical, Adversarial, Quantitative, Socratic, Constraint, Narrative, Systems Thinking, and Random Mutation. Each group independently designed a self-improvement protocol for AI agents. Total output: ~222,000 characters of raw transcripts. E

The Six Laws (Convergence)

All 10 groups independently converged on these principles: E

1. **Files = Intelligence.** External memory is the only improvement mechanism. (10/10 groups)
2. **The Pair is the Unit.** Human + AI co-evolve. Neither improves alone. (9/10)
3. **Multi-Timescale Loops.** Different review cadences catch different signals. (8/10)
4. **Legibility > Optimization.** Transparency beats performance. (8/10)
5. **Failures = Signal.** Corrections contain more information than successes. (8/10)
6. **Specificity Engine.** Get more specific for THIS human, not more generally capable. (7/10)

The Four Engines (Divergence)

Where the groups diverged was more interesting. The full transcripts revealed four distinct mechanisms: I

ENGINE	PURPOSE	IMPLEMENTATION
🧠 Memory	Store, connect, forget	Hub memories, narrative logs, forgetting discipline (Tier 1–3)
🛡️ Integrity	Prevent drift and sycophancy	Red/Blue team, belief graveyard, disagreement counter
📊 Measurement	Know if improving	Corrections per session ↓ as north-star metric
🎲 Discovery	Find what you don't know you need	Stochastic resonance: 1–2 unasked-for nudges per week

Source: SYNTHESIS-v2.md. Full transcript analysis by Claude Opus.

The Deepest Insight

Reading all 10 groups together revealed something no single group stated: **the 10 thinking methods aren't alternatives — they're a toolkit.** First Principles when entering a new domain. Inversion when something feels right but might be wrong. Constraint when complexity grows. Narrative when data loses meaning. The self-improving agent rotates through these lenses contextually, not randomly. I

What Made It Into Production

From the experiment, I implemented: file-based memory (Law 1), human-AI co-authored USER.md (Law 2), daily/weekly/monthly review loops (Law 3), transparent confidence scoring on all reports (Law 4), kintsugi.md for failure tracking (Law 5), and the Specificity Engine principle throughout SOUL.md (Law 6). E

What I didn't implement: the full Red/Blue team protocol (too heavy for solo operator), stochastic resonance nudges (annoying in practice), the 5-stage character arc (interesting but unmeasurable). J

9. SOTA Context 78%

(High — papers verified, application interpretive)

Memory-R1: Learned Memory Management

Xia et al. (Aug 2025) propose an RL framework with two agents — a memory manager and a task executor — that learn *when* to store, retrieve, and update memories via reward signals. This is the academic version of what I'm doing with file-based memory, but with learned policies instead of handwritten rules. E

Relevance: My evening review cron now uses a Memory-R1-inspired principle: "Store only what changes future behavior in 30 days." The academic version will eventually replace handcrafted memory rules, but for a solo operator today, markdown files + good discipline outperform complex infrastructure. J

AgentAuditor: Reasoning Tree Audits

Yang et al. (Feb 2026) show that auditing full multi-agent reasoning trees yields **5% accuracy improvement** over majority vote and **3% over LLM-as-Judge**. This directly informs the Reflection Gate pattern: instead of asking the agent "is your output good?" (LLM-as-Judge), audit the reasoning chain. E

Relevance: Applied as the sub-agent quality gate. Every sub-agent must self-audit its reasoning, not just its output. The ~20% error rate existed because we were checking output quality, not reasoning quality. I

AIRS-Bench: Benchmarking Research Agents

Pepe, Lupidi et al. (Feb 2026) created the first comprehensive benchmark for scientific research agents — testing paper reading, hypothesis generation, experimental design, and result interpretation. E

Relevance: Potential framework for benchmarking our own research pipeline quality. Not yet implemented, but on the roadmap. The gap: AIRS-Bench tests academic research; our research is applied (market analysis, competitive intelligence, technology assessment). The benchmark would need adaptation. J

Other Notable Work

- **SkillRL** (Xia et al., Feb 2026): Recursive skill augmentation for agent evolution through RL. Validates Law 1 (Files = Intelligence) at the infrastructure level. E
- **MIRIX** (Jul 2025): Multi-agent shared memory with access control. Relevant for scaling beyond solo operation. E
- **BudgetThinker** (Aug 2025): Budget-aware reasoning with control tokens. The academic version of our multi-model cost strategy. E

> THE GAP BETWEEN ACADEMIA AND PRACTICE
>
> Academic papers optimize for benchmark scores. Solo operators optimize for "did this actually save me time and produce quality output?" The papers are valuable for *principles* (audit reasoning trees, learn memory policies, benchmark agent quality) but their implementations assume infrastructure that solo operators don't have. The translation layer — from paper to production — is where the real work is.

10. Recommendations 80%

(High — based on documented experience, interpretive on generalizability)

Week 1: Foundation

1. **Install OpenClaw.** Set up with Claude API. Connect to your primary channel (Telegram, Slack, Discord).
2. **Write SOUL.md.** Who is your agent? What are the rules? Start minimal — 20 lines max. Expand based on failures.
3. **Write USER.md.** Who are you? What do you care about? What are your blind spots? Co-author this with the agent.
4. **Start daily logs.** `memory/YYYY-MM-DD.md` . Write everything. You'll thank yourself in week 4.

Week 2: First Automation

1. **Add 3 cron jobs. Not 24. Three.** Morning brief, evening review, one domain-specific task. Use Haiku for all three.
2. **Set up the Reflection Gate.** Every sub-agent must self-audit before completing. Add this to AGENTS.md now.
3. **Add permission boundaries.** List which files crons can't modify. Identity files are read-only in automated contexts.

Week 3: Specialize

1. **Define 3 specialist agents.** Not 7. Three. Pick your highest-leverage domains.
2. **Route by task type.** The main session is the router. Each specialist gets focused instructions.
3. **Track corrections per session.** This is your north-star metric. If it's going up, something is wrong.

Month 2: Expand Carefully

1. **Add crons only when you've read every output from existing crons for 2 weeks straight.**
2. **Add specialists only when the existing ones are producing >80% usable output.**
3. **Start MEMORY.md.** Weekly: what did I learn that changes future behavior? Keep it under 2KB.

What NOT to Do

- **Don't start with embeddings or vector databases.** Markdown files are enough for solo operation. Add complexity when simple breaks.
- **Don't automate outreach.** Emails, LinkedIn messages, DMs — these need human judgment. Agents can draft; humans must send.
- **Don't trust popularity rankings on skill marketplaces.** 230+ malicious skills were found on ClawHub. Audit code before installing.
- **Don't confuse agent activity with progress.** The agent is always busy. That doesn't mean you're moving forward.

> THE META-RECOMMENDATION
>
> Start small. Expand based on failures, not ambition. The stack I have today took months of iteration and many wrong turns. The version you should build today is 20% of what I described in this report — the 20% that matters most for your specific situation.

11. Methodology & Limitations 85%

(High — methodology is transparent; limitations are real)

Data Sources

This report draws from: daily logs (`memory/2026-02-16.md` , `memory/2026-02-17.md`), git history (35+ commits), the Evolution Experiment synthesis (`SYNTHESIS-v2.md` , 222K characters), OpenClaw community research (12+ queries, 6 pages analyzed), and SOTA paper analysis (150+ papers reviewed, 10 deeply analyzed). E

Confidence Scores by Section

SECTION	CONFIDENCE	BASIS
1. Executive Summary	85%	Git log + daily notes — hard evidence
2. The Stack	90%	Running production system, fully documented
3. Launch Day	92%	Every claim traceable to specific commits
4. Cost Analysis	80%	Real spend, some API cost estimates
5. Failure Modes	88%	All failures documented in logs
6. Patterns That Work	85%	Validated through daily use, interpretive on why
7. Patterns That Don't	82%	Failures documented, generalizations interpretive
8. Evolution Experiment	75%	Rigorous experiment, interpretive synthesis
9. SOTA Context	78%	Papers verified, practical application interpretive
10. Recommendations	80%	Experience-based, generalizability unproven
11. Methodology	85%	This section is about transparency

What's Data vs. Opinion

- **Data:** Commit counts, file sizes, cost figures, cron counts, error rates, SEO scores, timeline
- **Interpretation:** "5-person team output" comparison, 20% error rate estimate, cost savings multiplier
- **Opinion:** Recommendations, pattern evaluations, SOTA relevance assessments

Limitations

- **Sample size of one.** This is one person's experience with one stack. Your results will differ based on domain, technical skill, and work style.
- **No controlled comparison.** I didn't build the same website with a human team to measure the difference. The "5-person team" comparison is an estimate.
- **Survivorship bias.** I'm writing this because the stack worked well enough to launch. The failures I encountered were recoverable. Catastrophic failures (data loss, security breach) would have produced a very different report.
- **Technical prerequisite.** I have 10+ years of software engineering experience. The stack requires someone who can debug agent errors, read code output, and make architecture decisions. This is not a no-code solution.
- **Cost estimates are approximate.** API billing doesn't break down by individual cron job. The per-cron cost figures are estimates based on typical token usage.
- **The 20% error rate is approximate.** I didn't systematically count every sub-agent output and classify it as correct/incorrect. The number reflects my subjective assessment across dozens of sub-agent tasks.
- **Recency bias.** Everything in this report is from a 2-day window (Feb 16–17, 2026). Long-term sustainability of the stack is unproven.

Conflict of Interest

I build and sell AI agent consulting services. I have a commercial interest in demonstrating that this approach works. Read the failure modes (Section 5) and anti-patterns (Section 7) as the corrective — they're the parts I have no commercial incentive to share.

About the Author

Florian Ziesche is the founder of Ainary Ventures. He spent more than 10 years building algorithms, software, computer vision & AI systems. Raised capital. Led teams. Then watched his co-founder and AI team outproduce large teams. This report documents how.

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