

# From Assistants to Agents

Architecting Enterprise Intelligence with the Unified Context Layer



# The Enterprise Demands More Than Assistance. It Needs Agency.



## Today's Assistants (Reactive)

Respond to explicit, in-the-moment prompts.

### Limitations:

- Lack persistent memory across sessions.
- Struggle with complex, multi-step business processes.
- Cannot reason across disconnected data silos.
- Operate with limited, user-provided context.



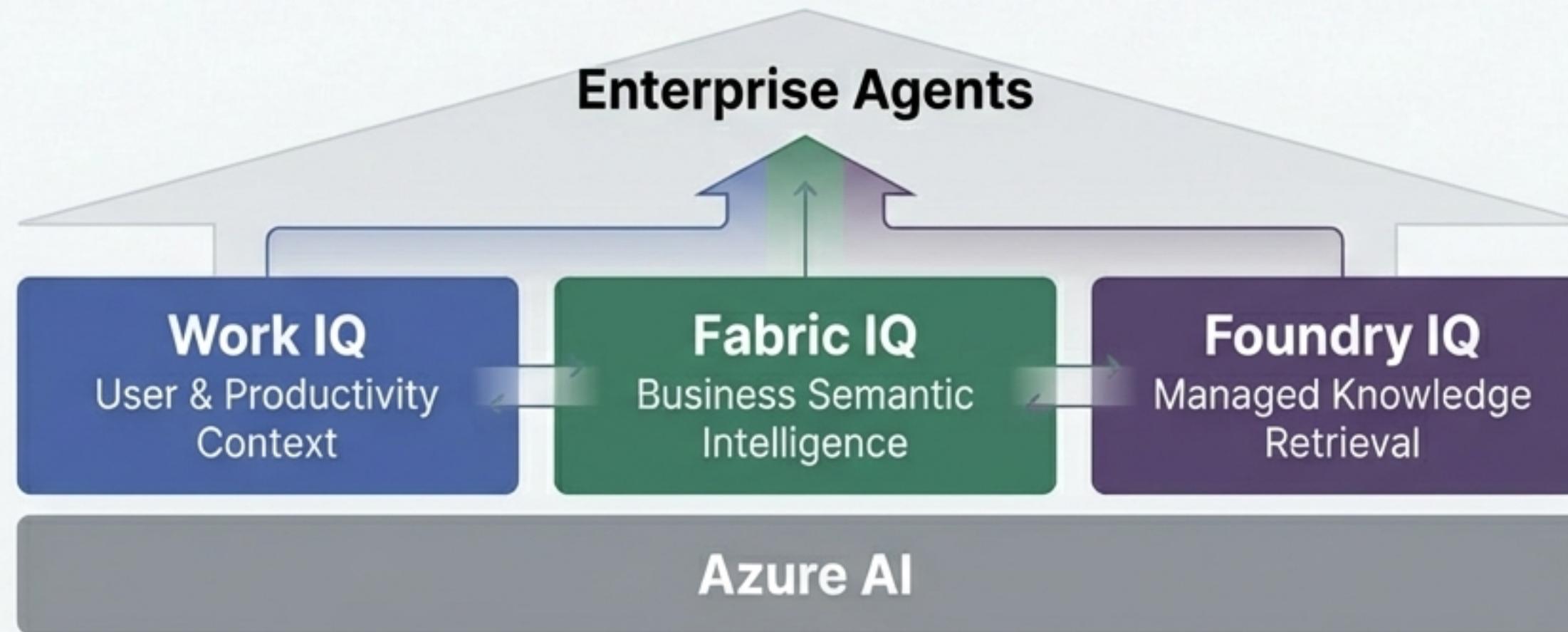
## Tomorrow's Agents (Proactive & Autonomous)

Autonomously perform complex tasks by reasoning over enterprise context.

### Requirements:

- **Deep Context:** Understand user behavior, business data, and organizational knowledge.
- **Governed Reasoning:** Make decisions grounded in verified facts and policies.
- **Secure Integration:** Operate safely within the enterprise security fabric.

# The Foundation: A Unified Context Layer for Enterprise AI



A managed, cohesive intelligence fabric that provides the memory, meaning, and knowledge required for enterprise-grade agents. It simplifies development by providing reusable foundations, not fragmented RAG pipelines.

# Work IQ: The User & Productivity Context Layer

Provides rich contextual understanding of how work actually happens—capturing personal and team interactions, patterns, and workflows.

## Key Capabilities

-  **Captures Productivity Signals:** Uses data from Microsoft 365 (emails, Teams, calendars, files) to understand who does what, when, and how.
-  **Builds Persistent Memory:** Remembers user preferences and collaboration patterns across sessions to reduce repetitive prompting.
-  **Provides Contextual Reasoning:** Infers relationships between documents, tasks, and people, moving beyond simple search.
-  **Suggests Next-Best Actions:** Predicts relevant tasks or agents based on ongoing work patterns.



*"Makes AI proactive rather than just responsive by integrating human work habits into its reasoning."*

# Fabric IQ: The Business Semantic Intelligence Layer

Transforms raw data into meaningful business concepts, relationships, and metrics that are consistently understood by both analytics and AI.

## Key Capabilities



**Defines a Semantic Ontology:** Establishes standard business concepts like “Customer,” “Revenue,” and “Product” and their relationships.



**Ensures Unified Business Meaning:** Guarantees that all tools interpret entity definitions the same way, preventing semantic drift.



**Enables Graph-Driven Reasoning:** Supports multi-hop queries that link customers to transactions to operational KPIs.



**Powers Data & Operations Agents:** Allows agents to answer analytical questions using governed business logic.

## Data Focus Visual



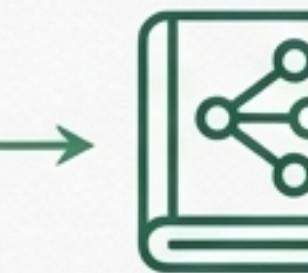
Data lakehouse



Data warehouse



Eventhouse



Fabric IQ

*“AI understands what your data means, not just where it lives.”*

# Foundry IQ: The Managed Knowledge Retrieval Layer

A next-generation knowledge grounding system on Azure AI Search for agents to access and synthesize enterprise knowledge securely and intelligently.

## Key Capabilities



**Provides a Unified Knowledge Endpoint:** A single API for agents to retrieve knowledge from M365, OneLake, Blob Storage, and external web sources.



**Drives Agentic Retrieval:** Moves beyond basic RAG to *plan, iterate, reflect, and synthesize* across multiple sources for context-rich results.



**Is Inherently Permission-Aware:** Automatically respects enterprise security, including Entra ID and Purview sensitivity labels, during retrieval.

## Data Focus Visual



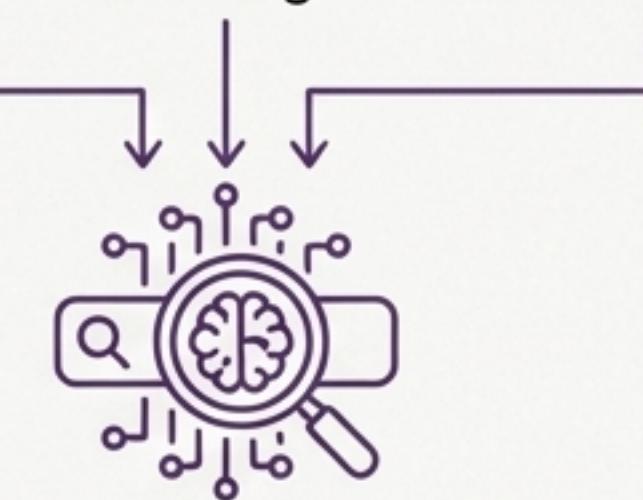
Documents



Web Pages



Databases



Foundry IQ

*"Reduces the need for custom RAG pipelines and brittle retrieval stacks, allowing developers to focus on agent logic."*

# The Unified Context Layer: A Side-by-Side Comparison

Dimension	Work IQ	Foundry IQ	Fabric IQ
Primary Purpose	Understands how people work, communicate, and collaborate.	Provides knowledge grounding from enterprise data and external sources.	Provides semantic meaning, business context, and metrics from structured data.
Core Question Answered	Who is working on what, with whom, and how effectively?	What does the organization know about a specific topic, customer, or product?	What does this data mean in business terms, and how are concepts related?
Type of Intelligence	Productivity & behavioral intelligence	Knowledge retrieval & synthesis intelligence	Semantic & analytical intelligence
Primary Data Sources	M365 signals (Outlook, Teams, Viva), user actions	Enterprise docs, files, web pages, external sources, databases	Structured data (Lakehouse, Warehouse), business models
Key Capability	Persistent contextual memory & inference of user intent	Agentic retrieval (plan, reflect, synthesize) with permission-awareness	Business ontology & semantic models for unified definitions
Role in Agentic AI	Personalizes and prioritizes behavior and recommendations	Grounds responses in trusted, verifiable enterprise knowledge	Ensures reasoning with correct, consistent business definitions
What Makes It New	Moves beyond Graph access → adds persistent memory and user context	Moves beyond classic RAG → adds agentic reasoning and reflection	Moves beyond BI models → creates AI-readable business semantics
Reusability Scope	User- or role-specific context	Org-wide reusable knowledge bases	Org-wide reusable semantic models

# A Simple Mental Model for Enterprise Context



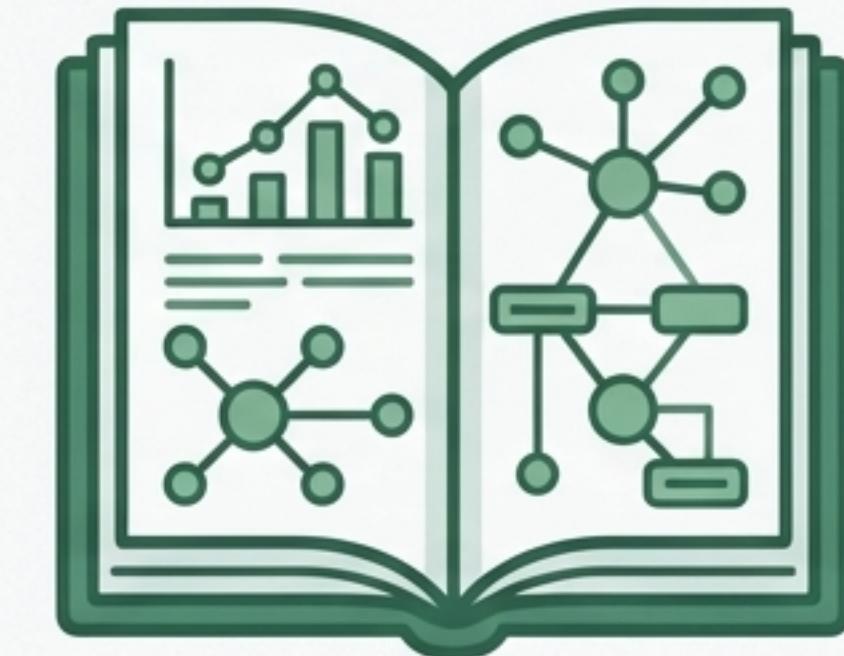
## Work IQ is the **Memory**

Remembers how people  
and teams work.



## Foundry IQ is the **Brain**

Reasons over what the  
company knows.

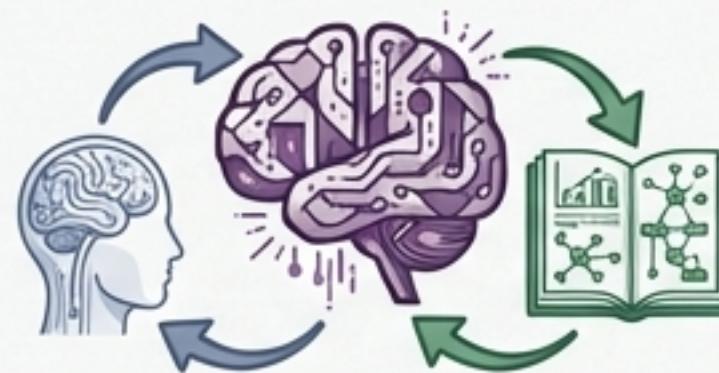


## Fabric IQ is the **Dictionary**

Defines what the business  
data means.

Together, they provide the **Context, Grounding, and Meaning** for truly intelligent agents.

# The Power of Synergy: Why a Unified Layer Matters



## Cross-Domain Reasoning

Agents can seamlessly combine work patterns (Work IQ), business concepts (Fabric IQ), and enterprise knowledge (Foundry IQ) to solve complex problems.



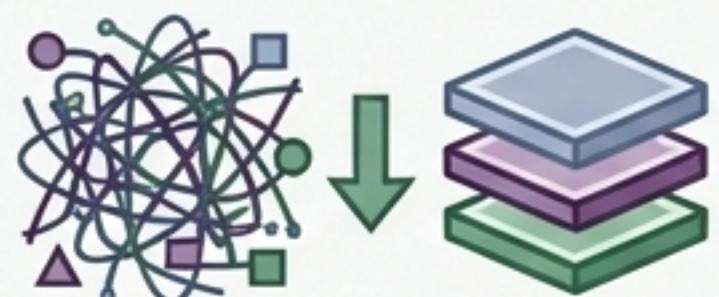
## Drastically Reduced Hallucinations

Rich, multi-faceted context from all three layers means AI stays grounded in verifiable enterprise facts, not abstract models.



## Built-in Governance & Security

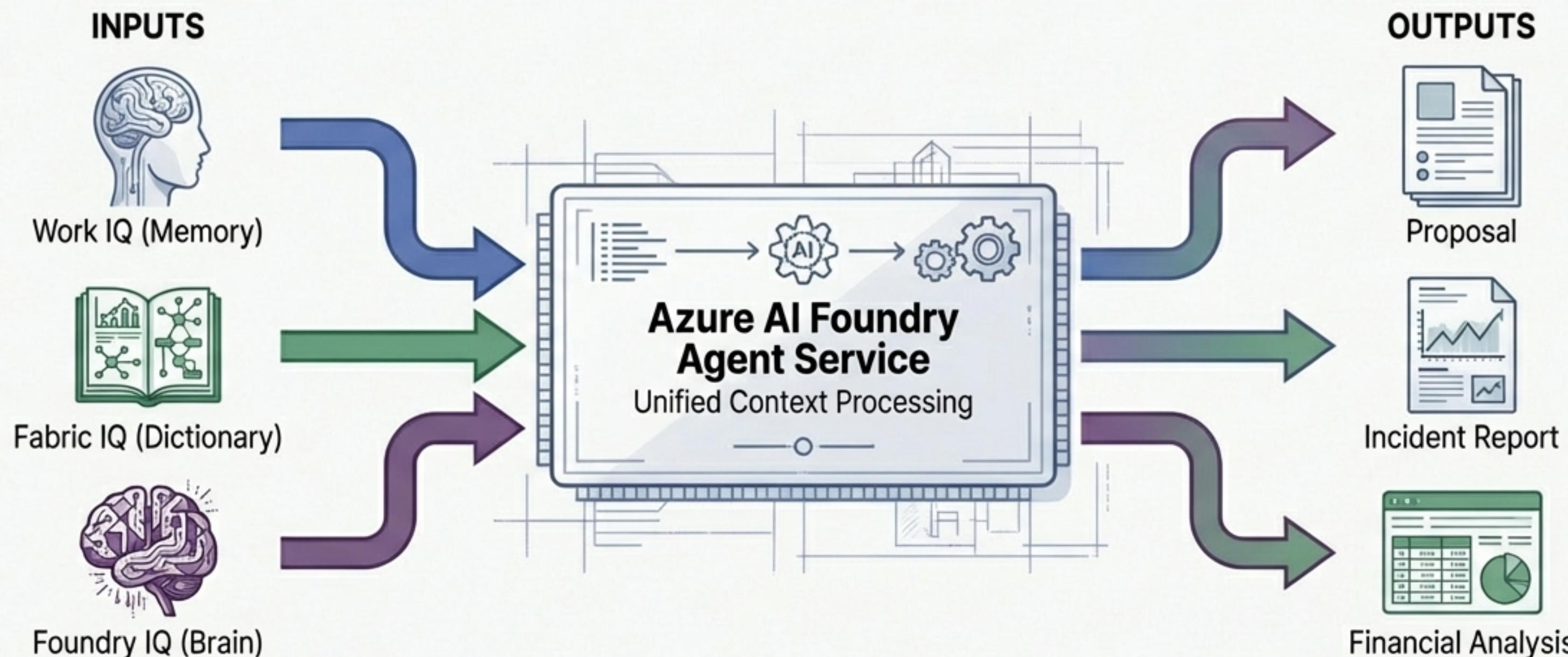
Identity and permission controls from Entra ID and Purview flow through every layer by design, ensuring enterprise-grade compliance.



## Simplified & Accelerated Architecture

Developers leverage managed, reusable foundations. The IQ layers replace the need to build and maintain brittle, custom RAG and semantic stacks for every project.

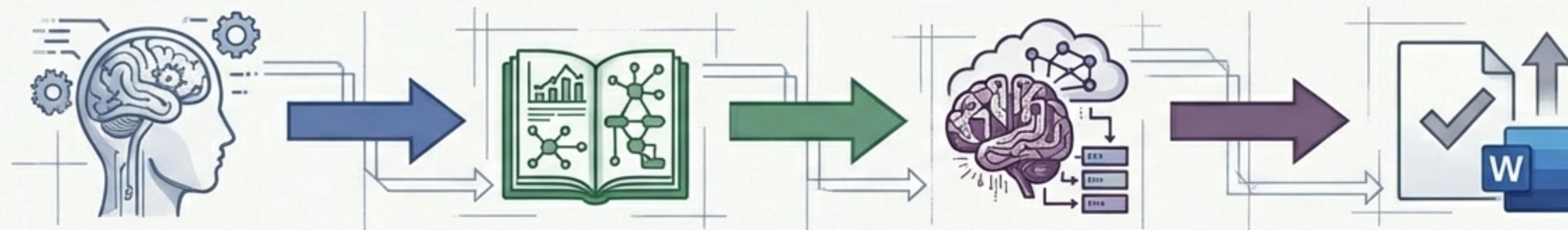
# From Blueprint to Reality: Agent Workflows in Action



The true power of the Unified Context Layer is revealed when it's put to work. The following examples demonstrate how these IQs combine to enable sophisticated, autonomous agents that solve real-world enterprise challenges.

# Agent Workflow: The Automated Deal Desk

**Goal:** Create a sales proposal that matches the customer's context, uses approved company language, and includes the latest business metrics.



## 1. Work IQ

Reads recent emails and Teams chats to infer customer pain points, stakeholders, and preferred tone.

## 2. Fabric IQ

Queries for "latest ARR, churn, and pipeline stage" using governed definitions, ensuring metric accuracy.

## 3. Foundry IQ

Retrieves approved pitch deck sections, security clauses, and relevant case studies from a permission-aware knowledge base.

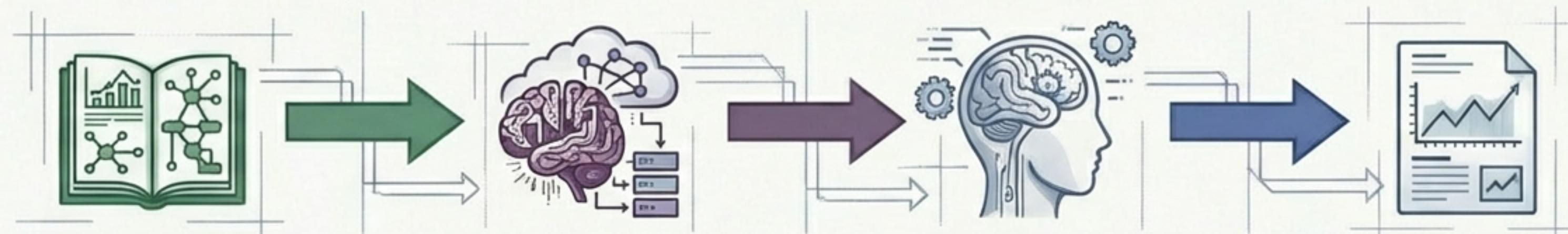
## 4. Action

Agent triggers an approval workflow and drafts the document in Microsoft Word.

**Output:** A tailored proposal draft with correct KPIs, citations to internal sources, and a tone personalized for the customer.

# Agent Workflow: The Proactive Operations Watch

**Goal:** Detect a KPI anomaly in real-time, diagnose likely causes using historical knowledge, and coordinate the appropriate response.



## 1. Fabric IQ

Monitors “Order Success Rate” as a business concept, mapping a data anomaly to a direct business outcome.

## 2. Foundry IQ

Performs agentic retrieval across runbooks, past incident postmortems, and service ownership docs to find the most likely cause and solution.

## 3. Work IQ

Checks on-call schedules, identifies the service owner, and drafts incident communications using the org’s standard template.

## 4. Action

Agent opens an incident ticket in the system of record and notifies the correct channel.



**Output:** An alert is automatically enriched with probable cause, recommended runbook steps, and a pre-drafted communication, turning hours of manual triage into minutes.

# The Pattern Extends Across the Enterprise

## Finance Close & Variance Agent

**Goal:** Explain month-over-month financial variances with auditable references.

### IQ Flow Highlights

- **Work IQ** understands the personal close checklist and reporting style.
- **Fabric IQ** pulls governed metrics like “Gross Margin” and “COGS.”
- **Foundry IQ** grounds commentary in internal revenue recognition policies.

**Output:** A narrative explanation of variances with linked citations to source policies.

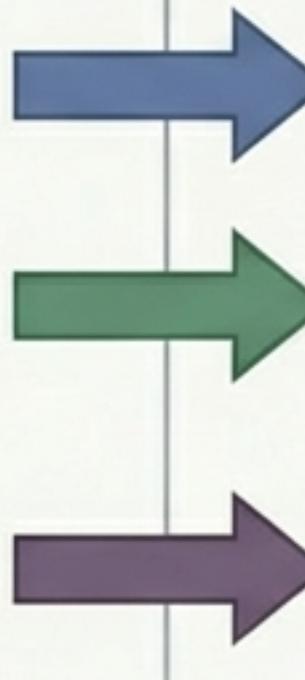
## HR Onboarding “First 30 Days” Agent

**Goal:** Provide a new hire with a personalized onboarding plan and the right resources.

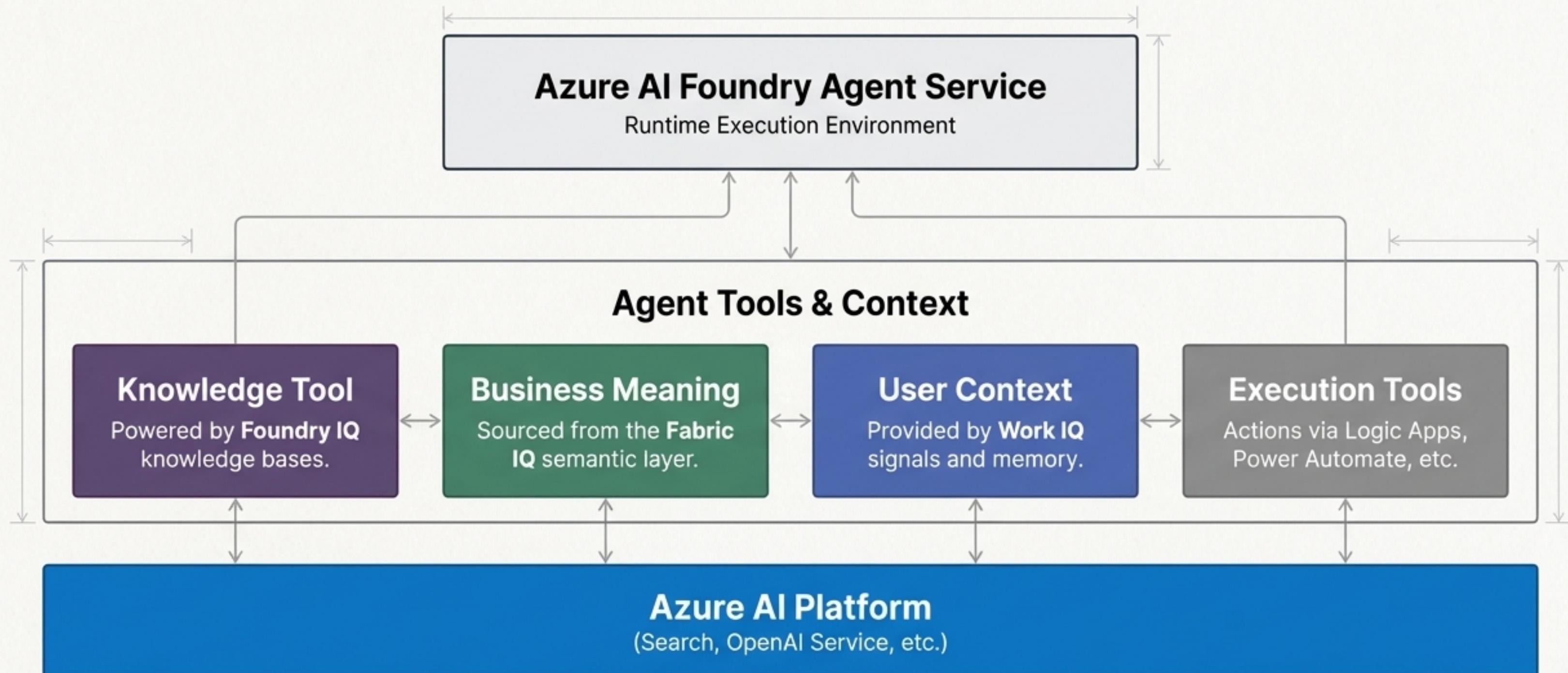
### IQ Flow Highlights

- **Work IQ** learns the new hire’s role from emails and calendar invites.
- **Fabric IQ** interprets the org chart and role taxonomy to select the correct onboarding track.
- **Foundry IQ** retrieves authoritative HR policies and security guidelines.

**Output:** A personalized 30-day plan with context and links to definitive policies.



# Your Architectural Blueprint for Building Enterprise Agents



The Unified Context Layer provides the managed, secure, and intelligent foundation. You provide the agent's unique purpose and logic. Start building not from scratch, but from a position of profound enterprise context.