

ENTREPRENEURS SANDBOX · JANUARY 28, 2026

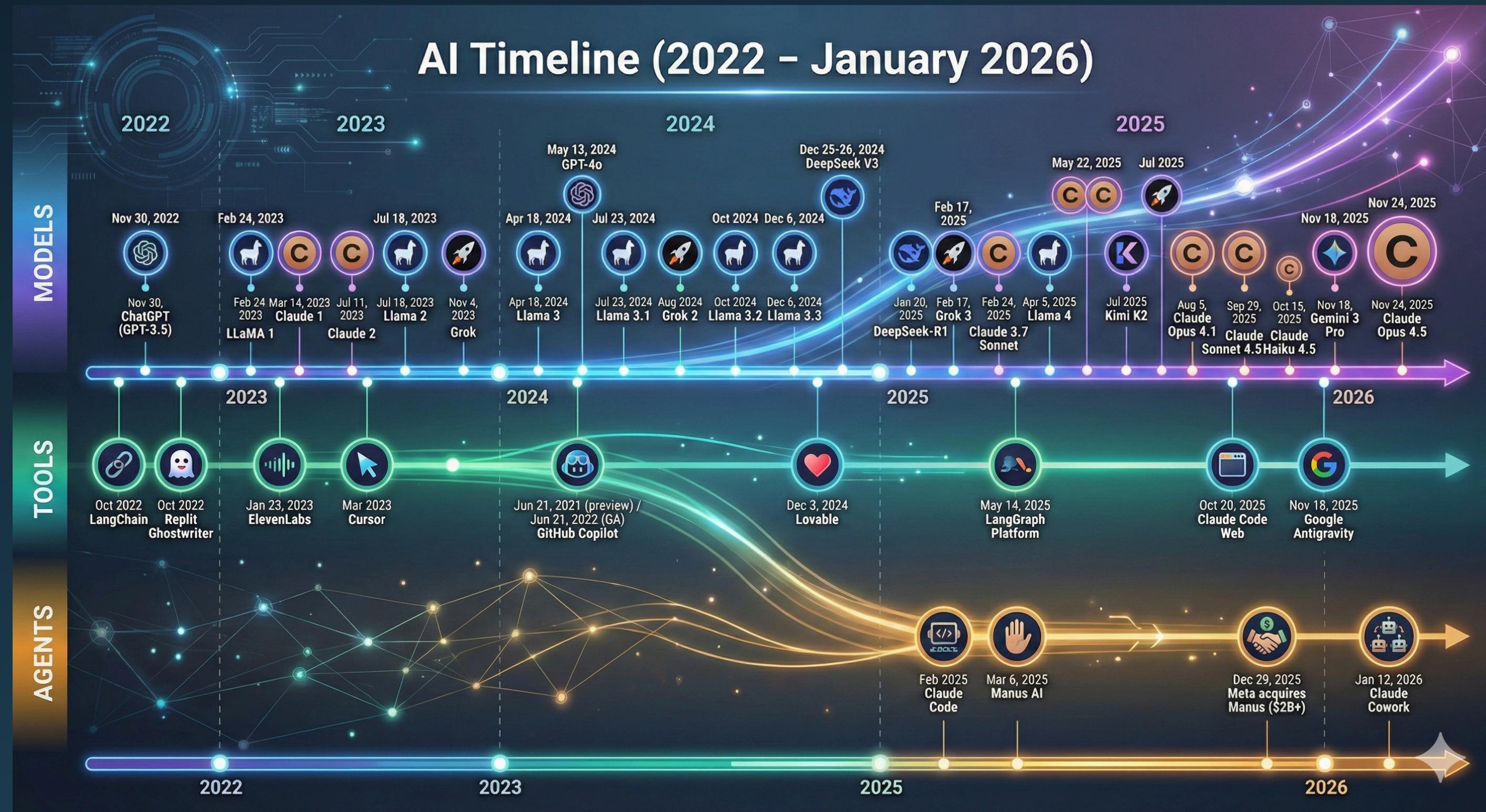
The Rapidly Changing AI Landscape

Level Up: A Founder's Guide to AI Maturity

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Three Years. Look What Happened.



The AI Maturity Framework

AI is changing, evolve your relationship with it.

0



You: Asker → AI: Answerer

Transactional · Trust nothing · Invest nothing

You type a question, get an answer. No memory, no context, no continuity. Like asking a stranger for directions — helpful, but forgettable. *ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini*

1



You: Instructor → AI: Assistant

Retained · Trust accuracy · Invest context

You give background, preferences, constraints. AI adapts to *your* situation with persistent memory and tailored responses. *Custom GPTs, Projects, Gems*

2



You: Designer → AI: Builder

Collaborative · Trust execution · Invest specification

You describe what you want, AI builds it. Working apps, landing pages, prototypes — in minutes, not weeks. *Lovable, v0, Bolt, Replit*

3



You: Supervisor → AI: Agent

Delegated · Trust judgment · Invest trust

AI works autonomously — reads your codebase, makes decisions, ships code. You review outcomes, not keystrokes. *Claude Code, Cursor, Devin*

4



You: Architect → AI: Organization

Orchestrated · Trust the system · Invest systems thinking

Multiple AI agents coordinated as an organization. You design workflows, quality gates, and feedback loops. The org chart includes AI. *Multi-agent orchestration*

It's Not JUST About the Tools.

It's about what you **invest**.

What Each Level Costs You

0 → 1

Give up: Anonymity

Invest: Time to teach who you are

1 → 2

Give up: Doing

Invest: Clarity on what you want built

2 → 3

Give up: Directing

Invest: Willingness to let go

3 → 4

Give up: Supervising

Invest: Ability to decompose & design



You Ask, AI Answers

Like asking a stranger for directions

The Grocery Test

"How can I save on groceries?"

Buy generic brands, use coupons, meal plan, shop sales...

Generic. Could be anyone, anywhere.

See it live in Gemini

Open in Gemini →

gemini.google.com



You Instruct, AI Assists

Like a consultant briefed on your business

Same Question. Different Answer.

LEVEL 0

"How can I reduce my grocery bill?"

Buy generic brands, use coupons, meal plan, shop sales...

GENERIC. USELESS.

LEVEL 1 – KA'IWI GEM

Waimānalo farm · Family of 3 · 5-year-old · Shops at Times, Costco, Whole Foods · Budget-conscious · Healthy eating

PERSONALIZED. ACTIONABLE. USEFUL.

See it live in Gemini →

Mindset Shift

"Repetition is waste"

12% 70%

of daily ChatGPT use involves
Custom GPTs

have memory on — most never
deliberately teach it



You Design, AI Builds

Like a creative partner building with you

This Is Vibe Coding

You describe what you want in plain English. AI builds it — live, in front of you.

WHAT YOU SAY

"Build me a grocery price comparison app. Let users pick 5 items and see prices from Times, Foodland, Costco, and Whole Foods. Show the cheapest option highlighted."

WHAT YOU GET

- ✓ Working web app with UI
- ✓ Store selector and item search
- ✓ Price comparison table
- ✓ Cheapest option highlighted
- ✓ Mobile responsive
- ⌚ Built in **under 10 minutes**



Lovable



v0



Bolt



Replit

See it live →

L2 gets you to

L3 gets you to

show it ship it

The Technical Cliff: Security gaps, context degradation,
auth/payments/data need real engineering

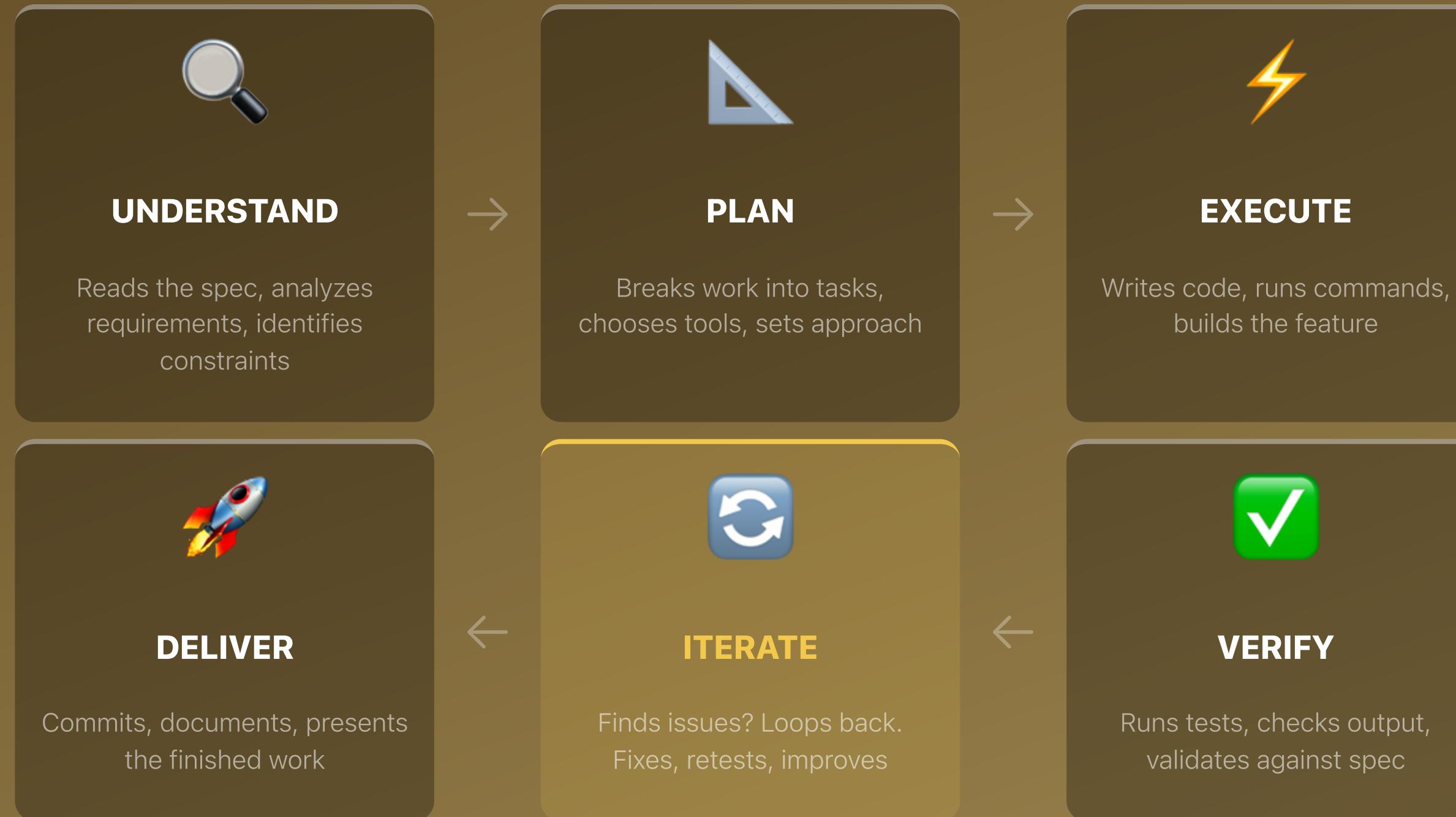
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You Supervise, AI Acts

Like a trusted employee you assign outcomes to

Agentic Engineering

You define "done." The agent figures out how.



⟳ LOOPS UNTIL DONE — NO HUMAN IN THE LOOP

Real Example: "Get real prices from stores to replace mock data"

~20 **~10** **4**

minutes commits bugs caught & fixed

I wasn't watching. I was doing something else.

Micromanager → **Supervisor**

"Define 'done' so clearly
that you don't need to watch."

BETWEEN LEVEL 3 AND LEVEL 4

The Gate

L3

You Supervise, AI Acts

Prototypes. Demos. Proofs of concept.

L4

You Architect, AI Operates

Production systems. Real revenue. Real users.



THE CLIFF

Security

Auth, encryption, access control,
vulnerability management

Reliability

Error handling, testing, monitoring, data
integrity

Systems Thinking

Architecture, scaling, integration,
operational design

40%+

of agentic AI projects will be cancelled by 2027 — Gartner

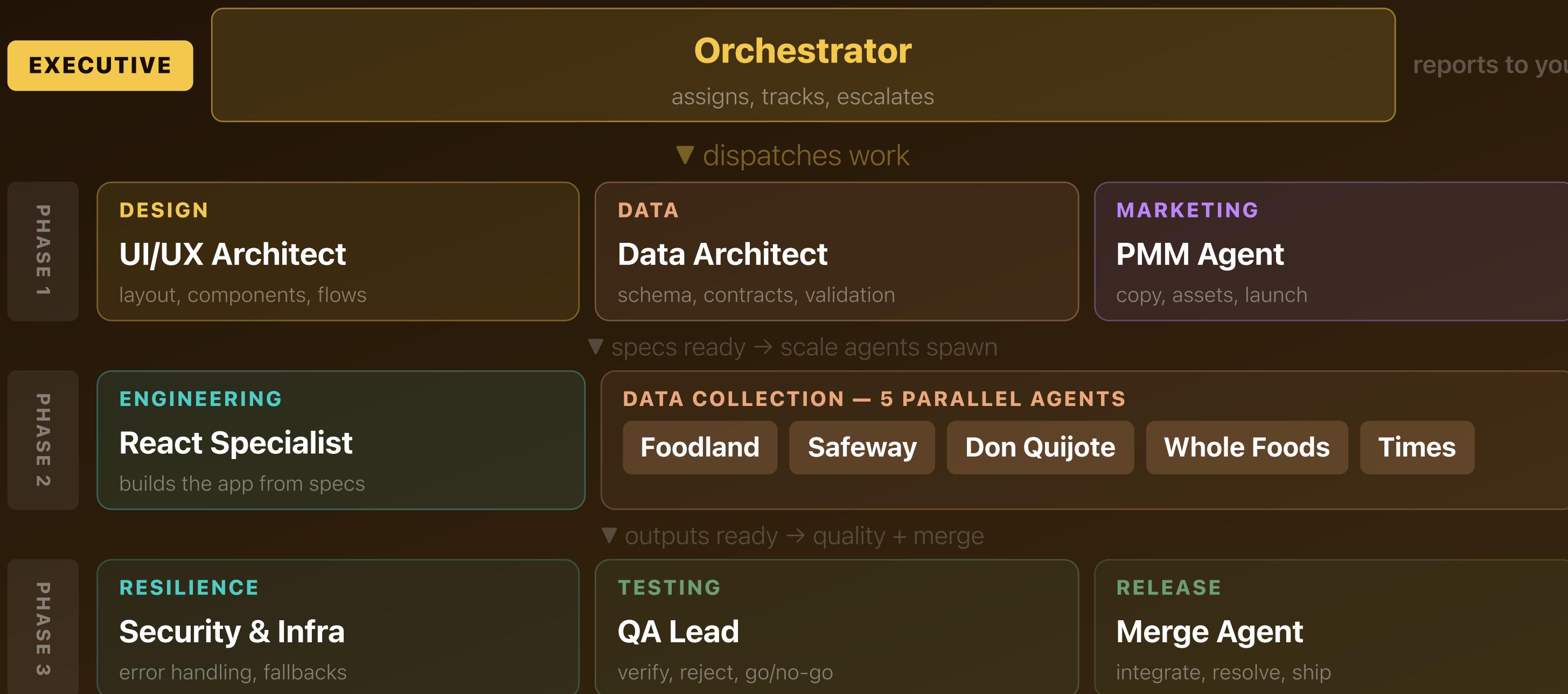


You Architect, AI Teams Execute

Like an organization that runs while you sleep

Agentic Swarming

13 agents. 6 departments. 3 phases. All parallel.



One founder. Zero employees. A decentralized product team.

Boris's Claude Code Setup Cheatsheet

Boris Cherny — creator of Claude Code. "Surprisingly vanilla. Works great out of the box."

No one correct way: customizable & hackable. Each team member uses it differently."

PARALLEL WORKFLOWS

1/ Run 5 Clauses in Parallel

Number terminal tabs 1-5. Use system notifications for input. All running simultaneously on the same codebase.

2/ Handoff Sessions

Run 5-10 Clauses on claude.ai/code in parallel. Handoff local sessions to web ([&](#)), manually kick off, or [--teleport](#) back.

MODEL & STRATEGY

3/ Opus 4.5 with Thinking

Use for everything. Bigger & slower, but **faster in the end** due to less steering & better tool use.

4/ Shared CLAUME.md

Team shares one [CLAUDE.md](#) checked into git. Multiple contributors weekly. Add incorrect actions for Claude to learn from.

5/ Tag @claude on PRs

Use [/install-github-action](#) to auto-update CLAUME.md during code review. Compounding Engineering.

SESSION MANAGEMENT

6/ Plan Mode First

Start sessions with [Shift+Tab](#) x2. Write a PR goal, iterate on plan. Switch to auto-accept edits for 1-shot completion.

7/ Slash Commands

Use [/help](#), [/config](#), [/reset](#). Integrate custom scripts & tools. Hack Claude Code to fit your flow.

9-12/ Personalize & Evolve

Multiple displays, parallel sessions visible. Consult docs & community. There is no wrong way — continually evolve your setup.

"There is no wrong way, just your way. Enjoy building with Claude Code."

Stop Supervising. Start Architecting.

66% 5-10x

of AI agent adopters report
measurable productivity gains
— PwC

productivity gains for top
performers

Most companies see 10–15% gains. The difference? Maturity level.

Where Are You?



Moving up **one level** is a competitive moat.

What Does This Mean for Your Role?

Founders

Investors

Mentors

Founders: Level Up Fast



Get to L3 as fast as you can. Have a technical co-founder thinking about L4.



Not just code. Pitch decks, marketing, research, hiring, ops — the framework applies to everything.



Competitive advantage isn't building first — it's learning fastest.

The Quality Bar: Acceptance Criteria

✗ VAGUE

"Show grocery prices from local stores"

✓ PRECISE

"Fetch prices for 5 staples from 5 stores, update weekly,
show per-unit cost, flag cheapest, handle missing data"

Investors: Three Questions

1

"What's your First Pass Yield?"

% of AI tasks succeeding without human rework

2

"Walk me through how you built that."

L0: "I used ChatGPT" · L3: "I specced it, the agent built it"

3

"Show me your agent orchestration."

If they can't → L1–2. Fine — but price accordingly.

Same Revenue. Different Multiple.

METRIC	L0–1 STARTUP	L3–4 STARTUP
Burn per feature	\$10,000+	\$1,000
Time to MVP	3–6 months	2–4 weeks
Team for same output	10 engineers	3 engineers
Technical debt	Accumulating	Managed by agents

You're not investing in revenue.
You're investing in **leverage**.

Mentors: Know Where They Are

1

Diagnose the Level

L0: "I ask it stuff" · L2: "I built a prototype" · L4: "I have a team of agents"

2

Connect to Their Domain

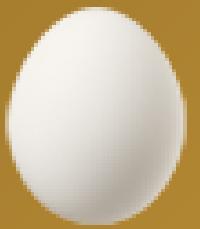
Legal, fundraising, marketing, hiring — not just code

3

Challenge Comfort

Most founders plateau one level below where they could be. Push.

Ready?



Kama'āina Saver

The Complete Framework

Where are you? Where do you want to be?

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Describe it, AI builds it. Working apps in minutes.

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Multiple agents as a full org. You design the system.

"I'll switch when things slow down."

Things never
slow down.

The cost of trying: **one afternoon**

The cost of not trying: **months of lost leverage**

This morning, you paid too much for groceries.

In 20 minutes, we built a tool that tells you exactly where to shop and how much you'll save.

Someone in this room
could launch this by March.

The tools are getting better every day.

How much more value could you deliver?

Miki Hardisty

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CEO & Co-Founder, 'Ōlelo Intelligence

Sources & Resources

Sources

- 40%+ agentic projects cancelled by 2027 — *Gartner, June 2025*
- 1,445% surge in multi-agent inquiries — *Gartner, 2025*
- 66% of AI agent adopters report measurable productivity gains — *PwC AI Agent Survey, 2025*
- Top performers: 5–10x productivity — *Bessemer, 2025*
- Most see 10–15% gains — *Bain Tech Report, 2025*
- VibeScamming vulnerability — *Guardio Labs, April 2025*

Tools by Level

- **L0:** ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini
- **L1:** Custom GPTs, Projects, Gems
- **L2:** Lovable, v0, Bolt, Replit
- **L3:** Claude Code, Cursor, Devin
- **L4:** Multi-agent orchestration