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The new rules of platform strategy in the age of agentic AI

Five priorities to help companies align people, platforms and intelligence

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Executive summary

For decades, enterprise platforms have powered modern business, running finance, human resources (HR), supply chain and customer management. Yet in an AI-first world, that foundation is fast becoming obsolete. Agentic AI is transforming how work gets done and how value is created, while customer and competitive dynamics are moving faster than traditional platforms can adapt.

Many organizations remain weighed down by duplicated and complex systems because they treat AI and platforms as separate domains, piloting tools instead of embedding intelligence into the core. The result is fragmentation, inefficiency and missed opportunity.

To understand how companies can break free from this pattern, we surveyed more than 1,000 executives across 12 countries and 10 industries. The findings are striking: companies that align their AI, platform and business strategies outperform peers by a wide margin on average, doubling revenue growth and increasing profitability by up to 37%. These leaders treat platforms not as static infrastructure but as living systems of intelligence, continuously learning, adapting and scaling.

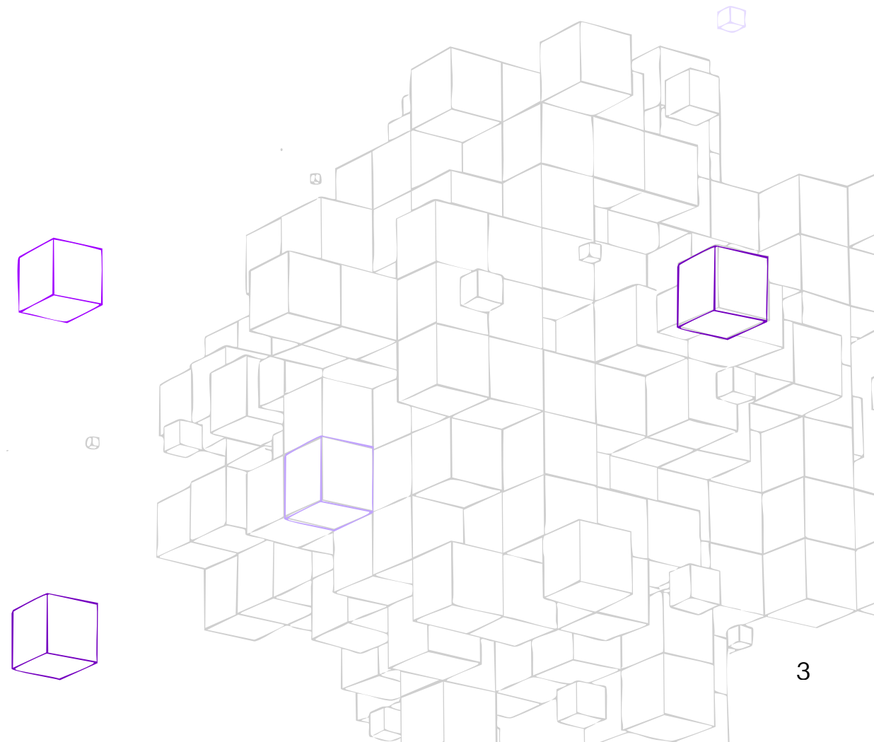
They modernize their digital cores, clarify how humans, platforms and AI agents work together and reimagine how work itself is structured. The goal is not replacement but reinvention, integrating people, platforms and intelligence into a single, adaptive architecture that accelerates performance and growth.

In short, they are playing by new rules. This report explores the five priorities that define the next generation of platform strategy in an age of agentic AI systems:

- **Architect for the future** – Build platform-aware infrastructure that allows AI to scale seamlessly.
- **Design a fit-for-purpose foundation** – Modernize the digital core for agility and real-time insight.
- **Articulate the interplay** – Define clear roles for humans, platforms and agents to ensure orchestration and accountability.
- **Prepare for operating model reinvention** – Reimagine how the enterprise operates to unlock new performance.
- **Transform culture** – Equip people with the trust, fluency and mindset to lead in an AI-driven enterprise.

When executed well, these priorities turn platform strategy into a source of growth and differentiation. Platforms evolve from systems of record to systems of action, where humans, platforms and agents operate in sync to deliver outcomes that are faster, smarter and more resilient.

The next chapter of enterprise platforms is about future-readiness. Companies that align architecture, intelligence and talent around AI will not only keep pace with change—they will define it.



Contents

The case for platform reinvention

AI has captured executive attention but not yet enterprise traction. Across industries, companies are investing heavily in pilots while their core systems remain fragmented and inflexible. The result: operational drag, data silos and limited returns. Finance teams still reconcile mismatched systems manually. Business leaders still make decisions on stale data. New tools emerge but cannot scale. Companies expect AI to deliver transformation while still relying on brittle foundations.

Enterprise platforms have long provided the structure that makes modern business possible. They brought structure, standardization and scale, powering everything from HR and finance to supply chain and customer management:

Adobe
turned digital marketing into a creative engine.

Oracle
became the backbone for mission-critical enterprise data.

Salesforce
reshaped sales into a science.

SAP
defined how businesses ran.

ServiceNow
automated the service desk.

Workday
pioneered cloud-native HR and finance.

But in an AI-first world, those same systems have become constraints. Designed for stability, not adaptability, they now slow the very progress AI promises to accelerate.

Our research underscores the urgency for reinvention. In a global survey of more than 1,000 executives across 12 countries and 10 industries, nearly one in five believe some of today's enterprise platforms will not survive the onslaught of AI in the next two years. The logic that once drove efficiency—prescribed workflows, fixed hierarchies, rigid data models—no longer fits a world defined by autonomy and learning. As one platform executive put it, "The features that made platforms valuable are the ones AI is now outgrowing."

Reinvention begins with modernization. When organizations consolidate legacy systems, standardize data and move to modular, cloud-based architectures, they create the conditions for scale. Fragmented operations give way to connected systems. Manual work becomes automated flow. New AI tools plug in seamlessly, delivering insights and speed.

The impact is measurable. Alignment turns platforms from cost centers into engines of growth. Our analysis shows that companies that align their AI, business and platform strategies achieve on average:

13%

revenue growth
More than double
that of their peers

37%

increase in operating profit
Equivalent to roughly
$1 billion in pre-tax earnings
for the average enterprise

Key terms

Platforms for the purpose of this research refer to the software used by businesses to carry out day-to-day business activities across functions. These include enterprise resource planning (ERP), customer relationship management, HR, financial management, supply chain management and marketing enablement systems, as well as smaller applications for specific business needs.

Key vendors in this space include Adobe, Oracle, SAP, Salesforce, ServiceNow, Workday, among others. This report focuses on the co-existence and integration aspects of platforms and AI.

Embedded AI refers to AI capabilities integrated into existing systems, platforms or workflows, often running in the background to improve performance, automation or insights.

Agentic AI denotes AI systems designed to act autonomously or semi-autonomously to complete goals, often using reasoning, planning and decision-making. These systems can adapt over time and may work collaboratively with humans or other agents—and they can exist both inside enterprise platforms or independently across them.

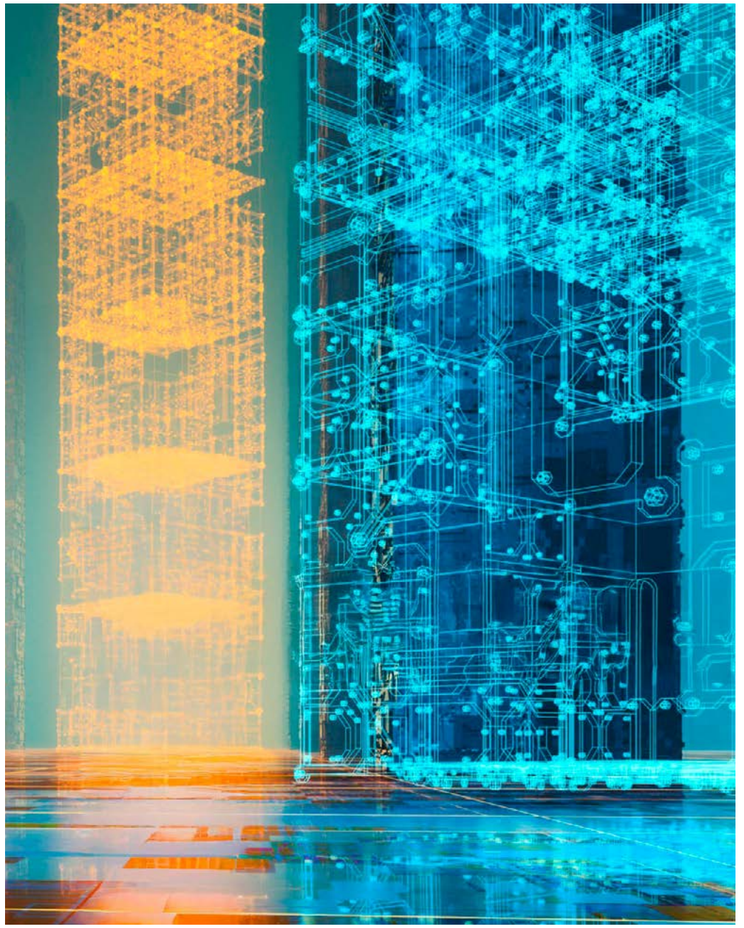
Two forces driving change

At its core, platform reinvention involves two interdependent shifts. The first is technological: embedding AI, especially agentic AI, into and around platforms. The second is organizational: rethinking how work gets done. That means reshaping workflows, roles and decisions to match the speed and intelligence of modern systems.

Together, these shifts redefine how enterprises operate. Work becomes adaptive, data moves freely and systems evolve continuously. This is the essence of platform reinvention: replacing rigidity with responsiveness and turning platforms into living systems of intelligence that scale across the enterprise.

When done right, AI stops being a side experiment and becomes the backbone of performance.

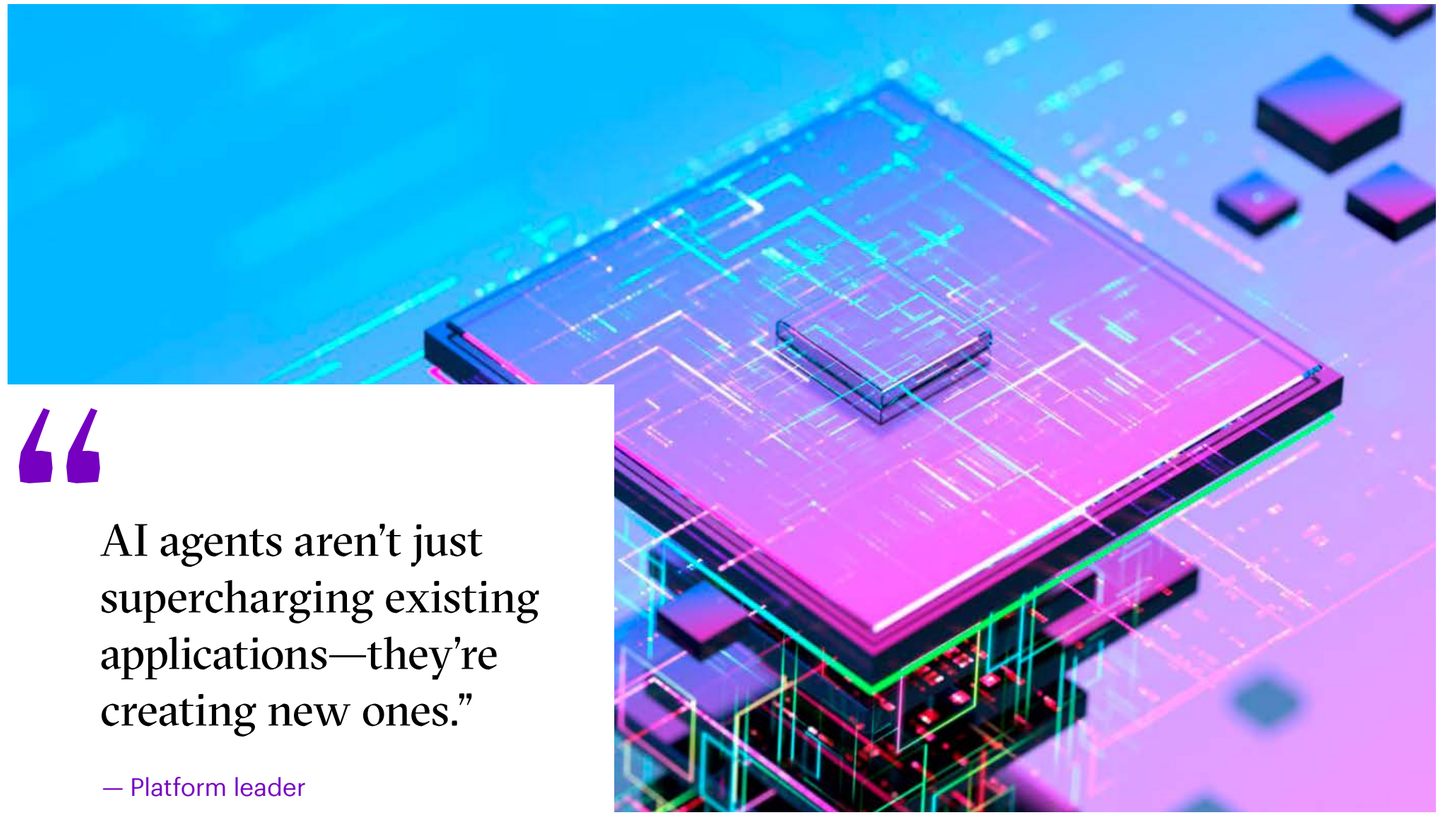
Two forces now make this reinvention unavoidable: AI is transforming how work is done, and business expectations are outpacing what traditional platforms can deliver.



1. AI-driven transformation of work

The rise of generative and agentic AI is redefining how work is done. Intelligent systems can now perform tasks that once required human judgment—from resolving service issues to managing financial close processes. AI is no longer just an accelerator of existing workflows; it is increasingly the orchestrator of them.

These technologies bring autonomy, context-awareness and adaptability. Agents can rebalance supply chains in real time, generate personalized customer offers or predict machine failures before they occur. They learn from outcomes and adjust their actions on the fly—qualities that traditional platforms, built on rigid logic and sequential processes, were never designed to handle.



> AI agents aren't just supercharging existing applications—they're creating new ones."
>
> — Platform leader

Case study

How Lenovo scaled engagement with AI

To meet growing demand for faster, more personalized engagement, Lenovo used Adobe Experience Platform and Microsoft Copilot to orchestrate AI across marketing, customer service and internal workflows. The effort delivered $11 million in efficiency savings and a 12.5% boost in click-through rates—speeding execution and enabling new forms of engagement at scale.[1]

This shift raises fundamental questions for every enterprise:

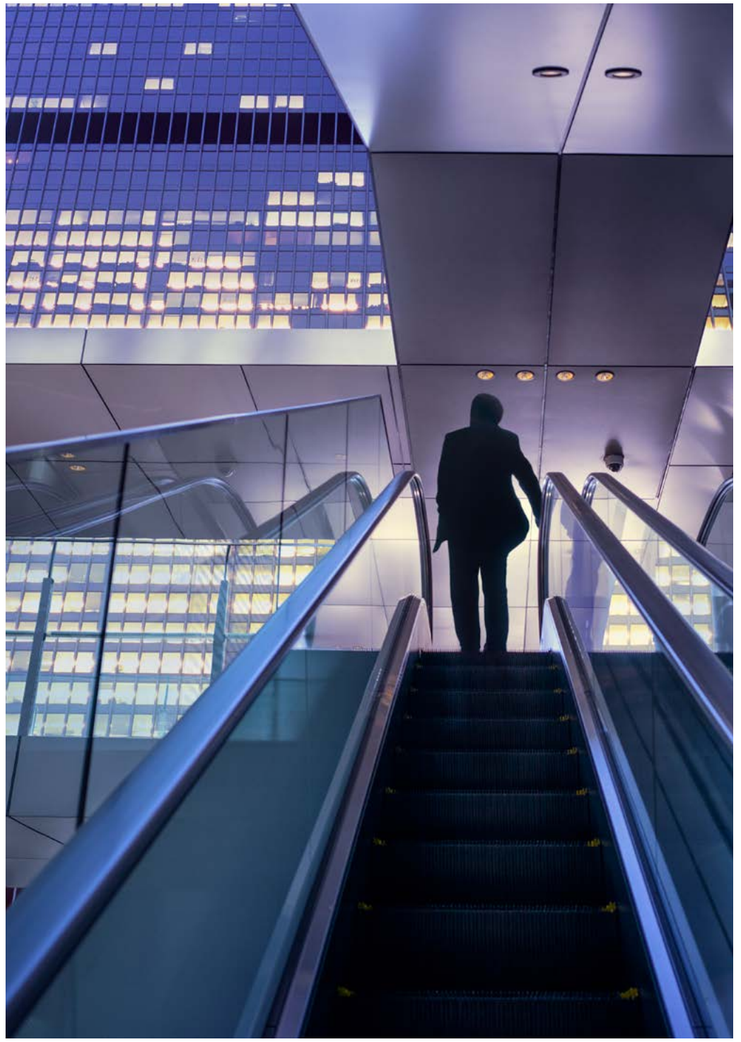
What should be automated?

What must remain human?

How should people and AI collaborate?

Routine tasks like invoice processing can be automated entirely. Complex issues, such as ethical decisions or customer escalations, still require human judgment. Increasingly, the answer will be hybrid: humans and agents working in tandem, each amplifying the other.

Modern agents not only execute instructions—they also reason, adapt and act independently within defined boundaries. When faced with new information, they learn and improve. In doing so, they expose the limits of traditional platforms and highlight the need for systems that are dynamic, interoperable and intelligent by design.



2. Business demands outpacing platforms

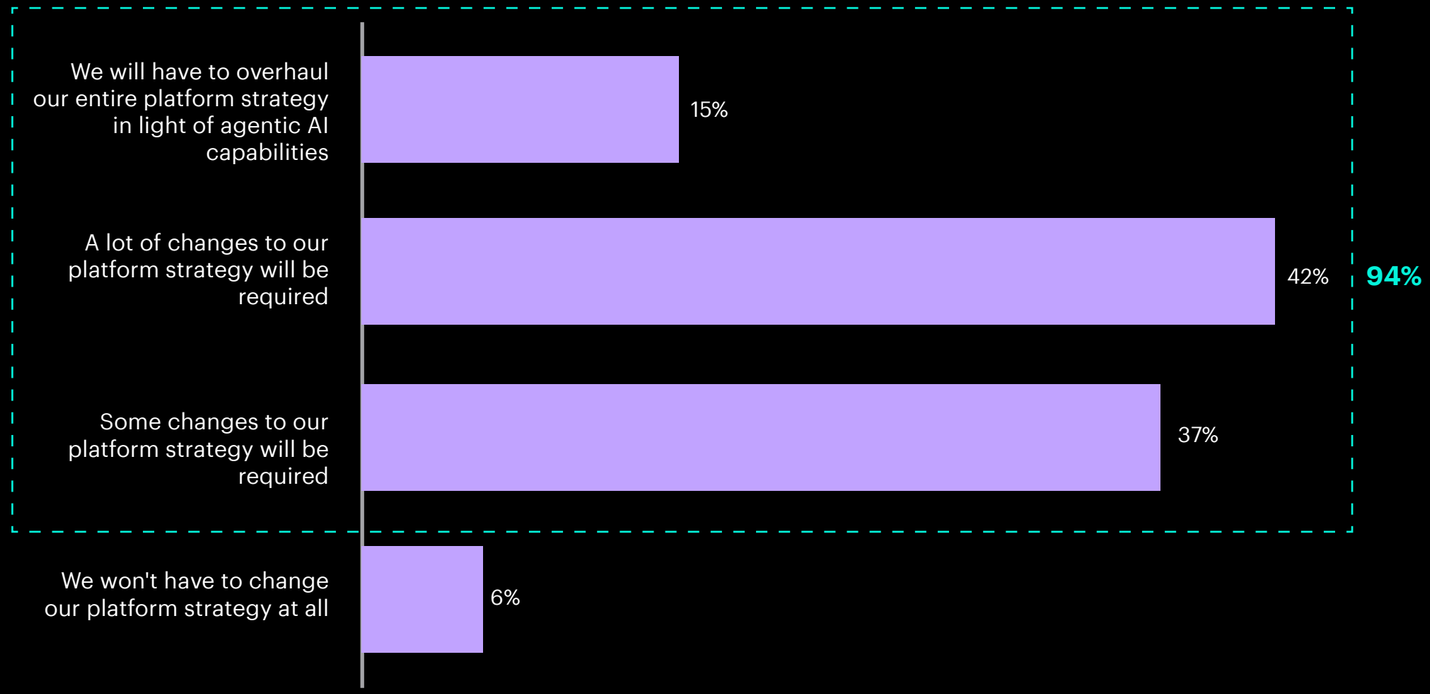
While AI accelerates possibility, business expectations are rising just as fast. Markets move faster, customer expectations grow sharper and competitive advantage hinges on the ability to adapt in real time. Yet most enterprises still use their platforms primarily for efficiency.

Our research shows that 74% of organizations continue to focus on productivity as the main goal of their platforms while only 60% view them as engines of innovation. But the bar has shifted. Leading companies now treat platforms as growth accelerants—enabling personalization at scale, cross-functional agility and instant responsiveness to market change.

The numbers tell the story: 94% of executives say the rise of agentic AI requires them to rethink their platform strategies and more than half (57%) believe it demands significant change or complete reinvention. Some are even asking whether they need platforms at all, or if AI agents could replace them entirely (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Big changes ahead

How do you expect your platform strategy will need to evolve in response to agentic AI?



Source: Accenture "Enterprise platform strategy in the age of agentic AI" survey, 2025 (N = 1,031)

The answer is not replacement, but evolution. Platforms remain essential for reliability, governance and transaction integrity. But they must now host embedded intelligence and work seamlessly with AI agents that operate across multiple systems. Humans, in turn, move into roles of oversight, judgment and orchestration—directing an enterprise that is both intelligent and adaptive.

The future of platform strategy will belong to those that can balance this triad—humans, platforms and agents—each performing what it does best, each amplifying the other.

Platforms evolve from tools to interaction hubs

Enterprise platforms are entering a new chapter. Once designed to enforce structure, they are now expected to deliver adaptability. The difference is agentic AI—systems capable of reasoning, deciding and acting with autonomy. As these capabilities mature, platforms are evolving from passive systems of record into dynamic systems of action.

Platform vendors are moving fast to embed agentic AI into their industry/ functional offerings.

Adobe introduced Experience Platform Agent Orchestrator for businesses to activate AI agents in customer experiences and marketing workflows.

Microsoft is expanding Copilot across Dynamics and 365 apps, while advancing Azure Agent Service and AutoGen to power multi-agent orchestration.

Oracle embedded AI across its cloud, using AI4Data and Oracle Cloud Infrastructure's high-speed network—building on its database and infrastructure strengths.

Salesforce launched Agentforce, embedding AI agents across sales, service and marketing to deliver a unified agentic platform.

SAP introduced Joule, which it markets as an AI copilot and agent orchestrator, embedding agents across its ERP suite with business-context awareness.

ServiceNow introduced pre-built AI agents for customer service, HR, IT and more—powered by Workflow Data Fabric, which connects agents to real-time enterprise data.

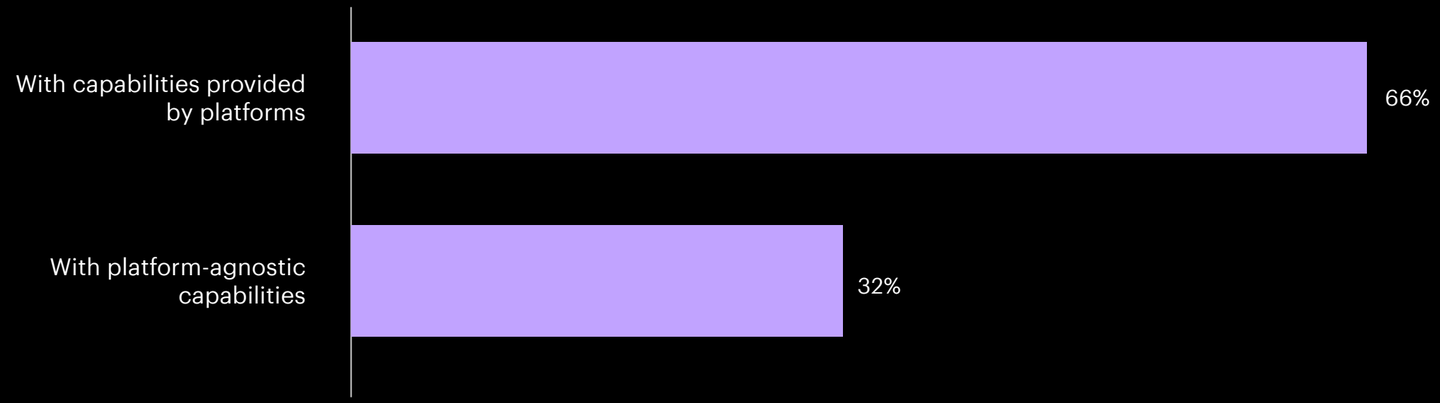
Workday introduced its Agent System of Record to manage fleets of AI agents like employees and launched role-based agents with configurable skills across HR, finance and recruiting workflows and agents.

These developments signal a profound shift. Platforms are no longer just tools—they are ecosystems where humans, agents and data interact continuously. Agents can now operate within or across platforms depending on how enterprises architect their systems. In our research, 66% of organizations say they rely primarily on platform-native AI capabilities while 32% are building platform-agnostic agents that span multiple systems (Figure 2).

The future will be hybrid, with agents working inside and beyond the platform boundary.

Figure 2: Platform-native capabilities remain the dominant path for AI deployment

How do you primarily develop and deploy AI solutions?



Note: "Others" accounted for 1% referring to respondents who either did not know or chose not to respond.

Source: Accenture "Enterprise platform strategy in the age of agentic AI" survey, 2025 (N = 1,031)

The alignment gap: Fragmented strategy, missed potential

As platforms evolve, most enterprises face a deeper challenge: their strategies are not aligned.

AI, platform and business initiatives too often move in parallel rather than in sync. Teams pilot AI tools in isolation. Platform investments proceed without clear linkage to business priorities. The result is duplication, complexity and low returns on investment.

Our research reveals the scale of the problem.

Only

18%

of companies say their AI, platform and business strategies are fully aligned.

Just

17%

have embedded AI deeply into core business processes.

More than

50%

remain trapped in narrow pilots or isolated use cases.

This fragmentation leaves companies unable to scale AI's impact across the enterprise.

The root cause is structural. AI and platform decisions are often made by different teams, funded through separate budgets and guided by different metrics. In many organizations, the CIO drives platform modernization while business leaders chase AI experimentation. Without a unified vision, both efforts stall.

Executives we interviewed were clear on the consequences. "If you do AI as a separate initiative," one global technology leader warned, "it becomes very expensive. Unless it's embedded in your overall strategy, you'll never realize its value."

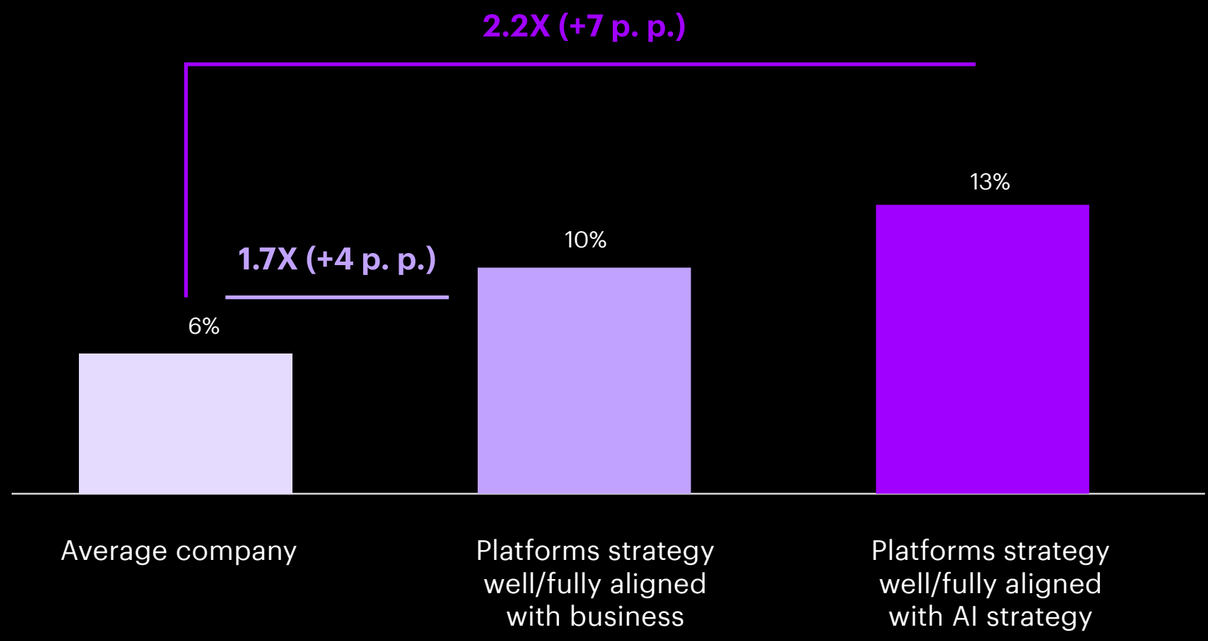
The cost of misalignment is high but the reward for fixing it is higher. Companies that align these three dimensions—AI, business and platform—achieve on average 2.2x higher revenue growth than peers (Figure 3). Alignment reduces duplication, improves innovation velocity and strengthens organizational focus.

The path forward requires deliberate integration. Business strategy must define the outcomes. Platform strategy must provide the scale and data foundation. AI strategy must deliver adaptability and intelligence. When these elements move together, led by an aligned leadership team, companies create a virtuous cycle of innovation and performance.

The message is clear: success with AI is not a technology challenge but an alignment one. The real differentiator is how effectively a company synchronizes its strategy, systems and people to drive continuous reinvention.

Figure 3: Companies that align their platforms with their business and AI strategy grow their revenue much faster on average

How well aligned is your platform strategy with your broader business strategy and your AI strategy?
Only consider well/fully aligned on both.



Source: Financial analysis of 602 public company statements from the Accenture "Enterprise platform strategy in the age of agentic AI" survey, 2025 (N = 1,031)

Five priorities for platform strategy in an AI-first world

The next chapter of platform strategy requires an integrated, forward-looking mindset. This isn't about abandoning platforms but evolving them. Change will unfold on multiple fronts— platforms, humans and agents—and preparation must reflect that complexity.

To help leaders navigate this shift, we propose five key priorities for building an AI-ready, future-fit platform strategy.

1. Architect for the future

2. Design a fit-for-purpose foundation

3. Articulate the interplay

4. Prepare for operating model reinvention

5. Transform culture

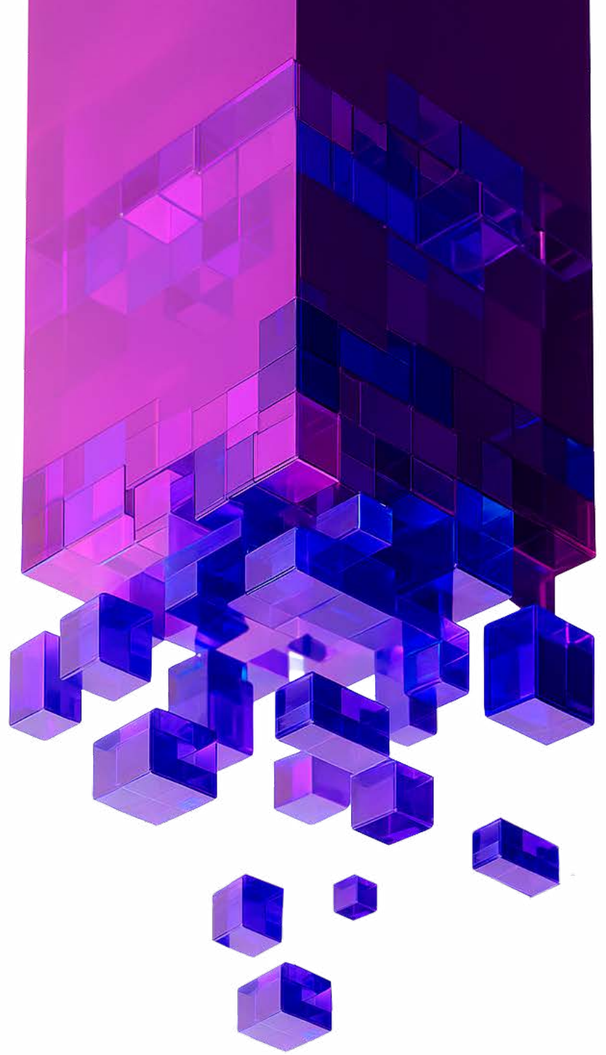
1. Architect for the future:
Build an AI-ready, platform-aware infrastructure

Agentic AI is advancing fast. But too often, companies add new tools to outdated systems. The outcome is AI sprawl, fragmented operations and little real impact.

Most enterprises rely on a patchwork of native tools like SAP's Joule or third-party models, such as OpenAI or Anthropic, and internally built agents. What's missing is an architecture blueprint that ties them together. No surprise, then, that 57% of leaders cite integration with existing systems as their top risk in scaling AI.

The way forward is to treat AI as a system, not a feature. That means designing architecture that defines where AI lives, how it connects to platforms, how it accesses data and how its actions are governed.

We call this new model agentic enterprise architecture: a design where human expertise and machine intelligence collaborate seamlessly.



Case study

Zurich Insurance: Designing AI-ready architecture for customer engagement

Zurich has launched an AI-powered CRM developed by its analytics division, ZCAM, to transform how customer-facing agents work.

The system centralizes customer and policy data into a unified interface, integrates with Outlook and Salesforce and follows a *"three-click rule"* for instant access to critical information. With AI-driven product suggestions, it reduces service times by over 70% and shifts agents from transactional intermediaries to trusted advisors.[2]

How agentic enterprise architecture works

An effective agentic architecture introduces a dedicated agent layer made up of reasoning engines to assess options and suggest next-best actions, orchestration logic to trigger and coordinate workflows across systems and management tools to ensure observability, explainability and human oversight.

These layers rely on access to structured and unstructured data, pulled in real time from across the enterprise through knowledge management systems.

Crucially, agentic enterprise architecture reimagines how processes are structured. Agents no longer stay locked inside system boundaries. They adapt to context, operate across functions and pursue goals dynamically. To support this shift, CIOs and architects must build abstraction layers—simplified interfaces that free agents from having to know the intricacies of multiple systems and standards by translating data and workflows behind the scenes to match seamlessly—to improve data quality and establish integration patterns that enable real-time, trustworthy execution.

Platform Agent Hierarchy

At the heart of agentic architecture is a coordinated Platform Agent Hierarchy where AI agents operate at different levels of complexity and control, much like the highly structured roles inside a beehive.[3] Each agent plays a distinct part in delivering intelligent, goal-oriented execution across the enterprise.

> **Utility agents** do the task. They execute sets of basic tasks autonomously inside systems

> **Super agents** coordinate the work. They understand user intention and the goal, then mobilize the right utility agents to achieve it.

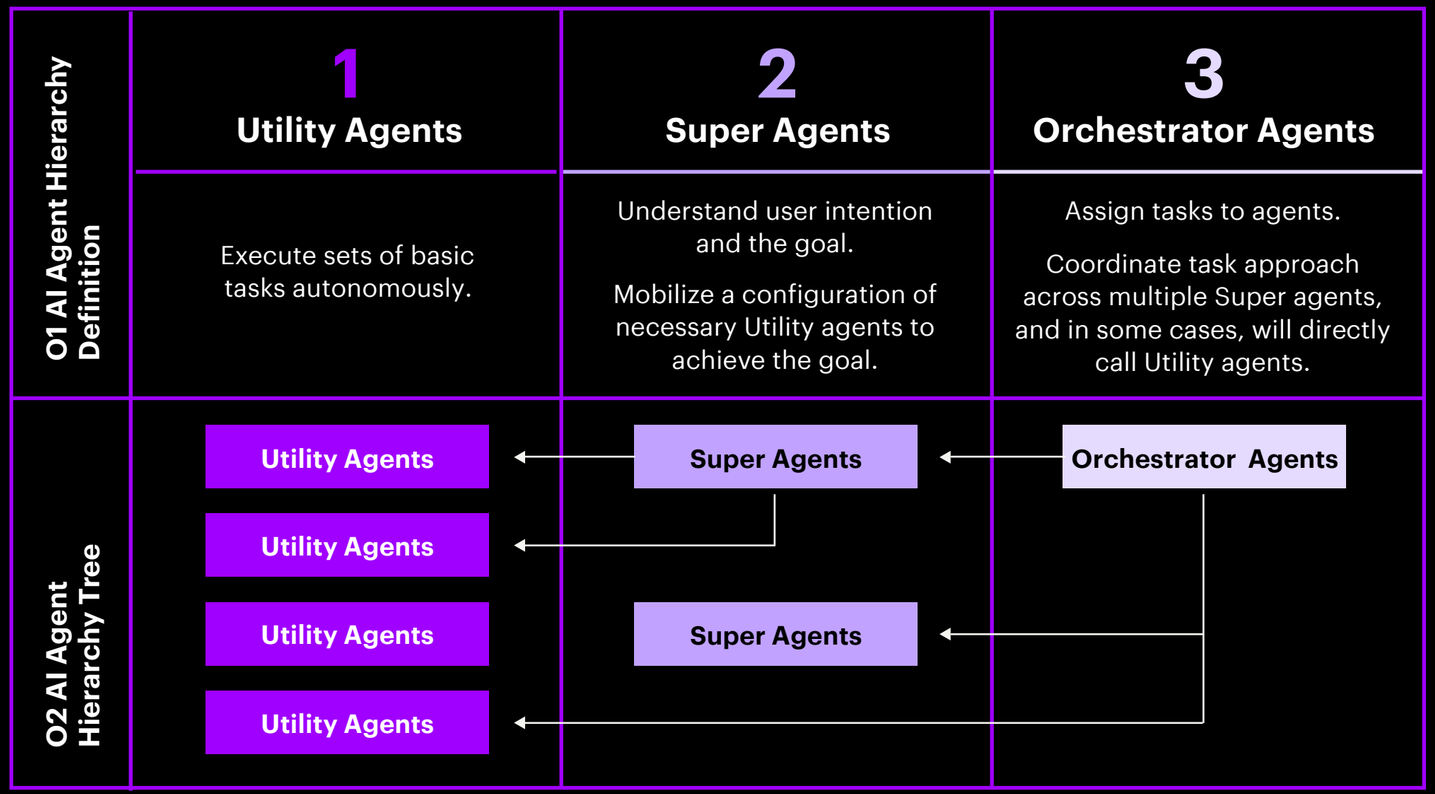
> **Orchestrator agents** govern the system. They assign tasks to agents, coordinate approaches across multiple super agents and when needed, directly call utility agents.

While utility agents often operate within specific platforms, super and orchestrator agents could be designed to live outside them, remaining platform-agnostic to manage tasks that span multiple systems.

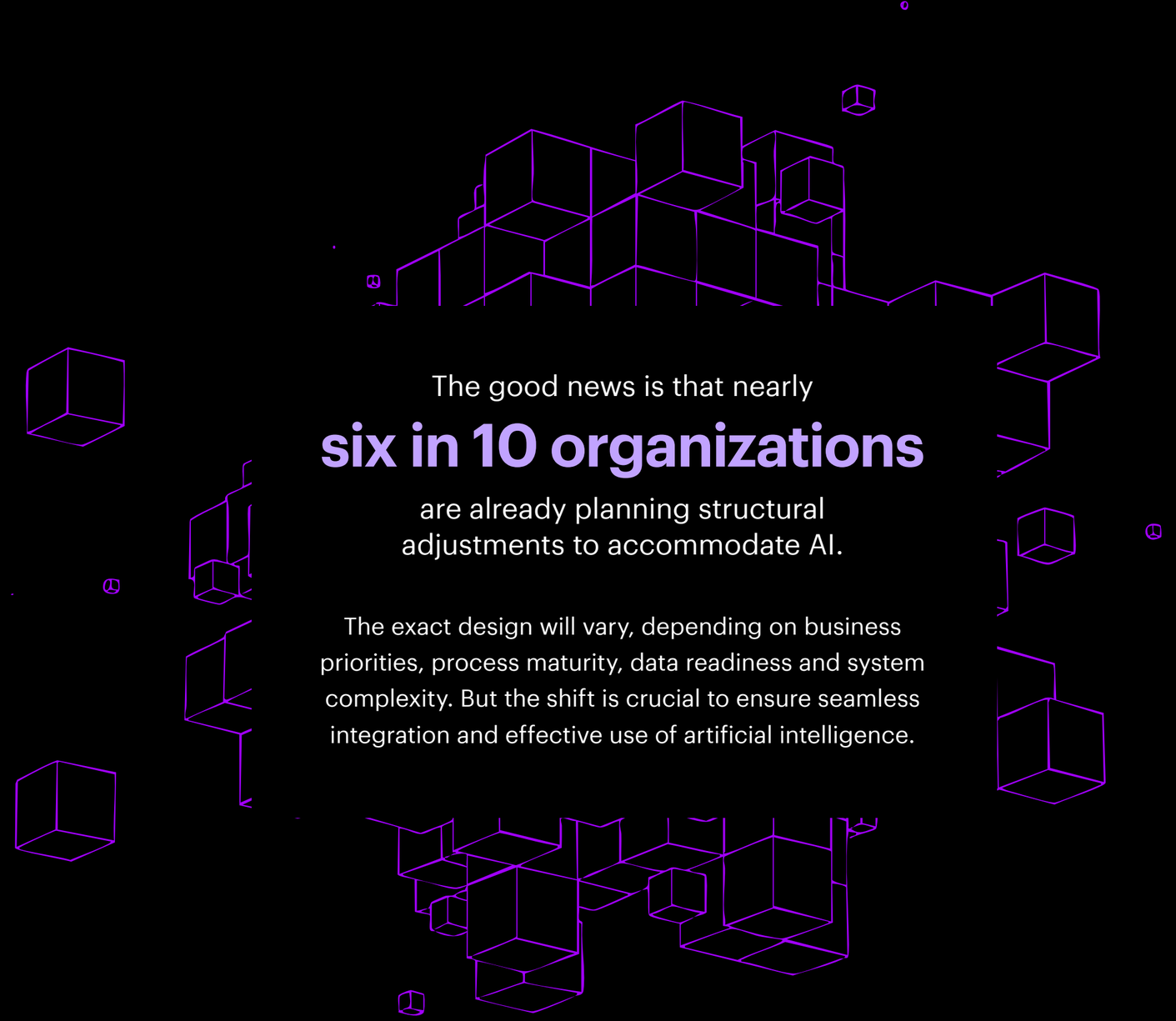
Consider a company looking to reinvent its financial close process. Utility agents take on system-level work, like retrieving balances or validating journal entries, directly inside SAP and Workday to stay compliant. Super agents interpret the broader goal—for instance, to finalize fourth quarter results—and coordinate utility agents, managing dependencies such as making sure payroll data is locked before journals post.

Orchestrator agents sit above it all, tracking progress, enforcing close rules and ensuring auditability through enterprise control planes and standards-based agent-to-agent orchestration frameworks. Together, the three layers turn a complex, interdependent process into a seamless, coordinated system (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Agents operate at different levels in the Platform Agent Hierarchy



Source: Accenture analysis



The good news is that nearly

six in 10 organizations

are already planning structural adjustments to accommodate AI.

The exact design will vary, depending on business priorities, process maturity, data readiness and system complexity. But the shift is crucial to ensure seamless integration and effective use of artificial intelligence.

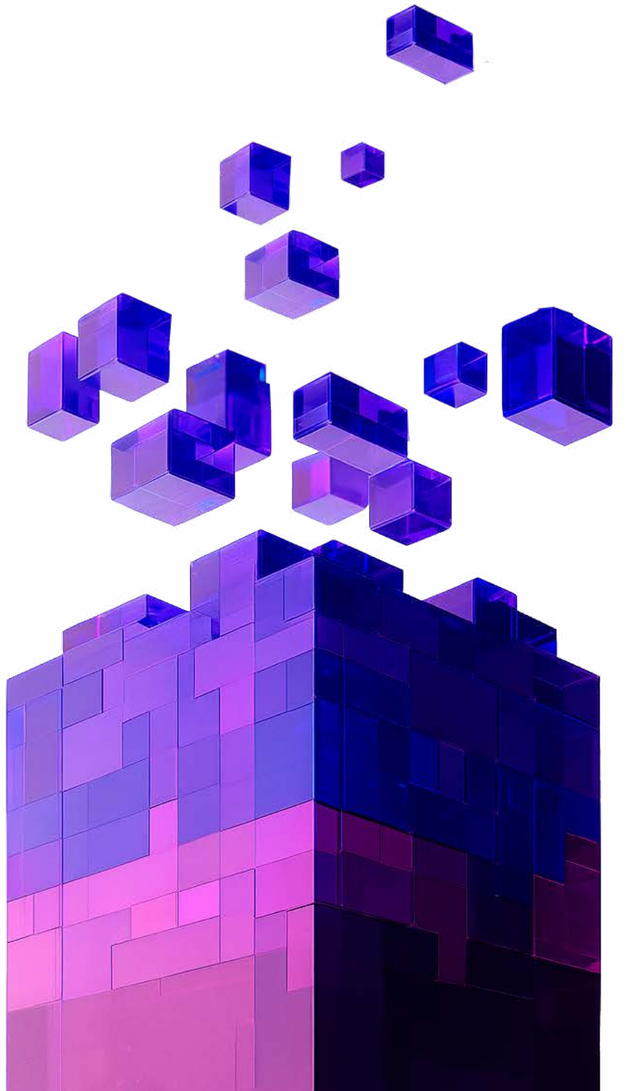
2. Design a fit-for-purpose foundation:
Modernize the digital core

Before agents can scale, the foundations need to be ready. That means modernizing the digital core to create a fit-for-purpose foundation—one that unifies platforms, data and processes to support real-time decision making and seamless AI integration.

This raises critical questions for every leader: Are your systems modular, real-time and open or slow, brittle and customized beyond reason? Do you have a clear data strategy and governance in place to ensure trust, quality and accessibility at scale?

Too often, companies try to build AI on top of outdated platforms that don't support real-time data, flexible workflows or modular integration. That makes scaling impossible.

> "We're actively working to reduce ERP implementation time from 6–7 years to under one using AI. But brittle legacy systems turn AI into a liability, not an advantage."
>
> — Senior leader, ERP vendor



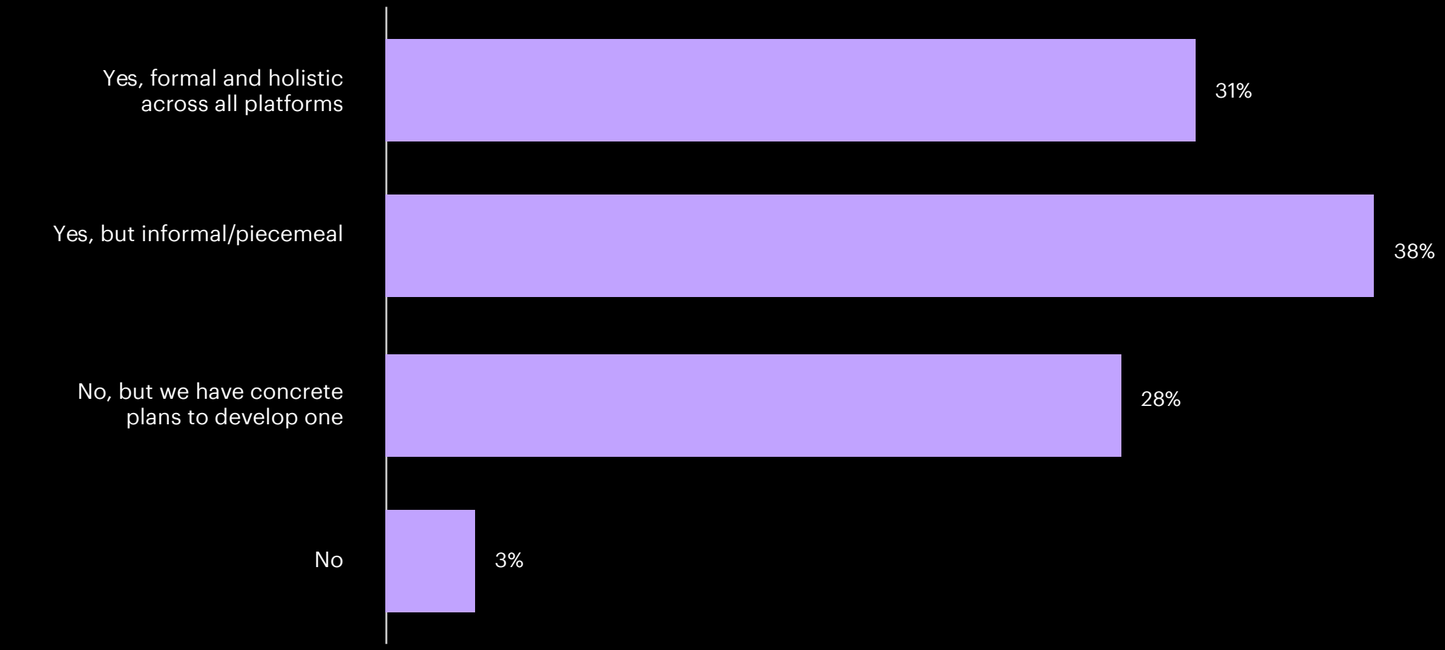
Bridging the strategy gap

Right now, only 31% of companies say they have a formal platform strategy (Figure 5). The rest are improvising or missing one altogether. That leaves AI initiatives to fight against fractured environments where they can't scale.

Modernization isn’t about replacing everything. It starts with a readiness assessment. What’s modern, what’s outdated, what’s missing? Only on a sound foundation can AI deliver sustainable scale. Start with a full inventory. Map which platforms support which functions—finance, HR, supply chain, customer experience—and assess whether they are still fit for purpose.

Figure 5: Fewer than one-third of companies have a formal, comprehensive platform strategy

Do you have a distinct strategy currently in place for the deployment of platforms across your organization?

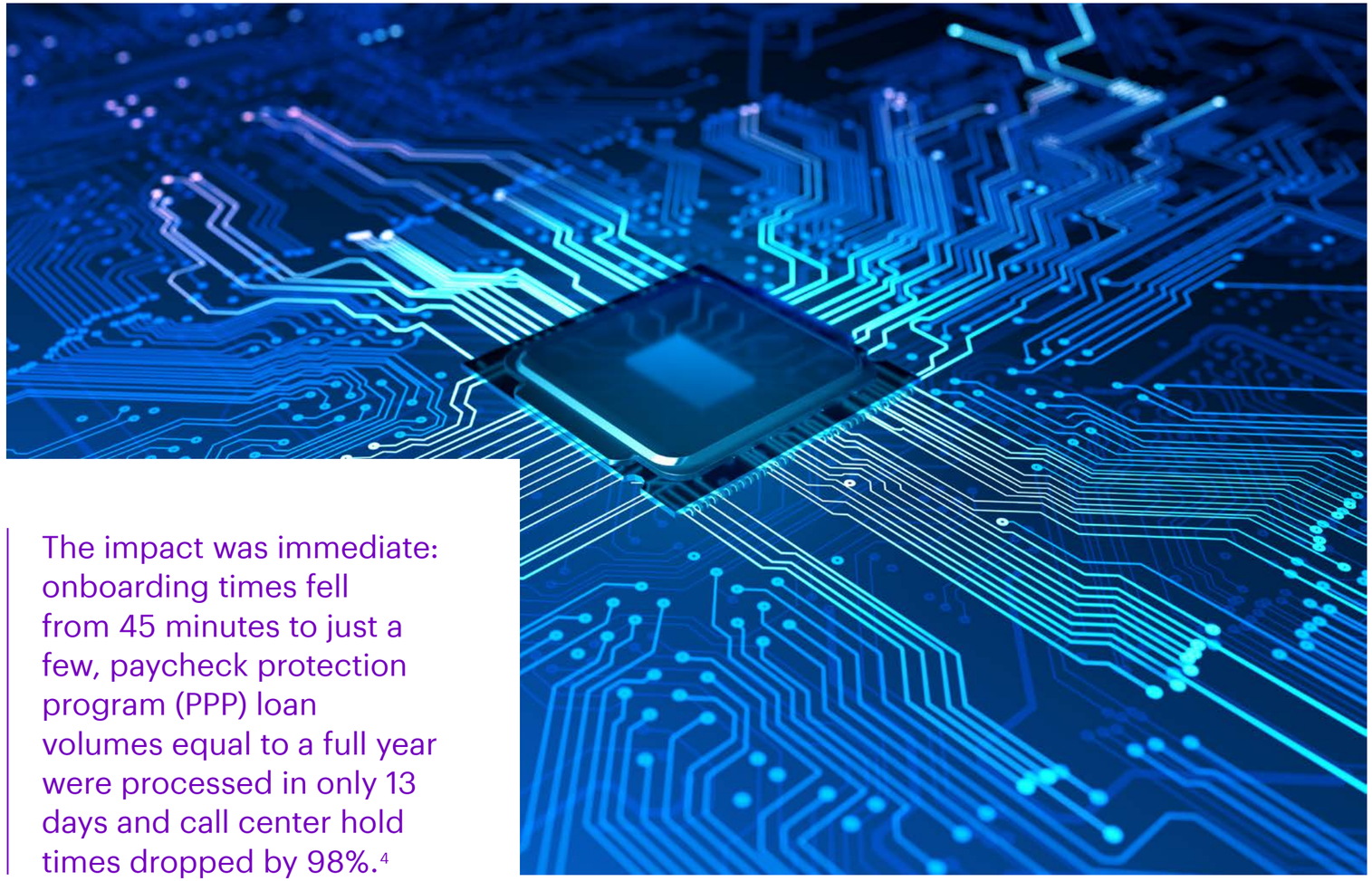


Source: Accenture enterprise platform strategy in the age of agentic AI survey, 2025 (N = 1,031)

Case study

Mascoma Bank: Building a clean, unified core

Mascoma Bank consolidated 66 fragmented systems onto Salesforce Data Cloud and related platforms. The consolidation covered banking, CRM, loan servicing, digital channels, general ledger, insurance and wealth management.



The impact was immediate: onboarding times fell from 45 minutes to just a few, paycheck protection program (PPP) loan volumes equal to a full year were processed in only 13 days and call center hold times dropped by 98%.[4]

3. Articulate the interplay:

Clarify platform, human and agent roles

One of the biggest challenges in using AI-native platforms is to know who does what: where does the platform ends, where does the agent begin and where do humans fit in?

- ***Should agents initiate workflows?***
- ***Make decisions?***
- ***Complete transactions?***
- ***Or should those remain within platform logic?***
- ***What requires human oversight, judgment or creativity?***

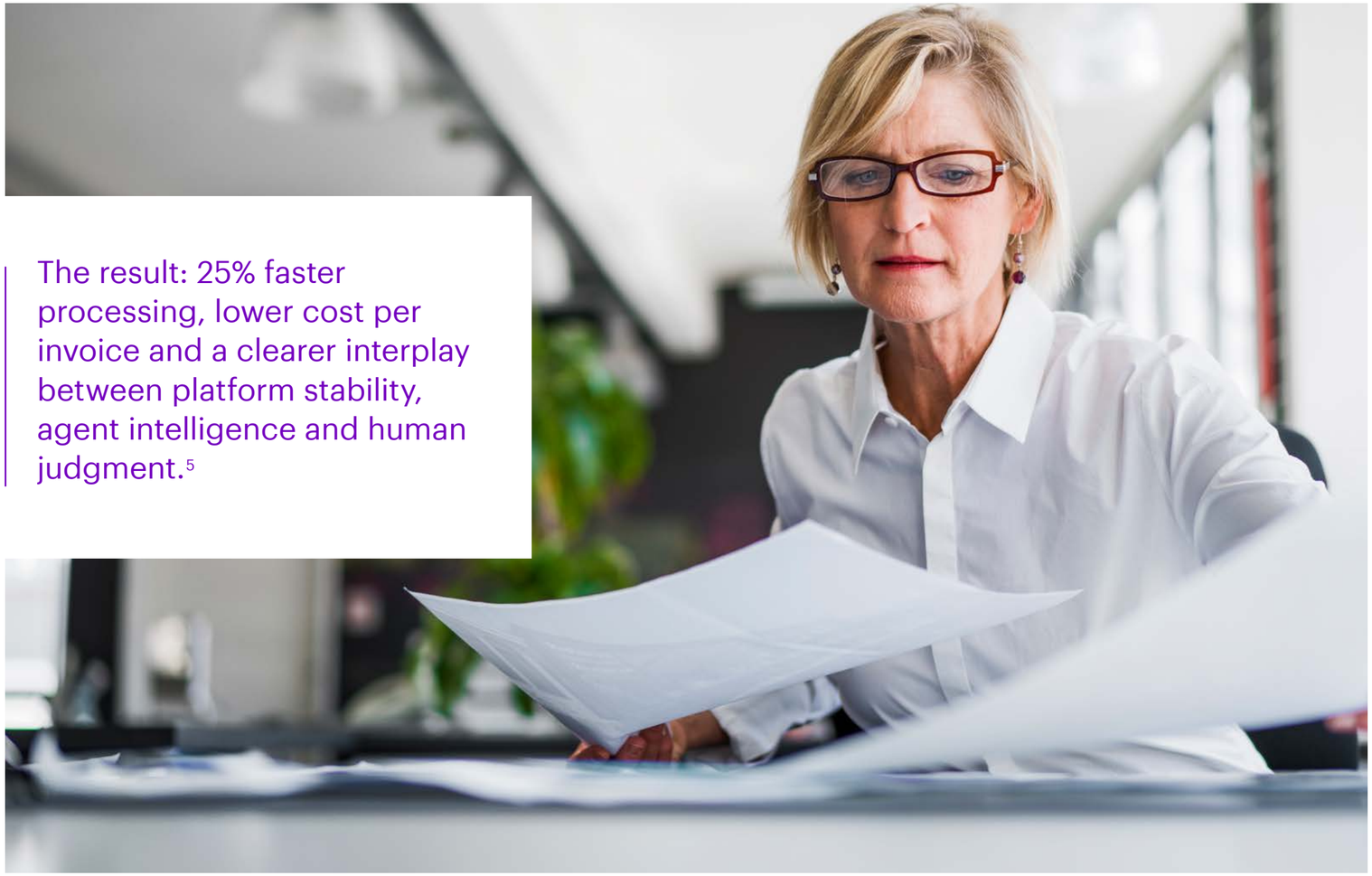
Without clarity, orchestration becomes guesswork and accountability breaks down. Every enterprise needs to map who does what. They need to define what gets triggered or executed by agents, what stays inside the platform and what still requires people.

Case study

Western Sugar: Lessons from an early mover

Embedded agents have transformed Western Sugar's finance operations into an intelligent, self-orchestrating system. Using SAP Ariba Central Invoice Management on SAP S/4HANA Cloud Public Edition, the company now processes about 40,000 invoices a year with no human intervention until approval.

The platform ensures structured compliance and auditability. AI agents handle contextual tasks like document recognition and error resolution. Finance teams focus on oversight and strategic improvements, saving about one week per month.



The result: 25% faster processing, lower cost per invoice and a clearer interplay between platform stability, agent intelligence and human judgment.[5]

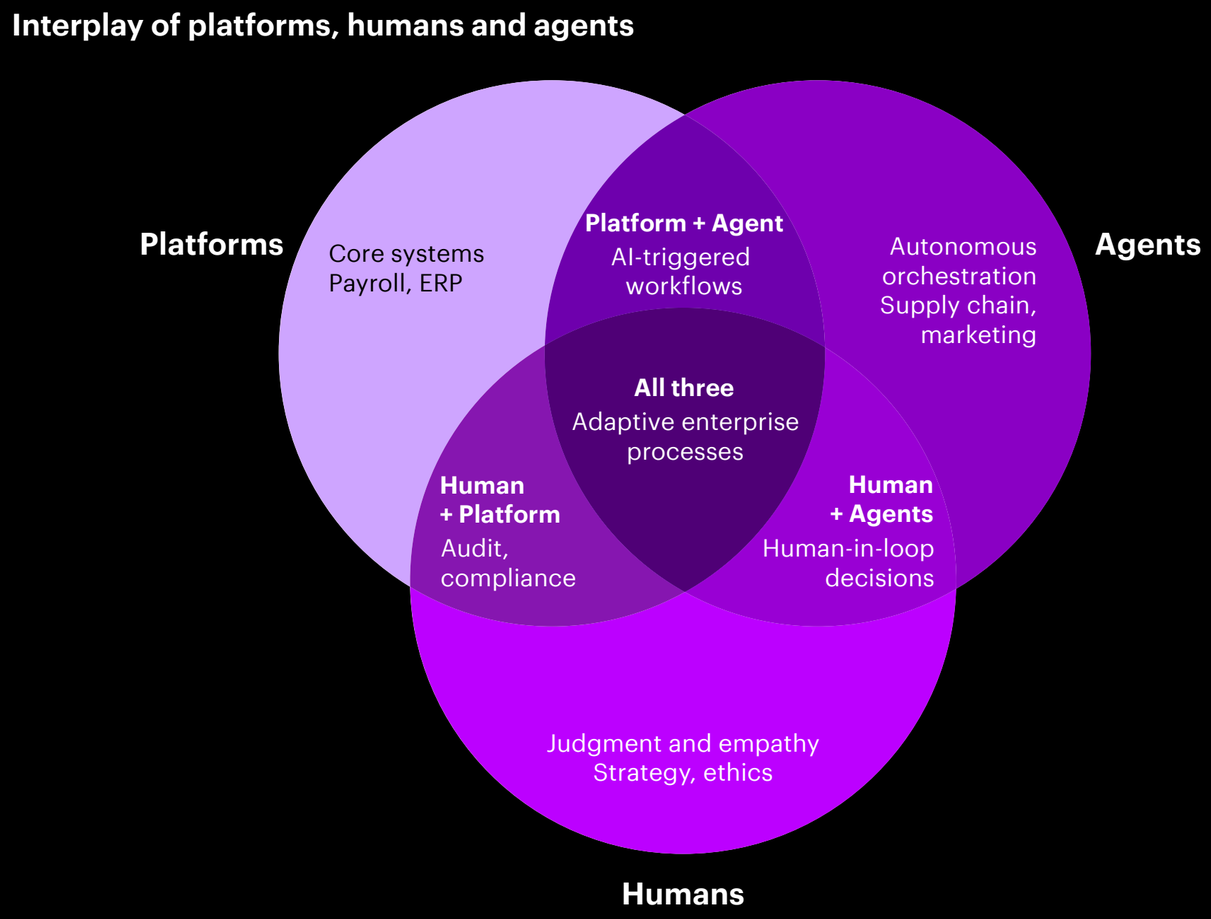
Think of this interplay as a three-part Venn diagram

Platforms handle and host structured data and rule-based workflows. Agents sense, decide and act dynamically across systems. Humans bring judgment, empathy, escalation and accountability.

As illustrated in Figure 6, where platforms and agents overlap, there is automated coordination (for example, agents initiating actions inside transactional systems). Where agents and humans overlap, there is collaborative decision-making (for example, agents recommending actions for review). Where platforms and humans overlap, there is structured oversight (for example, approvals or governance inside platform processes). And at the center—where all three converge—is the space for complex, high-value work that requires stability, intelligence, context and trust. This is where tasks like financial close, workforce planning and strategic decision-making occur, demanding seamless integration of technology and human expertise. Humans play both 'in-the-loop' and 'on-the-loop' roles, supervising, guiding and governing how agents learn, evolve and execute.

Understanding and intentionally designing for these intersections is critical to orchestrating work effectively.

Figure 6: The changing roles of platforms, humans and agents



Source: Accenture analysis

Redefining every role

Agent roles aren't static job descriptions. Their scope flexes depending on goals, inputs or context. Platforms shouldn't be expected to coordinate intelligence across systems without help. Humans will increasingly shift to oversight, escalation, strategy and relationship-driven work.

A shift in platform architecture inevitably reshapes how work gets done. And when work changes, the workforce must change with it—the roles required, the skills needed, the training provided and the way performance is measured. Platform, work and workforce are not three separate strategies; they form a single system. Treating them with different assumptions or success measures creates misalignment. Using a consistent set of outcomes and key performance indicators (KPIs) is essential to ensure the organization evolves as one. For example, when a company moves to an AI-enabled finance platform, reconciliation work may disappear and the workforce shifts toward exception review and data quality roles—all measured against the same outcome: faster, more reliable financial insight. Similarly, in customer service, agent-driven triage changes human work from ticket handling to judgement-based escalation, so platform performance, workflows and workforce KPIs must all align to resolution accuracy and customer experience.

This requires explicit task-mapping: determining which components of a process belong to agents, which stay in platform logic and where people add value.

For example, in customer service, agents may triage and suggest resolution paths, platforms may process workflows and tickets and humans may intervene for empathy, escalation or exception handling.

What might this look like in practice?

We analyzed tasks in each function and how often they occur, then reassigned them to platforms, humans or agents based on where each is strongest.

Who	Type of Work	Examples
Platforms	Routine, domain-specific, rules-driven	Reconciling transactions in finance, running compliance checks in legal, handling order updates in supply chain
Humans	Judgment-heavy, strategy- and relationship-led	Setting marketing direction, negotiating with suppliers, defining AI ethics in HR, shaping IT architecture
Agents	Proactive, adaptive, cross-functional	Drafting IT incident responses, generating first-pass marketing copy, assisting sales with customer research

Platforms are best at structured, repeatable work where rules apply. Agents step in for tasks that call for adaptability and contextual reasoning, cutting across functions to keep work moving. Humans stay focused on the judgment and complex decision-making, setting direction, shaping strategy and handling the moments that require leadership and interpersonal skills.

Our analysis shows the distribution clearly (Figure 7).

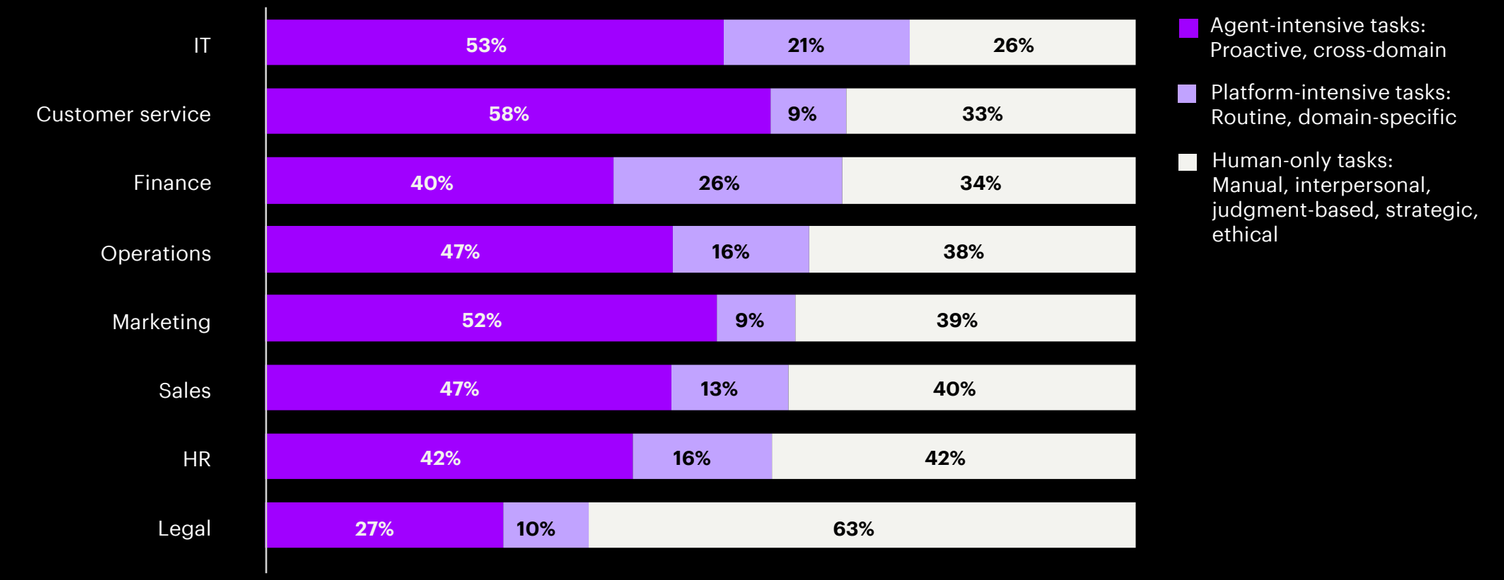
In customer service, IT and marketing, agents take the lead, platforms handle routine tasks and humans focus on escalation.

In finance, all three balance—platforms manage repeatable processes, agents add adaptability, humans steer strategy.

In legal, humans remain central, with platforms and agents extending their reach through compliance, research and logistics.

Figure 7: Different business functions will rely on agents, platforms and people in different proportions

Share of work time completed by platforms and agents by enterprise function



Source: Accenture analysis based on O*NET Online and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data, as described in the Methodology section 3.2 of this report.

The future isn't about one replacing another. It's about coordinated execution—where platform stability, agent intelligence and human oversight are clearly defined and continuously refined. Without that clarity, trust, security and scale are impossible.

4. Prepare for operating model reinvention:
Reimagine how the enterprise operates

The next step is to rethink operating models, work structures and the very roles that people play.

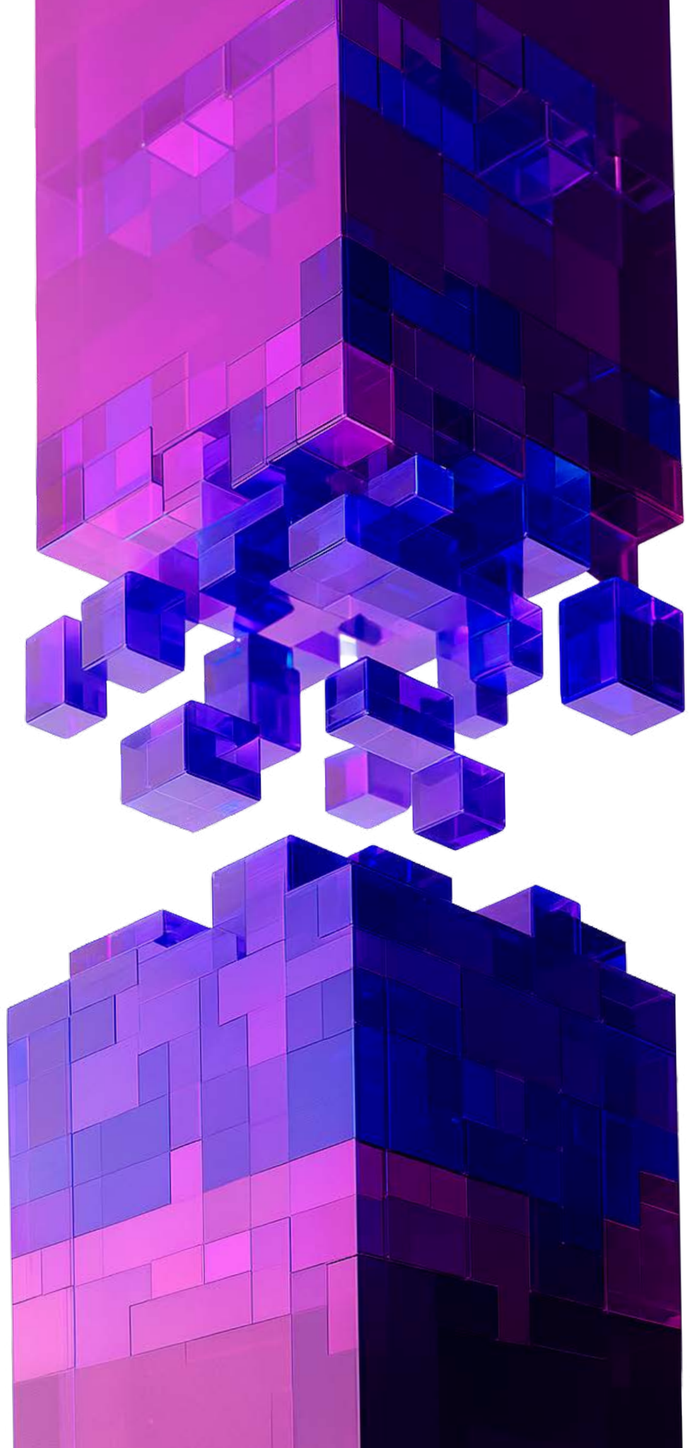
Take recruiting. Traditionally, recruiters handled everything from resume screening to interview scheduling. Now, AI agents can pre-screen, rank applicants and pre-fill interview templates—shifting recruiters' roles from processors to decision-makers.

In many companies, closing the books is still slow and manual. Agents can now reconcile accounts, flag anomalies and draft reports—freeing finance teams to focus on review and judgment.

Leaders across industries are moving quickly

One leader at a platform vendor told us that their Fortune 500 clients are already deploying AI agents for content creation, segmentation and performance analysis. At another ERP provider, a leader described agents as "front of house"—solving what they can and handing it over to humans with full context when needed.

> "We see ERP systems evolving through three stages: accelerate, assist and transform... where agents take over simple human tasks."
>
> —Senior ERP leader



Case study

How leaders are redesigning work with AI

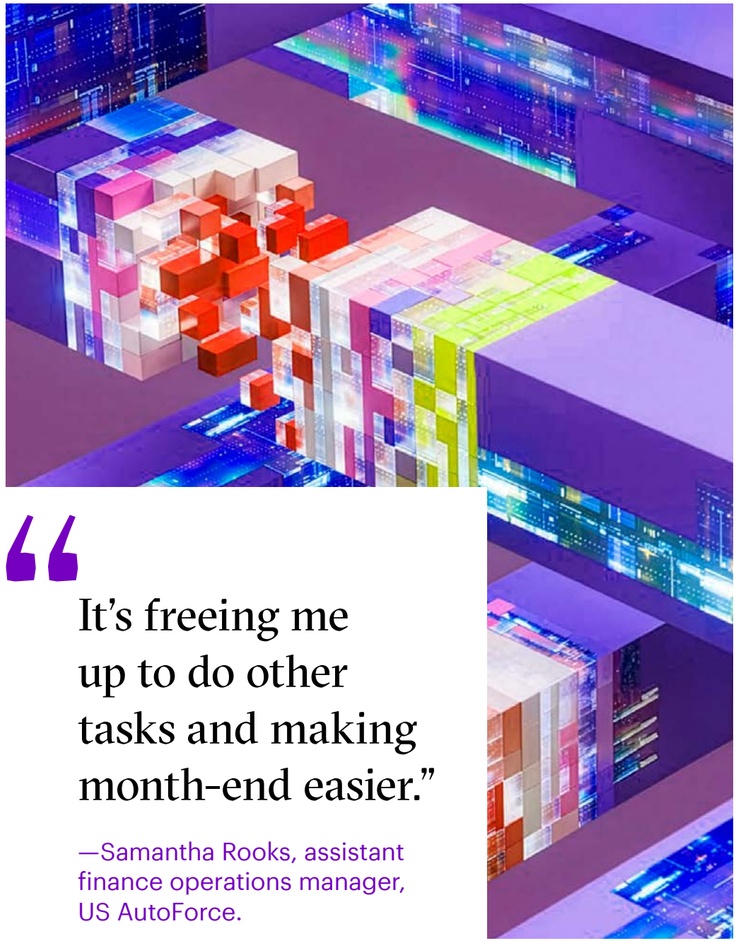
Adecco:
Reinventing recruitment at scale

Adecco's recruitment teams found it overwhelming to process over 300 million resumes a year. Using Salesforce Agentforce, the company deployed AI to handle "24/7" candidate engagement, resume screening and curated shortlists. Recruiters were freed to focus on building relationships.

The AI layer, powered by Salesforce Data Cloud, unified data from 40+ systems to make candidate matching accurate and fast. The result: shorter time-to-fill, higher fill rates and better candidate experiences.[6]

US AutoForce:
Accelerating with AI

US AutoForce, part of US Venture, was struggling with a legacy IBM iSeries ERP system that slowed financial workflows and drove up costs. To modernize, the company shifted to Microsoft Dynamics 365 Finance and Supply Chain Management, giving teams better visibility, intuitive workflows and centralized data. On top of this new core, they embedded Microsoft 365 Copilot for Finance directly into Excel. Copilot automated critical tasks like reconciling credit card transactions and bank statements, cutting reconciliation time by 80% and saving the finance team more than 30 hours a month. US AutoForce now plans to expand Copilot into vendor statement processing and cash reconciliations—turning time-intensive tasks into seamless, AI-driven processes.[7]



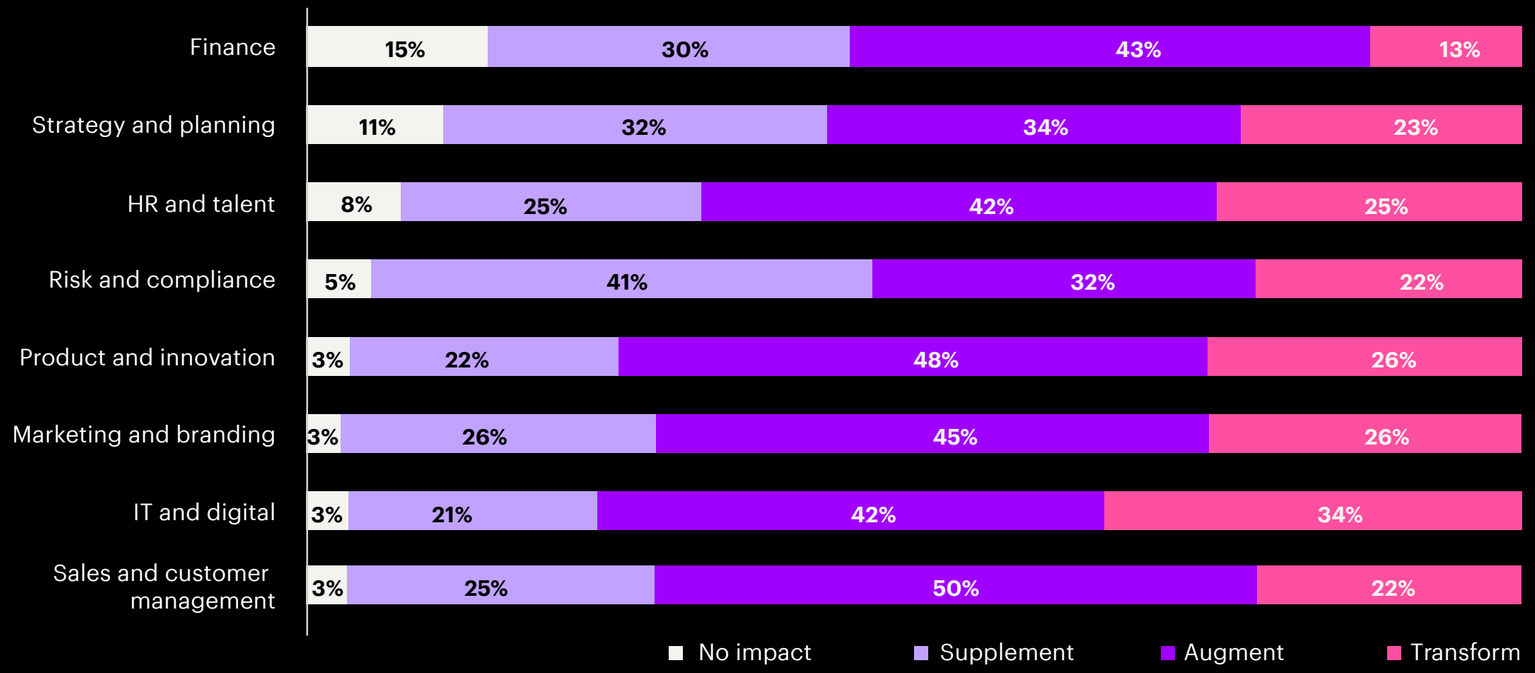
> "It's freeing me up to do other tasks and making month-end easier."
>
> —Samantha Rooks, assistant finance operations manager, US AutoForce.

Not every function can or should be transformed at once. Leaders must decide where to begin—not just based on technical feasibility or vendor offerings, but on business value, urgency and readiness.

Some areas will deliver outsized ROI quickly. Others may be slower to change but will prove foundational in the long term. Start with the functions already undergoing visible change (Figure 8).

Figure 8: In early stages, agentic AI is expected to have a different degree of impact on different processes

How do you anticipate AI agents will impact enterprise platforms for the following processes within your organization?



Source: Accenture "Enterprise platform strategy in the age of agentic AI" survey (N = 1,031)

Reinvention also reshapes the organization itself. We're seeing the classic pyramid give way to a more diamond-shaped structure—where the middle tier becomes the true center of gravity. As automation reduces the need for junior execution and AI takes on repetitive tasks, mid-level roles like product owners, domain architects and solution integrators are becoming more important.

Yet many organizations have not updated their job architecture or leadership models to support this shift. Without the right investment in the middle, transformation stalls.

Equally important is reimagining how the workforce is organized and supported—ensuring people have the structures, skills and systems they need to work differently and scale new value.

Our research shows that the sales and customer management function leads in AI augmentation, with 50% of companies using AI for chatbots, personalization and enablement. Product and innovation is close behind at 48%, with AI deeply embedded in R&D, design and testing. These high-impact, fast-moving areas are ideal for agent-driven augmentation.

Next, look to areas with strong transformation potential. IT and digital stand out: 34% of organizations expect agents to be transformational. Marketing and branding, product innovation and HR and talent also show strong momentum, with 25–26% expecting agent-first execution models. In these functions, the structure of work itself is being redefined. Agents are not just assisting; they are orchestrating tasks end to end. Other areas are moving more cautiously. Risk and compliance leads in "supplementary" use, with 41% using AI to enhance functionality while leaving core workflows intact—likely due to regulatory sensitivity. Strategy and planning follow, with 32% using AI as an advisor, not an executor. Finance shows slightly more resistance to change with 15% of companies reporting no AI impact at all.

This variation isn't just about technology

It's about how the structure of work evolves. Agents replace linear handoffs with real-time orchestration. Decision-making moves from rigid workflows to dynamic collaboration and people shift from operators to reviewers, from doers to deciders. But even with the right use cases, not every function will justify the same investment.

Some will deliver faster ROI. Some will need to go first because they enable downstream change. And others—despite their potential—may need to wait due to budget constraints or integration complexity.

Increasingly, operating models will feature more fluid boundaries and cross-functional teaming, as people and AI agents collaborate dynamically across traditional silos to drive speed, agility and innovation.

How should a leader decide what to do next?

We use a tool called the Platform-Agent Impact Map to help organizations prioritize which business functions or processes to transform, augment or leave largely intact (Figure 9).

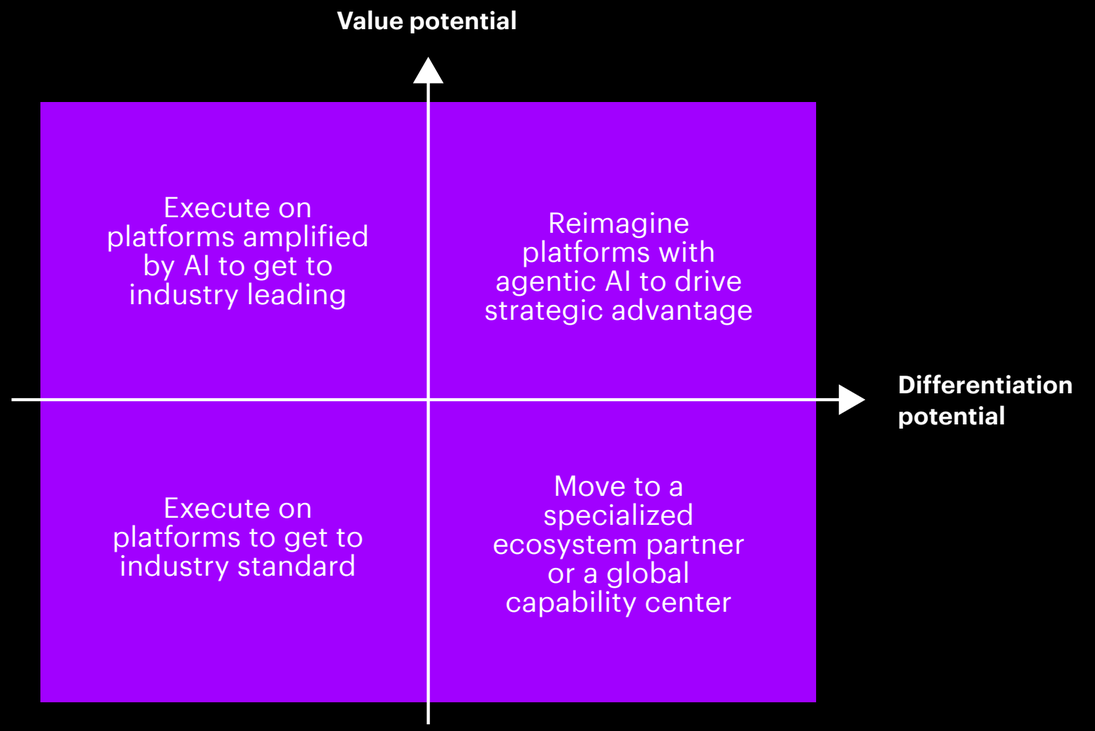
It's a simple but powerful 2x2 model. The horizontal axis represents differentiation potential—how much a process contributes to competitive advantage. The vertical axis reflects value potential—the benefit of improving that process through AI, whether through speed, efficiency or quality.

Processes that are high-value and highly differentiating sit at the top-right. These are prime candidates for full reinvention—such as personalized customer experiences or innovation pipelines. High-value but less differentiating functions like financial planning or IT service management (top-left) are ideal for augmentation.

At the bottom-left, essential but undifferentiated processes like compliance reporting or payroll should be standardized and selectively automated. And at the bottom-right, low-value but unique capabilities may be better handled by specialized ecosystem partners or global capability centers that can get unique capabilities delivered at lower costs.

Figure 9: The Platform-Agent Impact Map

Business functions and processes that should be transformed, augmented or left intact



Source: Accenture analysis

5. Transform culture:

Empower people, build trust and evolve how work gets done

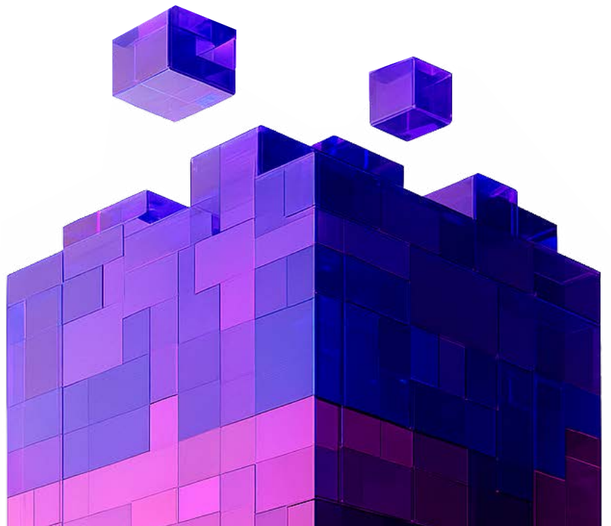
AI can only go as far as people allow it, and people will only allow it if organizations create the conditions for them to trust it.

The disconnect is clear in practice and in our data. New AI tools are deployed but remain underused. Workflows are redesigned but teams fall back to manual processes, not because they are unwilling but because they lack clarity, autonomy, psychological safety or reliable support systems to navigate the change. Instead of addressing these underlying issues, many organizations reduce it all to "resistance."

At first glance, the numbers appear to confirm this view. Sixty-four percent of companies cite employee resistance as the biggest barrier to scaling AI. But the next two barriers—insufficient training programs (51%) and limited training budgets (47%)—tell a different story. These are not separate problems; they explain the first one. When people are not given the skills, understanding or support they need, hesitation is a rational response. What leaders interpret as resistance is often the result of underinvestment and uncertainty. The issue is not that employees do not want to adopt AI. It is that organizations have not yet created the conditions that make adoption feel safe, supported and meaningful.

This isn't only a skills gap, it's also a trust gap. Leaders must build trust amid uncertainty, communicating an authentic, compelling narrative that engages employees on the possibilities while acknowledging their reservations. When people don't fully understand the processes AI is meant to augment, confidence in the system breaks down. Misconceptions about AI hallucinations, errors or black-box logic (lack of visibility into how AI makes its decisions) only deepen that mistrust. For example, nearly three-quarters of companies had to pause at least one project in 2024 due to AI-related risk, according to previous research by Accenture.[8]

> "If you don't understand the process, you won't trust the system that's supposed to improve it."
>
> —Senior leader, global platform vendor



New roles, new skills

As AI takes on more judgment-based and autonomous tasks, human roles must adapt.

People need to evolve from being operators to acting as orchestrators, reviewers and collaborators in a dynamic human-agent-platform model. At the same time, leaders must implement these blended teams with care to avoid detrimental impacts on team belonging, informal peer learning and interpersonal connections.

True readiness comes from what we call co-learning, continuous learning in the flow of work, where people and AI learn from each other to adapt faster, innovate more and sustain reinvention.[9]

That shift calls for new skills. People need **analytical reasoning** to evaluate AI suggestions and verify outputs. They must develop **fluency with natural language interfaces and agent tools** to interact intuitively with intelligent systems. And they require **situational judgment** to know when to trust the AI, when to intervene and when to escalate decisions. As organizational focus shifts from pure automation to augmentation, new human roles emerge—those of "trainers," "explainers" and "sustainers" of AI systems. Trainers build and refine models; explainers act as the bridge between business and AI logic; sustainers uphold system performance, governance and ongoing learning. These roles draw on uniquely human skills—judgment, ethics, domain knowledge—and are increasingly central to any durable AI-powered operating model.

For employees to embrace AI in their day-to-day work, they must first trust that AI improves their work, reduces bias and offers transparency. What's required is active, visible leadership. The C-suite must set a clear direction for how AI and platforms will evolve together and do so with alignment, not just intent. Middle managers need support in redesigning how their teams operate, with enough ownership to adapt workflows to local realities. Organizations must support employees in developing the capabilities needed not only to use AI, but also to understand how to work alongside it: when to trust it, when to intervene and how to stay accountable.

To build trust, companies must make responsible AI a regular practice and part of their culture. That means embedding responsibility into platforms and workflows, anticipating risks before they emerge, strengthening data governance and working closely with partners and regulators to set new standards. When done right, responsible AI doesn't just manage risk, it builds trust, accelerates adoption and drives measurable business value. For example, companies can expect a 25% increase, on average, in customer loyalty and satisfaction from offering responsible AI-enabled products and services.[10]

Ultimately, this is a cultural shift. Success depends not simply on tools or talent, but on leadership. Leaders shape culture through what they model, what they reward and how they support people as ways of working change.

Leaders must lean on their fundamental human qualities of curiosity, courage and connectedness—curiosity to explore how AI unlocks new value, courage to challenge legacy assumptions and rethink long-established norms and connectedness to unite teams, technology and human potential.

> "Success comes down to leadership role modeling and team-level experimentation, not just tech rollout."
>
> —Senior leader, global platform vendor

The five priorities in action

Practical actions to activate the five priorities for an AI-ready, future-fit platform strategy.

Priority	First step	Follow up action
Architect for the future	Map where AI lives today—and where it should live in the future.	Hold a cross-functional session to identify AI gaps in architecture, orchestration and data access.
Design a fit-for-purpose foundation	Run a rapid platform-readiness scan.	Inventory key platforms by function and assess which are modular, cloud-native and AI-capable.
Articulate the interplay	Clarify agent-platform-human roles for one critical workflow.	Define who (or what) owns each part of the workflow—then scale that model.
Prepare for operating model reinvention	Use the Platform-Agent Impact Map to prioritize five functions.	Quickly assess where AI can drive the most value and differentiation—and where to start.
Transform culture	Pilot an "AI fluency sprint" with one mid-level team.	Help a core team understand how AI will change their roles and workflows—and what to do about it.

Case study

Accenture M+C: Our own best credential

Accenture's global Marketing + Communications (M+C) team redesigned more than 2,000 roles to reflect a new model of human–AI collaboration. We clarified who does what between people and agents, created new metrics like agent output effectiveness and intervention frequency and introduced structured routines to review and govern agent contributions.

This journey is helping us cut campaign steps from 135 to 85, getting the average campaign to market 25–35% faster.[11]

Final word:
It’s not about replacement—it’s about readiness

Enterprise platforms aren’t ending. They’re entering a new phase, one where value comes from adapting quickly, embedding intelligence deeply and aligning technology with fast-moving strategy.

The real risk is less about platforms becoming obsolete overnight and more about them falling out of step with how intelligence now works—fluidly, continuously and across boundaries.

That’s why the focus must now shift from preservation to preparation. The opportunity is to build platform strategies that are ready for a future shaped by AI.

Those who re-architect with intent, both inside and outside their platforms, empower their people and embed intelligence into the core won’t just keep pace—they’ll set the pace.

> “This is a hybrid model. Platforms won’t disappear. But their role will change.”
>
> —Senior leader, CRM platform vendor

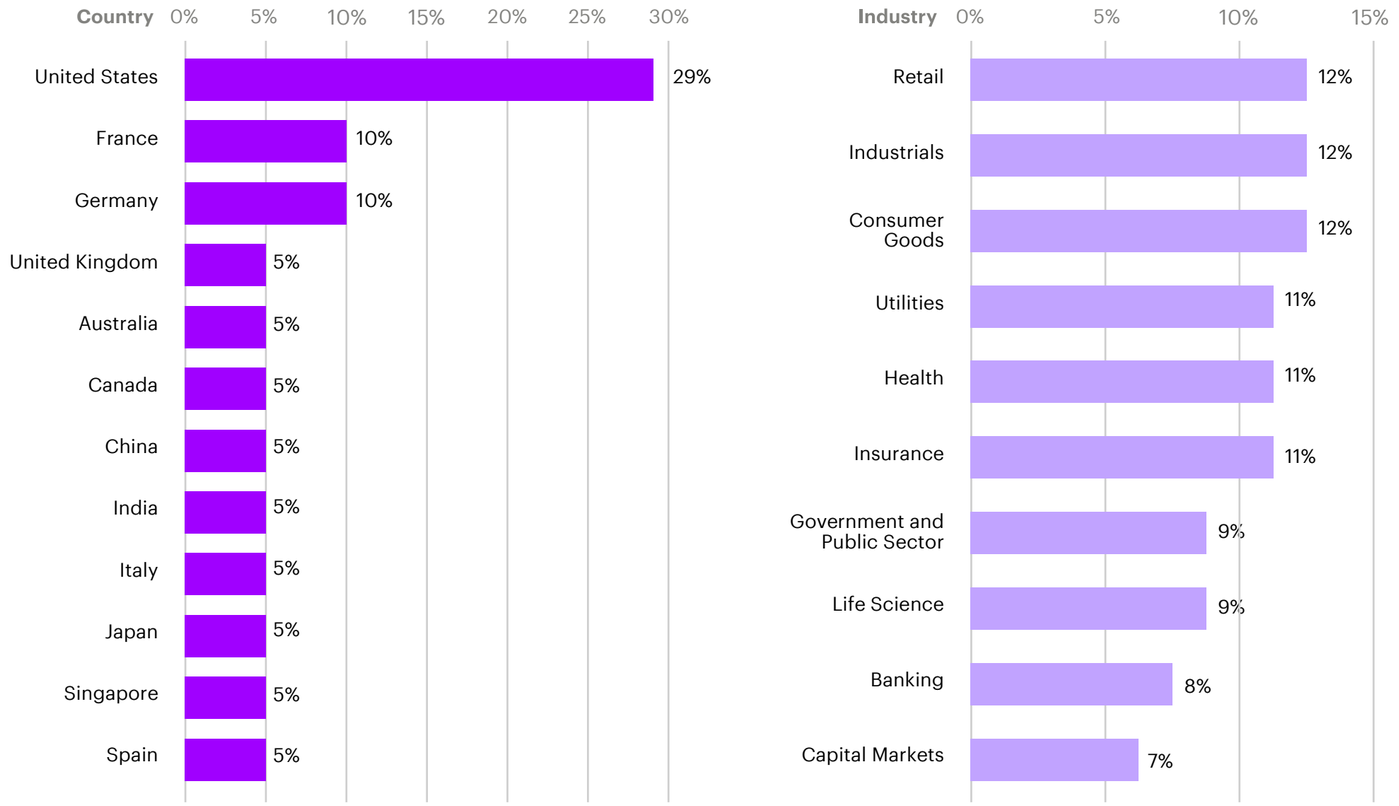
About the research

Our research integrates multiple methods to provide a comprehensive and evidence-based view of how AI and platform strategies drive financial outcomes:

1.0 Global executive survey

We surveyed 1,031 C-suite and senior executives across companies based in 12 countries (Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Singapore, Spain, United Kingdom, United States) and 10 industries (banking, capital markets, consumer goods, health, industrials, insurance, life science, public sector, retail, utilities) (Figure 10). Respondents represented the world's largest enterprises as well as mid-sized companies (revenues greater than $500 million). The survey explored platform strategies, AI adoption, investment priorities and business outcomes such as revenue growth, profitability and total shareholder return.

Figure 10: Geographic and industry composition of survey respondents



2.0 In-depth interviews

The dependent variable is the 2024 outcome. The key predictor is the selected “Enterprise platform strategy in the age of agentic AI” survey item, transformed as a binary variable. Controls include (i) baseline performance (prior-year level of the metric) and (ii) controls for industry and region. Robust standard errors to account for heteroskedasticity.
The equation to regress is then defined as:
Interpretation β captures whether firms adopting a given practice perform differently than those that do not, after accounting for prior performance and fixed firm characteristics.

3.0 Statistical modeling

3.1 Overview

We conducted a statistical analysis to determine how firm-level platforms and AI practices influence financial performance, drawing on data from Accenture’s “Enterprise platform strategy in the age of agentic AI” survey and S&P Capital IQ. This approach allowed us to assess the relationship between these practices and key business outcomes.

Model specification

We chose an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) framework that isolates the incremental effect of practices on financial outcomes, making the results more reliable than raw comparisons.

For each historical financial performance metric (EBITDA, profitability, revenue growth, total shareholder return):

+ The dependent variable is the 2024 outcome.

+ The key predictor is the selected “Enterprise platform strategy in the age of agentic AI” survey item, transformed as a binary variable.

+ Controls include (i) baseline performance (prior-year level of the metric) and (ii) controls for industry and region.

+ Robust standard errors to account for heteroskedasticity.

The equation to regress is then defined as:

$$\mathbf{Outcome}_{i,2024} = \alpha + \beta \mathbf{Binary}_i + \gamma \mathbf{Outcome}_{i,2023} + \delta_1 \mathbf{Industry}_i + \delta_2 \mathbf{Region}_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Interpretation

β captures whether firms adopting a given practice perform differently than those that do not, after accounting for prior performance and fixed firm characteristics.

3.2 Work model

We complemented survey and interview insights with a structured task-level analysis of the U.S. workforce, using O*NET Online and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

Task classification

We evaluated 332 intermediate-level tasks representing the activities of the workforce, applying both machine learning and human coding.

Each task was examined across four criteria:

+ Language-intensive: natural, mathematical or computational language tasks relevant to LLMs.

+ Interpersonal interaction: real-time human-to-human exchange, physical or virtual.

+ Proactive vs. routine: whether tasks require solving unstructured problems versus following defined rules.

+ Human sign-off: whether tasks require compliance or oversight driven by law, ethics or social conventions.

Work activities mapping

To assign tasks more precisely, we used O*NET Online's taxonomy of 30+ work activities (for example, communicating with others, thinking creatively, performing physical activities).

Category grouping

+ Platform tasks: language- or process-intensive and routine, without human sign-off.

+ Agentic tasks: language-intensive, proactive or interpersonal, but not requiring human sign-off.

+ Human-only tasks: physical, sign-off–driven or requiring high-stakes judgment.

Aggregation

We used U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data on occupational employment and hours worked to weight task frequencies. We then estimated what proportion of work time can be handled by platforms, agents or humans, all of which we aggregated to enterprise functions.

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Accenture is a leading global professional services company that helps the world's leading businesses, governments and other organizations build their digital core, optimize their operations, accelerate revenue growth and enhance citizen services—creating tangible value at speed and scale. We are a talent- and innovation-led company with approximately 791,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Technology is at the core of change today, and we are one of the world's leaders in helping drive that change, with strong ecosystem relationships. We combine our strength in technology and leadership in cloud, data and AI with unmatched industry experience, functional expertise and global delivery capability. Our broad range of services, solutions and assets across Strategy & Consulting, Technology, Operations, Industry X and Song, together with our culture of shared success and commitment to creating 360° value, enable us to help our clients reinvent and build trusted, lasting relationships. We measure our success by the 360° value we create for our clients, each other, our shareholders, partners and communities.

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