

# TURNING AGENTIC AI INTO OPERATIONAL ADVANTAGE

Why retailers who modernize their operational backbone first will move fastest.

BOOTH #326



# THE ARGUMENT

Most retailers ask: “Which tool, model or vendor should we choose?”

The better question: **“Is our operation ready for non-human work?”**



**01** Agentic AI doesn't replace your existing AI.



**02** First value lands in high-value, low-complexity back-office processes.



**03** The hard part isn't the agents.



**04** Same backbone: internal agents today, external agents tomorrow.



**05** Start with strategy, then one workflow.

# THE REAL SHIFT

WHAT EVERYONE SEES

## AI is the visible layer



Agents in retail back office



Human in the loop



WHERE THE WORK ACTUALLY IS

## Operational backbone is the real transformation



Operates across systems



Focuses on exceptions



Coordinates workflows, people & agents



Acts on operational knowledge

# TRADITIONAL AI VS AGENTIC AI

Traditional AI **optimized** decisions.

Agentic AI **orchestrates** operations.

## BACK-OFFICE FUNCTION

## TRADITIONAL AI

## AGENTIC AI

**Demand forecasting**

Predicts demand

**Explains variance and drafts overrides**

**Replenishment**

Generates POs

**Handles exceptions and coordination**

**Dynamic pricing**

Calculates markdowns

**Manages exception logic and approvals**

**Customer service**

Routes tickets

**Investigates and drafts resolutions**

**Finance reconciliation**

Detects mismatches

**Coordinates investigation and audit trail**

# THE OPERATIONAL BACKBONE



## Data

What is true right now?

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Inventory, pricing, and order status are often reconciled later.



## Interfaces

How do I act?

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Retail systems were built for humans clicking through screens.



## Process

What should happen next?

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Exceptions depend on informal judgment and manual handoffs.



## Knowledge

What is the right answer?

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Internal and vendor policies are scattered across sources and employees.



## Governance

Am I allowed to do this?

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Permissions and accountability were designed for people, not agents.

# WHERE RETAILERS SEE VALUE FIRST

## HIGH BUSINESS VALUE

The work is expensive, slow, or error-prone today.






## LOW COMPLEXITY

Stable inputs, bounded scope, well-understood rules.

## HUMAN IN THE LOOP

People still own the decision; agents do the heavy lifting.

## EXAMPLES

01 	02 	03 	04 	05 
<b>Returns Triage</b>  Classify, validate, refund or reroute — with vendor & policy context.	<b>Vendor Onboarding</b>  Forms, KYC, catalog mapping, terms — agents draft and chase.	<b>Replenishment Exceptions</b>  Investigate stock-outs, vendor delays, allocation conflicts.	<b>Finance Reconciliation</b>  Match invoices to receipts, draft adjustments with audit trail.	<b>Store Operations Audits</b>  Compliance checks, anomaly review, action items routed to managers.

# CASE STUDY: CUSTOMER SERVICE

Multi-brand retailer & distributor

*"The customer was waiting while employees were hunting for information."*

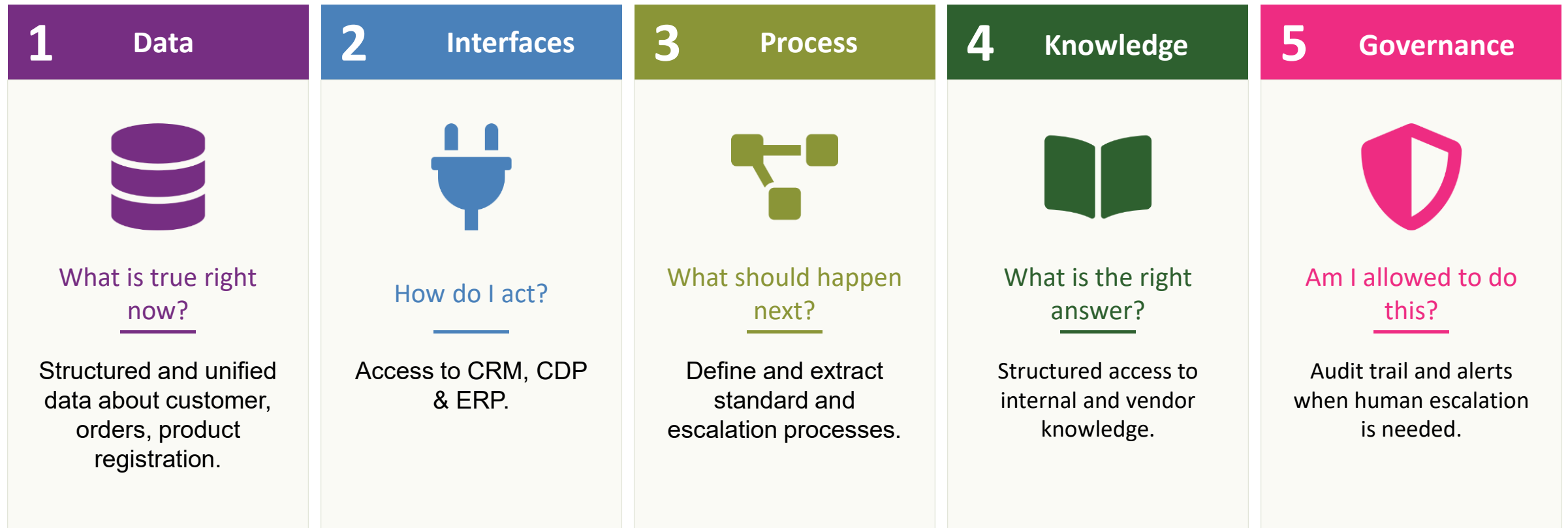
## THE OPERATIONAL CHALLENGE

### Six pressures hitting the back office at once

-  Rapidly growing service volume
-  Fragmented operational knowledge
-  Repetitive intake & follow-up work
-  Slow case management
-  Inconsistent operational processes
-  Decentralized multi-brand operations



# THE BACKBONE TEST: CUSTOMER SERVICE



# THE RESULT: CUSTOMER SERVICE

## 3 PRE-BUILT AGENTS, WORKING TOGETHER



### Case Management Agent

Automates closure and builds the knowledge base.



### Customer Intent Agent

Understands the request and gathers info before handoff.



### Knowledge Agent

Retrieves vendor and internal knowledge instantly.

## OUTCOME

# 2x

case-handling capacity per CSR

Same team — no headcount expansion

Same hours — no extended schedules

Scalable — increased operational capacity

**Project delivered in 3 months**

The AI was not the difficult part. The operational redesign was.

# CASE STUDY: THE PATTERN REPEATS

Farming-equipment seller

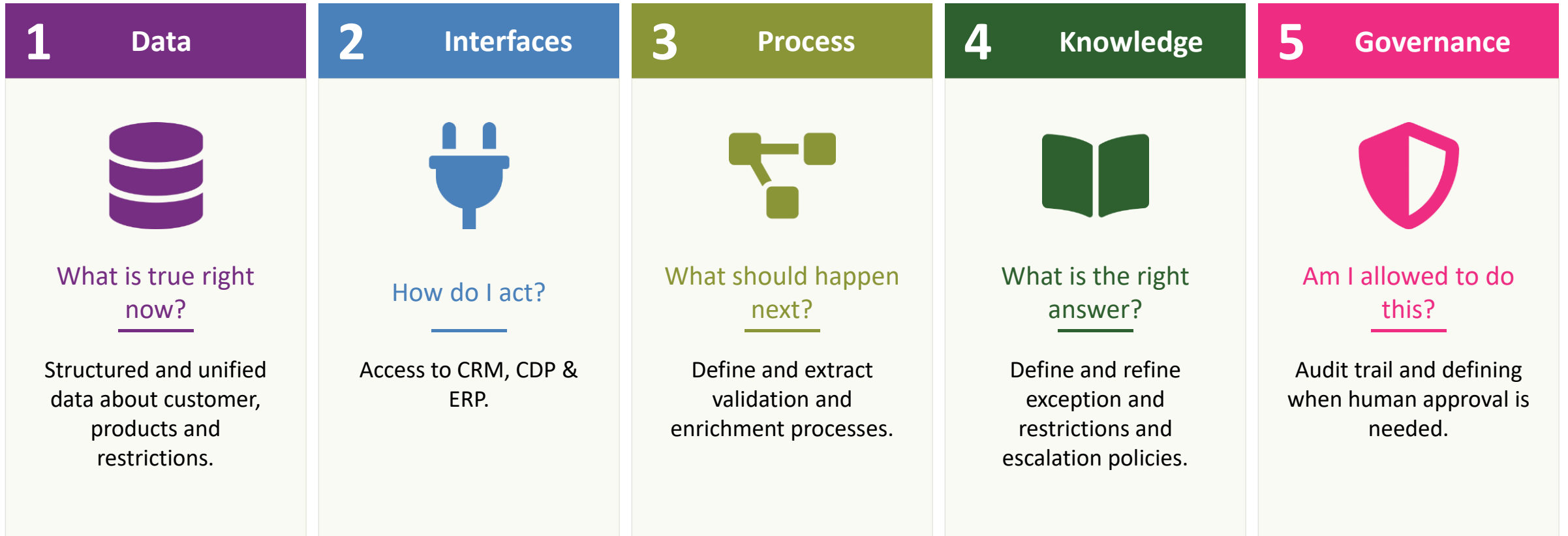
“Up to 1 hour to process a single sales order.”

WHAT MAKES IT COMPLEX

Seven things must happen in sequence



# THE BACKBONE TEST: ORDER CREATION



# THE RESULT: ORDER CREATION

## OWNERSHIP BY STEP

	AGENT	AGENT + HUMAN	HUMAN
1	Intake		AGENT
2	Validation		AGENT
3	Enrichment		AGENT
4	Exception handling	AGENT + HUMAN	
5	ERP orchestration	AGENT + HUMAN	
6	Human approval		HUMAN
7	Audit trail	AGENT + HUMAN	

## OUTCOME

**1h → 2-3 min**

order processing time

**2,400 h** saved annually (~50 hrs/week)

**6 months** to achieve ROI

**3 months** to deliver the project

The qualitative ROI is harder to measure and just as important.

# THE OPERATING MODEL

## CENTRAL

### Platform Team

Small, dedicated team that provides the infrastructure






-  **Governance**
-  **Identity & Security**
-  **Platform Standards**
-  **Operational Guardrails**



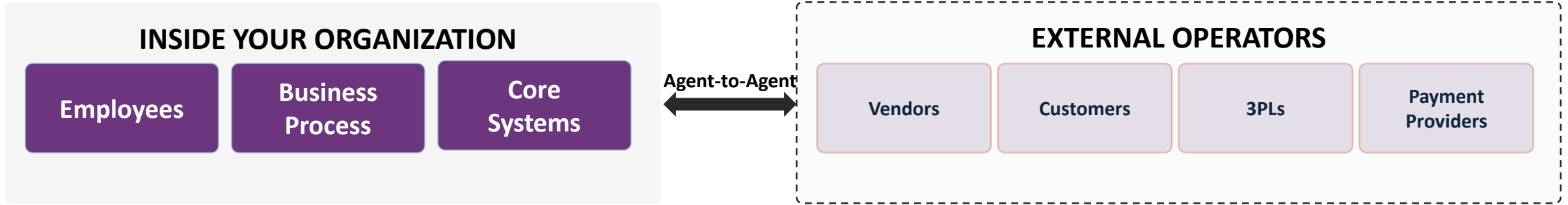
## DISTRIBUTED

### Business Teams

Each team owns their workflows, outcomes, adoption, and process redesign

	<b>Customer Service</b>	Triage, resolution, knowledge base
	<b>Merchandising &amp; Pricing</b>	MAP compliance, promo rules
	<b>Order Management</b>	Validation, enrichment, ERP
	<b>Supply Chain</b>	Replenishment, exceptions
	<b>Finance &amp; Audit</b>	Reconciliation, compliance

# THE NEXT SHIFT: FROM INTERNAL AGENTS TO EXTERNAL AGENTS



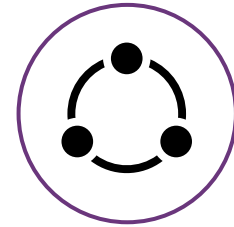
## Multiple External Actors

Vendors, customers, 3PLs, shipping and payment providers all interact with your systems.



## Their Own Agentic Transformation

Each partner is deploying their own AI agents that will need to communicate with yours.



## Same Operational Backbone

The operational infrastructure you build today becomes the foundation for external integration.

# AGENT TO AGENT

Traditional APIs were built for screens. Agents need actions.

01



## Authenticate

Whose agent is calling, and on whose authority?

Move beyond API keys: identity, delegation, scopes, and revocation that work for agents and the humans behind them.

02



## Discover

What can be done here, right now, with what is true?

Catalog, pricing, availability, contract terms, eligibility rules — exposed as machine-readable capabilities, not screens.

03



## Transact

Place the order, validate substitutions, write the audit trail.

Idempotent, observable, reversible — with an audit trail strong enough for finance, vendors, and regulators.

# BUYER AGENT



Placing a real order against a real backbone


Come at Booth #326 to see the full walkthrough



Adventure Works B2B Buyer Assistant > what are my last 10 purchases?

Here are the available promotions for your cart:

### Available Promotions




Offer ID	Promotion	Discount Code Required?
ST100451	 Buy 10, Get 15% Off	No

### Promotion Insight

You currently have 5 units of the Detloire Women's Shoes (Size 8, Dust-Berry) in your cart. To unlock the 15% discount, you need to purchase at least 10 units.

- **Current Quantity:** 5 units → \$275.00
- **With 10 units:** \$550.00 → 15% off = \$82.50 savings = \$467.50 total!

Would you like to:

-  Add 5 more units (or more) to qualify for the 15% discount?
-  Proceed to checkout as is?
-  Continue shopping and add other products?

Message Copilot

+

# HOW TO ASSESS YOUR OPERATIONAL BACKBONE



## Data

Is operational state real-time and reliable?

Is master data well defined and governed?



## Interfaces

Are systems designed for programmatic interaction?

Are systems agent-ready (e.g., MCP-enabled)?



## Process

Have your workflows been mapped end-to-end?

Have the edge cases been identified explicitly?



## Knowledge

Is operational knowledge structured and accessible?

Are operational policies well-defined and current?



## Governance





Have you identified the owner of governance?

Have you built a technical strategy and a champions team?

# WHAT CAN BE DONE NOW

01	DAYS	02	WEEKS	03	QUARTER
<b>Pick one operational workflow</b>  Choose something painful, bounded, and measurable. Avoid customer-facing first.		<b>Audit it against the readiness questions</b>  Data, Interfaces, Process, Knowledge, Governance. Write down what's missing.		<b>Start small and iterate</b>  Ship the first agent. Measure it. Expand scope only after the metric moves.	

THEN, MEASURE WHAT THE BUSINESS ALREADY CARES ABOUT

 <b>Capacity</b>  More work done with the same team.	 <b>Cycle time</b>  Intake-to-resolution duration.	 <b>Exception rate</b>  Escalations and manual interventions.	 <b>Cost-to-serve</b>  Operational expense per transaction.
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# THE ARGUMENT — REVISITED



**01** Agentic AI doesn't replace your existing AI.



**02** The first value appears in high value & low complexity back-office processes.



**03** The hard part isn't the agents.



**04** The same backbone that supports internal agents will eventually support external agents.



**05** The right starting point is strategy & one workflow, one owner, one measurable outcome.

# TALAN

THANK YOU

## Come see us!

### Booth #326

Questions, deeper dives, and the full Buyer Agent walkthrough.

WHAT'S AT THE BOOTH

## Two reasons to drop by



### Discuss with our experts

Bring your operation. We'll walk through the readiness questions together and pick the workflow with the highest leverage for you.



### See the Buyer Agent in action

Live, end-to-end. With experts.

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