



Maximizing ROI with Agentic AI: Why Agentforce Is the Fast Path to Enterprise Value

Executive Summary

The enterprise landscape for agent-based solutions is rapidly evolving, and agent-based AI solutions are proving critical to automating workflows, improving efficiency, and driving ROI. Among the available solutions, **Agentforce emerges as the clear choice for enterprises seeking rapid, affordable ROI**. This report demonstrates why Agentforce outperforms DIY (do-it-yourself) approaches, offering a currently unparalleled combination of speed, scalability, and lower Total Cost of Ownership (TCO). Based on quantitative numbers from early Agentforce adopters and Futurum Group's own analysis, organizations leveraging Agentforce report can achieve ROI up to **5 times faster** and with at least a **20% lower TCO**, enabling them to outpace competitors and streamline operations at scale.

Key Findings

1 Rapid ROI Leadership: Agentforce customers achieve payback in weeks, compared to months or years with DIY solutions.

Example: A telehealth company used Agentforce to facilitate a pilot implementation that automated 10% of their order validation processes within weeks, freeing human resources for strategic priorities and yielding ROI in under three weeks.

2 Lower TCO: Agentforce's pre-built integrations and low-code tools reduce implementation costs by at least 20% compared to custom-built AI systems, and often more based conversations with early Agentforce adopters for this report. See the DIY multiplier section for how to calculate an estimate of effort differences.

3 Speed and Simplicity: Deploying Agentforce's pre-built workflows enables enterprises to automate sales, marketing, and customer service functions almost immediately, bypassing the prolonged development cycles associated with DIY efforts.

4 The Cost of Doing Nothing: Delaying investment in agent-based AI risks, organizations lose market share due to inefficiencies, higher operational costs, and reduced customer satisfaction.

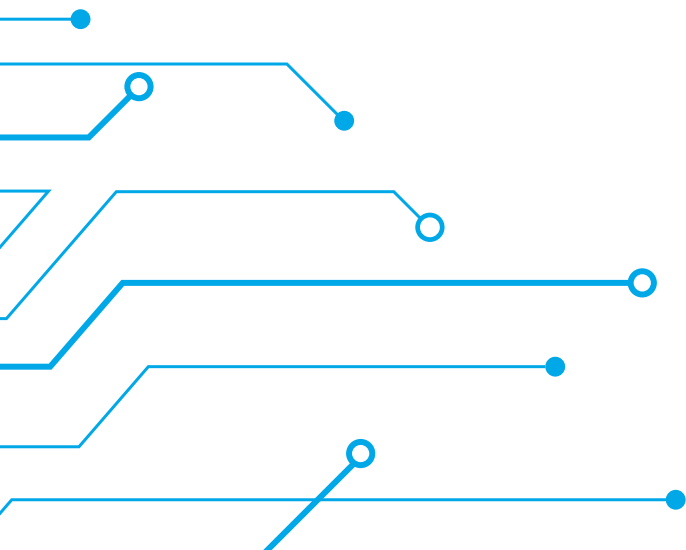


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Introduction: Achieving Fast ROI with Agent-Based AI

The rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) are reshaping the enterprise landscape, with agent-based AI emerging as a transformative force for automating workflows and driving business outcomes. According to Futurum research, AI adoption could contribute an additional \$4 trillion to the global economy by 2028, with agent-based systems accounting for a significant share of this growth due to their ability to execute complex tasks autonomously. Enterprises that prioritize AI investment today are poised to capture these gains, with faster ROI, reduced operational costs, and improved customer satisfaction as immediate benefits.

Agentforce, an Agentic AI system from Salesforce, represents the current pinnacle of enterprise-ready agent-based AI solutions. Unlike traditional AI tools that focus solely on content generation or simple task automation, Agentforce enables organizations to deploy intelligent agents capable of orchestrating complex, multi-step workflows across sales, marketing, and customer service operations. By leveraging pre-built workflows, seamless integrations with Salesforce CRM, and low-code configuration tools, Agentforce empowers businesses to achieve measurable outcomes quickly and efficiently.

The stakes for adopting agent-based AI have never been higher. In a recent Futurum global CIO survey, 89% of CIOs identify automation and AI as critical components of their digital transformation strategies. Automation is the overwhelming desired outcome from AI adoption, with 96% of CIOs identifying it as a priority. Despite this, a significant number of enterprises struggle to move beyond pilot phases, with 60% of AI projects failing to deliver clear ROI. These failures are often attributed to challenges such as prolonged development timelines, high operational costs, and insufficient governance frameworks—all of which are effectively addressed by Agentforce.

Operational inefficiencies unaddressed by agentic AI can result in annual losses exceeding \$500,000 or more for mid-sized enterprises.¹

¹Mid-sized and small enterprises in advanced economies operate at just 60% of the productivity of large firms, leaving a 40% gap (Source: A microscope on small businesses: Spotting opportunities to boost productivity, McKinsey Global Institute, May, 2024). For a \$10M revenue firm, closing this gap implies a 66.7% revenue uplift ($\$10M \times 40\% \div 60\% = \$6.67M$). Conservatively assuming that just 7.5% of this converts to net savings (and avoided loss) due to AI agents, the potential gain is at least \$500K annually—demonstrating the significant financial impact of AI-driven efficiency improvements.

DIY vs. Agentforce: The Time and Cost Equation

For organizations considering a DIY approach, the allure of customization often obscures the significant investments required to achieve enterprise-grade outcomes. Building an agent-based system in-house demands substantial resources, including specialized AI talent, robust infrastructure, and ongoing maintenance. Futurum estimates that the average development timeline for custom AI solutions exceeds 12 months, with additional delays stemming from integration complexities and iterative testing. In contrast, Agentforce customers report achieving full deployment in as little as 4-6 weeks, with payback periods as short as two weeks in many cases.

The Cost of Inaction

While adopting agent-based AI presents clear advantages, failing to act can have dire consequences for enterprises. Businesses that rely on manual processes or legacy automation tools risk falling behind competitors in efficiency, customer responsiveness, and innovation. For example, operational inefficiencies can result in annual losses exceeding \$500,000 for

mid-sized enterprises, while delayed customer service responses erode brand loyalty and increase churn rates. By contrast, companies leveraging Agentforce have reported **40% faster case resolution times** and **25% higher lead conversion rates**, directly impacting revenue and customer retention. Simply put, organizations that do nothing are losing out on significant economic opportunities that accrue every day because such solutions aren't deployed.

This research quantifies the likely cost of inaction in using time-consuming, expensive, and risky approaches to realizing agent-based AI and digital labor. To support these conclusions, it also explores the specific advantages of Agentforce over DIY solutions in particular, drawing on three recent customer success stories of agent-based AI, measurable metrics, and industry insights to illustrate why Agentforce is the optimal choice for enterprises aiming to maximize ROI. It also explores the risks associated with delaying AI adoption, providing a compelling case for immediate investment in scalable, enterprise-grade solutions.

The Agent-Based AI Opportunity

The global market for agent-based AI is expanding rapidly, driven by advancements in large language models (LLMs), integration technologies, and enterprise automation frameworks. By 2030, agent-based AI is projected to automate tasks accounting for over \$6 trillion in the global labor market, transforming industries ranging from finance and healthcare to retail and manufacturing. The Total Addressable Market (TAM) for these technologies

is thus immense, with enterprises investing in AI orchestration frameworks to achieve operational efficiencies and enhance customer engagement.

Agent-based AI stands at the intersection of automation, decision support, and workflow orchestration, delivering unparalleled opportunities for organizations to:

1

Enhance Productivity: AI agents can execute multi-step workflows autonomously, reducing manual intervention and accelerating task completion.

Example: Automating customer case resolutions has led to **40% faster response times** in industries such as telecommunications and retail.

2

Drive Revenue Growth: Intelligent agents personalize customer interactions and optimize sales processes, leading to higher conversion rates and improved customer retention.

Example: AI-driven lead scoring has increased sales team's efficiency by **25%** in early adopters.

3

Improve Cost Efficiency: By automating repetitive tasks and streamlining operations, agent-based AI reduces operational overhead, delivering significant cost savings.

Example: Enterprises leveraging pre-built workflows in Agentforce report **20% lower Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)** compared to custom solutions.

The Agent-Based Market Potential

The TAM for agent-based AI solutions is projected to grow from approximately \$5 billion in 2024 to over \$50 billion by 2028 for an annual growth rate of 78%. This rapid growth is driven by the increasing demand for high-capability automation across industries such as healthcare, financial services, and retail. Enterprises adopting these solutions stand to benefit from:



Revenue Growth:

Studies indicate that businesses implementing agent-based AI report an average revenue increase of 15% within the first year of deployment.



Cost Savings:

Operational cost reductions of up to 30% are achievable through intelligent process automation.



Customer Satisfaction:

Organizations using agent-based AI report a 25% improvement in Net Promoter Scores (NPS), reflecting enhanced customer experiences.



Time to Market:

Organizations using more mature, proven agent-based solutions designed for rapid development can capture value in very short time frames, often 4-5 times faster than DIY.

² 2025 Market Sizing & 5-Year Forecast: Agentic AI, Futurum Group, February, 2025.

Key Components of the Agent-Based AI Ecosystem

The architecture of agent-based AI solutions reflects their transformative potential. Below is a breakdown of the key components and their roles in the ecosystem:

1. Natural Language Understanding (NLU):

- o Enables agents to interpret and respond to user queries in real time.
- o Powers conversational interfaces with context-aware responses.

2. Workflow Orchestration:

- o Allows agents to execute multi-step processes seamlessly.
- o Applications include lead qualification, case resolution, and campaign management.

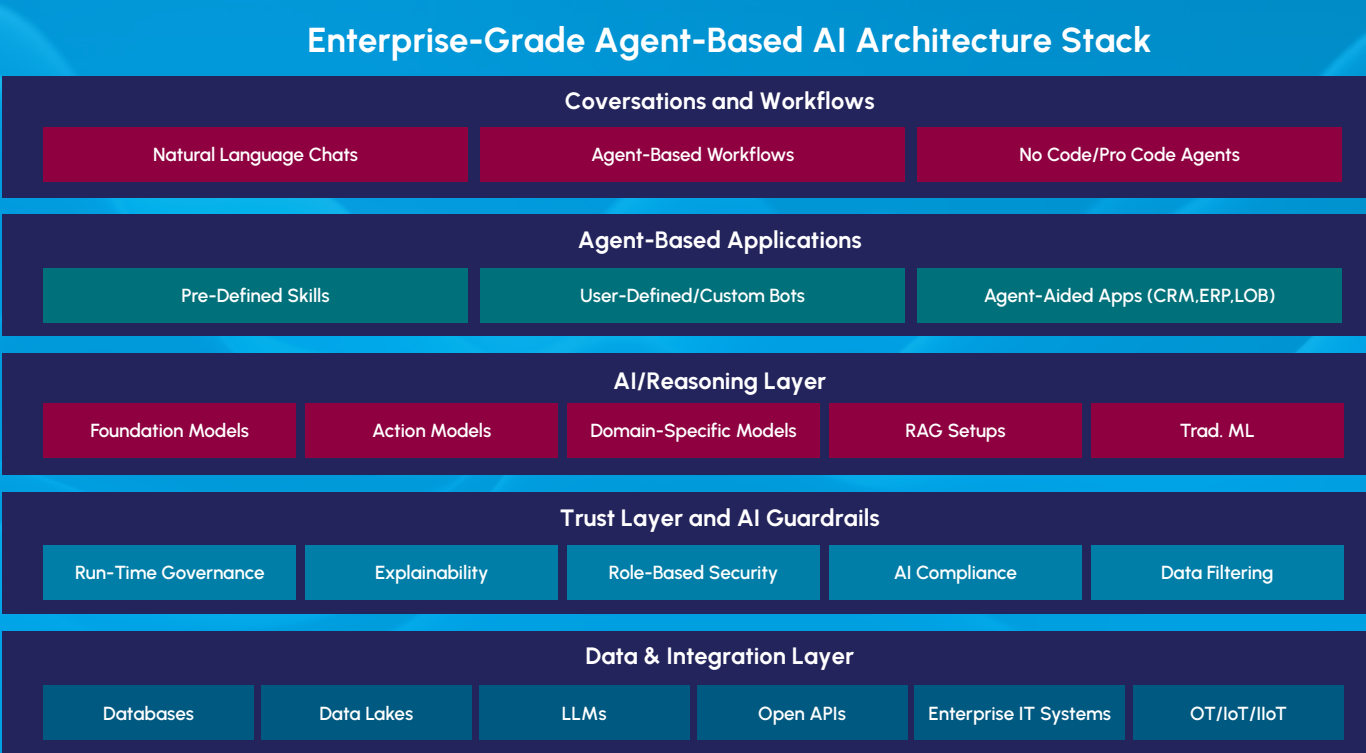
3. Enterprise Integrations:

- o Connects agents to core systems such as CRM, ERP, and data platforms.
- o Ensures seamless data flow and efficient action execution.

4. Governance and Trust Layers:

- o Safeguards compliance, privacy, and ethical use of AI.
- o Includes role-based permissions and accuracy verification tools.

Figure 1: The Required Layers of an Agent-Based Solution That Must Be Developed for a DIY Solution



Source: The Futurum Group

² 2025 Market Sizing & 5-Year Forecast: Agentic AI, Futurum Group, February, 2025.

Agentforce: Leading the Way

As the leading solution in this space, Agentforce combines cutting-edge AI capabilities with enterprise-grade integrations and governance frameworks. Unlike DIY approaches that require extensive resources and time to develop, Agentforce offers:



Pre-Built Workflows:

Reducing time-to-deployment by 80%.



Low-Code Tools:

Empowering business users to configure and deploy agents without technical expertise.



Integrated Ecosystem:

Seamlessly connecting to Salesforce CRM and Data Cloud, as well as Tableau, Snowflake, and Slack for enhanced productivity and collaboration.



Proven Results:

Customers report achieving ROI in weeks, with measurable gains in efficiency, revenue, and customer satisfaction.

The agent-based AI opportunity is vast, but only enterprises that act decisively and invest in scalable, ready-to-deploy solutions such as Agentforce will realize its full potential. Delays in adoption not only hinder competitiveness but also result in lost opportunities for growth and innovation.

Customer Success Stories: Realizing Value with Agentforce

The true value of Agentforce is best illustrated through the transformative success stories of its customers. These organizations, spanning diverse industries, have embraced Agentforce to automate workflows, enhance customer experiences, and achieve remarkable ROI. From personalized member engagement to complex telehealth operations, these real-world examples underscore why Agentforce is the premier solution for agent-based AI adoption.

What sets these stories apart is the measurable impact—reduced costs, faster deployment timelines, and improved customer satisfaction. Whether it's a telehealth company scaling its operations or a nutraceutical business ensuring compliance while educating customers, Agentforce delivers tailored solutions with tangible results. Here are three compelling success stories that highlight the diverse applications and benefits of Agentforce:

1. Nationwide Member-Based Organization - Regional Office

A regional chapter of a national member-based organization, known for its exceptional roadside assistance services, also operates in insurance and high-end travel, creating a multifaceted business model. Facing challenges in engaging members more effectively and improving operational efficiency, they sought to modernize their approach. With Agentforce, they launched a pilot that redefined member interactions. By integrating virtual agents across

Salesforce CRM and field services, they personalized the experience for thousands of members, providing real-time updates and seamless service coordination.

- **Challenge:** This organization operates in three distinct business areas—roadside assistance, insurance, and high-end travel services. These diverse operations faced challenges in member engagement, operational efficiency, and scaling digital-first experiences.
- **Solution:** The organization piloted Agentforce to personalize member interactions across all three business areas. By leveraging pre-built workflows and integrating with their Salesforce ecosystem, the organization deployed virtual agents to handle frequent member inquiries, such as roadside assistance updates and membership status.
- **Impact:**
 - **Member Retention:** Increased engagement led to improved retention, with a projected \$1 million in annual membership revenue for every percentage point increase in retention.
 - **Operational Efficiency:** The agency handles 23,000 routine membership-related inquiries focused on membership status alone annually. Automating this with agentic AI will free up human agents for higher-value tasks.

- **Time to Value:** The pilot program was operational in **less than a quarter**, demonstrating rapid deployment and measurable ROI potential.

2. Telehealth Company

A mid-sized telehealth company grappled with inefficiencies due to a legacy system laden with technical debt. Manual workflows slowed their ability to validate orders, creating bottlenecks in scalability and compliance. By deploying Agentforce, they transformed their operations, automating clinical validations and integrating seamlessly with Salesforce's secure ecosystem. This shift enabled them to address compliance needs while accelerating service delivery to patients.

- **Challenge:** The company inherited a legacy system with high technical debt, complicating workflows for regulatory-compliant telehealth product sales. Manual processes slowed order validation, reducing scalability and efficiency.
- **Solution:** Agentforce was deployed to automate clinical and regulatory workflows, consuming unstructured data to validate orders in real time. The company leveraged Agentforce's ability to integrate seamlessly with Salesforce to begin improving efficiency immediately, even before a complete re-platforming of their systems.
- **Impact:**
 - **Operational Savings:** Automated validation processes reduced reliance on manual labor, saving \$2 per interaction, which equates to significant cost savings across thousands of orders.

- **Deployment Speed:** A functional prototype was developed in just three weeks and moved to production within two months, a timeline much shorter than traditional development methods.

- **Scalability and Compliance:** Agentforce's ability to operate securely within Salesforce's ecosystem ensured HIPAA and PHI compliance, reducing data risks and simplifying auditing.

3. Global Tax and Consulting Firm

A global tax and consulting firm sought to improve the efficiency of contract creation and knowledge retrieval for client engagements. As AI-driven automation became increasingly relevant to their Revenue Cloud initiatives, the firm explored how Agentforce could streamline workflows, particularly for configuring service environments, contract management, and knowledge article integration. By leveraging Agentforce, they reduced manual effort in document and contract generation while improving access to vital client information during live customer interactions.

- **Challenge:** The firm's Salesforce solution architects faced inefficiencies in managing contracts, work orders, and knowledge retrieval. Solution architects often struggled with real-time access to relevant client documentation during support calls, requiring manual searches and prolonging response times.
- **Solution:** Agentforce was implemented to automate contract creation based on AI-driven inputs, reducing the need for manual data entry in Salesforce. Additionally, it was integrated with knowledge articles, enabling real-time information retrieval during customer support engagements. The organization was able to rapidly develop

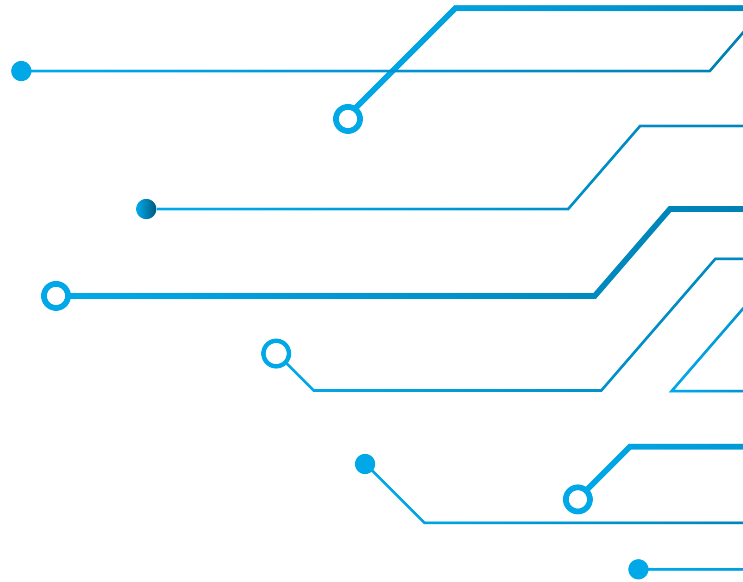
proofs of concept, validating use cases before full-scale implementation. These enhancements ensured that agents had immediate access to relevant documentation, improving both speed and accuracy in client interactions.

- **Impact:**

Contract Automation: Reduced the time required for contract and work order creation through AI-driven process automation.

- **Knowledge Access:** Improved service efficiency by linking support conversations to relevant knowledge articles, ensuring consultants had immediate access to the required information.
- **Rapid Prototyping:** Enabled stakeholder-ready proof-of-concept development in just 2-3 weeks, allowing for faster iteration and deployment.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Minimized reliance on manual workflows, allowing solution architects to focus on higher-value strategic tasks.

This case highlights how the firm leveraged Agentforce to drive automation in complex contract workflows while enabling better access to critical business knowledge, reinforcing the role of AI in modern enterprise advisory.



Calculating an Agent-based DIY Score

When organizations evaluate whether to adopt a commercial agent-based AI solution or embark on a DIY approach, understanding the level of effort (or cost) required for each component of the AI architecture is crucial. This section introduces a practical multiplier framework, based on the academic research methods and actual IT industry data on build vs buy³, which organizations can use to self-assess the relative complexity of implementing each key layer in an enterprise-grade agent-based AI stack on their own vs a commercial solution they might use in that particular place. By estimating the multiplier for each element, businesses can better quantify the time, resources, and expertise required to replicate commercially available capabilities. This framework highlights the true scale of the DIY undertaking, from foundational elements such as integrating databases to advanced layers such as runtime governance and explainability.

Currently, the Futurum Group estimates that while DIY of agent-based AI solutions can eventually pay off years down the road, the velocity of the AI market makes it very difficult to maintain and keep a modern agent-based AI stack, especially with talent-scarcity in AI. In addition, the commercial efforts all involve significantly larger product development teams than most businesses can field for their efforts, even using AI-based development acceleration.

Thus, while it may be tempting to take shortcuts in areas such as governance, explainability, or compliance to reduce upfront effort, these omissions can lead to significant hurdles later. For instance, neglecting robust explainability features might not pose immediate challenges during deployment but could result in reputational damage or regulatory penalties if an AI-related issue arises. Similarly, overlooking runtime governance can save development time initially but expose the organization to significant risks when scaling

³ Shahzad, B., Abdullatif, M. A., Ikram, N., & Mashkoor, A. (2017). Build Software or Buy: A Study on Developing Large Scale Software. IEEE Access, 5, 24639-24661; Cortellessa, V., Marinelli, F., & Potena, P. (2008). An Optimization Framework for 'Build-Or-Buy' Decisions in Software Architecture. Computers & Operations Research, 35(10), 3090-3106; Futurum Intelligence build vs. buy IT project data previously captured in prior research.

How to Use the DIY Multiplier

The DIY multiplier provides a structured way to assess the relative effort required to build each component of an enterprise-grade agent-based AI system from scratch. To use it, organizations should first identify the layers of the stack they plan to develop in-house and sum their respective multipliers to understand the different upfront resources for build vs. buy. This cumulative score helps estimate the overall complexity, cost, and resource burden of a DIY approach compared to using a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) solution.

A lower total multiplier (e.g., under 2x) suggests that a DIY approach may be feasible in some practical timeframe with the right expertise, development intensity, and infrastructure, while a higher score (e.g., 3x or more) indicates more risk, time investment, and operational challenges. Organizations can also use this framework to prioritize which areas to build versus buy, recognizing that shortcuts—such as skipping governance or explainability—may save effort initially but lead to major risks and technical debt in the long run.



operations or navigating compliance requirements. The effort multiplier framework underscores that while some layers are easier to address through DIY means, others demand a level of investment and expertise that may make commercial solutions the more practical and scalable option.

By combining these insights, the effort multiplier framework serves as a valuable tool for decision-makers. It enables them to assess the trade-offs between building in-house solutions and leveraging pre-built platforms, helping organizations balance cost, risk, and speed to value. Whether a

company seeks to prioritize speed, minimize TCO, or ensure long-term sustainability, this scoring model provides a structured way to approach agent-based AI development with a clear understanding of the implications of their choices.

Here is a detailed analysis of the effort multiplier for each box of the previously introduced enterprise-grade agent-based AI architecture stack when compared to a DIY approach versus a COTS solution such as Agentforce.

Conversations and Workflows

1. Natural Language Chats: 1x	NLU frameworks (e.g., Rasa, OpenAI) are widely available, and DIY development here is relatively straightforward for basic functionality. COTS solutions might offer additional pre-trained models and easier integration, but the gap isn't wide.
2. Agent-Based Workflows: 4x	Building scalable, robust workflow orchestration from scratch requires extensive custom logic and integration with existing systems. COTS solutions offer pre-built workflows, saving significant time.
3. No Code/Pro Code Agents: 8x	Creating user-friendly interfaces for both non-technical and technical users is highly labor-intensive and demands specialized UI/UX development and testing. COTS tools are designed with these dual audiences in mind and come pre-tested.

Agent-Based Applications

4. Pre-Defined Skills: 6x	Pre-defined skill libraries in COTS platforms save substantial development time. DIY requires starting from scratch to define, test, and refine domain-specific skills.
5. User-Defined/Custom Bots: 2x	DIY approaches benefit from flexibility, but COTS platforms significantly reduce effort through intuitive low-code/no-code interfaces.
6. Agent-Aided Apps (CRM, ERP, LOB): 4x	Integrating agents with enterprise systems such as CRM/ERP requires extensive knowledge of APIs, workflows, and edge cases. COTS solutions come pre-integrated, minimizing development complexity.

AI/Reasoning Layer

7. Foundation Models: 0.5x	For LLMs and pre-trained models, DIY can sometimes be easier as teams directly integrate with foundational models (e.g., OpenAI GPT, Hugging Face). COTS platforms might not always offer the same flexibility or model availability.
8. Action Models: 3x	Action models, which define task-specific workflows and outputs, require significant development effort for custom implementations. COTS provides pre-built action libraries.
9. Domain-Specific Models: 5x	Creating domain-specific models involves data collection, annotation, training, and testing. COTS platforms often include these pre-built and pre-tested for common use cases.
10. RAG Setups (Retrieval-Augmented Generation): 2x	RAG configurations can be implemented DIY with open-source tools but require significant fine-tuning to integrate with enterprise systems. COTS tools often streamline this process.
11. Traditional ML: 1.5x	For standard ML models, DIY requires pipeline development and tuning but isn't drastically different from what COTS solutions offer, depending on complexity.

Trust Layer and AI Guardrails

12. Run-Time Governance: 6x	Building systems to monitor, manage, and enforce runtime governance requires deep expertise in AI risk management. COTS tools have pre-built frameworks for this.
13. Explainability: 8x	Explainability often requires advanced techniques to build custom dashboards or interpretable models. COTS solutions include pre-integrated, regulation-compliant features.
14. Role-Based Security: 5x	Role-based security in enterprise systems is labor-intensive to implement from scratch, requiring extensive testing. COTS solutions come with pre-tested, scalable options.
15. AI Compliance: 10x	Ensuring compliance with regulations such as GDPR and HIPAA is highly complex and time-consuming. COTS solutions simplify compliance with built-in tools.
16. Data Filtering: 4x	Filtering and data wrangling for accuracy, formatting, and compliance can require custom pipelines, making COTS solutions more efficient for enterprises.

Data & Integration Layer

17. Databases: 0.5x	● Databases such as PostgreSQL and MongoDB are easily accessible for DIY efforts. COTS solutions don't offer substantial advantages unless highly integrated workflows are required.
18. Data Lakes: 3x	● Setting up and managing data lakes from scratch involves architecture planning, tool selection, and ongoing maintenance, which COTS solutions can streamline.
19. LLMs: 0.8x	● Similar to Foundation Models, direct integration with LLMs can be DIY with minimal additional effort compared to COTS platforms.
20. Open APIs: 2x	● Open APIs are straightforward to implement in DIY projects but require extra effort to ensure compatibility with enterprise tools. COTS solutions often include these natively.
21. Enterprise IT Systems: 4x	● Integrating with enterprise IT systems requires extensive customization and testing. COTS platforms often provide pre-configured connectors.
22. OT/IoT/IIoT: 4x	● Integrating with operational technology and IoT systems is complex due to hardware-software interfacing and the need for domain-specific expertise. COTS platforms excel in simplifying this process.



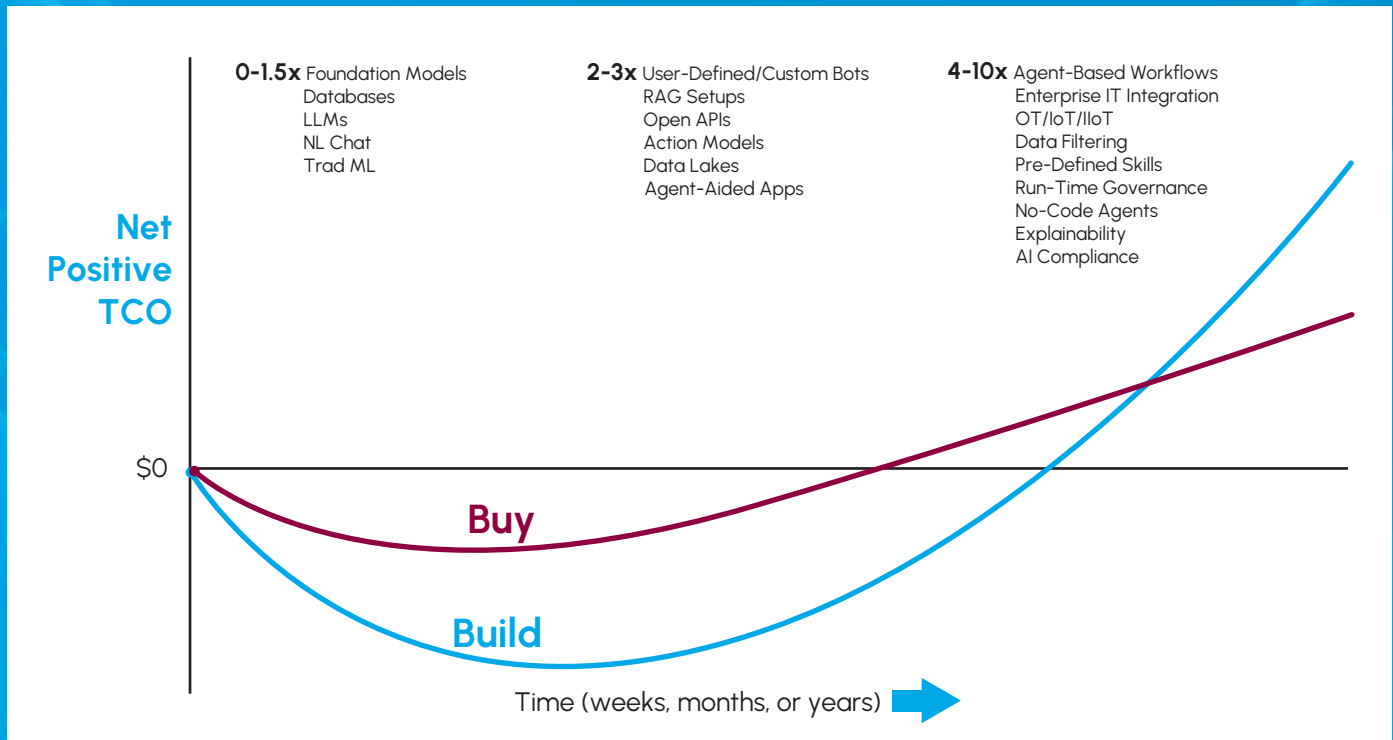
Summary of DIY Multipliers

Capability	DIY Multiplier	Explanation
Foundation Models	0.5x	DIY might be easier when directly integrating with LLMs
Databases	0.5x	DIY with readily available tools is straightforward
LLMs	0.8x	Similar to Foundation Models, DIY is comparable
Traditional ML	1.5x	Building standard ML pipelines is somewhat more intensive
AI Compliance	10x	Ensuring regulatory compliance from scratch is resource-intensive
Natural Language Chats	1x	Widely available open-source frameworks make DIY relatively easy
User-Defined/Custom Bots	2x	Some flexibility in DIY, but COTS makes it more efficient
RAG Setups	2x	DIY setups are possible but require effort to scale
Open APIs	2x	Requires effort to ensure compatibility with tools
Action Models	3x	Requires significant custom development
Data Lakes	3x	Setting up scalable architecture for lakes adds complexity
Agent-Based Workflows	4x	Requires significant effort to design robust, scalable workflows from scratch
Agent-Aided Apps (CRM, ERP, LOB)	4x	Integrating with enterprise systems is highly complex
Data Filtering	4x	Custom pipelines require effort but are manageable
Enterprise IT Systems	4x	Extensive customization and testing required for DIY
OT/IoT/IIoT	4x	Interfacing with hardware and software is highly complex
Domain-Specific Models	5x	Needs data collection, annotation, and training
Role-Based Security	5x	Testing and scaling secure implementations is time-consuming
Pre-Defined Skills	6x	Developing, testing, and refining domain-specific skills is resource-intensive
Run-Time Governance	6x	Requires deep AI risk management expertise for DIY
No Code/Pro Code Agents	8x	UI/UX and dual-mode functionality are complex and time-intensive to build DIY
Explainability	8x	Demands advanced techniques and dashboard creation

Figure 2: Organizations can use this multiplier table to determine to what degree DIY is feasible for agentic AI. The breakdown above provides a useful framework for assessing the effort required for a DIY solution versus a COTS platform for each layer in the stack. It also underscores the challenges of keeping up with the complex and rapidly evolving nature of AI technology. This presents IT departments and digital companies with a significant challenge for considering a DIY approach to agent-based systems.

Figure 3: Heuristic Approximation of DIY Multiples in an Agent-based Stack with Number of Years to Positive TCO

Approximate Year to Positive TCO by element of Agent-Based AI Stack



Building and maintaining such a system requires not only substantial compute resources but also highly specialized technical expertise, including AI model training, orchestration, and integration with enterprise workflows. These demands are compounded by the need to address AI-specific considerations, such as ensuring model performance, scalability, and compliance with evolving regulatory standards. For most organizations, particularly those without a mature in-house AI capability, the technical and operational barriers to developing a robust, enterprise-grade DIY solution are prohibitively high. Even with sufficient resources, the pace of innovation in AI often leaves DIY solutions outdated before they are fully implemented.

Traditional organizations are also at a disadvantage in keeping pace with the constant advancements in AI. Emerging technologies, such as fine-tuned

foundation models, retrieval-augmented generation (RAG), and advanced governance frameworks, are rapidly becoming the standard for modern agent-based solutions. Commercial platforms such as Agentforce are continuously updated to integrate these advancements, ensuring they remain competitive and compliant. DIY solutions, on the other hand, require significant effort to maintain and upgrade, often stretching beyond the capacity of internal teams. For businesses operating in fast-paced markets, the delays and risks associated with a DIY approach can result in missed opportunities and reduced competitiveness, making pre-built, scalable AI platforms the more practical and forward-looking choice.



Operational Cost and Value of Agentforce

Operational cost is a critical factor in evaluating the effectiveness of agent-based AI solutions. For Agentforce, one of the key differentiators is its straightforward pricing structure: \$2 per agent request. Case study participants unanimously highlighted this pricing as both predictable and manageable, enabling them to confidently plan their operational budgets.

The mid-sized telehealth company emphasized how this cost structure allowed them to implement scalable automation without the financial risks typically associated with developing custom AI solutions. Similarly, the CIO of a regional, member-based travel and insurance organization remarked that Agentforce's per-request pricing provided a cost-effective way to pilot and scale AI capabilities, while simultaneously deflecting low-value interactions to automated workflows.

While DIY solutions may offer lower operational expenses in certain scenarios, they often require significant upfront investment and lengthy development cycles. Building a custom solution involves hiring skilled engineers, designing a robust

architecture, and continuously maintaining and securing the system. These hidden costs frequently exceed the predictable expenditures associated with Agentforce, particularly over the long term.

Moreover, maintaining a DIY solution introduces ongoing risks, including potential security vulnerabilities, technical debt, and the need for constant updates to stay competitive. These factors make the seemingly lower operational cost of DIY approaches deceptive, as many organizations discover that sustaining and scaling their systems can be far more expensive than initially projected. By contrast, Agentforce eliminates these risks, offering a secure, scalable, and turnkey solution that delivers rapid ROI and positions businesses for long-term success.

Deep Dive: Agentforce vs. DIY Solutions

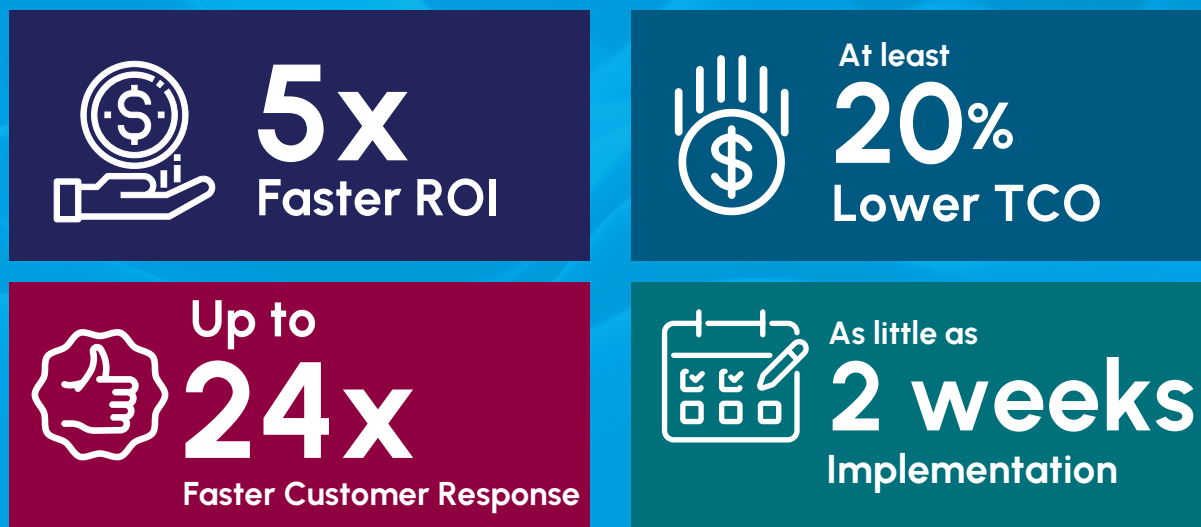
Evaluating agent-based solutions is a critical decision that can shape an enterprise's operational efficiency, customer experience, and long-term success. Businesses often weigh two primary options: leveraging a pre-built platform such as Agentforce or embarking on a DIY approach. Each pathway offers unique benefits and challenges that warrant careful consideration.

The core advantage of Agentforce lies in its speed to value. Enterprises can deploy Agentforce within 4-6 weeks, leveraging pre-built workflows and seamless integrations with Salesforce's ecosystem. This rapid implementation accelerates ROI, allowing businesses to automate critical processes and improve customer experiences without enduring prolonged development cycles. In contrast, DIY solutions demand extensive time and resources, often taking six months to a year before yielding tangible results. This delay can erode competitive advantage and hinder an organization's ability to adapt to market changes.

TCO is another pivotal factor. Agentforce reduces TCO by at least 20% through its pre-built infrastructure, low-code configuration, and maintenance-free architecture. Enterprises avoid the costly pitfalls of building and sustaining custom solutions, such as hiring specialized talent, managing infrastructure, and addressing ongoing technical debt. On the other hand, DIY approaches often require significant upfront investment and incur hidden costs over time, including expenses for retraining models and updating integrations.

Agentforce's seamless integration and scalability are also key differentiators. By connecting directly to Salesforce CRM, Tableau, Slack, or just about any digital system via Salesforce's Mulesoft platform, Agentforce eliminates the need for complex custom integrations, enabling businesses to scale their AI initiatives effortlessly. In contrast, DIY solutions necessitate bespoke integrations that can increase operational complexity and introduce vulnerabilities.

Figure 4: The Key Benefits of Agentforce over DIY Solutions



As businesses grow, the scalable architecture of Agentforce, including powerful platform elements such as Data Cloud that can systematically supply contextual enterprise data to agentic AI, ensures high effectiveness, consistent performance, and reliability, while DIY systems may struggle to accommodate high transaction volumes, robust data integration, or advanced use cases.

Finally, governance and compliance present significant challenges for enterprises deploying AI. Agentforce addresses these concerns with built-in tools, role-based permissions, and enriched responses that prioritize accuracy and trust. DIY solutions, while customizable, place the burden of implementing and maintaining governance frameworks on the enterprise. This can expose organizations to increased risks and compliance violations, particularly in regulated industries such as healthcare or financial services.

In summary, Agentforce provides a comprehensive, enterprise-ready solution that minimizes risk, reduces costs, and accelerates time to value. For organizations seeking to unlock the transformative potential of agent-based AI, Agentforce stands out as the fastest, most reliable, and most cost-effective choice.

Speed to Value

- Agentforce can be deployed within 4-6 weeks, significantly faster than DIY solutions, which often require 6-12 months for implementation.
- Rapid deployment enables faster adaptation to market changes and quicker realization of ROI.

Total Cost of Ownership

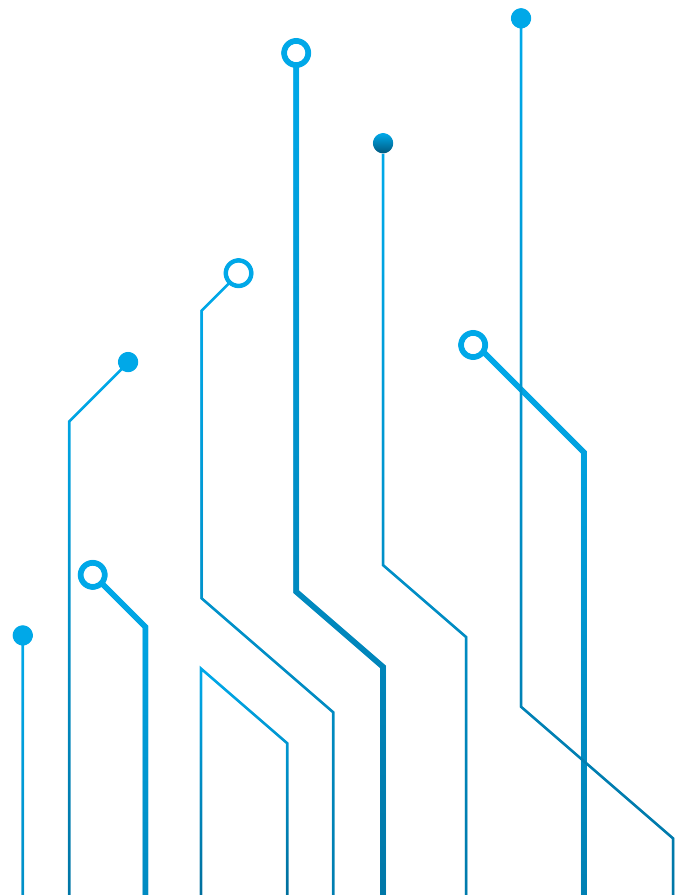
- Agentforce reduces TCO by 20%, leveraging pre-built infrastructure, low-code tools, and maintenance-free architecture.
- DIY solutions often incur high upfront costs and hidden expenses, including hiring specialized talent and managing technical debt.

Integration and Scalability

- Seamless integration with Salesforce CRM, Tableau, and Slack eliminates the need for complex custom setups.
- Agentforce's scalable architecture ensures consistent performance, even with high transaction volumes, while DIY systems may struggle with growth.

Governance and Compliance

- Agentforce provides built-in governance tools, including role-based permissions and enriched responses, ensuring regulatory compliance and risk management.
- DIY solutions place the burden of compliance frameworks on enterprises, increasing risks in regulated industries such as healthcare and finance.





Findings and Recommendations

The case studies of those who embarked on agent-based AI reveal a compelling case for embracing out-of-the-box agent-based AI solutions such as Agentforce versus DIY. As enterprises strive to achieve faster ROI, reduce operational costs, and enhance customer experiences, the evidence is clear: pre-built, enterprise-ready platforms significantly outperform DIY approaches in terms of speed, scalability, and cost efficiency. By analyzing the early experiences of those pioneering with agent-based solutions, a better understanding can be gained of the transformative potential of solutions such as Agentforce and practical recommendations can be gleaned for leveraging it to its fullest extent.

Findings: Unlocking the Potential of Agent-Based AI

Agent-based AI is not just a technology trend; it is a pivotal shift in how enterprises can optimize operations, enhance customer experiences, and unlock new revenue streams. The findings of this report underscore several critical insights for organizations considering agent-based AI solutions:

- 1 Faster ROI Realization:** Agentforce delivers measurable value in a fraction of the time required by DIY solutions. Businesses report achieving ROI within 4-6 weeks, compared to 6-12 months for custom-built alternatives.
- 2 Cost-Effective Scalability:** Agentforce lowers TCO by 20%, leveraging pre-built workflows and eliminating the need for extensive development resources. Its scalable architecture ensures seamless operation even during rapid business growth.
- 3 Enhanced Governance and Compliance:** Built-in trust layers and role-based permissions ensure adherence to regulatory requirements, providing a crucial advantage for industries with stringent compliance standards.
- 4 Operational Efficiency Gains:** By automating routine tasks and optimizing workflows, enterprises using Agentforce report a 25-30% increase in productivity and significant reductions in customer service response times.

Data Summary of Findings

To help illustrate the significant differences between adopting Agentforce and pursuing Do-It-Yourself (DIY) AI solutions, the table below provides a consolidated view of key metrics. These datapoints have been gathered via interviews of Agentforce early adopters conducted for this research, as well as industry data, and other quantitative data cited in this report. It

highlights the substantial advantages of Agentforce in terms of speed to value, cost-effectiveness, implementation timelines, and operational efficiencies. This side-by-side view allows organizations to clearly assess the trade-offs between these two approaches and make informed decisions about their agent-based AI strategy.

Metric	Agentforce	DIY AI Solutions
Speed to Value/ROI	Achieved in weeks (e.g., under 3 weeks for a telehealth company, less than a quarter for a member org.)	Achieved in months or years (e.g., 6-12 months for implementation)
Total Cost of Ownership	20% lower TCO	Higher TCO for 2-6 years due to custom development, infrastructure, and maintenance
Implementation Time	3-6 weeks	6-12 months
Customer Response Time	40% faster case resolution (telecommunications and retail example) and 24x response times	Likely similar but at higher cost and longer time to value
Lead Conversion Rate	25% higher lead conversion rates	Same as above
Operational Efficiency	25-30% increase in productivity (as reported by enterprises) gained in relatively short time periods (weeks)	Slower achievement of operational efficiency, with potential losses exceeding \$500,000 annually for mid-sized enterprises until fully rolled out (months to years)

Key Takeaways from Table:

- **Speed:** Agentforce significantly reduces the time to value and implementation compared to DIY solutions.
- **Cost:** Agentforce lowers the TCO from the outset.
- **Efficiency:** Agentforce rapidly improves customer response times, lead conversion rates, and overall operational efficiency.

This table provides a clear and concise overview of the quantitative differences between using Agentforce and pursuing a DIY approach to agentic AI implementation.



Recommendations: Charting a Path to Success with Agentforce

To maximize the benefits of agent-based AI and maintain a competitive edge, organizations should consider the following strategies:

1

Prioritize Speed and Simplicity:

Choose solutions such as Agentforce that offer pre-built integrations and low-code configurability to minimize deployment time and accelerate value realization.

2

Focus on Compliance and Security:

Leverage the robust governance frameworks of Agentforce to safeguard sensitive data, especially in regulated industries such as healthcare and finance.

3

Target High-Impact Use Cases:

Start with use cases that deliver immediate ROI, such as customer service automation or sales enablement, and expand adoption incrementally to more complex workflows.

4

Monitor and Optimize Continuously:

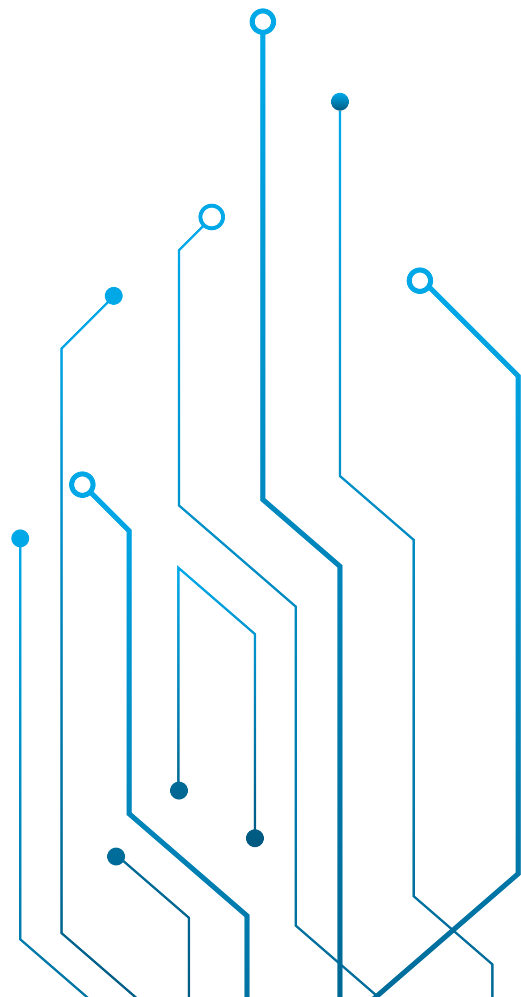
Use metrics such as case deflection rates, customer satisfaction scores, and operational savings to evaluate the performance of your agent-based AI initiatives and refine them over time.

² 2025 Market Sizing & 5-Year Forecast: Agentic AI, Futurum Group, February, 2025.

Conclusion: The Agentforce Advantage

Agent-based AI represents a transformative opportunity for enterprises to redefine how they deliver value to customers and stakeholders. The data captured from early adopters is clear in terms of the very rapid uptake, accelerated development, and overall time to value. Among the available solutions, Agentforce has shown itself as one of the **fastest, most cost-effective, and most reliable platforms currently available** for deploying intelligent agents at scale. By addressing the critical challenges of speed, cost, and compliance, Agentforce empowers organizations to focus on innovation and strategic growth.

As businesses continue to navigate an era of rapid technological advancement, adopting robust and scalable AI solutions will be paramount. Agentforce offers a clear and compelling pathway to not only keep pace with change but to lead it. Organizations that embrace this opportunity today will position themselves as tomorrow's leaders in efficiency, customer satisfaction, and financial performance.



Overall Guidance: Choosing the Right Path Forward

When evaluating agent-based AI solutions, decision-makers should consider the following key factors:



Cost Implications:

While DIY solutions may appear more affordable in terms of operational expenses, they often come with significant hidden costs, such as extended development timelines, specialized hiring needs, and long-term maintenance expenses. Agentforce offers predictable, scalable pricing models that minimize financial surprises and accelerate ROI.



Risk Management:

Deploying DIY solutions exposes organizations to potential compliance gaps, security vulnerabilities, and technical debt. Agentforce mitigates these risks with built-in governance tools, robust security layers, and seamless integrations that ensure data accuracy and trust.



Time to Value:

Speed is critical in today's competitive landscape. Agentforce enables enterprises to deploy intelligent agents within weeks, drastically reducing time to value compared to the months or years often required for DIY projects. This allows organizations to adapt quickly and maintain a competitive edge.

Ultimately, Agentforce provides a streamlined, secure, and cost-effective solution for enterprises seeking to harness the power of agent-based AI without the complexities and risks associated with custom development. By prioritizing solutions that deliver rapid ROI, lower TCO, and enhanced governance, organizations can confidently navigate their AI adoption journey and unlock unparalleled business value.

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