

A Quick Guide to Bringing AI Agents into Your Workforce

Five practical steps for leaders driving Frontier Transformation

By now, AI adoption is table stakes. The real advantage comes from scaling its value.

AI agents are a primary way this shift takes shape. By taking over processes and performing actions on behalf of employees and teams, agents turn AI from a set of one-off productivity tools into an operational backbone for the business. That evolution is a key part of Frontier Transformation—going beyond AI experimentation to drive real business impact.

The steps below outline how leaders can integrate agents into their teams, intentionally and responsibly, to redesign how work gets done.

[Learn more](#) about Frontier Transformation.

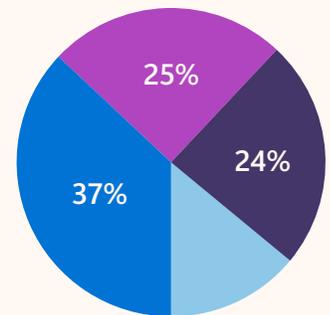
Five steps to driving business impact with agents

1. Zero in on your recurring pain points—they're your biggest opportunities.

Identify the workflows that directly affect revenue, cost, risk, customer experience, or speed of decision-making. Then look for repetitive or high-friction tasks. Leaders can start by observing how work actually gets done (by shadowing teams in continuous improvement reviews, for example) and asking a few simple questions:

- What takes the most time?
- What's easy to get wrong?
- What feels broken—but no one owns?

37% of all respondents currently use agentic AI, another 25% are experimenting with it, and 24% are planning to use it in the next 24 months.



Source: [IDC InfoBrief, sponsored by Microsoft](#)

This was the starting point for one Microsoft operations group, Commerce FastTrack, whose experience we'll reference throughout this guide. This team discovered that administrative coordination—triage and follow-up—accounted for 20–30% of program managers' time. Recurring pain points like these are prime examples of where agents can transform workflows.

Take an [agentic readiness assessment](#) and receive a personalized report.

"Agents aren't tools to configure, they're new team members to develop. When we onboard, coach, and refine them daily, and model that discipline for our teams through a 30-minute growth habit, we become the Change Agents who unlock AI's true potential."

Lloyd Adams

Corporate Vice President and COO, Worldwide Enterprise Sales, Microsoft

How agents evolve from personal productivity tools to shared services

Expectations, ownership, and required skills evolve as agents are shared across team and organizational workflows.

Scope of work

Mindset

Core skills needed from people

Stages of agents

	Personal agent	Team agent	Division or workflow agent
Scope of work	Your work	The team's work	Core business processes
Mindset	Agents make an individual's job better and faster	Agents help others with the same role do their work better and faster	Agents run scale functions for the organization
Core skills needed from people	Prompting, agent creation, fundamentals of people management	Same skills as to the left, plus change management, communication, and basic service operations	Operational ownership moves to a core AI team

2. Set a bold goal—and champion change

Once you've identified pain points to tackle, define an ambitious goal that people can rally around. For the FastTrack team, the objective was to use agents to reduce people's manual workload by 50%, freeing up time to invest in higher-value work.

Start with a small number of tightly scoped agents to work toward your goal. FastTrack formed a four-person squad to oversee agents and momentum took off from there. At first, it built two narrowly scoped agents. One of those agents automated manual triage and routing, eliminating roughly 200 hours of work per month.

A key point as you get started: Leaders need to act as champions of change. The biggest barrier to adoption often isn't the technology, it's trust, habits, and change management. Leaders should model the behavior by using agents in their own work, recognizing early adopters who spread new ways of working, and building new habits—perhaps setting aside 30 minutes a day to experiment.

Build your AI capabilities with AI Skills Navigator—explore the [full learning experience](#) or start with a [course](#) on Microsoft 365 Copilot agents.

"We're hearing from many of our customers and partners that they expect employees across different roles to spend about 15–20% of their week learning and integrating AI into their daily work."

Jeana Jorgensen
Corporate Vice President of Global Skilling, Microsoft

[Read](#) Jeana's three skilling insights that set Frontier Firms apart.

3. Measure what works, and keep building

Track what agents do, how long it takes, and what they deliver. Build in logging and monitoring from the start to measure usage and impact. For the FastTrack team, seeing real runs and adoption data—not just building impressive tech—was essential to proving ROI. Those insights helped justify continued investment and guided decisions on when to share, consolidate, or retire agents based on real usage trends.

Once an agent proves value, scale it deliberately. And keep building. FastTrack created new agents, including one to automate recurring reporting and another to surface key customer insights from CRM data. Along the way, what began as experimentation became a repeatable, scalable process.

[Get a guide](#) on how to implement an AI Center of Excellence.

Trust is foundational to agent adoption strategies

To make agents scalable and secure, design for these fundamentals from the start:

Observability allows leaders to see how AI behaves and understand why it behaves that way.

Zero Trust principles ensure that every agent is explicitly identified and given access only to what it needs for a specific purpose. Ongoing monitoring of actions, prompts, and data use helps detect unexpected behavior early.

Governance defines who owns each agent, what it's allowed to do, and how changes are approved as agents become part of shared work.

4. As agents become part of the team, keep optimizing

Once agents are up and running, turn your attention to refinement and orchestration. That's even more essential as agents start working together and are shaped by more people across the organization.

For the FastTrack team, agents began as individual tools and quickly became shared resources. When someone accidentally "broke" an agent, the team learned that shared agents need clear ownership, communication, and a strong team dedicated to maintaining and improving them.

In just a few months, FastTrack's agent operations evolved from a four-person squad piloting two agents into an eight-person team managing more than 90 agents. Agents helped free up about 20% of program managers' time for higher-value work. And business impact followed: for example, a 36% increase in deal volume.

Learn how agentic AI is a new differentiator for business leaders.

The Frontier success framework

Judson Althoff, CEO of Microsoft's Commercial Business, sees AI's impact across four core areas:

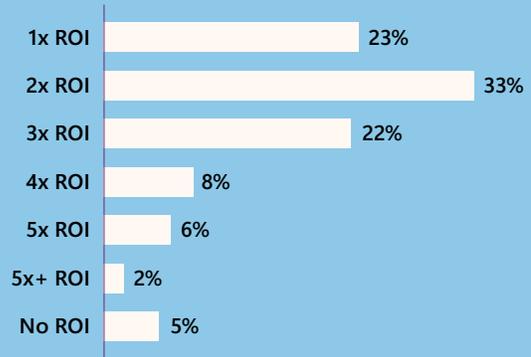


Go deeper on the four-point framework.

AI agents are becoming part of everyday work, and the organizations that see the most value treat them less like tools and more like teammates. Unlike set-and-forget tools, agents behave more like apprentices who require ongoing training based on feedback, evolving responsibilities, and integration into team workflows. As agents grow more capable, people naturally become "AI managers"—guiding digital teammates the same way they would any new hire.

The ROI of agentic AI

Worldwide, agentic AI users reported an **average of 2.3x ROI**. The share of surveyed organizations reporting each ROI level:



Source: IDC InfoBrief, sponsored by Microsoft

5. Innovate, and expand what your organization can achieve

Reinvest the time agents save into areas of innovation and growth. Time savings are just the start—AI can also accelerate the innovation work that follows. Recent IDC research found that 75% of Frontier Firms are using AI for product development.

Many companies use agents to create new or better experiences for customers. L'Oréal launched Beauty Genius, a personal beauty assistant powered by generative AI. AT&T reduced customer care resolution time by 33% and saved millions annually.

Watch how companies are empowering Frontier Transformation.



Explore more on what we're learning at Microsoft about becoming a Frontier Firm.