



HORIZONS REPORT

# Agentic Services, 2026

**An assessment of agentic services across service providers, addressing the why, what, how, and so what**

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Excerpt for Cognizant

“

Agentic AI isn't a software upgrade. It changes who does the work and how work gets done. You need partners that understand you aren't buying tools, but outcomes.

”



**Phil Fersht**

CEO & Chief Analyst,  
HFS Research

“

Successful agentic services require superior domain expertise, tech depth, and the engineering credentials to make your AI plumbing work.

”



**David Cushman**

Executive Research Leader,  
HFS Research

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# 1

## Introduction and research methodology

# Introduction

“**HFS Horizons: Agentic Services, 2026**” is our very first report about agentic services, acknowledges the point we have already reached: AI-led agentic services (see pages 6 and 17) augmenting human capabilities through smart AI agents to optimize processes and decision making.

- This research study evaluates how effectively service providers are helping enterprise clients embrace innovation and realize value across three distinct Horizons.
  - **Horizon 1 – Functional digital transformation:** Disruptors driving digital transformation by leveraging agentic AI to improve business outcomes such as cost reduction, speed, and efficiency across elements of an industry’s value chain.
  - **Horizon 2 – Enterprise transformation:** Enterprise innovators (Horizon 1+) enabling the OneOffice model of end-to-end organizational alignment across the front, middle, and back offices by leveraging agentic AI to improve decision making and drive unmatched stakeholder experience across processes.
  - **Horizon 3 – Ecosystem Transformation:** Market leaders (Horizon 2 +) embracing the emerging paradigm of [Services-as-Software™](#) (SaS) by leveraging agentic AI to redefine how work gets done and drive new sources of value and co-creation with **OneEcosystem** partners.
- This research evaluates the capabilities of 36 service providers across the agentic services value chain based on a range of dimensions to understand the **why, what, how, and so what** of their service offerings.
- The study highlights the value-based positioning of each participant across the three distinct Horizons. It also includes detailed profiles of each service provider, outlining their facts, strengths, and development opportunities.
- For the first time, we have introduced “**SaS Stars**” spotlighting service providers that are fundamentally changing its business models toward Services-as-Software by beginning to operationalize agentic capabilities, reduce reliance on human intervention, and move toward scalable, technology-led service delivery.
- The report is global in scope and provides critical insights for enterprises embarking on their agentic services journey, covering the roles and capabilities of service providers and ecosystem partners supporting enterprise adoption.
- *HFS recognizes that the agentic services landscape is evolving at a rapid pace. This report aims to capture the momentum of agentic capabilities through vendor briefings, conversations with clients and partners, and extensive analysis. That said, the data collection for this report took place between September 2025 and January 2026.*

# Definition

**Agentic services** are *managed offerings* that embed **large language model (LLM)-enabled autonomous agents with tool-calling, memory, and orchestration** into end-to-end workflows. This enables the system to **perceive context, plan goal-driven actions, and execute them at scale with trust**, while humans set objectives, policy guardrails, and success criteria.

# Inclusion criteria – Service providers must offer case studies to meet these criteria

The “**HFS Horizons: Agentic Services, 2026**” report aims to help enterprise decision makers evaluate service providers’ alignment with their objectives and needs. Providers must be clear about what makes them different, how they get work done (and the extent to which this shifts them toward Services-as-Software), and the impact of their work on live customers.

## Participants must deliver the following:



### Pilots and proofs of concept (POCs) into production

To engage in this study, providers must present at least three large-scale case studies on agentic services, with at least two being customer-facing and all in production. POCs and pilots are acceptable only with a referenceable client. Client-zero case studies are acceptable only when external case studies are insufficient.



### Focus on outcomes

Providers should support enterprise clients in shaping a rigorous business case, estimating/managing costs, and measuring ROI. They must share at least three enterprise case studies showing  $\geq 15\%$  productivity or  $\geq 5\%$  net-new revenue and/or where agents are replacing FTE services.



### Speaking to customers

Service providers must be ready to facilitate conversations with their customers.

# Executive summary (1/2)

## 1 SaS Stars and Horizon 3 service providers revealed

We assessed 36 service providers across their value propositions (the why), execution and innovation capabilities (the what), go-to-market strategy (the how), and market impact criteria (the so what). From this analysis, we spotlighted five service providers as SaS Stars: Accenture, Cognizant, IBM, Infosys, and Wipro. These companies demonstrated the strongest progress toward Services-as-Software to date. They are beginning to operationalize agentic capabilities, reduce reliance on human intervention, and move toward scalable, technology-led service delivery.

The Horizon 3 service provider leaders are Ascendion, Capgemini, EY, HCLTech, KPMG, NTT DATA, Publicis Sapient, and TCS. These companies have demonstrated an ability to support enterprises across the agentic AI journey, starting from functional digital transformation through enterprise-wide modernization to creating new value through ecosystems and new ways of working. Shared characteristics include strong aspirations to transform business models and reimagine workflows and enabling the shift to autonomous/agent + human processes rather than simply digitizing current ways of working.

This is not just for enterprise clients; internal business functions and delivery capabilities are increasingly showcasing such capabilities, indicating possible shift to Services-to-Software. They are developing expertise across the agentic services value chain (consulting, IT, and operations) by adopting a full-services approach. They are also focusing more on internal and external innovations, co-innovating with clients and partners, and adopting non-traditional commercial models while ensuring proven client impact and outcomes.

## 2 What enterprises need from service providers

The HFS Horizons model closely reflects enterprise maturity. In our “voice of the customer” interviews, AI leaders reported that the greatest value delivered by service providers sits in Horizon 1, where the focus is on productivity, efficiency, faster decision making, and cost optimization through functional AI and agent-led optimization. At the same time, enterprises are increasingly relying on providers to modernize legacy systems and align front, middle, and back offices while selectively pursuing innovation and new value through AI ecosystems. Enterprise leaders must align provider selection to the specific business value and Horizon they want to achieve.

# Executive summary (2/2)

## 3 How service providers are meeting enterprise needs

Service providers are meeting enterprise agentic AI needs by prioritizing scale readiness over raw autonomy. They focus on agent platforms, orchestration layers, and governance frameworks to move pilots into production while managing risk, trust, and compliance. Investments focus on domain-specific agentic solutions, enterprise transformation advisory, and managed agentic services, especially around software development life cycle (SDLC), IT operations, and core workflows. However, while platformization and AI-led automation are advancing faster, true Services-as-Software remains limited, with autonomy typically capped by human oversight, outcome accountability constraints, and enterprise operating model readiness.

## 4 Voice of the customer

We conducted in-depth interviews with 42 enterprise leaders as part of this study's "voice of the customer" research. AI leaders consistently rely on service providers to drive productivity gains and cost efficiencies, citing strengths in delivery quality, AI expertise, co-innovation capabilities, and access to best-of-breed partner technologies. Overall satisfaction with providers remains high, averaging 8.5 out of 10 for CSAT on foundational needs. However, enterprises are increasingly seeking more innovative commercial models and stronger provider-led IP creation and R&D to support enterprise-wide adoption of agentic AI.

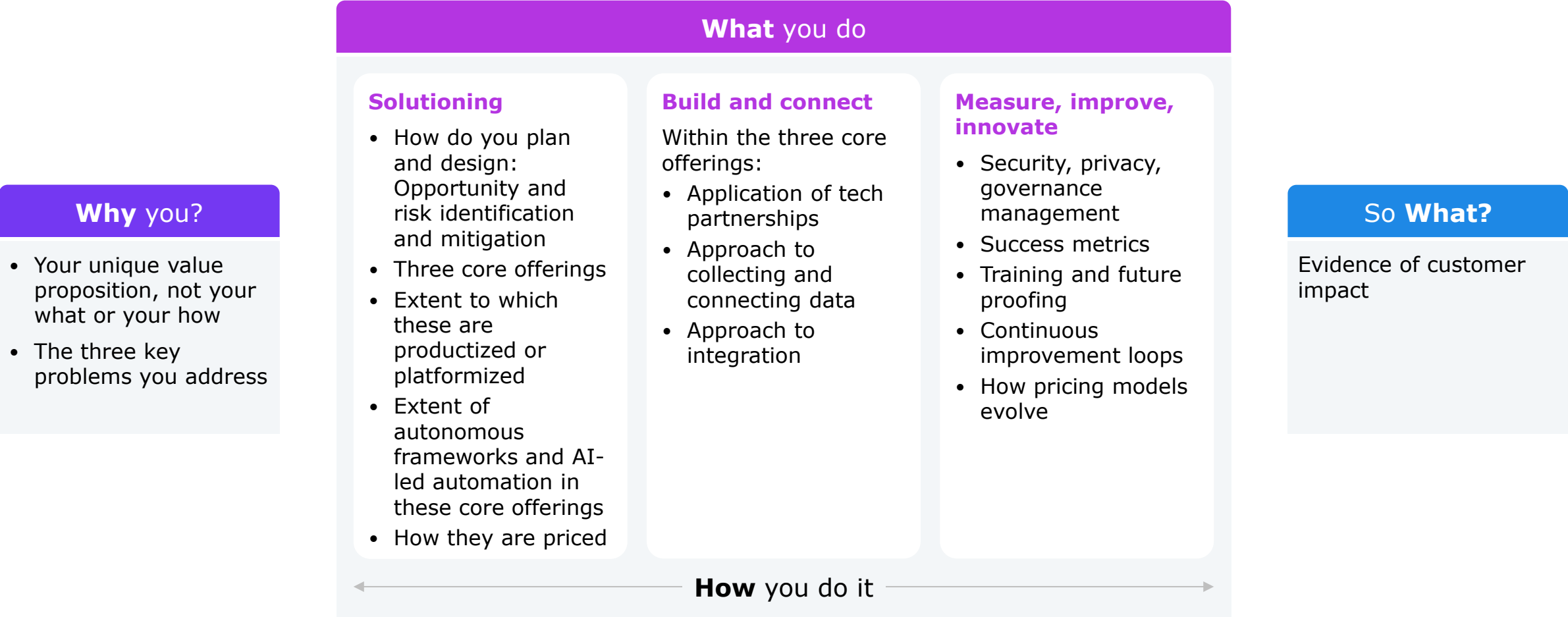
## 5 Voice of the partners

Service providers engage a broad ecosystem of partners to address evolving enterprise requirements. Partner satisfaction with these firms is generally strong, signaling positive downstream impact for clients. However, partners find that providers often overstate the delivered value and should thus strengthen their talent management and execution rigor. Enterprises, in turn, must deliberately assess and capture the value created through ecosystem-led collaboration rather than individual vendors alone.

## 6 Voice of the employees

Service providers are actively investing in and curating agentic AI training programs for their workforce. While 92% of the employees interviewed reported receiving formal training from their employers, nearly 90% found it insufficient. Technical complexity, limited time to apply learning, weak incentives, and gaps in internal infrastructure are slowing both individual and organizational adoption. This disconnect underscores the need for more holistic and interdisciplinary training, stronger incentives, practical application opportunities, and better-aligned platforms and solutions to accelerate adoption at scale.

# HFS' agentic services value chain



# The 36 service providers evaluated in this report

accenture

AKKODIS

ASCENDION  
Engineering to elevate life

Atos

BAIN & COMPANY

BCG

birlasoft

brillio

Capgemini

cognizant

EXL

EY  
Shape the future  
with confidence

firstsource

genpact

HCLTech

Hitachi Digital Services

IBM

IGT  
SOLUTIONS

Infosys

innova  
SOLUTIONS

IOPEX

KPMG

LTM

McKinsey  
& Company

MINDSPRINT

movate

Mphasis  
The Next Applied

NTT DATA

Persistent

publicis  
sapient

pwc

SUTHERLAND

tcs  
TATA  
CONSULTANCY  
SERVICES

U  
S  
T

virtusa

wipro

Note: All service providers are listed alphabetically.

# Sources of data

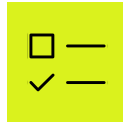
This Horizons research report relies on myriad data sources to support our methodology and help HFS obtain a well-rounded perspective on the service capabilities of the participating organizations our study covers. Sources are as follows:



## Briefings and information gathering

HFS conducted detailed **briefings** with AI leadership from each vendor.

Each participant submitted a specific set of **supporting information** aligned to the assessment methodology.



## Reference checks

We conducted reference checks with **42 active clients, 58 active partners, and 93 active employees** of the study participants via survey-based and telephonic interviews.



## Other data sources

**Public information** such as press releases and websites.

**Ongoing interactions, briefings, virtual events,** etc., with in-scope vendors and their clients and partners.

# Horizons assessment methodology for agentic services (1/2)

The “HFS Horizons: Agentic Services, 2026” research evaluates the capabilities of providers to understand the **why, what, how, and so what** of their agentic services offerings. Our assessment is based on inputs from clients, partners, and employees, augmented by analyst perspectives. The following illustrates how we assess their capabilities.

← Distinguishing Supplier characteristics →

Assessment dimension	Assessment sub-dimensions (briefing questions)	Horizon 1 service providers	Horizon 2 service providers	Horizon 3 service providers
<b>Value proposition: The Why?</b>  (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is your unique value proposition? Why should a company choose you over others for their agentic services requirements?</li> <li>What are the three key problems your agentic services will address?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Driving digital transformation by leveraging agentic AI to improve business outcomes such as cost reduction, speed, and efficiency, primarily for tasks within the front, middle, and back offices.</li> <li>Helping enterprises understand the data, processes, and interactions needed to drive functional optimization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Horizon 1+</li> <li>Ability to enable the OneOffice model of end-to-end organizational alignment across the front, middle, and back offices by leveraging agentic AI to improve decision making and drive stakeholder experience</li> <li>Help enterprises break down the data silos continuously, find patterns, and maintain robust governance across all decision points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Horizon 2+</li> <li>Ability to enable, articulate, and aspire to shift toward Services-as-Software by leveraging agentic AI, with early evidence, a strong narrative, and clear roadmaps to redefine how work gets done, driving new sources of value and co-creation with OneEcosystem partners</li> <li>Drive OneEcosystem impact via collaboration across multiple organizations with common objectives around enabling completely new sources of value</li> </ul>
<b>Execution and Innovation capabilities: The What?</b>  (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you plan and design (opportunity and risk identification and mitigation)?</li> <li>What is your approach to collecting and connecting data?</li> <li>What are your three core offerings?</li> <li>How do you ensure seamless integration with clients' existing systems?</li> <li>Illustrate the extent to which these offerings are productized or platformized.</li> <li>Provide evidence of the extent of using autonomous frameworks and AI-led automation in these core offerings.</li> <li>Describe your security, privacy, and governance management in the context of your core offerings.</li> <li>What do you have in place to control and respond to errors?</li> <li>How do you ensure continuous improvement loops in your core offerings?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proven repeated agentic AI use case generation</li> <li>Proven capabilities in moving agentic AI into production</li> <li>Third-party agentic AI tools and technologies</li> <li>Processes and frameworks for security, governance, and privacy</li> <li>Continuous improvement loops</li> <li>Proven capabilities for managing data for agentic AI</li> <li>Typically offshore-focused with strong technical skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Horizon 1+</li> <li>Processes and frameworks in place to generate net-new value cases with agentic AI</li> <li>Processes in place for taking agentic AI use cases to production</li> <li>Offshore and nearshore capabilities with both technical and consulting skills</li> <li>Implementation of third-party and own IP</li> <li>Market-ready AI-driven proprietary tools, assets, and frameworks</li> <li>Proven processes and IP for data management for agentic AI</li> <li>Structured employee training on agentic AI</li> <li>Focus on human-agent management and change management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Horizon 2+</li> <li>Processes and frameworks for prioritizing and delivering agentic AI value cases consumed by enterprises as a service</li> <li>Deep partnerships, including joint IP creation with AI technology leaders</li> <li>Ability to implement with third-party, joint, and own IP</li> <li>Proven capabilities for human-agent management and change management</li> <li>Well-rounded capabilities across all value creation levers: talent, domain, technology, data, and change management</li> </ul>

# Horizons assessment methodology for agentic services (2/2)

The “**HFS Horizons: Agentic Services, 2026**” research evaluates the capabilities of providers to understand the **why, what, how, and so what** of their agentic services offerings. Our assessment is based on inputs from clients, partners, and employees, augmented by analyst perspectives. The following illustrates how we assess their capabilities.

← **Distinguishing Supplier characteristics** →

Assessment dimension	Assessment sub-dimensions (briefing questions)	Horizon 1 service providers	Horizon 2 service providers	Horizon 3 service providers
<b>Go-to-market strategy: The How?</b>  (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you price your three core offerings today? How do you enable your pricing models to evolve?</li> <li>How do you apply your ecosystem of partners to the three core offerings?</li> <li>What are the success metrics for your three core offerings?</li> <li>How are you future-proofing through training, access, and approach to technology?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primarily effort-based relationships</li> <li>Some alliances with AI technology leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Horizon 1+</li> <li>Increasing number of performance-based relationships in the portfolio</li> <li>Alliances with many AI technology leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Horizon 2+</li> <li>Driving co-creation with ecosystem partners and AI technology leaders</li> <li>Evidence of purpose-based (co-creation) partnerships with clients in addition to the increasing number of performance-based relationships in the portfolio</li> </ul>
<b>Market impact: The So What?</b>  (40%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share at least three case studies that have gone into scale production. Include business case prioritization and how/if costs have aligned with initial predictions. Include ROI, KPIs, tech stack, and client quote. Provide at least three example case studies showing ≥15 % productivity or ≥5 % net-new revenue or where agents are replacing services and customer ROI. These should ideally be in production, but POCs will also be considered ONLY with referenceable clients. Client-zero case studies may be acceptable in the absence of sufficient external case studies.</li> <li>Across all deployed agentic AI solutions, how many use cases have been scaled to enterprise production? How many autonomous agents are currently running in live environments?</li> <li>Voice of the customer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognized as strong implementation vendors</li> <li>Referenceable and satisfied clients for ability to execute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Horizon 1+</li> <li>Recognized as strategic partners by clients</li> <li>Referenceable and satisfied clients for the ability to execute and innovate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Horizon 2+</li> <li>Recognized as thought leaders by clients</li> <li>Referenceable and satisfied clients driving new business models through partnerships</li> </ul>

# Introduction and assessment methodology

## SaS Stars: Agentic Services, 2026

The **SaS Stars** spotlight service providers that are progressing toward software-driven service delivery as agentic services mature. Services-as-Software reflects a shift away from labor-centric models toward operating models in which intelligence and autonomy are embedded directly into how services are designed, delivered, and scaled. HFS developed this assessment to provide greater visibility into how Services-as-Software is unfolding in the market.

All providers in Horizon 3 are recognized as leaders moving the market toward Services-as-Software. The SaS Stars designation simply highlights **five service providers** whose recent proof points most strongly align with this direction and are making distinctive, demonstrable changes to move from the legacy services model.

This assessment measured progress against HFS' Services-as-Software capability framework, assessing provider maturity across the core elements required for the journey toward Services-as-Software. Our SaS Stars assessment is based on the evidence and proof points shared during the research process, client and partner interviews and experiences from our advisor team working on live contract engagements that comprise SaS elements.

Note:

- The Services-as-Software criteria assessment is directional and validated by HFS analysts
- This is a leadership callout, not a ranking.
- This list reflects firms covered in depth in the "HFS Horizons: Agentic Services, 2026" report, not the full universe of potential SaS players.

# 2

## Market dynamics

# Services-as-Software™ (SaS) promises a non-linear economic model

## HFS Services and Ops Tech Vision 2028

### Staff augmentation

Enables companies to quickly fill skill gaps, scale teams up or down as needed, and maintain control over project execution

### Technology-enabled services

Primarily driven by people but supported by proprietary solution accelerators, tools, and software

### Platform-led services

Leverage built-in delivery platforms to enhance service delivery and efficiency

### AI-led Agentic services

Augment human capabilities through smart AI agents to optimize processes and decision-making

### Services-as-Software™

Unlike traditional software-as-a-service (SaaS), this model focuses on delivering services primarily through technology, minimizing human intervention, and maximizing efficiency

### Humans + Machine mix (capability model)

Shows how delivery shifts from human-led execution to machine-led (AI) orchestration, with humans focused on judgment and oversight

Human

Machine



### Linear vs. Non-linear (economic model)

Indicates whether revenue and margins scale with headcount or are decoupled through platforms, IP, and AI

Linear

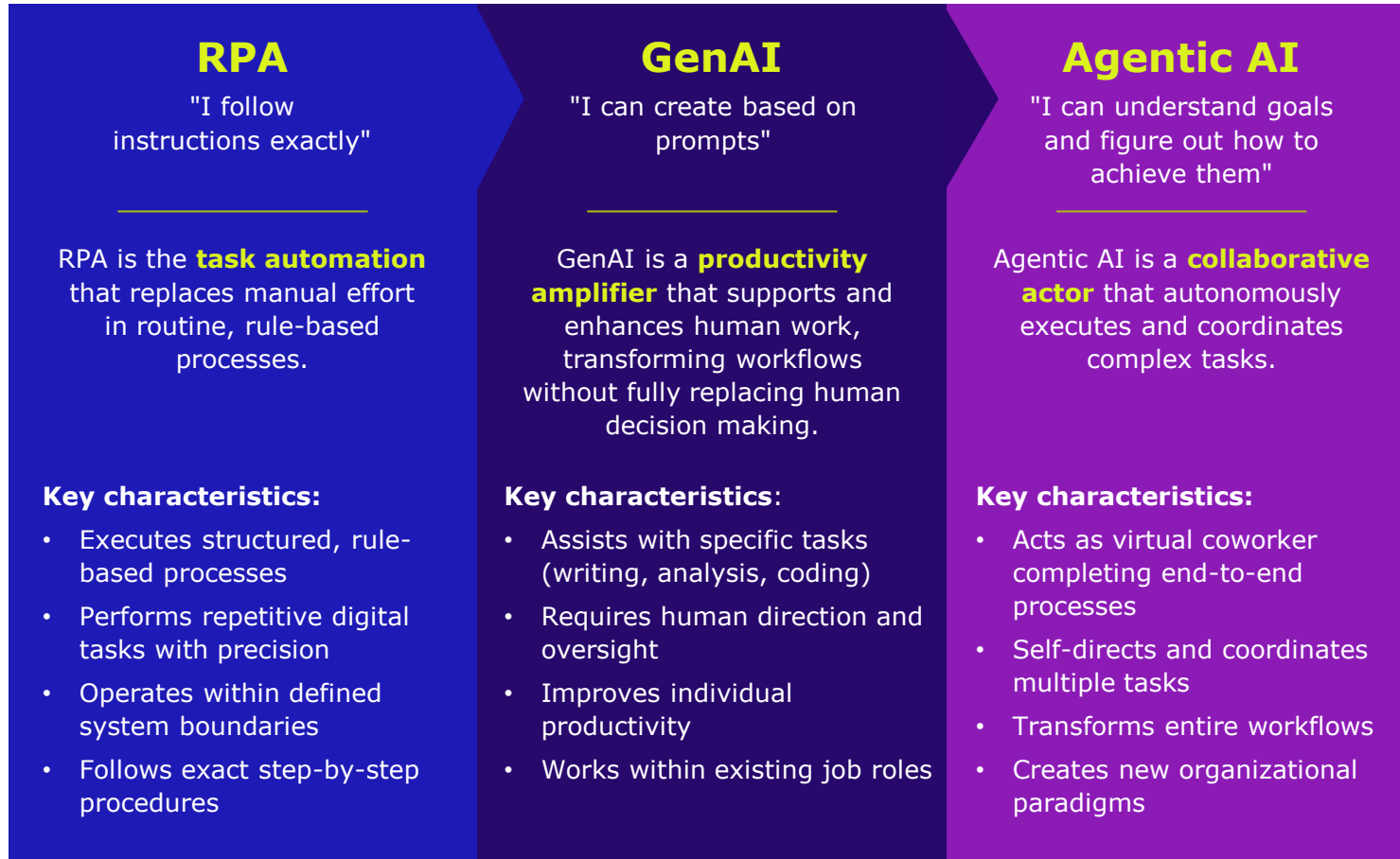
Non-linear



Current state  
2000-2025

Emerging  
2025+

# Evolution of AI: Agentic AI is picking up where generative AI (GenAI) and robotic process automation (RPA) left off

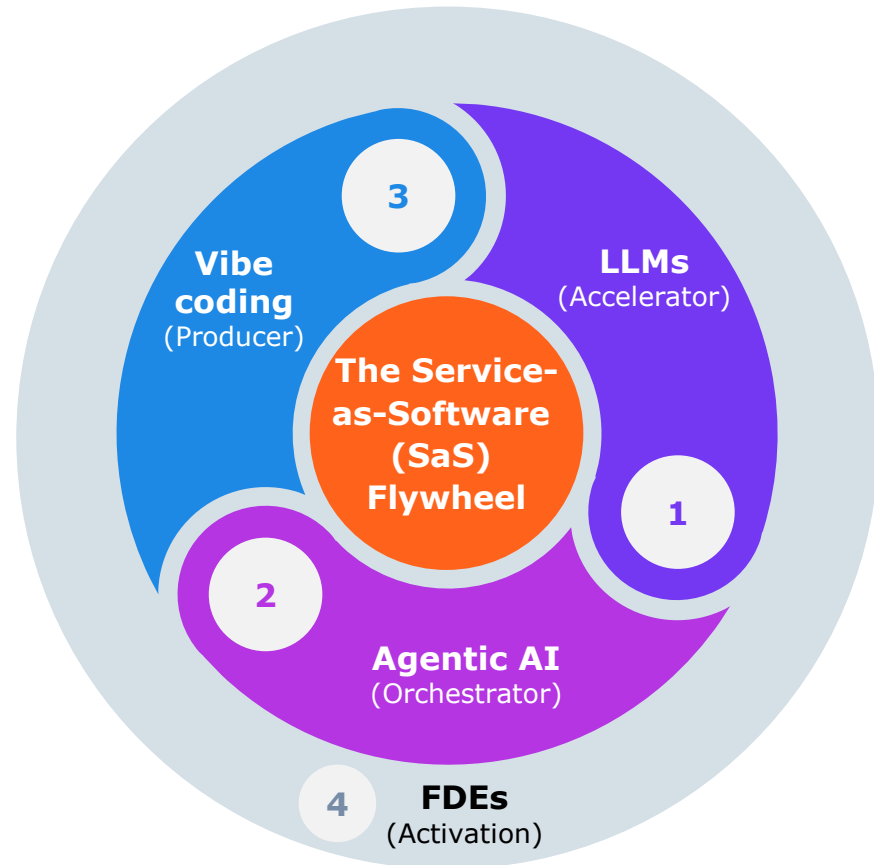


The progression from RPA → GenAI → Agentic AI highlights a shift from simple task execution to advanced decision making and workflow transformation. This evolution signals a move toward more autonomous and strategic AI capabilities for enterprises.

Source: HFS Research, 2026

# Services-as-Software delivery is accelerated by LLMs, orchestrated by agentic AI, produced by vibe coding, and activated by FDEs

## A new operating logic for AI-native delivery



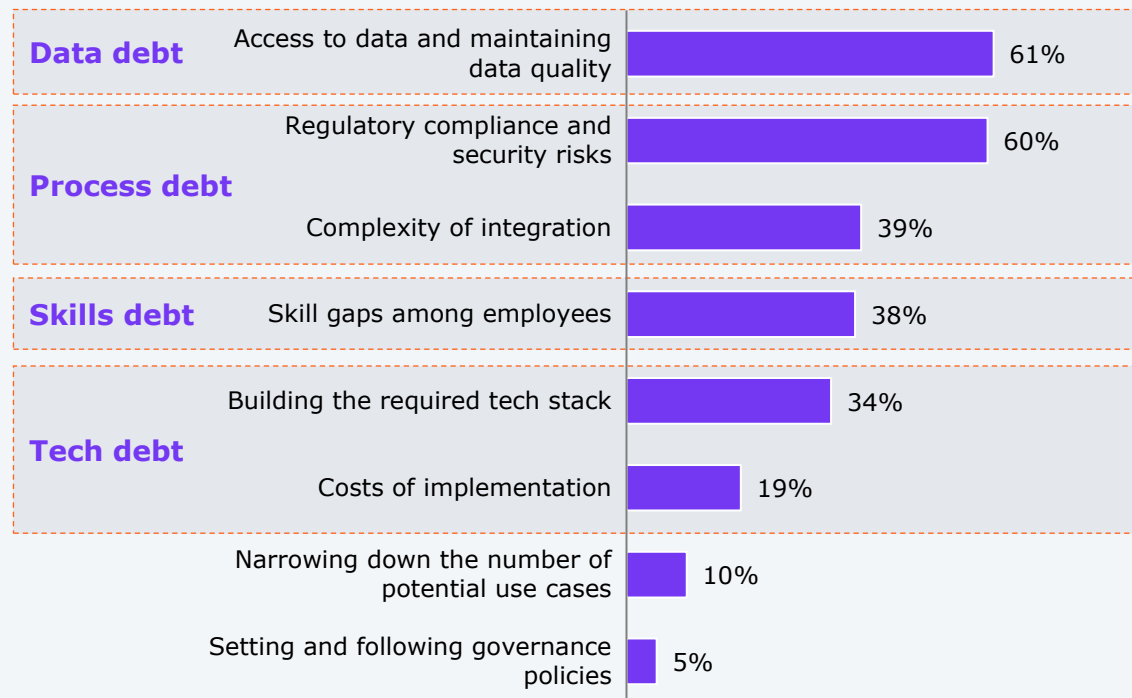
### How it works:

- 1** **LLMs** accelerate reasoning, code generation, and knowledge access
- 2** **Agentic AI** orchestrates workflows, decisions, and compliance
- 3** **Vibe coding** produces working service agents directly from business intent
- 4** **FDEs** (forward-deployed engineering) activate AI systems into enterprise workflows, governance, and production environments

Source: HFS Research, 2026

# Agentic services expose the cost of unresolved enterprise debt

## Which are the most significant challenges in implementing GenAI in your organization?



Sample size: 550 survey participants, Global 2000  
Source: HFS Research, 2026

## Partner for change to cut the chains of legacy

Ambitious enterprises are pushing to adopt AI-driven business models. However, change is a team activity, requiring partnerships with willing technology and service providers. As AI initiatives move beyond experimentation, such firms must help clients cut through technology noise and align on when, where, and how to move.

The shift from labor to technology demands experienced and visionary partners that can guide organizations through fast-moving technology ecosystems, redesign operating models, and build realistic transformation roadmaps. However, long-standing debts across data, process, skills, and technology continue to limit how far and how fast enterprises can go. Ambition alone is not enough.

To enable agentic services to operate reliably and at scale, enterprises and their partners must actively address foundational debt rather than layering new capabilities on top of existing constraints.

- **Fix your data debt:** Ensure you have the data you need to give agentic AI an accurate understanding of how your business works. Poor data means agentic guesswork and fast tracks to cascading errors.
- **Fix your process debt:** If you apply AI to simply repeat how you have always worked, don't expect to create new value. Now is the time to reconsider how things work with the new context of agentic AI capabilities.
- **Fix your skills debt:** Develop new skill sets that support the transition to embracing emerging technologies and AI-driven business models.
- **Fix your technology debt:** IT spending keeps swelling with each new platform and coding change. Stop buying technology for the sake of it; this has been the failure of so many previous investments. For instance, two-thirds of enterprises that were struggling with their cloud migration journeys had signed during the pandemic.

# Top seven takeaways from HFS Horizons: Agentic Services, 2026 (1/2)

Agentic AI scales when enterprise-grade tools, data foundations, and governance controls are combined with redesigned processes, clear decision rights, and embedded business context.

1

## Platformization is accelerating, with Services-as-Software emerging

Nearly all providers now lead with agent platforms, with many offering orchestration too. Most still rely heavily on human oversight and services wrappers. Platforms act as accelerators, control planes, and copilots rather than owning end-to-end runtime accountability. Only narrow domains, such as testing, IT service management (ITSM), and customer support, achieve ~70% autonomy. The industry is still early in the transition from tool-enabled to software-owned services. Leaders have aspirations and are building the technology, but enterprises remain responsible for defining where agents can own outcomes.

2

## Solving governance, risk, and security unlocks higher agent autonomy

Technical capability is advancing faster than enterprise tolerance for autonomous decision making. There is a strong focus on guardrails, policy engines, human-in-the-loop controls, audit logs, and kill switches. However, there is a limited use of agents with unsupervised decision rights, especially in finance, HR, and regulated operations. Agentic maturity is being constrained more by trust, governance, and liability models than by LLMs or tooling limitations. For enterprises, this is less of a technology limitation and more about risk appetite and operating design, particularly in regulated functions.

3

## True disruption through agentic services remains relatively rare

Providers position agentic services as transformational, but current deployments optimize execution rather than redesign business models. Common use cases include productivity uplift, exception handling, workflow coordination, and knowledge retrieval. Horizon 3 use cases remain under 10% of portfolios. Agentic services today improve how work is done, while disruption remains concentrated in future roadmaps.

4

## Repeatable proof is emerging, though uneven across use cases

There is a growing gap between the breadth of agentic narratives and the depth of evidence. Most providers rely on a small number of repeatable use cases reused across clients and industries. Claims of near autonomy are rarely supported beyond SDLC, ITSM, and contact center domains. This concentration of proof provides a clear starting point for providers to industrialize agentic services first. Enterprises should evaluate agentic maturity by use case based on measurable outcomes, observability, and operational control.

Sample size: 36 service providers evaluated in this report  
Source: HFS Research, 2026

# Top seven takeaways from HFS Horizons: Agentic Services, 2026 (2/2)

Agentic AI scales when enterprise-grade tools, data foundations, and governance controls are combined with redesigned processes, clear decision rights, and embedded business context.

5

## SDLC is the most mature and repeatable agentic use case today

Across providers, SDLC stands out as the clearest proof point where agents deliver sustained value, not just pilots. Agents for code generation, testing, defect triage, release, documentation, CI/CD orchestration, and environment management are already operating at 40%–70% autonomy in production programs. This is the most substantial evidence that agentic services scale when workflows are deterministic, measurable, and telemetry-rich, making SDLC the blueprint for other domains.

6

## IT and BPO services augment technology firms to accelerate execution-ready agentic AI capabilities

Technology firms are materially ahead of service providers in agentic execution maturity. They already own much of the control plane, runtime, governance hooks, and system-of-record integrations, allowing agents to execute work, not just orchestrate it. Their platforms increasingly embed agents directly into workflows, pricing, and products, which makes Services-as-Software more tangible today. However, their value still depends on enterprises and service partners resolving gaps in operating model, accountability, and change management. Enterprises must select both fit-for-purpose platforms and operationalize them through governance, process redesign, and ownership.

7

## Redesigning operating models and accountability is the next frontier for agentic services

Agentic technology and orchestration platforms are now robust, but adoption is constrained by unresolved ownership of decisions, failures, compliance, and outcomes once humans exit the loop. Governance is often presented as a technical control layer, but it is fundamentally a business operating model issue. Agentic autonomy also requires embedding business context, including tacit knowledge, into workflows.

Enterprises accept AI assisting work but remain uncomfortable with AI owning work or being accountable for outcomes. As a result, autonomy typically plateaus well below full ownership, with humans retaining decision and accountability control in most enterprise deployments. Services-as-Software examples remain limited outside SDLC and limited IT operations.

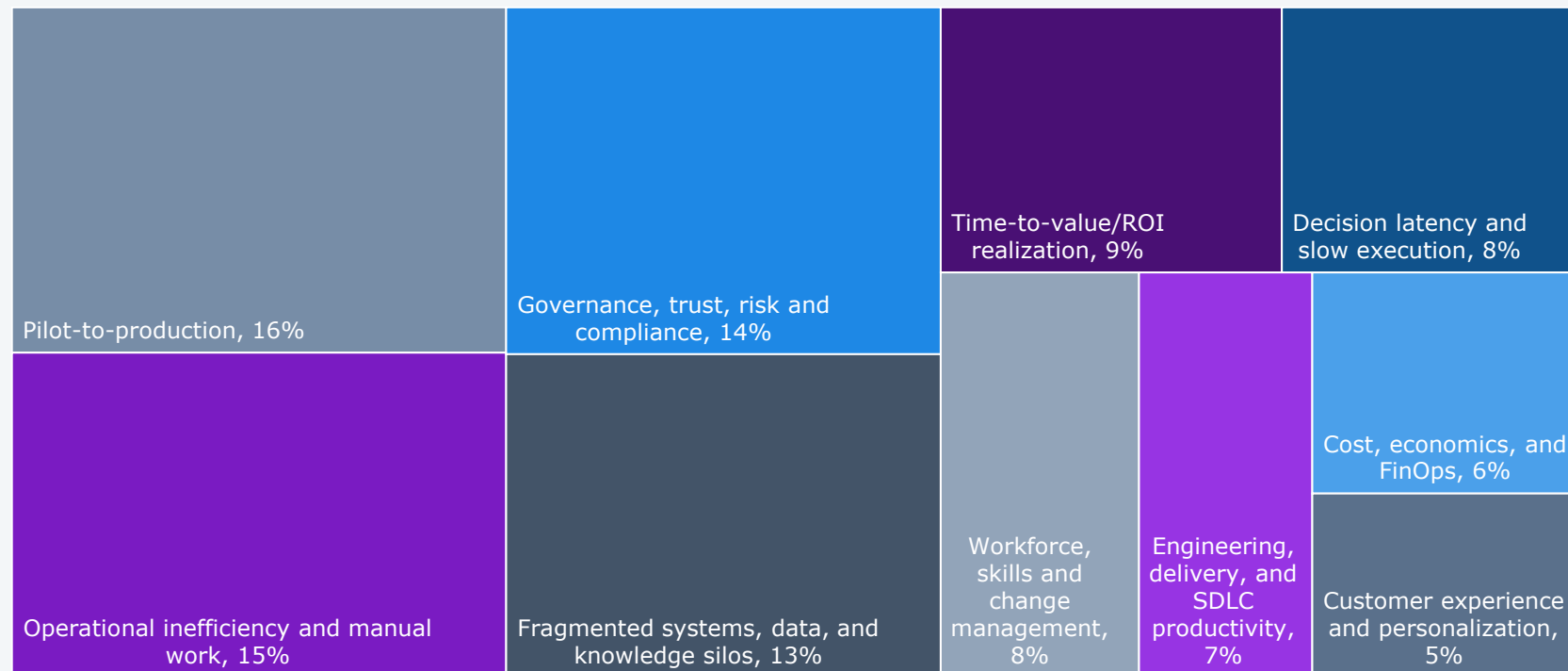
All this explains why platforms resemble accelerators rather than products, orchestration stops short of execution, Horizon 3 deployments remain limited in scale and scope, pricing stays hybrid, and risk language dominates autonomy language. Until decision rights, liability, and audit ownership are redesigned, agentic services will scale broadly but not deeply, remaining services-led. Winners will be those that help clients redesign accountability models, not just build better agents.

Sample size: 36 service providers evaluated in this report  
Source: HFS Research, 2026

# The key barriers that service providers want to overcome are scaling, operational inefficiency, governance, and system, data, and knowledge silos

## What are the top three agentic AI problems that providers want to address?

(Percentage of responses)

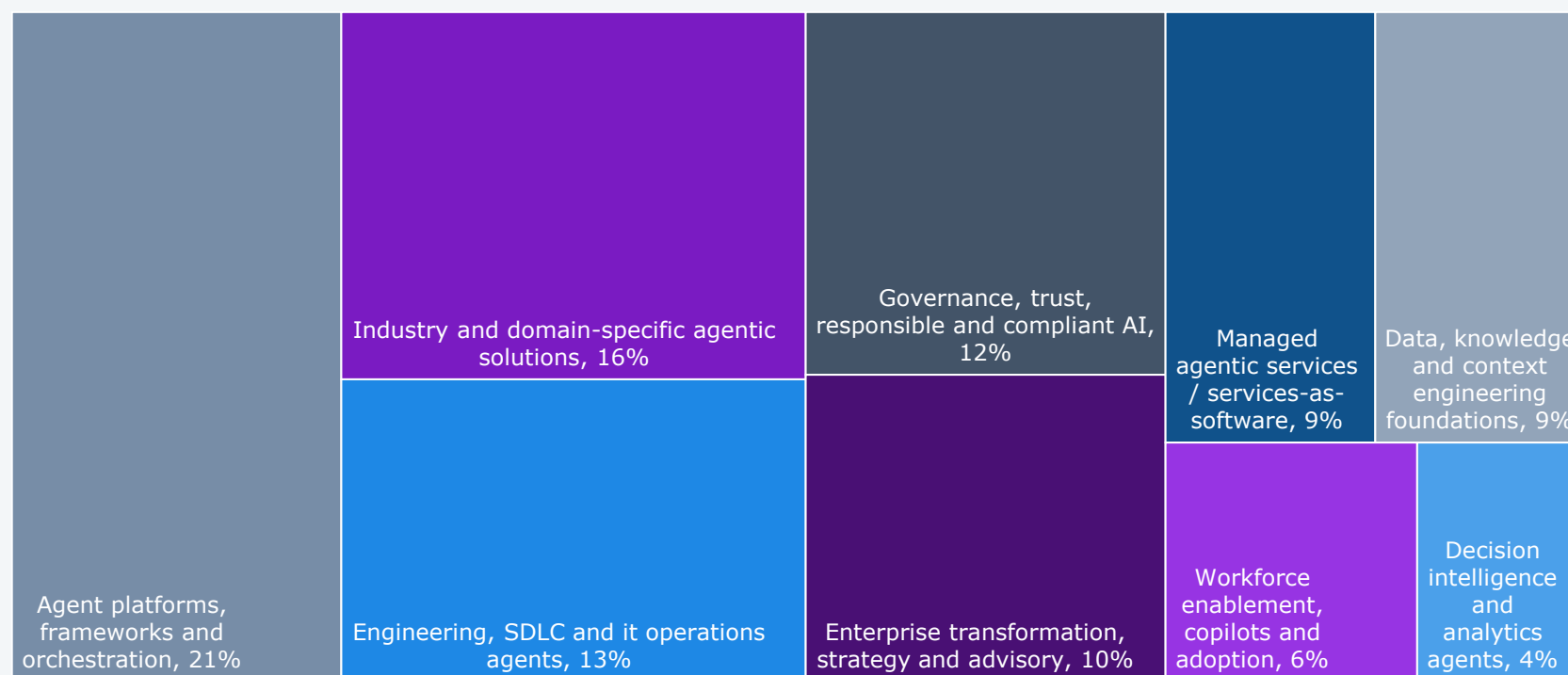


We asked 36 leading IT and business services providers to identify the top three barriers they are currently addressing in the agentic services space. The most prominently cited challenges are pilot-to-production scaling gap, operational inefficiencies driven by manual work, governance, trust, risk and compliance, and organization, data, and knowledge silos. These barriers are less about AI capability itself and more about enterprises' ability to scale, control, and operationalize autonomy. Secondary themes such as time-to-value and ROI realization; decision latency, delayed insights; and skills upgradation and change management reinforce the need for end-to-end transformation rather than isolated AI deployments.

Sample size: 36 service providers evaluated in this report  
Source: HFS Research, 2026

# Providers are responding to the adoption barriers by investing in agent platforms, domain-specific agentic solutions, strategic advisory, governance, and other enabling capabilities

**What are the three core agentic AI offerings of providers?**  
(Percentage of responses)

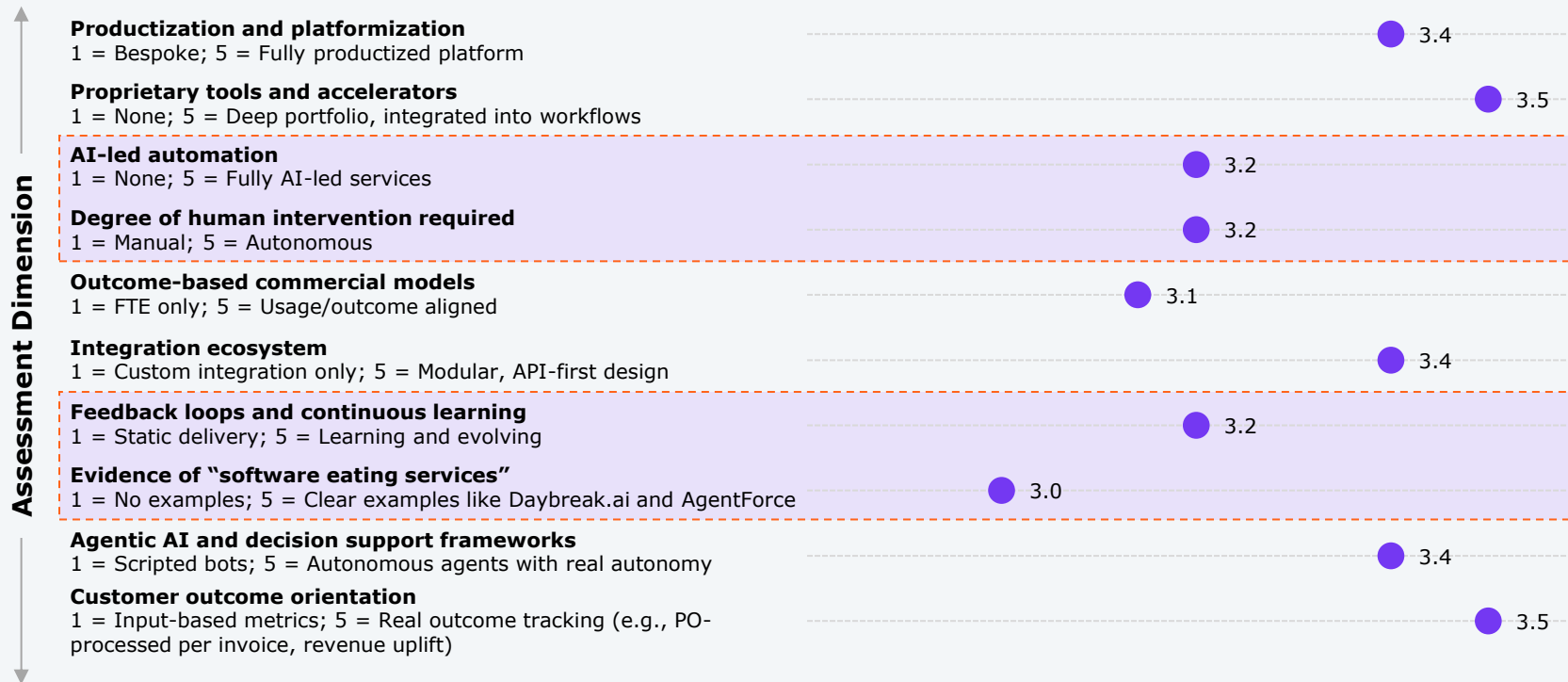


Service providers are responding to agentic AI adoption challenges by prioritizing agent platforms and orchestration layers, industry-specific agentic solutions, enterprise transformation, governance, trust, and compliance frameworks, engineering and operation agents, and advisory services. Substantial investments in managed agentic services complement these offerings, including data, knowledge, and context foundations. Together, this solution mix enables enterprises to move beyond experimentation to production-grade, governed deployments, scale autonomy responsibly, embed agents into core workflows, and realize sustained business value.

Sample size: 36 service providers evaluated in this report  
Source: HFS Research, 2026

# Progress with agentic platforms is leading the way – while evidence of SaaS realization lags

## Analyst view of journey toward Services-as-Software (average rating of 1–5 of provider capabilities)



## An overview of how agentic services providers are progressing toward Services-as-Software

Providers were scored on a scale of 1 to 5 on each dimension required for Services-as-Software. The scores shown are averages across the 36 firms in this study.

Providers are investing heavily in tools, platforms, and agent frameworks, but are weaker on autonomous workflows, outcome-based pricing, and clear evidence that software is replacing human efforts.

This indicates that providers are building the foundation for Services-as-Software faster than they can deliver it through services.

Overall, the market is moving in the right direction, but achieving Services-as-Software will require providers to effectively translate their assets into outcome-based service delivery.

Sample size: 36 service providers evaluated in this report  
Source: HFS Research, 2026

# Early signs of Services-as-Software are visible in ITSM and SDLC, where agentic AI is already achieving 70% autonomy

## Case studies by agentic AI maturity and high future potential

Case study	Current maturity proof	Features indicating maturity potential
<b>Autonomous ITSM/AIOps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-agent monitoring, diagnosis, remediation, and validation</li> <li>Strong feedback loops from telemetry</li> <li>Clear authority to act (restart, rollback, reroute, patch)</li> <li>Mature ITSM processes: incident management and event and alert management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Machine-readable infrastructure</li> <li>Strong economic pressure due to downtime costs</li> <li>Increasing trust in autonomous remediation</li> </ul>
<b>Closed-loop SDLC and DevOps agents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agents write, test, deploy, observe, and fix</li> <li>Human oversight is supervisory, not operational</li> <li>API-native tool ecosystems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Software creation is already AI-mediated</li> <li>Dev teams accept autonomy faster than business users</li> <li>Rapid learning cycles</li> </ul>
<b>Contact center service orchestration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large volumes of unstructured input (voice, chat, email)</li> <li>Repetitive intents with clear service outcomes</li> <li>Lags in decision authority, emotional and contextual reasoning, cross-journey orchestration, closed-loop outcome learning, and governance and accountability models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy-bound actions (refunds, credits)</li> <li>Cross-channel coordination agents</li> <li>Held back by human trust barrier, emotion, and brand risk</li> </ul>
<b>End-to-end claims orchestration (insurance and healthcare)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-agent workflows (intake, validation, fraud, settlement)</li> <li>Growing autonomy in low-risk cases</li> <li>Strong intelligent document processing (IDP) + reasoning layers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tiered autonomy models (held back by regulatory and reputational risk, and human override still common)</li> <li>Proven ROI</li> <li>Gradual expansion of decision authority</li> </ul>
<b>Real-time fraud, risk and compliance systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuous sensing and decisioning</li> <li>Agents negotiate thresholds and actions</li> <li>Strong data foundations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforcement learning and simulation</li> <li>Regulator comfort with AI supervision (being held back by false positives, governance and explainability)</li> </ul>
<b>Agentic IDP and case management (such as KYC/AML investigation)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dominate early adoption</li> <li>Document-heavy, decision-light today</li> <li>Lags in continuous sensing, autonomous reprioritization, dynamic goal setting, and cross-case optimization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moving from document handling to decision delegation</li> <li>Escalation logic becoming autonomous</li> </ul>

Sample size: 36 service providers evaluated in this report

Source: HFS Research, 2026

# Productivity and efficiency gains are the top expected outcomes, with customers highly satisfied with service providers

## What are the top three intended outcomes of your agentic AI solution?

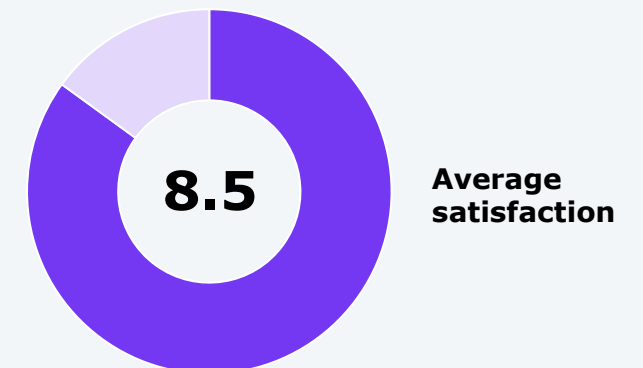
(Percentage of respondents)



The top three intended outcomes when embedding agentic AI in workflows are reduced manual effort (74%), faster insights (33%), and cost savings (33%).

## Customer view of how well providers delivered outcomes

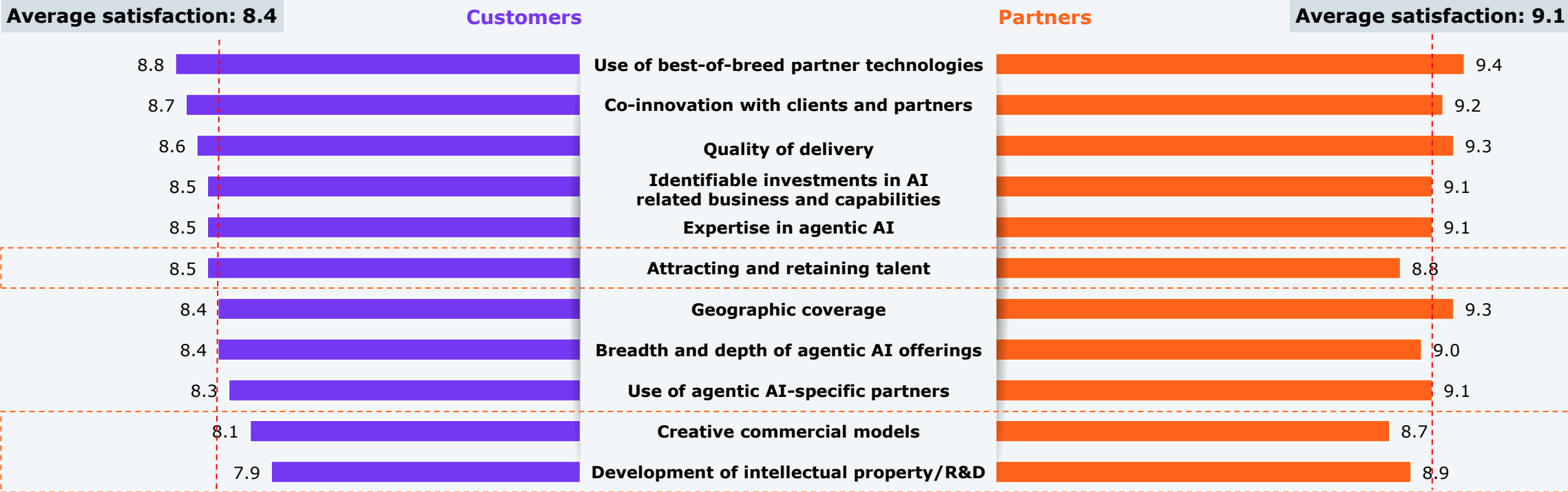
(customer satisfaction ratings of providers; average out of 10)



Sample size: 42 customer references  
Source: HFS Research, 2026

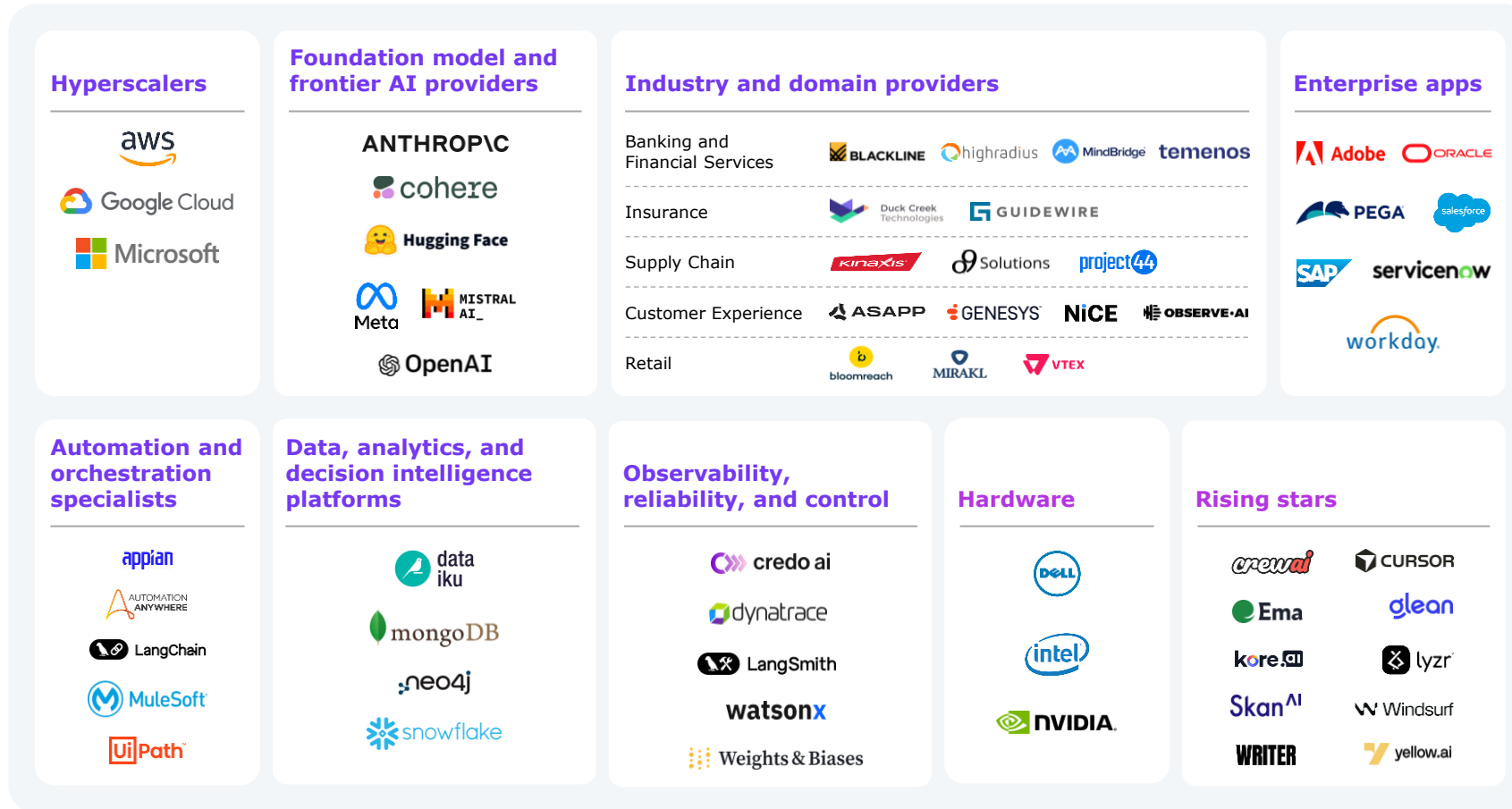
# Developments in non-traditional commercial models, IP/R&D, and talent are necessary to enhance client and partner satisfaction

Please indicate how well your service provider has delivered the following outcomes.  
 (Scale of 1–10, where 1 is below expectations and 10 exceeds expectations)



Sample size: 42 customer references, 58 partner references  
 Source: HFS Research, 2026

# The agentic services ecosystem



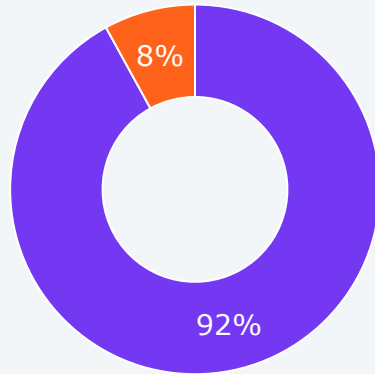
**An overview of the agentic services ecosystem based on partners most frequently referenced in the material provided by the 36 service providers included in this study.**

These companies show where they are actively building, integrating, and partnering today. The ecosystem spans hyperscalers and frontier model providers supplying core compute models, industry platforms, and enterprise applications that embed agentic capabilities into workflows, along with a growing set of orchestration, data, observability, and infrastructure specialists that enable scale, reliability, and control. The Rising Stars highlight newer, agent-first products that are beginning to influence how autonomous outcomes are delivered. This reflects the current agentic services ecosystem, but we expect this to evolve rapidly as the market matures.

Note: This is a representative list, not exhaustive; companies are listed in alphabetical order  
 Source: HFS Research, 2026

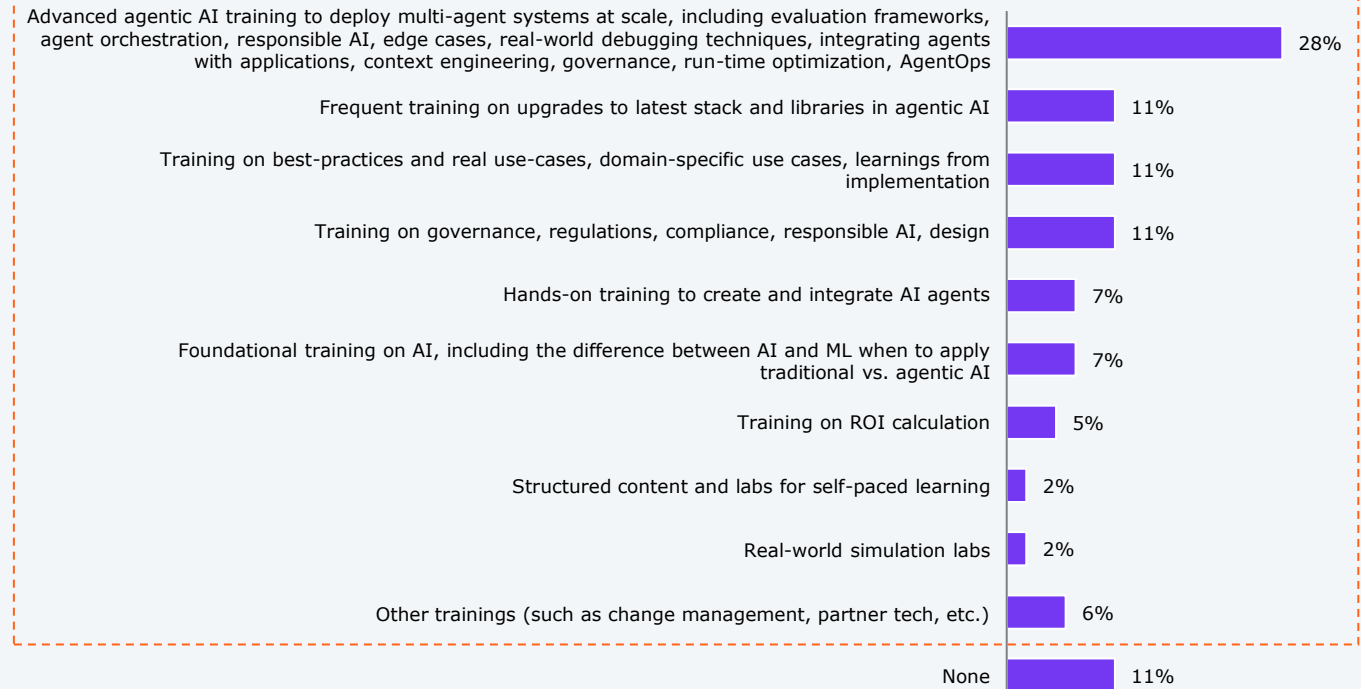
# Around 92% of employees from service providers claimed they received formal agentic AI training; ~90% believe it is not sufficient and would benefit from additional training

**Have you received formal and specific training from your employer on agentic AI in the last 12 months?**  
(Percentage of respondents)



- Formal agentic AI-specific training received from employer
- No formal agentic AI-specific training received from employer

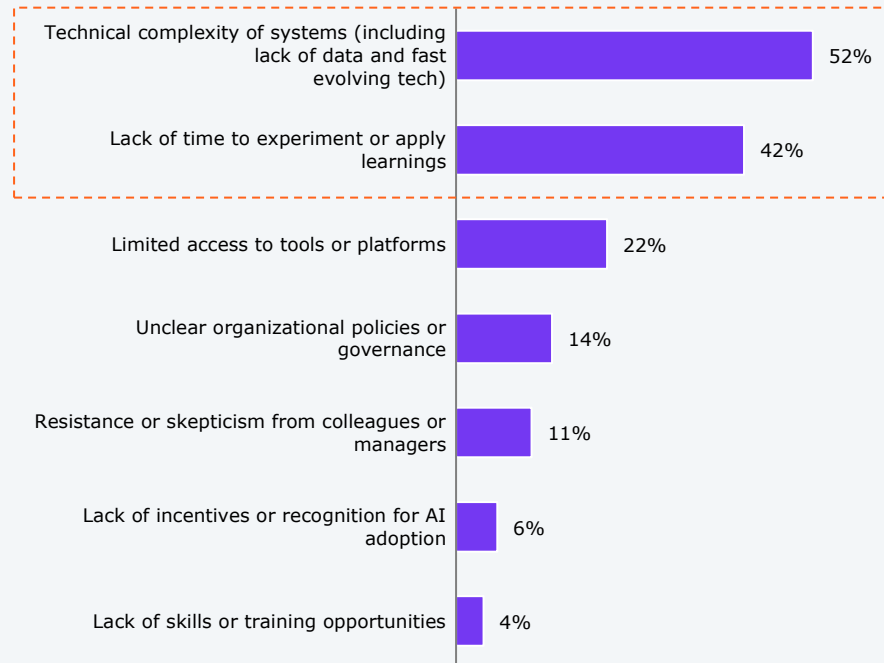
**What additional training could you use related to agentic AI?**  
(Percentage of respondents)



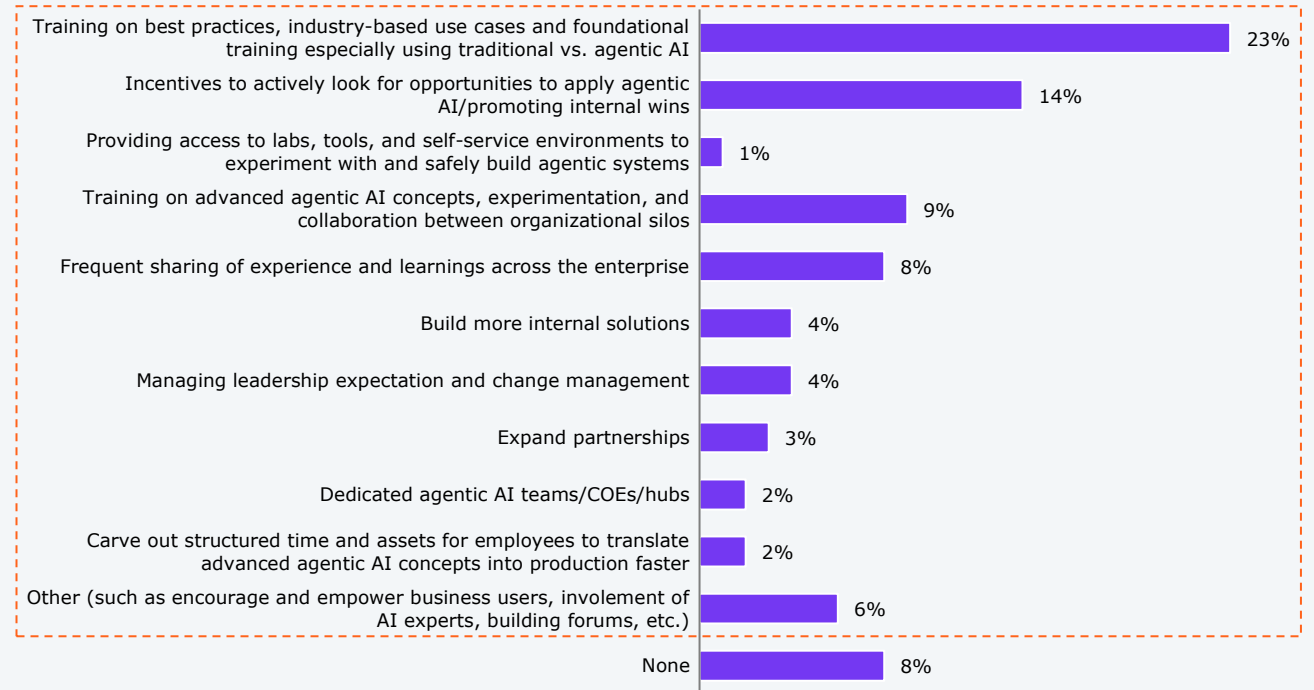
Sample size: 93 service providers' employee references  
Source: HFS Research, 2026

# Technical complexity and lack of time are slowing down individual skills uplift, while gaps in training, incentives, internal infrastructure, and internal solutions impede organizational adoption

## What are the biggest barriers you face in adopting agentic AI? (Percentage of respondents)



## What should you additionally do to improve the adoption of agentic AI within your organization? (Percentage of respondents)



Sample size: 93 service providers' employee references  
Source: HFS Research, 2026

# 3

## Horizons results: Agentic Services, 2026

## Summary of providers assessed in this report (1/2)

Providers	HFS point of view
<b>Accenture</b>	Industrializing agentic AI to reinvent enterprise platforms, processes, and outcomes at scale
<b>Akkodis</b>	Agentic services grounded in data platforms and governed execution
<b>Ascendion</b>	Agentic engineering platform delivering scaled modernization and measurable SDLC acceleration
<b>Atos</b>	Full lifecycle agentic services grounded in sovereign, secure enterprise delivery
<b>Bain &amp; Company</b>	Agentic enablement for tech and business shift
<b>BCG</b>	Transformation consulting and integration strategy for agentic AI-led outcomes
<b>Birlasoft</b>	Domain-focused, task-oriented agentic and low-code delivery
<b>Brillio</b>	Enterprise agentic services built on data and application management
<b>Capgemini</b>	Ramping up automation maturity with scaled agentic AI for end-to-end process transformation
<b>Cognizant</b>	Expanding agentic AI capabilities with platforms, IP, context engineering, and enterprise controls

Providers	HFS point of view
<b>EXL</b>	Domain-rich, governance-first agentic AI partner for regulated, data-intensive enterprises
<b>EY</b>	Building AI-first, trusted agentic platforms that turn risk, tax, and finance expertise into software
<b>Firstsource</b>	Deep domain focus, proprietary agentic tooling, and scalable human-AI orchestration
<b>Genpact</b>	Scalable AI solutions grounded in operational discipline and domain expertise
<b>HCLTech</b>	Engineering-led agentic AI with reliability-by-design and data-ready scale
<b>Hitachi Digital Services</b>	Combining deep industrial expertise with governed operational agents across IT and OT
<b>IBM</b>	Governed agentic transformation enabled by modular architecture, vertical workflows, and integrated consulting
<b>IGT Solutions</b>	Productizing agentic AI to transform travel, hospitality, and customer experience
<b>Infosys</b>	Transforming business operations into AI-driven services through modular agentic platforms
<b>Innova solutions</b>	Business-led accelerated multi-agent workflows built on open frameworks

Note: All service providers are listed alphabetically

## Summary of providers assessed in this report (2/2)

Providers	HFS point of view
<b>iOPEX</b>	Delivering scalable agentic workflow automation with focus on data management and outcome alignment
<b>KPMG</b>	Agentic, outcome-driven transformation partner combining AI-first platforms and trusted governance
<b>LTM</b>	Bridging agentic AI strategy and execution with patented frameworks, productized components
<b>McKinsey</b>	Research-led, ecosystem-driven agentic AI delivery for governed enterprise transformation
<b>Mindsprint</b>	Multi-agent processes with operational control
<b>Movate</b>	CX-first agentic services spanning customer operations, engineering, and analytics
<b>Mphasis</b>	Embedding agentic AI across app development, IT infrastructure, and business operations
<b>NTT Data</b>	Delivering scalable agentic AI through a full-stack ecosystem, deep verticalization, and governed innovation

Providers	HFS point of view
<b>Persistent Systems</b>	Engineering-led agentic AI with scalable, governed execution
<b>Publicis Sapient</b>	Translating business strategy with scalable agentic platforms
<b>PwC</b>	Delivering agent-powered enterprise services with governance and proven impact
<b>Sutherland</b>	Operationally-grounded agentic AI with productized accelerators and built-in governance
<b>TCS</b>	Platform-neutral agentic ecosystem with accelerated build for fast-evolving tooling and rapid integration
<b>UST</b>	Driving intelligent automation by delivering governed, industrialized agentic AI with long-term commitment
<b>Virtusa</b>	Agentic grounded in domain depth and engineering rigor
<b>Wipro</b>	Consulting-led provider moving agentic AI into enterprise operations

Note: All service providers are listed alphabetically

# HFS Horizons: Agentic Services, 2026



### Horizon 3 – Market Leaders

**Horizon 3 service providers demonstrate:**

- Horizon 2+
- Ability to embrace the emerging paradigm of **Services-as-Software** by leveraging agentic AI, with early evidence and clear roadmaps to redefine how work gets done, driving new sources of value and co-creation with **OneEcosystem** partners
- Innovation at the ecosystem level with value creation centered on collaboration, new revenue streams, and outcome-based models in driving business transformation

### Horizon 2 – Enterprise Innovators

**Horizon 2 service providers demonstrate:**

- Horizon 1+
- Ability to enable the **OneOffice** model of end-to-end organizational alignment across the front, middle, and back offices by leveraging agentic AI to improve decision making and drive an unmatched stakeholder experience
- Innovation at the end-to-end enterprise level, with value creation focused on stakeholder experience, enterprise agility, improved compliance, and measurable business impact

### Horizon 1 – Disruptors

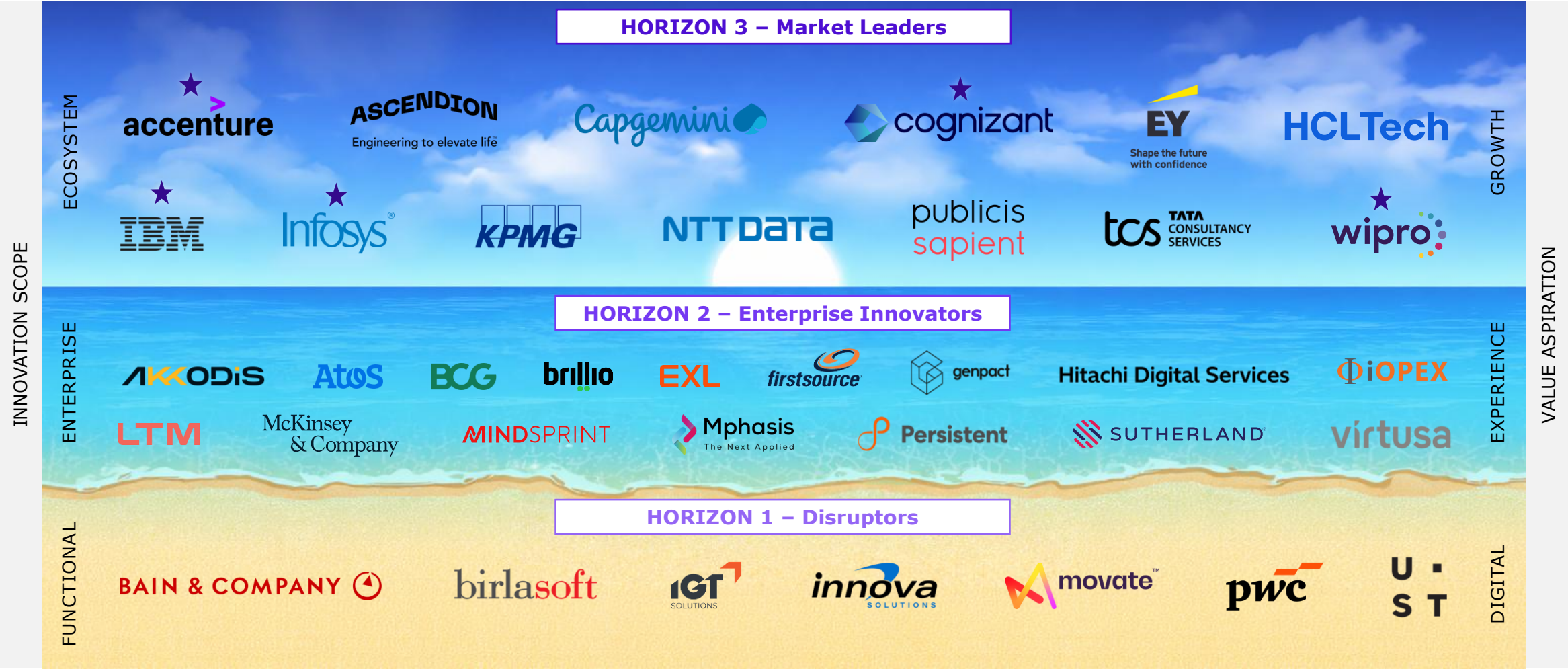
**Horizon 1 service providers demonstrate:**

- Ability to drive digital transformation by leveraging agentic AI to improve business outcomes across elements of an industry’s value chain
- Innovation on a function level with value creation measured by operational efficiency, cost savings, and improved productivity in targeted processes

Note: All service providers within a Horizon are listed alphabetically  
 Source: HFS Research, 2026

★ **SaaS Stars** - Fundamentally changing its business models toward Services-as-Software by beginning to operationalize agentic capabilities, reduce reliance on human intervention, and move toward scalable, technology-led service delivery.

# HFS Horizons: Agentic Services, 2026



★ SaS Star  
 Note: All service providers within a Horizon are listed alphabetically  
 Source: HFS Research, 2026

# 4

## Cognizant profile: Agentic Services, 2026

# Cognizant: Expanding agentic AI capabilities with platforms, IP, context engineering, and enterprise controls



Strengths	Development opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Value proposition:</b> Cognizant sets a clear direction for enterprises with a three-part AI vision focused on improving software productivity, moving to an agentic operating layer, and tapping new labor models. Its Agentification framework and 6D method give organizations a unified way to link strategy, operating model, governance, and technology without disconnected use cases.</li> <li>• <b>Sustained capability expansion in agentic AI:</b> Cognizant’s Enterprise Agentification framework, Agent Foundry, and Neuro AI highlight end-to-end capabilities across strategy and design with build, integrate, and run with governance built in. It has a library of 350+ reusable agents, supported by 75+ AI patents, global innovation labs, and industry platforms such as StoreNEXT and TriZetto AI Gateway. Deep partnerships with hyperscalers, NVIDIA, and Workfabric, along with a world record-setting vibe coding initiative (~53,000 participants), demonstrate ongoing investments in talent and execution.</li> <li>• <b>Enterprise controls and architecture for safe, scalable agentic AI:</b> Cognizant stands out for its Enterprise Agentification framework, integrated platform stack, emphasis on context engineering, and ability to reinvest savings to advance broader agentic adoption. Its responsible AI standards, ISO 42001 certification, and ability to integrate across complex IT landscapes enable robust governance, scale, and system interoperability.</li> <li>• <b>Evidence of shift toward Services-as-Software:</b> Cognizant developed a multi-agent architecture for a UK-based financial institution handling over 40% of customer interactions, enabling higher throughput, improved CX, and scalability.</li> <li>• <b>Outcomes:</b> Cognizant deployed a multi-agent retail contact center stack to automate post-purchase journeys for a US-based retail brand. The client was able to handle ~40% of interactions digitally, easing agent load and improving customer satisfaction. For one of the largest mutual fund and investment companies in the UK, Cognizant used agentic reviewers to automate FCA-compliant content checks, reducing costs and approvals from weeks to minutes, and lift first-draft approvals to 80%.</li> <li>• <b>Customer kudos:</b> Xerox credits Cognizant’s deep expertise, clear roadmap, and tools for modernizing Snowflake, reducing complexity, speeding up compliance, and enabling real-time insights.</li> <li>• <b>Partner kudos:</b> Partners praise Cognizant’s repeatable AI productization, process/change leadership, industry depth, bold leadership bench, fast idea to client execution, and strong data and transformation capabilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Expand growth-oriented outcome evidence:</b> Despite strong efficiency gains and productivity improvements, Cognizant should work toward consistent reporting of revenue, improving CX, and top-line growth outcomes.</li> <li>• <b>Strengthen strategic and lifecycle roadmap:</b> The company would benefit from a clearer, end-to-end agentic roadmap and a more unified lifecycle narrative supported by stronger consulting-led guidance for strategy and transformation, not just delivery.</li> <li>• <b>Customer critiques:</b> Clients expect the company to manage attrition and are looking for co-innovation.</li> <li>• <b>Partner critiques:</b> Partners want stronger advisory, flexible deals, faster bold execution, quicker decisions, and better talent upskilling/retention.</li> </ul>

Key partnerships	Mergers and acquisitions (2022–2025)	Clients	Global operations and resources	Flagship IP
AWS, Google Cloud, Microsoft, NVIDIA, ServiceNow, Salesforce, WRITER, Workfabric, C3.ai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>2025: 3Cloud</b> (expert in Azure managed services)</li> <li>• <b>2024: Belcan</b> (digital engineering capabilities in aerospace, defense, space, marine, and industrial markets); <b>Thirdera</b>, (ServiceNow consulting and AI-driven workflow automation specialist)</li> <li>• <b>2023: Mobica</b> (IoT software engineering and embedded software development specialist)</li> <li>• <b>2022: AustinCSI</b> (premier digital transformation consultancy)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Number of clients in direct relation to agentic services:</b> 150–200</p> <p><b>Key clients:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading North America-based investment and insurance client</li> <li>• Leading US-based retail brand</li> <li>• Major food ordering client</li> <li>• Global biopharmaceutical company</li> <li>• Leading healthcare provider</li> </ul>	<p><b>Headcount supporting agentic services only:</b> 1,500+</p> <p><b>Delivery and innovation locations by major geo:</b> 170+ delivery centers with major presence in US, UK, India</p> <p>Six AI Innovation Studios to inspire, ideate, and research with clients, including Cognizant AI Ops Experience Studio in Bangalore, Advanced AI Lab in San Francisco, and GenAI Lab in Amsterdam</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Agent Foundry:</b> Provides a standardized environment to design, build, and manage enterprise-grade agents</li> <li>• <b>Neuro@ AI Multi-Agent Accelerator:</b> Enables teams to rapidly assemble and scale multi-agent systems using no-code, pre-built agent networks</li> <li>• <b>Cognizant Neuro@ AI Engineering:</b> Allows enterprises to embed AI into apps and workflows, connecting data and operational systems seamlessly</li> <li>• <b>Neuro CX:</b> Tracks and evaluates agent behavior to ensure quality, reliability, and performance across training and production</li> <li>• <b>Other solutions:</b> StoreNEXT (retail), HealthNEXT (healthcare), and TriZetto AI Gateway (insurance)</li> </ul>

# 6

## HFS Research authors

# HFS Research authors (1/2)



**Phil Fersht**  
CEO and Chief Analyst

[phil.fersht@hfsresearch.com](mailto:phil.fersht@hfsresearch.com)

Phil Fersht is widely recognized as the world's leading analyst focused on reinventing business operations to exploit AI innovations and the globalization of talent. He recently coined the term "Services-as-Software" to describe the future of professional services, where people-based work is blurring with technology.

Fersht identifies change agents enabling organizations to access critical data and exploit the huge global talent base. He trademarked the term "Generative Enterprise" in 2023, articulating the pursuit of AI technologies based on Language Models to reap huge business benefits for organizations seeing to continuously generating new ideas, redefine how work gets done, and disrupt business models steeped in decades of antiquated processes and technology.

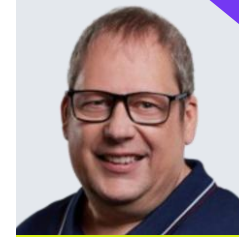
His reputation drove him to establish HFS Research in 2010, which today is one of the leading industry analyst and advisory firms and the undisputed leader in business and tech services and process technologies research.

In 2012, he authored the first analyst report on Robotic Process Automation (RPA), introducing this topic to the industry. He is widely recognized as the pioneering analyst voice that created and inspired today's RPA and process AI industry.

Fersht coined the term "OneOffice" in 2016, which describes HFS' vision for future business operations amidst the impact of cloud, automation, AI, and disruptive digital business models. OneOffice is the foundation of the hybrid (virtual-physical) workforce, where automation and AI tools augment the employee's digital capabilities, and the workplace becomes a plug-and-play, work-from-anywhere scenario. Silos between front and back-office are collapsed into one single office, where employees are empowered and motivated by common outcomes and values.

Prior to founding HFS in 2010, Phil has held various analyst roles for Gartner (AMR) and IDC and was BPO Marketplace leader for Deloitte Consulting across the United States. Over the past 20 years, Fersht has lived and worked in Europe, North America, and Asia, where he has advised on hundreds of operations strategies, outsourcing, and global business services engagements.

He is also the author of the most widely read and acclaimed blog in the global services industry, "Horses for Sources," which is now entering its 19th year. He regularly speaks at major industry events such as NASSCOM, ABSL, and HFS Research Summits. He has been named Analyst of the Year three times by the Institute of Industry Analyst Relations.



**David Cushman**  
Executive Research Leader

[david.cushman@hfsresearch.com](mailto:david.cushman@hfsresearch.com)

David Cushman is an executive research leader for HFS Research. He has a long-term focus on emerging technology, tracking OneOffice™ and OneEcosystem™ enablers from automation, artificial intelligence (AI), generative AI (GenAI), data and design thinking, Web3 and metaverse, process orchestration, workflow, and intelligence to quantum computing. He also leads the HFS Hot Tech program.

Experienced in startup, scale-up, and large-scale digital transformation programs, David has led digital development at the UK's fastest-growing media company, founded and grown digital consultancies across Europe, and worked with world-class companies as a director in digital strategy advisory at a Tier 1 services provider.

The author of *The 10 Principles of Open Business* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), David earned a joint honors degree in philosophy and sociology from the University of Essex.

He lives in Cambridgeshire, UK, with his wife and daughter and enjoys reading, writing, travelling, and thinking (exploration of all kinds). David embraces change and always seeks learning opportunities. But, for all that, he has been a supporter of Leeds United Football Club since he was seven years old. Some things just cannot be unlearned.

## HFS Research authors (2/2)



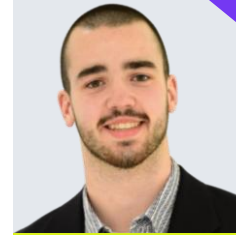
**Niti Jhunjunwala**  
Senior Analyst

[niti@hfsresearch.com](mailto:niti@hfsresearch.com)

Niti Jhunjunwala is a senior analyst for HFS Research. Her coverage areas include banking and financial services and GenAI. She also regularly contributes to competitive intelligence across IT and business process services and the HFS Market Index, a quarterly report that analyses the performance and major developments of top service providers over the past quarter.

Niti joined HFS with more than six years of experience in market research. Previously, she worked with Kantar (a leading data, insights, and consulting company). Her responsibilities included leading end-to-end research studies and delivering client presentations.

She earned an MBA in finance and marketing and B.Tech degree in information technology. Niti is based out of Kolkata, India. In her spare time, she loves reading, traveling, and going for walks. On weekends, she enjoys painting, spending time with her nephew, and binge-watching series.



**Jason Dann**  
Research Analyst

[Jason.dann@hfsresearch.com](mailto:Jason.dann@hfsresearch.com)

Jason Dann is a Research Analyst at HFS Research and is based in Boston, MA. He focuses on the evolving landscape of sports technology and the broader services ecosystem that supports enterprise transformation. His work spans multiple industries, with a particular emphasis on how service providers enable organizations to meet their strategic objectives.

Jason leads HFS's research in the Sports & Entertainment space, drawing on his background as a former college athlete and his deep interest in the intersection of sports and technology. He is especially focused on how innovation is enhancing operational performance and delivering superior experiences for both sports organizations and their fans.

He holds a degree in marketing from Bridgewater State University. In his free time, Jason engages in weightlifting and various sports. He's an avid supporter of all Boston teams, especially the Celtics and Red Sox.

## About HFS

- **INNOVATIVE**
- **INTREPID**
- **BOLD**

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