



Leapfrogging with agentic AI: the new competitive edge in B2B commerce

Capgemini 

Is agentic AI maturity a worthy pursuit?

B2B buyers are no longer passive participants in long procurement cycles – they arrive at decisions faster, often before traditional sellers even get a chance to know their needs.

That's because their buying habits are changing, no doubt influenced by the B2C experience, which favors autonomy, convenience, and 24/7 multi-channel access.

In fact, over the last two years, 89 percent of B2B buyers have been using generative AI (Gen AI) for product discovery, research, and decision-making, mirroring their B2C counterparts.¹ This sends a clear signal to sellers that it may be time to assess and possibly adapt (or overhaul) their current sales-led model.

No longer bound by the limitations of their software platforms, forward-thinking sellers are now offering two distinct streams of Gen AI influence in digital commerce:

1. Gen AI tools for employee use to improve operations and create better commerce experiences for buyers, e.g., text generation, segment creation, product information and exposure.

2. Gen AI tools for buyers to enable quick searches and product decisions, e.g., sales chat agents, natural language search tools, and AI review summaries.

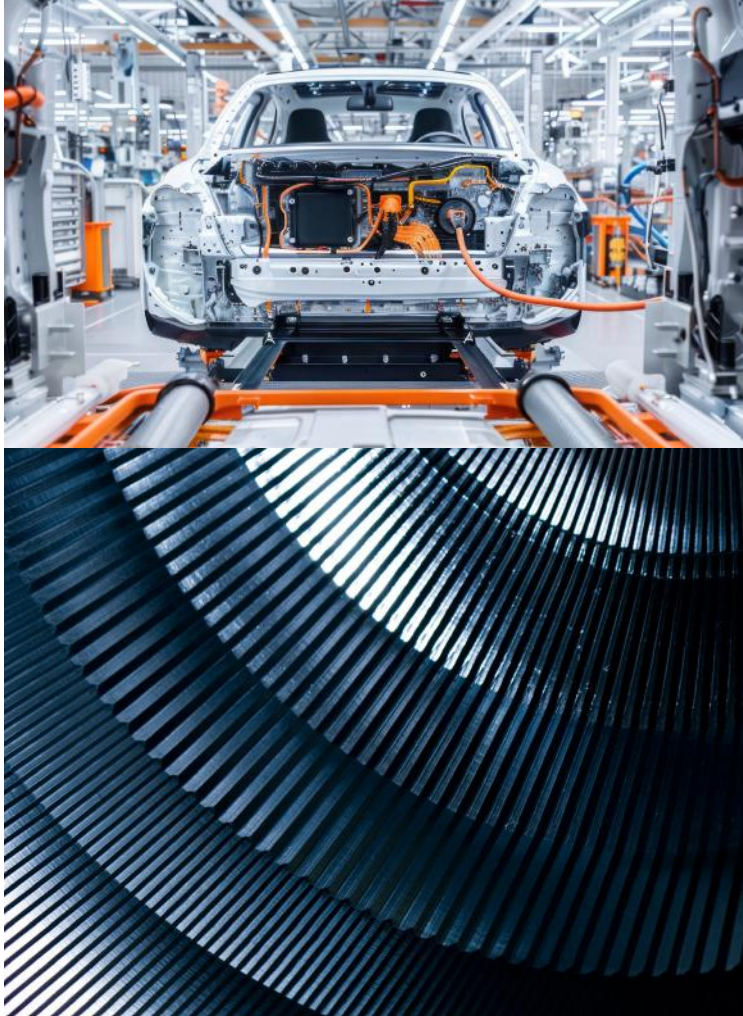


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of B2B buyers have been using generative AI over the last two years.

They're also using agentic AI to streamline and innovate their business processes and customer journeys. Agentic AI liberates sellers from the constraints of their platforms and empowers them to meet buyers where they are – mainly in Gen AI-driven conversations – whether that's on ChatGPT or another third-party AI tool that directs them to an e-commerce platform.

And because agentic AI is such an accessible technology, organizations that use it but lack digital and data maturity can catch up and even leapfrog their competitors much faster than was ever previously possible.



Out with the old, in with the new

For years, digital transformation has been the gold standard for modernizing B2B commerce, as organizations invested in custom-built or software-as-a-service (SaaS) products, data centralization, and workflow automation.

But these efforts, while valuable, are proving to be insufficient in a market where AI technologies are influencing people's habits, particularly in how they search and buy products.

Traditional digital transformation often revolves around customizing software platforms to fit business needs or stakeholder demands. Each SaaS product is evaluated for its out-of-the-box capabilities and potential for customization.

When we choose to omit building out customizations due to costs or simply because

it's not possible on the chosen platform, it leads to rigid workflows that are reactive rather than proactive. It's never a good sign when business processes become constrained by the limitations of their underlying platforms; they become defined not by intent but by what the software can or cannot do.

Additionally, because each SaaS platform operates independently, its data is often siloed. Although data platforms can mitigate this by merging data from separate systems, it's never in real time, and it's difficult to draw insights.

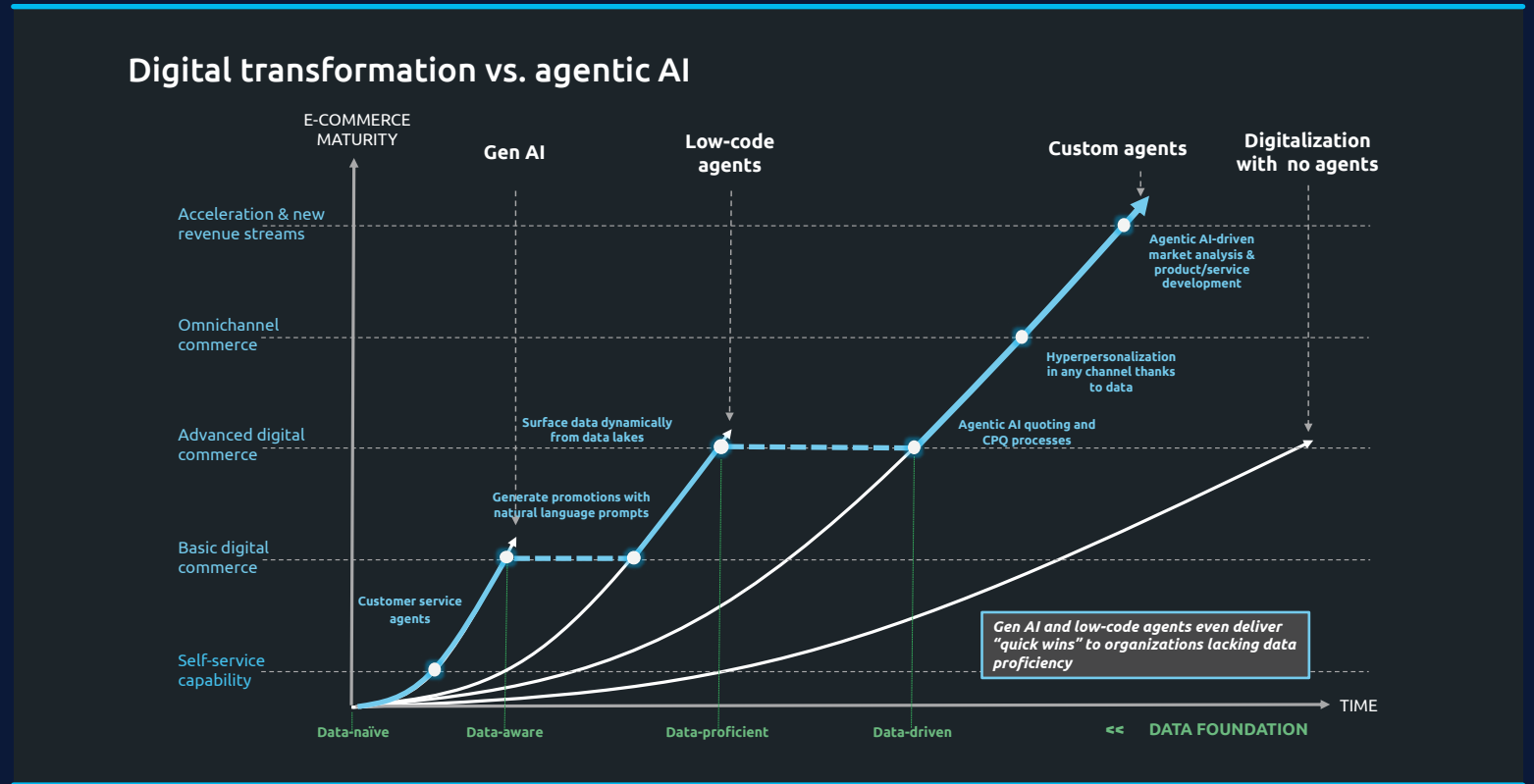
Agentic AI offers an enhancement to these inflexible platforms.

Instead of building systems around static capabilities, we construct dynamic, goal-oriented processes and then power them with autonomous agents.

These agents can perceive, reason, act, and collaborate with other agents to solve complex, multi-step problems across quoting, pricing, fulfillment, and support. Because they can collaborate in chains, they can adapt to their given context and initiate actions based on assumptions made from data insights.

Since agents can operate directly on data, even organizations that find themselves behind their more digitally mature competitors can benefit from agentic AI and, in some cases, outperform them. Why? Because agentic AI enables real-time responsiveness, hyper-personalization, and intelligent automation at scale.

Here's a visualization of how it tips the scales in the race to e-commerce maturity:



Consider the following scenario: A newly hired manager at a construction firm logs into a supplier portal for the first time.

Before they even start searching, an AI agent jumps in, inviting them to describe their needs in a simple search bar. As the agent collects the buyer's needs, multiple specialized agents – covering CRM, product configuration, pricing, and fulfillment – collaborate. Behind the scenes, they reorganize the landing page to show tailored product listings and recommendations, with detailed specifications, personalized quotes, delivery options, and stock updates in real time.

Agentic AI integration not only attracts more buyers and improves their experience, but it also solves the problem of labor shortages. This is especially prevalent in industries like manufacturing where sales team turnover can reach 30-35 percent. This leaves organizations struggling to maintain operations and customer engagement, as new staff often lack the expertise needed for effective selling.

Although AI agents can be helpful assistants to salespeople here, the future lies in the more advanced utility-based agents that will provide 24/7 automated support to prevent revenue losses when resources are stretched thin.

Much more than just a layer of digital transformation, agentic AI is a new foundation that's built to accommodate the next generation of business buyers. And since these buyers



increasingly rely on Gen AI tools to find and compare products, sellers must ensure their offerings are visible and accessible within those AI search environments.

This opens up an opportunity for agent-to-agent (A2A) communication. If offers, pricing, product details, and availability are structured in a way that's machine-readable, they'll be discoverable by buyer-side bots and crawlers – provided autonomous agents and A2A communication continue to evolve.

However, before A2A becomes a survival requirement, organizations can already enhance their product data by sharing product feeds with third-party Gen AI platforms, even without deploying agentic capabilities in operations or on their sites.

Misconceptions holding businesses back

Despite the growing urgency to modernize B2B commerce with AI capabilities, many organizations still remain anchored to outdated assumptions. These beliefs not only slow progress but actively erode competitiveness.

“We can just customize our current platform.”

This is one of the most common traps. Organizations assume that layering more custom code onto legacy platforms will help them keep pace. In reality, this approach leads to technical debt, brittle workflows, and systems that

can't evolve with changing buyer behavior. If organizations used agentic AI to support goal-driven processes, they could adapt in real time, without the need for constant reconfiguration.



“Automation replaces humans.”

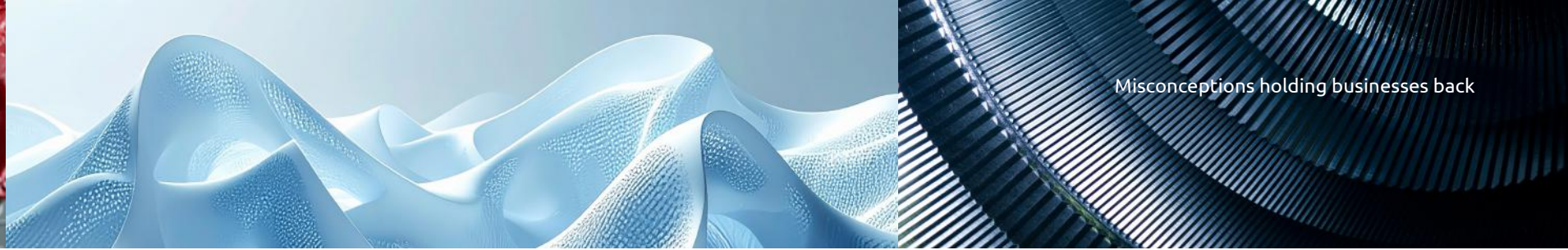
There are concerns that AI agents will replace people, when in fact they're there to elevate how they work. These agents are designed to handle repetitive, low-value tasks, like quoting, returns, and order tracking. If they can take over these tasks, salespeople can focus more on strategy development and relationship building.

Although the use of agentic AI will become more prevalent, Gartner predicts that even at the turn of this decade 75 percent of B2B buyers will still want to interact with a human for sales engagements. This re-emphasizes the importance of

human roles at critical touchpoints in the buyer journey.²

This isn't to suggest that humans and AI operate in isolation; rather, AI agents supplement the work done by humans (referred to as human-AI chemistry). As AI shifts from passive tools to autonomous agents embedded in core processes and functions, human-AI collaboration will become a defining factor for enterprise success.

² <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2025-08-25-gartner-says-by-2030-that-75-percent-of-b2b-buyers-will-prefer-sales-experiences-that-prioritize-human-interaction-over-ai>



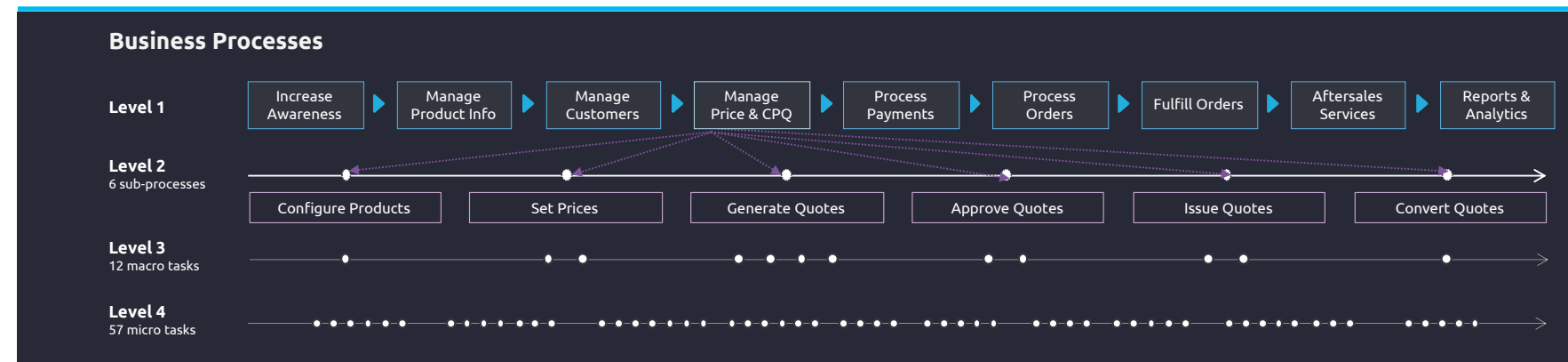
“Our current process is good enough.”

At least for some companies, this notion may have been true five years ago. But today, “good enough” most likely means slow, opaque, and invisible. Without AI-driven interfaces and round-the-clock responsiveness, sellers won’t be able to compete in a marketplace where decision-making is faster and buyer expectations are higher.

“Our workflow is too complex to automate.”

Complexity is no longer a barrier. If an organization can define its standard processes, agentic AI can be used to further break them down

into subprocesses, then connect them to the buyer’s journey. Here’s an illustration of this concept using “Manage price & CPQ.”



The practical path to agentic AI maturity

Adopting AI agents offers organizations both predictable and exponential benefits.

While predictable benefits come from designing agents for specific tasks and processes, exponential benefits arise from AI agents autonomously choosing helpful actions by calling on existing agents from a catalog.

The potential rewards – from elevating operational efficiency (thus reducing the cost of quoting and returns) to boosting growth (by enhancing customer satisfaction and retention) – are powerful drivers for business performance. Early adopters will enjoy a significant competitive edge.

The good news is that the journey to agentic AI usually doesn't require a complete overhaul but an iterative approach that aligns with an organization's current data maturity. One of the most powerful aspects of agentic AI is its flexibility, as it can be deployed in stages, delivering value from day one while laying the foundation for bigger and better changes to come.

Strategic vision and alignment are the starting points of effectively implementing AI at scale. It's about setting the business, organizational, and operating requirements to enable AI across



the company. This includes C-suite alignment, value materialization, and organizational transformation, which will create a pathway for human-AI chemistry.

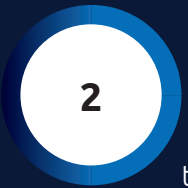


Here's our proven five-step approach to transforming a business into an agentic AI-powered enterprise:



1 Use Gen AI chat assistants

to help salespeople with daily tasks, e.g., drafting personalized emails for client outreach, gathering and synthesizing competitor and market intelligence.



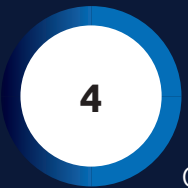
2 Build a large language model (LLM) agent chain

to automate processes. As agents advise humans on generating quotes or upselling products, reinforce and train each agent to optimize its recommendations. By continuously learning from each interaction, agents become more adept at streamlining workflows, identifying opportunities that work, and adapting to their given situation.



3 Empower agents to self-organize and use self-orchestration

to determine which other agents should be called next. At this stage, agents begin to analyze incoming requests, assess the complexity of the task, and dynamically assign responsibilities within their network.



4 Activate agents on triggers and reinforce collaboration.

Configure agents to launch automatically in response to specific business events or data changes. For example, when a customer begins searching for a product on a digital platform, an AI agent can be activated to assist with any questions about the product, customization options, pricing, and delivery. This will eliminate manual intervention and reduce response times. Reinforcement learning can help reward not just individual agent actions but the performance of the entire chain. Agents could eventually request additional agents when gaps are detected.



5 Enable agents to make decisions independently

when their confidence in outcomes surpasses a defined threshold. For instance, an agent might analyze hundreds of data points, such as news stories, inventory, historical orders, and client behaviors, and, upon achieving high predictive certainty, autonomously adjust product sorting to improve conversion rates for a targeted segment. Actions like these could be tracked and fed back into the agent's learning cycle, allowing for continual refinement and smarter decisions over time.



How to build trust into agentic AI

Agentic AI offers great potential. But with more autonomy comes more responsibility. As autonomous agents make key decisions across B2B commerce operations, we must ensure they behave ethically, securely, and in alignment with business goals.

This is where thoughtful guardrails can keep AI agents within clearly defined boundaries in order to protect clients, employees, and the business from unintended consequences.

Capgemini's approach to agentic design incorporates three core guardrail principles:

- **Operational guardrails** ensure generated content and agent actions meet user expectations and business intent. They also help maintain consistency across client interactions, pricing logic, and fulfillment processes.

- **Ethical guardrails** are designed to detect and block biased or harmful outputs before they reach clients. This includes filtering for stereotypes, offensive language, and hallucinated content. Agents can be tuned using bias detection tools in AI Foundry, Bedrock, or Vertex AI.

- **Legal guardrails** validate that any agent-generated content and decisions comply with industry-specific regulations and legal standards. After all, it's important for agents to respect the rules of the domain they operate in.

Making streamlined procurement and logistics real

A large biotech company faced a familiar challenge: How can we modernize procurement and logistics workflows in a dynamic, high-stakes environment?

Despite their scale and sophistication, the company struggled with error-prone approval processes that were also inconsistent and inefficient. Slow decision making and complex interactions between AI systems and human teams were additional problems.

Capgemini worked with the client to create a solution centered around an autonomous agent that would be triggered by external events, such as inventory changes or order requests.

The agent would:

- Proactively initiate a step-by-step procurement plan.
- Collaborate with human experts to execute tasks.
- Analyze data and make recommendations.
- Automate pre-approved actions while seeking human validation for more important decisions.



This hybrid human-AI collaboration ensured that strategic oversight remained intact while routine tasks were handled with speed and precision.

By integrating agentic AI into their operations, the client not only streamlined workflows but also unlocked a new level of agility that resulted in fewer delays, greater consistency, and better decision-making accuracy across the board.

Succeeding with agentic AI

Capgemini has been exploring the benefits of integrating agentic AI into multiple business contexts. We've been recognized as a [“Leader” in the 2025 Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ for Digital Experience Services](#) and in [The Forrester Wave: AI services, Q2 2024 report](#) as one of only two companies in this category.

This distinction was made possible thanks to our comprehensive approach to agentic AI transformation. Only Capgemini brings the unique combination of AI thought leadership and innovations, with the ability to scale those innovations into the enterprise. Our multi-disciplinary approach ensures that every solution is grounded in smart analytics and practical strategy, driven by technology, and tailored to human needs.

Capgemini differentiates itself further through the use of our own proprietary AI frameworks:

- **RAISE™** (Reliable AI Solution Engineering): a collection of best-of-breed tools to advance the design, testing, security, and scalable deployment of Gen AI solutions.
- **Agentic SDLC** (software development lifecycle): a framework for structured agent development, including orchestration templates for B2B processes. It also includes customizable private assistant blueprints to accelerate deployment and scale AI agents with confidence.

Whether you're just beginning your agentic AI journey or looking to create custom agentic and Gen AI solutions, now is the time to partner with experts who can help your business reach its full potential with this technology.

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About Capgemini

Capgemini is an AI-powered global business and technology transformation partner, delivering tangible business value. We imagine the future of organizations and make it real with AI, technology and people. With our strong heritage of nearly 60 years, we are a responsible and diverse group of 420,000 team members in more than 50 countries. We deliver end-to-end services and solutions with our deep industry expertise and strong partner ecosystem, leveraging our capabilities across strategy, technology, design, engineering and business operations. The Group reported 2025 global revenues of €22.5 billion.

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