From automation to autonomy:

The new era of *ESM*

Capgemini

What if your service operations could think, act, and adapt…

In a rapidly evolving digital era, enterprise service management (ESM) stands at a transformative crossroads. Where automation once promised efficiency, generative AI delivered intelligence, reshaping how enterprises manage tickets, streamline repetitive tasks, and personalize interactions.

But that was just the beginning.

Agentic AI is now emerging, not as an extension of automation, but as a redefinition of it. Where generative AI provides the knowledge layer, agentic AI builds the decision and action layer, turning insight into initiative. These intelligent agents don't wait for prompts. They set goals, interpret context, take initiative, and learn from outcomes. They aren't only embedded in tools, but orchestrate the work itself, proactively surfacing issues, coordinating actions, and aligning with business priorities.

The result? A new paradigm of intelligent service: adaptive, autonomous, and relentlessly outcome-focused.

Gartner forecasts that by 2028, 33% of enterprise software will embed agentic AI – up from less than 1% in 2024. Just a year later, these systems are expected to autonomously resolve 80% of service issues, cutting operational costs by 30%. And by 2030, half of all service requests may no longer come from humans – but from machine customers.

However, if the last few years have taught us anything, it's that the future doesn't wait for forecasts to catch up. The pace of adoption is accelerating. Enterprises that once cautiously explored generative AI are now piloting agentic AI in production.

CIOs are no longer asking if machines will initiate service. They're asking how soon, and how ready their infrastructure is to support it. What was once a future scenario is fast becoming operational reality. The question has shifted from when this transformation will happen, to whether our systems, teams, and governance models are prepared to meet it.

Incremental improvement is no longer enough. Leaders need to fundamentally redefine how enterprise services are conceived, executed, and experienced. The future of ESM is both intelligent and autonomous.

The window to lead is closing

The shift to autonomy is already underway. What was once a future scenario is becoming operational reality.

This acceleration is no coincidence. The conditions are aligned: the technology is ready, the platforms are mature, and the business need is urgent. Service organizations are under pressure to deliver faster, more personalized, and resilient support at scale. Agentic AI offers a path forward by transforming service from reactive to proactive, from manual to orchestrated.

Readiness is the differentiator. More than 80% of AI initiatives stall before reaching scale, not because the tools fail, but because organizations lack the data maturity, governance, and cross-functional alignment to operationalize autonomy. In fact, 62% of enterprises cite insufficient internal expertise as the top barrier to adopting generative or agentic AI. And even when the talent is in place, only 42% of data executives say they have the data required to train generative AI models. And while that's a challenge for generative AI, agentic systems demand even more – structured context, orchestration logic, and real-time feedback loops – making data readiness a strategic imperative.

Without the right people, structures, and data foundations, even the most advanced platforms can underdeliver. This results in stalled innovation, lost momentum, fragmented trust, and missed opportunity.

Those who wait place themselves at strategic risk. The enterprises that act now will shape the standards, build the talent, and define the future of intelligent service. Those who delay may find themselves adapting to systems they didn't design and outcomes they didn't choose.

The time to prepare is not when agentic AI becomes mainstream. It's now, while the opportunity to lead still exists.

To act on this opportunity, enterprises must go beyond experimentation and understand what truly sets agentic AI apart. This is a re-architecture of how decisions are made and actions are executed across the enterprise. To grasp the scale of change, we need to look at how service management is moving from intelligent automation to agentic operations.

From intelligent automation to agentic operations

Agentic AI builds on the foundations laid by generative AI, but extends far beyond content generation. Where Gen AI interprets, summarizes, and assists, agentic AI makes decisions and initiates actions. This creates a new operational layer that transforms ESM from a reactive support model into a proactive, goal-driven capability.

This shift isn't about replacement – it's augmentation. Gen AI provides the knowledge and content layer; agentic AI adds contextual decision-making and execution. Together, they redefine how incidents are resolved, changes are managed, and service value is delivered.

Agentic operations in action:

- Change management: AI digital workers perform risk assessments before CAB reviews, analyzing complexity, historical outcomes, interdependencies, and regulatory risks. After implementation, they conduct post-implementation reviews (PIRs), validating whether changes met objectives, identifying gaps or deviations, and recommending improvements for future change cycles.
- Incident management: Beyond ticket routing, AI agents investigate context, correlate signals, and recommend or initiate resolution steps. In major incidents, they support real-time prioritization and stakeholder coordination based on business impact.
- Proactive problem management: AI workers detect patterns across incidents, changes, and alerts, surfacing emerging risks and enabling problem managers to focus on systemic improvements and reliability engineering.

This redefines the shape and speed of workflows. In Gen AI-led environments, people initiate processes. In agentic systems, AI detects issues, recommends actions, and adapts autonomously. The result is dynamic, co-orchestrated service delivery that evolves in real time.

Looking forward, agentic AI goes beyond scaling automation and reshapes the operating model entirely. It shifts roles from execution to orchestration, enabling humans to focus on judgment, stewardship, and strategy. Together, human-AI teams transform service delivery from a static function into a continuously learning, value-driven engine.

Reimagining service roles in the age of agentic AI

As enterprises move beyond traditional automation into the era of agentic AI, service management is being fundamentally redefined. Intelligent agents can act, learn, and collaborate, transforming how value is created, scaled, and sustained.

This evolution is driving a shift from siloed functions – such as incident, change, and service desk management – toward integrated, cross-functional service teams. At the center of this transformation is an emerging role: the digital workforce/service manager. This role bridges the gap between business intent and autonomous execution, ensuring agentic systems remain aligned, deliver measurable outcomes, and continuously improve.

Agentic AI doesn't remove human contribution. It amplifies it. Agents handle scale and complexity, while human roles evolve to focus on strategic oversight, value creation, and ethical stewardship. For example:

- Incident managers move from reactive firefighting to monitoring AI-flagged patterns and recommending proactive interventions.
- Problem managers focus on systemic improvement, using insights uncovered by agents to drive resilience.
- Change managers become strategic enablers of safe autonomy – validating agent-initiated proposals while ensuring alignment and compliance.

This is not a future of fewer roles – but of more empowered ones. It's a shift from managing processes to designing adaptive service experiences where humans and AI work in dynamic partnership, guided by intent and driven by intelligence.

Case spotlight: Autonomy at scale in healthcare

In healthcare, every second counts. Agentic AI is transforming critical IT operations from reactive support to proactive, autonomous service.

Capgemini partnered with a global healthcare provider serving 300,000+ users to embed agentic AI into their digital ecosystem. The result: a conversational assistant built on ServiceNow and Microsoft Teams, now the front door for enterprise IT.

The AI agent:

- Handles issue reporting, ticket tracking, and service requests
- Detects anomalies, correlates incidents, and proposes resolutions
- Independently initiates over 20% of service tickets.

This shift to autonomy improves service desk efficiency, boosts user satisfaction, and frees up talent for innovation and care. It has also strengthened operational resilience, enabling the organization to deliver consistent support in a high-pressure, high-stakes environment.

From vision to reality: A leadership blueprint

Realizing the promise of agentic AI requires strategic execution. Scaling autonomy with purpose, trust, and resilience depends on five foundational pillars that translate vision into operational reality. From aligning leadership and empowering teams to embedding governance, engineering adaptability, and forging strategic partnerships – each plays a critical role in making autonomy sustainable, scalable, and human-aligned.

Leading for success: Strategy, sponsorship, and sustained momentum

Agentic AI demands a new kind of leadership. The success of enterprises hinges not only on technical readiness, but on strategic clarity, executive sponsorship, and organizational alignment.

With so many potential use cases for agentic AI, leaders must be intentional about where to begin and how to scale. Leaders should:

- **Prioritize with purpose,** focusing on areas where autonomy drives measurable outcomes
- **Sponsor with conviction,** providing visible executive support that signals commitment
- **Plan with realism,** by evaluating data maturity, platform readiness, and change capacity
- **Manage change proactively,** embedding trust-building and role clarity from the start.

Successful transformations treat agentic AI as an ongoing journey that is anchored in early wins, iterative scaling, and measurable impact.

This is how autonomy becomes sustainable. It evolves beyond a proof of concept to a new operating norm.

Scaling autonomy: Empowerment needs expertise

Agentic AI is reshaping enterprise operations, elevating service teams from task execution to intelligent orchestration. But scaling autonomy requires more than low-code tools and prebuilt agents. These platforms improve accessibility, but not production readiness. Even out-of-the-box agents must be tuned, contextualized, and governed to operate safely and adapt in real time.

Delivering resilient autonomy demands deep expertise, adaptive architecture, and strategic leadership.

Low-code platforms like ServiceNow empower non-technical business users to participate in app and workflow creation. But accessibility doesn't eliminate complexity. Building robust, production-grade agents still requires fluency in LLM behavior, prompt design, ACLs, APIs, and enterprise architecture.

To scale responsibly, organizations must:

- **Form fusion teams –** bringing together analysts, architects, engineers, and compliance leads to design, deploy, and govern AI agents with consistency and speed
- **Invest in AI literacy and capability building,** through a mix of upskilling, hiring, and strategic partnerships
- **Secure executive sponsorship,** to align autonomy with funding, accountability, and long-term momentum.

Designing for trust: Governance, ethics, and oversight

As decision-making shifts to autonomous systems, trust and accountability become foundational. Agentic AI must be governed with intentional design:

- **Governance** defines decision rights, escalation paths, and organizational risk controls.
- **Explainability** ensures decisions are traceable and understandable across technical and business domains.
- **Ethical alignment** requires proactive measures to address bias, privacy, and regulatory expectations.

AI governance must be treated as a core operating model, supported by controls and enabling technologies that manage risk and drive responsible innovation. Trust must be embedded in the architecture: AI handles execution, while humans guide intent, ethics, and oversight.

Designing for adaptability and scale

Agentic AI reshapes existing systems, and requires architecture that is intentionally designed for scale, resilience, and trust. To support agentic AI autonomy, enterprises must rethink their architecture from the ground up.

This begins with:

- **Domain-driven design:** Define agent boundaries that align with team structures and business functions, decomposing workflows into clear, role-specific tasks to avoid responsibilities overlap.
- **Knowledge engineering:** Enable agents to act with context, drawing on knowledge articles, CMDB records, and external sources via ServiceNow Integration Hub or Workflow Data Fabric, enabling precise, informed decisions.
- **Modular system design:** Architect for flexibility, building systems where agents can connect, act, and respond in real time across enterprise platforms. Consider how systems like ServiceNow might interoperate with tools like Salesforce and Microsoft Teams to enable real-time, cross-platform orchestration.

- **Reference architectures:** Scalable agentic AI begins with structure. Use frameworks like ServiceNow's CSDM to embed governance, integration standards, and reusable patterns – providing a consistent foundation for scalable autonomy.
- **Assessment frameworks:** Benchmark platform readiness by evaluating data quality, system health, and automation maturity – ensuring the environment can support agentic operations at scale.
- **Evaluation models:** Guide technology and orchestration choices to align with business priorities, platform strategy, and ecosystem evolution.

A strong architecture is what turns autonomy from pilot into platform. It's what enables agents to scale responsibly, adapt dynamically, and operate transparently – across use cases, teams, and industries.

Partnering for progress

Agentic transformation is not a solo pursuit – it's plug-and-partner.

It requires a network of trusted collaborators who bring the right mix of frameworks, platforms, and experience to accelerate your path to autonomy, while avoiding common pitfalls.

Strategic partnerships help enterprises:

- Accelerate outcomes with prebuilt components and proven frameworks
- Look for partners with deep expertise in ServiceNow and a proven track record across enterprise AI, multi-cloud platforms, and regulated industry environments
- Embed governance early by integrating responsible AI principles from day one
- Build internal capability through co-creation and enablement, avoiding long-term dependency
- Stay adaptable with ongoing support to evolve strategies and evaluate emerging tools.

The best partnerships function as embedded allies, working together to design the path to scalable, ethical, and outcome-driven autonomy.

In this new era of intelligent service, progress isn't just about what you build but who you build it with.

The time to lead is now

The future of enterprise service management is intelligent, autonomous, adaptive, and aligned with business purpose. However, this transformation won't happen through technology alone. It demands vision, commitment, and leadership.

At Capgemini, we don't just deploy AI, we embed agentic intelligence into the core of service delivery. From day one, our focus is on resilience, scalability, and meaningful outcomes. We connect Gen AI's creative potential with measurable results, rearchitecting operations to drive lasting value.

The leaders of this new era won't be those who adopt AI – they'll be the ones who design for agency, embed accountability, and scale with purpose. They'll operationalize human-AI collaboration, empower cross-functional teams, and introduce autonomy into every layer of the service model.

The question is no longer if agentic AI will reshape enterprise service, but who will shape what comes next.

Leadership starts now. Are you ready to rethink what's possible?

About Capgemini

Capgemini is an AI-powered global business and technology transformation partner, delivering tangible business value. We imagine the future of organisations 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 2024 global revenues of €22.1 billion.

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