

AGENTIC AI AND THE IT BALANCING ACT: SAVING COSTS WHILE PRIORITIZING PEOPLE



Today, the tech required for an always-on world seems to be on an almost daily evolution, and AI is at the heart of it. A lot of our customers have already made or are making the move to an AIOps-based infrastructure that lives in a cloud or hybrid cloud environment. And now comes the promise of agentic AI, with all sources heralding it as a tidal wave, poised to compete with smartphones in its far-reaching impact. But can it really change the world? With the right planning and governance, I think yes. And I believe it may be one of the smartest IT investments organizations will ever make.

The quiet part out loud

So, let's address the elephant in the room: agentic AI also has the power to reduce workforce costs—and yes, that makes a lot of IT leaders uncomfortable. Not because the tech isn't compelling, but because teams are made up of people. People with institutional knowledge, technical expertise, and a lot of pride in their work. So, what happens when AI starts doing some of that work faster and cheaper?

Here's the short answer: you don't lose value when you reduce repetitive work—you redirect it. Agentic AI thrives in taking on structured, time-consuming tasks like incident resolution, change management, and proactive monitoring. That's where cost savings begin: fewer manual hours, fewer escalations, and faster resolutions.

Change the mix

The current economics are that we spend 90 percent of our time (and budget) on “keep the lights on” work and 10 percent on work that can change the business because there simply isn't time to do both. One real world example? For years, enterprise project management offices have captured demands (sometimes called ideas) that have yet to see the light of day because they've been either too expensive or too unrealistic to work on.

Agentic AI gives us the opportunity to change the mix. Enterprises can use the extra capacity freed up by agentic AI to focus on the captured demands that have gone unaddressed. Again, AI isn't about gutting teams—it's about giving your people space to do more of what only humans can do: apply judgment, respond with empathy, and make decisions in messy, unstructured situations where AI still struggles.

Keep humans in the loop

Case in point: earlier this year, a major airline suffered customer backlash when its automated system rebooked passengers on inconvenient, impractical routes after weather disruptions—with no human check before the messages went out. The company had the right tech but missed the human layer of oversight. That's the risk when automation becomes a blunt instrument. Agentic AI, used well, doesn't replace people—it reroutes the work so humans can provide guidance, make calls when things aren't clear-cut, and prevent problems AI can't predict.

That's why it's not just about cost savings—it's about strategic efficiency. With AI handling repeatable tasks, IT teams can focus on security, governance, long-term planning, and experience optimization. These are areas where human strengths matter most—and where companies differentiate. And let's be honest: IT budgets aren't getting any looser. If you're not exploring how AI can streamline your operations, someone else in your industry already is. Staying competitive means making room for tools that amplify your team's impact, not shrink it.

To be continued

This is the first of a three-part conversation. Next, we'll dig into how you can approach getting agentic AI up and running with compelling use cases that are more likely to get buy-in across the business. And in the final post, we'll show how to take that momentum to the C-suite, framing the savings and innovation in a way that unlocks continued investment. Because this isn't just a tech shift. It's a business imperative.