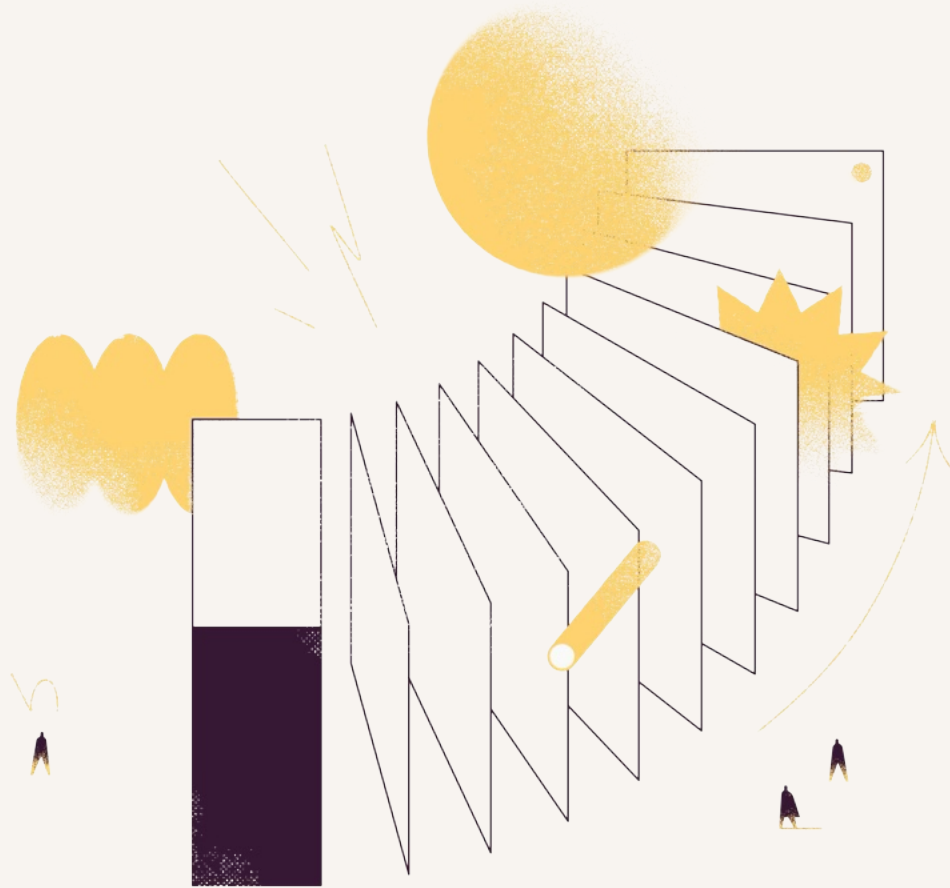# Why AI orchestration is becoming the enterprise standard

zapier

You're under pressure to unlock the full potential of AI—cut costs, move faster, and stay competitive—without compromising security or scale. But most enterprise tech stacks weren't built for that kind of agility.

As more teams race to implement AI, leaders are feeling the strain:

⚠ Legacy platforms can't support adaptive AI workflows

⚠ Siloed tools and data block end-to-end intelligence

⚠ Building complex systems in-house drains developer time

Traditional integration tools like iPaaS helped stitch systems together, but they weren't designed to handle the real-time decisions, dynamic logic, and scale AI now demands. They're bridges between apps, not conductors of intelligent systems.

That's why forward-thinking leaders are embracing **AI orchestration**—a smarter, more scalable approach that coordinates tools, data, and AI agents across entire workflows. This report explores how enterprises are shifting from static integrations to adaptive, intelligent systems that act on data, learn over time, and deliver measurable impact.

In this report, you'll learn:

1. What **AI orchestration** is—and why it matters now

2. Why integration alone can't meet **modern AI demands**

3. How **orchestrated AI agents** are reshaping enterprise productivity

4. What it takes to **scale AI** with a maturity model you can act on

1. What is AI orchestration?

We're witnessing the most profound shift in enterprise automation since the advent of APIs. Automation helped us offload repetitive work. Integration connected our tools into powerful, multi-step workflows. But today's enterprises need more—systems that can think, adapt, and orchestrate decisions in real time. That need has ushered in a new era: the Age of AI Orchestration.

AI orchestration is the connected, end-to-end application of AI tools, agents, and automations across workflows, teams, and systems. It uses structured logic and adaptive intelligence to decide which tool should act, when, and how—so your business moves faster without giving up control.

Instead of automating isolated tasks, orchestration links them into a cohesive system. It doesn't just notify sales when a lead comes in; it qualifies that lead, enriches the data, routes it to the right rep, and personalizes the next steps. That's orchestration in action.

While AI automation helps complete individual tasks, AI orchestration manages the full workflow. It adapts as work unfolds, scaling impact across teams and making complex processes feel effortless.

Automation → Orchestration

	AI automation		AI orchestration
Scope	*Add AI into individual workflows*		*Connect AI to tools, teams, and workflows*
Function	*Perform individual tasks or workflows*		*Connect multiple workflows into systems*
Example	*"Send an email when a lead comes in + notify sales"*		*"Qualify, route, notify, and personalize the entire lead journey for new leads"*

Still wondering what orchestration looks like in practice? Picture an orchestra.

Each section—strings, woodwinds, percussion—plays its part. But it's the conductor who ensures everything comes together in sync. The conductor is your AI orchestration platform. Without it, talented musicians play independently and create chaos instead of harmony.

THAT'S WHAT MAKES AI ORCHESTRATION A FUNDAMENTAL STEP FORWARD.

It's not just about connecting systems. AI orchestration aligns intelligence, data, and action to drive impact at scale. And for enterprise leaders, that shift is what separates fragmented AI experiments from real business transformation.

AI orchestration keeps your tech playing in tune

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Traditional iPaaS solutions can't do it all anymore, and it's time to embrace orchestration—capable, accessible, and unified. If you're still thinking integration, maybe it's time to think bigger. **Welcome to the Age of AI Orchestration.**

—**Wade Foster**
   CEO of Zapier

Here's the reality: AI orchestration is becoming essential for enterprises that want to innovate and stay competitive. Organizations that embrace orchestration are better equipped to move beyond manual processes and the limitations of traditional integration alone.

Bridge the gap between AI promise and impact

Many enterprises struggle to turn promising AI experiments into real impact—not because the technology falls short, but because the infrastructure to scale it is missing.

AI orchestration bridges this gap by embedding intelligence into existing systems, processes, and teams. Instead of siloed efforts, AI becomes part of everyday operations—triggering the right actions, at the right time, in the right context.

The result: tangible business outcomes, trackable ROI, and scalable success across the organization.

vector

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AI orchestration unlocks more productivity and intelligence in enterprise workflows. One of the biggest challenges in the enterprise world is the amount of data, both internal and external, that needs to be shared, processed, and activated. With AI, we can crunch this data and activate it much more quickly! I'm excited for what's to come.

—**Sara McNamara**
Founding Revenue Operations
and GTM Strategy Lead, Vector

Scale efficiency without scaling complexity

Scaling AI through traditional integration platforms often leads to rising complexity, higher costs, and constant maintenance—enough to have your dev team pulling their hair out. Every new implementation typically demands custom work and ongoing support.

AI orchestration offers a smarter alternative: it frees developers to focus on strategic initiatives while enabling non-technical teams to build intelligent systems without writing a line of code. That means fewer tickets, less oversight, and more time spent on meaningful work.

And the best part? Those efficiency gains compound. Each new workflow builds on existing infrastructure, making future deployments faster, smoother, and far less painful.

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The biggest thing people get wrong about AI orchestration is **not understanding that it's about running AI in your sleep.** It's not just about using AI for a single, isolated task. It's about building robust, automated systems that are powered by AI, where AI is a component that performs tasks intelligently within a larger, orchestrated workflow that can run continuously."

—**Reid Robinson**
Lead Product Manager, Zapier
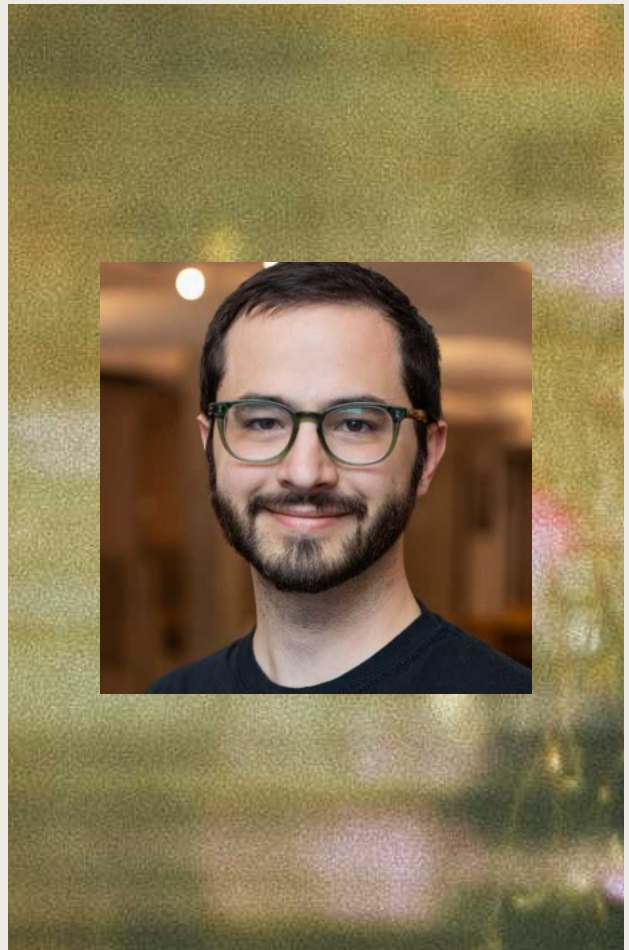
Enable continuous learning in every workflow

Traditional automation systems operate with fixed logic that requires manual updates when business conditions change. But orchestration platforms actually learn from experience.

Orchestration platforms **loop outcomes back into AI systems**, enabling continuous improvement of workflows, predictions, and automation. Over time, these systems self-optimize, learning from successes and failures and adapting based on the results. The more you use these systems, the more effective they get.

Accelerates ROI on AI investments faster

Many enterprises struggle to see ROI from their AI efforts. You may have seen impressive technical capabilities in individual projects, but this hasn't translated into better business outcomes. Broader impact requires the power of scale.

AI orchestration accelerates deployment and value realization by giving teams the infrastructure to implement, iterate, and scale AI use cases in days—not the weeks or months needed with integration platforms.
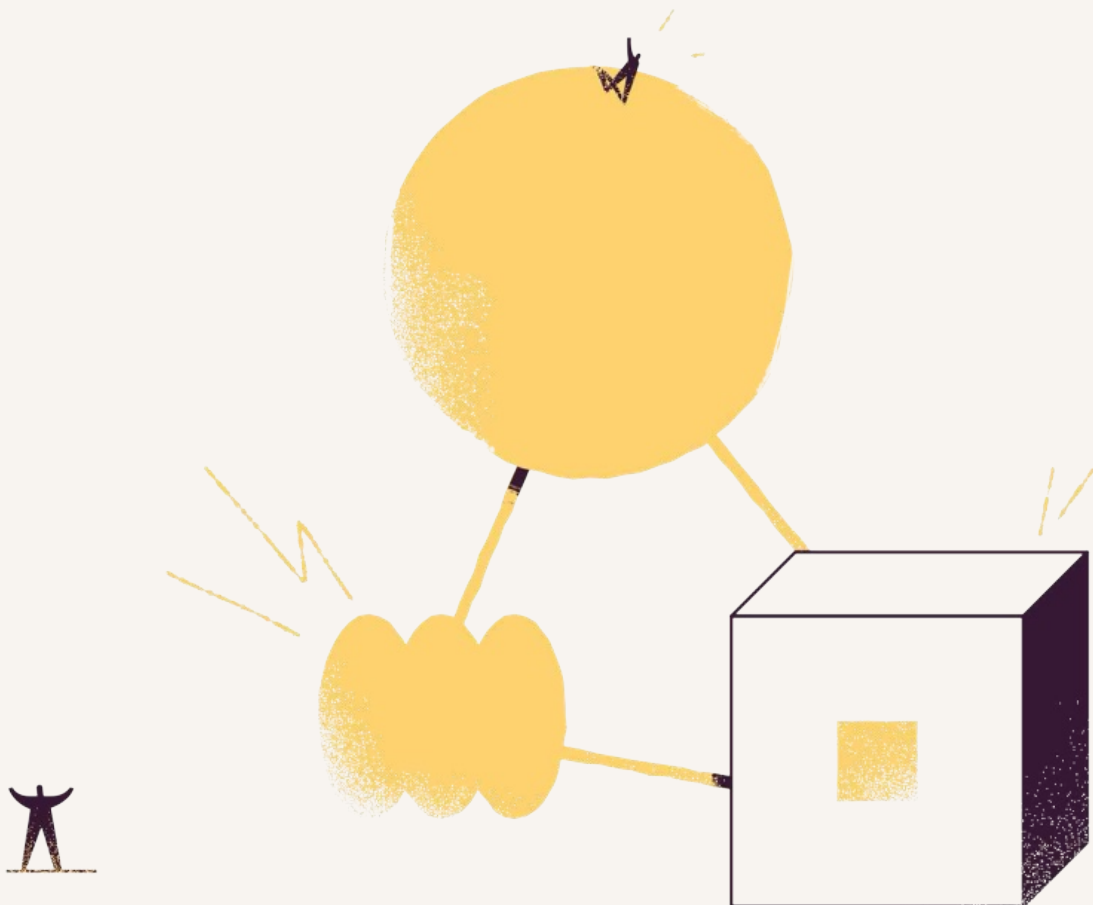
2. Why AI orchestration goes beyond integration

Although traditional integration platforms as a service (known as iPaaS) have served organizations well when connecting disparate systems in your tech stack, they weren't designed with AI in mind. They can't keep up with intelligent, adaptive AI workflows. This has created a widening chasm between what integration platforms can offer and what enterprises actually need. Many companies have fallen into that gap.
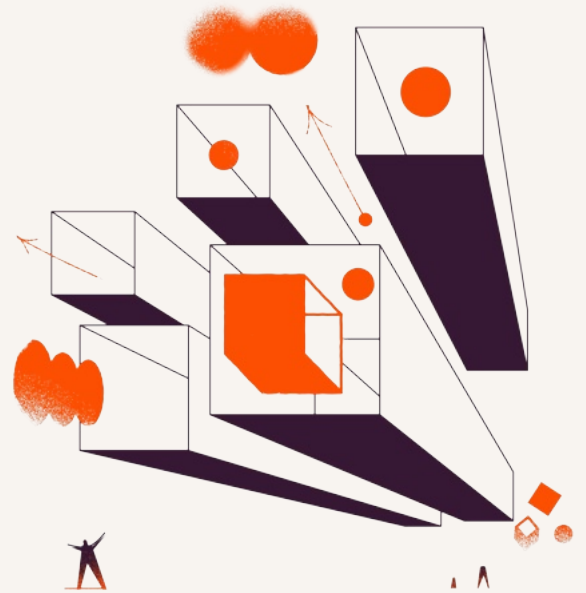
The bridge vs. the brain

Let's get into the nitty gritty and compare these two frameworks head to head. Think about AI orchestration in terms of end-to-end workflow (like complex systems), scale, or transformation. Think about iPaaS for individual tasks or just starting to explore what AI can do.

The fundamental differences become clear when we take a look at how both handle complexity.

Integration platforms as a service (iPaaS) create reliable connections between systems. These connections are crucial infrastructure that allows tools to work together. Essentially, integration is the equivalent of a bridge that connects multiple islands—it gets you from Point A to Point B, but you're limited to the bridges you build yourself.

Integration platforms excel at:

✓   Stable, repeatable integrations where the logic doesn't change often

✓   Syncing structured data between systems, notifications, or basic automated workflows

SupportLogic

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We've outgrown static integrations. The future is systems that learn, adapt, and execute autonomously across the business. With tools like Zapier, we're shipping intelligent workflows in hours, not quarters, and that speed reflects a bigger mindset shift in how we build modern operations.

—**Blake Cohlan**
Senior Director of Growth Marketing, SupportLogic

AI orchestration platforms allow organizations to build entire intelligent ecosystems. It's an adaptive brain that makes decisions on your behalf. In AI orchestration, autonomous AI agents can perceive, reason, and act in real-time as part of workflows that span your entire business.

AI orchestration is more like an intelligent network that offers real-time route recommendations based on live data and adapts accordingly. GPS tools like Waze and Google Maps fit the bill.

AI orchestration platforms excel at:

✓ Dynamic, high-complexity workflows requiring adaptability, learning, and autonomy

✓ AI use cases with changing data, decision trees, and cross-functional collaboration

Where traditional integration platforms fall short

The crux of the integration vs. orchestration battle goes beyond differing frameworks. Integrated workflows are static, brittle, and labor-intensive to maintain. AI orchestration adapts in real time and scales with minimal maintenance.

IPAAS VS. AI ORCHESTRATION: HITTING THE CAPABILITIES CEILING	
Integration platform as a service (iPaaS)	**AI orchestration platform**
Static logic. iPaaS can't make context-based decisions since these solutions often run workflows on fixed, rules-based logic.	**Enable contextual decision-making.** AI orchestration allows teams to respond in real time based on streaming data, customer behavior, or system changes.
Not scalable. When companies try to scale AI-powered workflows, it often overwhelms traditional integration platforms. It's too onerous to roll out AI across your org, so you also can't scale its impact.	**Scale without complexity.** Teams can replace disconnected integration solutions with a single platform that handles everything from data collection to process automation. AI orchestration also offers enterprise controls and governance so you can maintain visibility while empowering teams to build their own solutions.
Data latency. Integration platform workflows typically pull data at scheduled intervals, but struggles with real-time triggers and data.	**Access real-time insights.** AI orchestration constantly accesses up-to-date data, which is necessary for complex, real-time use cases. Think: fraud detection, predictive maintenance, intelligent support routing—all happening automatically and instantly.
Dev bottlenecks. Integration platforms weren't designed with AI or machine learning (ML) in mind. So, to integrate AI tools into iPaaS workflows, you often need help from engineering (which isn't the best use of their time).	**Deploy quickly.** Thanks to no-code/low-code AI orchestration options, non-technical teams can create the right systems without waiting on developers or juggling multiple platforms.

Ultimately, automation and integration alone aren't enough—AI needs to be orchestrated, not just adopted. For AI to drive real business impact, you need a platform that connects all your disparate AI tech and tools and can build entire systems rather than one-off AI workflows.

3. How to orchestrate AI agents into a cohesive team

AI agents are the backbone of orchestration. They go beyond basic automation—reasoning, adapting, and making contextual decisions in real time. Think of them as autonomous teammates who can juggle dozens of tasks at once. The best part? They get better
at their jobs over time.

For forward-thinking enterprises, agents are quickly becoming table stakes. They boost productivity, streamline routine work, and free teams to focus on what matters. In fact, a recent McKinsey report found agents alone can drive a 25% productivity lift—and that's without AI orchestration.

25% productivity lift—and that's without AI orchestration.

How AI agents work together in orchestrated workflows

Even the most capable teams need coordination. That's where AI orchestration steps in—acting as the project manager for your agents. It keeps every component aligned, routes the right data to the right place, and ensures your entire system works in concert toward shared business goals.

Assign the right job to the right AI agent

If AI agents are your autonomous teammates, you can think of each one as a specialist brought in to solve a specific problem. They're modular by design—each with focused expertise, a defined role, and the ability to plug into your existing operations with ease.

For example, a compliance agent might review marketing content against regulatory standards. A support agent could parse customer conversations and route tickets based on urgency or intent. Each agent does its job independently but contributes to the broader system—just like a high-performing team.

**This modular structure brings powerful advantages:**

- **Specialization:** Each agent is tailored to a specific task or dataset, offering more precision than one-size-fits-all automation.

- **Scalability:** Agents act as building blocks. As your needs evolve, you can combine or expand them to handle increasingly complex workflows.

- **Maintainability:** Because each agent has its own unique job, it's easy to update or swap out agents without breaking your entire system.

Equip agents to reason, adapt, and respond

Here's where AI agents leave traditional automation in the dust: they can actually think through complex situations and make smart, on-the-spot decisions.

Traditional integration workflows are governed by if-then logic. It's the difference between regurgitating lines from a script and understanding how a specific scene moves the story forward. In a customer service context, a traditional integration workflow could escalate all billing complaints to the billing department, but that's where it ends. An AI agent could consider the customer's history and lifetime value, the details of their complaint, and current business priorities around retention or cost management.

AI orchestration provides agents with situational awareness—real-time data streams, historical context, business rules, current system states, and organizational priorities. With a complete picture, agents can make choices based on broader business outcomes.
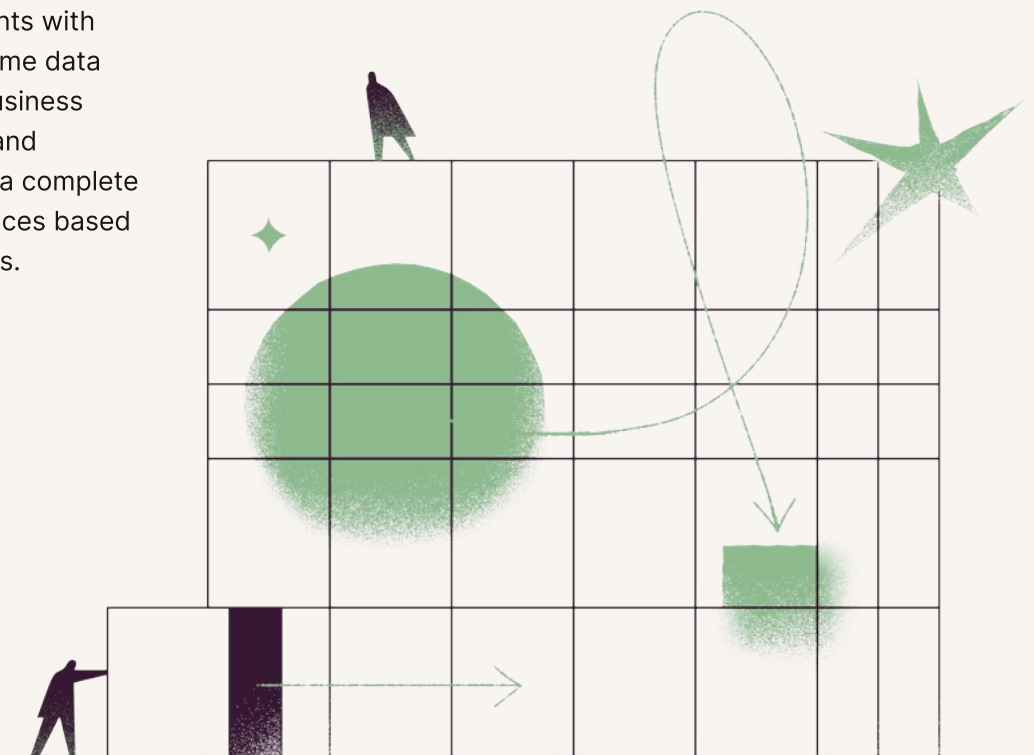
The challenge

Lead enrichment at Vendasta was painfully manual. Reps had to pull data from multiple sources—company names, phone numbers, job titles—then enter it by hand into the CRM. This slowed down the sales cycle and introduced inconsistencies that hurt their close rates.

The solution

Vandasta adopted a company-wide AI strategy powered by Zapier to streamline lead enrichment. When leads come in, the workflow automatically enriches the lead data through Apollo and Clay, AI summarizes company descriptions into digestible sales insights, creates an account records, and instantly routes them to the right sales rep based on industry or segment.

"Our reps can now focus purely on closing deals—not admin. Before Zapier, we'd hack together solutions. Now, we think automation-first. We're solving problems in a way that empowers our team and drives real results."

—Jacob Sirrs, Marketing Operations Specialist

Results

$1M
in recovered revenue

282+
working days saved annually by eliminating manual admin for sales reps

1,200
minutes saved daily by using AI to summarize sales conversations

Turn siloed AI agents into a high-performing team

When AI agents are connected through multi-agent workflows, isolated tasks become coordinated intelligence. This shift moves enterprises beyond basic automation, enabling systems where each AI agent contributes its specialized function while working in concert as part of a coordinated team.

R remote

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The IT team managed to scale themselves where they are today through Zapier. Most of the requests and questions that come through are not actually answered by a human—they're automated.

—**Marcelo Lebre**
Co-founder and President, Remote

HERE'S HOW IT LOOKS IN ACTION

A customer inquiry comes in. A classification agent analyzes the message—identifying the issue, urgency, and best response approach. A routing agent then considers rep availability and past interactions to assign it to the right person. From there, a drafting agent generates a personalized reply using the customer's history, preferences, and relevant help content.

AI orchestration ensures all these activities happen seamlessly and in the right sequence. It also offers the option of human oversight for monitoring and control when needed.

The challenge

After Remote experienced rapid growth, its three-person IT team was tackling 1,000+ tickets each month—risking both burnout and delayed support. Instead of adding headcount, the team adopted an AI-first strategy focused on scaling internal IT operations.

The solution

Using Zapier as their all-in-one enterprise platform, Remote automated their entire IT help desk process using Zapier Agents, Okta, ChatGPT, Notion, and Slack. The system automatically captures tickets, uses AI to determine request priority, and automatically suggests solutions. This approach allows their small team to handle 1,000+ requests a month.

Results

- **28% of tickets are now resolved in minutes automatically**

- By consolidating legacy tools, **Remote saved $1M in 2024**

- Three-person IT team **performs like a team of 10.**

"Zapier makes our team of three feel like a team of 10."

—Marcus Saito, Head of IT and AI Automation

Unlock seamless orchestration with Model Context Protocol (MCP)

Traditional integration platforms often require custom connections between each AI tool and every app in your stack—leading to technical debt, slowdowns, and constant maintenance. This patchwork approach makes it difficult to orchestrate AI at scale.

That's where MCP comes in. Short for Model Context Protocol, MCP acts as a universal translator between your AI agents and the tools they rely on. Instead of coding custom connections for every interaction, MCP standardizes how agents communicate with apps, APIs, and data sources—**dramatically simplifying AI orchestration.**
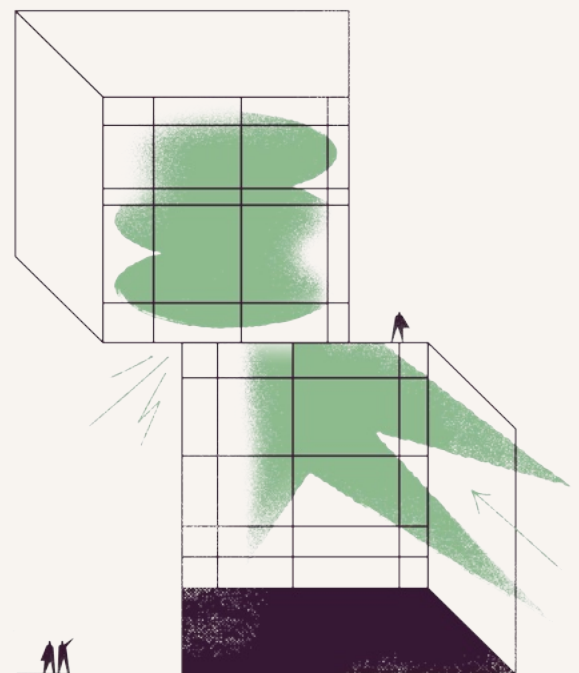
The problem MCP solves	Before USB-C, every device had its own port—USB-A, HDMI, proprietary adapters. Connecting new peripherals meant juggling dongles. Similarly, integrating AI tools with apps today often means custom code, unique APIs, and one-off data handling.
MCP as the new standard	MCP is like everyone agreeing to use USB-C. Now, companies can build their tools according to the MCP standard. If a tool is MCP-enabled, any AI agent can immediately understand how to use it.

Why it's a game changer

1. **Interoperability and ecosystem:** This standardization unlocks a flourishing ecosystem. Any AI agent can use any MCP-enabled tool, which vastly expands what agents can do.

2. **Increased capability:** When official providers release new tools, it dramatically raises the bar for what AI and agent systems are capable of doing.

3. **Developer focus:** Enterprise developers can focus on building the core logic of their AI agents and rely on a growing marketplace of standardized tools instead of building custom integrations for every single capability.

# 4. Mapping your AI orchestration maturity

While orchestration is the answer to many enterprise AI challenges, many organizations have yet to hit the maturity milestones to get there. That's primarily because leadership isn't moving as quickly (or proactively) as it should.

Although almost all companies are investing in AI, only 1% believe they've reached AI maturity. And while almost half of C-suite leaders admit they're moving too slowly, they're 2.4x more likely to blame employees for slow adoption rather than recognize their own lack of alignment.

2.4x

more likely to blame employees for slow adoption rather than recognize their own lack of alignment.

AI transformation journey

OPERATE **AUTOMATE** **ORCHESTRATE**
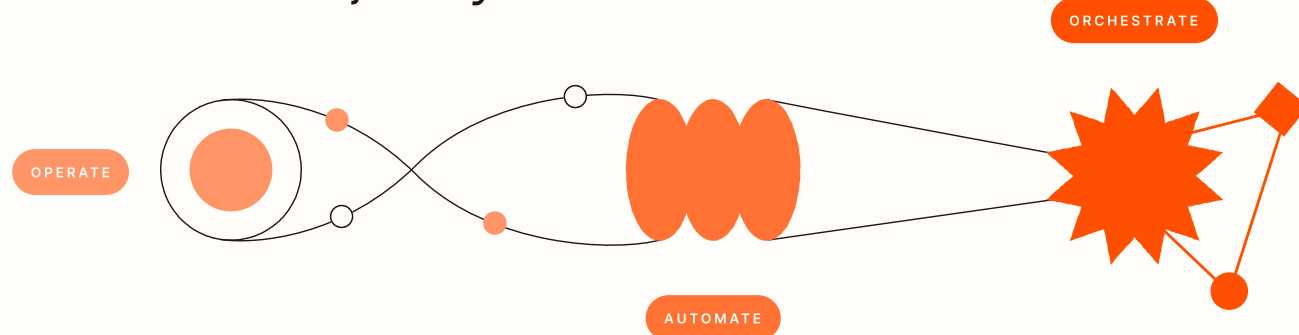
Stage 1: LLMs

Teams experiment with tools like ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini to carry out research or write content. That's useful, but these efforts are disconnected from your data and the rest of your systems.

Stage 2: AI-powered workflows

This is the automation step: using AI to enhance repeatable tasks inside your systems. Teams connect AI tools with no-code platforms and automate workflows (like summarizing content, classifying data, or enriching records and/or leads, which are triggered automatically).

Stage 3: Agentic workflows and MCP

Agents don't just enhance—they act. Agents evaluate your business data, get context to make decisions, and take action across your tech stack with minimal human input. It's a turning point where you move from task automation to agentic systems that respond, adapt, and operate across your tech stack from one platform—on demand or automatically.

Stage 4: Scaled orchestration

AI is no longer a layer—it's fully embedded. It connects across your tech stack, flows through your workflows, and is governed by policy. It supports both operations and strategy. This is orchestration: where AI, people, tools, and logic are all aligned, and scale becomes reality.

To scale AI—and get real business impact —you need to evolvepast experimentation, beyond basic automation, and then implement orchestration.

Assess your AI readiness

So, where does your organization stand in its AI maturity journey? You can evaluate your AI maturity level based on a few criteria:

- **Technical infrastructure.** Assess your data architecture and quality, AI/ML platform capabilities, plus your API management and capabilities for connecting disparate systems.

- **Governance.** Examine your AI ethics and risk management strategy; readiness to meet compliance and regulatory requirements; and your change management process governance plans.

- **Talent readiness.** Evaluate your teams' technical competencies; their business and strategic skills; and their cultural and change readiness.
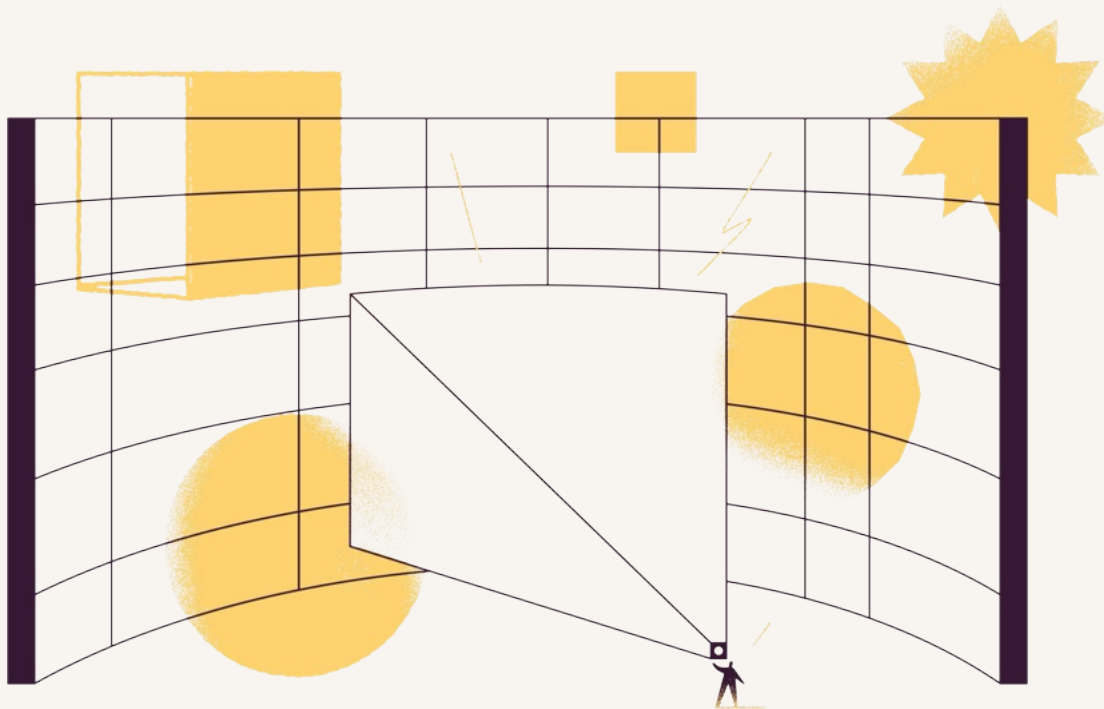
Implement AI orchestration in 3 strategic phases

Phase 1: Take immediate action (first 3 months)

1. Complete a comprehensive assessment of your technical infrastructure, governance and talent readiness

2. Secure executive sponsorship and establish an AI orchestration steering committee

3. Identify and prioritize initial AI orchestration use cases with clear business value

4. Begin foundational infrastructure improvements, including data quality and integration capabilities

5. Initiate organization-wide AI literacy and awareness programs

Phase 2: Execute short-term objectives (3–12 months)

1. Deploy core AI/ML platform capabilities with initial workflow orchestration features

2. Implement a governance framework with established policies, procedures, and oversight

3. Complete the first wave of AI orchestration pilots with measurable business impact

4. Build initial AI engineering and orchestration team capabilities through hiring and training

5. Establish partnerships with key technology vendors and implementation partners

Phase 3: Scale orchestration for long-term impact (1–2 years)

1. Achieve full AI orchestration platform deployment with advanced capabilities and enterprise-scale operations

2. Demonstrate measurable business transformation through AI-driven processes and decision-making

3. Establish a market leadership position in AI orchestration within your vertical

4. Create a sustainable competitive advantage through proprietary AI orchestration capabilities

5. Achieve organizational and cultural transformation supporting continuous AI innovation and improvement

For leaders hesitant to scale AI because of risks, Zapier's own Lead Product Manager offers some advice to help them move forward:

- **Be intentional about risks.** Actively understand and articulate the specific risks involved with the AI systems you're implementing.

- **Risk vs. reward evaluation.** Carefully evaluate whether the potential risks are offset by the benefits of the AI adoption.

- **Education and empowerment.** Lean on your orchestration platform vendor to help you understand the risks. Platforms like Zapier can empower you and your teams to prevent these risks within the systems you build on top of the platform.

- **Provide a strong foundation:** Establish a secure foundation with customizable guardrails to tailor the safety measures to your own specific needs and risk tolerance.

- **Don't just move fast and break things without a plan.** Move fast with an understanding of the guardrails you need.

—Reid Robinson, Lead Product Manager at Zapier

The most connected AI orchestration platform

The world's most forward-thinking enterprises don't just adopt AI—they orchestrate it.

Zapier's AI orchestration platform gives you everything you need to connect tools, deploy agents, and scale intelligent systems across your business.

No patchwork. No bottlenecks. Just one unified platform built for real-world impact.

Connect every app, AI model, and workflow. Securely integrate with thousands of tools using advanced authentication and data handling.

Automate complex workflows with ease. Build, test, and scale AI-driven systems using no-code, low-code, or full-code—whatever your teams need.

Deploy intelligent systems across the org. Connect AI to the workflows your teams rely on—sales, support, IT, ops, marketing, and more.
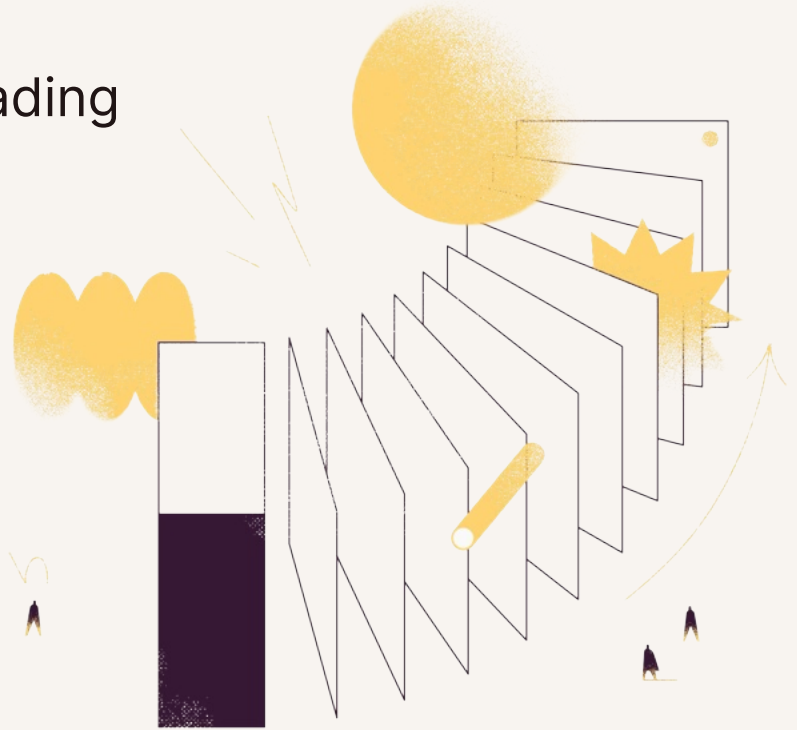
Control AI at scale with IT-grade governance. Prevent shadow AI, enforce permissions, and keep AI use auditable, visible, and compliant.

"An AI orchestration platform [like Zapier] goes beyond simple integration. For example, with Zapier's agent platform and something like Model Context Protocol (MCP), we're enabling external AI tools and agents (like Microsoft Co-pilot, Salesforce Agents, or even standalone ChatGPT/Claude instances) to leverage Zapier's vast library of searches, actions, and authentications. That means Zapier's capabilities can be used outside of Zapier by these other AI systems. This is a significant architectural shift from iPaaS, which is typically about connecting systems within its own framework."

—Reid Robinson, *Lead Product Manager at Zapier*

Ready to turn AI silos into AI systems?

Learn why the world's leading businesses trust Zapier

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airbnb   ActiveCampaign ≫   okta   betterhelp

Dropbox   hudl   Sysco   Ruggable   THE HOME DEPOT

VOXMEDIA   grammarly

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Talk to an expert today to assess your AI maturity and start your AI orchestration journey.