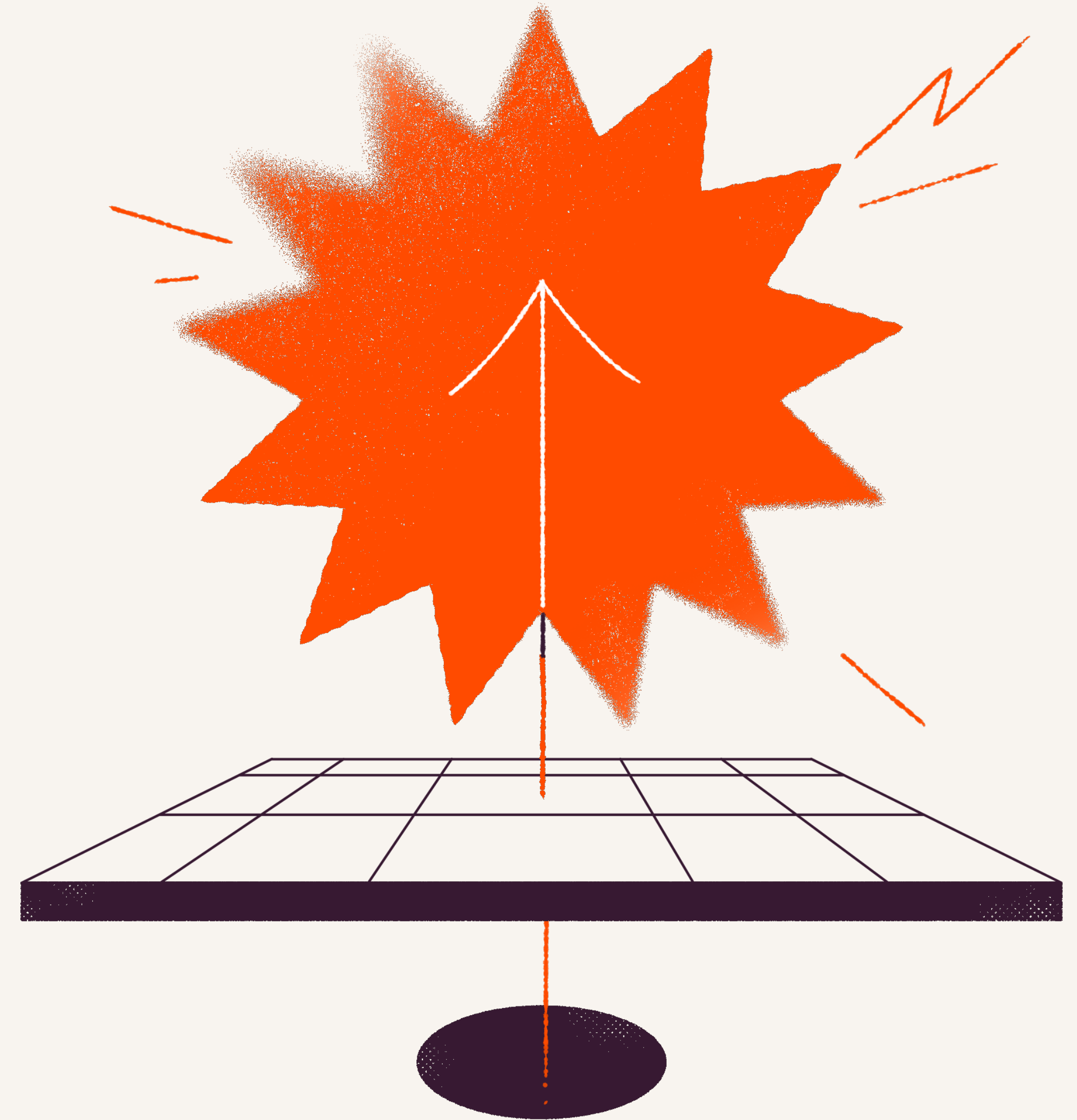


AI Workflow Index

How leading adopters are putting AI to work inside real workflows

Helping enterprise and mid-market leaders decide where AI belongs, what to build next, and how governance should evolve



A selection of early reactions

“Too many organizations still treat AI as a general-purpose capability. The organizations furthest along treat it as a division-of-labor problem: what should the model do, where should the handoff occur, and how should the workflow around it be designed?”

Zapier's AI Workflow Index advances the conversation by examining AI where change happens: inside the workflow. What the index underscores, and what our work at the Work AI Institute at Glean also finds, is that the frontier is no longer model performance alone. It is understanding the workflow well enough to redesign the division of labor around it.”

—**Dr. Rebecca Hinds**, Head of the Work AI Institute and bestselling author

“Zapier's framework is incredibly useful because it makes AI governance practical. Classifications like Communicator and Clerk help you see where AI actually fits in a workflow, and start to think about how to govern it.”

—**Chelsea Omel**, Director of Strategic Design @ BenchSci

“Zapier's AI Workflow Index gives leaders something they've been missing: a workflow-level view of AI grounded in real usage data. By showing the distinct roles AI is already playing across workflows, it helps teams see more clearly where they are today and where to build next.”

—**Adrian Oropeza**, AVP, Product Development @ Union Bank & Trust

“Enterprise AI creates value when it's designed around how people actually work, not deployed as another standalone tool. New AI experiences should work alongside the systems of record and controls the business already depends on. Zapier's AI Workflow Index provides a practical framework for that shift, showing where AI is already communicating, structuring information, supporting decisions, or initiating work. As organizations move from AI-assisted productivity to agentic execution, governance must evolve in parallel, with clear decision rights and full auditability.”

—**Venkat Chivukula**, VP, AI Enablement for Enterprise @ ZoomInfo

“The framework maps well to the next phase of our AI journey because it moves beyond adoption and into the harder work of redesigning workflows. The supporting proof points make it especially relevant for leaders asking what comes after the first wave of AI productivity tools.”

—**Martin Rydder**, VP Finance @ LiveRamp

Foreword



Andre Vanier

Head of Orchestration
Strategy @ Zapier

Whether you're beginning to deploy AI or trying to control cost while scaling, the challenge is the same: How do you get AI working in practice? Either way, you'll face two decisions.

First, which steps in a workflow should run on AI?

The data points to a clear answer: leading adopters are not using AI for every step. Even in AI workflows, most steps are not AI. AI is the largest single step category, but **AI represents only 18% of workflow steps**. The rest of the workflow runs on conventional automation: rules, logic, app connections, and data movement.

That matters for cost. In our modeling, we found that **workflows that reserve AI for reasoning steps cost 71% less to run** than workflows that route every step through a model.

Second—and the focus of this report—once AI is handling a step, what role should it play?

Among leading adopters, we found AI tends to play one of four roles:

- Communicator
- Clerk
- Analyst
- Coordinator

These roles show where AI belongs inside a workflow. It can write for people, extract information and update records, make a decision, or create tasks for teams.

This is not a small experimental pattern. **The typical AI workflow handles more than twice the automated actions of a conventional workflow**, across the same population of leading adopters.

This report is a portrait of the frontier. It shows how leading adopters build with AI in their workflows. Read it as a practical framework for deciding where AI belongs, what to build next, and how governance should evolve.

A practical framework for deciding where AI fits, what to build next, and what controls are needed

Where AI belongs

- We analyzed the top 25% of companies, ranked by adoption of AI workflows. We found they assign AI to one of four roles: Communicator, Clerk, Analyst, and Coordinator.
- Each role sits inside a larger workflow. AI handles the part that needs reasoning, while the surrounding steps run on conventional automation.
- Use these four AI roles to move from broad AI ideas to specific workflow opportunities.

What to build next

- Companies tend to add the roles in a similar order.
- Companies typically begin with the Communicator and Clerk before expanding into the Analyst and Coordinator.
- Use this pattern to see where you are today and which AI role to explore next.

How governance should evolve

- The right controls depend on what AI does in the workflow.
- The Communicator and Clerk put AI output into messages, documents, and systems of record. These roles need checks on what AI can use, who reviews the output, and where AI can write.
- The Analyst and Coordinator bring AI into execution. These roles need checks on when AI decisions are reviewed, who is responsible, and how actions are tracked.

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■ ABOUT THE DATA

Zapier is infrastructure for AI-powered automation. Teams build wherever they work, then connect their workflows and agents to 9,000+ apps, business context, and deterministic rules.

This report started with a panel of 1,500 mid-market and enterprise-sized Zapier customers. We then focused on the top 25%—375 companies—ranked by adoption of AI workflows. The analysis is based on aggregated data from those workflows. Our methodology in the appendix shows what we measured and how.

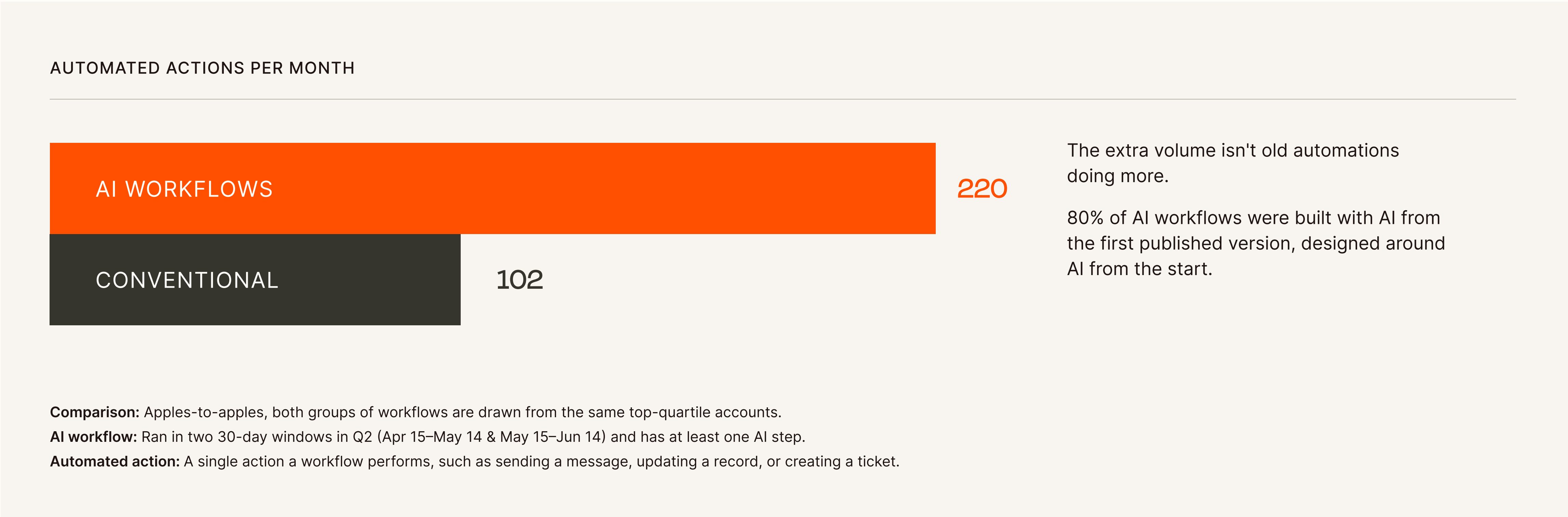
AI plays specific roles inside larger workflows

AI workflows are already running at scale. But AI is only part of the workflow: most steps still run on rules, logic, and code, while AI plays a small set of specific roles.



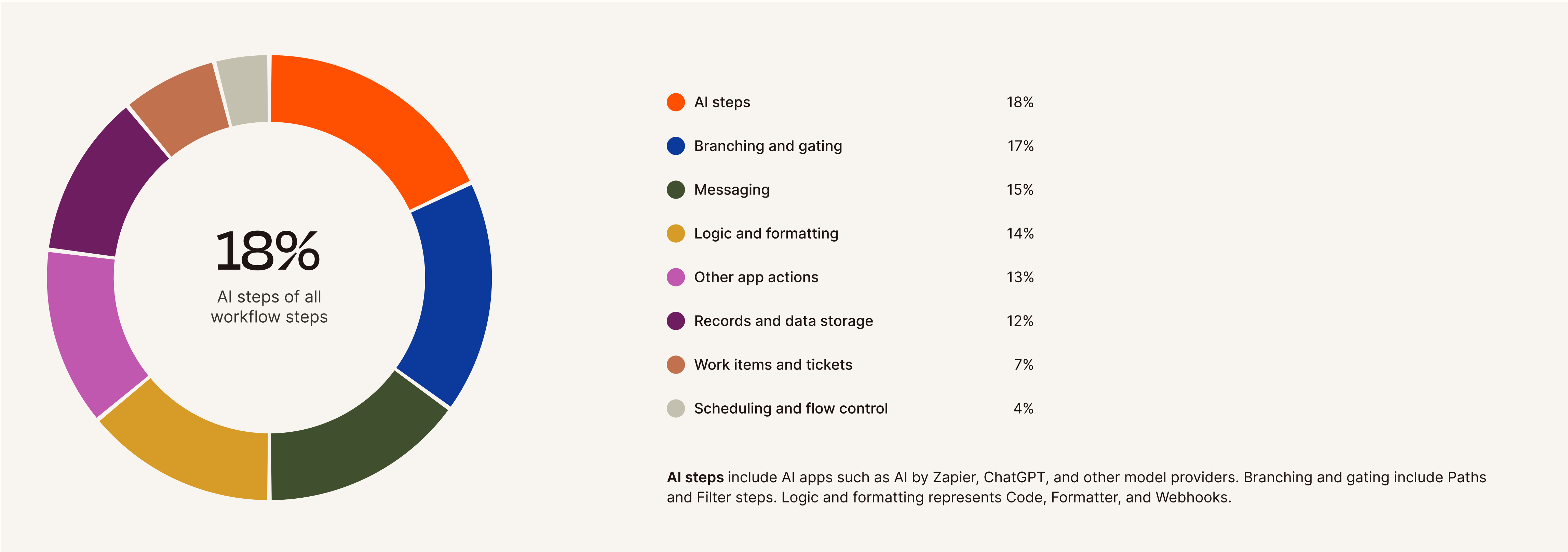
AI workflows are already running at scale

AI workflows do more: the typical one handles more than twice the automated actions of a conventional workflow.



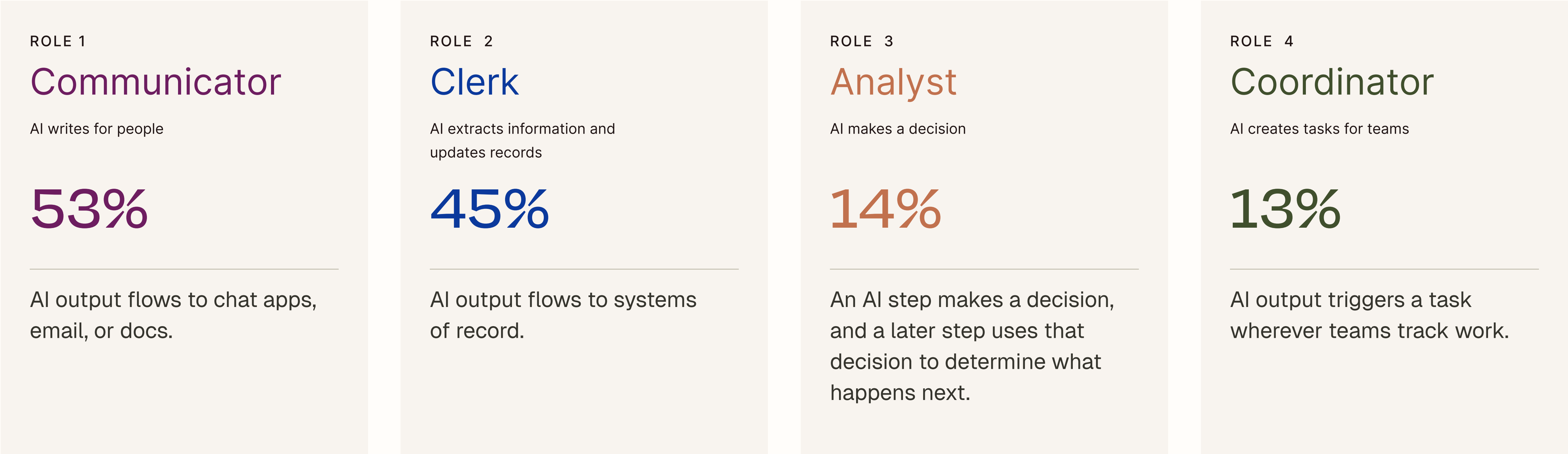
But even in AI workflows, most steps aren't AI

AI handles specific tasks inside a larger workflow. The rest is conventional automation: rules, logic, app connections, and moving data.



When AI appears, it plays one of four recurring roles

% IS THE PORTION OF AI WORKFLOWS EXHIBITING EACH ROLE



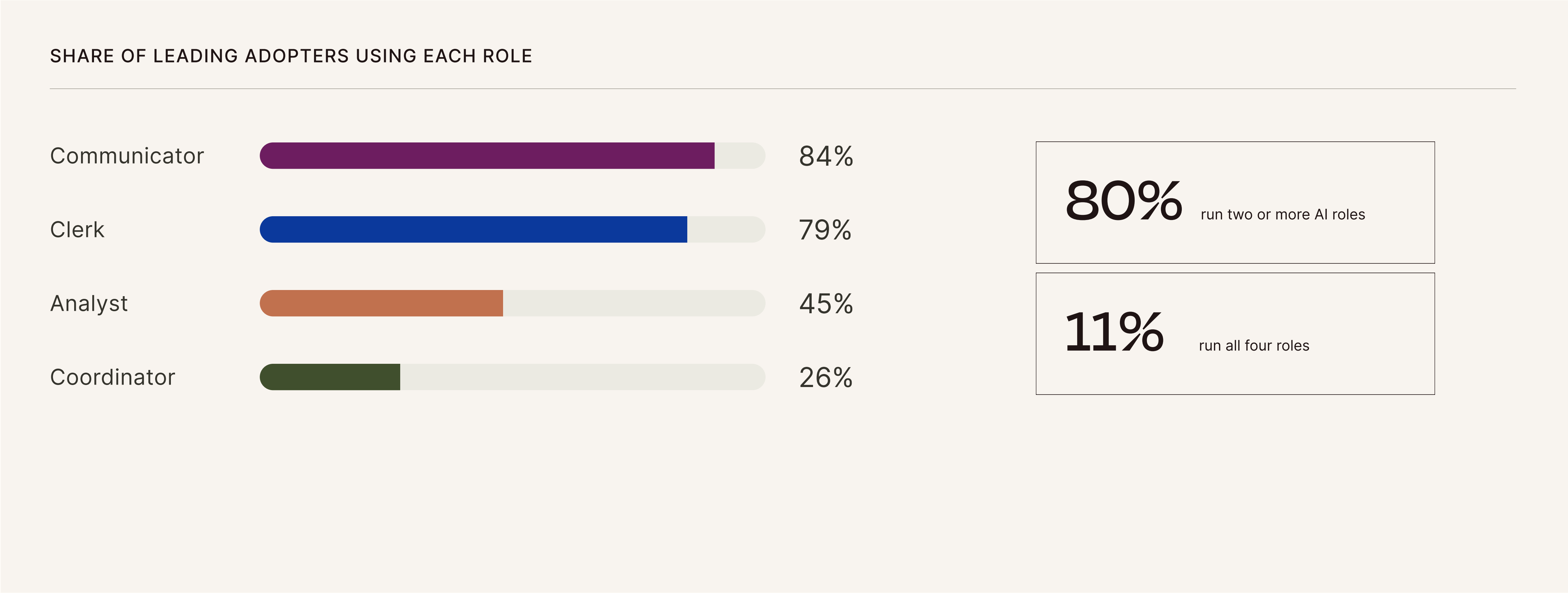
Note: 22% of classified workflows carry more than one role.

The same pattern holds across business functions

Function	Communicator	Clerk	Analyst	Coordinator
Operations	45%	38%	9%	8%
IT	44%	30%	11%	10%
Marketing	34%	35%	10%	3%
Engineering	44%	30%	11%	12%
Support	35%	35%	11%	25%
Sales	37%	48%	20%	3%
People/HR	43%	55%	9%	3%

Percentage = for each function, the share of its AI workflows that include the role. A workflow may carry more than one role or no roles, so rows won't necessarily tally to 100%.

Communicator and Clerk are the most prevalent



Communicator: AI writes for people

84% of leading adopters run it

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Media company, North America, >5,000 employees

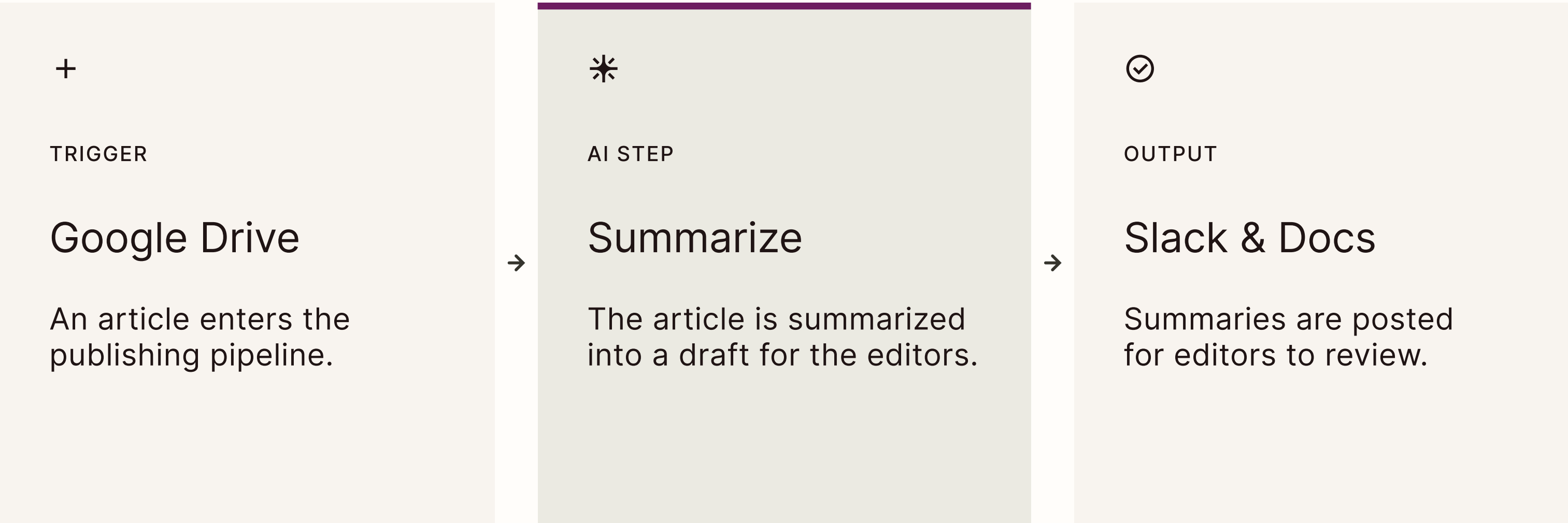
Role in the workflow: AI output is written and sent to a channel, inbox, or document for a human to review.

OPERATING SCALE

≥100,000 Automated actions per month

≥10,000 runs per month

Automated actions, also known as tasks, are actions that an automation completes, such as sending an email or updating a record. Runs represent trigger executions.



Clerk: AI extracts information and updates records

79% of leading adopters run it

Role in the workflow: AI turns unstructured input into structured fields in a CRM, database, or spreadsheet.

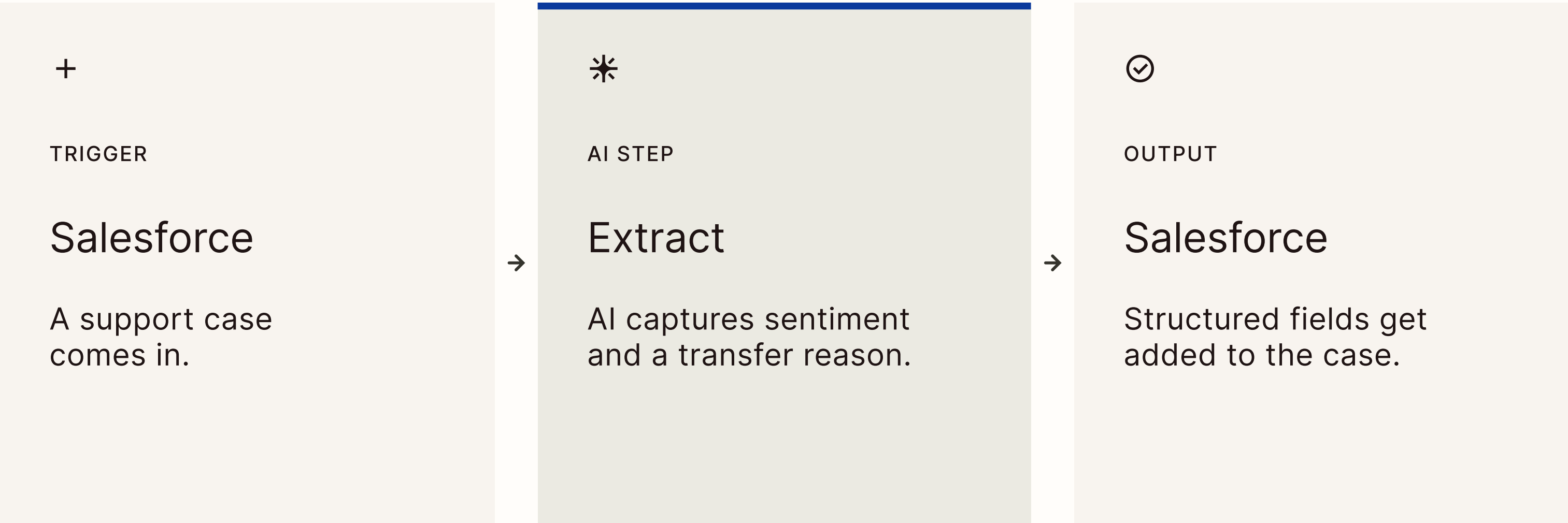
OPERATING SCALE

≥100,000 Automated actions per month

≥10,000 runs per month

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Software company, Latin America, 1,000 to 5,000 employees



Analyst: AI makes a decision

45% of leading adopters run it

Role in the workflow: AI makes a judgment, like a decision, score, or classification, that a routing step then acts on.

OPERATING SCALE

≥25,000

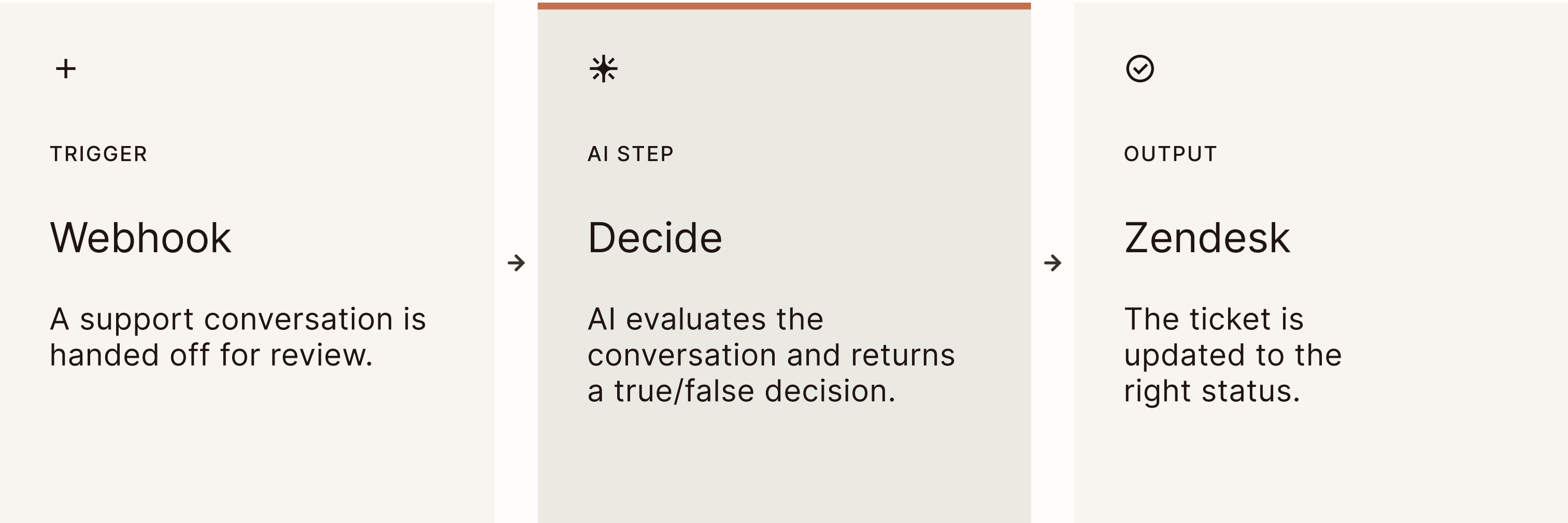
Automated actions per month

≥10,000

runs per month

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Enterprise software company, North America, >5,000 employees



Coordinator: AI creates tasks for teams

26% of leading adopters run it

Role in the workflow: AI output triggers the creation of a task, ticket, or issue in a task management system in response to an event.

OPERATING SCALE

≥5,000

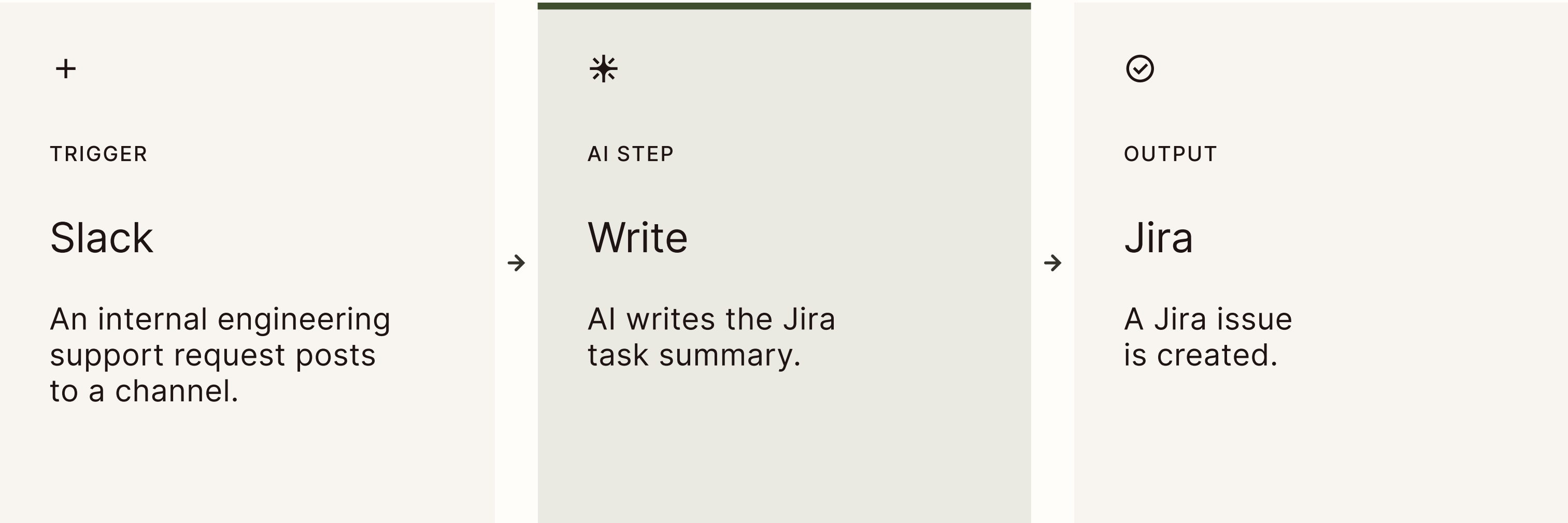
Automated actions per month

≥500

runs per month

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Mobility company, Europe, 1,000 to 5,000 employees



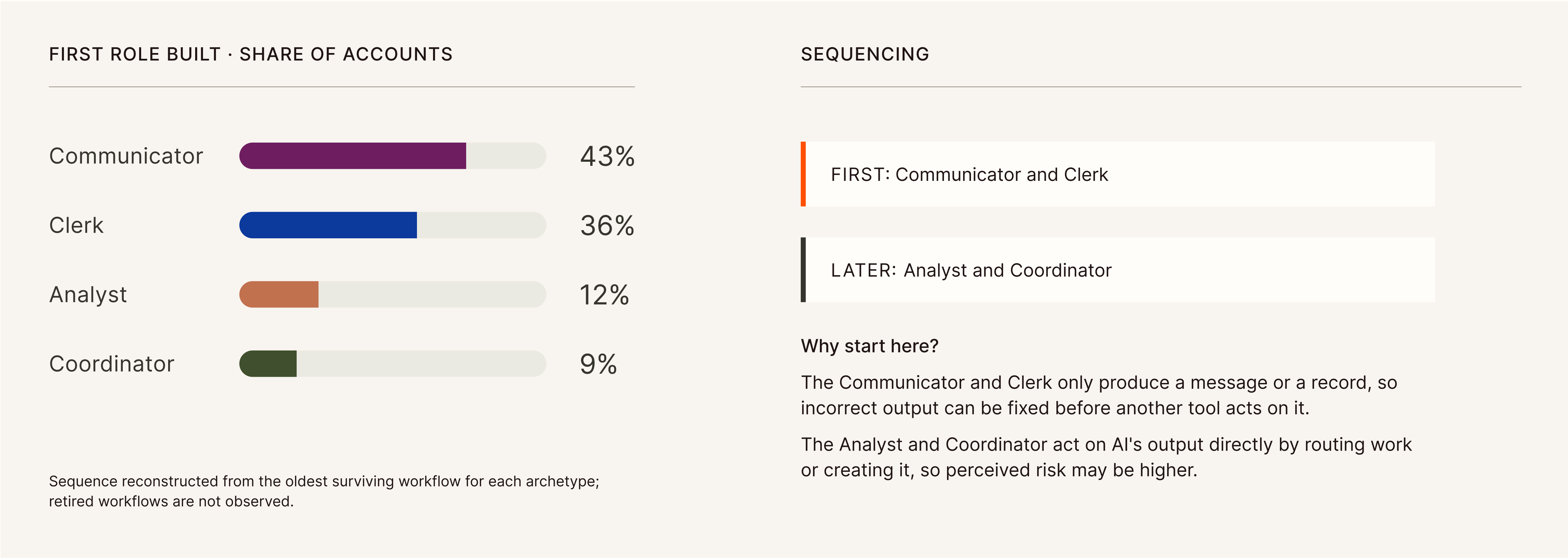
Adoption tends to move from information to action

Leading adopters often start with AI that writes messages or updates records, then expand into AI that decides what happens next or creates tasks for teams.



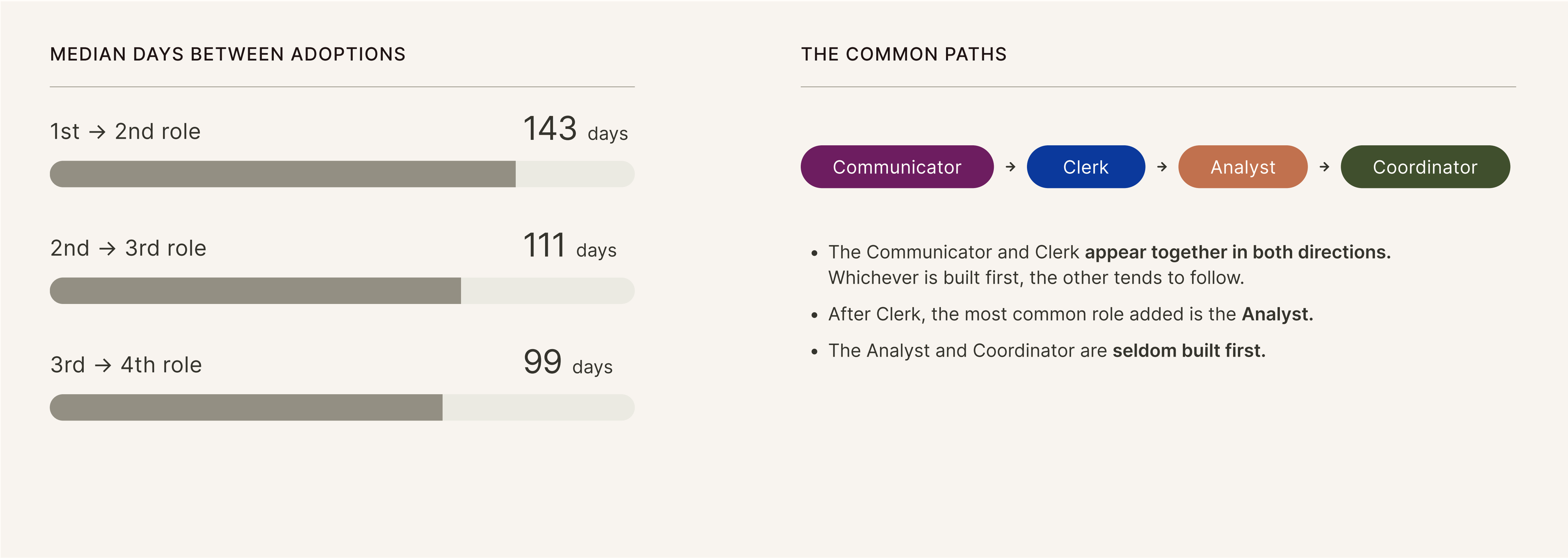
Adoption usually starts with information, then moves to action

Most adopt the Communicator or Clerk before expanding into the Analyst and Coordinator.



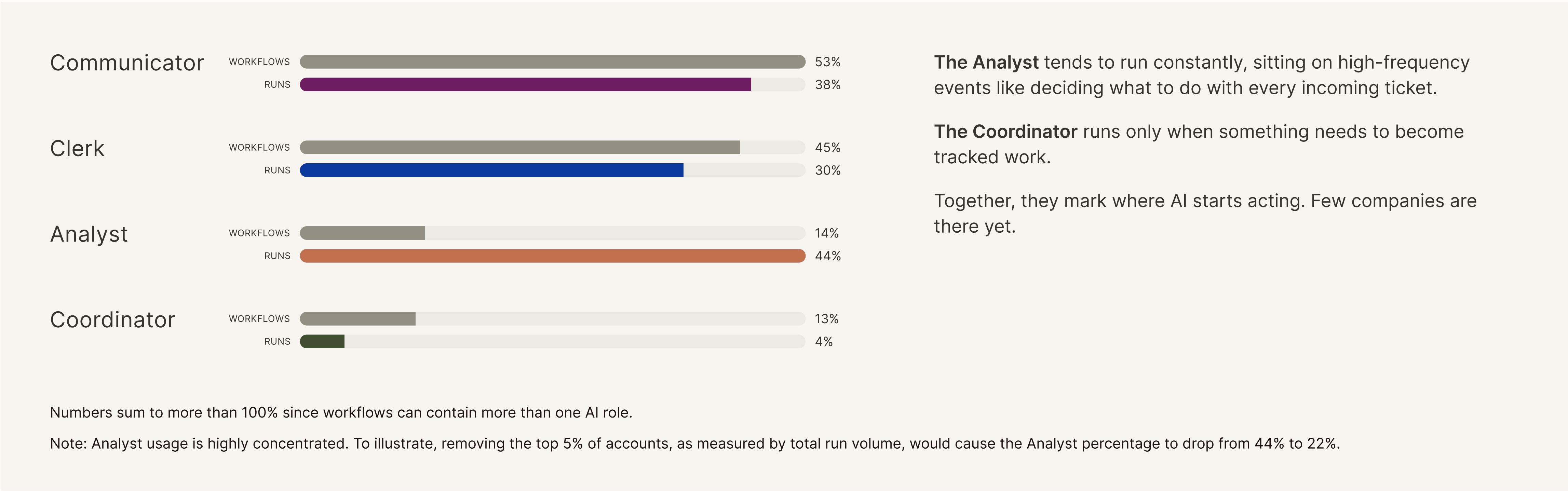
Adoption speeds up after the first role

The first role appears to create a foundation. After that, each additional AI role takes less time to add.



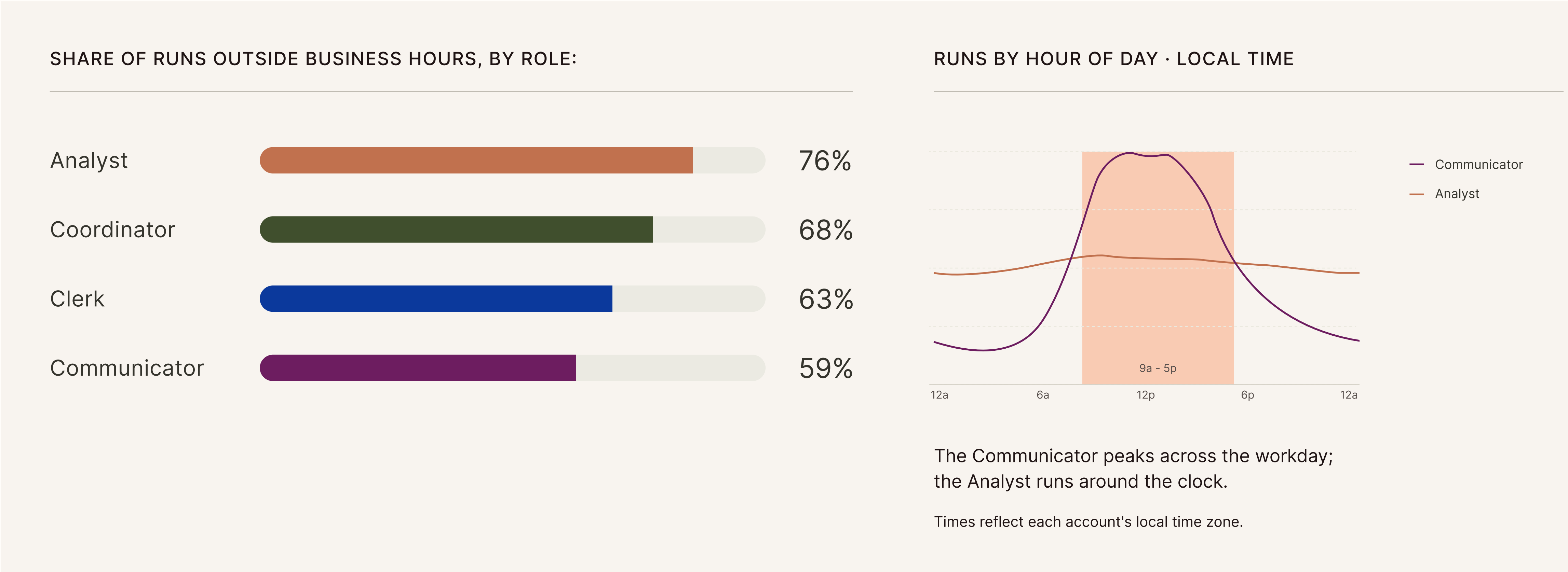
Analyst and Coordinator are still emerging, but Analyst runs much more often

Each appears in about one in 10 AI workflows, yet the Analyst drives 44% of all runs and the Coordinator only 4%.



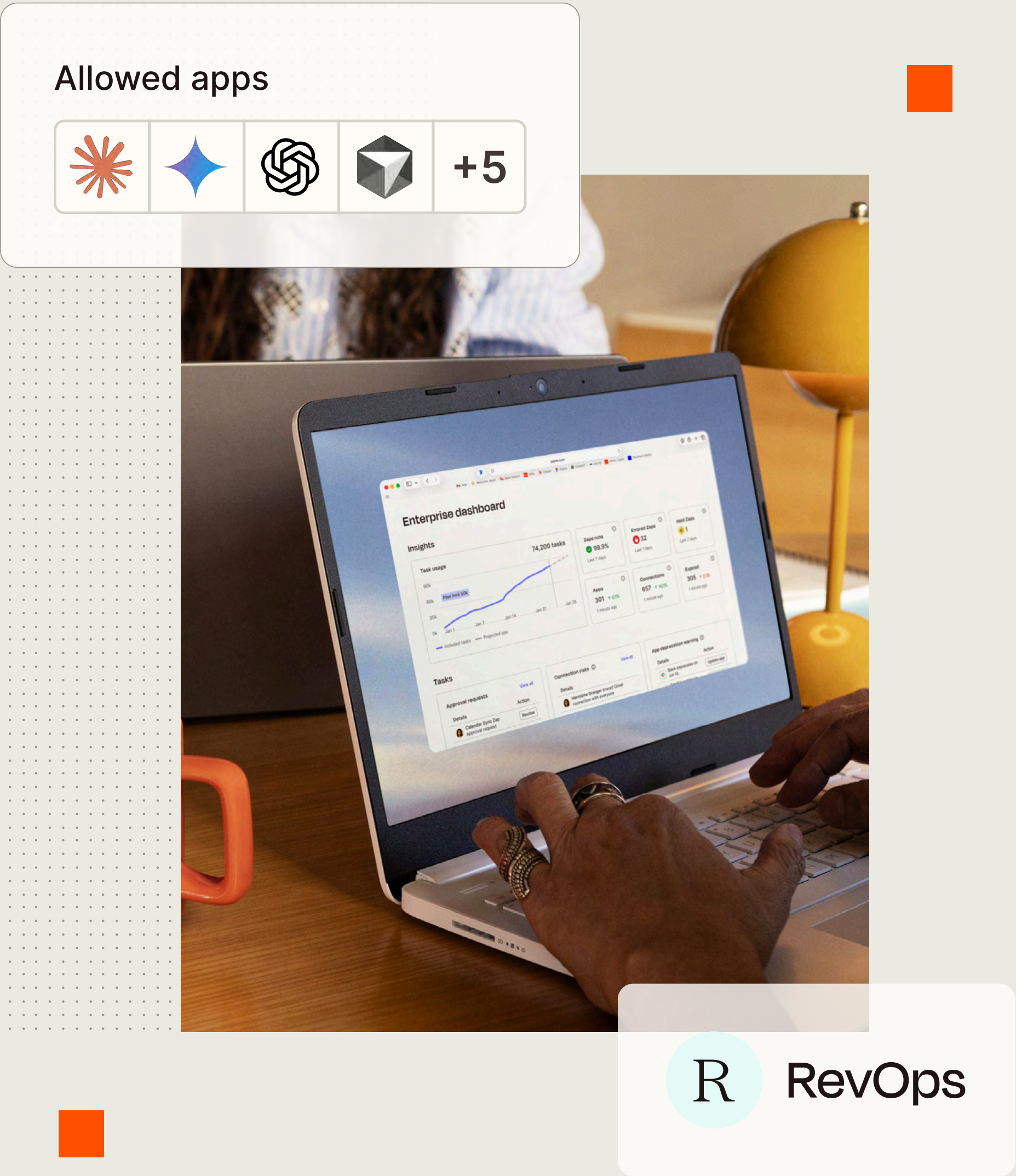
Analyst runs around the clock

76% of Analyst workflow runs occur outside business hours, the highest share of any AI role.



Govern AI by what it does in the workflow

The right controls depend on whether AI is writing information, updating records, deciding what happens next, or creating tasks.



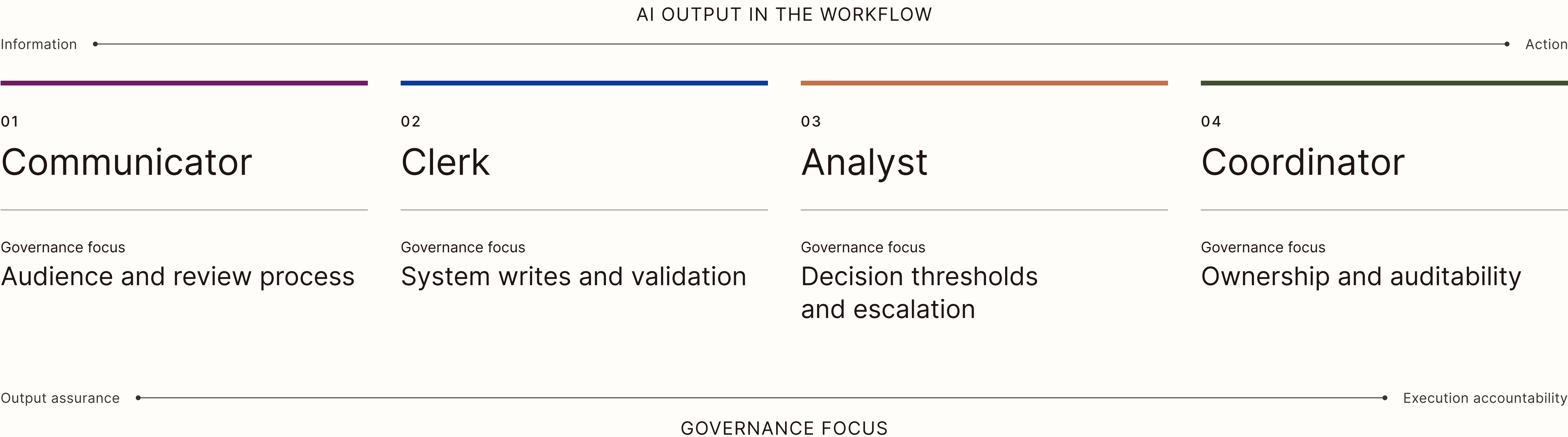
Match the control to the AI role

The right governance questions change depending on what AI does.

Communicator AI writes for people Govern audience and approval. • What sources can AI use? • Who can receive the output? • When does a person review before sending or publishing?	Clerk AI extracts information and updates records Govern system writes and validation. • Which fields can AI update? • What validation happens before the write? • How are corrections logged?	Analyst AI makes a decision Govern decision thresholds and escalation. • Which judgments can AI make? • What thresholds trigger human review? • How are decisions monitored over time?	Coordinator AI creates tasks for teams Govern ownership and auditability. • What tasks (or tickets and work objects) can AI create? • Who owns the work once it's created? • How is every action tracked and audited?
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Controls should change as AI moves from information to action

A draft can be reviewed. But when AI updates a record, decides the next step in a process, or creates a task, different controls are needed.



How to use the framework

Map your workflows to the four roles. Then use that map to decide where AI fits, what to build next, and what controls are needed.

AI transformation leaders

Use the roles to see how AI is already being used across the business. Look for where AI is writing messages, updating records, determining next steps, or creating tasks. Then set clear rules for each role:

- What AI can read
- Where it can write
- What decisions need review
- Which actions need to be tracked

Line-of-business leaders

Start with the workflow problem you need to solve.

- Communicator: where teams wait for a written update
- Clerk: where people spend time updating records
- Analyst: where work gets delayed by sorting or prioritizing
- Coordinator: where requests need to become tasks

The best candidates are recurring workflows that already feed a system or team process.

Operations leaders

Prioritize workflows where AI can reduce delay.

- Communicator and Clerk: reduce information lag
- Analyst: reduces delays in sorting, routing, and prioritizing work
- Coordinator: turns requests into tasks

The best candidates are high-volume processes with a clear system of record and a person responsible for the outcome.

Security leaders

Govern each AI role by what its output does next:

- Communicator: review sources, recipients, and approvals
- Clerk: validate what AI writes to records
- Analyst: log and monitor decisions and escalation points
- Coordinator: track the tasks being created by AI

What this all points to

Across the enterprise and mid-market companies in this study, a pattern appeared: AI does not run every part of a workflow. Instead, it handles a specific role inside a larger process. It writes for people, updates records, decides the next step, or creates tasks for teams. The rest of the workflow runs on conventional automation.

For leaders, that points to three implications.

- Use AI selectively. AI is only 18% of the steps in these workflows. Reserve it for reasoning, and let conventional automation handle the repeatable steps where reliability is critical. In our modeling, that approach was 71% less expensive to run.
- Use the four roles to decide where AI belongs and what to build next. Most leading adopters start with the Communicator or Clerk, then expand into the other roles.
- Match controls to the role. A message needs review, a record needs validation, a decision needs rules, and a task needs a clear handoff.

The AI Workflow Index will continue tracking how companies put AI to work as models, tools, and workflows evolve.

■ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Venkat Chivukula VP, AI Enablement for Enterprise ZoomInfo			

What the patterns look like in practice



GTM

Communicator

AI writes for people

The content brief

Schedule > Docs / Template > AI > Chat

A weekly schedule pulls structured content from a document or template. The AI synthesizes the inputs and drafts the brief, topic priorities, format guidance, and deadlines, then publishes it to a Slack channel. The marketing team gets a ready-to-use brief without anyone writing it.

Clerk

AI extracts information and updates records

Meeting intelligence → Deal record

Marketing tool > AI > Spreadsheet/CRM

A meeting transcript from a tool like Gong or Fathom is passed to the AI, which extracts deal-relevant fields, contacts, commitments, next steps, and close signals, then logs a structured row to a Sheets tracker or CRM. Reps leave calls with their CRM already updated.

Analyst

AI makes a decision

Lead quality gate

Marketing auto > AI > Marketing auto

When a contact is created or a form is submitted, the AI scores the lead against fit criteria, company size, intent, and message quality, then returns a judgment: qualify, nurture, or disqualify. The score updates the record and routes the lead automatically.

Coordinator

AI creates tasks for teams

Slack request → Work item

Chat > AI > Task system

Someone posts a request in a shared channel. The AI evaluates whether it's an actionable work request, checking for a task definition and deadline, and if so, creates a structured task with the title, description, and due date pre-filled. Informal requests become tracked work.

Operations

Communicator

AI writes for people

The ops briefing

Email / Schedule > AI > Chat

Inbound emails or a recurring schedule trigger the workflow. The AI reads status updates, reports, and forwarded messages and synthesizes them into a concise briefing posted to an operations channel. Teams start the day with a summary, not a pile of unread threads.

Clerk

AI extracts information and updates records

Conversational data capture

Chat > AI > Spreadsheet

A Slack message—either a project update, status note, or field report—is passed to the AI, which extracts the structured fields that belong in a tracking sheet: project, status, owner, date, values. A new row is written automatically. Teams log data from conversations.

Analyst

AI makes a decision

Inbound request router

Email > AI > Routing logic

An inbound email arrives: a vendor inquiry, an internal request, or an escalation. The AI classifies it by type and urgency, returning a label that determines which downstream workflow fires. The AI is the decision layer between the inbox and the process.

Coordinator

AI creates tasks for teams

AI-driven task creation

Email / Form / Chat > AI > Project management

Any inbound trigger—email, form, or chat—is read by the AI, which determines task type, priority, and likely owner. A structured task is created in Asana, monday.com, or ClickUp with fields pre-filled. Ops teams stop manually translating requests into tasks.

IT

Communicator

AI writes for people

Security advisory synthesizer

RSS feed > Chat > AI

An RSS feed delivers raw security advisories and common vulnerabilities and exposures (CVE) disclosures. Each item is posted to a channel for visibility, then the AI replies in-thread with a plain-language impact assessment: which systems are affected, the exposure window, and the recommended action.

Clerk

AI extracts information and updates records

Incident record auto-fill

Chat > Task system > AI > Chat

An alert surfaces in Slack. The workflow creates a task stub, then passes the message and context to the AI, which enriches the record, structured description, inferred severity, likely impacted system, and initial triage notes. The record is complete before anyone opens the task.

Analyst

AI makes a decision

Ticket severity scorer

Ticketing > Code > Ticketing > AI

A new ticket is created. A code step enriches it with system status, history, and user impact. The AI reads the enriched ticket and returns a severity score and routing decision: L1 self-service, L2 engineering, or L3 escalation. The ticket lands in the right queue untouched.

Coordinator

AI creates tasks for teams

Incident ticket creator

Email > Chat > AI > Ticketing

A monitoring alert arrives via email. The workflow posts a notification to the IT channel. Then it passes the content to the AI, which generates a fully structured ticket with title, description, severity, impacted systems, and initial diagnosis. The ticket exists before anyone reads the email.

Engineering

Communicator

AI writes for people

Alert synthesizer

Chat / Alert > AI > Chat

A technical notification arrives as a GitHub webhook, PagerDuty alert, or deploy event. The AI translates the raw signal into plain language: what happened, what it likely means, and whether action is required. The summarized message goes to the engineering channel.

Clerk

AI extracts information and updates records

Bug ticket enricher

Chat > AI > Task system

An engineer adds details or a stack trace to an open ticket's Slack thread. The AI reads the thread and extracts the structured fields that belong on the existing issue: severity, affected component, repro steps, and initial hypothesis. It writes those into the ticket's fields. The AI completes the record.

Analyst

AI makes a decision

Dependency relevance filter

RSS feed > AI > Chat

An RSS feed delivers release notes and changelogs. The AI evaluates each item against the team stack, a dependency in use, severity above threshold, and a breaking change. If relevant, an alert fires. If not, silence. The AI is the filter that prevents advisory fatigue.

Coordinator

AI creates tasks for teams

Discussion to issue

Chat > AI > Task / Code system

An engineering discussion happens in Slack, covering a decision, a problem, or an informal scope. The AI reads the thread and extracts the actionable item, writing a structured issue with a title, description, and acceptance criteria. Work decided in conversation doesn't fall through the cracks.

Support

Communicator

AI writes for people

Support health digest



A scheduled trigger fires at the start of a shift. The AI analyzes ticket volume, CSAT trends, resolution times, and escalation rates. Then it writes a support-health narrative and posts it to a leadership channel. Managers start with a written briefing rather than having to pull reports.

Clerk

AI extracts information and updates records

Quality record writer

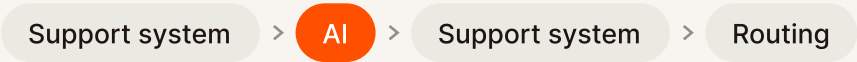


A ticket closes, or a schedule pulls a batch of recent tickets. The AI reads the content and interaction history, evaluates handling quality against defined criteria, and writes structured scores and coaching notes to a QA system. QA runs continuously without a manager reviewing each ticket.

Analyst

AI makes a decision

Ticket intent classifier



A ticket arrives in Zendesk or Dixa. The AI classifies intent, issue type, sentiment, and complexity, then writes those back to the ticket fields. Downstream routing reads them and assigns to the right team or automated path. No human triages the queue.

Coordinator

AI creates tasks for teams

Feedback to feature task



Customer feedback surfaces in a channel, whether from a rep, call summary, or bot. The AI extracts the actionable product item: what was reported, the implied feature gap, and the owning team. A structured task is created for product. Feedback stops living in Slack and enters the backlog.

People / HR

Communicator

AI writes for people

Recruiting and people digest

Schedule > AI > Chat

A weekly schedule or a meeting recording triggers the workflow. The AI gathers the recruiting pipeline, talent metrics, or interview notes, writes a short recap, and posts it to a Slack channel or a Google Doc. The team starts the week with a written summary instead of compiling one by hand.

Clerk

AI extracts information and updates records

Interview and resume capture

Email / Transcript / Form > AI > Spreadsheet or Airtable

A resume, an interview transcript, or an HR email arrives. The AI reads it and pulls out the fields that belong in a record: candidate details, role, department, start date. A new row is written to Google Sheets or Airtable automatically. Unstructured HR inputs become clean records without manual entry.

Analyst

AI makes a decision

New hire compliance check

Form > AI > Routing

A new-hire form or an employee survey is submitted. The AI checks it against compliance or eligibility criteria and returns a judgment, and a filter or path step acts on it, flagging an exception, raising an alert, or letting it pass. The AI is the decision layer that catches the cases a person would otherwise screen by hand.

Coordinator

AI creates tasks for teams

Onboarding task creation

New hire / Signed contract > AI > Task system

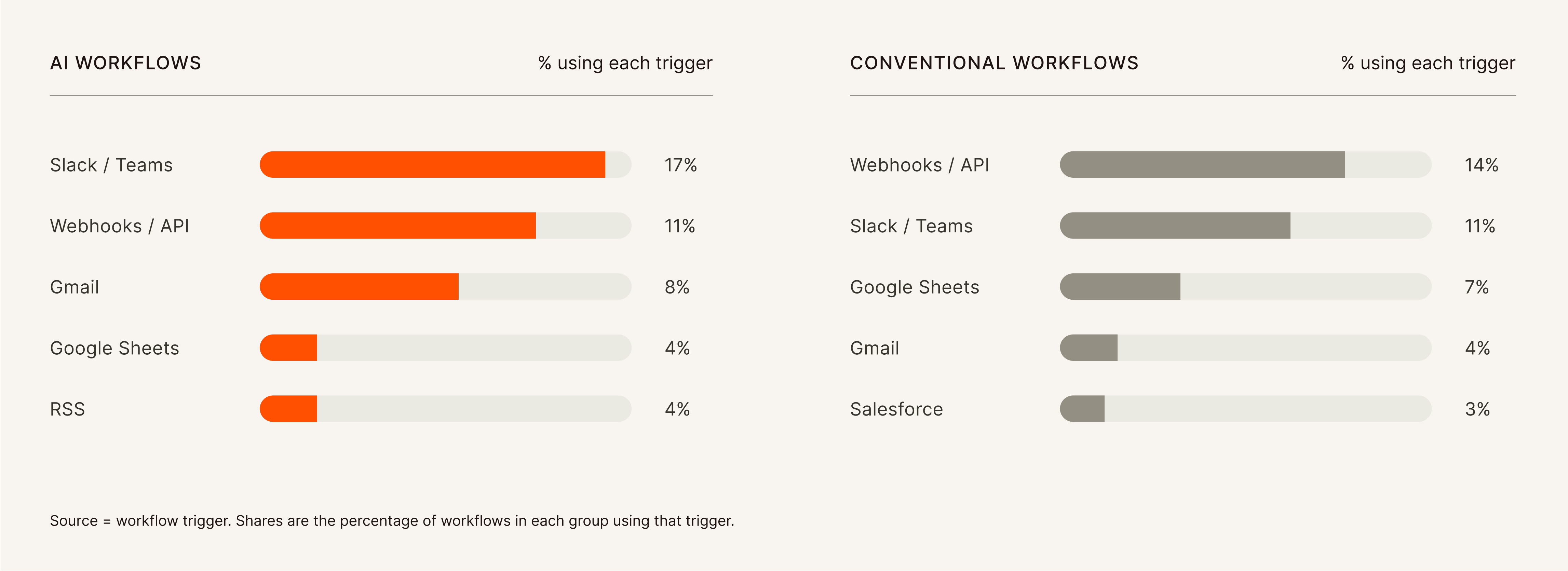
A new hire is confirmed or a contract is executed. The AI generates the onboarding tasks and creates them in a task system like Asana, monday.com, or Trello, with titles, owners, and due dates pre-filled. Onboarding steps become tracked work the moment someone joins.

Workflow architecture: AI workflows are plugged into the same systems that run the business



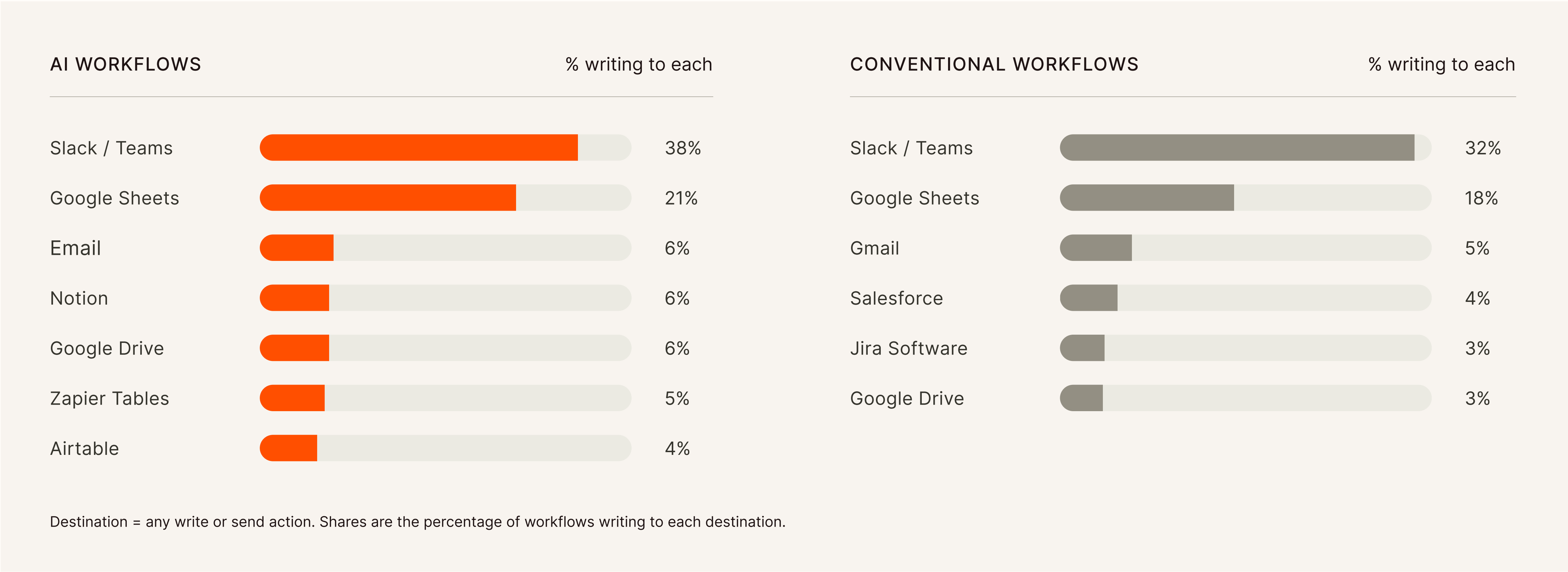
AI workflows are triggered by the same business systems

AI workflows start from the same apps and systems teams already use to run the business.



AI workflows write back to the same business systems

These workflows send AI output back to the apps teams already use for messages, records, and handoffs.



Methodology



Methodology overview

PANEL: 1,500 COMPANIES

The 1,500 companies are evenly split across three size bands: one-third lower mid-market, one-third upper mid-market, and one-third enterprise.

↓ TOP 25% BY AI WORKFLOW ADOPTION

LEADING COHORT STUDIED: 375 COMPANIES

We sampled 1,500 companies on Zapier's platform. This report studies the top 25% by AI workflow adoption (375 companies) selected by the volume of AI workflows run on a recurring basis.

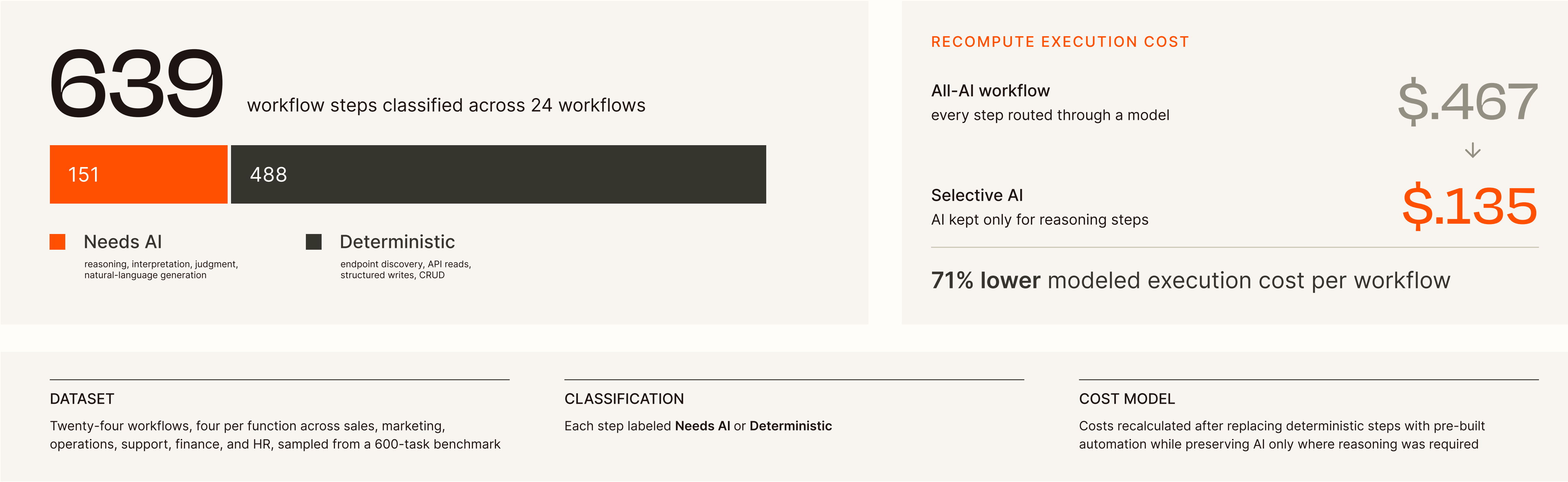
The average company in this cohort runs **11 durable AI workflows**.

This report isn't a picture of average AI adoption. It's a study of the workflow usage of companies with the highest observed AI workflow adoption. The figures that follow describe how these organizations build with AI in workflows, not simply how much AI they use.

Durable AI workflow: ran in two 30-day windows in Q2 (Apr 15–May 14 & May 15–Jun 14) and has an AI step present. Top-quartile median AI workflows = 6, mean = 11.

Modeling the economics of the AI-in-workflow architecture

600-task benchmark → 24 sampled workflows → classified, step by step



Complete methodology: In an internal Zapier study, we modeled 24 AI agent workflows (Gemini 3.5 Flash) to classify which steps required AI versus deterministic automation. Savings reflect the estimated cost reduction if deterministic steps were routed away from the LLM, which also removes their data from the context fed to the remaining AI steps, using modeled LLM pricing of \$1.50/M input tokens and \$9.00/M output tokens, and a modeled \$0.001 per app action fee. Not based on live customer workflows. Results can be expected to vary.

How we built the panel

PANEL 1,500 companies The sample was composed of 1,500 companies selected through stratified random sampling from eligible Zapier Team and Enterprise customers. Eligible companies had at least four active builders running workflows in each of the two trailing months. The sample was balanced equally across three employee-size bands: lower mid-market, upper mid-market, and enterprise. Some top-quartile panel accounts may be nonprofits or other non-corporate organizations, not exclusively for-profit companies.	AI WORKFLOW Definition A workflow with at least one step that calls a large language model, through Zapier's native AI capabilities or a third-party model integration.
SELECTION Top quartile By number of durable AI workflows = 375 companies, the subject of this report. The median company has six. The mean is 11.	DURABLE Two-month window Ran in both 30-day halves. AI step present, confirmed active in both halves and not paused.
UNIVERSE Full census Every AI-enabled workflow in production across the 375 accounts during the analysis window. No sampling.	DATA PERIOD April 15–June 14, 2026 The 60-day measurement window within Q2 of 2026.

How we classified what we found

ORIGIN Strict day-zero	Net-new = AI in the first published version. Retrofit = AI added after it. Unknown < 1%. Sub-patterns: 14% were started by copying another workflow; 6% replaced a retiring conventional workflow. Both overlap the primary categories. Sensitivity tested at 30, 90, and 180 days.	PERSONAL WORKFLOW FILTER < 1% removed	Write destinations were classified into organizational systems, communicator apps with business recipients, and personal-only apps. Twenty-one workflows that write exclusively to personal productivity apps were removed. Field-level inspection confirmed hard-coded recipients target business addresses and team channels.
AI ROLES Structural and prompt	Three of the four roles were assigned by following the AI step's output to where it lands: into a Slack message, an email, or a shared doc, as Communicator; into a CRM record or a spreadsheet, as Clerk; opening a ticket in something like Jira or Asana, as Coordinator. Analyst used a different, two-part test, both required: a filter or path step reads the AI's output, and a classifier labels the AI's prompt as a judgment task (decide, score, classify) rather than drafting, extraction, or summarization. Judgment is read from the builder-configured prompt, not runtime customer values or the AI's output. The classifier is fully scored on this window; Analyst is a final figure. A workflow can carry more than one role; 22% carry two or more.	BUILDER ROLE 77% coverage	From self-reported job function (58%), with third-party enrichment as a fallback (19%). 23% of workflows are untagged.
		PRODUCTION ACTIVITY Census	Full population of durable workflows on the 375 accounts. Timeframe: April 15–June 14, 2026. Automated actions: Each individual step a workflow carries out when it runs; one run through three action steps is three automated actions.

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MODELED-FIGURE QUALIFIER

The cost saving estimates provided herein are modeled estimates and not based on live customer workflows; results will vary.

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DATA BASIS

All statistics in this report are aggregated and de-identified. They are derived from configuration and usage metadata, including workflow structure, step types, connected apps, and run and operation counts. No customer content processed by a workflow at runtime was used, and the aggregated figures do not identify any individual company or person.

PRICING INPUTS

Pricing inputs are modeled and illustrative, as of July 6, 2026, and are not guaranteed rates for all plans.