LUMO INSIGHTS

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Autonomous AI agents break barriers, raise the stakes for leaders

Executive Summary

In the past two days, AI agents made major inroads from lab research to the corporate back office - surprising moves that promise big efficiency gains while surfacing new challenges. This briefing highlights how autonomous workflows are becoming mainstream in enterprise settings and what organisations must consider as they deploy these powerful but still-maturing tools.

Workplace platforms become AI Agent hubs

Notion, a popular collaboration platform, unveiled a major push into agentic AI on May 13 (techcrunch.com [1]). It introduced a new developer platform that allows users to integrate custom AI teammates into their Notion workspaces, connecting these agents with external apps and live data to automate multi-step workflows (techcrunch.com [2]). By building this orchestration layer across the tools and databases where employees already work, Notion is evolving from a note-taking app into a central hub where people and AI agents collaborate on knowledge tasks in real time.

Coupa also announced a sweeping vision for embedded AI automation. At its Inspire 2026 conference, Coupa launched Coupa Compose, an agentic-as-a-service platform for spend management functions (www.coupa.com [3]). The new offering provides a comprehensive environment to build, orchestrate, and manage a digital workforce of AI agents - effectively transforming how work is executed across procurement, finance, and supply chain operations (www.coupa.com [4]). By packaging the entire AI agent lifecycle into one solution, Coupa aims to help firms go from pilot to production automation faster and without re-writing core systems (the company says initial setup time can be cut by 40%).

These moves illustrate a broader trend: everyday business software is becoming inherently agentic. Established platforms are embedding AI-driven workflows directly into their products, reducing integration friction and accelerating automation from experiment to at-scale implementation. For senior leaders, this means the tools your teams already use may soon come with built-in AI co-workers, lowering adoption barriers and putting autonomous capabilities within reach across the organisation.

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Autonomous agents deliver results in operations

A new industry survey underlines how rapidly autonomous agents are moving from theory to practice. OutSystems' 2026 State of AI Development report found 96% of enterprises are already using AI agents, and 97% are working on organisation-wide deployments (www.outsystems.com [1]). The findings signal a clear shift from isolated pilots to AI embedded in mission-critical processes, as businesses move beyond experimentation and start treating agents as standard operating tools (www.outsystems.com [2]).

Tangible results are now emerging. In financial services, Broadridge Financial Solutions has deployed an agent-based platform that autonomously analyses, prioritises, and resolves routine post-trade and client-service exceptions in the back office with minimal human intervention (www.broadridge.com [3]). Live in production across capital markets and wealth management operations, this system is already delivering significant efficiency gains - early adopters report operational cost reductions of up to 30% on day one (www.broadridge.com [4]). Such outcomes demonstrate that agent-driven automation can immediately cut costs and cycle times in complex operational workflows, freeing employees to focus on higher-value activities.

Amazon's own embrace of AI agents shows that even core supply chain functions are being transformed. The company has expanded autonomous AI systems across procurement, inventory management, forecasting, and delivery logistics in its internal operations (distributionstrategy.com [5]). This aggressive push into AI-managed supply chains is not just about efficiency - it positions Amazon to compete more directly with distributors and logistics providers by leveraging unmatched automation capabilities (distributionstrategy.com [6]). For other players in retail and distribution, the message is clear: they will need to adopt agent-based workflows in operations or risk falling behind a fast-moving market leader.

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AI agents tackle specialised and regulated tasks

High-stakes, domain-specific work is no longer off-limits to AI. On May 13, Dotmatics - a scientific informatics firm - debuted Luma Agent, described as an AI co-scientist that can plan and execute complex laboratory research with minimal human guidance (www.prnewswire.com [1]). Embedded within Dotmatics' R&D platform, Luma Agent moves beyond simple Q&A: it carries out multi-step experiments, analyses structured lab data, generates reports, and even reconfigures experimental workflows via natural language commands (www.prnewswire.com [2]).

Just as importantly, Luma Agent was built with strong compliance guardrails. It can complete research tasks in minutes that once took human experts days of manual work (www.morningstar.com [3]), and every action it takes is logged with full audit trails and must be approved by a human supervisor before any data changes occur (www.morningstar.com [4]). By combining speed with traceability and human oversight, this AI co-scientist is bringing automation into regulated laboratory environments

without sacrificing accountability.

Major tech providers are pursuing a similar balance of autonomy and trust. At SAP's Sapphire conference, SAP and NVIDIA announced a partnership to enable specialised AI agents within enterprise applications, complete with built-in security and governance controls (nvidianews.nvidia.com [5]). Whether in an ERP system or a clinical setting, the focus is on deploying domain-trained agents that can perform sophisticated tasks under tight oversight. These developments suggest that even in highly regulated fields, leaders can begin leveraging autonomous agents for expert work - provided they also implement rigorous controls.

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Governing the risks of autonomous agents

Excitement around AI agents is now matched by a new emphasis on control and risk management. One analyst noted this week that the question is no longer whether to adopt agentic AI, but how well it's governed at enterprise scale. Put simply, rapid adoption has left governance struggling to keep up: 94% of organisations in a recent survey worry that the spread of AI agents is increasing complexity, technical debt, and security risks faster than they can manage (www.outsystems.com [1]).

Unchecked, autonomous agents can misbehave with costly consequences. There are already incidents of errant agents taking unsanctioned actions - from deleting entire databases to issuing unauthorised transactions (www.networkworld.com [2]). Not surprisingly, Gartner now predicts that more than 40% of enterprise agent initiatives will be abandoned by 2027 due to uncontrolled costs or unclear business value (economictimes.indiatimes.com [3]).

In response, companies are implementing new guardrails. Red Hat's latest update to its Ansible automation platform routes AI-driven operations through pre-approved, deterministic playbooks that ensure bots only execute vetted, safe actions (www.networkworld.com [4]). This approach allows organisations to accelerate tasks like troubleshooting and configuration while keeping a human in the loop for any potentially risky decisions.

Cybersecurity teams are also leveraging autonomous agents - this time, to play offense. This week Sweet Security launched an AI red team system that continuously attacks its clients' own networks with intelligent agents to find and fix vulnerabilities before attackers can (www.securityweek.com [5]). By stress-testing their defences with AI, companies can spot real-world security gaps faster than traditional audits, staying ahead of emerging threats. Overall, the throughline for leaders is clear: harness the growing power of AI agents, but invest equally in oversight and resilience to ensure these tools remain assets rather than sources of new risk.

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Key Statistics

- 96% of enterprises now use AI agents, and 97% are pursuing system-wide agent strategies ([www.outsystems.com](https://www.outsystems.com/news/enterprise-ai-agent-report-2026/#:~:text=revealing%20that%20enterprises%20have%20moved,However%2C%20as%20adoption%20accelerates%2C%20governance))
- Over 1,000,000 custom AI agents have been built by Notion users since February 2026 ([techcrunch.com](https://techcrunch.com/2026/05/13/notion-just-turned-its-workspace-into-a-hub-for-ai-agents/#:~:text=Notion%20customers%20have%20built%20over,work%20around%20these%20problems%20by))
- Up to 30% immediate reduction in day-one back-office costs reported in a financial back-office deployment of AI agents ([www.broadridge.com](https://www.broadridge.com/press-release/2026/broadridge-deploys-agentic-ai#:~:text=and%20wealth%20management%20workflows,directly%20into%20a%20firm%E2%80%99s%20own))
- 75% of organisations run legacy applications lacking modern APIs ([www.infoq.com](https://www.infoq.com/news/2026/05/aws-workspaces-ai-agents/#:~:text=requiring%20application%20modernization%20or%20API,a%20WorkSpaces%20instance%20at%20a))
- Gartner predicts over 40% of AI agent projects may be cancelled by 2027 due to high costs or unclear value ([economictimes.indiatimes.com](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/artificial-intelligence/over-40-of-agentic-ai-projects-will-be-scrapped-by-2027-gartner-says/articleshow/122068315.cms#:~:text=Playing%20By%202027%2C%20over%2040,to%20rise%20significantly%20by%202028))

KEY TAKEAWAY

AI agents are no longer experiments; they are becoming core to how work gets done. Leaders should focus on fast, pragmatic adoption in high-value workflows while enforcing strict governance to manage risk and ensure returns.

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