

Lead signal

# Automating the apprenticeship.

When agents take the routine work, they also take the training ground for the judgement above it.

Lead signal

# SAP used Sapphire in May to put the autonomous enterprise on the table, more than 50 Joule assistants, over 200 agents, and a 100 million euro partner fund to deploy them.

The shift moves AI from helping with the work to participating in the work, across finance, supply chain, procurement, human capital and customer experience, and once that happens the workforce question changes. The easy part of the story is which tasks the agents take, the harder part is what happens to the work underneath the work.

The apprenticeship was where people learned how a business actually behaves, how a contract hides risk, how a customer changes its mind, how a finance close tells you more than the dashboard does. That is where judgement gets built, long before anyone calls it judgement.

<p><b>The question asked</b></p> <hr/> <p>Which tasks can be automated</p>	<p><b>The question underneath</b></p> <hr/> <p>Which tasks were training people</p>
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Gartner CHRO research shows **78 percent** of HR chiefs agree roles and workflows must be rewritten for AI value to land, while only just over half of organisations have redesigned a role in the last year. The platform is moving faster than the apprenticeship, and that is the problem.

From my office, I started my MBA on Monday, which is either good timing or my own radar sensing the future, because this week I am writing about upskilling budgets and senior judgement while making the same decision myself. The senior judgement of 2030 will need to hold agents, governance, data context, regulatory exposure, workflow redesign and human adoption in the same conversation, and that comes from staying close enough to the work that the judgement keeps being tested.

On the radar

# Three signals from the week.

The org chart and the agents are moving, the apprenticeship is not.

**BBVA · 28 May 2026**

## 9/10

a top-level AI Transformation area

BBVA created a new top-level global area called AI Transformation, led by Antonio Bravo Acín, combining the current Data area with the technology capabilities needed to industrialise AI agents across the group. This is what the work looks like when it moves from programme language to organisational authority.

**BILL · 26 May 2026**

## 8/10

leadership reshaped around AI

BILL reshaped its executive structure around an AI-native operating model, folding product and technology under one leader to push AI services across the platform faster. The org chart is being redrawn for the agents, and the open question is whether the role redesign underneath it reaches the junior rung or stops at the top.

**Sysco · 27 May 2026**

## 7/10

SAGE agents in everyday work

Sysco was recognised for scaling SAGE, a company-wide agentic capability built to move AI out of experimentation and into the everyday work of supply chain and sales. This is the quiet version of the autonomous enterprise, agents absorbed into the daily workflow rather than launched as a headline.

### Against the grain

The dominant reading of SAP's autonomous enterprise is that the platform is ready and the next chapter is deployment. The harder question sits underneath it, what happens when the work we automate is also the work that trained people.

The junior workflow has always done more than produce output, it has produced memory, judgement, and the quiet instincts people rely on when the situation is messy and the system has no clean answer. Automate that layer without replacing the apprenticeship, and you may lift productivity this year while weakening the future bench.

### Perspective

Productivity this year is the easy number to put in front of an executive team. The senior bench of 2030 is the number nobody is measuring, and it is being spent down quietly every time a junior workflow is automated with no plan for where the learning moves next. Before you automate a workflow, ask what people were learning inside it.

#### The reframing question

When your AI strategy automates the junior workflow, what becomes your senior-talent pipeline strategy for 2030?

Two tests this week to find the answer.

#### Run these against the AI portfolio

Map every AI initiative against the work it removes, then ask which of those workflows trained the people you will need in five years.

Look at the upskilling budget and check whether you are funding the answer, or assuming the productivity will appear on its own.

#### What's next

Issue 09 lands Friday 5 June 2026, the procurement question underneath the autonomous enterprise, who owns the deployment hours when the agents, the platform vendor and the integration partner all sit inside the same operating model.