

3x

WINNING BY DESIGN · GROWTH INSTITUTE

3x Seller

How AI does not replace a seller but enables a new generation of sellers.

Jacco van der Kooij



reality-check - zsh

> What can AI do?

Everything.

> Replace all of our tools with AI

ERROR Cannot replace all tools.

I can stitch your tools together instead. Proceed? (y/n)

> y

Stitching: CRM — Email — Calls — Docs — Billing **done**

> Replace all of our humans with AI

ERROR Cannot replace humans.

I can help your humans with AI skills instead. Proceed? (y/n)

> y

> Help me create a deck that explains this to humans

Creating...  100% **Ready.**

> 

THE IMPACT OF AI ON GTM

It's time to put
AI to Work

THE 10X ENGINEER

In the past 8 months, the top 10% pulled 10x ahead

"TECHNOLOGY MAGNIFIES DIFFERENCES IN PRODUCTIVITY." PAUL GRAHAM, 2004

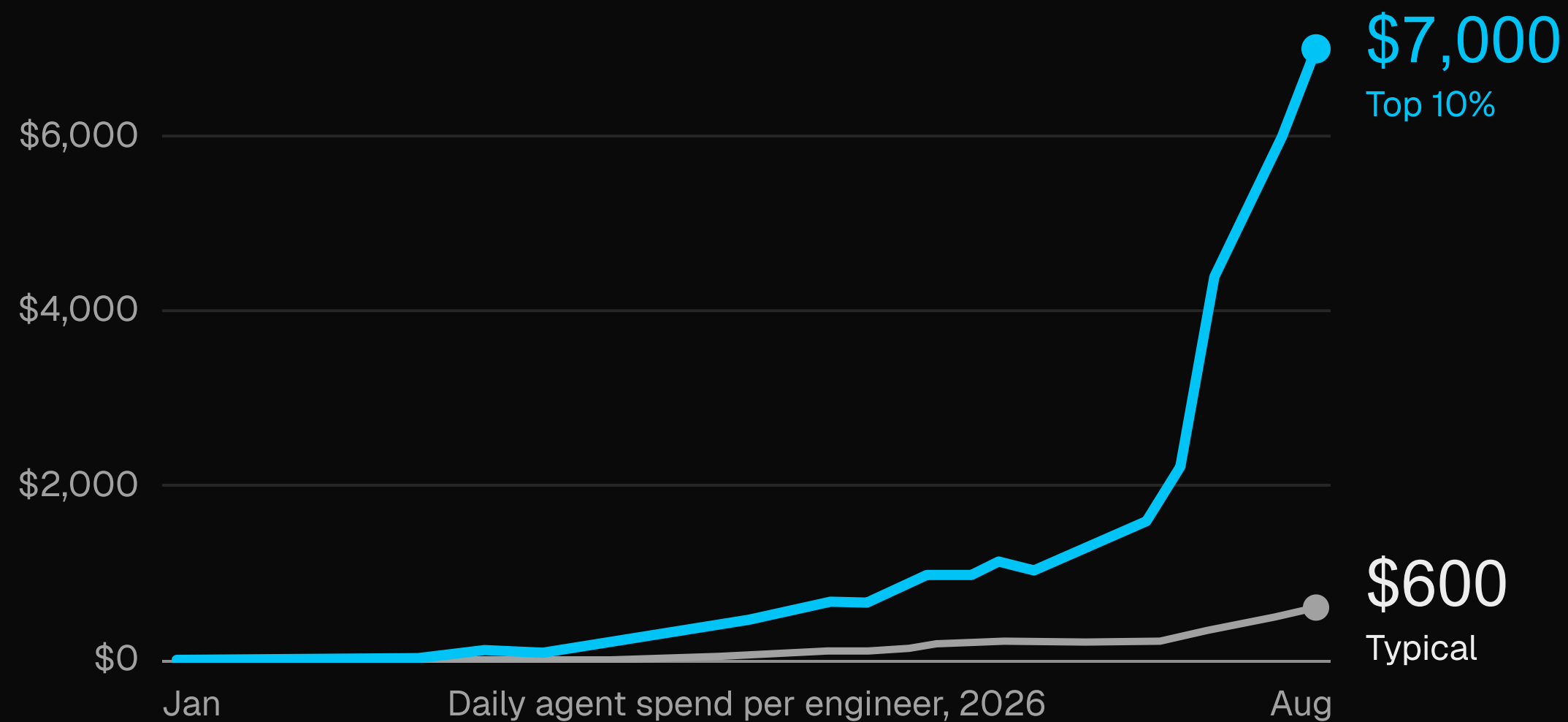


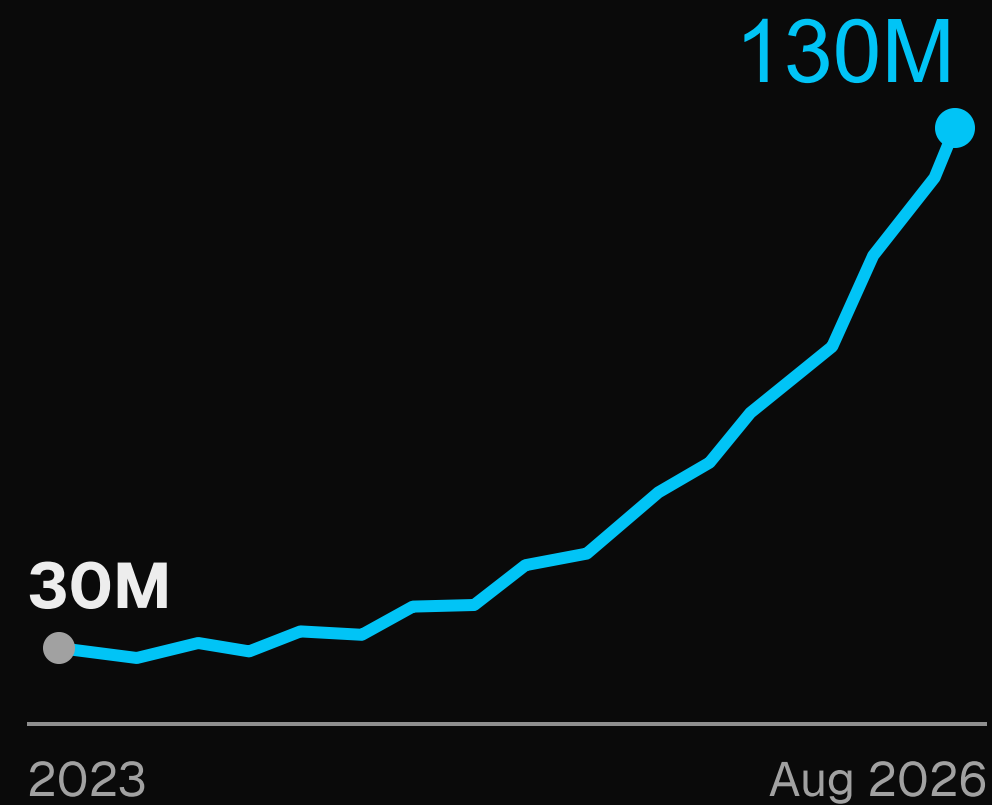
Figure 1.1. Adapted from OpenAI, Research acceleration: The view inside OpenAI, Sept 2026

THE 10X ENGINEER

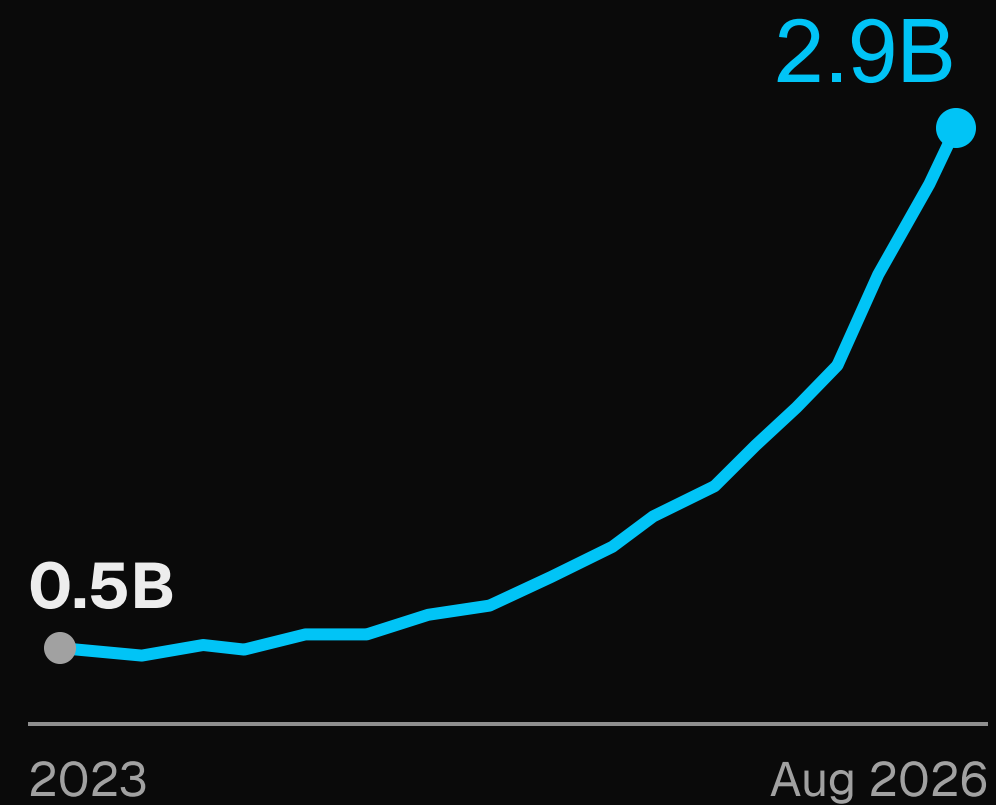
The production of software engineers has taken off

PULL REQUESTS, COMMITS AND NEW REPOSITORIES ROUGHLY QUADRUPLED SINCE 2023

Merged pull requests



Commits



New repositories

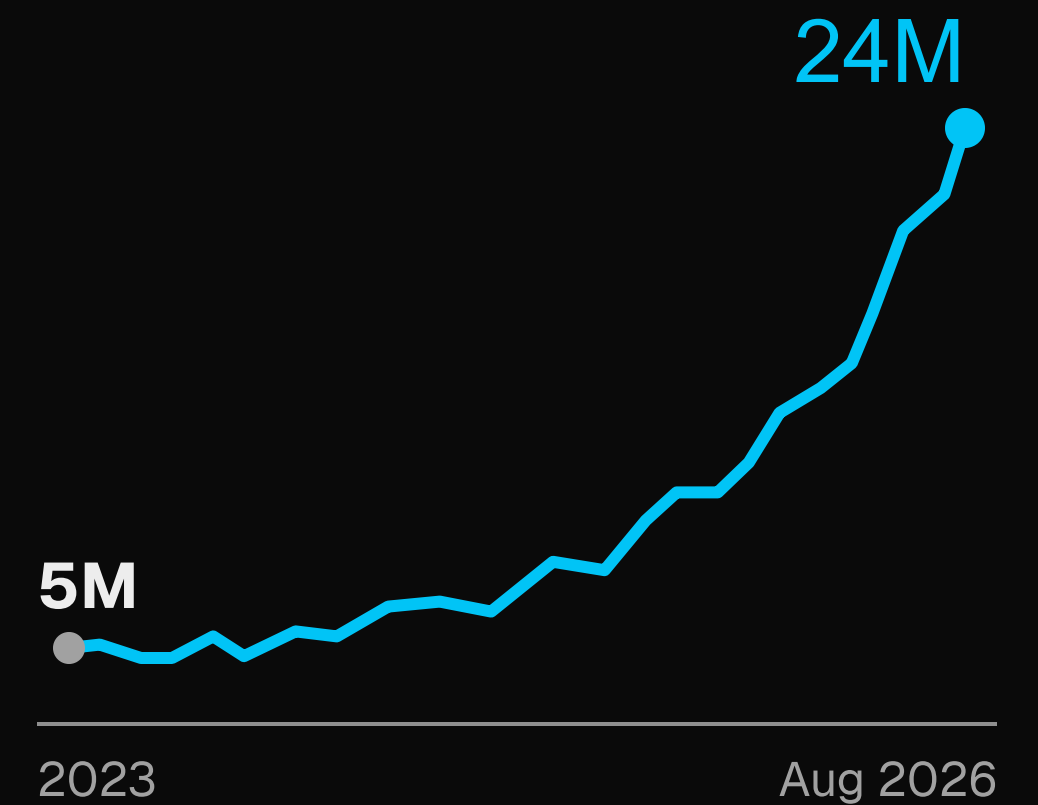


Figure 1.2. Sources: GitHub, Aug 2026; Vercel (M. Ubl), Sept 2026

THE 10X ENGINEER

Because AI moved the engineering constraint

THE ENGINEER'S TASK SHIFTS FROM WRITING CODE TO ORCHESTRATING AGENTS THAT WRITE CODE

	#	Engineering task	2024	2026	2027
1		Understand the requirement	8%	15%	20%
2		Design and architecture	8%	20%	25%
3		Write the code	32%	10%	5%
4		Debug	19%	8%	5%
5		Test	12%	3%	2%
6		Review	8%	25%	12%
7		Document	5%	1%	1%
8		Ship and operate: does it do what it was meant to do	8%	18%	30%

Table 1.1. 2024 from Sonar developer-time survey; 2026 and 2027 are estimates

What engineering can teach us about sales

1

AI removes the constraints that sellers have formed*

In sales, the main constraint today is the seller's time.

2

AI in GTM is much harder than AI in product

Code can be tested against a specification. A sale is decided by a buying group.

3

Sales trails engineering by 2 years

Copilot arrived in June 2022; AI SDRs in 2024. Sales is still in the flat part of the J-curve.

* Goldratt, Theory of Constraints; The Goal, 1984



THE IMPACT OF AI ON SALES

What's the constraint for sellers?

THE IMPACT OF AI ON SALES

Sellers spend surprisingly little time selling

SHARE OF A SELLER'S TIME BY TASK, TODAY

	#	Seller task	Today
	1	Find and Qualify	13%
	2	Research	13%
	3	Engage	12%
	4	Diagnose	9%
	5	Demonstrate	9%
	6	Navigate	4%
	7	Propose	18%
	8	Contracting	6%
	9	Administration	16%

TODAY

20–30%

Diagnose, Demonstrate and
Navigate: the only tasks spent
with the buyer

Two constraints govern sales

The seller's constraint

About 1,600 of 2,000 working hours go to commercial work, and every meeting needs preparation and follow-up.

Sets how many opportunities run at once.

The buyer's constraint

A few hours of conversation spread over months, while the buying group works toward consensus.

Sets the length of the sale.

THE IMPACT OF AI ON SALES

Classic SaaS sales is governed by these constraints

WHY A B2B SELLER HAS A PORTFOLIO OF APPROXIMATELY 50 OPPORTUNITIES

Step	Calculation	Result
Seller Capacity	2,000 working hours – 400 organizational	1,600 hours
Hours per meeting	1h meeting + 1h prep + ½h follow-up	2.5 hours
Meetings per opportunity	10% won × 8 + 90% lost × 4	4.4
Hours per opportunity	4.4 meetings × 2.5 hours	11 hours
Throughput	~1,340 hours (84% of capacity) ÷ 11	122 a year
Deals won	122 opportunities × 10%	12
New bookings	12 wins × \$50,000	\$600,000
Work in process	122 × 150 days ÷ 365 (Little's Law)	~50

Table 2.2. Growth Institute model: a manufacturing-style throughput model. Constraints per Goldratt's Theory of Constraints (1984); throughput and work in process per Little's Law (1961).

THE IMPACT OF AI ON SALES

AI moves the seller's constraint

PUT AI TO WORK SO SELLERS SPEND MORE TIME WITH CUSTOMERS

#	Sales task	Group	Today	1X	2X	3X
1	Find and Qualify	AI-led	13%	11%	4%	1%
2	Research	AI-led	13%	8%	5%	1%
3	Engage	Human-led	12%	15%	18%	10%
4	Diagnose	Human-led	9%	14%	24%	28%
5	Demonstrate	Human-led	9%	14%	18%	12%
6	Navigate	Human-led	4%	7%	16%	18%
7	Propose	AI-led	18%	14%	6%	1%
8	Contracting	Hybrid	6%	5%	4%	3%
9	Administration	AI-led	16%	12%	5%	1%

Table 4.2. 2025 from Winning by Design analysis; 2027 and 2028 are projections

THE IMPACT OF AI ON SALES

Example: AI researches better and faster

THE SELLER STOPS DOING THE WORK AND STARTS ORCHETRATING AI TO DO THE WORK

AI FREES SELLER TIME

2–3 hours

per \$50,000 opportunity, across CRM, email, calls, filings and news. AI now searches it all in parallel.

AI DOES A BETTER JOB

~90%

of AI's synthesis is relevant after a few iterations. By hand, 70–80% of what a seller finds is discarded.

THE HUMAN ROLE CHANGES

The last 10%

The seller validates, corrects and tunes the findings, then walks into a better first conversation.

THE IMPACT OF AI ON SALES

AI gives the seller 540 hours a year back

SELLERS SPEND TOO MUCH TIME ON MANUAL LABOR AI IS MORE SUITED TO DO

2.5 → 1.5

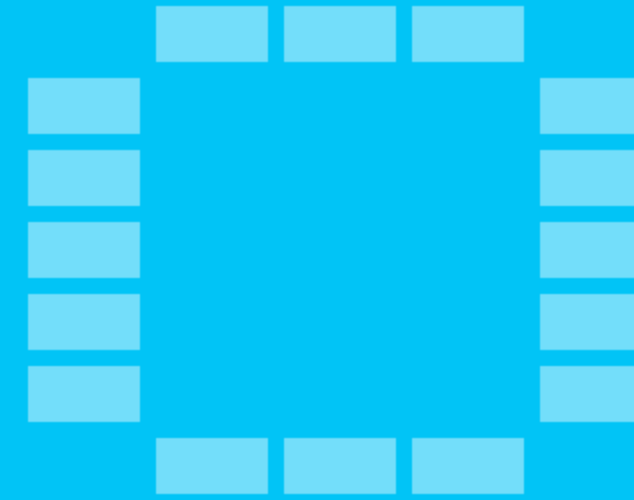
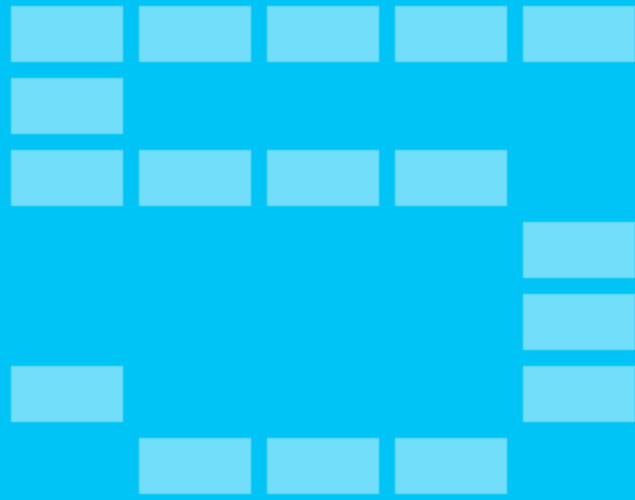
hours per meeting, as prep and follow-up fall from 1.5 to 0.5

1,340 → 800

hours spent on sales tasks for the same 50 active opportunities

540

hours a year freed to spend on talking with customers



AI READINESS

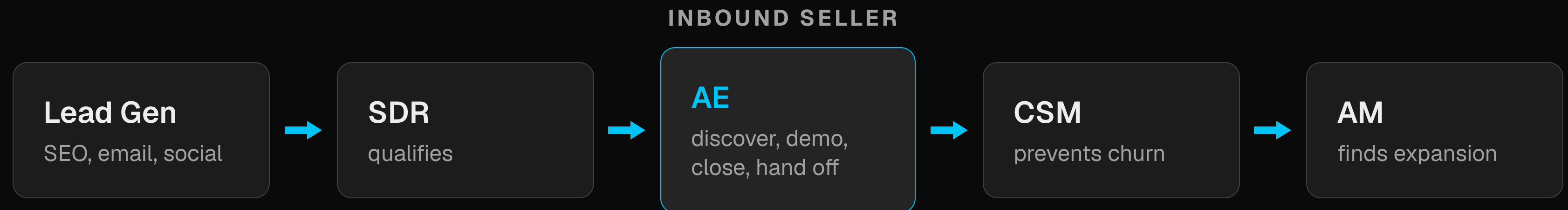
What to do with these hours?



AI READINESS

SaaS was built on specialized roles

THE ERA OF AN ABUNDANCE OF INBOUND CREATED A HIGH-VELOCITY MOTION BASED ON SPECIALIZED ROLES



Before the SaaS era there was no SDR, AE or CSM. One salesperson set their own meetings, closed their own deals and managed their own customers. The role was split because no one person could be good at every stage. AI makes the full-cycle seller possible again.

Mark Roberge, *Why AI Is Bringing Back the Full Cycle Seller*, Sept 2026

AI READINESS

It created a generation of inbound sellers

AN INBOUND SELLER SELLS TO PAIN; THE IMPACT SELLER SELLS TO THE IMPACT THAT PAIN CAUSES

Diagnostic element	Opportunities	Revenue index	Win rate
Situation	63%	90	37.0%
Pain	55%	100	39.9%
Impact (\$)	21%	144	42.4%
Critical Event (t)	22%	150	42.4%
Decision (%)	7%	176	55.4%

21%

faster close for deals with a Critical Event: a date the buyer must act by.

Table 3.1. WbD analysis of 57,826 opportunities, trailing 120 days, excl. renewals; associations, not causal.
Inbound selling is a form of solution selling whereas Impact Selling is an application of consultative selling.

AI READINESS

As inbound faded, growth collapsed

GROWTH RATE FELL FROM 55% TO 20% WHILE RETENTION HELD NEAR 70%

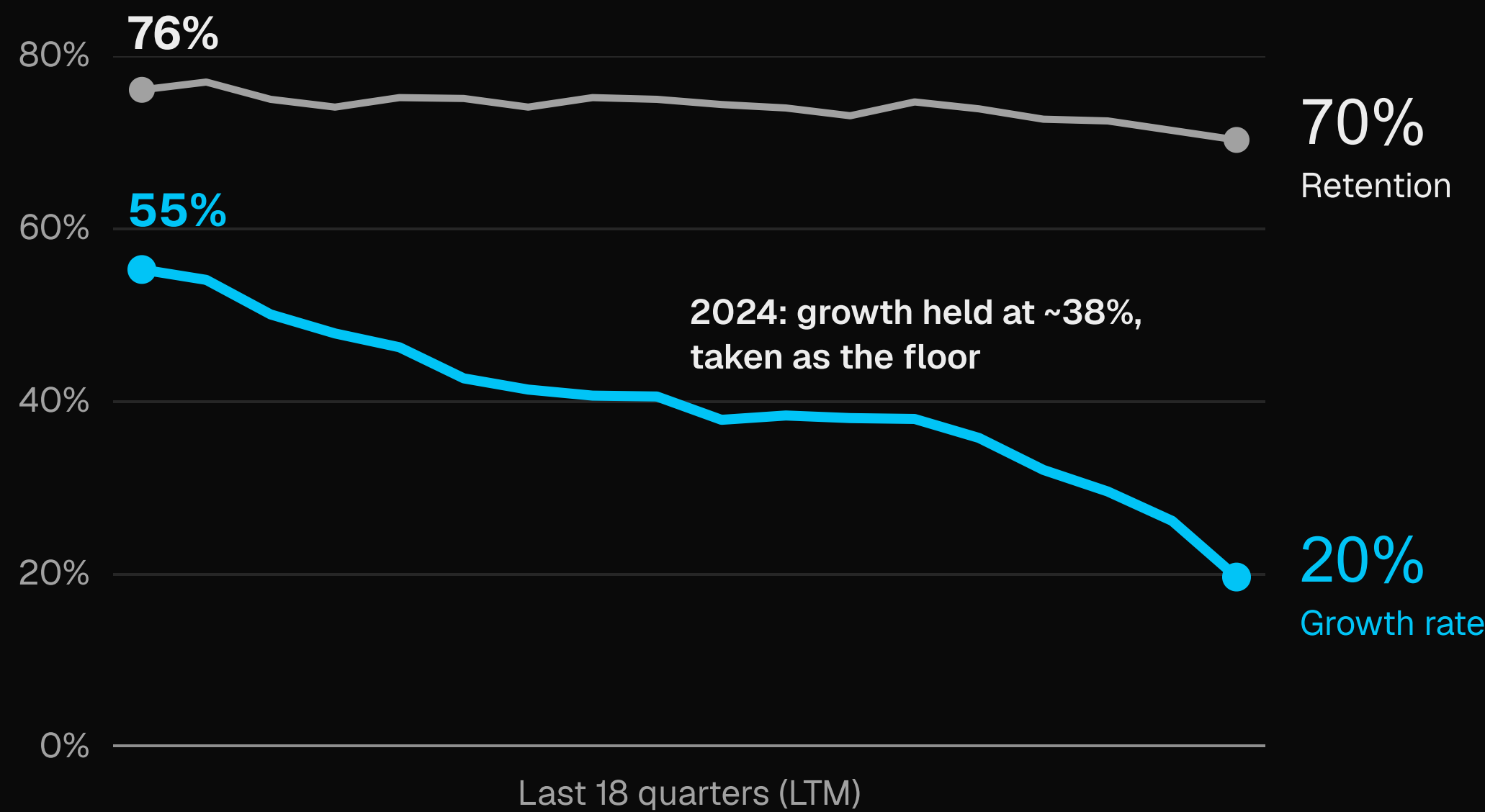


Figure 3.2. B2B software companies with ARR above \$100,000, last 18 quarters (LTM).
Source: ChartMogul and BenchSights

AI READINESS

Mid-tier sellers are trending to bottom-tier sellers

JUST LIKE IN ENGINEERING, THE TOP SELLERS HAVE ALREADY SEPARATED FROM THE REST

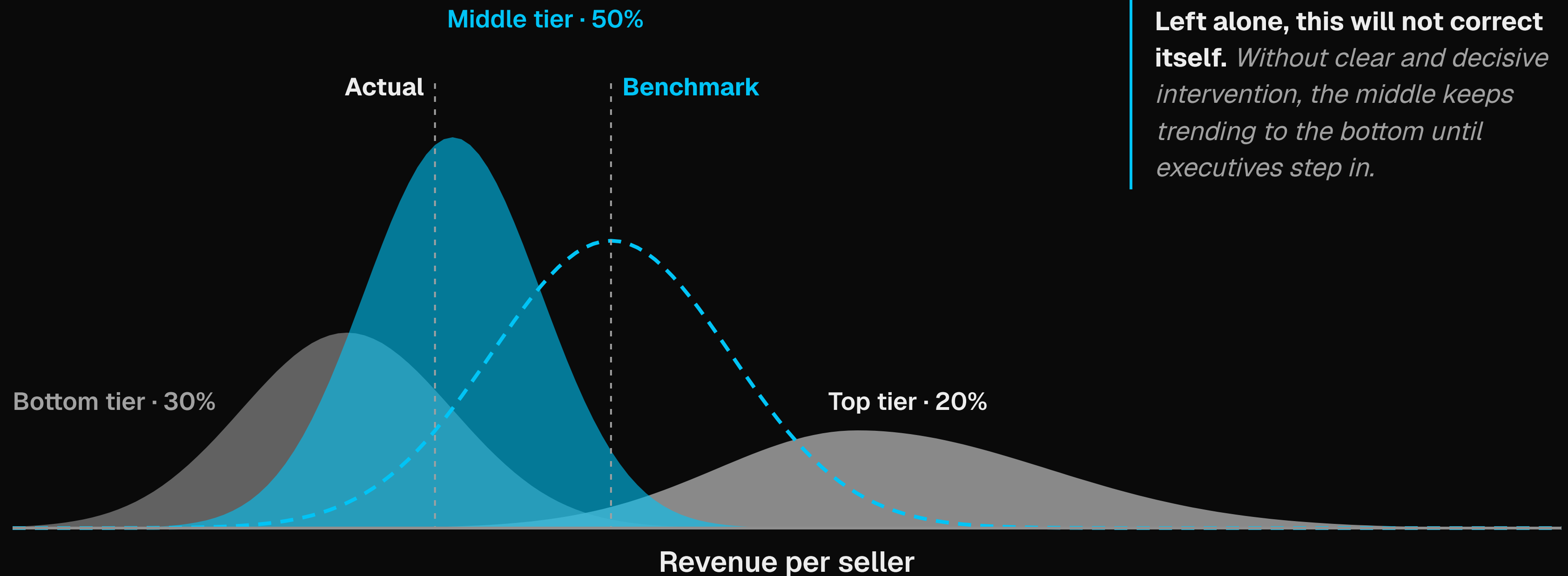


Figure 3.3. Modeled from Winning by Design customer data

EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGY

The evolution of technology
is shaping sales.

EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology shapes each generation of seller

SOFTWARE SALES IS STAFFED WITH G3 SELLERS, WITH THE G4 WORLD ACCELERATING AWAY.

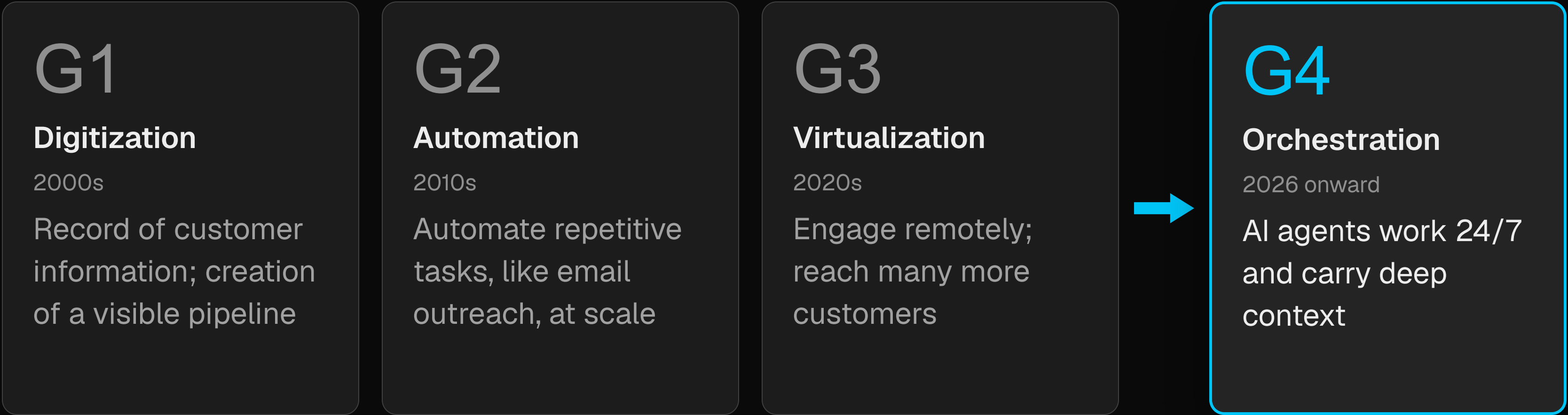


Table 3.2. G1–G3: technology helps the seller do the work. G4: the seller orchestrates the work, and AI does most of it.

EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology is speeding away from the seller

TH

G3

Virtualization

2020s

Engage remotely;
reach many more
customers

G4

Orchestration

2026 onward

AI agents work 24/7
and carry deep
context

EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology improves exponentially, humans improve linearly.

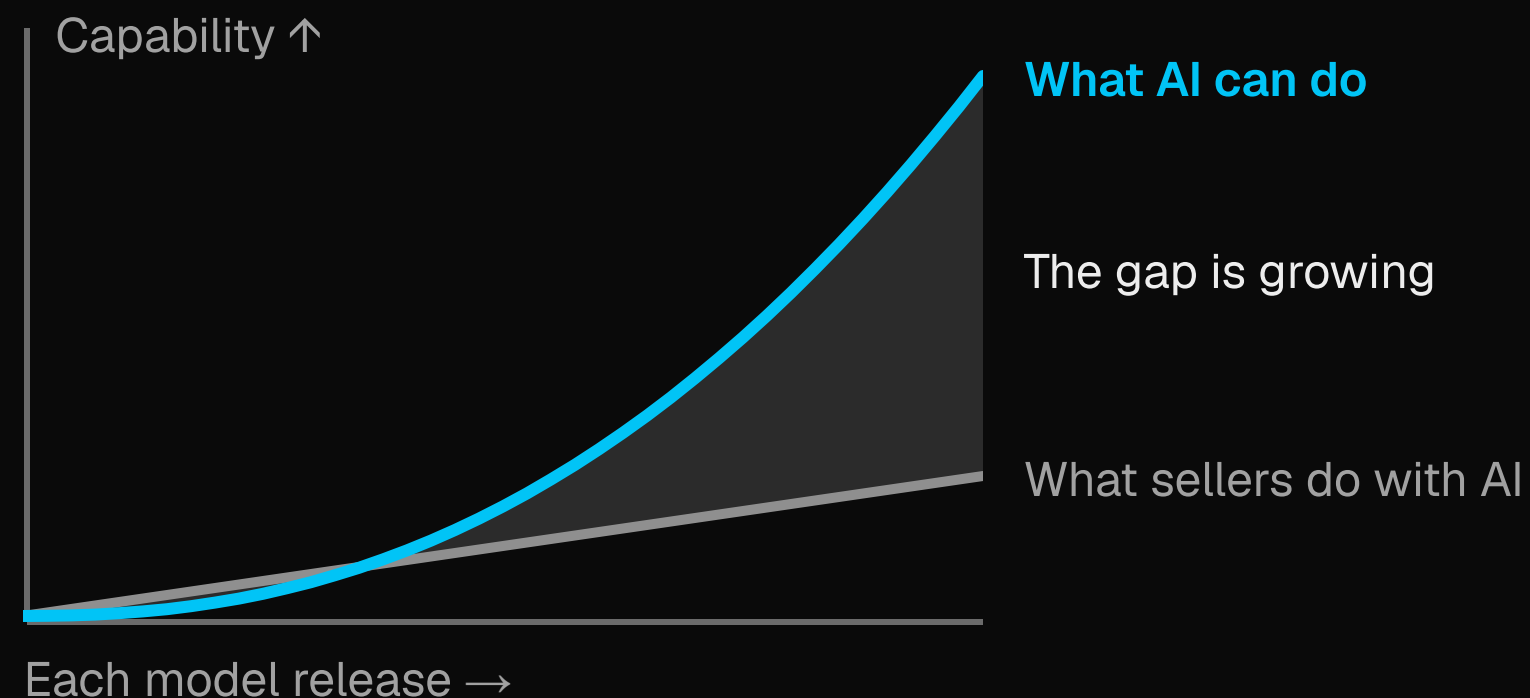
THIS CREATES A GROWING GAP BETWEEN WHAT AI CAN DO VS. WHAT SELLERS DO WITH AI

G3

Virtualization

2020s

Engage remotely;
reach many more
customers



G4

Orchestration

2026 onward

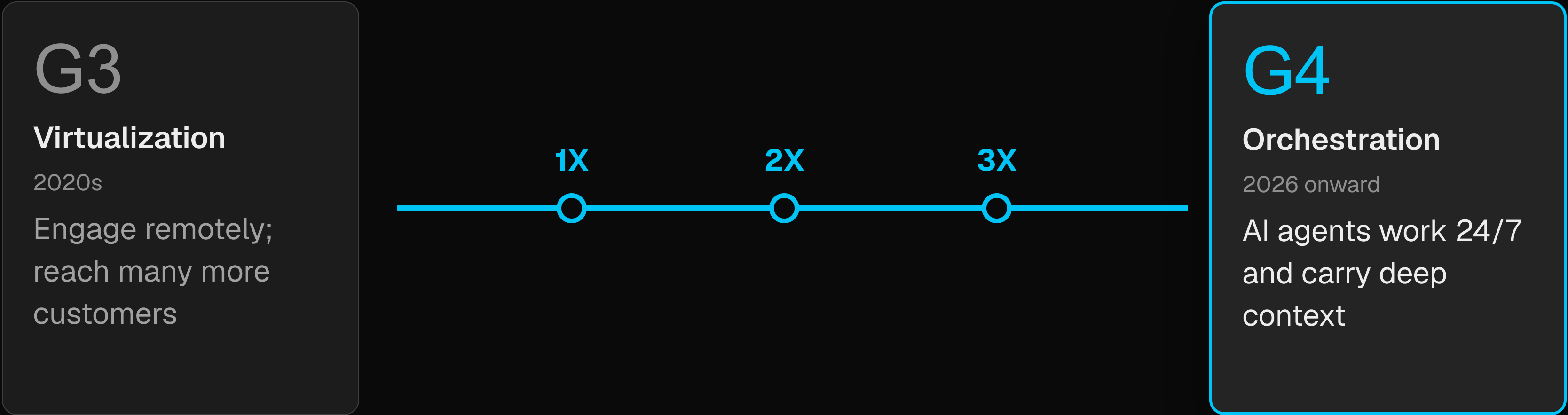
AI agents work 24/7
and carry deep
context

Figure x.x Adapted from “Capability overhang”, Chelsea Larsson, Anthropic, Founders' Day 2026

EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGY

We must to close the gap

THREE STAGES TO GET THE ENTIRE SALES TEAM ON A STRUCTURED PATH TO LEVERAGE AI

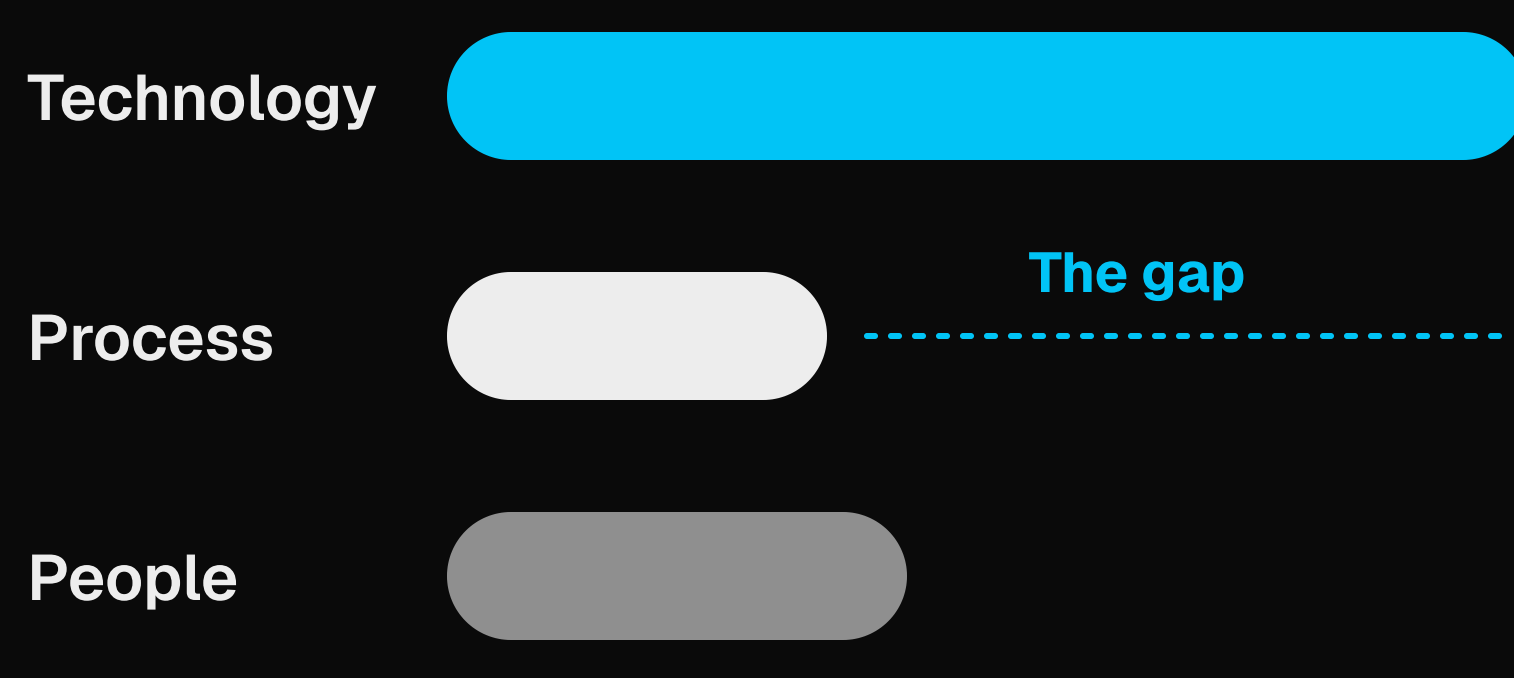


EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology must be aligned with people and process

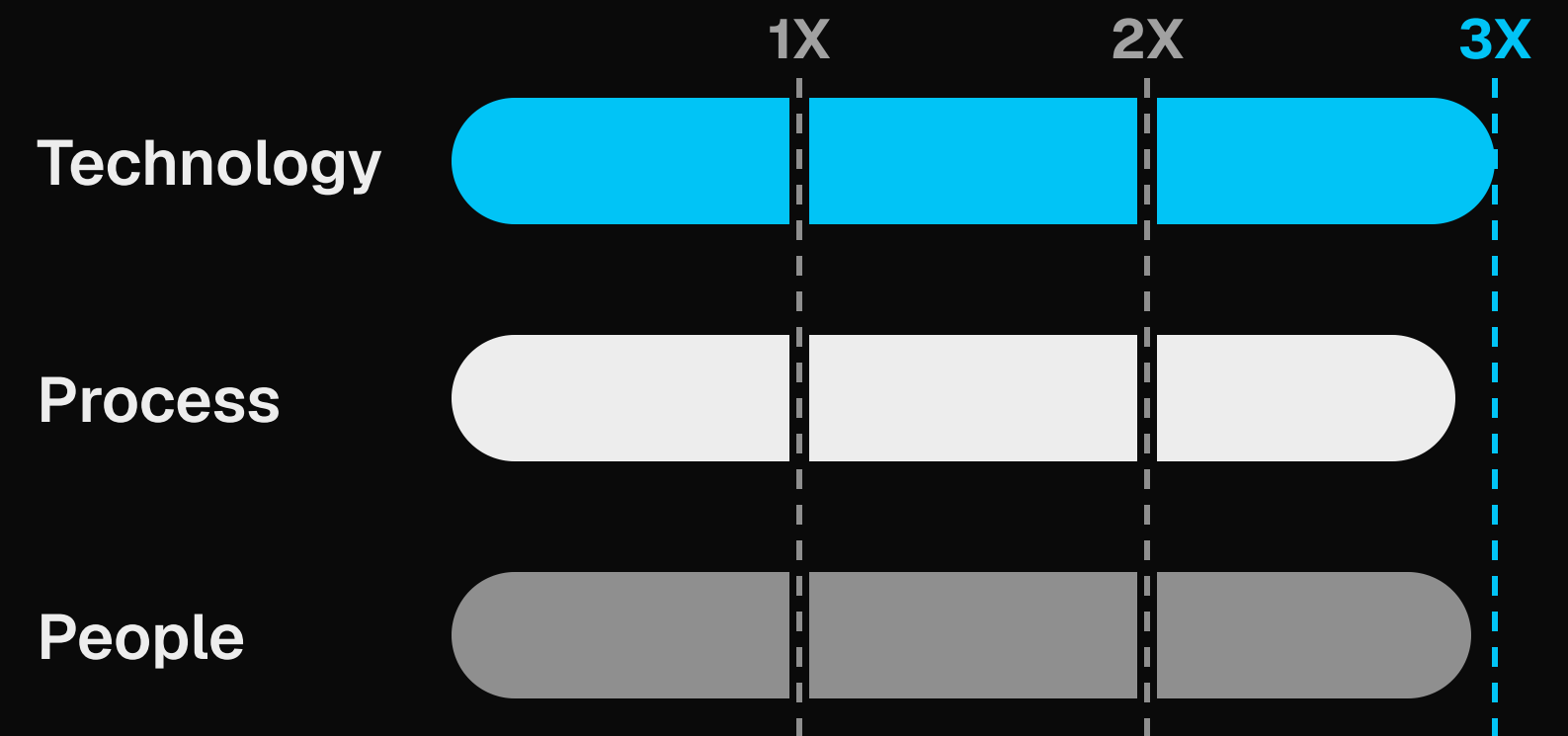
TODAY THEY'RE OUT OF STEP; THEY MUST MOVE TOGETHER

Misaligned



Technology races ahead, people lag, process trails.

Aligned



All three move together, at nearly the same pace.

3X SELLER

Three stages to the 3x Seller

3X SELLER

1X is about skills. 2X is about agents

EACH STAGE CHANGES WHO DOES THE WORK

1X: Skills

Learning how to work with AI

Fluent with AI: writing, skills and projects; AI does some work, the seller learns how to refine.

Every sales task gets easier and goes faster.

2X: Agents

Having AI work for you

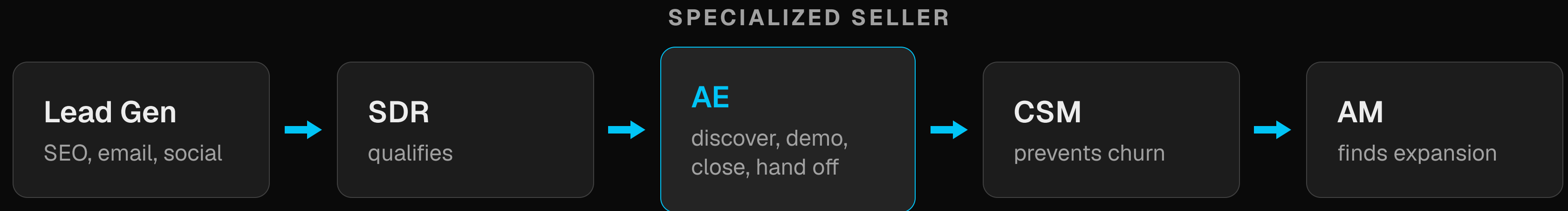
Agents perform sales tasks: prepare, draft and follow up; the seller reviews.

Freed time goes into working with customers.

3X SELLER

3X is about the full-cycle seller

SPECIALIZED ROLES HAND THE CUSTOMER OFF AT EVERY STAGE



New

+ Existing

multiple hand-offs between
humans and systems

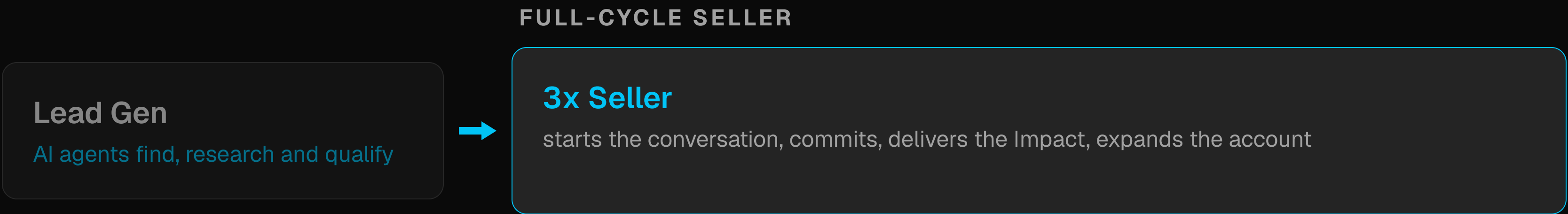
= 1x revenue

what one seller produces today

3X SELLER

3X is about the full-cycle seller

"AI IS UNDOING 20 YEARS OF SALES SPECIALISATION" MICHAEL HARTMAN GTM AT ANTHROPIC AT GTM SUMMIT



New

~\$600K a year: 10 to 12 new customers

+

Existing

540 freed hours go to existing customers, even at 108% NRR

=

3x revenue

the recurring revenue one seller produces and sustains

Figure 4.1, adapted. Growth Institute model, \$50,000 ACV

3X SELLER

Increase the time spend with customers

Sales task	Group	Today	3X
Find and Qualify	AI-led	13%	1%
Research	AI-led	21%	1%
Engage	Human-led	4%	10%
Diagnose	Human-led	9%	28%
Demonstrate	Human-led	9%	12%
Navigate	Human-led	4%	18%
Propose	AI-led	18%	1%
Contracting	Hybrid	6%	3%
Deliver Impact	Human-led	0%	25%
Administration	AI-led	16%	1%

TIME ON HUMAN-LED WORK

26% → 93%

Engage, Diagnose, Demonstrate, Navigate and Deliver Impact.
AI takes on the rest.

Table 4.2. Share of 1,600 hours of Seller Capacity; modeled, not measured

CLOSING THE GAP

We get to decide what AI does in sales

CLOSING THE GAP IS NOT A ONE-TIME PROJECT; FOR YEARS TO COME, WE WANT AI TO HELP US

-
- 01 Spend more time with customers**
Not more time in our tools
 - 02 Use that time to diagnose the Impact**
Not pitch against the pain
 - 03 Communicate faster and more responsibly**
Not more noise, across more channels
 - 04 Iterate with the customer until they achieve the Impact**
Not hand them off at the Commit
-

CLOSING THE GAP

We are helping sales teams close the gap

PACKAGES TO HELP CROS CLOSE THE GAP THIS SKO SEASON

SKO PACKAGE

1X

Skills

Sellers become fluent with AI and sell to Impact

SKO PACKAGE

2X

Agents

Sellers direct agents and review what comes back

SKO PACKAGE

3X

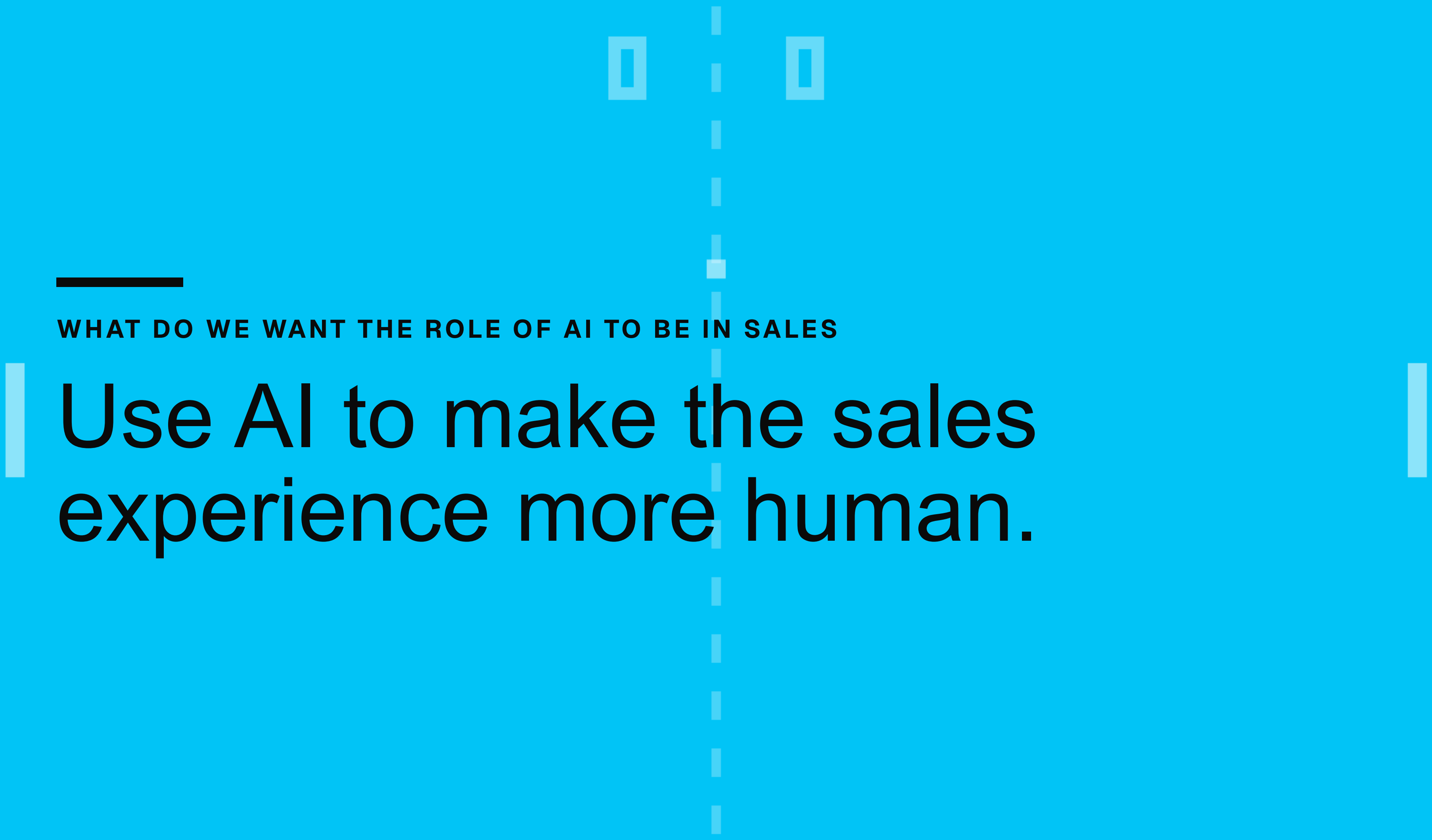
Workflows

Sellers orchestrate workflows across the full customer cycle

FOR LEADERS

Growth Institute

Where CROs and revenue leaders gather to discuss how to put AI to work to accelerate growth, not compound cost



WHAT DO WE WANT THE ROLE OF AI TO BE IN SALES

Use AI to make the sales
experience more human.

APPENDIX

Sources and references

FROM *THE 3X SELLER*, GROWTH INSTITUTE EXECUTIVE BRIEF V1.0, SEPTEMBER 2026

ENGINEERING PRECEDENT

- 1 OpenAI, *Research acceleration: the view inside OpenAI*, Sep 2026
- 2 GitHub, *The August 17 outage, and the work ahead*, Aug 2026
- 3 Andreessen Horowitz, *Investing in Cognition*, Sep 2026
- 4 J. Huang, remarks on token spend, All-In Podcast, Mar 2026

MARKET SIGNALS

- 13 Quartz / Reuters, SpaceX to acquire Anysphere, Jun 2026
- 14 TechCrunch, Cognition at \$26B, May 2026
- 15 Cognition, Series E at \$48B, Sep 2026

CODE QUALITY AND REVIEW

- 5 Sonar, survey of 1,100+ developers, 2026
- 6 Sonar, developer time allocation, 2019
- 7 IEEE Spectrum, AI code review at Synthesia and Bonterra, 2026
- 8 D. Longnecker, *The Review Bottleneck*, Jul 2026
- 9 Checksum, *State of AI Code 2026*, 105 leaders

SELLER TIME

- 10 Salesforce, *State of Sales*, 2024–2026
- 11 Forrester, activity study of 3,031 reps
- 12 Salesmotion, mid-market rep time, 2026

INTELLECTUAL LINEAGE

- 16 Growth Institute, *Don't Rip and Replace the Stack*, Jun 2026
- 17 N. Rackham, *SPIN Selling*, 1988
- 18 M. Dixon, B. Adamson, *The Challenger Sale*, 2011
- 19 J. van der Kooij, *Revenue Architecture*; SPICED and Bowtie
- 20 Growth Institute, *Foundations of Compounding Growth*, Feb 2026

ALSO CITED IN THIS DECK

- C. Larsson, Anthropic, “Capability overhang”, Founders' Day 2026
- ChartMogul and BenchSights, SaaS growth data
- M. Roberge, *Why AI Is Bringing Back the Full Cycle Seller*, Captivate Talent, Sep 2026