

ServiceNow's Blueprint for Agentic Business

The Executive Brief

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AI That Thinks. Workflows That Act.

AI got brilliant fast. In three years, it went from novelty to necessity, reasoning, writing, analyzing, and coding at levels that redefine what's possible. Every enterprise leader is asking the same question: how do we put this to work?

But even the most powerful AI still can't resolve a cross-system payroll discrepancy on its own. It can't provision an employee across five systems with the right approvals. It can't investigate a compliance exception spanning three vendors and two jurisdictions while producing an audit trail that holds up in front of regulators.

Intelligence has outpaced execution. The models can think. The open question is what makes them act safely, at scale, with the context and governance that enterprises require.

The answer is workflows. Not simple automation or task-level scripts. Enterprise workflows, the kind built on decades of business process capital, security architecture, regulatory compliance, and cross-system orchestration. The kind tested, hardened, and refined through thousands of real-world deployments.

AI without workflows is just expensive advice. AI inside workflows is autonomous enterprise execution.

That's the shift happening right now. And ServiceNow was built for it.

The average enterprise runs 367 applications across the employee experience alone, each with its own data model, security perimeter, and governance logic. That fragmentation has been accumulating for decades. AI didn't create it. But it made it impossible to ignore, because AI can only execute as well as the infrastructure beneath it allows.

That's why, despite record investment, enterprise AI maturity actually *declined* 20% year over year. Vendors bolted AI onto existing applications as sidecars, producing shallow intelligence layered on disconnected processes. The models could reason. They couldn't execute across systems with governance, context, and accountability. Their foundations weren't ready.

ServiceNow's was, with 80B+ workflows and 6.5T transactions annually for more than 85% of the Fortune 500. Twenty plus years of operational intelligence embedded at the core of how the world's largest organizations actually run: IT, CRM, Employee Experience, Security, Finance, and beyond. When AI needed a platform that could supply identity, governance, context, and execution infrastructure, the platform was already there.

***"ServiceNow is destined to be the best platform,
the operating system of enterprise AI agents."***

Jensen Huang, CEO, NVIDIA



The Industry Is Solving the Wrong Problem

There's an arms race underway, measured in benchmarks, parameter counts, and context windows. Every quarter, a new model claims the top spot. Every quarter, the gap between first and fifth gets smaller.

The cost of intelligence has dropped by an order of magnitude in three years. The benchmarks are converging. The price gaps are closing. Intelligence is already cheap, and getting cheaper by the month.

That's not a problem. It's a signal. The value is shifting.

When intelligence is abundant, the scarce resource is everything surrounding it: the enterprise context that grounds AI in reality, the governance that makes it safe, and the execution infrastructure that turns insight into action. Durable competitive advantage lives in who can apply intelligence where work actually happens.

When you look at the competitive landscape through that lens, the gaps become clear.

Standalone LLMs represent a genuine leap in reasoning, but they're general-purpose intelligence engines. They can suggest actions but can't orchestrate workflows across systems. They have no persistent memory, no built-in governance, no connection to the systems of record where work gets done. Even leading model providers increasingly acknowledge that the real breakthrough comes from the context and integration wrapped around the model. Intelligence without action.

Vibe coding has lowered the barrier to building software in remarkable ways. It's fast, real, and genuinely impressive for prototyping. But enterprise value doesn't come from prototypes. It comes from decades of accumulated business process capital: the approvals, SLAs, exception handling, cross-functional coordination, and regulatory controls refined through real operations. Vibe coding makes the first 20% easy. The remaining 80%, hardening, integrating, governing, and maintaining, is where the real cost lives. Speed without depth.

Data platforms play a critical role in organizing and modeling enterprise data. They help organizations understand what they have. But understanding and acting are different things. Insights generated on a data platform still need to be executed through another system. They power intelligence but don't sit inside the flow of work where incidents get resolved, approvals get routed, and service requests get fulfilled. Insight without execution.

Agent frameworks and digital workers operate at the task layer, not the enterprise execution layer.

Early agentic frameworks have proven that AI can act autonomously, and simultaneously demonstrated why ungoverned execution creates real risk. Even their own creators advise limiting access to sensitive files and restricting internet activity to trusted environments. Powerful tools with real limitations. Capability without control.

Every one of these approaches solves a part of the problem. None of them solves the whole problem.

Who can apply AI where work actually happens, safely, at scale, with context?

That's a platform question. And it has a platform answer.

The Insight That Changes Everything

Here's an analogy that clarifies the entire competitive landscape.

A GPS helps an individual optimize a route. Powerful, personalized, useful. But localized. It has no awareness of what's happening in the rest of the system.

Air traffic control coordinates thousands of moving parts simultaneously, enforcing safety constraints, routing across teams and systems, maintaining real-time operational awareness across the entire airspace. One assists an individual. The other manages the system.

That's the line between what everyone else is building and what ServiceNow already operates. AI that assists individuals versus AI that runs enterprises.

The distinction matters for a reason that goes beyond technology. When autonomous workflows handle the routine, people gain the autonomy to do the work they actually signed up for. The real promise of enterprise AI is putting it to work *for* people, so they can focus on judgment, creativity, and the decisions that actually move the business.

Why This Advantage Compounds

There's a fundamental asymmetry at the heart of the AI landscape that most people miss.

Frontier AI models can be built, improved, and commoditized within training cycles measured in months. Enterprise operational context, the workflows, integrations, data relationships, and institutional knowledge required to apply AI reliably, compounds over years. You can't accelerate that with compute alone.

ServiceNow already sits at the operational core of the world's largest enterprises. 80B+ workflows. 6.5T transactions annually, growing at ~25% year over year. 85%+ of the Fortune 500. 98% renewal rate. Twenty years of embedded workflow intelligence across IT, CRM, Employee Experience, Security, Finance, and beyond.

That's not a commercial metric. That's deep operational embedding. The platform where work already happens is the platform best positioned to make that work autonomous.

The Counterintuitive Truth

Here's what most people miss when they think about enterprise AI: **AI agents need the platform more than humans do.**

Humans have intuition about boundaries. They know not to look at a colleague's compensation data. They know to get approvals before making payroll changes. They watch deadlines, read context, and exercise judgment. A powerful AI agent can do far more than any individual, but that amplifies risk unless the platform supplies the guardrails.

The more capable the agent becomes, the more it depends on identity resolution, entitlements, workflow constraints, integration governance, audit evidence, and change management. Without those foundations, a brilliant agent becomes a brilliant liability.

This leads to a critical economic insight: as intelligence commoditizes, enterprises won't pay durable premiums for features that any model can reproduce. They'll pay for the AI Control Tower, the governed platform that knows who you are, what you're allowed to do, and how to execute across systems with audit-grade proof.

- **Governance OS.** Permissions, workflow enforcement, audit trails. Any agent must run through it.
- **Best domain agents on-platform.** The model isn't what's special. The platform's operational data and execution context are.
- **Data flywheel.** Every action, exception, and resolution becomes compounding operational history that makes automation smarter and governance stronger over time.

And here's what makes this position special: ServiceNow gets better every time the models get better. Every breakthrough in reasoning, speed, or capability from any model provider flows directly through the platform, grounded in your enterprise context and governance. Other companies are racing to build the smartest AI. ServiceNow is building the system that makes every AI smarter the moment it connects to your business. We don't compete with the models. We make them work.

Open by Design

The AI Control Tower only works if it's genuinely neutral. An orchestration layer locked to one hyperscaler or one model provider is just another silo. ServiceNow is architected for openness at every layer.

- **Any data.** Workflow Data Fabric connects to 450+ systems and federates live queries across your entire data estate without replication or lock-in.
- **Any model.** Leverage NVIDIA, OpenAI, Google, Anthropic, or ServiceNow's own models, all grounded in your enterprise context and governance.
- **Any workflow.** Autonomous execution across IT, CRM, Employee Experience, Risk & Security, and custom applications built on the platform.
- **Any cloud.** Deploy on-prem, private cloud, or public cloud across any hyperscaler, with configurable data residency and sovereignty controls.

Every other player in the ecosystem optimizes for their own layer. Hyperscalers want to consolidate workloads. Data platforms want to centralize data. Model providers want to standardize on their APIs.

ServiceNow optimizes for the enterprise, orchestrating across all of them. That neutrality is what makes the AI Control Tower the trusted center.

What this looks like in practice

Architecture is only as convincing as the outcomes it produces. Here's a scenario that brings it to life, not because it's dramatic, but because it's exactly the kind of cross-system, regulated, high-stakes problem that every enterprise faces and that no one else can solve end to end.

An employee checks their brokerage account on RSU vesting day. The share count looks wrong. Not wildly off, just enough to trigger concern. A simple question: "Where are my shares?"

An LLM can explain RSU vesting logic, walk through withholding calculations, and pull policy summaries. Helpful, but it can't answer the actual question. It doesn't know the employee's entity, tax jurisdiction, equity plan version, or which systems were involved. It can explain. It cannot resolve.

A desktop agent might notice something suspicious, like a withholding election that appears to have changed. But it can't verify why because it lacks access to the enterprise systems of record. So it guesses. It blasts multiple teams in parallel. It starts drafting messages containing personal stock transaction details. Noise, risk, and embarrassment, fast. It can act. It cannot govern.

ServiceNow resolves the employee's identity across HR, payroll, equity administration, tax, and brokerage. Structured, relational data connected by relationships that change over time and are full of edge cases. The platform enforces permissions *below* the model. The system cannot show or do what it's not allowed to. It launches a governed workflow spanning multiple vendors, investigates root cause, validates corrections, coordinates across systems with proper approvals and segregation of duties. And it produces the evidence: who initiated, what changed, who approved, SLA compliance, complete audit trail.

The root cause turned out to be a cross-entity transfer that changed the employee's tax profile and created a temporary mismatch. The AI could explain how vesting works. The platform could actually fix it, safely, with approvals, and with a complete trace of what changed where.

The more complex the work, the more the enterprise needs the AI Control Tower.



The Architecture: Sense, Decide, Act, Govern

Four interconnected capabilities power everything described above. Together, they form the AI Control Tower, the platform that enables autonomous workflows at enterprise scale.

SENSE. Most LLMs are trained on the internet. ServiceNow gives AI your enterprise context. Workflow Data Fabric connects to 450+ systems, contextualizing data in real time. Zero-Copy Connectors eliminate duplication and brittle pipelines. The Knowledge Graph maps it all to your business context and CMDB, giving AI agents a complete navigational view of your organization. That extends to every connected asset: IoT, OT, cloud infrastructure, medical devices. Continuous discovery that knows what exists, how it's connected, and what it means to the business.

DECIDE. AI models need to reason with business accountability, not probabilistic guesswork. ServiceNow grounds any model provider in your enterprise context, rules, and knowledge. The result: decisions that are aligned with your policies, predictable in their behavior, and auditable from end to end. Think of it as AI alignment for the enterprise. Researchers work to align models with human interests. ServiceNow aligns them with your business interests.

ACT. This is where most AI stops and ServiceNow keeps going. Agent Orchestrator, Agent Studio, and Agentic Playbooks execute work end to end, from autonomous IT resolution to updating CRM records based on customer signals. When an out-of-the-box workflow doesn't exist, App Engine and Build Agent let teams build new ones with AI, inside the guardrails of enterprise security and governance. The difference between AI that recommends and AI that gets it done.

GOVERN. AI workflows require guardrails at the moment of action, not after the fact. AI Control Tower ensures every AI system, asset, and identity is compliant, secure, and aligned with your strategy. This

is where ServiceNow's twenty-year history in enterprise IT becomes an AI advantage, governing every model and every agent across the organization.

These four capabilities are already delivering results across five enterprise domains.

In **IT**, ServiceNow is shifting organizations from reactive firefighting to autonomous resolution. AI handles routine support, incident triage, and remediation so experts focus on strategic work. AstraZeneca has reclaimed 30,000+ hours annually. Adobe resolves outages 25% faster. The best incident is the one that never happens.



AstraZeneca

30k
Hours saved annually

In **CRM**, the model is changing from digital filing cabinet to revenue engine. AI agents sell, serve, and support across front, middle, and back office on a single platform. Pure Storage has seen 7x faster case resolution. Bell has automated 90% of dispatch-related tasks. Customers get faster answers. Sales reps spend more time selling.



PURE STORAGE

7x
Faster case resolution

For the **employee experience**, the friction of the patchwork enterprise is disappearing. Procurement onboards suppliers in a click. HR resolves over 70% of inquiries automatically. Siemens resolves 210,000 tickets autonomously every month. Eaton doubled workflow capacity without adding headcount. The daily grind of navigating 367 applications is being replaced by AI that gets work done.

For builders, ServiceNow is turning **app development** from a months-long IT project into a days-long creative act. Low-code and AI-assisted development inside the guardrails of platform security, governance, and compliance. Every app inherits enterprise-grade trust from day one. No shadow IT. No ungoverned code.

And in **risk and security**, the equation is flipping from reactive to predictive. As AI-powered apps and agents multiply, security teams need the same speed the rest of the business is gaining. Honeywell achieved 75% faster compliance attestation. Avalara saves 800 hours per month. Governance isn't slowing the business down. It's keeping pace with it.

For complete technical architecture detail, including RaptorDB, Workflow Data Fabric, Zero-Copy Connectors, Agent Fabric, and the full competitive analysis, see the companion document: The Technical Foundation.



Honeywell

75%
Faster compliance attestation

Where We're Going

The AI landscape is moving fast. ServiceNow's advantage is that we're not starting from scratch. We're building from a position of deep operational embedding, compounding data, and proven enterprise trust.

But the next phase requires more than extending what we have. It requires becoming something new. ServiceNow is becoming an AI-native enterprise: AI embedded into every product, every feature, every interaction with the platform. Not AI bolted on. AI built in. That means AI-native engineering practices, AI-native pricing and packaging, multimodal user experiences, and a modernized tech stack that delivers innovation to customers faster than ever.

That shift is already underway. And it's accelerating.

Autonomous workflows are expanding into every corner of the business. Finance, legal, procurement, supply chain. Every new domain adds enterprise context, strengthens the execution advantage, and creates new value for customers who are already on the platform.

The enterprise data advantage is compounding. Contextual AI grounding through CMDB, Context Graph, and workflow history improves with every execution. Bringing the right data, at the right time, to every agent and workflow. Providing business context to AI decisioning, not just raw information.

Governance is becoming the deciding factor. Industry analysts predict up to 40% of agentic AI projects could fail due to governance challenges. The platforms that apply AI safely will win. The governance challenge is also expanding beyond traditional IT. Every AI coworker, every connected device, every machine-to-machine interaction needs an auditable identity chain and scoped permissions. ServiceNow is investing to meet this moment, building an AI Control Tower that governs not just what AI does, but who it acts as and what it can reach.

Creating the AI Front Door for the enterprise. The 367 application problem doesn't just create architectural complexity. It creates a daily experience problem for every employee. ServiceNow is building a single conversational AI interface that collapses that complexity into one front door. One place to ask questions, take action, and resolve issues across IT, HR, Finance, and beyond, grounded in enterprise context, permissions, and workflows. The patchwork enterprise disappears for the people who work inside it.

Accelerating time to value. Simpler products, faster deployments, and more ways for customers to see results quickly. The more teams across an organization use ServiceNow, the stronger the platform becomes for everyone.

Through all of this, one principle holds: autonomous doesn't mean unattended. It means intelligently delegating routine work so people can do the work that actually matters. Every autonomous workflow ServiceNow delivers is designed to give people back their time, their judgment, and their focus. The technology gets smarter. The work gets more human. **That's what it means to put AI to work for people.**

The Bottom Line

Intelligence is rapidly becoming a commodity accessible to anyone through an API. The differentiator is who can apply intelligence at the precise moment it matters, grounded in the right context, embedded in the flow of work, capable of turning insight into action.

ServiceNow's advantage is AI embedded inside the operational fabric of the enterprise, grounded in real workflows, assets, relationships, and history. We don't layer intelligence on top of work. We apply it inside the execution layer where work actually happens.

Competitors can access frontier models. They cannot easily replicate our operational context, our execution position, or the institutional knowledge that compounds with every workflow we run.

The more capable AI agents become, the more they need a platform that supplies identity resolution, entitlements, workflow constraints, integration governance, audit evidence, and change management. Intelligence will keep getting cheaper. Trusted execution will keep getting more valuable.

Every enterprise will have access to brilliant AI. The ones that win will be the ones that put it to work, safely, at scale, inside the workflows where their business actually runs.

That's the AI Control Tower for Business Reinvention. That's ServiceNow.