

1 - The six 2026 newcomers (the big three live in lesson 7.3)

Manus AI	Managed autonomous agent you BUY (no code). Gives the agent a virtual computer - browser, terminal, files. Credit-based pricing; great for one-off results, risky at high volume.
Claude Agent SDK	Anthropic SDK (renamed from Claude Code SDK, Sep 2025). 'Give your agent a computer.' Subagents, compaction, agentic search, built-in verification, MCP. Engineers; pay tokens.
OpenAI Agents SDK	Production successor to Swarm (Mar 2025). Primitives: agents, handoffs, guardrails, tracing + sandbox + REALTIME VOICE pipeline. Lightweight; for OpenAI shops.
Google ADK + Vertex	Open-source kit (ADK) + managed runtime (Vertex AI Agent Builder / Agent Engine). Multi-language, model-agnostic, enterprise governance. Pick if you're on Google Cloud.
n8n	Low-code, SELF-HOSTED. ~70 LangChain AI nodes, native MCP, 400+ integrations. Data stays in your environment; you pay server time. Semi-technical teams.
Zapier	No-code SaaS automation across 8,000+ apps. Copilot + Agents + Chatbots. Bills per task + AI add-ons; fastest cross-app build, least control.

2 - The buy-to-build spectrum (speed falls, control rises L to R)

BUY -> Manus AI .. Zapier / n8n .. Google ADK+Vertex .. Claude / OpenAI SDK -> BUILD
speed (ship this week) <-----> control (shaped to the task)

3 - Mind the pricing unit (40 cameras x 30 days = 1,200 runs/mo)

Manus	credits per task	1,200 runs x ~50 credits = ~60,000 credits/mo (no estimate)
Zapier	tasks per action	1,200 runs x 5 apps = 6,000 tasks/mo + AI add-on fees
Claude / OpenAI	no platform fee	pay model tokens only - predictable, linear with volume

Rule map runs/day x days x sites onto each tool's unit BEFORE you choose a plan

4 - How to choose: who builds it first, then model + cloud

- No engineers, want a finished result? Manus (autonomous one-off) or Zapier (cross-app).
- Semi-technical, want data control? n8n, self-hosted on your own server.
- Engineers + OpenAI + realtime voice in a call? OpenAI Agents SDK.
- Engineers + heavy digital work (search archive, run code, self-verify)? Claude Agent SDK.
- Already on Google Cloud and need enterprise scale + governance? Google ADK + Vertex.
- Don't buy an autonomous agent for a fixed, repetitive pipeline - and don't over-build either.