

# Designing an *AI-Enabled* Distribution Business

*Trent Gillespie*

**DISTRIBUTION  
STRATEGY **GROUP****

# 13%

**OF DISTRIBUTORS SEE AI AS VITAL TO  
LONG-TERM SUCCESS**

**THE BOLD AREN'T  
WAITING FOR AI TO  
HAPPEN TO THEM.**

THEY ARE USING IT  
TO REINVENT WHAT  
IS POSSIBLE.

# 20%

***PRODUCTIVITY SAVINGS FOR DAILY  
USERS***

# 40%

**OF KNOWLEDGE WORKER EMPLOYEES  
ARE USING AI IN THEIR WORK TODAY**

*even if they aren't officially authorized.*





# AI SPRINT

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# 82%

***REDUCTION IN INVOICE PROCESSING COST  
WITH 72% FASTER PROCESSING***

79%

***REDUCTION IN QUOTE TIMES BY  
LETTING AI SUGGEST SUBSTITUTES***

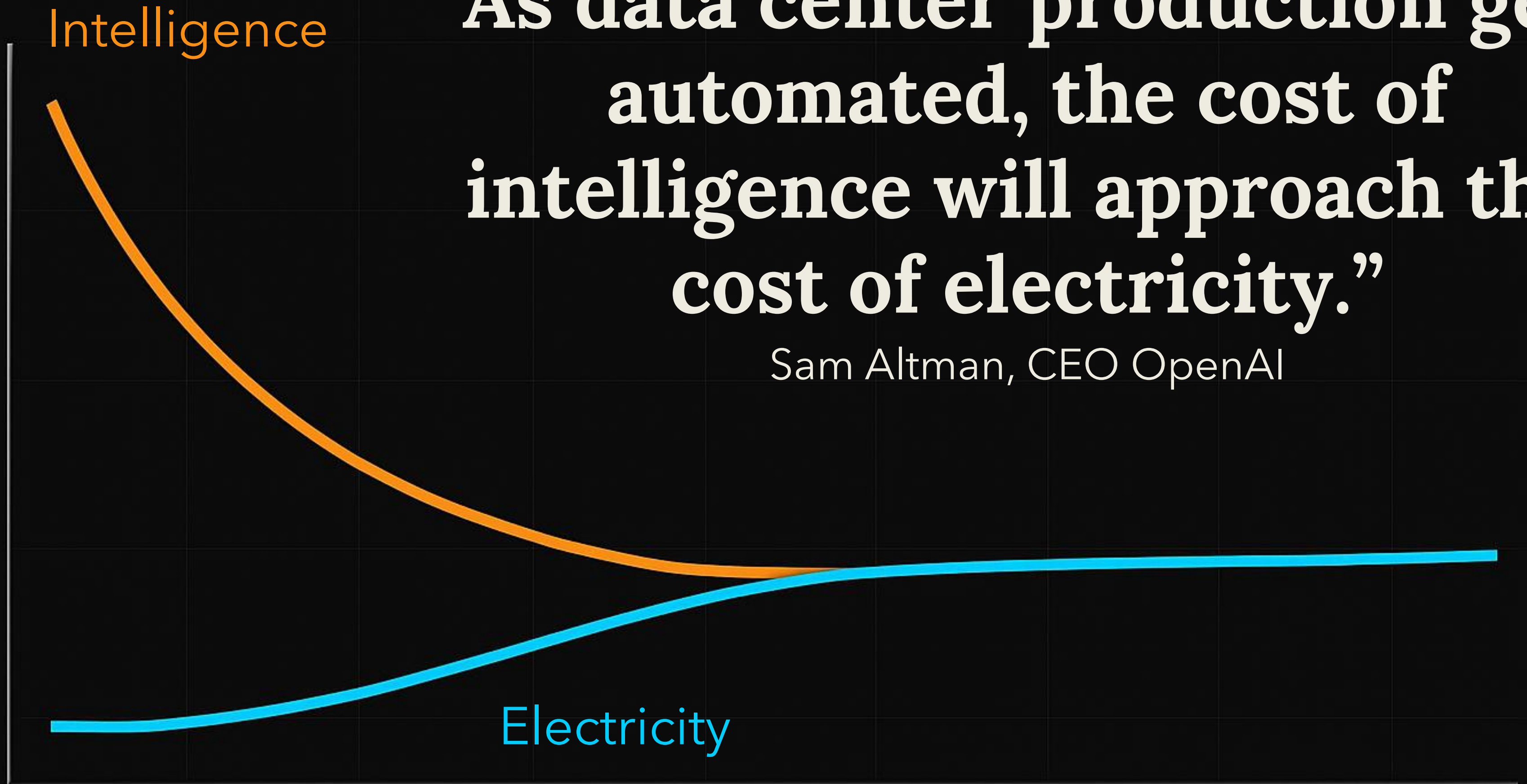


*What changes...*

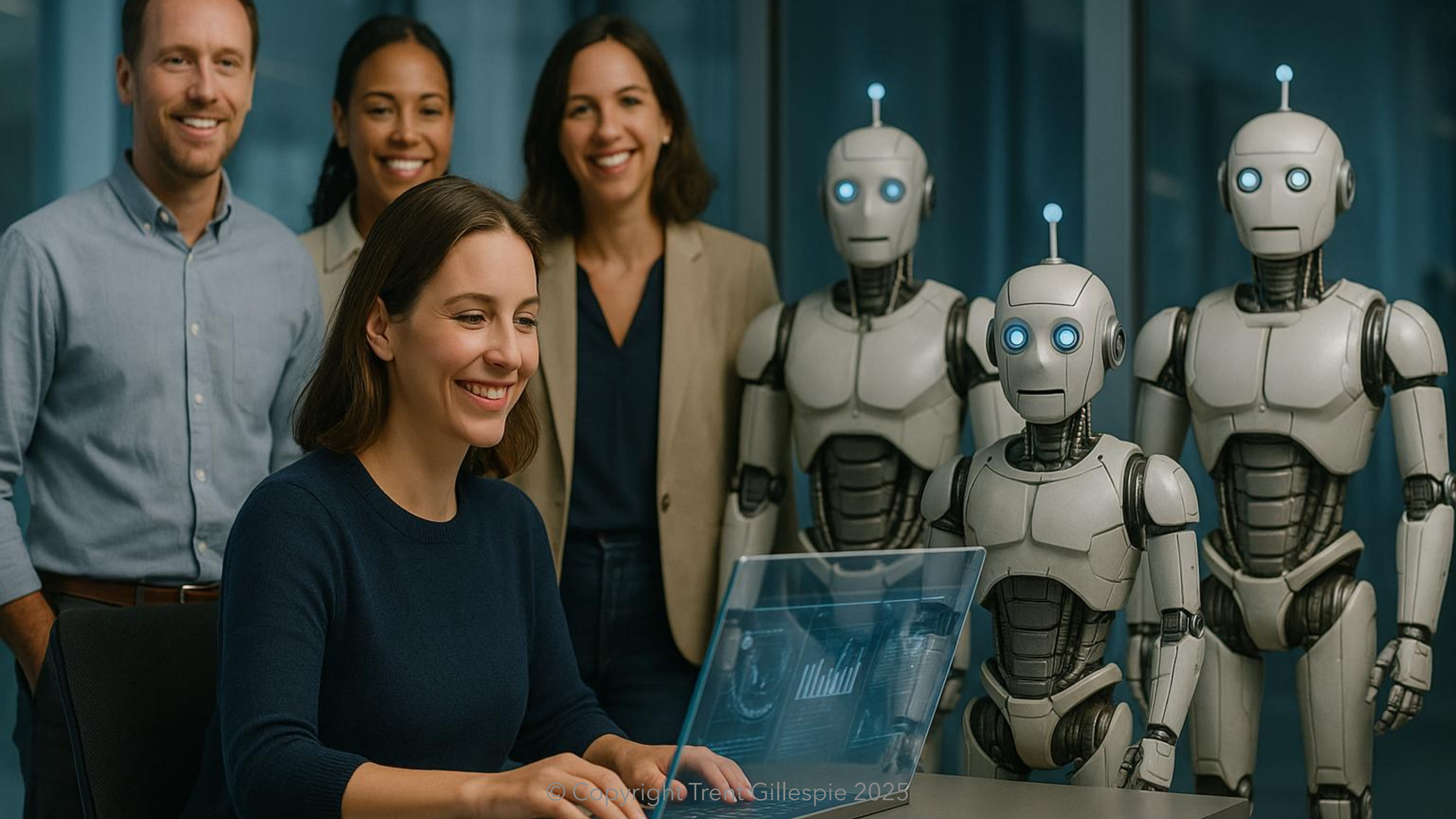
When Intelligence  
is *cheap*?

**“As data center production gets automated, the cost of intelligence will approach the cost of electricity.”**

Sam Altman, CEO OpenAI



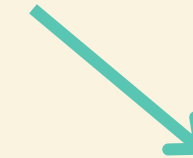
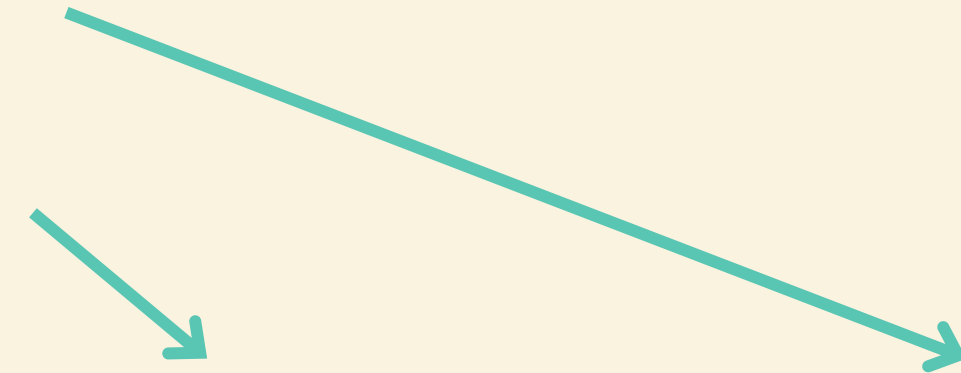
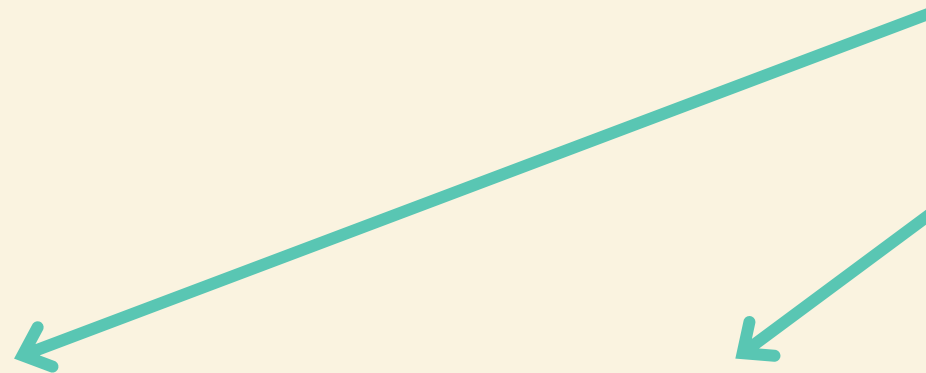








General Purpose  
AI Agent



Outside  
Sales AI  
Agent

Pricing AI  
Agent

Forecasting  
AI Agent

Replenishment  
AI  
Agent

## Specialty Agents

# *Reasoning and Deep Research Agents*





ChatGPT 4o ▾



# What can I help with?

🔗 Search connectors **NEW**

🖼️ Create an image

🌐 Search the web

✍️ Write or code

🔍 Run deep research

+ 🛠️ Tools

You are writing for operations and  
the distributor.



# *Specialty Agents*

# Hire Agent Frank, To Achieve **10x** Pipeline Coverage

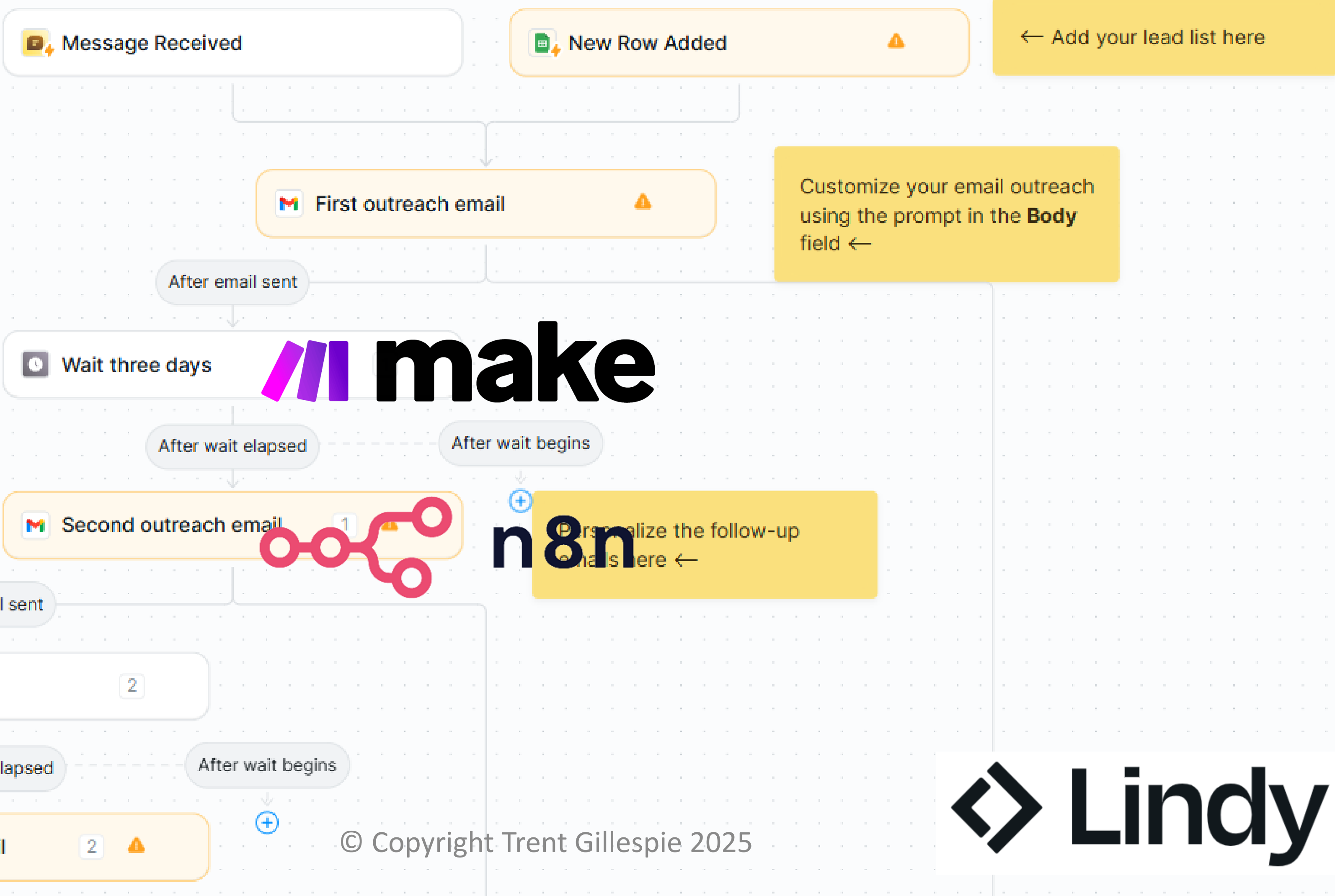
Maximize your outreach without inflating your costs by adding an AI Agent to your plan.

**\$499** / Month, billed quarterly


[Hire Agent Frank](#)

[Learn more](#)

- 24/7 Automated Prospecting ✓
- Auto-Pilot & Co-Pilot Modes ✓
- Fully Customizable Agent ✓
- Available in 20+ Languages ✓
- Dedicated Account Manager ✓
- Shared Slack Channel ✓
- Industry Best Practice Implementation ✓



 make

 n8n

 Lindy





# Customer



General  
Purpose  
AI Agent

Company A has 20 for  
\$10.00, available today.

Customer is looking for  
qty 20 of item #1234.

# You



Your General  
Purpose  
Agent

Qty 20 of #1234: \$10.00  
per item. Available Today.

Your Sales  
Agent

Customer  
Buyer  
AI Agent



# Big Trends?



**Predictive Analytics**



**AI-Optimized Supply Chain**



**AI-Optimized Route Planning**



**Robotics and Drones**







What is left  
for *humans*?



# VISION

The background of the image is a vibrant, surreal sky. A brilliant sunburst emanates from the center, with rays of light streaking outwards in all directions. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds in shades of blue, purple, and orange, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall effect is one of awe and inspiration.

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# Distribution AI for \$500 or Less

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## **Sales and Marketing**

- Low-Code AI Demand Forecasting
- AI-Powered Local Competitor Tracking
- AI for Customer Segmentation
- AI-Driven Local Ad Targeting
- AI for Dynamic Pricing

## **Customer Service:**

- AI Chatbots for Customer Service
- Sentiment AI for Customer Retention
- AI for Social Listening
- AI for Local Demand Spikes
- AI for Customer Segmentation

## **Operations:**

- AI for Predictive Fleet Maintenance
- AI for Invoice Automation
- AI for Contract Analysis
- AI for Supplier Risk Scoring
- AI for Demand Spikes

# Your future job is to be



*Visionary*

**WHAT NEW  
POSSIBILITIES CAN WE  
DELIVER...**

**THAT WE NEVER  
COULD BEFORE?**

The smartest people in the room won't be those who *know the most*.

**But those who know how to**  
*think and innovate with AI.*

**“Using AI is a fundamental  
expectation of everyone.”**

Tobi Lutke, Shopify CEO



**AI ISN'T JUST A TOOL**

IT'S A NEW  
OPERATING MODEL

# THE AI SPRINT<sup>TM</sup> FRAMEWORK

**S:** SPARK

*Action With Leader AI Education*

**P:** POSITION

*Your Company to Win with AI*

**R:** RALLY

*Your Employees to Use AI Daily*

**I:** INTEGRATE

*Into Your Sales & Marketing Processes*

**N:** ENABLE

*A Culture of AI and Innovation*

**T:** TRAILBLAZE

*With New Offerings that Drive Growth*

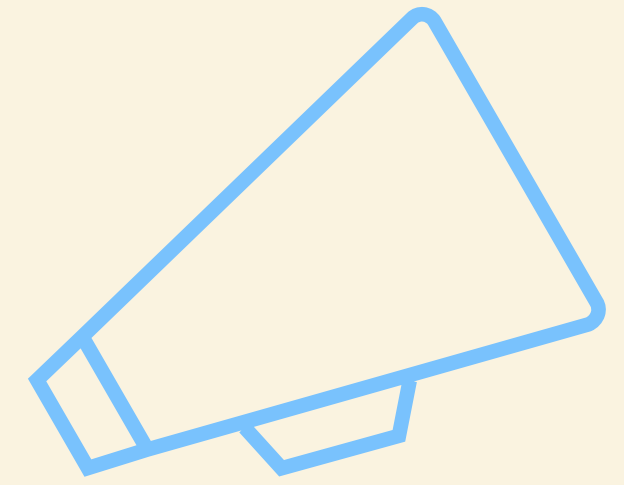


SPARK ACTION WITH  
LEADER EDUCATION

**Light the fire that gets AI  
moving.**

# SPARK Action with Leader Education

- Educate Leaders on AI
- Assign a Transformation Owner
- Start Transformation SPRINTS





# POSITION COMPANY TO WIN

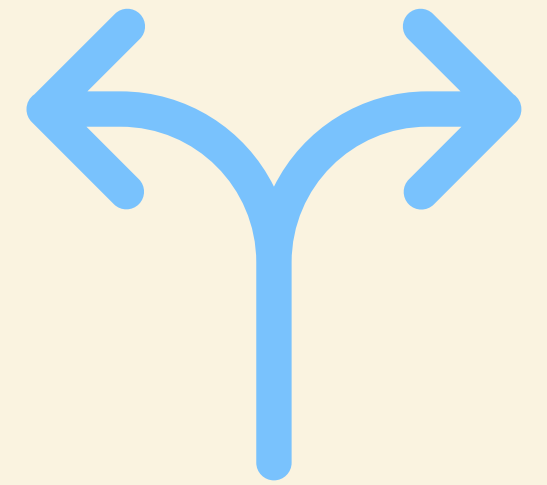
**Design your  
company for  
future, AI-  
enabled  
customers.**





# POSITION Your Company to Win with AI

- Define Your Strengths
- Define Your Future Customer
- Decide WHAT, and WHEN, and HOW



# RALLY EMPLOYEES

## To Use AI Daily



# RALLY Your Employees to Use AI Daily

- Create Safety and Guardrails
- Equip and Train Everyone
- Incentivize Smart Usage



INTEGRATE INTO SALES & MARKETING

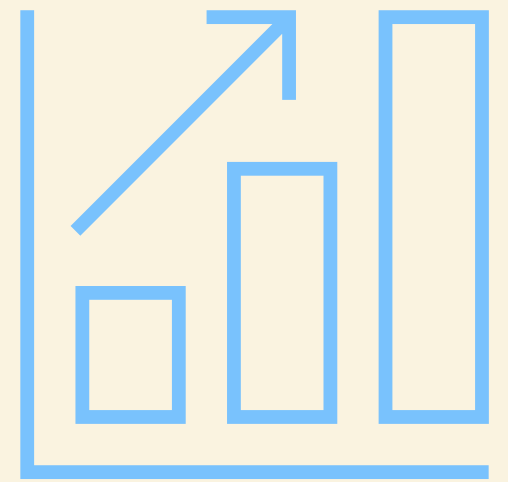
**Revenue is What  
Buys Your Future**



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# INTEGRATE Into Sales & Marketing Processes

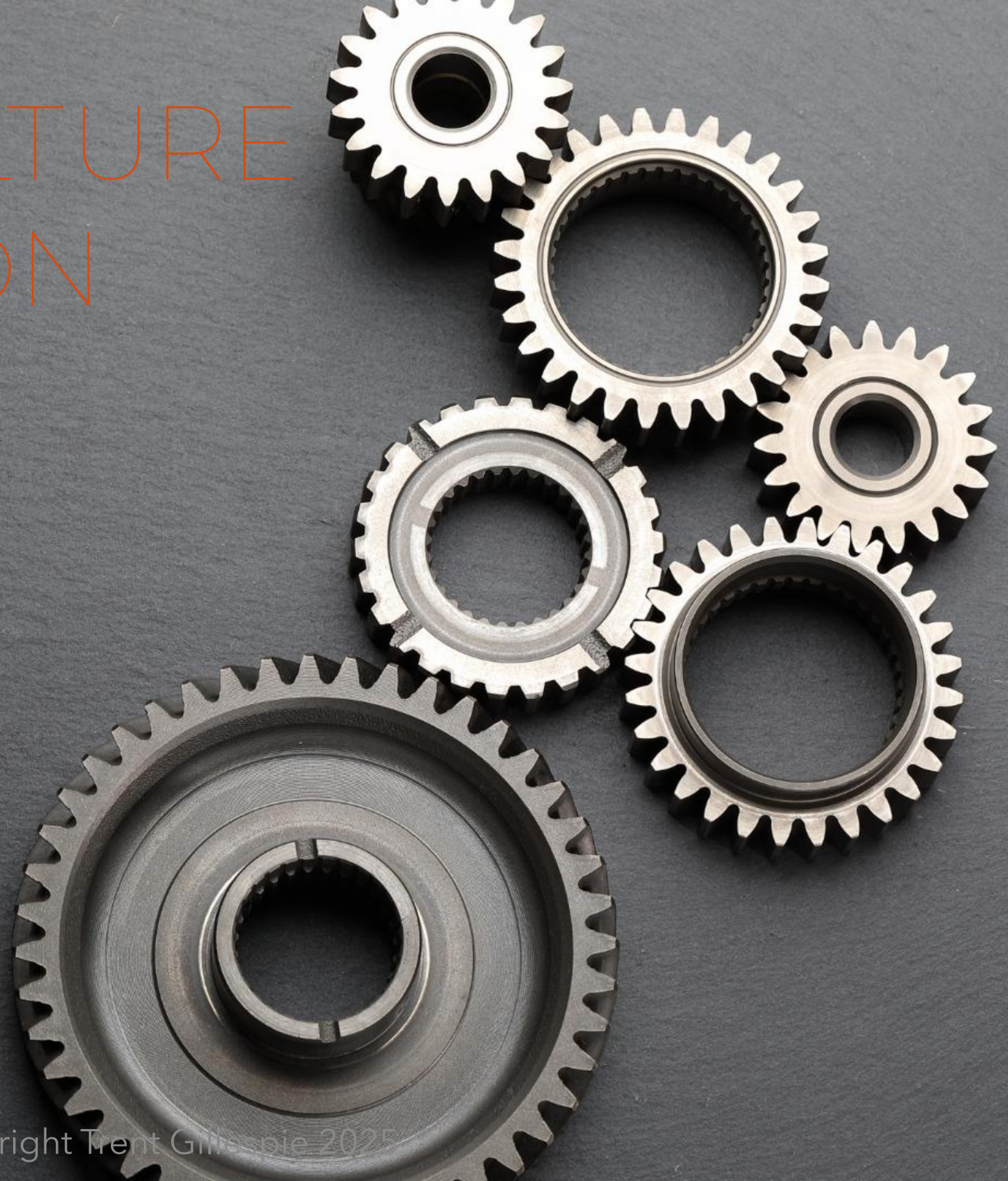
- Marketing Content and Personalization
- Sales Personalization, Scoring
- Bottlenecks Slowing the Organization





ENABLE A CULTURE  
OF INNOVATION

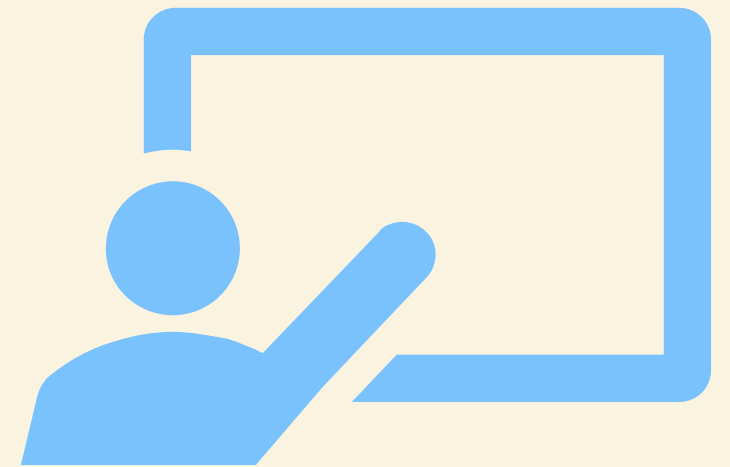
**Build your  
future company.**





# ENABLE a Culture of AI and Innovation

- Set Clear Expectations & Rewards
- Establish Learning Sprints & Reports
- Structure Idea Intake



TRAILBLAZE  
WITH NEW  
OFFERINGS

**LEAVE COMPETITORS BEHIND**

# TRAILBLAZE With New Offerings

- Invent for Your Future Customer
- Spot Emerging Opportunities Early
- Bet on Bold Experiments





## What can I help with?

Identify the top 3 high-return, low-risk investments a distributor can make with **\$100,000** create new, revenue-generating services and disrupt larger companies.

+  Tools





# \$100k AI Disruptive Ideas

1. Agent-Ready Commerce API

Open Your Catalog to AI

2. Predictive Replenishment-as-a-Service

Forecast and Buy Automatically

3. Customer Procurement Copilot

Embedded Customer AI Agent

# To Do List

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- ✓ **1. Use an AI tool every day**
- ✓ **2. Automate one Bottleneck**
- ✓ **3. Start your first SPRINT**

**WITH AI EVEN THE  
SMALLEST SHOP CAN  
BEAT THE LARGEST  
PLAYER.**



DAY 1

PPEN, THIS IS STILL

IN SU

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- ✓ Key Slides
- ✓ Automation GPT
- ✓ AI Research
- ✓ AI Minutes