

Agent Readiness Check: Five Questions an AI Procurement Agent Asks Your Company

Agent-to-agent commerce in B2B:

What happens when an agent sends you an inquiry tonight at 3:14 a.m.?

Purchasing departments are deploying AI agents that request quotes, compare them and place orders. The term for this is agent-to-agent commerce, A2A for short, also called agentic commerce. These agents inquire at night and with many suppliers at once, and they decide within the first hour based on the answers they have. This sheet uses five questions to show how far an agent gets with your company today. The back shows how to tell whether agents have already contacted you.

Five questions in the order an agent asks them

1

Can an agent find your product range without asking a human?

☐ Yes ☐ No

An agent reads tables, data feeds and APIs. It cannot read a PDF brochure or a designed catalog. If your product range only exists there, or in the heads of your inside sales team, an agent will not find it.

2

Are your list prices machine-readable?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Without a price the agent cannot compare, and without a comparison it will not inquire. For decades, many manufacturers kept list prices in the printed catalog. The agent needs them machine-readable and without a login. Your contract prices are not affected.

3

Is it clear whether and when you can deliver?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Agents compare delivery dates the way they compare prices. A price without a date is half an answer to them. Stock and replenishment time have to come from the ERP. What only lives in the planner's head is invisible to an agent.

4

Does every customer see only their own price?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Your regular customer's agent expects that customer's terms. For this, the agent needs to identify itself as that customer. At first, the known sender address is enough, just as with email orders today. And your terms have to be stored in the ERP so that a system can apply them per customer. An Excel list is not enough.

5

Is a quote available within one hour?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Whatever arrives after two days was never part of the comparison. Standard inquiries have to be answered before the agent decides, including at night and on weekends.



At the first "no", the agent stops reading. That is your starting point.

How to recognize an agent inquiry

Agent-generated inquiries arrive as email today, because there is no other channel yet. Five signs you will find in your inbox:

- 1 Timing**
Received between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., on weekends, on public holidays.
- 2 Structure**
Line items as a clean table or list, every row built the same way, exact quantities, requested date, delivery address, more complete than any human inquiry.
- 3 Tone**
No greeting, no pleasantries, no reference to earlier conversations. Factual to the point of coldness.
- 4 The request**
"Please reply in a structured format", "Please state price and lead time per line item", sometimes with a response format or a deadline in hours.
- 5 The sender**
A signature reading "purchasing assistant", "procurement agent", "automatically generated". Or a sender address with no human behind it (procurement-bot@, sourcing-agent@).

If you received an inquiry like this in the past three months, it has already started for you.

Three things to do this week

- 1 Review your inbox**
Search the past 90 days for the signs above. Count them.
- 2 Measure response time**
For one week: time from inquiry received to quote sent. The median is your baseline.
- 3 Ask IT**
How quickly can price list, stock and customer terms come out of the ERP via API? Whether it is possible is rarely the question.

Workist brings inquiries and orders from email, PDF and phone into your ERP today, and builds the path on which agents get the same answers in seconds.

[Read the article series at workist.com/blog](https://workist.com/blog)

Sources: 67% of B2B buyers prefer purchasing without a sales representative, 45% used AI in their most recent purchase (Gartner, March 2026, n=646). Brands without a presence in AI answers are invisible to at least 20% of B2B buyers (Gartner Technology Buying Behavior Survey, 2026). Coupa reports 450+ customers using AI agents in procurement (Coupa, 2026). The five signs are based on observations in the order intake of mid-sized manufacturers and distributors.