



ketteQ White Paper

When to Deploy Digital Planning Agents on Your Existing Supply Chain Planning System and When Not To

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When to Deploy Digital Planning Agents on Your Existing Supply Chain Planning System and When Not To

A Practical Guide for Executives to Assess ROI, Readiness, and Decision Impact Across SAP IBP, Kinaxis, Blue Yonder, Oracle Cloud Planning, and Anaplan

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Executive Summary

Many supply chain organizations have reached a point where their planning systems are stable, widely adopted, and operationally mature, yet don't deliver the best answers or desired results. This guide is written for leaders who suspect the issue lies not in the system itself but in the limits of traditional planning platforms in an environment defined by constant change and the need for agility and responsiveness. Rather than advocating replacement, this guide helps executives assess whether digital planning agents—deployed on top of existing systems—can unlock faster decisions, stronger financial outcomes, and renewed ROI. The focus is not on technology adoption, but decision effectiveness. The central question is uncomfortable but straightforward: Are your current planning tools enabling good decision-making, or are they merely a data repository, leaving planning to manual processes, reactive measures, and gut feel?



Most Supply Chain Leaders Don't Have a Planning System Problem... They have an **unexamined ROI problem.**

Over the past decade, organizations have invested heavily in enterprise supply chain planning platforms such as SAP IBP, Kinaxis, Blue Yonder, Oracle Cloud Planning, Logility, and Anaplan. These investments were made with clear expectations: better forecasts, higher service levels, lower inventory, and stronger alignment across the business.

In many organizations, those expectations were met early on.

But today, a growing number of executives are facing a quieter reality. Despite rising volatility, tighter margins, and increasing pressure from the C-suite, the incremental value generated by these systems has flattened or never been realized. Enhancements and work continue, but returns are smaller, slower, and harder to connect directly to business outcomes.

This raises a critical question: **Have you reached the natural ROI ceiling of your planning system, or have you simply stopped questioning its limits?**

That question is driving interest in digital planning agents. Not because leaders are chasing AI trends, but because they are looking for pragmatic ways to extract more value from systems they already own.

Start With the Question Most Organizations Avoid

Before evaluating architectures or AI maturity, supply chain leaders should ask a more difficult question:

Is our current planning environment still capable of supporting the decisions the business expects us to make?

This is not a question about replacing systems. It is a question about decision velocity, decision quality, and decision confidence.

Most modern planning platforms are highly effective at optimization within defined assumptions. Where they struggle is continuous adaptation—particularly when assumptions change faster than planning cycles can absorb.

If your planning process produces outputs that look reasonable but rarely change outcomes, the issue may not be execution. It may be that the system is not really helping you decide.

That gap is where digital planning agents become relevant.



Who This Guide Is For, and Who It Isn't

This guide is written for supply chain executives operating mature planning environments who are questioning whether additional value remains untapped.

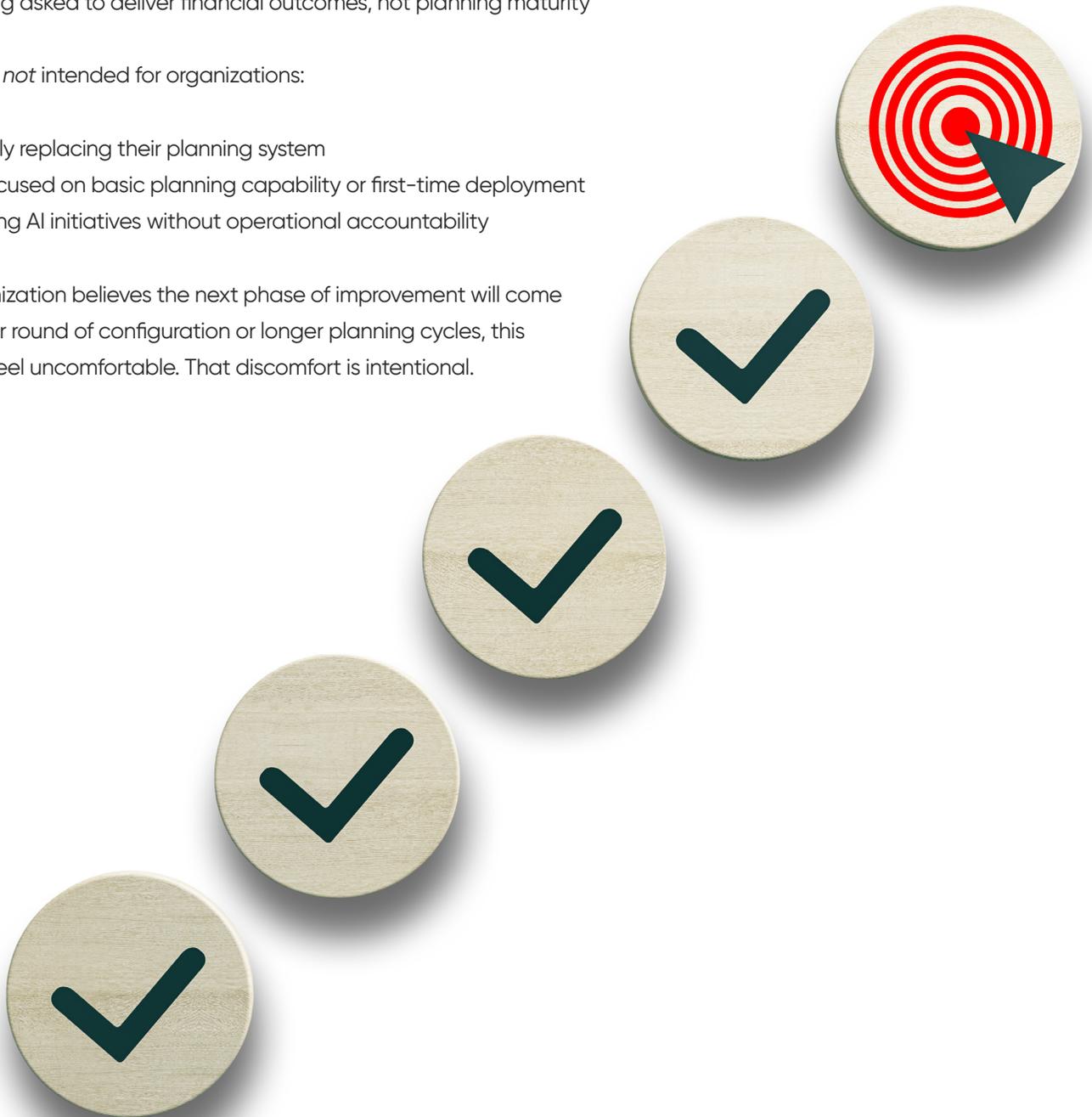
It is especially relevant if your organization:

- Runs SAP IBP, Kinaxis, Blue Yonder, Oracle Cloud Planning, Logility, Anaplan, or similar platforms
- Has achieved early wins but now sees diminishing incremental returns
- Faces increasing volatility and executive scrutiny
- Is being asked to deliver financial outcomes, not planning maturity

This guide *is not* intended for organizations:

- Actively replacing their planning system
- Still focused on basic planning capability or first-time deployment
- Pursuing AI initiatives without operational accountability

If your organization believes the next phase of improvement will come from another round of configuration or longer planning cycles, this guide may feel uncomfortable. That discomfort is intentional.



What Digital Planning Agents Actually Do

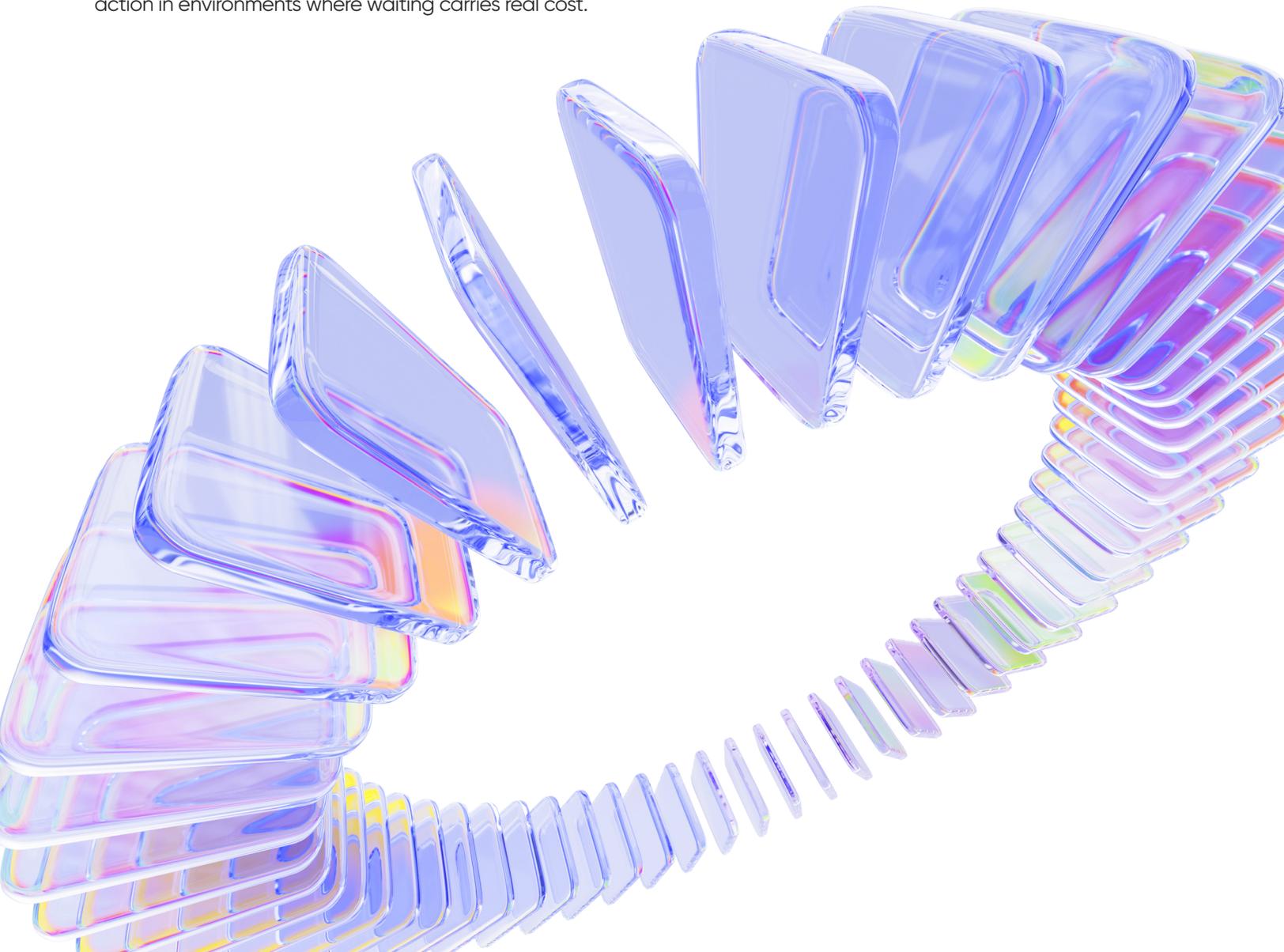
Digital planning agents operate as an adaptive intelligence layer on top of existing planning systems. They do not replace SAP IBP, Kinaxis, Blue Yonder, Oracle Cloud Planning, or Anaplan. They augment them.

In practice, agents:

- Continuously analyze data from planning systems, ERP, and operational signals
- Detect emerging risks, constraints, and opportunities as conditions evolve
- Evaluate tradeoffs across multiple scenarios in near real time
- Recommend actions in clear business context
- Learn from outcomes and improve decision quality over time

The shift is not primarily technical. It is operational.

Agents help organizations move from **periodic planning** to **continuous decision support**, enabling faster, more confident action in environments where waiting carries real cost.



Why ROI Plateaus in Mature Planning Environments

When planning system ROI stalls, the causes are rarely technological. They are structural. Common patterns include:

- Planning cycles that move more slowly than the business
- Scenarios that take weeks to build and are obsolete when finished
- Heavy reliance on spreadsheets to answer “off-model” questions
- Ongoing consulting spend that delivers marginal improvement
- Leadership pressure for financial impact rather than better plans

In these environments, the planning engine is often sound. What is missing is an intelligent layer that helps leaders decide what to do next and when to act.

A Self-Assessment: Are Digital Planning Agents Relevant for You?

Most organizations do not lack intelligence in their planning systems. They lack decision leverage.

The following questions are not about technology maturity. They are about whether your planning environment still influences outcomes that matter.

- 1 | *Has the value from your planning system plateaued?***
If additional tuning no longer delivers meaningful gains, agents may represent the next source of value.
- 2 | *Do planners fall back on spreadsheets to answer critical questions?***
This is often the clearest signal that real-world complexity has outpaced the model.
- 3 | *Are scenario analyses slow or infrequent?***
If scenarios are confined to formal planning cycles, risks and opportunities are being missed.
- 4 | *Does progress depend on ongoing consulting support?***
When improvement requires constant external effort, internal decision velocity suffers.
- 5 | *Is leadership asking for financial outcomes rather than planning maturity?***
Agents help link decisions directly to revenue, margin, service levels, and working capital.
- 6 | *Do planners trust experience more than system recommendations?***
Explainable, context-aware agent insights can rebuild confidence and adoption.

If three or more of these questions feel uncomfortably familiar, the issue may not be your planning system – but the limits of how it is being used.

How Most Organizations Get Started

Organizations that succeed with digital planning agents do not begin with large-scale change. They start deliberately.

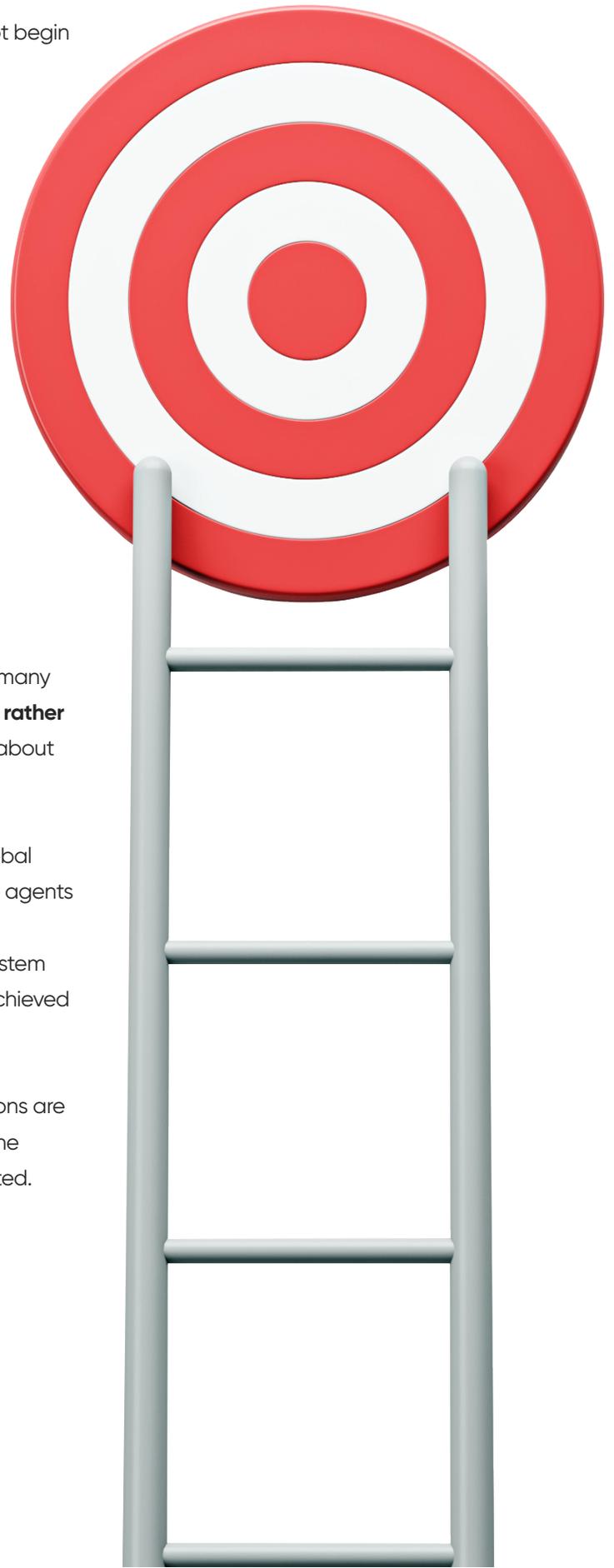
Typical first steps include:

- **Targeting a single planning domain, such as demand, supply, inventory, or service**
- **Deploying agents alongside existing systems and workflows**
- **Measuring impact on decision speed, quality, and financial outcomes**
- **Expanding only after the value is clearly demonstrated**

Because agents operate on top of existing systems and data, many organizations observe measurable improvements within **weeks rather than quarters**. This contrast raises an uncomfortable question about how long it should reasonably take for value to appear.

In practice, this pattern is already emerging. For example, a global manufacturing organization recently deployed digital planning agents on top of its existing planning environment to improve decision responsiveness in a focused domain. Rather than initiating a system replacement, the company augmented its current tools and achieved measurable operational and financial impact within weeks.

The experience mirrors what many mature planning organizations are discovering: meaningful gains often come not from changing the system of record, but from changing how decisions are supported.



The Strategic Shift Few Organizations Acknowledge

The next phase of supply chain planning is not about replacing one system with another. It is about augmenting existing investments with intelligence that can keep pace with uncertainty.

Digital planning agents are not a silver bullet. But neither is continuing to ask more from systems designed for stable environments.

For many supply chain leaders, the most challenging question is no longer: ***What planning system should we buy next?***

It is: ***Are we willing to examine why value has stalled—and whether augmenting what we already have is the most pragmatic path forward?***

That is a question worth confronting now, before the next disruption makes the answer unavoidable.



Discover how digital planning agents unlock measurable value from your existing planning system...



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