AGENTIC AI IN PRACTICE

Agentic AI — enterprise, mid-market & startup case studies.

What actually happens when you deploy an agent, not what the demo shows. Three deployments, three budgets, and what it means for you at pre-seed.

→ Akshit Kandi — Founder & CEO, SkySync & Festiva Capital

→ The Glasshouse, Cambridge

→ 10:30 — 11:00



YOUR SPEAKER

Akshit Kandi.

Founder & CEO of SkySync. Salesforce, before that.

- **100+ startups mentored** · Antler & Techstars
- **Engineering, Product & GTM leadership** · Salesforce, top 100 accounts
- **Second-time founder** · SkySync + Festiva Capital
- **"Why 90% of AI Agents Are Stuck in a Pilot"** · podcast

Erez Capital · Techstars · Antler · Festiva Capital · Purdue · Tsinghua

Past ventures: Astrlive, FairMD. Featured on CNBC & The Times of India.

NEXT 30 MINUTES

Five things worth stealing.

01 The stall: why most pilots never ship

02 Three deployments, three scales

03 The architecture underneath all three

04 Manage agents like employees, not tools

05 What enterprise governance teaches a pre-seed founder

…and one thing to build this afternoon with Cien.

THE STALL

Most agent pilots stall before they ever ship.

Not because the model was wrong. Because of mindset, human silos, and change management nobody designed for.

MINDSET

Shipped like a feature.

No owner for the outcome.

SILOS

It touches everyone.

No shared owner across teams.

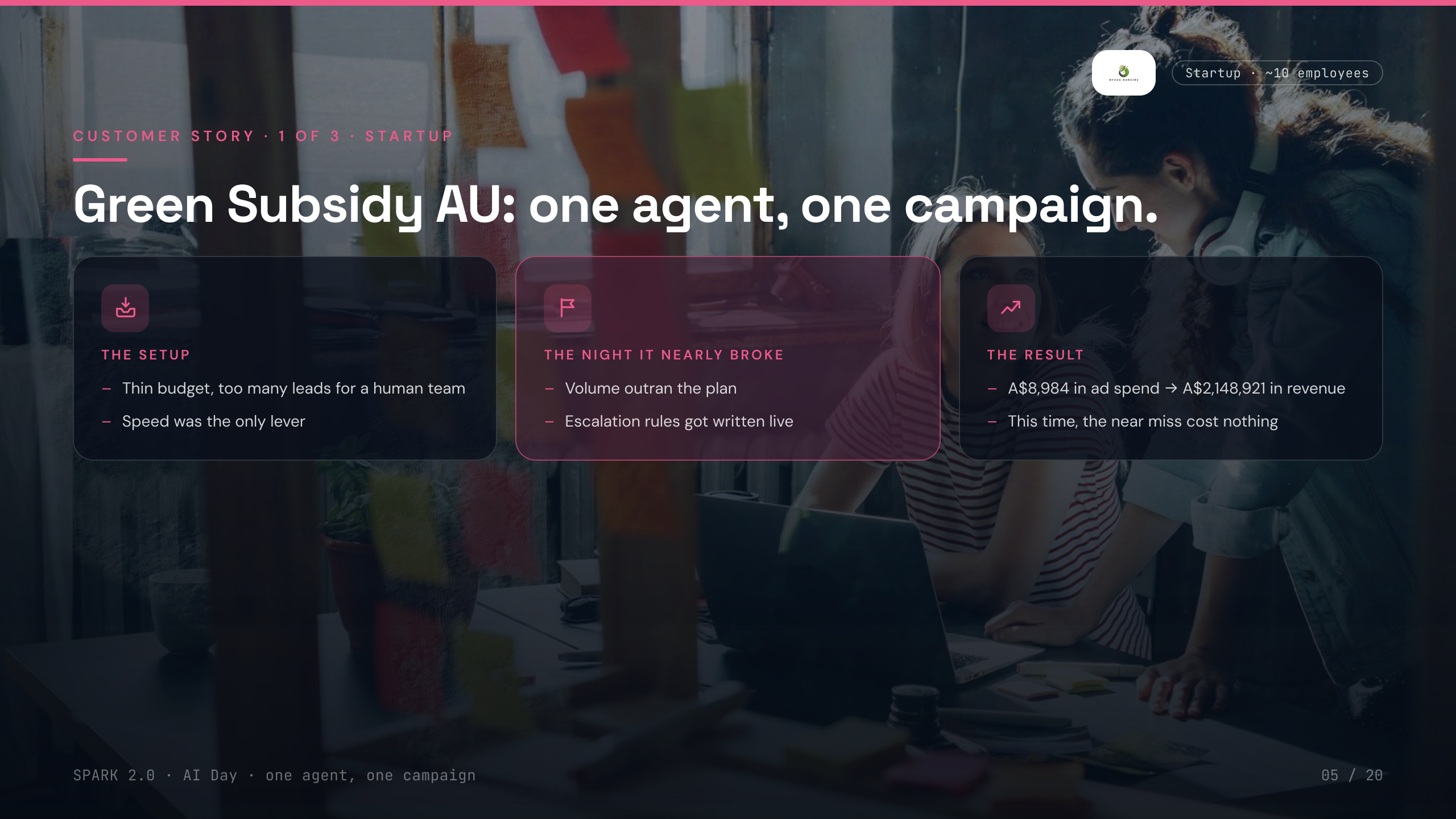
CHANGE MANAGEMENT

No owner for ”wrong.”

No plan for when it's wrong.

9 out of 10 stall in pilot.

Field observation, not a market stat.



Startup · ~10 employees

CUSTOMER STORY · 1 OF 3 · STARTUP

Green Subsidy AU: one agent, one campaign.

THE SETUP

- Thin budget, too many leads for a human team
- Speed was the only lever

THE NIGHT IT NEARLY BROKE

- Volume outran the plan
- Escalation rules got written live

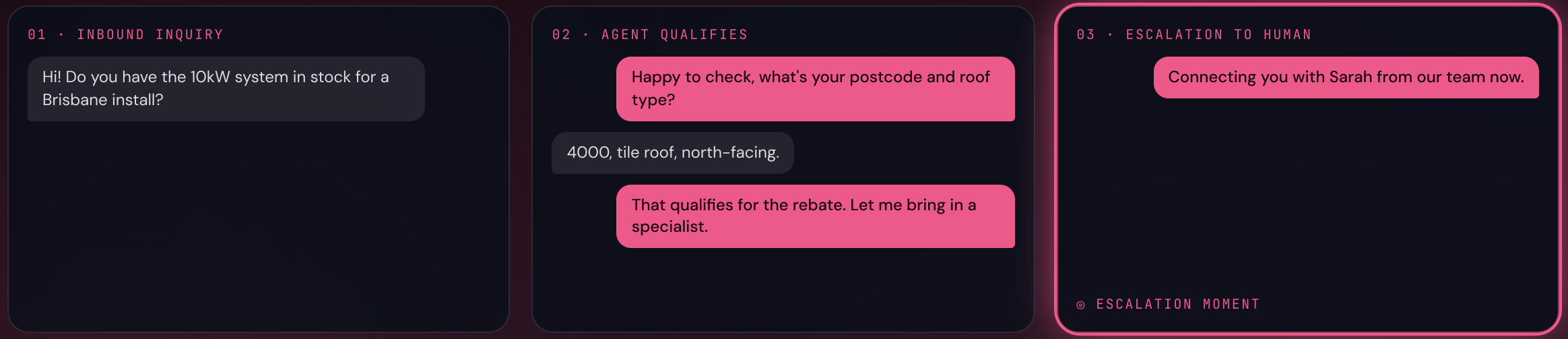
THE RESULT

- A$8,984 in ad spend → A$2,148,921 in revenue
- This time, the near miss cost nothing

LIVE FROM THE FIELD

This is what the agent actually looks like.

A real inquiry, start to finish. Customer side anonymized.

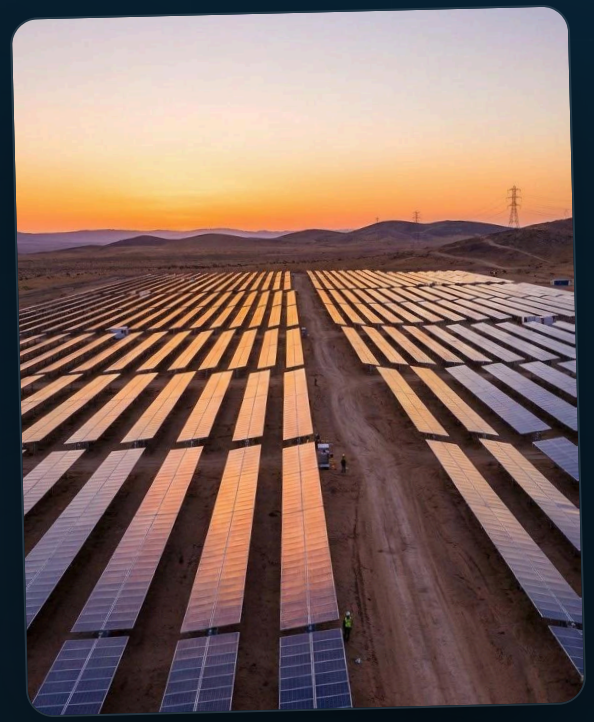


Illustrative mock-up.

GREEN SUBSIDY AU, IN NUMBERS

A$8,984 in ad spend. A$2,148,921 in revenue.

Ledger-verified. Nothing here is rounded up.



A$8,984 → A$2,148,921

≈239× gross ROAS

A$87
per customer

4 → 48
installs / month

518
leads, A$17.34 each

103
customers, A$26,206 avg

20%
lead → sale (5–15% benchmark)

Live
near miss, under load

Five months of Meta advertising. AUD, as of 16 Jul 2026. Identity shared with permission.

Mid-market · ~100-200 employees

CUSTOMER STORY · 2 OF 3 · MID-MARKET

Tibarumal & Sons.

THE SETUP

- Instant replies expected, boutique and online
- No single view of a customer across either

THE WORKFLOW

- WhatsApp agent for instant order status & aftersales
- CRM synced to Meta, powering lookalike audiences

THE RESULT

- A customer never waits for a human to check stock
- One profile, boutique to online

Enterprise · ~5,000 employees, multi-site

CUSTOMER STORY · 3 OF 3 · ENTERPRISE

Pinnacle Infotech.

THE SETUP

- Salesforce, project data & IoT signals, all disconnected
- Consultants losing time gathering on-site context by hand

THE DESIGN

- One data foundation across CRM, projects & IoT
- "Project 360" & "Field Assist" agents: status, RFIs, site prep

THE RESULT

- IoT signals become proactive risk alerts and upsells
- Automated briefings replace manual prep

BEYOND TODAY'S THREE

Same pattern, different regulator.

Three deep dives today. The shape repeats everywhere else I've worked.

LIFE SCIENCES & PHARMA

Regulated intake, in build

One agent, five steps, human approval gate. ~80% cycle-time target, pending go-live.

COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA

Usage + billing, unified

Resolves outages before the call.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Qualification, with a stricter gate

Agent narrows the list. Human signs every exception.

FIRST WORKFLOW, BY INDUSTRY

Different industries, same question — what goes first?

The right starting workflow isn't universal. It follows what actually costs each industry money.

INDUSTRY	FIRST WORKFLOW	WHY IT LANDS FIRST
Retail & consumer goods	Support ticket triage & routing	High contact volume and thin margin per ticket make first response the cheapest place to buy back time.
Healthcare & patient services	Appointment scheduling & intake	No-shows and phone hold time are the biggest visible cost, and the task is repetitive, not clinical.
Manufacturing & industrial	Equipment monitoring & downtime alerting	Unplanned downtime costs far more per hour than any office task, so catching problems early pays back fastest.
Pharma & life sciences	Regulatory & compliance documentation	Filing deadlines are fixed and penalties for missing them are severe, so speeding up paperwork is safer than speeding up the science.
Comms, media & technology	Tier-1 support & content localization	High volume and repeatable output make quality easier to calibrate than upstream creative work.
Professional & financial services	Research, drafting & document review	Billable hours are the unit of cost, so compressing research and first-draft time shows up directly on margin.

PATTERNS FROM 100+ PITCHES

Everyone has an AI slide now. Here’s what still gets you noticed.

Across Antler and Techstars cohorts, the founders who cut through aren't the ones with the best AI pitch.

PROOF, NOT ROADMAP

One real number beats ten planned ones.

Investors and customers have seen a hundred AI roadmaps this year. A single verified result, even a small one, reads as more credible than a big vision slide.

ONE CHANNEL, NOT FIVE

Go deep before you go wide.

The founders who break out are usually running one channel obsessively — one agent, one campaign, one community — long before they're running five badly.

SAY WHAT'S ACTUALLY AI

Authentic use beats an ”AI” label.

Founders overstate AI in the pitch and understate it in the product, or the other way round. Both get caught in diligence fast. Say exactly what the agent does, and where a human still sits.

HOW IT'S ACTUALLY BUILT

You've already seen this slide three times.

Green Subsidy's agent, Tibarumal's, and Pinnacle's are the same shape. The only variable is who sits in the approval seat, whether that's 10 people or 5,000.

Green Subsidy founder approves, from a phone

Tibarumal store lead approves, in WhatsApp

Pinnacle regional PM approves, across sites

CHANNELS & SOURCES

WhatsApp · web · email
customer-facing intake

Phone · paper
voice & document intake

CRM · product · IoT
system signals

→

One unified data layer
everything in one place, ready for AI

→

The AI agent
reads it → sorts it → drafts it → **a human approves** → it acts

→

Outcome
logged, never overwritten

GOVERNED AT EVERY SCALE ↺ **Observe** : accuracy, cost, drift **Safety layer** : masks sensitive data, keeps an audit trail **Approve** : a human signs off before it's final

THE OPERATING MODEL

Run your agent like your first hire.

The difference between a demo and a deployment is who's managing it.

Job description
what it owns, what it doesn't

→

Weekly check-in
did it actually do the job

→

Reset the goal
re-scope it, don't just retrain it

THE OPERATING LOOP ↺

Scope it : a job description, not a feature spec

Review it : weekly, against the metric that matters

Re-scope it : when it underperforms, don't just retrain



We write one of these before any agent goes live. Template: skysync.nyc

AGENT ECONOMICS

Your first hire got a 90-day review. Your agent needs one too.

Three numbers decide whether it stays, gets re-scoped, or gets killed.

COST TO RUN VS. COST TO STAFF

Compare per action, not totals.

What the agent costs to do one unit of work, next to what a person doing that same unit would cost.

THE ONE METRIC THAT MOVED

Pick it before launch.

Cycle time, response rate, error rate — one number. If it didn't move, nothing else about the agent matters yet.

A THRESHOLD, SET BEFORE LAUNCH

Decide the exit before you need it.

What result triggers a re-scope, and what triggers a shutdown. Deciding after launch is how a failing agent survives on vibes.

WHAT AGENTFORCE-SCALE TAUGHT ME

The governance conversation happens before the build.

WHAT BREAKS WITHOUT IT

- Rules written under pressure, after the fact
- Fixes arrive after the incident

DESIGN BEFORE YOU SCALE

- Security sign-off, before customer contact
- Human-in-the-loop, decided in advance

WHY IT APPLIES AT YOUR STAGE

- Same principle, more zeros
- The cheapest insurance at pre-seed

Security sign-off · Data privacy · Data residency · Human-in-the-loop

THE MINDSET SHIFT

Offense vs. defense.

LEADING FROM DEFENSE

- Protects the org chart
- "What could go wrong" first
- Waits for certainty

LEADING FROM OFFENSE

- Redesigns around the agent
- "What could this unlock" first
- Ships this week

Lead from the right column.

WHAT DOESN'T GET AUTOMATED

The agent decides faster. You still decide what's right.

Every case study today had a near miss. What saved it wasn't the agent — it was who was sitting in the approval seat.

ESCALATION RULES ARE VALUES

Written down early.

The line where an agent has to stop and ask a human isn't a technical spec. It's you deciding in advance what you're not willing to risk.

THE APPROVAL SEAT

A people decision, not a technical one.

The person who can override the agent needs your judgment, not just their login. Choose them on purpose, not by default.

MAP THE DANGER ZONE

Where your values and theirs actually clash.

You don't need identical values with a co-founder or an early hire — just harmony. Find the 2–3 places yours run opposite to theirs, early. One, you can work around. Three or four, and that's not friction — it's the wrong partner.

FOR YOU, SPECIFICALLY

Your first agent, this week.

1. **Pick one workflow.**
   Depth over breadth.

2. **Write its job description.**
   Owns, doesn't own, one metric.

3. **Decide the escalation rule before launch.**
   Who's pinged, and what it never does alone.

4. **Buy or partner before you build.**
   Skip the infra. Authentic use is what matters to investors.

THANK YOU

Manage the agent.
Don’t just deploy it.

Everything from today, in one place:

Slides · the agent job description template · the first-agent checklist · the podcast episode · sources

skysync.nyc · akshit@skysync.nyc · LinkedIn: Akshit Kandi