

Orchestrating agents was supposed to be the new job.

The agents are catching up.

The reskilling advice and the org chart are moving in opposite directions, and the data shows why.

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- 01** Companies are cutting the management layer, not filling it with orchestrators
 - 02** The capability curve behind that decision keeps compounding
 - 03** Why "become the orchestrator" isn't a stable endpoint
 - 04** The real design choice: replace the task, or include the person

7 mo

Doubling time for how long AI agents can work alone

The length of task frontier AI agents can complete autonomously has doubled on this cycle for six straight years. Orchestration sits inside that same curve. METR, March 2025.

16 → 49%

Automation potential of "managing and developing talent"

2017 pre-generative-AI estimate versus 2023 reassessment, after language and reasoning capability was factored in. McKinsey Global Institute.

41%

Say their company has trimmed management layers this year

Korn Ferry survey of 15,000 professionals, via Fortune, June 2026. Separately, 72% of managers believe their own employees fear AI will make them less valuable at work. Beautiful.ai, 2026.

Companies aren't filling the coordination layer with human orchestrators. They're removing it.

Amazon cut roughly 14,000 corporate roles in October 2025. Cloudflare cut about a fifth of its workforce in May 2026, while posting record revenue.

"Measurers." Cloudflare's CEO named exactly who the layoffs targeted: middle management, finance, legal, internal audit.

Matthew Prince, CEO, Cloudflare, May 2026

A capable agent can produce the analysis. It cannot be the party accountable for the decision.

That's a design choice about where a system draws the line between output and accountability, not an automatic consequence of how capable the model gets.

- **Build the checkpoint into the workflow**
Not into a policy document someone can skip under deadline pressure
- **Name who's accountable before the system ships**
Not after something goes wrong
- **Measure whether the human review changes anything**
A rubber-stamp review is a compliance artifact, not inclusion
- **Don't treat "orchestrator" as a permanent endpoint**
Ask again at every new capability jump which decisions still need a person

**The design choice is what a system
is still built to need a person for.**

That doesn't stop the capability curve. It decides what the curve is used for while it climbs.



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