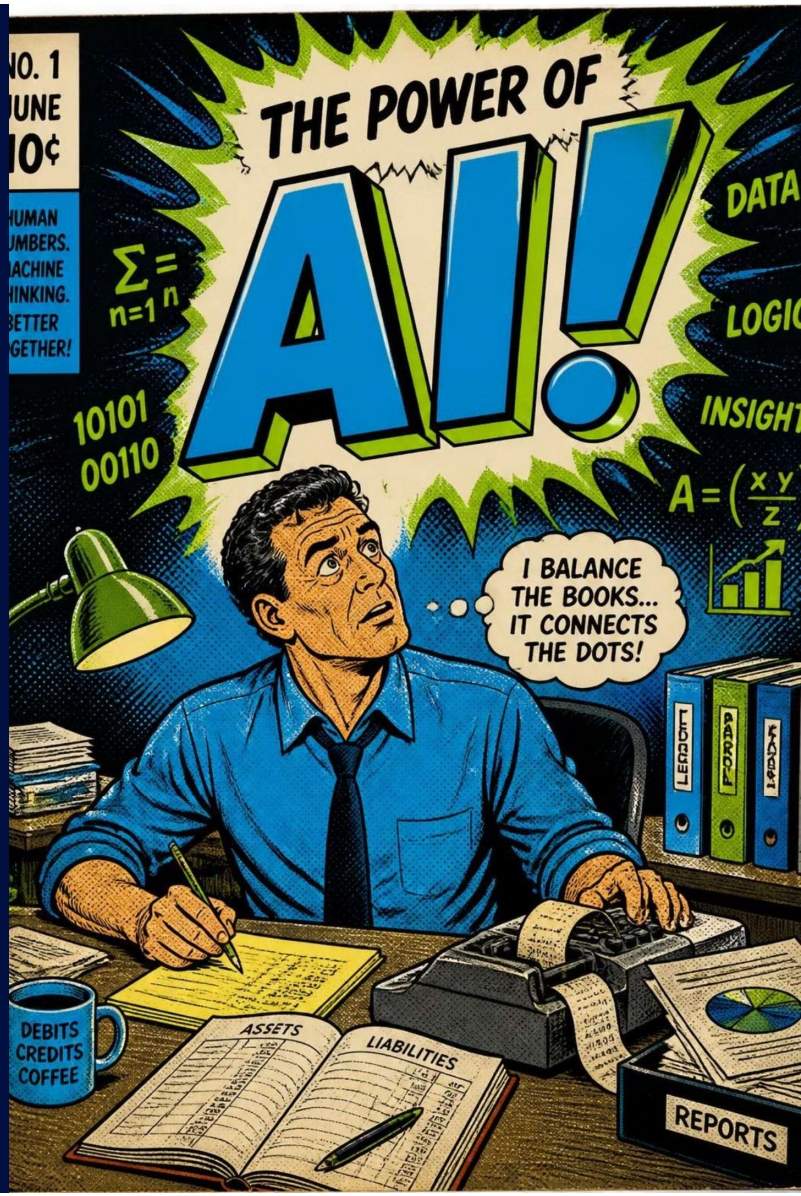
Artificial Intelligence Impact on Accounting

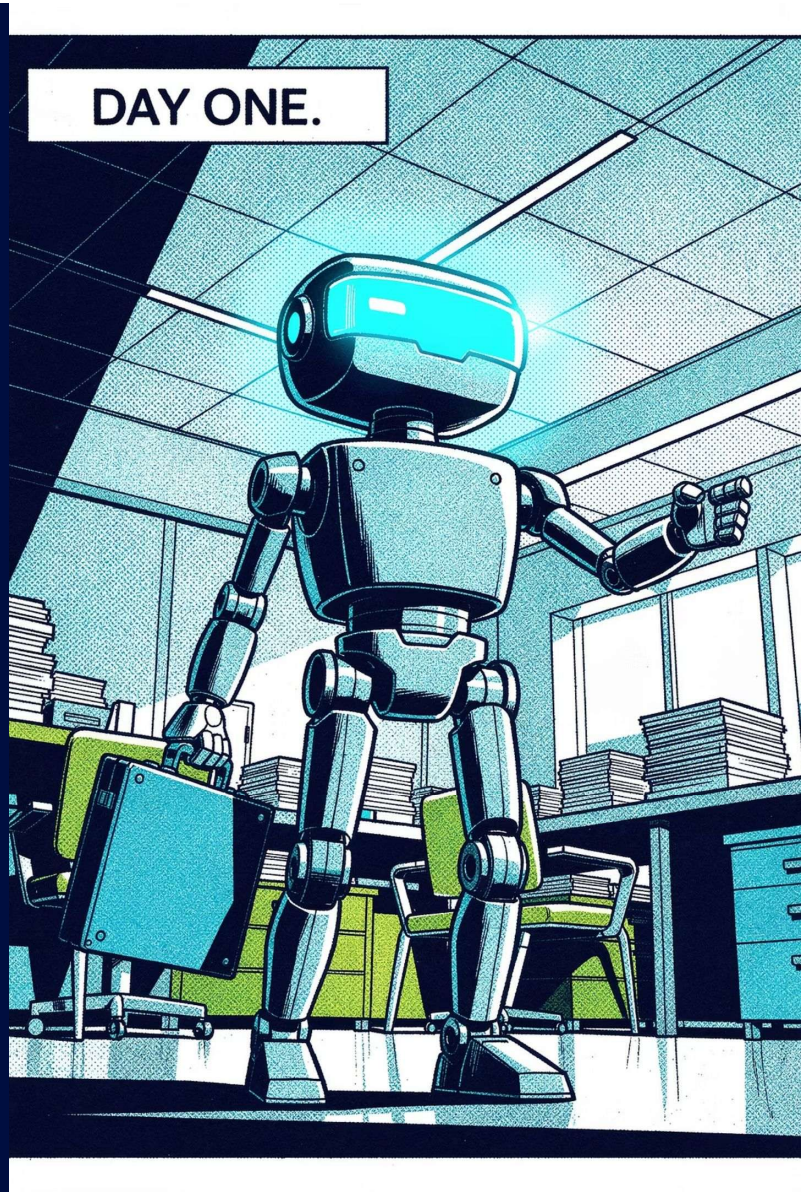
Charlie Apigian, PhD

AI Practice Leader, LBMC



Meet AI

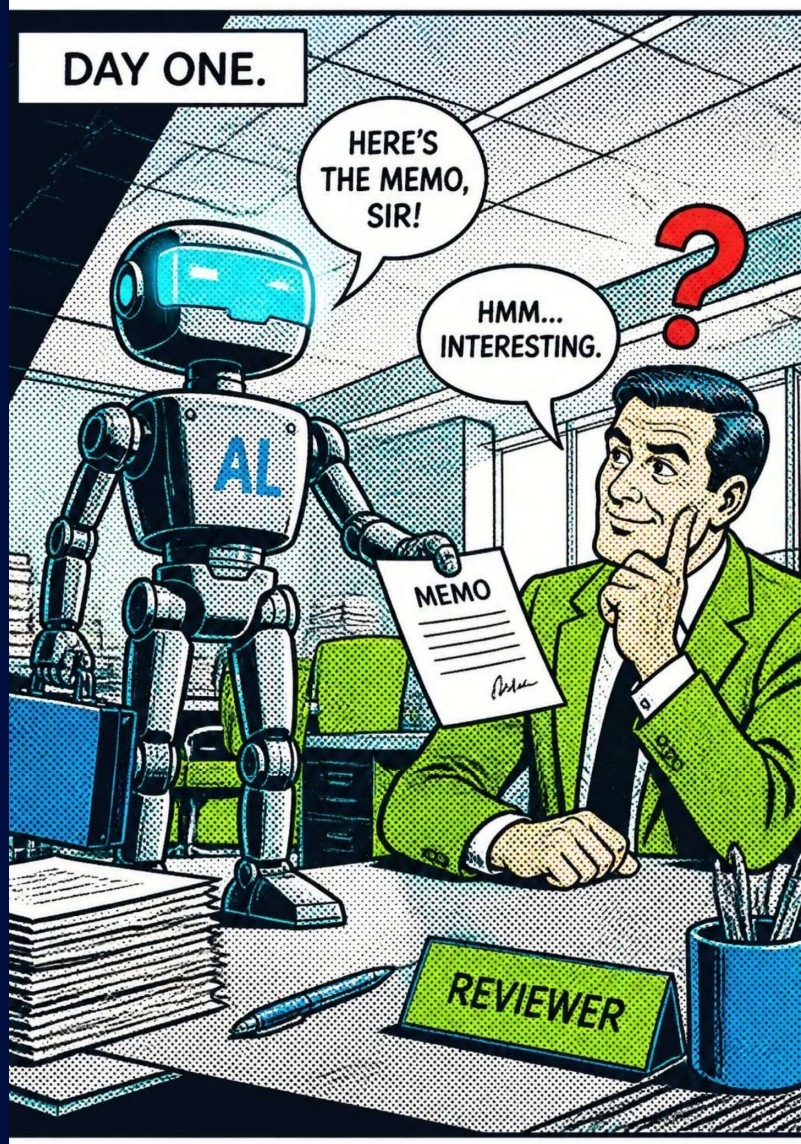
- Your smartest new hire
- Read everything. Knows a little about everything.
- On day one, he knows nothing about your clients, your firm, or your standards.

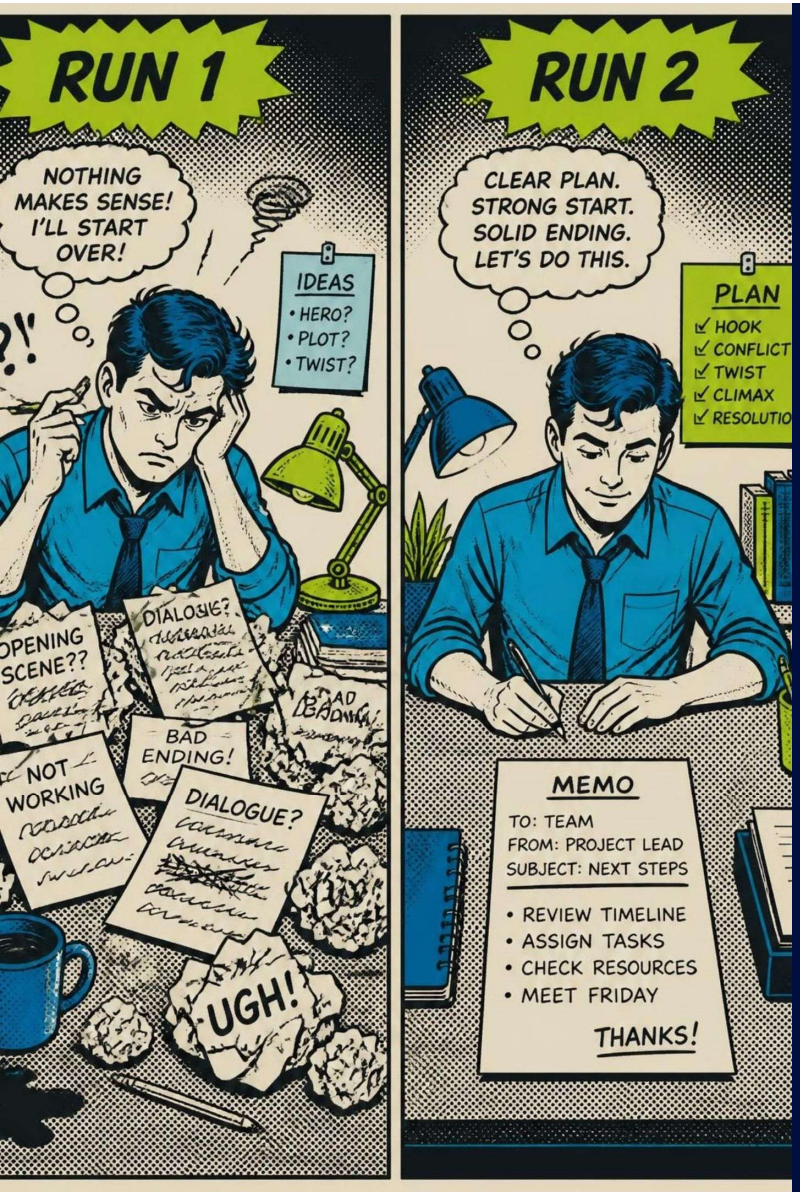


AI on Day One

- Confident, fast, and articulate
- Gives the same advice to every client
- Fills gaps with plausible guesses
- Never asks what you're trying to achieve

Brilliant. Generic. Sometimes confidently wrong.



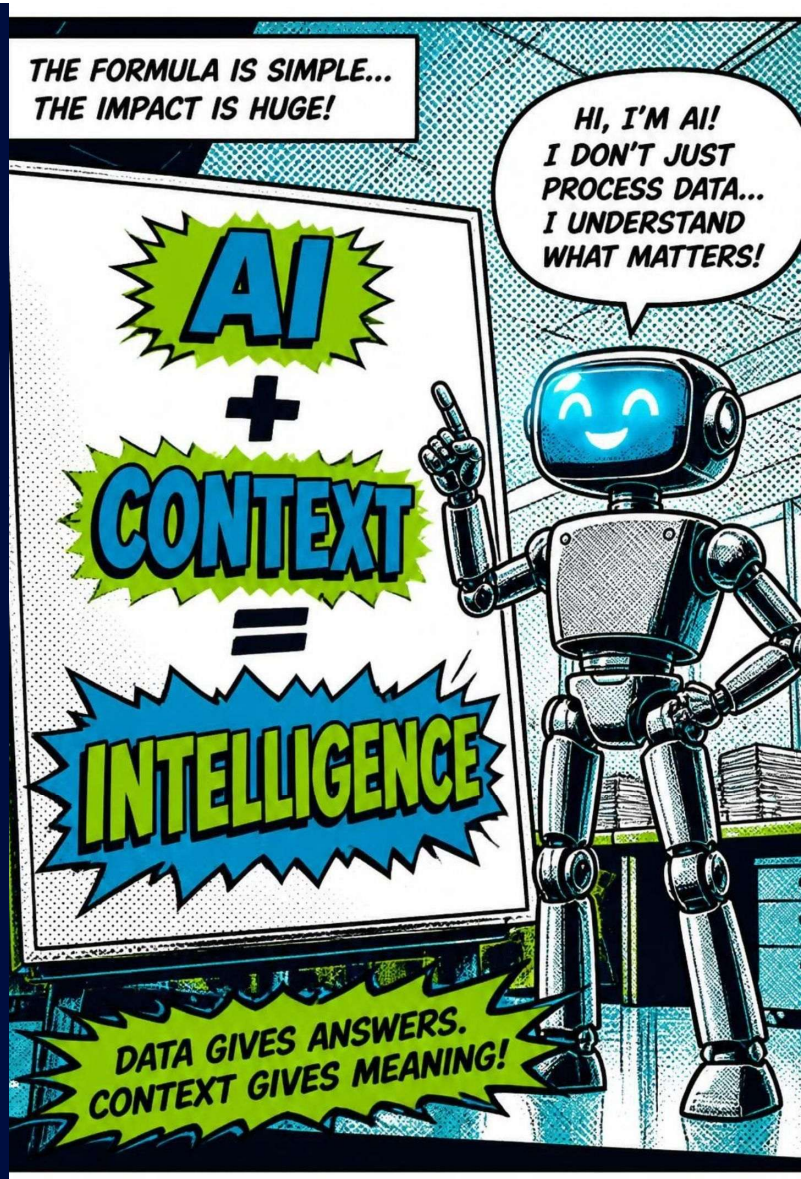


Same Task. Run Twice.

- Run 1: summarize this lease for the ASC 842 memo — cold
- Run 2: the same ask, with our template and context loaded
- Same model. Same question. Different result.

AI = Smart?

AI + Context = Intelligence



AI, Onboarded

- Knows your strategy and where the firm is headed
- Works inside your processes
- Reads your data and knows which data to trust
- Knows the rules and when to ask a human

Same AI. Now part of the team.



Poll

How did you use AI this week?

A. I didn't

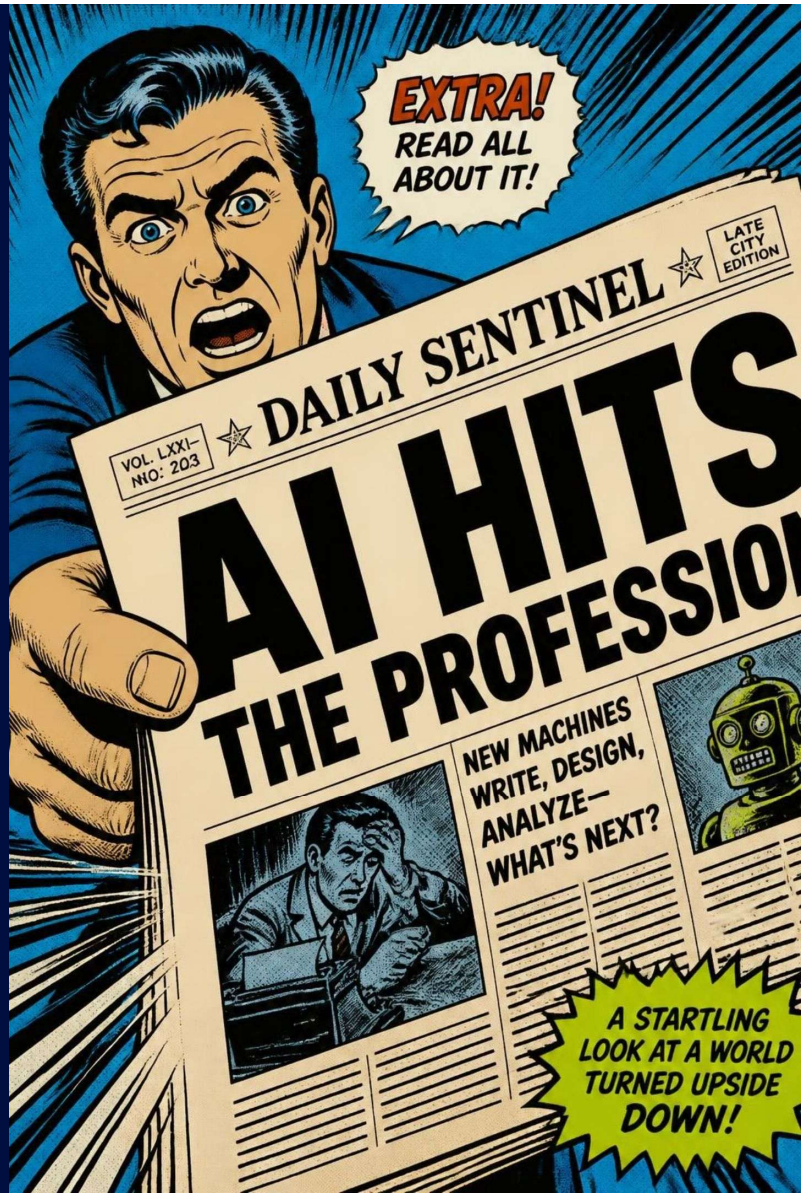
B. Chat questions (ChatGPT, Copilot, Claude)

C. It's part of my daily work

D. I've built something with it

Part 1

Where Things Are Today





Everyone Is Using It

- **81%** of tax and audit professionals use AI several times a week
- Adoption is table stakes. Depth is the divide.

Source: Thomson Reuters 2026; Intuit 2026 Accountant Technology Survey

Lots of Use. Little Structure.

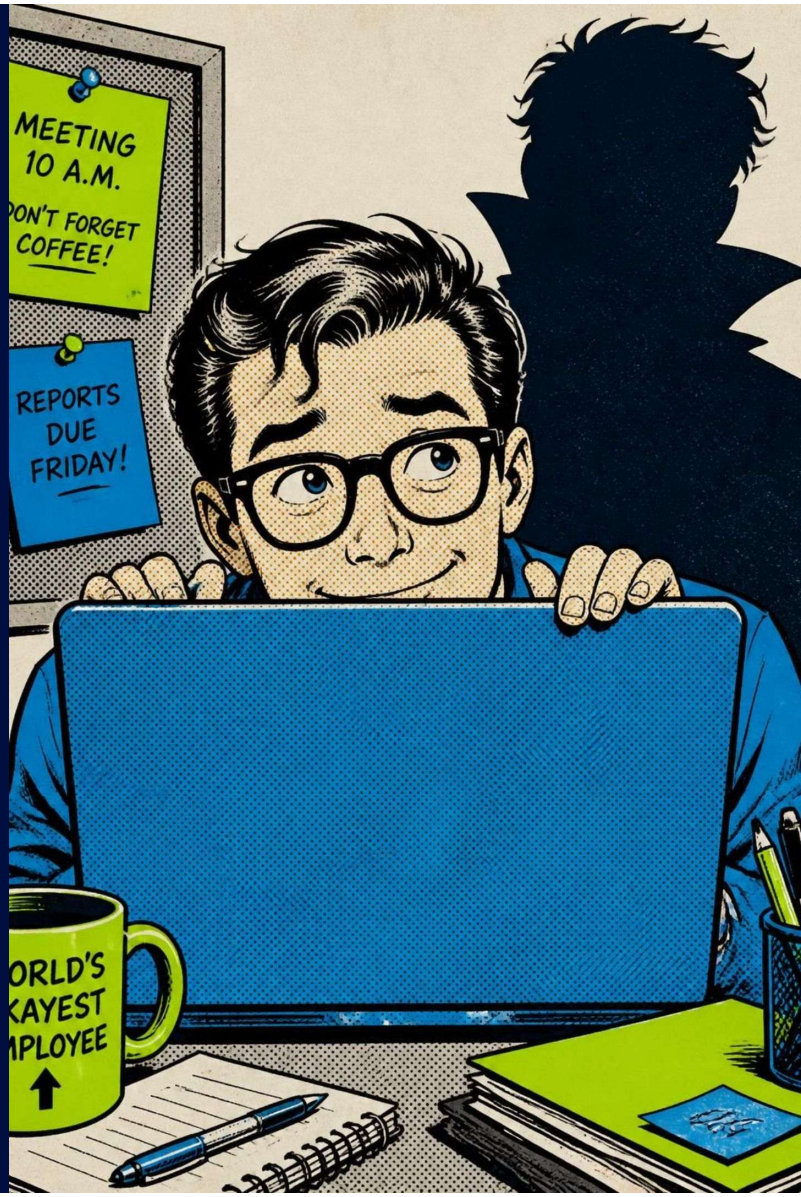
95% of firms use or explore AI

20% can show measurable ROI

90% have no written AI policy

Shadow AI is already in the building.

Source: Financial Cents, 2026 (486 firms)

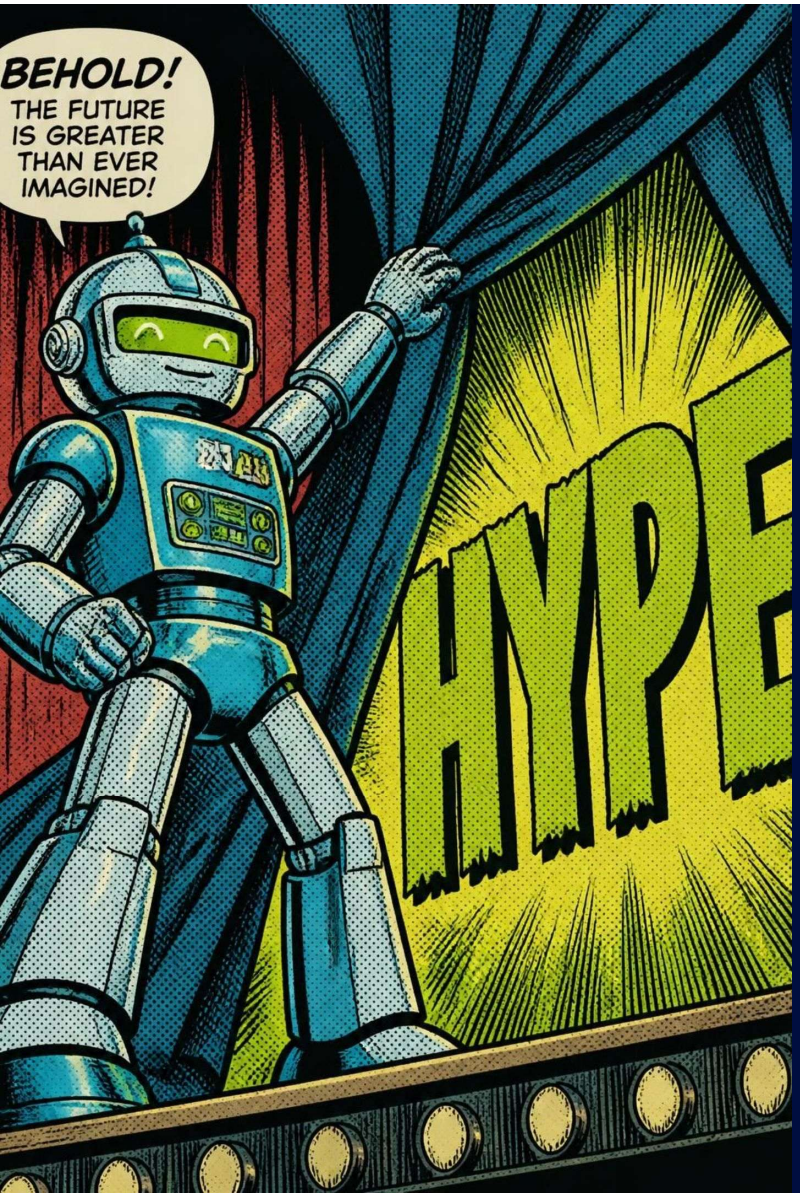


The Talent Squeeze

- First-time CPA exam candidates fell more than **40%** from 2016 to 2024
- Partners turn down work they can't staff
- AI is the only way to add capacity at scale

Source: Redshift Recruiting, 2026





Part 2

What AI Really Is

AI in One Sentence

AI is software that learns from data to recognize patterns, make predictions, or take actions — without being told every step.

Two Kinds of AI

Generative AI	Predictive AI
Creates language and content	Learns from your history to forecast
Memos, summaries, client emails	Cash flow, collections risk, demand

Different data. Different tools. Different value.

Brilliant, Fast, and Sometimes Confidently Wrong

The more you hand over, the more you check.

Trust it to	Never hand it
Draft memos and client emails	Final judgment
Summarize a 40-page lease	Unreviewed client advice
Extract data from invoices	Facts it can't verify
Give you a first pass	Your signature



Three Buckets of Capability

Think about the job you want done, not the tool.

Make sense of what you have	Make something new	Decide better
Summarize	Brainstorm	Analyze
Find & extract	Generate	Recommend
Explain	Transform	Review

The 3 buckets of capabilities

Nine capabilities, grouped into three buckets — think about the job you want done, not "do AI at me."



Make sense of what you have

Summarize
Find & Extract
Explain



Make something new

Brainstorm
Generate
Transform



Decide Better

Analyze
Recommend
Review

Buckets 1 & 2 = **Simplify** Bucket 3 = **Strategize & Act** — *the same path we land on at the end.*

The nine capabilities

Make Sense



Summarize

Long → short



Find & Extract

Documents → data



Explain

Plain-language answers

Make New



Brainstorm

Ideas on demand



Generate

Draft anything



Transform

Rewrite, reformat, translate

Decide Better



Analyze

Patterns in your data



Recommend

Options, ranked



Review

Check work against criteria

The Value Lens

Where AI pays off



Efficiency

- Same work, lower cost
- Fewer truck rolls, smarter vegetation management, better power purchasing



Productivity

- More from your people
- Faster calls, less reporting time, faster onboarding



New opportunities

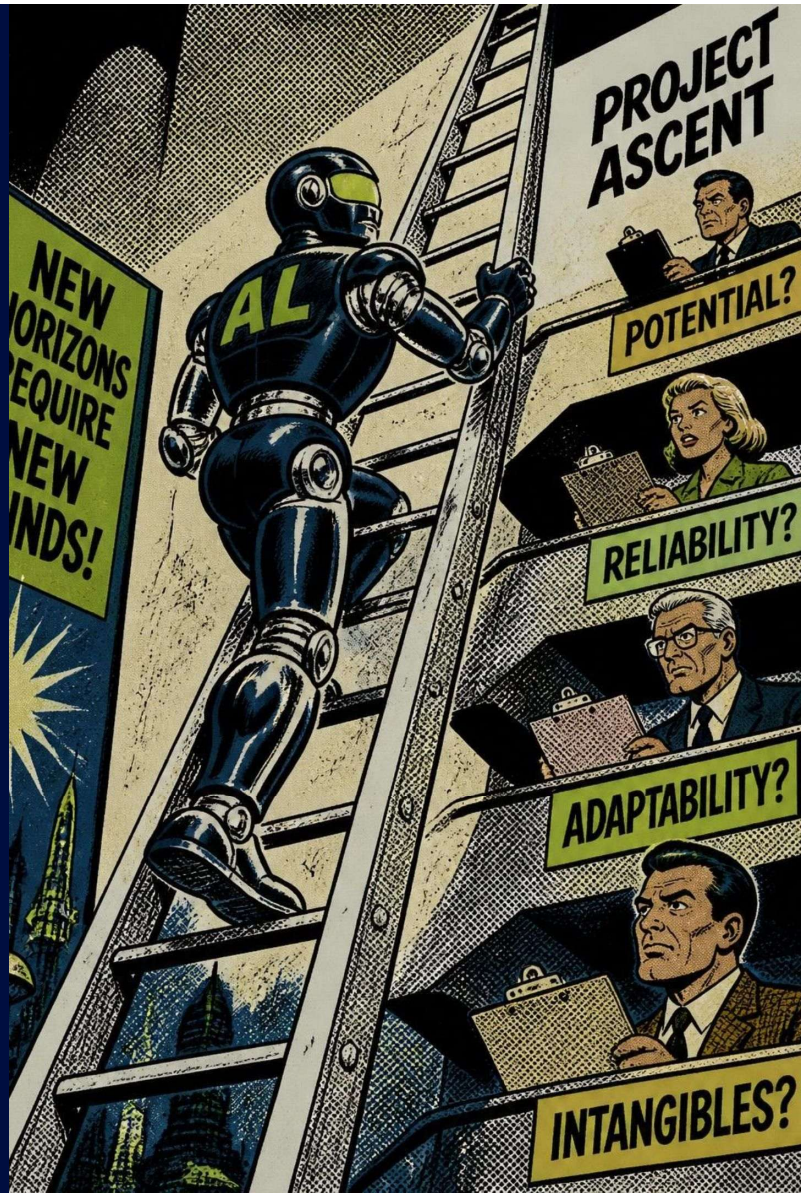
- Things you couldn't do before
- Proactive outreach, EV/solar programs, demand response

The AI Capability Ladder

1. **Assist** — you drive, AI helps one task at a time
2. **Automate** — you give it a goal, it plans the steps
3. **Orchestrate** — a whole process, humans at the checkpoints

More autonomy → more value → more verification.

Humans in the loop, not humans doing the loop.



Poll

You reconcile 12 bank accounts every month using the same steps. Which fits best?

A. An AI assistant (chat)

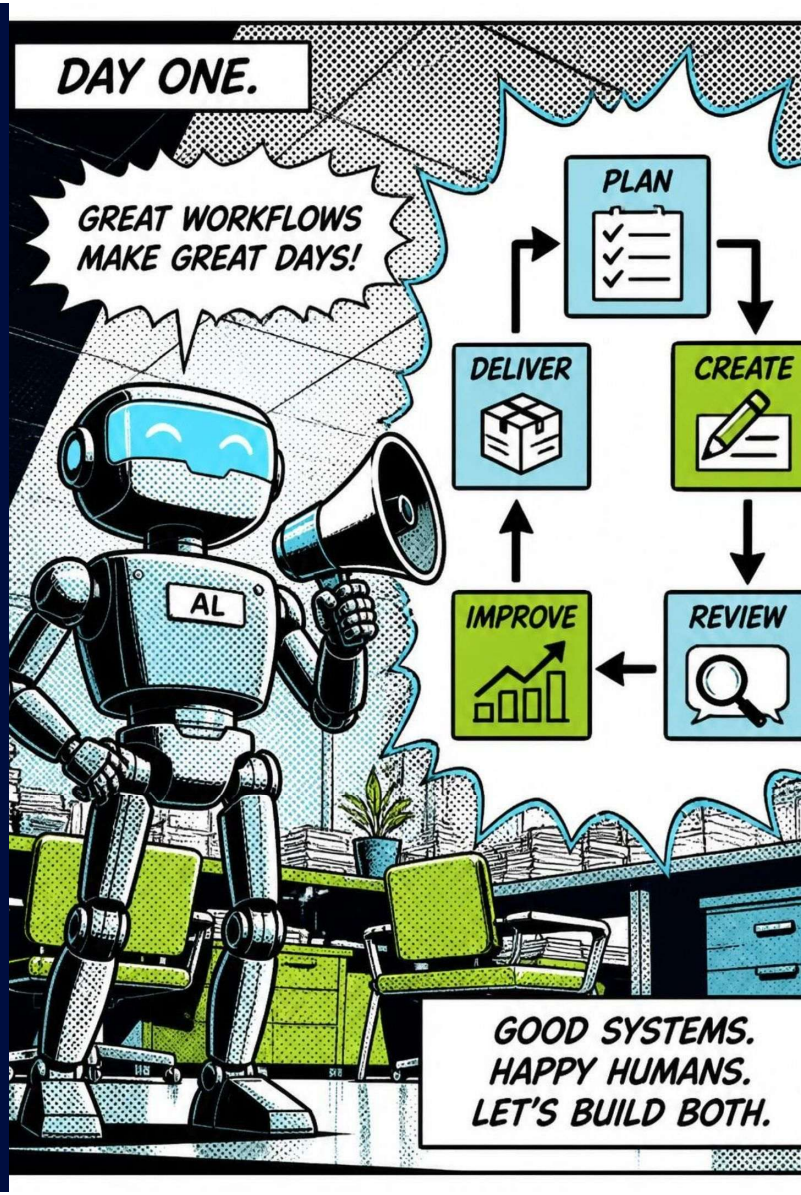
B. An AI agent

C. An agentic workflow

D. Don't use AI for this

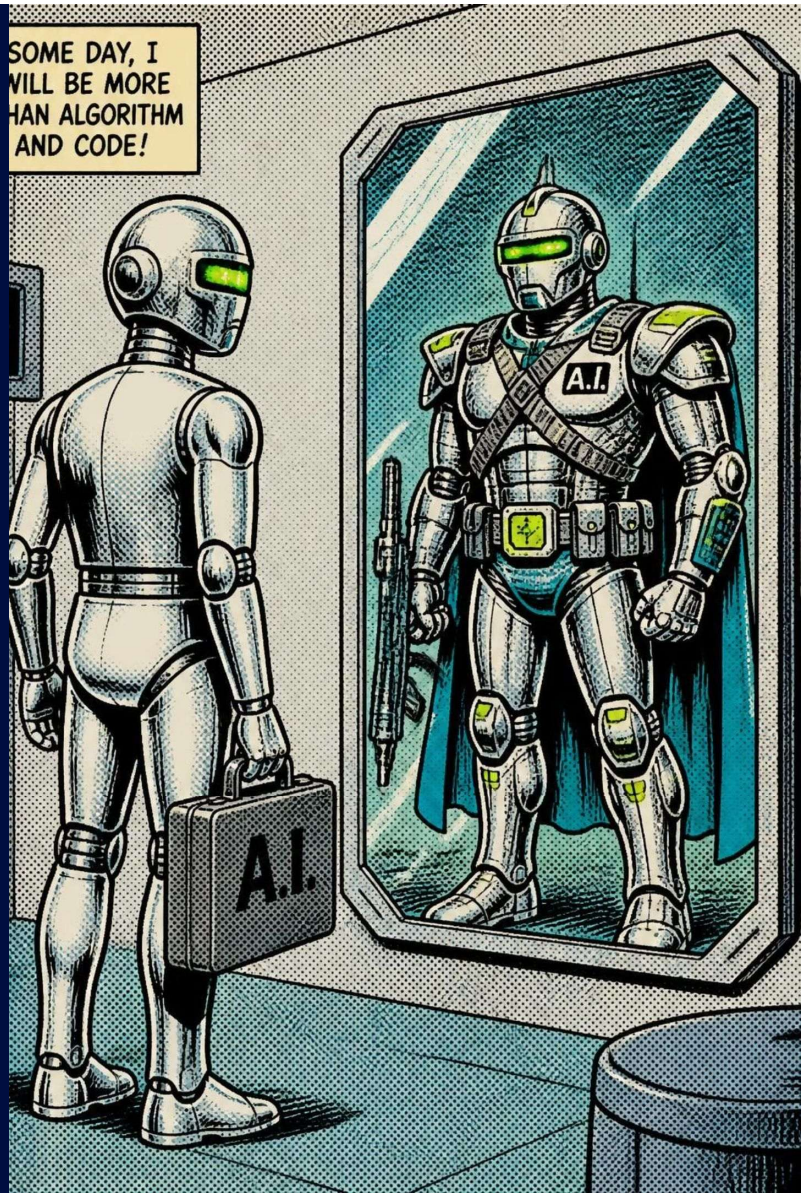
AI Doesn't Fix Your Firm. It Amplifies It.

People, process, and data decide which direction.



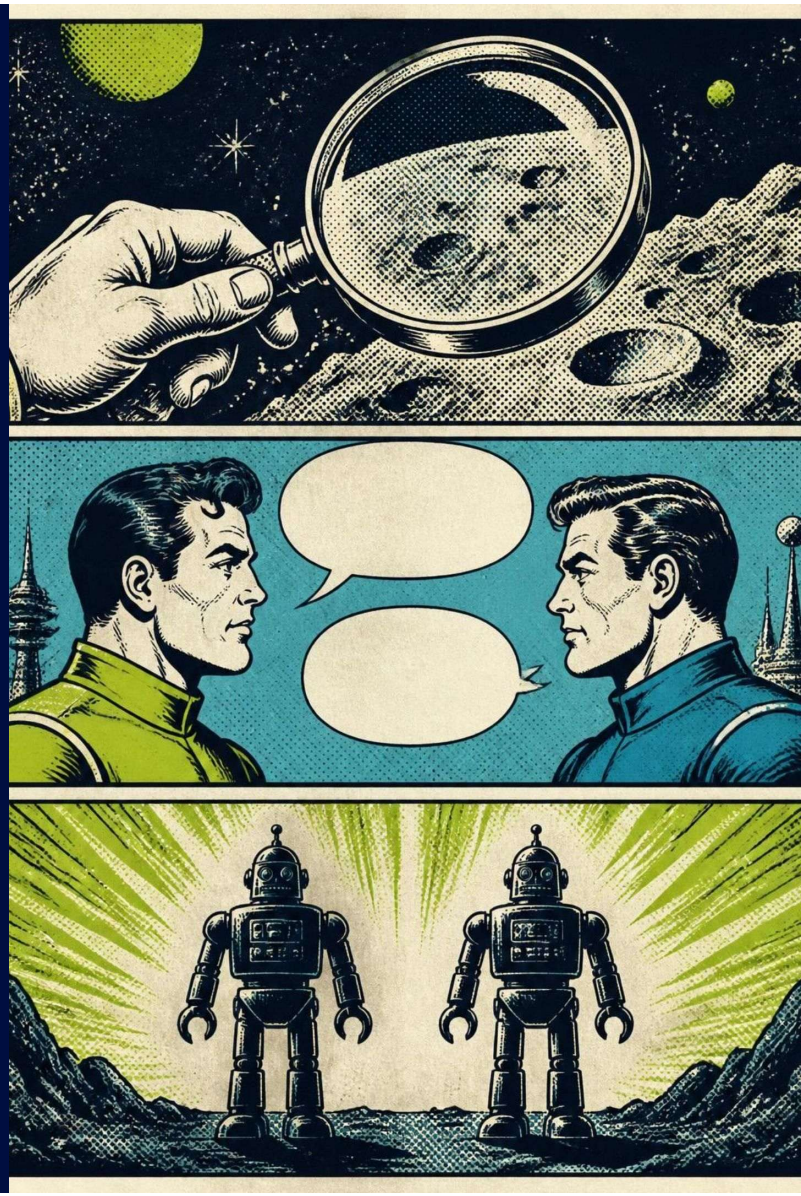
Part 3

Beyond Google: Your Digital Twin



Where Are You?

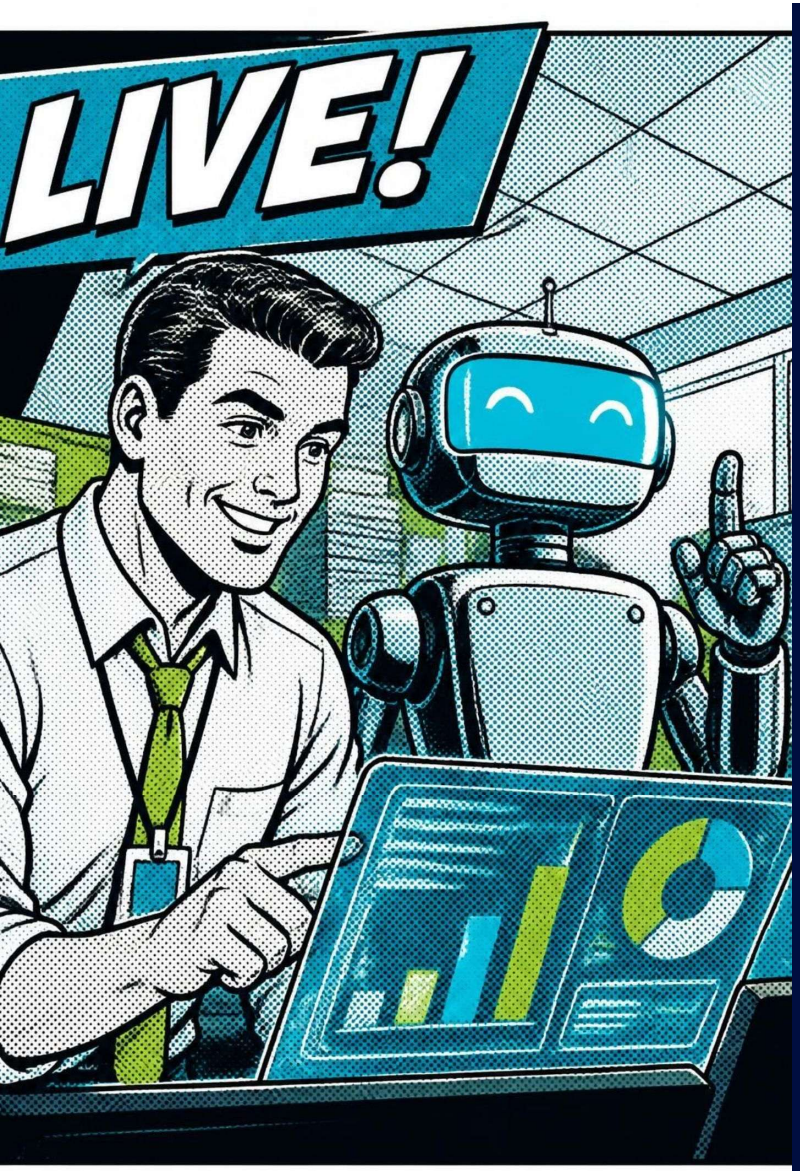
- **Light — Glorified Google:** one question, one answer
- **Normal — Chatting:** drafting, iterating, a thinking partner
- **Advanced — Digital Twin:** AI that knows your context and your data



The Race to Mediocrity

- If everyone uses AI the same way, no one is different
- Generic AI turns expertise into a commodity
- A profession that sells trust can't afford generic





Demo: My Personal Digital Twin

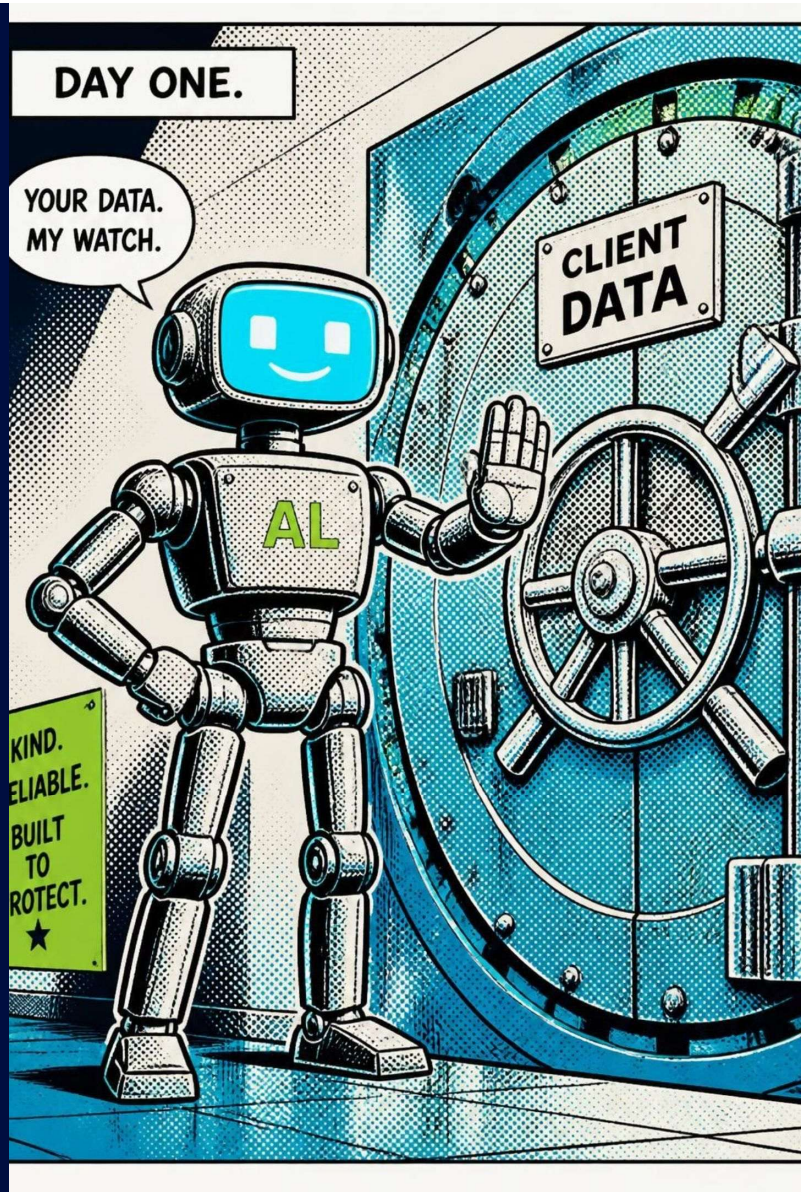
Same Pattern, Three Scales

The model is the same for everyone. The context is what's yours.

Personal	Professional	Firm
My goals, habits, decisions	My clients, engagements, prior-year workpapers	Methodology and decades of expertise
Better daily decisions	Faster prep, sharper advice	Offerings no one else can copy

A Twin Built on Client Data Needs Guardrails

- Client data stays in firm-licensed tools only
- Your twin is only as trustworthy as the data you feed it
- Same rules, new ways to break them



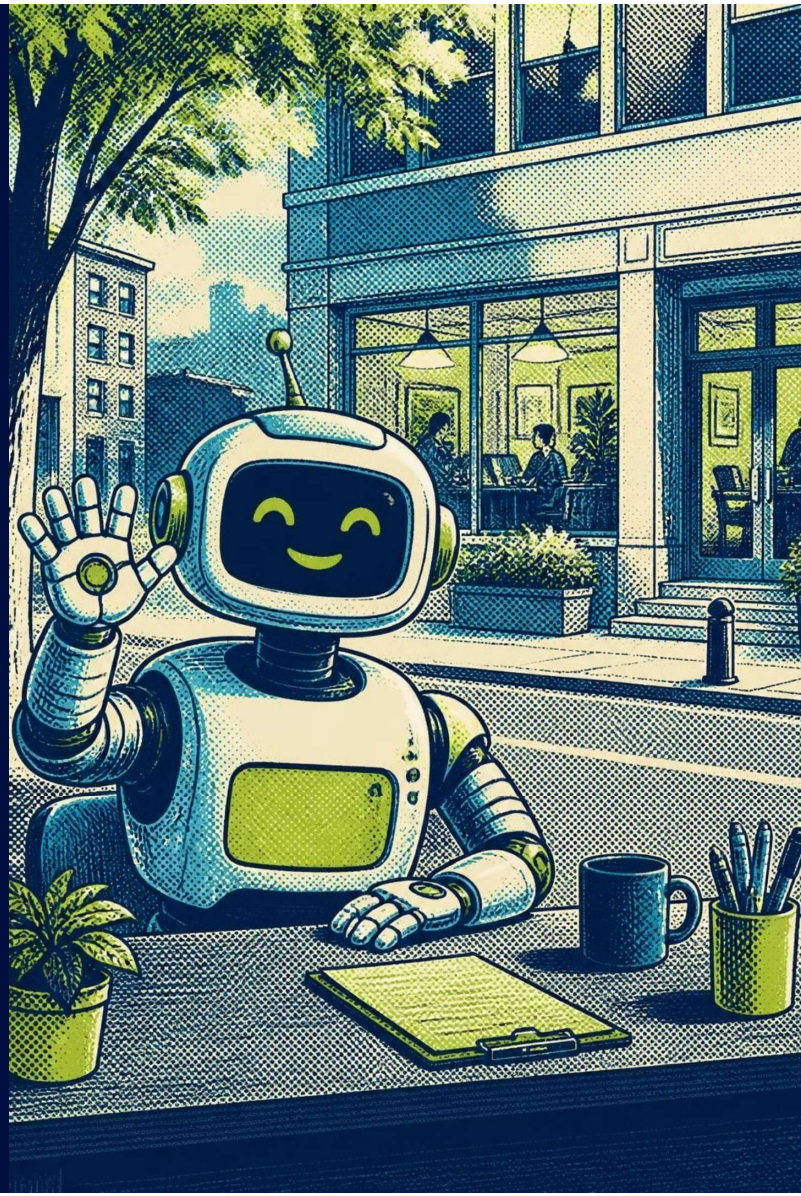
Part 4

Six Shifts That Will Shake Up the Profession



Shift 1: Software Becomes a Competitor

- Every Big Four firm has unveiled agentic AI platforms for audit, tax and compliance
- Software vendors are building the close into the GL
- Clients will do more of their own close





Reimagine, Don't Automate

Accounts payable invoice intake

Gather → Extract → Match & Flag → Human Review → Post

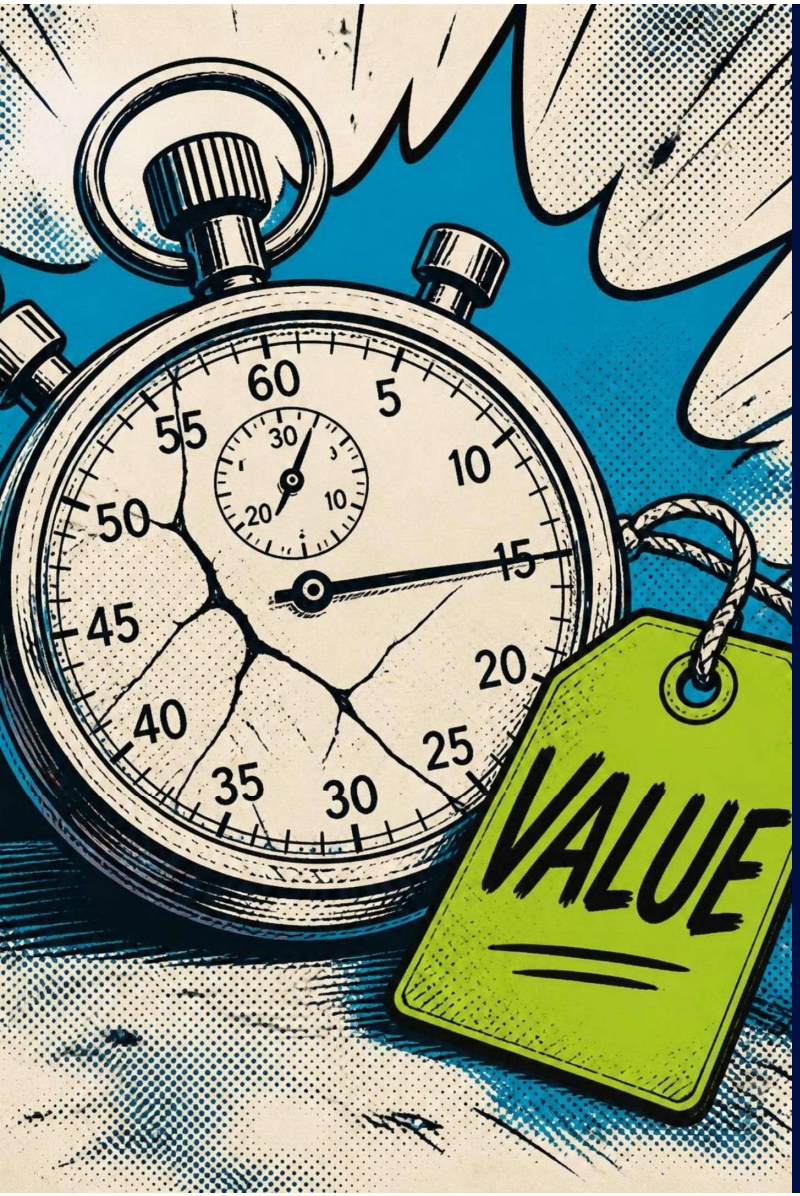
- Before: people key every invoice
- After: people approve exceptions
- Every step logged — a stronger audit trail, not a weaker one

Shift 2: Private Equity and Consolidation

- Grant Thornton's $5B deal for CBIZ, backed by private equity
- AI is changing the returns to scale
- Firms that can fund the AI investment pull ahead

Source: Bloomberg Government, 2026





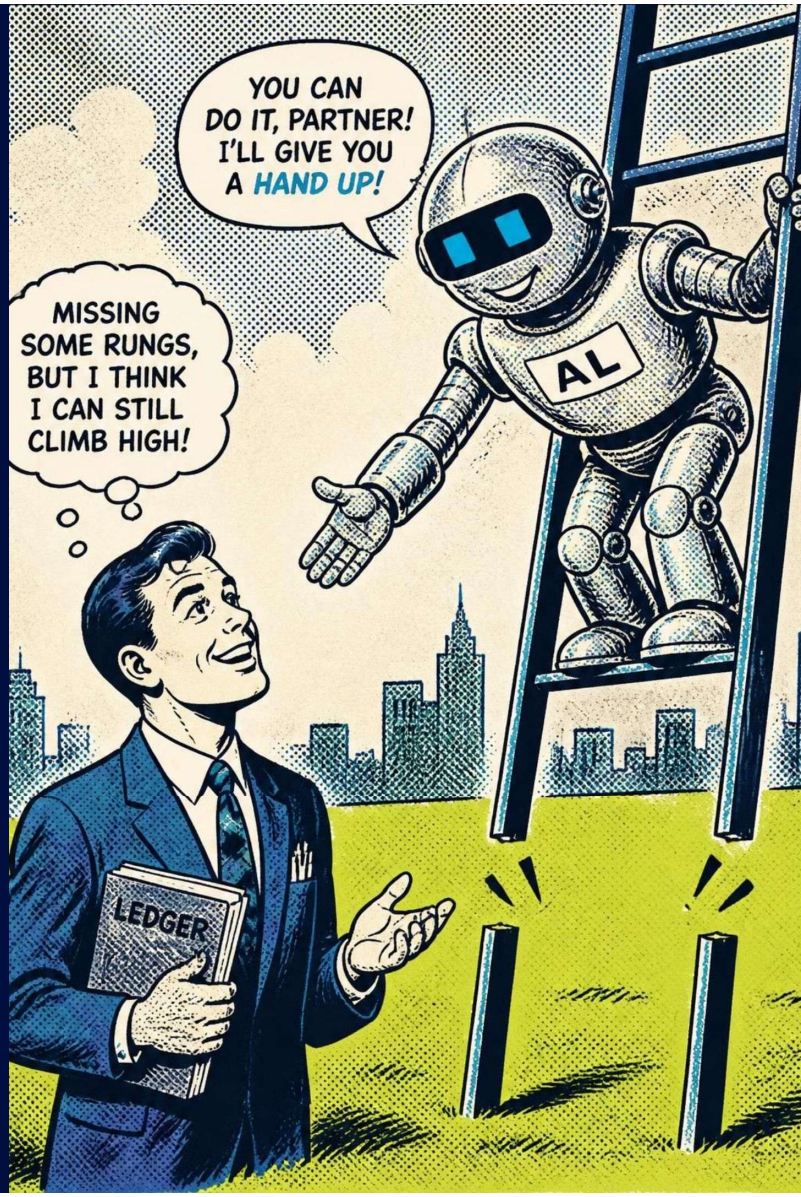
Shift 3: The Billable Hour Gets Stress-Tested

- Work moves at 2026 speed; invoices still look like 2019
- When AI cuts hours, hours stop measuring value
- Fixed-fee and value pricing move to the front

Shift 4: The Apprenticeship Gap

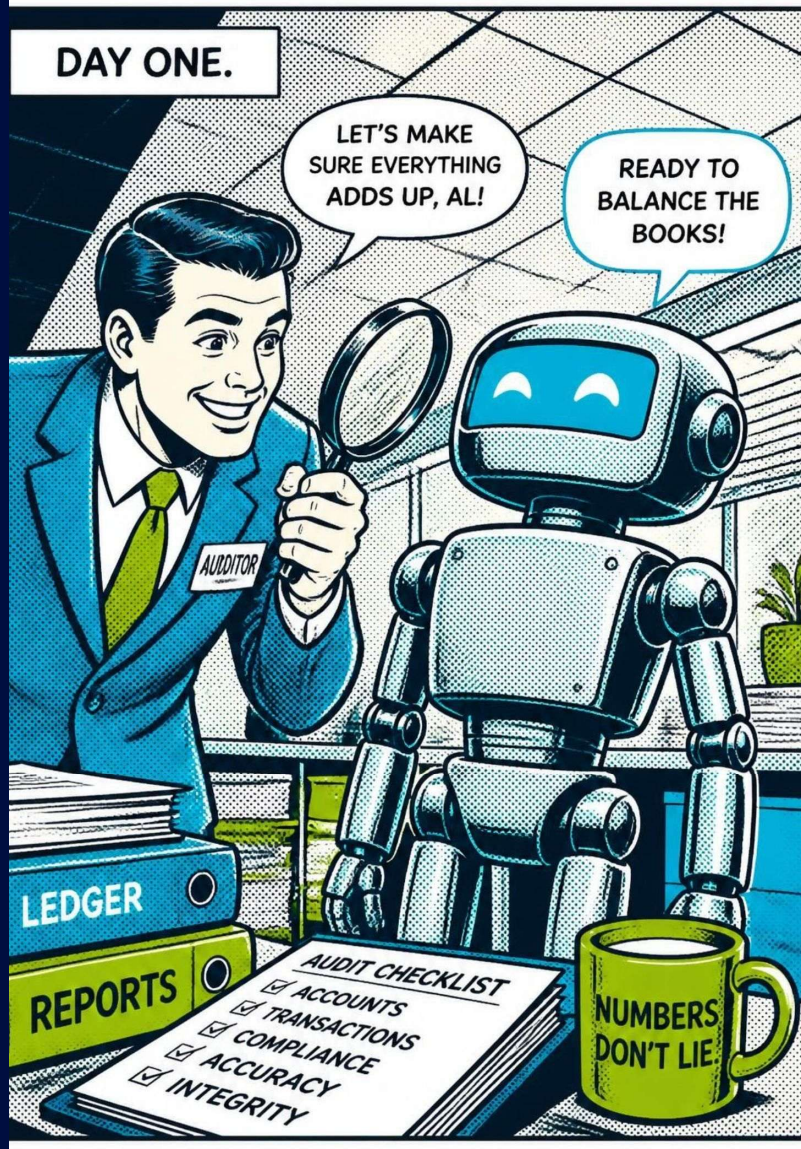
- AI now does the work that built judgment: vouching, testing, reconciliations
- Many states are moving CPA licensure from 150 to 120 hours
- How do we train judgment when the reps are gone?

AI-assisted, not AI-dependent.



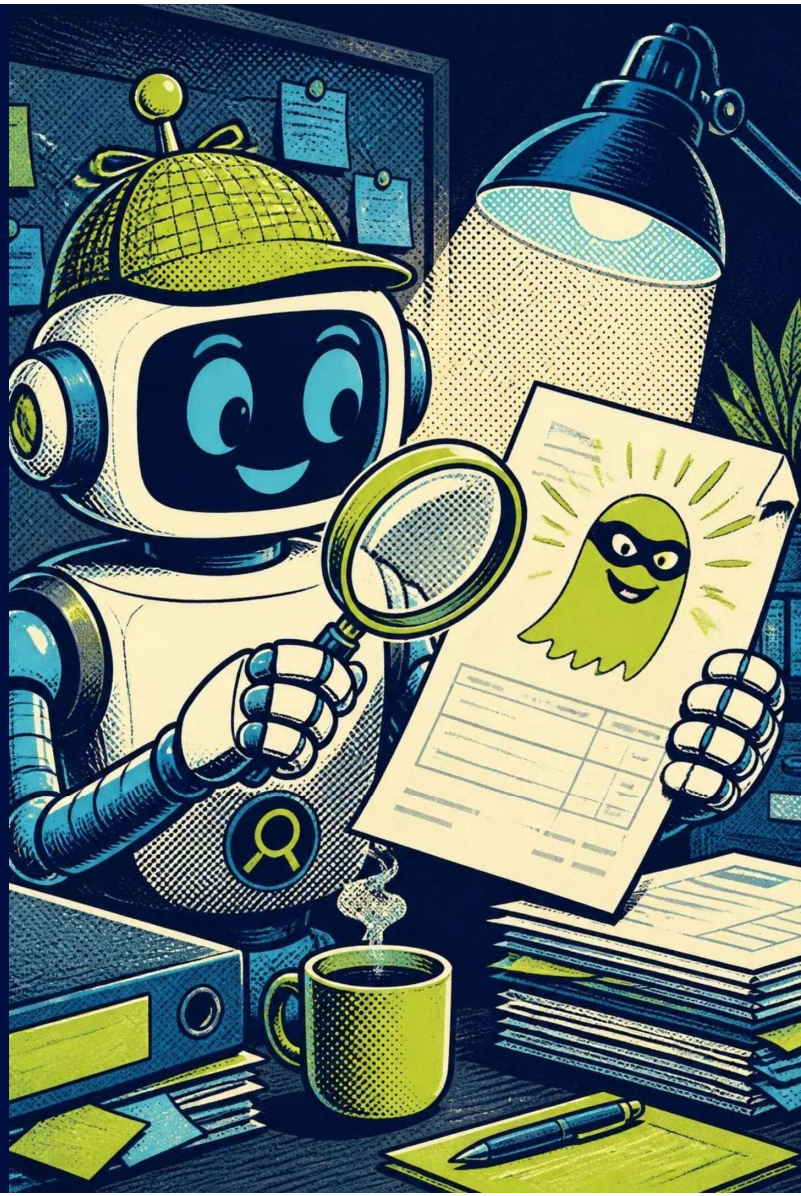
Shift 5: Assurance Over AI

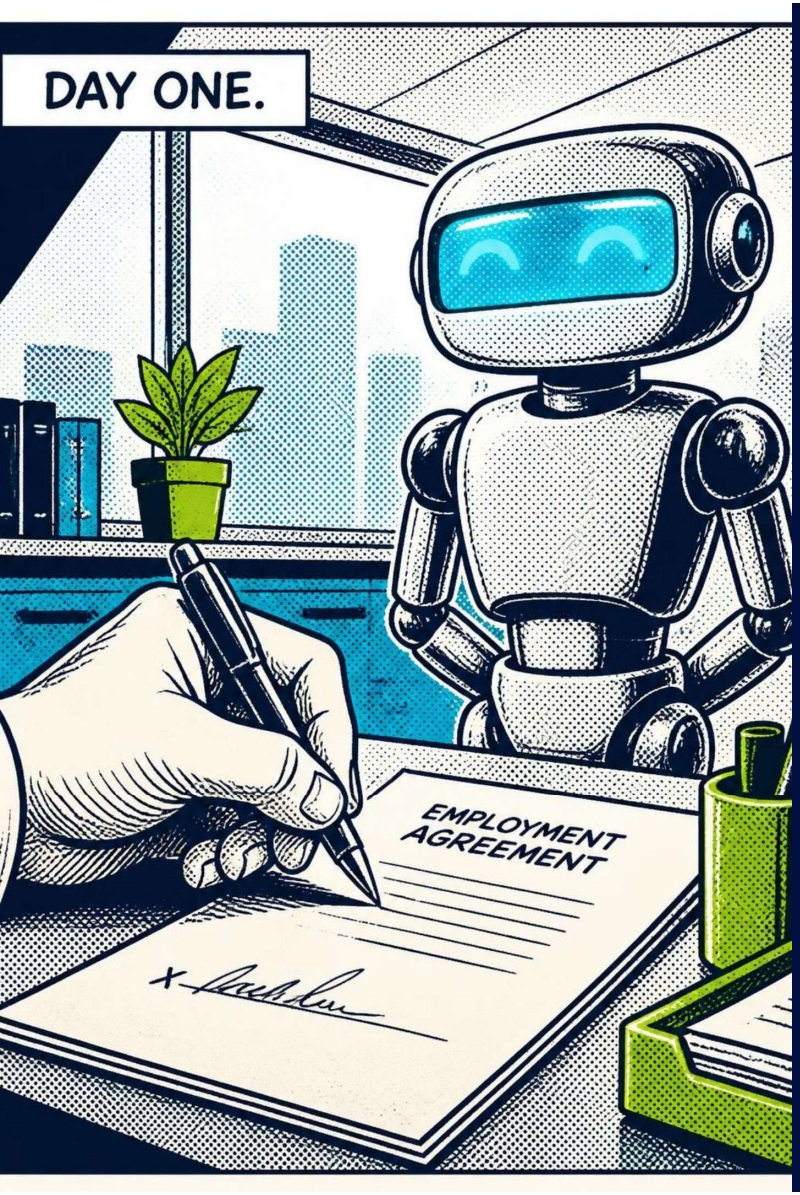
- Auditors must assess clients' AI use and their own AI-assisted procedures
- AI governance reviews become a new service line



Shift 6: AI-Enabled Fraud

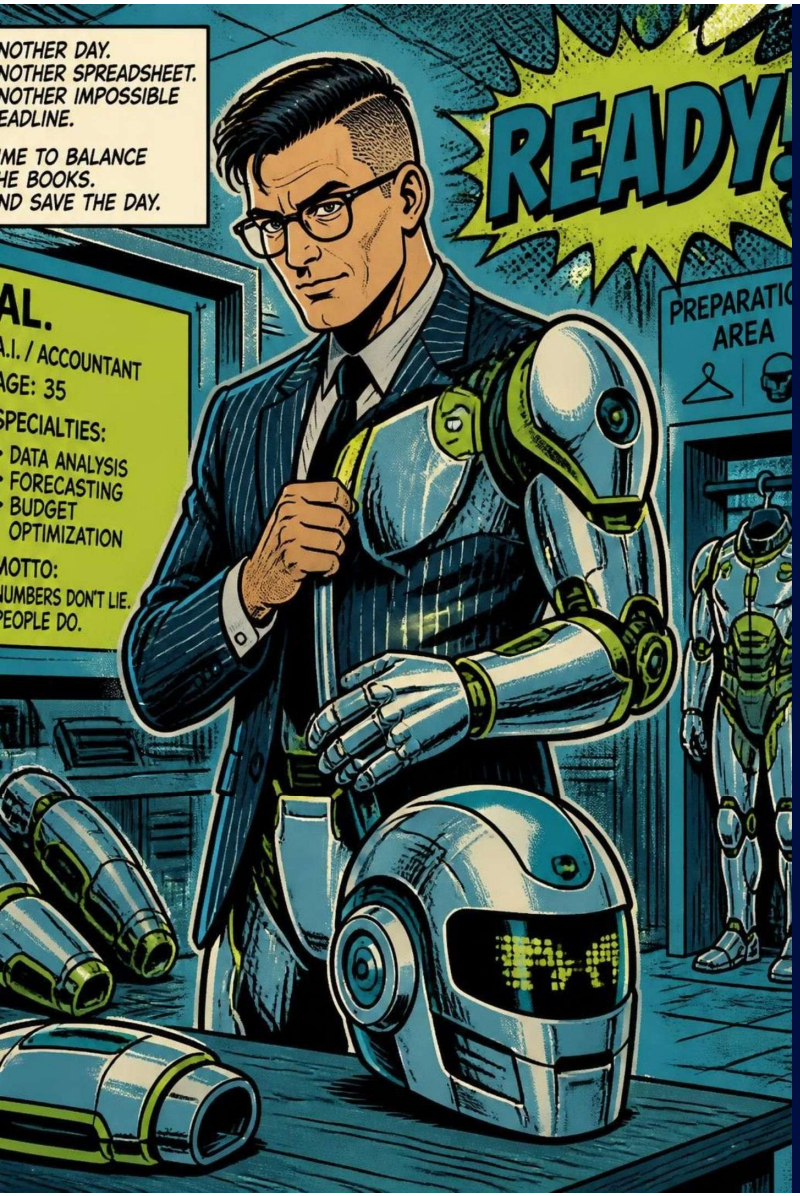
- Deepfake CFO calls and synthetic invoices
- Better impersonation and social engineering
- Controls testing has to catch up





Everyone Has the Same AI

Your advantage is the context only you have, and the judgment AI can't sign for.



Part 5

How to Get Ready Today

Start With the Goal, Not the Tool

- **The Goal (North Star):** stays steady for years — close the books in 5 days, not 10
- **The Tool (AI):** changes every quarter
- Name the inputs, the objectives, and the output first



Process. People. Then Technology.

- **Process**: map the workflow AI will improve
- **People**: earn buy-in and build skills
- **Technology**: pick the tool that fits the goal, the data, and the risk

Data-driven first. AI-enabled second.

Two Traps

- **AI on a missing foundation:** a process that lives in one head gives different answers Monday and Wednesday. Automate it, and inconsistency compounds at machine speed.
- **Efficiency-only thinking:** cost savings are the easiest value to see and the smallest.



A Traffic-Light Data Policy

- **Green — Go:** public info, templates, fictional data → any approved tool
- **Yellow — Enterprise only:** client financials, workpapers → firm-licensed tools
- **Red — Stop and check:** tax return info, SSNs, PII/PHI

Safeguards don't slow adoption. They give people permission.



Four Things Your Company Should Start Today

Companies that act first and strategize later hit the same four problems.

Structure & Governance

Name an AI owner, approve your tools, write the rules in plain language

Enablement

Role-based training tied to real work

Data Visibility & Mapping

Know what data you have, where it lives, and who owns it

Use Cases

One quick win and one big bet, each tied to your vision

Start With You

1. **Use it daily, on real work** — one recurring task, every day for two weeks
2. **Onboard your own AI** — a one-page "about me" plus one saved template
3. **Lead with it** — share one win; never put client data in personal accounts

Be the catalyst, not the shadow AI.



This Isn't an AI Initiative. It's a Change Initiative.

Your company needs a strategy. You just need to start.

If You Remember One Thing

AI is about capacity, not replacement.

More room for judgment, clients, and growth.





"At the end of the day, I just want time to pet my dogs."

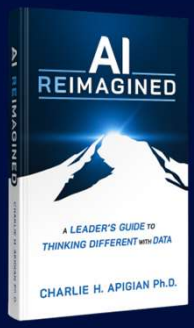
Free up valuable time for what truly matters.



AI REIMAGINED:

A Leader's Guide to Thinking Different with Data

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charlie.apigian@lbmc.com

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