

Agentic AI Pricing Models Evolve to Address Buyer ROI Anxiety

Introduction

As agentic AI moves from pilots to enterprisewide deployment, workflow complexity and unpredictability are increasing. As a result, pricing models are also evolving, affecting cost predictability, scalability and ROI. Chief product officers (CPOs) need to understand that agentic AI pricing is a strategic leadership imperative for buyers, not a procurement detail.

Key Gartner findings

1

A mid-2025 Gartner survey of almost 4,000 IT leaders revealed that most have no or low confidence in their organization's approach to calculating costs (45%) or ROI (63%) for AI initiatives.

2

AI agents priced on technical metrics (e.g., GPU hours, tokens consumed) are disconnected from business outcomes, causing buyer confusion and budget predictability concerns.

3

Recurring costs of AI agents at scale pose a significant risk to buyer budgets and provider margins. They are driven mainly by the unpredictable number and complexity of steps in an agentic AI workflow.

Market trends and strategic implications

- Shift toward tiered **usage and value-based** models.
- Adaptive pricing reflects complexity and diversity of **agent-driven workflows**.
- Growing demand for **pricing transparency**.
- Enterprises prioritizing **cost predictability at scale**.

By 2028, 67% of agentic AI buyers will rate “policies to protect against runaway agent costs” as the most crucial pricing factor in a purchase decision, up from less than 10% today.

By 2028,

55%

of agentic AI offerings will use volumetric pricing linked to business outcomes, up from less than 10% today.

What should CPOs ensure their go-to-market teams communicate to buyers when comparing their AI solutions to competitors?

- Total cost of ownership (TCO): Highlight cost-effective agent execution, transparent ongoing costs and measurable ROI.
- Adoption and scalability across teams and geographies.
- Alignment with business outcomes.
- Flexibility to adapt as AI maturity evolves.

Strategic recommendations for C-Level product leaders

- Create pilot programs that allow customers to assess and predict their usage (within/aligned to the pricing models) to derisk the buying process and ensure long-term commit.
- Differentiate on flexibility as usage and value expand.
- Be a vendor with transparent, adaptable pricing.
- Continuously reassess pricing as agentic AI matures.

Getting there

In the 2025 Gartner Agentic AI Survey, buyers identified proof of value (49%), case studies with similar customers (32%), and pricing information (27%) as the top factors influencing their purchase decisions. Leaders should promote pricing transparency and share success stories to attract prospective customers.

- Define qualitative (soft) and quantitative (hard) metrics for your agentic AI solutions, and evaluate how each metric impacts business outcomes.
- Follow the outcome, volumetric and predictability (OVP) pricing framework. Create pricing tiers based on volumes using outcome-sensitive metrics and include cost protection policies.
- Differentiate your solution through the pricing model by using new metrics to transparently show both agentic AI's impact on customer business outcomes and cost control.

Next steps

Buyers' fear of missing out has been replaced with a fear of overpaying for AI capabilities, particularly with AI agents. AI pricing is moving beyond simple subscriptions to more complex usage- and value-based models. Understanding these options is critical for budgeting and vendor negotiations.



Audit existing AI contracts and pricing structures.



Align AI product strategy with customer business objectives and risk tolerance.



Explore innovative pricing and partnership models.

Ready to lead your organization into the future? Contact us for a tailored AI pricing assessment and strategic roadmap.

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