

IN 2025, AI WON'T JUST ASSIST PEOPLE—IT WILL REPLACE THEM.

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Starting in 2025, market leaders will leverage AI to replace 70% of their GTM efforts, and this shift will happen faster than expected. This transition will create a zero-day exploit for first movers, giving them an unprecedented advantage—one that will widen the gap so significantly and so fast that others won't be able to catch up. GTM teams that lay the foundation for AI in 2025 will emerge as dominant market leaders in 2026.

1. First Principle: The Buyer-Seller Asymmetry Flipped

Over the past 100 years, sellers have had the upper hand in the buyer-seller relationship. Unsurprisingly, buyers have relied on them for knowledge and expertise, given their deep product knowledge, customer insights, and market understanding. It was only logical that sellers educate buyers on their challenges and market trends and offer solutions, giving them significant leverage throughout the sales cycle.

Today, that power has flipped. With AI providing buyers with insights, they better understand their challenges and can independently identify the right solutions. This complete reversal in the knowledge gap has put buyers in control of the buying journey, rendering traditional seller-driven interactions across GTM motions increasingly irrelevant.

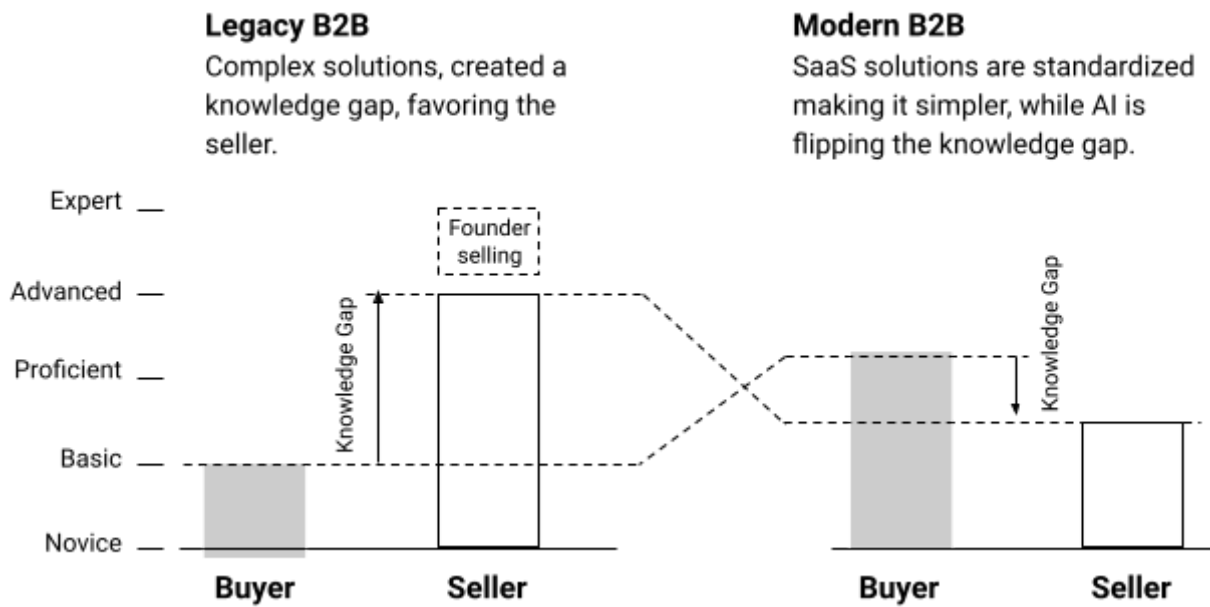


Figure 1. AI has caused the asymmetry of knowledge between buyer and seller to flip, favoring the buyer.

The flip in knowledge asymmetry has made traditional seller-driven GTM strategies obsolete, creating a need for a new approach.

Case in point: The Shift in the Doctor-Patient Relationship

For decades, patients relied almost entirely on doctors for medical information, diagnoses, and treatment options. Today, thanks to the internet and accessible medical research, patients often arrive at appointments having already researched their symptoms and potential treatments. This shift has altered the dynamics, as doctors now engage with patients who are better informed about their conditions and treatment possibilities.

Similarly, in the business world, buyers today engage with sellers with AI-powered insights, allowing them to deeply understand their needs and potential solutions before making contact. It flips the traditional knowledge imbalance between buyer and seller, shifting the seller's role.

2. The Consequence: GTM Inefficiency

Since the crash in 2022, growth has declined to about half, and the cost of growth has nearly doubled. GTM efficiency—the cost of acquiring one dollar of net new ARR—has spiraled out of control, leaving many with no immediate recourse.

$$\text{GTM Efficiency Rate} = \frac{\text{LTM Adj. Sales \& Marketing Spend (period)}}{\text{LTM Net New ARR (period)}} \times 100\%$$

The underlying cause is that human sellers are too expensive, lack the knowledge to provide value in buyer-seller interaction, and cannot keep up with ever-changing needs. AI can solve this.

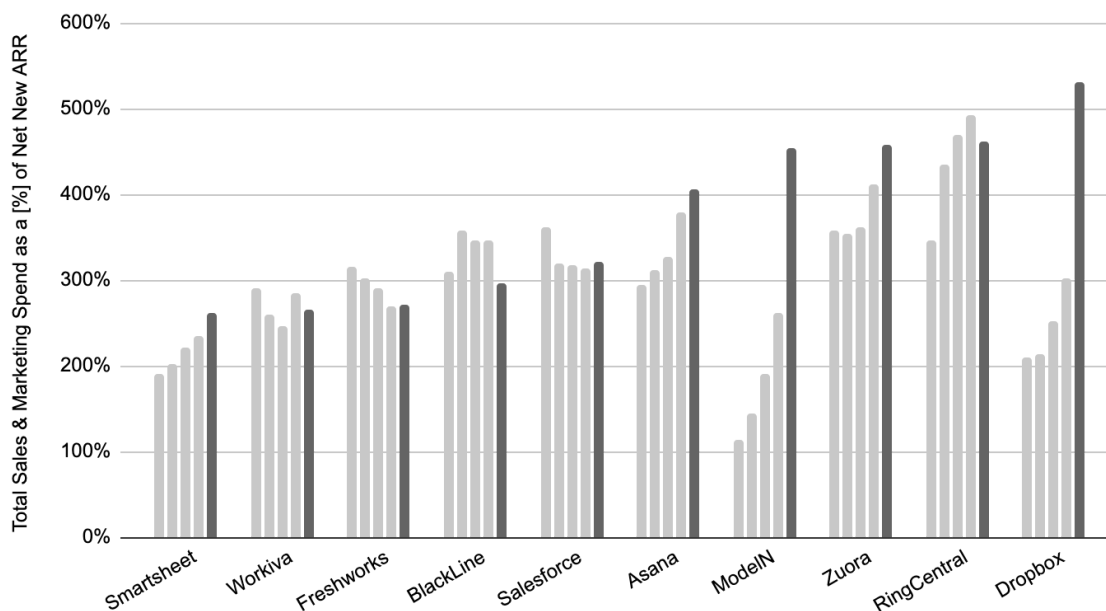


Figure 2. GTM Efficiency rate over the past five quarters for public SaaS companies (via Benchsights)

In a recurring revenue business such as SaaS, GTM efficiency is often discussed in terms of two main challenges:

- Scalability** refers to situations with plenty of prospects (inputs), but businesses struggle because they rely on people to engage with those prospects and convert them into opportunities. Historically, this required hiring, onboarding, and training, which can take years, making human capacity the limiting factor. *In this case, AI systems offer*

near-instant, near-infinite scalability, allowing businesses to handle far more input without increasing human resource demands.

- **Sustainability:** For most public companies, scalability alone is not the main issue—they already have tens of thousands of customers. However, they face uncontrollably high costs to retain and expand their business with these customers and win new ones. While scalability is limited by the time required to grow, sustainability is constrained by the high costs. *Here, AI systems offer a significant advantage by operating at a fraction of the cost of human-driven processes while becoming more cost-effective as technology advances.*

AI can solve GTM inefficiency by instantly scaling processes and reducing costs, making growth both scalable and sustainable.

3. Use of Systems to Scale Processes

Like any other production system, revenue production can be divided into three core components: Process, Systems, and People—in that order. The key to solving GTM efficiency issues is to focus on refining the Process and integrating Systems (AI) to enhance both scalability (effectiveness) and sustainability (efficiency). Historically, B2B has become overly reliant on people (SDRs and AEs) to execute inefficient processes (GAAC), which has limited scalability. As demand for People grew, the finite supply of quality talent created a supply-and-demand problem. This drove up costs and contributed to ongoing GTM inefficiency, resulting in unsustainable growth.

The solution, therefore, is simple: Don't use AI systems to train people—for example, with co-pilots—because sales training shows that adoption takes too long due to ingrained habits, resulting in only marginal and linear gains. In a world that demands disproportionate growth, this approach falls short. Instead, the solution must focus on systems that deliver disproportionate gains to support and drive the disproportionate growth required for success.

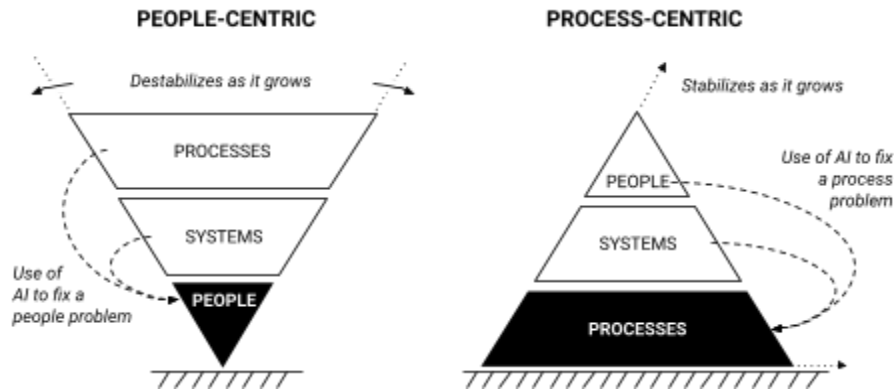


Figure 3. The best use of AI is not to improve people's performance through co-pilots but to create disproportionate improvement by using AI to optimize the process entirely and replace the seller.

Businesses can scale faster and sustainably by shifting focus to AI-driven processes that replace people entirely. This approach isn't new. Revenue growth operates like a factory, and just as factories in the 1960s integrated robotics into their manufacturing processes, we leverage AI today to enhance and streamline GTM processes.

AI can do more than assist people—it can replace people.

4. Linear Systems Can't Meet Exponential Growth Expectations

Startups and scaleups aim for exponential growth, but many rely on a linear growth strategy centered around hiring more people. This approach creates scalability and sustainability challenges, as it cannot meet the demands of hypergrowth. Linear growth is constrained by the time it takes to recruit, onboard, and train employees—often up to 12 months—causing delays in capitalizing on market opportunities.

In contrast, AI-based systems are inherently exponential. They can instantly scale capacity and enable businesses to respond in real-time to market demands. Companies adopting AI invest in systems that support scalability and sustainability, unlocking exponential growth without the limitations imposed by human resource constraints.

Today's market demands agility, with opportunities emerging and dissipating rapidly. Traditional linear approaches—relying on prolonged hiring and training cycles—risk missing these fleeting chances. The market landscape will shift when new personnel are fully operational. AI systems, on the other hand, can scale rapidly, allowing businesses to respond in real-time.

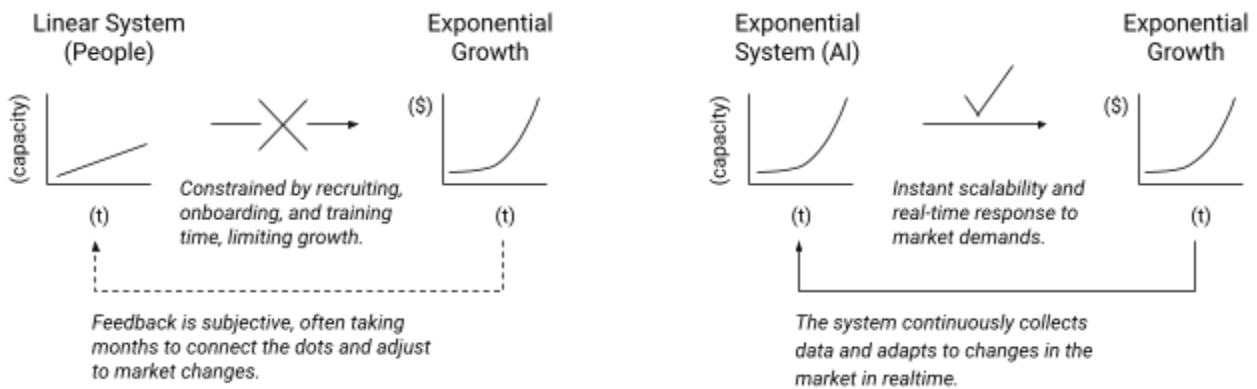


Figure 4. The startup growth challenge has historically been the reliance on a linear, people-based approach in GTM roles to achieve exponential revenue growth. This reliance has significantly contributed to GTM inefficiency. In contrast, AI offers an exponential, system-based approach better suited to driving exponential revenue growth, with real-time feedback loops ensuring continuous market alignment.

You can't achieve exponential growth with a linear, people-based approach. The key to exponential growth lies in leveraging exponential systems powered by AI.

Integrating AI into business operations unlocks exponential growth potential and provides the agility needed to thrive in today's fast-moving markets.

PLG wasn't a fluke: It was an early indicator.

Product-led growth (PLG) wasn't a fluke or a fad—it was an early glimpse into how hypergrowth could be achieved by prioritizing scalable processes and systems over traditional people-centric methods. PLG-driven companies, like Slack and Zoom, grew rapidly not by expanding sales teams but by optimizing the product experience to attract, convert, and retain users directly within the product. This approach shifted the focus from high-touch sales to a streamlined, low-friction customer journey that encouraged self-service and virality.

PLG demonstrated that when processes and systems are engineered to align with customer behavior, growth can be achieved at a pace and scale that outstrips traditional, human-reliant methods. PLG's success hinted at a new paradigm: sustainable, scalable growth is possible when companies use data-driven insights

and automation to create seamless customer experiences. By systematizing the acquisition and retention processes within the product itself, PLG companies bypassed many of the limitations associated with people-dependent growth, laying the groundwork for AI-led growth (AILG).

PLG proved that optimized processes and systems can drive hypergrowth. With AI processes and systems, we can reignite hypergrowth across every GTM motion.

5. Understanding what AI can and cannot do

The value proposition of AI in GTM can be divided into three categories akin to aspects of road construction. Think of it this way:

- **AI can do Simple tasks**, like fixing potholes and putting up road signs.
- **AI can do Intermediate tasks**, like building roads, consistently and at scale.
- **AI can do Complex tasks**, like building bridges, which require technical expertise

Now, combine this analogy with the three core benefits AI offers: it can do this cheaper, at higher volume, and help do this at a higher quality. This results in the following:

1. **Do it cheaper (Sustainability)** – *Build Roads.*

We currently pay many humans to perform basic tasks at a premium. AI can handle most of these tasks more cost-effectively.

2. **Do more (Scalability)** – *Fix Potholes.*

AI enables companies to handle more volume, such as road crews fixing potholes en masse. It also applies to support tasks like appointment setting, lead follow-up, and proposal generation, where AI can manage a higher workload without additional human resources. Thus, it allows businesses to scale rapidly without bottlenecks in support or enablement functions.

3. **Do it better (Durability)** – *Build Bridges.*

Just as building bridges requires skilled expertise, AI can augment human performance for more complex, specialized tasks like sales engineering or deliver personalized solutions to optimize customer engagement, such as strategic account management.

The Human-in-the-loop (HITL) Curve

In AI, skill levels can often be treated equally due to the system's ability to execute tasks precisely, meaning the distinction between skill levels tends to dissipate. However, skill level often correlates with accountability and the impact of failure. For instance, failing to fix a pothole might cause an accident for a single car, but a bridge collapse could lead to massive economic damage and loss of life. This highlights that, in AI, we must shift focus from skill compensation toward accountability and the impact of failure.

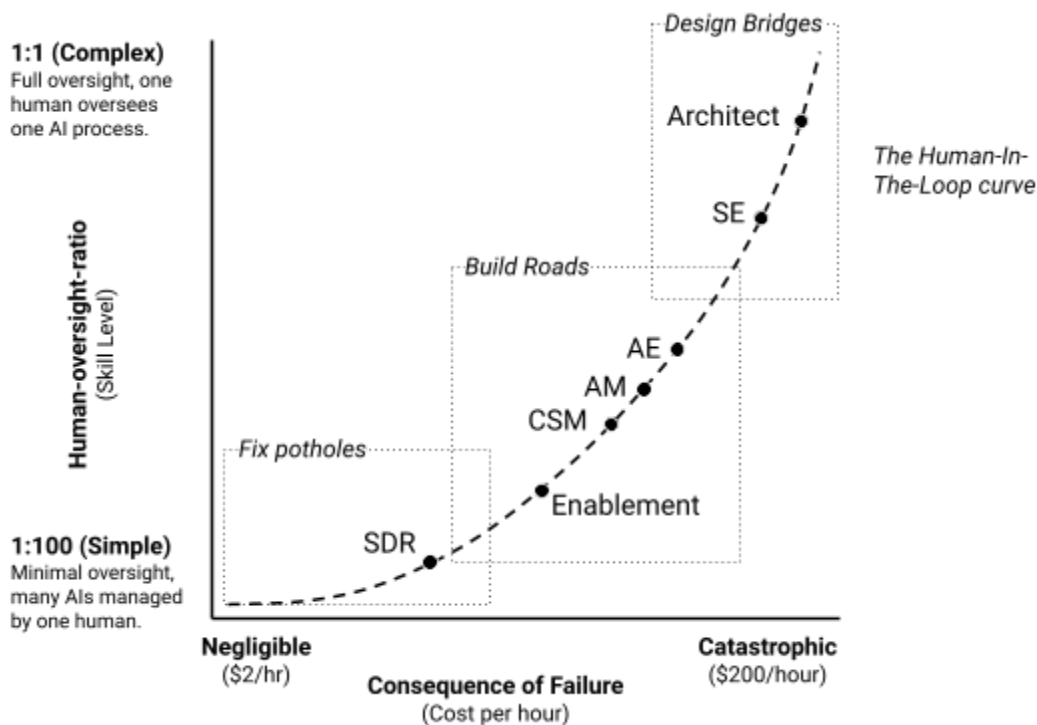


Figure 5. The Human-in-the-Loop Curve replaces the Skill/Compensation curve in a world where AI can manage many low-complexity tasks with minimal oversight (1:100), but higher-risk, complex tasks require full human oversight (1:1).

The human-in-the-loop (HITL) concept explains this shift by emphasizing that the greater the potential consequences of failure, the more essential human oversight becomes. HITL ensures that humans are integrated into AI-driven processes when the risk of failure is high. In low-risk situations, AI can operate autonomously, but for high-stakes tasks, humans must intervene, review, and take responsibility where the cost of failure is significant. The HITL Curve balances the precision of AI with the necessity of human judgment based on the impact of potential failures.

Even the most advanced AI will require human oversight when the cost of failure is too great.

Case in point: Taum Sauk Dam Failure

The 2005 Taum Sauk Dam Failure highlights the need for human oversight in high-risk automated systems such as AI. The dam's sensors failed to control water levels, causing a catastrophic breach that released over a billion gallons of water.



The incident underscores the importance of a high human oversight ratio for systems with catastrophic failure potential. While lower-risk tasks, like fixing potholes, may operate at a 1:100 oversight ratio, high-stakes infrastructure, such as dam operations, requires constant human monitoring. The faulty sensor could have been caught with proper human oversight, and the disaster could have been avoided. The HITL Curve illustrates that as the risk and impact of failure increase, so too must the level of human oversight.

6. All Roads to Success Lead Through Systems & Processes

The approach must combine AI System innovation with proven GTM Processes. Many companies use the Growth At All Cost (GAAC) approach. In effect, they either lack process, use the wrong process, or have the right process but execute it poorly. Adding AI Systems to any of these will likely worsen the situation.

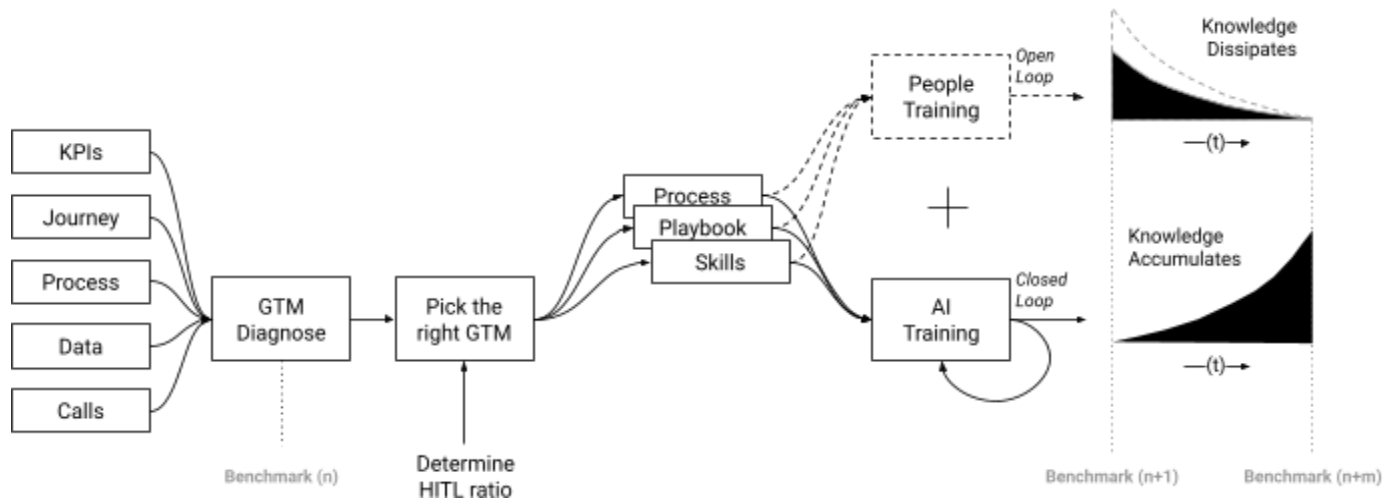


Figure 6. The Winning by Design GTM Diagnostic process and its outputs redirect from People Training to AI Training

There are three steps to achieve an AI GTM approach:

Step 1. GTMD-AI: Diagnose the AI readiness of the GTM team:

- Where across the customer journey can AI make an impact (which role):
 - Scalability, e.g., increased growth rate,
 - Sustainability, e.g., lower cost, or
 - Durability, e.g., improve quality.
- Based on this, what would be the priority of xxx

Step 2: Train the AI. Establish the ICPs, customer journey, process, insights, key actions, etc., for any buyer segment and train the LLM.

Step 3: Implement and Tune the AI. Deploy and fine-tune AI—measure leading indicators of success vs. a pre-sprint baseline. Evaluate results. Lean into specific moments where AI drove positive results and deploy these more broadly across the organization.

The combination of proven GTM processes and AI systems will fix inefficiencies, enabling companies to scale sustainably and dominate future markets.

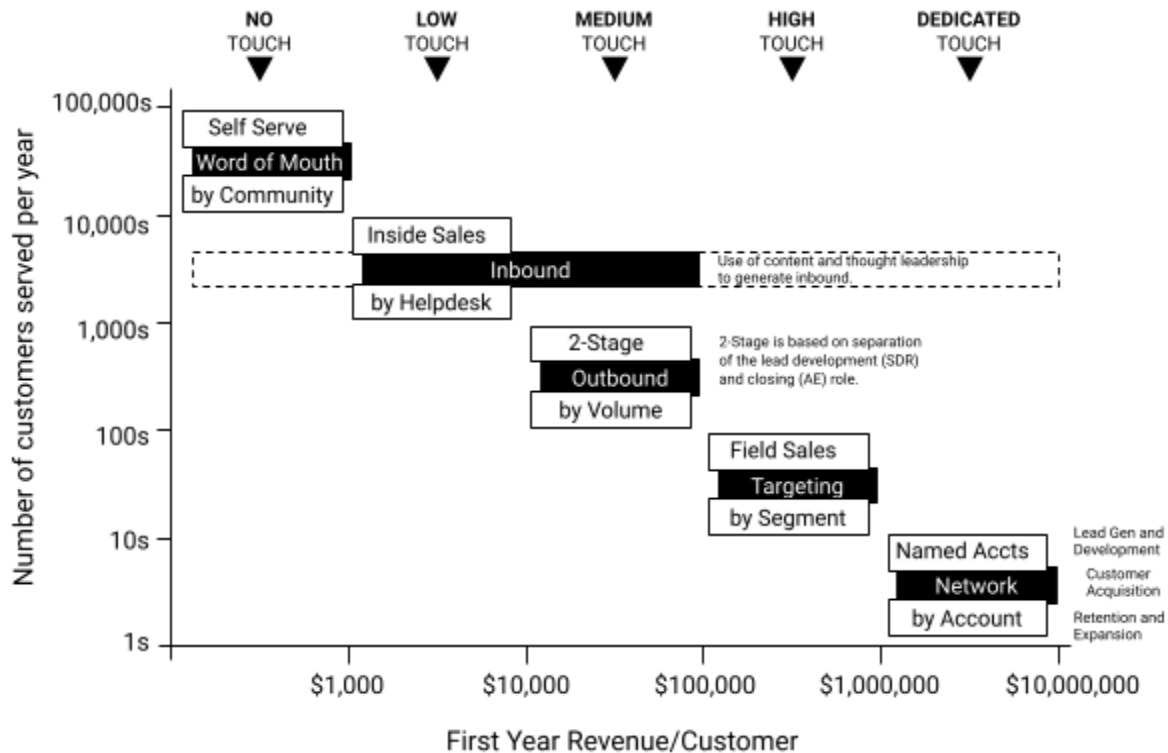


Figure 7. Determining the proper GTM process is no longer solely based on the product's price or revenue, which traditionally influences a company's investment in GTM efficiency. Instead, it is now driven by the preferred customer experience. This shift emphasizes that a successful GTM strategy prioritizes alignment with customer expectations, ensuring that financial success, scalability, and sustainability become natural outcomes.

7. AI Lead Growth, or AiLG

Now that we understand how we arrived here, the question becomes: Can we use AI to accelerate growth—and, if so, how? The answer lies in two key benefits: growing at a lower cost, freeing up resources to reinvest in expansion—what we call "do more, better"—and growing more intelligently, or "do better, better."

Today, AI is almost exclusively applied to "doing more, better." AI is used to write more spam emails, send more impersonal LinkedIn invitations, engage in superficial conversations, and flood the industry with clickbait content. These are merely applications of outdated GAAC processes executed at a lower cost without meaningful innovation. This approach falls short of using AI to generate growth, or AiLG, as Amanda Kahlow from 1Mind coined.

So, what do we mean by AiLG? We're referring to "doing better, better." It means targeting the right customers, having meaningful conversations, and arriving prepared with insights about the people, the company, and their unique challenges. But it doesn't stop there—it also involves responding faster, being available instantly, diagnosing needs more accurately, and offering consistent, transparent pricing.

AiLG is about elevating the quality of every customer interaction, setting a new standard in customer engagement, and causing sustainable growth.

To understand the full power of AI, we will separate it into two parts:

- **Part 1.** AI-led Cost Reductions. and
- **Part 2.** AI-led Growth

Let's start by learning more about AI-led cost reductions.

Part 1. AI-led Cost Reductions

The cost-benefit analysis is straightforward, based on two primary factors:

- **Lower Hourly Cost:** In GTM and other knowledge-based roles, human-hour costs range from \$30 to \$300, leading to annual salaries between \$60,000 and \$600,000. In contrast, AI operates on a usage-based model at \$2 to \$20 per hour, representing just 6-7% of the cost of a human hour.
- **Higher Efficiency Rate:** In knowledge-based work, humans typically operate with an efficiency rate of about 3:1, meaning it often takes 3 hours to deliver 1 hour of actual output. This starkly contrasts with simpler tasks, such as fruit-picking (almost 1:1) or construction (3:2). However, AI systems often achieve closer to a 1:1 efficiency rate, producing direct output per hour worked.

Therefore, an accurate cost comparison should account for both hourly wages and efficiency rates. For human labor, this results in the effective cost per hour of output being multiplied by the efficiency rate (3).

Note: AI excels in knowledge work that involves standardized, high-volume tasks where creativity relies on *pattern matching*. In comparison, processes requiring creativity, emotional intelligence, or out-of-context problem-solving—essentially, non-pattern-based tasks—will still require human involvement. AI will achieve a much lower efficiency in these areas.

Table 1. *The application of AI is particularly strong in low creativity roles, where its pattern recognition and matching capabilities excel. In SaaS sales, the buying and selling processes involved in GTM increasingly consist of low-creativity, high-volume tasks—conditions well-suited for AI. In contrast, more creative tasks, especially those required in deep enterprise sales, remain challenging for AI to perform effectively due to the need for nuanced judgment, customization, and complex relationship-building.*

	High Physical Effort	Low Physical Effort
High Creativity	Craftmanship (Dedicated Touch) Creative work requires manual skill and physical labor, such as sculpting, culinary arts, and traditional craftsmanship.	Artist (High Touch) Tasks focused on creativity, originality, and emotional expression are often seen in art, design, music, and writing. The effort is cognitive rather than physical.
Low Creativity	Manual Labor (Medium Touch) Physical skill and repetitive tasks but with minimal creativity. Think of Construction, manufacturing, and agricultural work.	Knowledge work (No/Low Touch) Intellectual skills, analysis, and technical expertise, but without physical effort. Think of data analysis, engineering, and accounting.

Conclusion: The cost per hour of output generated by a human worker is effectively tripled to account for efficiency, resulting in \$90 to \$900, compared to \$2 to \$20 for an AI worker. As of 2025, the cost of producing one hour of output in knowledge work through AI effort is approximately 2%—or 1/50th—of the cost of human effort.

Growth Rate Is Valued at a Premium Over Cost-Efficiency

While cost efficiency is essential for large SaaS companies with substantial recurring revenue, most pre-IPO SaaS businesses are primarily valued based on their growth rate. In venture-driven markets, particularly for companies with \$1M to \$1B in ARR, the growth rate often outweighs cost considerations by a factor of three to one. The growth rate reflects the startup's momentum, customer demand, and scalability—acknowledging that cost-efficiency can be optimized later. However, due to increased market saturation over the past three years, growth rates have slowed by about half, intensifying the demand for rapid growth.

Table 2: Hypergrowth businesses, such as SaaS, mature through four stages of growth. The demand for AiLG to drive growth is most prominent in the Scalable and Sustainable maturity phases, whereas the need for AiLG to lower cost is more prominent in the Durable Growth stage.

	Volume-Based <i>More likely to result in high acquisition.</i>	Relationship-Based <i>More likely to result in high retention.</i>
Cost-Efficient Growth	MATURITY PHASE 3: \$10M to \$1B Sustainable Growth Growth optimized for cost efficiency through scalable methods. It relies on a solid customer base and repeatable revenue streams, though it may not always expand consistently. This model emphasizes maintaining low costs while acquiring new customers steadily.	MATURITY PHASE 4: Over \$1B Durable Growth Long-term, consistent growth is fueled by a loyal, returning customer base. This model relies on delivering a high-quality product with recurring impact. Durable growth is built on proven processes that enable growth without sacrificing quality.
Growth comes at a High Cost	MATURITY PHASE 2: \$1-10M Scalable Growth Achieves rapid, high-growth acquisition by investing heavily in acquiring new customers. Requires a high volume of leads and a strong conversion rate. With substantial resources, this model can lead to hypergrowth, though it comes at a higher cost.	MATURITY PHASE 1: Up to \$1M Founder-led Growth Growth driven by one-off deals or projects that often come at high costs and rely on the founder's unique expertise and relationships. This model can generate impactful short-term gains but is unsustainable in the long run, as it depends on specialized, non-repeatable efforts, making it challenging to scale without their involvement.

Part 2. AI Lead Growth

AI-Led Growth, or AiLG, refers to the use of artificial intelligence to enhance both the efficiency (“doing more, better”) and effectiveness (“doing better, better”) of growth-related activities, such as sales and customer engagement. AiLG leverages AI to progressively optimize and automate complex tasks traditionally performed by humans.

In sales, AiLG can be understood by breaking down the process into six core actions, each consisting of a number of micro-actions. As AI technology advances, AiLG goes through iterative improvements, referred to as Generations of AiLG (denoted as $AI_{(n)}$), where each new generation achieves higher levels of autonomy and sophistication.

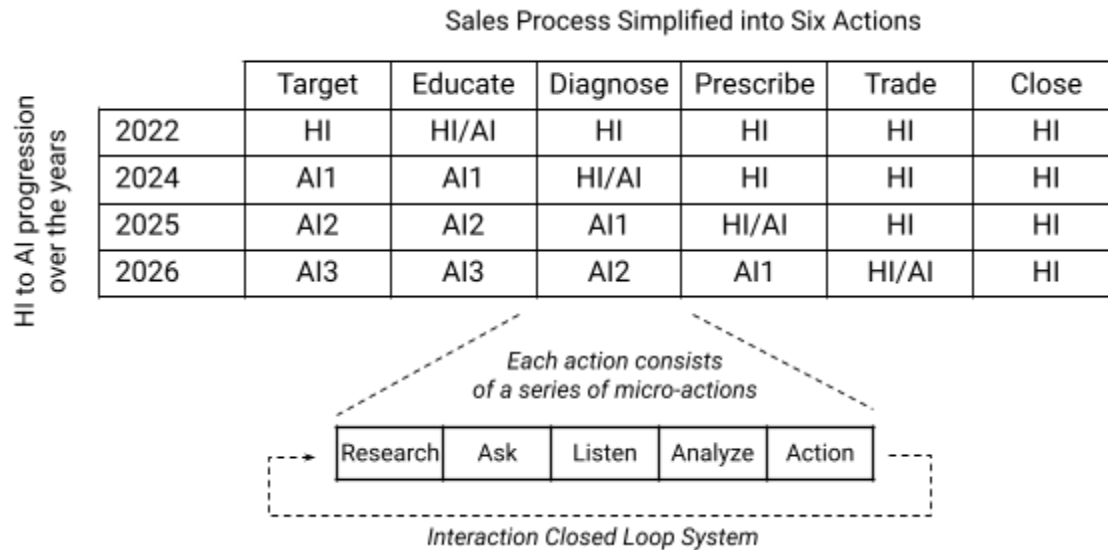


Figure 8. Progression of Six Actions performed by either Human Intelligence (HI), assisted by artificial intelligence (HI/AI), or entirely replaced by it (AI). Each action consists of micro-actions. It is these micro-actions where AI makes such a significant impact on performance.

In 2022, human effort primarily drove sales processes (Human Intelligence, or HI). Over time, the integration of AI in sales has followed a progression: First, AI assists human efforts (HI/AI); in this case, AI supports but doesn't replace human work. Think of summarizing the meeting. Next, we can see AI replacing human efforts (AI); it is here where AI autonomously performs tasks previously handled by humans.

As AiLG matures, each generation of AI improves; it refines its capabilities, driving growth with increasing precision and autonomy; this causes a widening gap for first movers.

This generational evolution represents continuous advancements in AI's ability to lead and scale growth independently. As outlined in Stable 3, AiLG improves itself across both dimensions of Scalability and Sustainability. This points back to the maturity phases outlined in Table 2, which tells us that seeing marginal improvements from an AI-based sales system is very realistic.

Table 3. Dimensions of Scalability and Sustainability in AI-Led Growth (AiLG). Each represents a specific advantage of AI that contributes to either rapid expansion or long-term efficiency and resilience.

Scalability of AiLG	Sustainability of AiLG
<p>Speed: AI can make near-instantaneous progress and replicate improvements seamlessly across all AI agents.</p> <p>Capacity: AI can deploy unlimited capacity within seconds, handling extensive workloads without human constraints.</p> <p>Consistency: AI reliably reproduces processes accurately and efficiently, reducing variability and minimizing errors.</p> <p>Scale: Unlike human intelligence, which relies on exceptional individuals, AI scales based on improving the process.</p>	<p>Cost Efficiency: AI operates at a lower cost.</p> <p>Resource Optimization: AI manages and allocates resources based on demand, reducing waste and maximizing utilization.</p> <p>Quality Control: AI maintains high standards of accuracy, minimizing rework and waste, leading to reliable, long-term quality.</p> <p>Continuous Learning: AI models are designed to learn and adapt over time, becoming smarter and more efficient with each iteration, reducing the need for frequent updates or manual intervention.</p>

Simplified Performance Calculations for AI-Led Growth (AiLG)

The following metrics illustrate the incremental improvements in conversion rates at each stage of AiLG. These calculations are designed to reflect the general behavior of AiLG rather than to provide precise conversion rates for each action.

1. **Step 1: Human Intelligence (HI)**
 - The initial conversion rate for a human action is set at 0.8 (80%). For example, the chance of a customer wanting to proceed after a discovery call is 80%.
2. **Step 2: Human + AI Assistance (HI/AI)**
 - With AI assisting humans—such as preparing insights for a discovery call—the conversion rate improves slightly to 0.82 (82%).
3. **Step 3: AI Generation 1 (AI(1))**
 - As AI becomes more integrated, leveraging scalability and consistency, the conversion rate increases to 0.84 (84%).
4. **Step 4: AI Generation 2 (AI(2))**
 - Further refinement in AI capabilities boosts the conversion rate to 0.86 (86%).
5. **Step 5: AI Generation 3 (AI(3))**
 - The conversion rate improves once again, reaching 0.87 (87%).

Through these stages, the performance of an AiLG-based system demonstrates incremental gains in conversion rates, highlighting the compounding effect of AI's scalability and sustainability factors over time.

Sales Process Simplified into Six Actions

HI to AI progression over the years		Target	Educate	Diagnose	Prescribe	Trade	Close
	2022	HI	HI/AI	HI	HI	HI	HI
	2024	AI1	AI1	HI/AI	HI	HI	HI
	2025	AI2	AI2	AI1	HI/AI	HI	HI
	2026	AI3	AI3	AI2	AI1	HI/AI	HI

↓

HI=0.8
 HI/AI = 0.82
 AI1=0.84
 AI2=0.86
 AI3=0.87

HI to AI progression over the years		Target	Educate	Diagnose	Prescribe	Trade	Close	GF*
	2022	0.80	0.82	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.27
	2024	0.84	0.84	0.82	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.30
	2025	0.86	0.86	0.84	0.82	0.80	0.80	0.33
	2026	0.87	0.87	0.86	0.84	0.82	0.80	0.36

*Growth Formula (GF) is the outcome of the product of the entire row.

Table 4. When we apply the marginal gains of AI to Human Intelligence (HI), we observe that the compounding nature of the acquisition process produces disproportionate results. For instance, an improvement from a 0.82 to 0.84 conversion rate represents a 2.44% increase. In an AiLG-powered system addressing 1,000 prospects against a product with a first-year revenue/customer of \$20,000, the compounding effect could result in approximately \$7,173,813 in revenue by 2026 compared to \$5,373,952 in 2022, marking a 33.49% increase.

This analysis shows how AI-led growth (AiLG) can reignite growth at a fraction of the cost.

8. To Jump Higher, You Have to Jump Over Backwards

Early adopters of AI-led growth (AiLG) are poised to figure it out faster and gain momentum more quickly, creating a "zero-day exploit" that builds a widening competitive edge. We're familiar with the understanding that AI evolves in successive cycles—GPT-3 to GPT-4 and beyond—each building on prior advancements. This means first movers streamline processes faster, establishing a significant advantage that catching up may be impossible for others.

However, this path doesn't come without risk; the shift to AiLG will undoubtedly be second-guessed and even ridiculed. At conferences, speakers will debate whether AiLG is like the first bird catching the worm or more like the second mouse who gets the cheese. Let me add this: In 1968, Dick Fosbury won Olympic gold by pioneering a new approach in the high jump: Jumping over backward. How did he know it would work? As a civil engineering student, Fosbury understood that the center of gravity, guided by principles of physics, would give him an edge over conventional techniques.

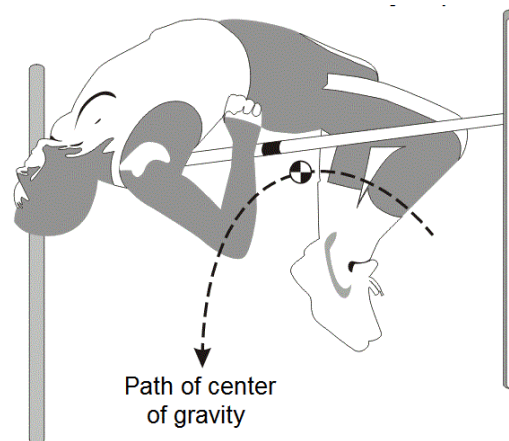


Figure 9. The Fosbury Flop technique lowers the center of gravity compared to the traditional scissor jump, allowing for greater height in the high jump.

What do the Bird, the Mouse, and the Fosbury Flop teach us? They show that those who adhere to scientific principles earn the reward. Similarly, early adopters of AiLG, harnessing the power of scientific insights, will create an advantage that compounds over time. These pioneers aren't just winning—they're setting a new standard that will reshape the playing field for years.

To jump higher, we have to jump over backward.