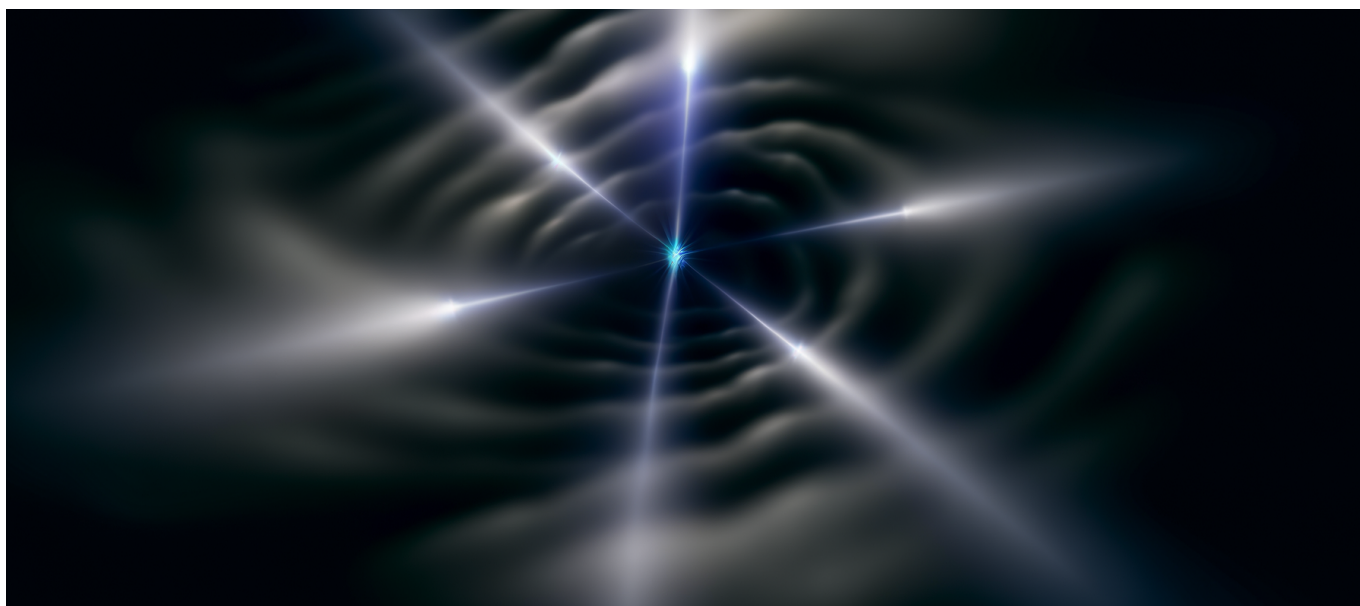




Zapier Agents Hit General Availability with Multi-Step Memory—All Five Major Workflow Platforms Ship Agent Builders in Single Quarter



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Five competitors shipping the same feature within 90 days isn't a product launch—it's an industry admitting that rule-based automation hit a wall. The workflow automation war just ended in a tie, and the real battle starts now.

The News: All Major Platforms Go Agentic Simultaneously

Between January and April 2026, every major workflow automation vendor shipped agent builders. Zapier Agents reached general availability in April with multi-step memory, expanded tool access, and observability features. Make (now under



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Celonis) launched a generative scenario builder with one-click agent conversion. n8n added native agent nodes. UiPath layered agentic judgment onto existing RPA bots. Microsoft Power Automate expanded Copilot integration with Microsoft Graph tool-calling for E5 license holders.

According to [Arahi AI's workflow automation coverage](#), all five vendors treated agent builders as existential priorities. The timing wasn't coincidence—it was mutual assured disruption.

The convergence reveals how quickly agentic capabilities moved from experimental to table stakes. Twelve months ago, only Zapier had a public agent beta. Today, choosing a workflow platform without agent support means choosing obsolescence.

Why This Matters: The Death of the Workflow-as-Flowchart

Traditional automation tools force users to anticipate every edge case upfront. You build a flowchart, define branches for each scenario, and hope your users behave predictably. When they don't—and they never do—your automation breaks or does something destructive.

Agentic automation inverts this model. Instead of encoding every decision path, you give an agent a goal and let it reason about how to achieve it. The agent handles edge cases dynamically rather than requiring you to predict them.

This shifts automation from “if-then-else” to “figure it out.”

The business implications are significant. Companies that previously needed dedicated automation engineers to maintain complex Zapier or Make scenarios can now describe outcomes in natural language. The skill barrier drops from “understands conditional logic and API payloads” to “can articulate what done looks like.”

That's not hyperbole. [Teamwork's 2026 tool review](#) found that Make's natural-language scenario builder reduced automation setup time by 60% compared to manual configuration. Early Zapier Agents users report similar gains, though Zapier hasn't published official benchmarks yet.

The losers here are integration specialists and the consultancies that employed



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them. When a VP of Operations can build their own multi-step agent by describing the process in plain English, the \$200/hour automation consultant becomes harder to justify.

Technical Depth: How These Agent Builders Actually Work

Despite the marketing convergence, the five platforms take meaningfully different architectural approaches.

Zapier: Memory-First Architecture

Zapier's general availability release centers on multi-step memory—the ability for agents to maintain context across workflow steps and even across separate workflow runs. This matters because most agentic failures happen when an agent loses track of what it already did or learned.

Zapier's implementation stores memory in a structured format that persists across sessions. If an agent processes a customer inquiry, learns the customer's tier and previous interactions, and then needs to hand off to a different process, that context transfers. Previous agent implementations typically lost all state between workflow executions.

The observability features matter equally. Zapier now exposes agent decision logs showing why the agent chose specific tools, what alternatives it considered, and how confident it was in each choice. For production deployments, this is the difference between debugging a black box and actually understanding failures.

Make/Celonis: One-Click Conversion Strategy

Make took a different path: let users build traditional scenarios first, then convert them to agents. This preserves existing workflow investments while adding agentic capabilities.

The conversion process works by treating the original scenario as a “playbook” the agent can deviate from when circumstances require. If a scenario expects a specific input format but receives something different, the agent attempts to adapt rather than failing. This hybrid approach reduces adoption risk for teams with years of



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Make scenarios already running.

[Fueller's analysis of top workflow agents](#) notes that Make's approach particularly suits organizations with compliance requirements—they can audit exactly where agent behavior diverged from the original approved scenario.

n8n: Open Source Flexibility

n8n's agent nodes reflect its open-source DNA. Rather than providing a single opinionated agent framework, n8n offers composable building blocks that users wire together. This means more configuration work but also more control over agent behavior.

The platform's upcoming growth-stage funding round, reportedly based on recent user and revenue milestones, suggests the approach resonates with technically sophisticated users who want customization over convenience.

For self-hosted deployments—still n8n's primary value proposition—the agent nodes run entirely on local infrastructure. In industries where data can't touch third-party servers, this matters enormously.

UiPath: Agentic Judgment on RPA Rails

UiPath's approach layers agentic decision-making on top of existing RPA bots. This solves a specific problem: RPA bots are exceptional at repetitive tasks but catastrophically brittle when inputs vary.

[TMCnet's coverage of autonomous back-office operations](#) describes UiPath's architecture as giving bots "supervised autonomy"—the bot handles routine execution while the agent layer handles exceptions and edge cases.

For enterprises with substantial RPA investments (UiPath's core market), this is the only viable migration path. Rewriting thousands of bots isn't feasible. Adding an intelligent layer on top preserves existing work while enabling new capabilities.

Microsoft Power Automate: Enterprise-Grade Governance

Microsoft's differentiator is governance. Power Automate's agent features ship with unified controls for E5 license holders: which agents can access which data, which



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users can deploy agents, and how agent actions get logged for compliance.

The Microsoft Graph tool-calling integration means agents can take actions across the entire M365 ecosystem—SharePoint, Teams, Outlook, Dynamics—using a unified permission model. For organizations already standardized on Microsoft, this eliminates the integration work required with other platforms.

The E5 license bundling also shifts the pricing conversation. Companies already paying for E5 get agent capabilities included, making standalone agent platforms a harder sell to Microsoft-centric enterprises.

The Contrarian Take: What Coverage Is Getting Wrong

Most analysis frames this as “automation gets smarter.” That framing misses the actual shift.

The real story is that automation becomes non-deterministic—and most organizations aren’t ready for that.

Deterministic automation means the same input always produces the same output. You test it once, deploy it, and know exactly what it does. Non-deterministic automation (agents) means similar inputs produce similar outputs, usually. Sometimes the agent takes a different path. Sometimes it makes a judgment call you wouldn’t have made.

This breaks existing testing and validation approaches. How do you QA an automation that behaves differently each time? How do you audit it? How do you explain to regulators why the agent did what it did?

The observability features in Zapier’s release are a partial answer, but they’re insufficient for highly regulated industries. Decision logs explain what happened after the fact—they don’t guarantee what will happen before deployment.

I expect the first major agent-caused compliance incident within 18 months. Not because the technology is flawed, but because organizations will deploy agents without updating their validation frameworks. Someone will ship a financial or healthcare automation agent, it will make a reasonable-but-wrong judgment call, and the organization will have no good answer for how they tested for that scenario.



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The winners in the agent era will be companies that treat agents like junior employees rather than software deployments. Junior employees require training, supervision, escalation paths, and clear boundaries around what they can decide independently versus what requires approval. Agent deployments need identical structures.

What's Underhyped: The Middleware Opportunity

While platforms compete on agent builders, almost nobody is building the middleware that agents need.

Consider: agents require tool access to be useful. Zapier's agent can use Zapier's integrations. Make's agent uses Make's scenarios. But what about tools that live outside these platforms?

There's an emerging need for universal agent interfaces—standardized ways for agents to discover, authenticate with, and use arbitrary tools. OpenAI's function calling established a rough template, but there's no industry standard for tool description, capability advertisement, or permission negotiation.

Whoever builds the "OAuth for agent tool access" will own a critical layer of the agentic stack. The workflow platforms themselves are too busy competing to collaborate on standards. This creates opportunity for startups focused purely on agent infrastructure.

What's Overhyped: Natural Language Configuration

Every vendor trumpets natural language as the future of automation configuration. The demos are impressive—describe what you want, get a working workflow.

In practice, natural language configuration has a ceiling. Simple automations work well. Complex automations require iterative refinement that quickly becomes slower than direct configuration.

The reason is precision. "Send me a Slack message when a high-priority ticket comes in" seems clear until you need to define: which Slack channel? What constitutes high-priority? Which ticket system? What time zone for timestamps?



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How should the message be formatted?

Experienced automation builders develop precise mental models for these details. Natural language forces them to verbalize context that traditional interfaces make explicit. For power users, natural language is friction, not simplification.

The actual sweet spot is natural language for initial scaffold generation, then direct manipulation for refinement. Make's one-click agent conversion hints at this hybrid approach. Building in natural language and converting to a traditional scenario you can tweak directly captures the best of both modes.

Practical Implications: What You Should Do Now

For CTOs and engineering leaders evaluating agent platforms, here's the decision framework:

If You're Microsoft-First

Power Automate is the default choice. The governance features matter for enterprise deployments, the E5 bundling eliminates incremental cost, and Graph integration means fewer custom connections to build.

The risk is Microsoft lock-in, but if you're already running on M365, that lock-in already exists. Incremental lock-in via Power Automate agents is marginal.

If You Have Existing RPA Investments

UiPath's layered approach preserves those investments. Retraining your RPA team on an entirely new platform has real costs—in productivity loss, morale, and accumulated expertise. UiPath lets you add agent capabilities without starting over.

If You Need Data Residency or Self-Hosting

n8n remains the only serious option. The agent nodes work entirely on your infrastructure. For healthcare, finance, government, and European data protection compliance, this matters more than any feature comparison.



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If You're Building Net-New Automations

Zapier's multi-step memory gives it an edge for complex, stateful workflows. Make's natural language builder has a slight advantage for simpler automations where setup speed matters more than sophisticated state management.

For Everyone: Start with One Agent, Add Observability Immediately

Don't deploy a fleet of agents. Deploy one agent in a low-risk area with full observability enabled. Watch how it makes decisions. Identify the edge cases where its judgment diverges from yours. Document those cases, adjust the agent's instructions or constraints, and iterate.

Only after that single agent runs reliably for 30+ days should you consider scaling. The organizations that rush to "automate everything with agents" will generate the compliance incidents that slow industry adoption for everyone.

Where This Goes: The Next 12 Months

Three predictions for Q2 2027:

Prediction 1: Agent Marketplaces Emerge

Just as Zapier and Make have integration marketplaces, agent marketplaces will emerge where users share and sell pre-built agents for specific use cases. "Sales qualification agent" or "invoice reconciliation agent" will be purchasable templates rather than built-from-scratch projects.

Workato's move toward templates and recipe integrations, noted in their recent mid-market push, foreshadows this. Templates lower adoption barriers and create network effects—the platform with the best agent marketplace wins the users who don't want to build from scratch.

Prediction 2: Agent-Specific Compliance Frameworks Arrive

SOC 2 and ISO 27001 auditors currently don't know how to evaluate agent deployments. By Q2 2027, specialized compliance frameworks for agentic



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automation will emerge—likely from industry consortiums or major audit firms rather than regulators.

These frameworks will require documented agent decision boundaries, mandatory human-in-the-loop for high-risk actions, and audit trails showing agent reasoning. Organizations that proactively implement these practices now will have competitive advantages when the frameworks become required.

Prediction 3: Consolidation Begins

Five major platforms shipping identical features is unsustainable. By Q2 2027, at least one acquisition occurs. The most likely scenario: a cloud infrastructure provider (AWS, Google) acquires one of the independent platforms to add workflow automation to their AI portfolio.

n8n's growth-stage funding round suggests they're building for acquisition or IPO. Zapier's independence increasingly looks like a strategic asset someone will want to buy. Make's Celonis ownership provides stability but also caps their upside.

The Deeper Shift: From Automation to Delegation

Zoom out and this quarter's releases represent something beyond a feature war. They signal the business world's first real encounter with machine delegation.

Previous automation augmented human work—making repetitive tasks faster. Agent automation delegates work—giving machines judgment over how to accomplish goals, not just execution of predefined steps.

This distinction matters enormously for how organizations structure work. If I delegate an automation rather than configure it, I'm responsible for outcomes I didn't directly cause. Legal frameworks, management practices, and professional norms all assume humans control organizational actions. Agents break that assumption.

The workflow automation industry's simultaneous agent push is the beginning of this confrontation, not the resolution.

The platforms built the tools. Now organizations must figure out how to use them responsibly. That's a harder problem than building the technology, and it will take



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longer to solve.

The companies that treat agent deployment as an organizational change project—not just a technology implementation—will capture the actual value from this quarter’s launches while others struggle with the consequences of premature automation.