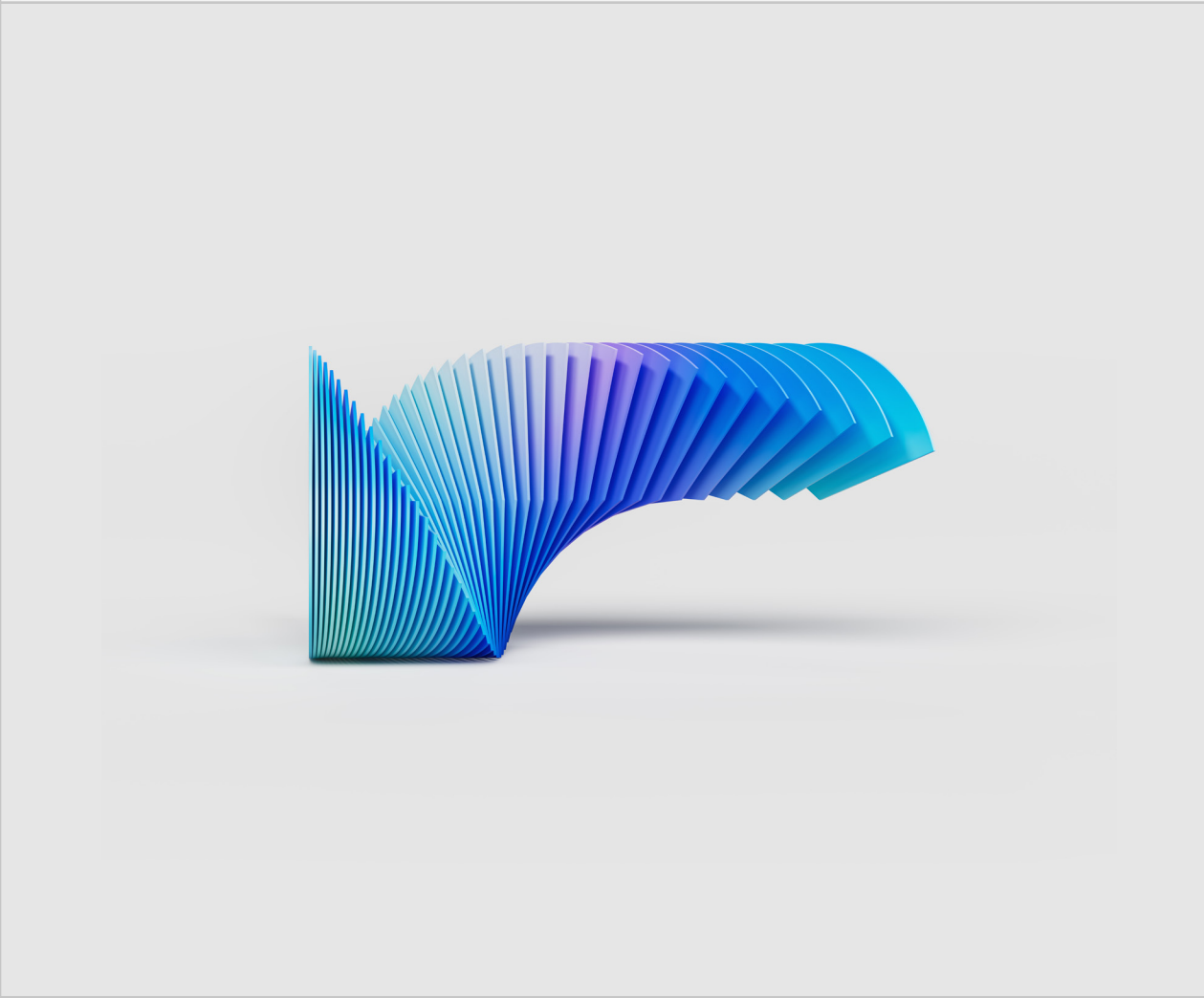


Smarter agentic AI solutions



The complete 2026
buyer's guide



Contents



01

Why use AI agents
and assistants now?



Enterprise generative AI (gen AI) is here to stay. But the promise of innovative solutions also comes with the potential for increased fragmentation and reduced ROI. What the next era of AI demands are tools that take companies from pilots to productivity, delivering impactful efficiencies, easing adoption barriers and creating exponential value. This value is estimated by McKinsey to add up to USD 4.4 trillion in global corporate profits annually.¹

Though the future of AI continues to evolve, one thing is for certain: tech leaders need to act now to set their organizations and their teams up for success. Leveraging AI tools, such as AI assistants and agents, is an essential first step.

IBM's suite of AI tools helps make it simple for business leaders to integrate AI efficiencies at scale. Housed within a single interface, the tools reduce manual workflow with AI and automation, unlocking productivity gains and significant ROI in the process. AI agents and assistants can be easily built and deployed on low-code and no-code interfaces, using existing enterprise data. Finally, integrated AI governance within the tools reduces risk and helps ensure compliance with the latest AI regulations.

Use this guide to better understand what IBM's AI agents and assistants do best, how they can be used together to supercharge business goals and how to get started today.

By 2028, at least **15%** of day-to-day work decisions will be made autonomously through agentic AI, up from zero percent in 2024.²

Gartner

Operating profit gains directly attributable to AI doubled to nearly **5%** from 2022 to 2023—and executives expect that figure to hit **10%** by 2026.³

IBM Institute for Business Value

02

IBM's AI agents and
assistants defined

A simplified overview of IBM’s three core AI productivity tools

IBM® watsonx Orchestrate®	IBM watsonx® Agents	IBM watsonx Code Assistant®
<p>Watsonx Orchestrate is an enterprise-ready solution that helps create, deploy and manage AI assistants and agents to automate processes and workflows.</p> <p>Watsonx Orchestrate provides seamless integration with your existing business systems, connecting to any AI agent, model or automation tool you already use. The solution powers collaboration between your AI assistants and agents in one unified experience. The result? Less manual effort, faster decision-making and greater efficiencies.</p>	<p>IBM watsonx Agents, available in watsonx Orchestrate, are AI agents designed for business use cases in HR, sales, procurement, finance and customer service.</p> <p>IBM watsonx Agents come ready with prebuilt integrations and tools, enabling them to immediately operate across existing applications and systems, breaking down barriers to AI adoption and accelerating time to value. They’re adept at complex, multistep tasks and can act on behalf of employees, freeing up their time for more strategic projects.</p>	<p>Watsonx Code Assistant is an enterprise-ready coding assistant that helps developers bridge their skills gap, increase their productivity and write high-quality code.</p> <p>The watsonx Code Assistant suite of gen AI tools caters to generic coding languages and specific programs, such as Python, Java, C, C++, Go, JavaScript and TypeScript. Additionally, it can be used to create Red Hat® Ansible® Playbooks and IBM Z® mainframe application modernization.</p>

03

Solving challenges with specific tools

How to decide which tool you need, based on your
business challenges

watsonx
Orchestrate solves:



Managing AI agents across the organization
Enterprises struggle to manage AI tools, data, agents and assistants across fragmented systems, slowing adoption and limiting impact. Watsonx Orchestrate seamlessly integrates with your existing business systems, making it easier to collaborate across disconnected tools.

Vendor lock-in
Many AI tools are locked into specific models or vendors. Watsonx Orchestrate delivers quick value by integrating with your existing systems and tools—no rip and replace needed. Teams can build what they want, where they want it.

Disconnected workflows
Business processes often span multiple applications and systems, making it difficult to automate end-to-end workflows without complex integrations. Watsonx Orchestrate integrates with over 80 leading enterprise applications, including Salesforce, Workday and more.

Security and compliance concerns
As AI adoption grows, organizations struggle with ensuring compliance, security and ongoing oversight. Watsonx Orchestrate embeds governance and enterprise-grade security to confidently manage AI at scale.

IBM watsonx Agents solve:



Lag time between implementation and impact

Developing AI solutions from scratch requires significant time, expertise and resources, delaying ROI. IBM watsonx Agents deliver immediate impact with ready-to-deploy capabilities.

Lack of ROI on technology investments

Enterprises struggle to integrate AI into existing systems. IBM watsonx Agents directly plug into tools, such as Salesforce, Workday and SAP, maximizing current investments without costly overhauls.

Inefficient workflows

Employees often burn time on manual, repetitive tasks. IBM watsonx Agents automate complex, multistep processes, freeing teams to focus on strategic work.

watsonx Code Assistant solves:



Software development talent and skills gaps

Finding and retaining skilled developers with the right expertise is challenging. This issue is compounded by the growing complexity of enterprise application portfolios. These talent shortages lead to project delays, increased costs and strain on senior developers. Watsonx Code Assistant helps overcome skills gaps by using AI to democratize knowledge, with code explanation and code generation features.

Trust, security and transparency concerns

These essential AI tool attributes make or break development efforts. Watsonx Code Assistant is built on an IBM Granite[®] code large language model (LLM) that offers IP indemnity, which doesn't store customer prompts or use them for machine learning. The product also provides code similarity checks.

Delayed development cycles

Enterprise development teams are under constant pressure to deliver new features and updates quickly to support business innovation. Rapid digital transformation must be balanced with equally rapid testing and QA—essential factors for long-term sustainability. Watsonx Code Assistant accelerates development cycles by providing AI-powered code suggestions, automation and integration within popular development environments, streamlining workflows and reducing manual coding efforts. These features help teams deliver high-quality software faster and more efficiently.

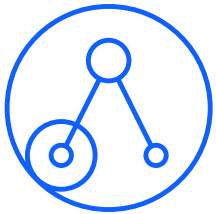
Deployment variability

Some companies require tools to be SaaS, while others need them on prem. Watsonx Code Assistant does both.

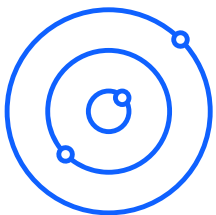
04

Key strengths of
IBM's AI agents
and assistants

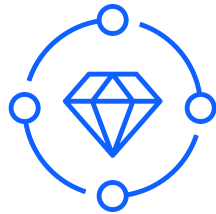
Here’s a summary of what watsonx Orchestrate does best:



Integrates with enterprise systems, databases and AI models
Connects seamlessly with over 80 business applications—such as Salesforce, SAP and Microsoft—plus databases, while also supporting both IBM’s and third-party AI models. Helps ensure adaptability and scalability without vendor lock-in.

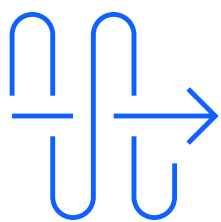


Build AI agents with no-code and pro-code options
Empowers business users to build, customize and deploy AI-powered agents with or without coding. Leverages a vast catalog of prebuilt tools and agents that integrate seamlessly with popular enterprise apps, accelerating development and reducing time to value.

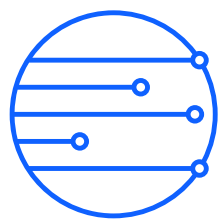


Offers AI-powered orchestration with built-in governance
Acts as the command center for managing third-party and proprietary AI assistants, agents and automations in one unified platform. Provides visibility across all workflows, so organizations can monitor performance, optimize processes and ensure consistent governance across business functions.

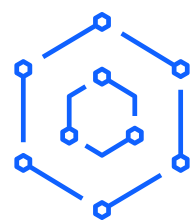
Here’s a
summary of what
IBM watsonx
Agents do best:



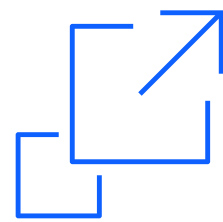
Automates high-impact workflows
Agents come equipped with agentic tools and accomplish tasks across multiple, high-ROI use cases, such as employee support, talent acquisition, supplier management and sales prospecting in HR, sales, procurement, finance and customer service domains.



Delivers work faster
Action-oriented from day one. Agents clear your to-do list of repetitive, time-consuming tasks. Triggers workflows, updates systems, intelligently routes tasks and completes multistep processes across applications without manual intervention.

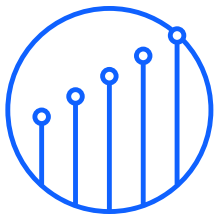


Acts with enhanced autonomy
Infused with agentic automation, a set of expert agents in watsonx Orchestrate represent the next step in the evolution of AI—moving from scripted rules to autonomous action-taking. Independently collaborates with multiple agents, assistants and applications to complete complex, multistep tasks with just one user prompt.

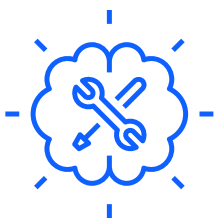


Adapts to your business with customization designed for ease of use
Flexible enough to evolve with your business. Customizes workflows, integrates with new apps and even adjusts how decisions are made—all without writing a single line of code. Also learns from feedback, continuously improving their performance.

Here’s a
summary of what
watsonx Code
Assistant does best:



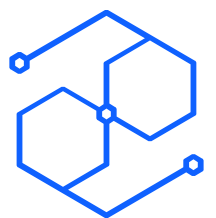
Boosts developer productivity with trusted, transparent gen AI
Increases developer productivity with context-aware assistance in the integrated development environment, such as VS Code and Eclipse, that helps generate, complete, transform, explain, document, review and test code.



Performs specific tasks
Designed to perform specific tasks, such as Java modernization, Ansible Playbook creation and IBM Z mainframe application modernization, keeping trust, integrity and transparency intact.



Manages AI security, privacy and compliance with hybrid cloud deployment
Supports hybrid cloud enterprises with a coding assistant fit for both SaaS hosting and on-premises deployment. Also bolsters regulatory compliance and meets data governance requirements.



Accelerates application development and modernization
Built on Granite models tuned and trained for specific products. Accelerates coding with intelligent suggestions, streamlines code reviews with automated feedback, enhances testing by generating test cases and aids deployment with precise configuration.

05

Real-world
success stories

watsonx Orchestrate

IBM leveraged watsonx Orchestrate to drive enterprise-wide productivity by organizing complex HR workflows and automating manual processes, freeing teams to focus on strategic, high-impact work.

12,000 hours
saved in one quarter by automating manual data entry⁴

50,000 hours
saved annually through automation at scale (projected estimate)⁴

50%
reduction in promotion cycle time⁴

Avid Solutions used watsonx Orchestrate to reduce the number of errors that occur in their project management processes by 10%.⁵

25%
reduction in the time it takes to onboard new customers⁵

10%
reduction in errors caused by the manual project management process⁵



IBM watsonx Agents

IBM used [IBM AskHR](#), an AI agent, to streamline its employee experiences and free up HR professionals to focus on higher-value tasks.

40%
reduction in HR budget⁶

94%
of employee inquiries resolved with AskHR⁶

Over
55 point
improvement of HR Net Promotor Score (NPS)⁶

Dun & Bradstreet, an IBM Business Partner, built [D&B Ask Procurement](#), an AI agent, to help teams quickly access supplier insights, speed up analysis and reporting, and locate the right suppliers.

10%–20%
projected reduction in procurement-related tasks⁷



watsonx Code Assistant

IBM developers used watsonx Code Assistant to streamline coding processes to free them to focus on innovation.

90%
more time saved on
code explanations⁸

59%
increase in average time saved
on coding documentation⁸

Water Corporation accelerated the creation of Ansible Playbooks and cut development efforts and associated costs with watsonx Code Assistant.

40%
reduction in cloud-related
operating costs⁹

1,500 hours
hours of manual labor
saved annually⁹

Zero
unplanned downtime over
a one-year migration⁹



06

Top industry
use cases

Here are the
top use cases for
watsonx Orchestrate:



All-in-one agentic AI manager
Manage your existing AI assistants and agents through a single, unified experience—seamlessly connecting applications, workflows and teams with orchestration capabilities. LLM-powered automation drives real-time collaboration and accelerates productivity at scale.



Custom automations
Power your existing workflows and automations with AI agents in watsonx Orchestrate. Maximize your existing technology investments by adding AI tools that automate tasks, enhance workflows and seamlessly connect to your enterprise systems.



AI agent creation
Build and deploy AI agents with a low-code and pro-code interface. Use natural language to automate complex tasks, integrate with your existing systems and scale AI across the enterprise—without complications or disruptions.



Prebuilt AI tools
Choose from thousands of prebuilt AI tools that work with your existing systems and applications, so you can get your AI agents up and running quickly across your enterprise without work disruptions.

Here are the top use cases for IBM watsonx Agents:



HR and workforce productivity
Drives productivity beyond basic automation. IBM watsonx HR Agents don’t just handle simple HR queries—they autonomously manage end-to-end workflows, such as talent acquisition, onboarding, employee support and learning management. Works with Workday, SAP SuccessFactors, Oracle and more.



Customer service and support
Delivers proactive, personalized customer experiences. IBM watsonx Customer Care Agents predict, personalize and resolve customer issues autonomously. Agents handle complex queries, escalate when needed and continuously learn from interactions to improve over time. Works with ServiceNow, Zendesk and more.



Sales acceleration and deal execution
Elevates sales productivity with IBM watsonx Sales Agents that go beyond surface-level automation. From lead qualification to deal closure, agents autonomously manage multistep workflows, such as drafting personalized outreach, tracking customer interactions, optimizing follow-ups and coaching reps with data-driven insights. Works with Salesforce, Microsoft Dynamics 365 and more.



Finance and operational efficiency
Facilitates operational excellence. IBM watsonx Agents handle invoice processing and expense management, financial forecasting and compliance audits; dynamically adapt to regulatory changes; help ensure data accuracy; and provide real-time insights for smarter financial decisions. Works with Coupa, Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS), Oracle Cloud HCM, WageScape, D&B, Anaplan, IBM Cognos® and Microsoft Power BI.



Procurement and vendor management
Transforms procurement operations with IBM watsonx Procurement Agents that orchestrate entire procurement lifecycles. Agents intelligently manage supplier onboarding, contract negotiations and purchase requisitions; perform compliance checks; proactively identify bottlenecks; recommend optimal sourcing strategies; and help ensure real-time visibility into vendor performance. Works with SAP Ariba, Coupa and more.

Here are the top use cases for watsonx Code Assistant:



Developer productivity
Boosts developer productivity and flexes for various skill levels.



Trust and security
Manages AI security, privacy and compliance with hybrid cloud deployment that's fit for both SaaS hosting and on-premises deployment.



Java modernization
Streamlines the lifecycles of Java applications and reduces the cost and risk associated with modernization. Performs a deep analysis of Java applications and streamlines updates with a guided, automated experience that supports end-to-end application lifecycles.



Playbook generation
Creates and explains full Ansible Playbooks using natural language task prompts.

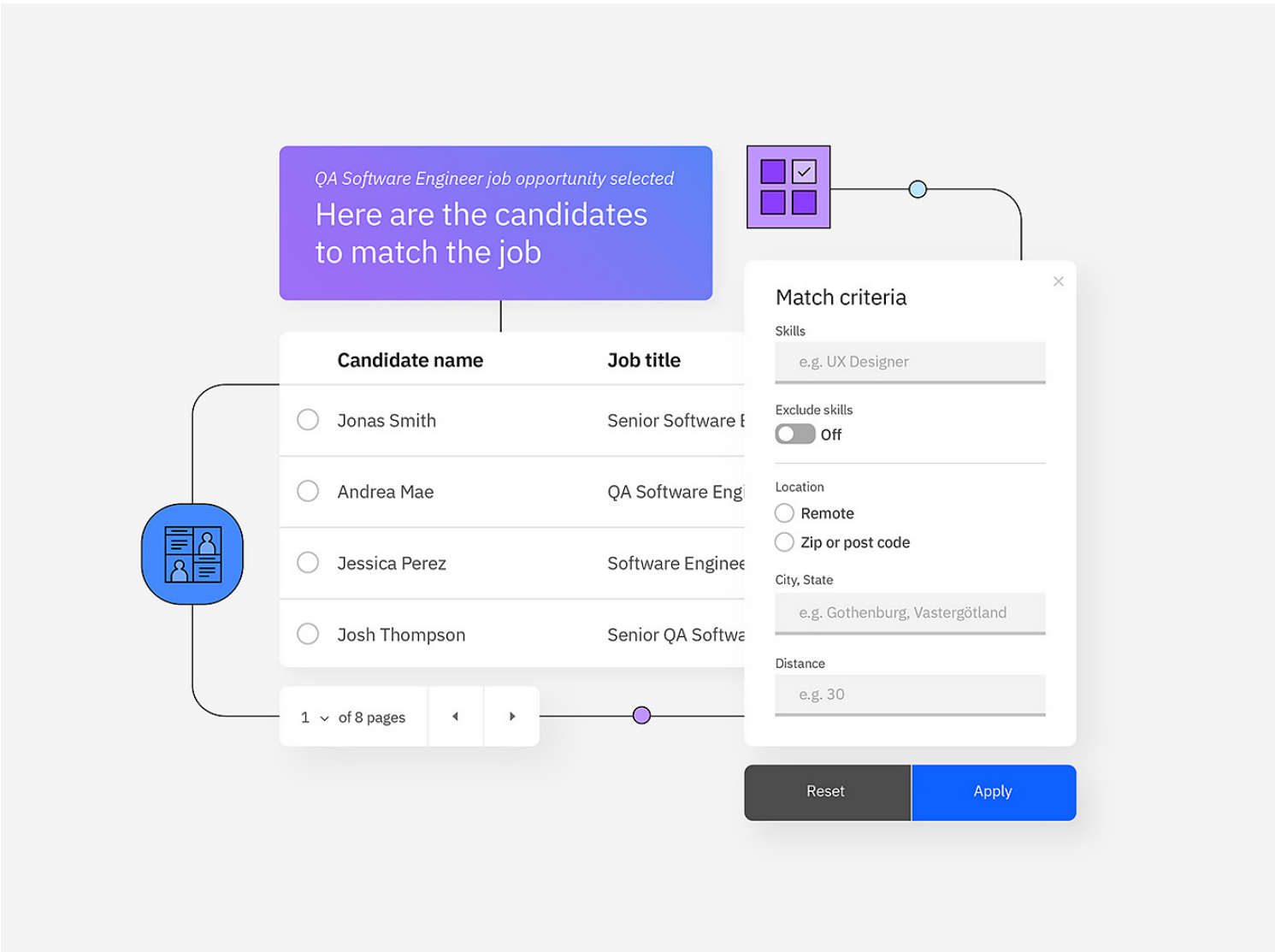


Mainframe application modernization
Accelerates every phase of the mainframe application lifecycle, from application, discovery and code explanation to auto refactoring, modular services and code optimization, transforming it into Java and testing for functional equivalence.

07

Summary of capabilities

Here’s an
overview of watsonx
Orchestrate capabilities



AI work orchestration and automation

- Manages everything in one place (AI assistants, agents and automation)
- Manages end-to-end workflow automation across HR, sales, procurement and more
- Has a built-in automation engine (native process automation)

AI development and customization

- Uses low-code and no-code setup for agent builder
- Has a pro-code automation builder
- Has customizable workflows and decision logic

Flexible AI deployment and interoperability

- Works with business applications (Salesforce, SAP, Microsoft, ServiceNow and so on)
- Supports IBM, third-party and open-source AI models
- Offers prebuilt connectors and OpenAPI support

AI experience and governance

- Offers custom branding and tools for AI assistants and agents
- Offers enterprise-grade security, governance and compliance
- Includes configurable gen AI guardrails

AI operations and scalability

- Coordinates multiple AI assistants and agents within existing workflows
- Embeds gen AI summarization, classification and insights
- Includes prebuilt domain AI agents and use case templates

“We have also seen a number of qualitative benefits from watsonx Orchestrate. Our employees are more satisfied with their jobs because they are no longer bogged down by repetitive tasks. We have also seen an improvement in customer satisfaction because we are able to respond to customer inquiries more quickly and efficiently.”⁵

Dr. Malcolm Adams
Chief Executive Officer
at Avid Solutions



Here's an overview of the capabilities of IBM watsonx Agents

AI development and customization

- Includes low-code builder. For example, simplified, drag-and-drop interface for faster customization.
- Includes pro-code builder. For example, advanced development environment for technical users.

Domain-specific solutions

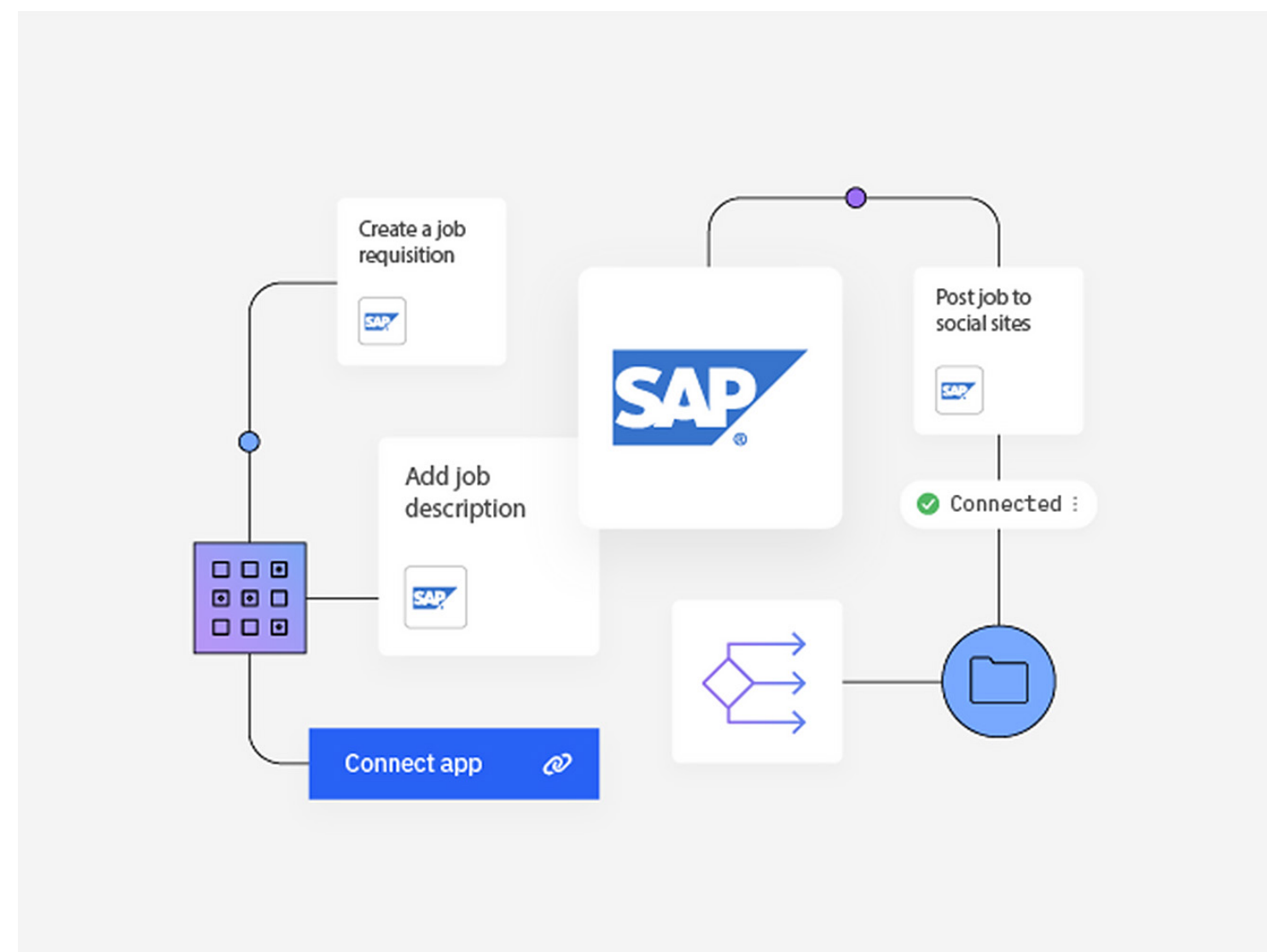
- Prebuilt, domain-specific AI agents tailored for specific business functions (HR, sales, procurement and so on).

AI experience and branding

- Includes customizable assistant and agent branding tools.

AI operations and workflow management

- Coordinates multiple AI agents for seamless workflow execution.



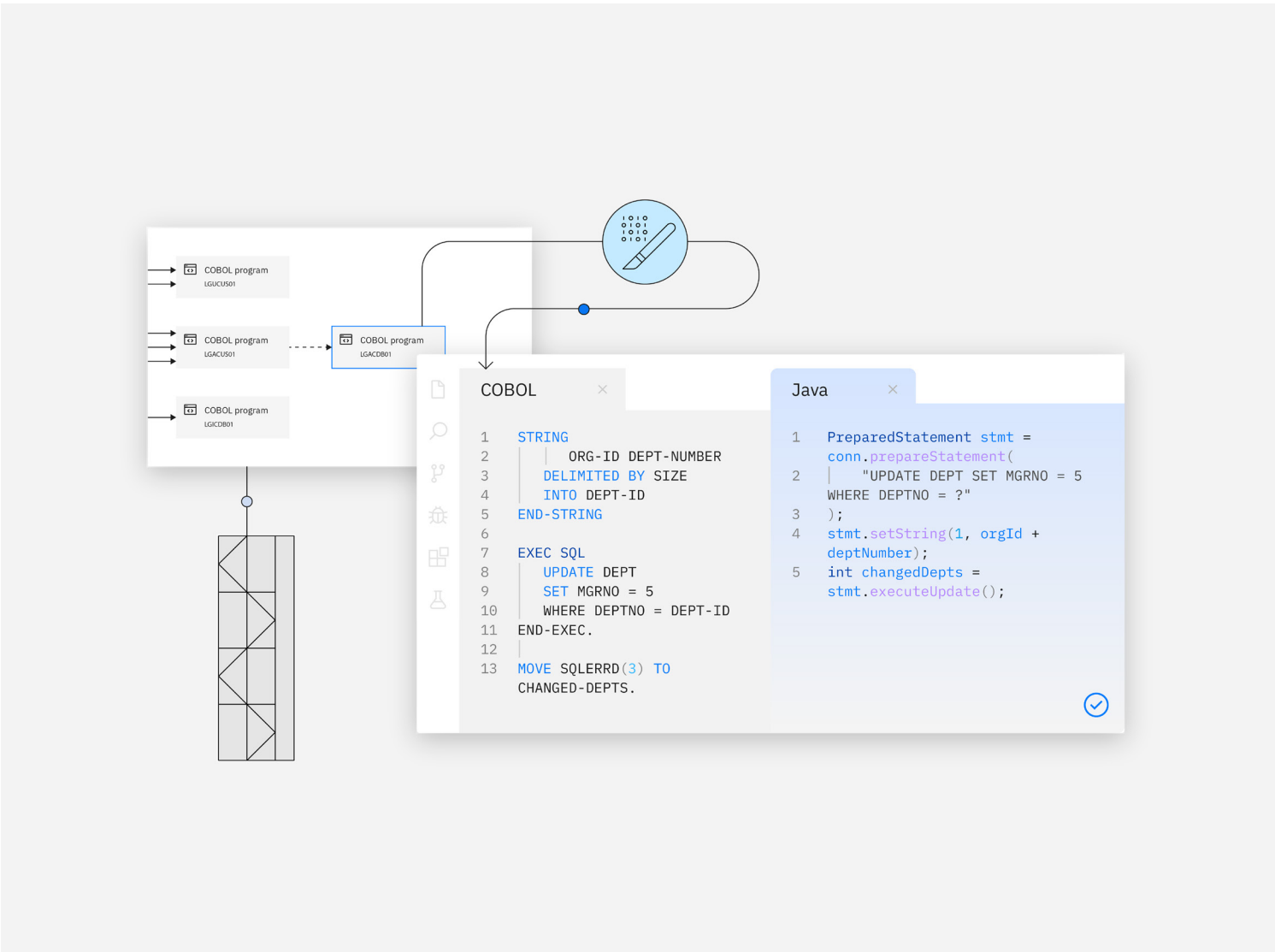
“Our team was impressed by the depth of experience the IBM team brought to the table and the capabilities available through watsonx Orchestrate.”⁷

Gary Kotovets

Chief Data & Analytics Officer
at Dun & Bradstreet



Here’s an overview of watsonx Code Assistant capabilities



Code generation and assistance

- Autocompletes code snippets
- Generates full functions
- Includes language-specific features

Code optimization and debugging

- Suggests performance improvements
- Detects and fixes common errors
- Refactors code

Collaboration and documentation

- Shares and collaborates on code snippets
- Generates comments and docstrings
- Provides coding tips and best practices

Integration and support

- Integrates with development tools
- Has API integration capabilities
- Offers code pattern recognition
- Recommends best practices
- Provides coding suggestions

Security and compliance

- Identifies security vulnerabilities
- Does compliance checks
- Does code similarity checks
- Covers IP indemnity

Testing and validation

- Automates testing
- Debugs and troubleshoots
- Autogenerates unit test cases

“IBM watsonx Code Assistant makes it easier, faster and ensures better quality for Java modernization. I would highly recommend the product to others and I’m excited about IBM’s future with generative AI.”¹⁰

Walid Largou
Chief Executive Officer
at rKube



08

How to
get started

	watsonx Orchestrate	IBM watsonx Agents	watsonx Code Assistant
Step 1 Figure out which product you need	For leaders who need AI to boost their teams’ productivity. Manage and scale AI and automation across your business from a single interface. Whether it be third-party or proprietary AI assistants, agents, enterprise applications or workflows, watsonx Orchestrate helps ensure your AI investments work together to be smarter and faster, maximizing their full potential.	For leaders who need seamless, prebuilt AI agents for high-impact deployment. Come equipped with the tools and integrations necessary to immediately get to work. Whether it be HR, sales, procurement, finance or customer service, they quickly adapt to workflows, handling complex tasks, so your teams can focus on strategic priorities.	For leaders who need a comprehensive, seamless solution to enhance their coding capabilities. Boost productivity, optimize code and help ensure top-notch performance for development projects, the creation of Ansible Playbooks, Java and mainframe application modernization projects.
Step 2 Experience the product for yourself	Watch demo videos → watsonx Orchestrate live demo Try it → watsonx Orchestrate free trial	Watch demo videos → IBM watsonx HR Agents live demo (available now) Get on the wait-list → IBM watsonx Agents wait-list for sales, finance, procurement and customer service agent releases	Watch demo videos → IBM watsonx Code Assistant for Red Hat Ansible Lightspeed demo → IBM watsonx Code Assistant for Ansible Lightspeed live demo booking → IBM watsonx Code Assistant for Z live demo booking Try it → watsonx Code Assistant trial
Step 3 Explore pricing, ROI estimators and the latest plans	Price estimator and plans → watsonx Orchestrate and AI agent pricing		Price estimator and plans → watsonx Code Assistant → IBM watsonx Code Assistant for Red Hat Ansible Lightspeed
If you have any additional questions, contact your IBM representative.			



1. [AI could increase corporate profits by \\$4.4 trillion a year, according to new research](#), McKinsey Global Institute, 7 July 2023.
2. [Top Strategic Technology Trends for 2025: Agentic AI](#), Gartner, 21 October 2024.
3. [The ingenuity of generative AI](#), IBM Institute for Business Value, June 2024.
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5. [Using watsonx Orchestrate to improve employee and customer happiness](#), IBM, October 2023.
6. [AI-driven data analytics and automation: IBM as client zero](#), IBM Newsroom, 22 January 2025.
7. [Minimizing business risk and supplier evaluation with AI](#), IBM, 2024.
8. [Accelerating software development with gen AI](#), IBM, 2024.
9. [Keep the data flowing. Keep the water flowing](#), IBM, January 2024.
10. [Using generative AI to transform enterprise Java applications](#), IBM, 2024.

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