PROS
The Agentic AI Buyer's Guide
What to Ask,
What to Avoid,
What to Demand

As interest in AI accelerates, a growing number of tools are being labeled as "AI agents." But not all agents are created equal.

Agentic AI refers to systems with the autonomy to plan, reason, and act toward goals with minimal human input — a capability far beyond basic automation. Unfortunately, many offerings conflate this with simpler, deterministic tools that lack true autonomy. This misrepresentation can lead to poor investment decisions and missed opportunities for transformation.

To avoid falling for the label alone, buyers must demand proof of agentic capabilities and ask the right questions. This checklist is designed to help you cut through the noise and evaluate AI agents with clarity and confidence — ensuring your business gets the innovation it expects.

☑ Define the Business Value

What problem will an AI Agent solve for us?

Don't invest in agentic AI just because it's trending. The real value lies in identifying time-consuming processes that truly benefit from automation. Simply deploying AI to check a box won't drive meaningful operational change.

How will agents complement or augment employee roles?

How quickly can we expect to see ROI, and what does that look like in our context?

☑ Adaptability – Understand how well the agent can respond to change

Can the agent reason, plan and improve with experience?

How does the agent handle ambiguity or incomplete information in decision making?

How does the agent balance autonomy with adherence to evolving governance frameworks?

Human-AI Collaboration

Define what autonomy means to your business

Not all agents are created equal, be sure to align on what autonomy means for you and your business needs.

Does the agent pursue goals autonomously rather than follow scripted tasks?

For example, a customer service agent that interprets the customer inquiry, decides the best course of action, generates personalized responses and even initiates follow up tasks, all without relying on a fixed script. It operates based on goals like improving customer satisfaction and adapts its behavior depending on context and data.

Investigate End-to-End Integration & Security Requirements

Where do the AI Agents operate?

Be sure to understand if the AI Agents are operating within current product workflows or outside of them. This answer will have implications for further development and security.

Are the AI Agents operating in a secure environment where they can autonomously perform tasks involving personal and confidential data?

The promise of agentic AI is not in flashy labels, but in its ability to drive real business outcomes. The most effective enterprise AI systems don't rely solely on autonomy, they use hybrid approaches that combine deterministic infrastructure (rules, protocols, safety rails) with probabilistic intelligence (reasoning, creativity, adaptation). This balance is what enables agents to operate reliably, responsibly, and impactfully within complex enterprise environments.

Failing to evaluate AI Agents critically can lead to costly missteps: wasted budgets on basic automation, missed opportunities to solve high-value problems, and a fragmented landscape of disconnected tools.

By using this evaluation guide, your organization is taking a proactive step toward building integrated, orchestrated AI capabilities that transform workflows, empower employees, and unlock exponential value.

To learn more about PROS AI Agents, visit pros.com