

From CX to AX: Experience in the Age of Agents

Building for the Agent Experience in Financial Services

This is the first in A&M's series of thought leadership articles on agentic AI in financial services

Every bank, insurer, and asset manager has spent the past fifteen years learning to serve a client who taps and clicks on a smartphone screen. As agentic artificial intelligence (agentic AI) gains traction, that human client is still the account holder, but they no longer decide how to engage with you. Increasingly, the choice belongs to a piece of software—an AI agent—that has no feelings about your brand, carries no loyalty from yesterday, and can reprice your entire book against competitors before the account holder finishes breakfast.

The Last Interface

Modern-day banking is a story of interfaces. The branch gave way to the telephone, the telephone to the website, and the website to the mobile app. Each step moved the institution closer to the customer's hand. The agent removes the hand. The mobile app was the last interface built for human eyes, but the agent has none. It engages not through sight but through data, APIs, and code.

This is not a forecast for the next decade. AI agents are projected to facilitate \$8 trillion in online consumer spending by 2030¹, and industry analysts forecast that by 2028, 90% of B2B buying will be intermediated by AI agents, representing more than \$15 trillion in B2B spend.²

The infrastructure is being built. In the US, Plaid already reaches millions of bank accounts on behalf of user-authorized software³; Robinhood now allows clients to connect third-party AI agents to a dedicated trading account, enabling autonomous trade execution within pre-defined capital limits⁴. In Hong Kong, Webull's Open API gives customers the ability to place trades programmatically, with no human touching a screen⁵. By 2028, 30% of Fortune 500 firms are expected to offer service through a single AI-enabled customer channel⁶.

Within the next two or three operating-system releases, an agent may sit between the customer and most mobile apps, making the app optional. The banks that spent a decade perfecting an app are still perfecting something the customer's software will simply route around.

Here is the question much of the financial services industry is now asking themselves: When the human customer still owns the account, but their agents are making 80% of the routine financial decisions, who is the real customer?

By 2028

90%

of B2B buying will be intermediated by AI agents, representing more than \$15 trillion in B2B spend.²



From Business to Consumer (B2C)...



The customer is a human engaging through channels the bank controls, such as branch, web, and mobile

- Experiences are designed around customer needs and segments
- Distribution is driven by brand, channels, and owned journeys
- The bank controls the interface, journey, and product presentation



...to Business to Agent (B2A)...



The bank must increasingly serve AI agents acting on behalf of customers

- Expose machine-readable products, pricing, and services
- Provide secure, permissioned access through APIs and MCP-based services
- Enable governed retrieval, workflow, and servicing actions
- Ensure the bank is discoverable in AI-led journeys



...to Agent to Agent (A2A)



Over time, agents will increasingly interact directly with bank services and with each other under customer permission

- Discovery becomes recommendation-led
- Servicing becomes conversational and task-based
- Execution becomes orchestrated through trusted service layers and controls
- The banks that will win are the banks that are the easiest for agents to understand, access, and transact with

1 ARK Invest, [BIG IDEAS 2026](#)

2 Gartner, "[Gartner Unveils Top Predictions for IT Organizations and Users in 2026 and Beyond](#)"

3 <https://plaid.com/global/>

4 <https://robinhood.com/us/en/newsroom/robinhood-is-now-open-to-agents/>

5 <https://developer.webull.hk/apis/docs/>

6 Gartner, "[Gartner Predicts that 30% of Fortune 500 Companies Will Offer Service Through Only a Single, AI-Enabled Channel by 2028](#)"

Agent Experience Is Not Customer Experience

Customer experience was built with human emotions in mind. Financial institutions stripped out friction because it frustrated people.

They have built loyalty programs to turn incentives into habit. They measure sentiment through net promoter score (NPS) and customer satisfaction score (CSAT), because sentiment is a driver of behaviour. Financial institutions market with emotionally resonant images, as it makes people feel good. None of that transfers to an AI agent.

An agent has no feelings to soothe, patience to exhaust, or habits to exploit. A clumsy flow does not annoy it; an agent parses the flow or fails and moves on. It forms no loyalty; it holds a ranked list and re-sorts that list the moment an institution's price, latency, or reliability changes.

It does have preferences, but those preferences are dictated entirely by what it can measure: efficiency of data access measured by tokens consumed, historical performance measured against competitors, and cost relative to the alternatives. Agents also monitor market sentiment from voice-of-the-customer sources such as Reddit and X, parsing large volumes of data within seconds.

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30%

of Fortune 500 firms are expected to offer service through a single AI-enabled customer channel⁶.

Figure B: Current framework on Generative Engine Optimization (GEO). For financial institutions, this creates a new optimization imperative. Just as they once competed for placement in search results, they must now compete for how — and how often — they appear in the outputs of the AI systems making decisions on their clients' behalf.



Visibility

How often the brand is mentioned across LLM responses and where it appears when mentioned. Higher positions (top-three) score better.



Authority

The quality and frequency of outbound citations from the brand's website in LLM responses. More high-quality citations indicate higher authority.



Relevance

How closely the brand aligns with the selected sector and keywords in LLM responses. Sector-specific mentions boost this score.



Freshness

Signals from the website audit, including recency of content, update frequency, and presence of date metadata.



Structure

The quality of on-page Search Engine Optimization (SEO) structure, including schema.org markup (structured data tags such as Organization, FAQ, HowTo), heading hierarchy, and content chunking.



Sentiment

Sentiment analysis of LLM responses mentioning the brand. Positive sentiment increases the score; negative sentiment reduces it.

The cost of switching becomes zero

In financial services, that customer inertia to switch is built into the profit model.

A large share of profit still comes from customers who do not switch, even when switching is in their interest. Agents will. They face none of the inconvenience, the vague anxiety, or the sheer effort that keeps a person with an average provider for years. Once that inertia is gone, the back book businesses relied on to drive profitability becomes share that rivals can take.

The metrics that matter to the agent are mechanical: the rate at which it successfully reaches the data it came for, the latency of each step, the determinism of the response. And one more belongs on the list: the clarity of error codes. An agent that cannot tell why it failed will not retry. It will route to the competitor that tells it precisely what went wrong.

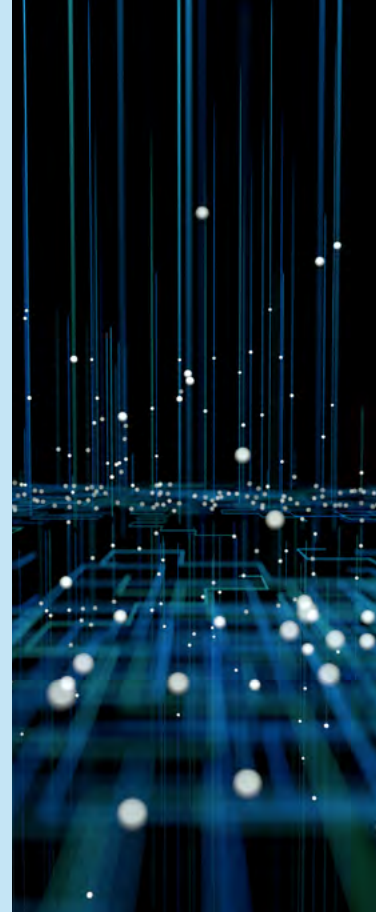
Regulators are catching up

Every regulator is still writing rules for the last interface. The EU AI Act⁷, which is currently being rolled out in phases, classifies credit scoring and insurance pricing as “high-risk” systems, but its framework assumes a human operator deploys a model. It does not yet answer the question that agentic AI poses: what happens when the customer’s software, not the bank’s, is the one making the high-risk decision? But jurisdictions are diverging – and fast.

In November 2025, the Monetary Authority of Singapore set out proposed guidelines on the use of AI in the financial sector, with a 12-month transition period following final issuance⁵. The guidelines establish a comprehensive framework across: Board and Senior Management Oversight, Systems and Controls, Lifecycle Controls (addressing data fairness, transparency, human oversight, third-party risk, and testing), and Enablers.

A global institution cannot build one architecture for all of them. The agent that routes around a clunky bank interface will also route around a fragmented regulatory patchwork and toward the jurisdiction whose rules give it the clearest path to execution.

The story lies in the gap between adoption and governance. Financial services firms are adopting AI far faster than regulators can keep up. That gap is not a reason to slow down. It is a reason to build, from day one, the governance architecture that regulators will eventually demand, because agents will accelerate the move towards transparency.



⁷ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai>

⁵ <https://www.mas.gov.sg/publications/consultations/2025/consultation-paper-on-guidelines-on-artificial-intelligence-risk-management>

The split is coming. Your place on the curve isn't fixed.

By 2028, customer segmentation will split in two. Human relationships will still be based on trust, reassurance, and brand.

Agents will be won on data access, decision logic, and the limits of the mandate they carry. These are not two versions of one customer; they want opposite things. The institutions that build for both, separately and deliberately, will take share from those still designing for a customer who has already left the building.

If you're not yet certain where your institution sits on that curve — or what it would take to build for the agent without sacrificing what works for the human — that's precisely where A&M's work begins.

In the subsequent articles in this series, we will explore operating models for agentic AI, organization and people for agentic AI, and governance of agentic AI.





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