

BUILD OR BUY × DIY OR PARTNER

Implementing AI is two calls, not one: WHAT you get (Build or Buy) and HOW you deliver it (yourself or with a partner). The quadrants carry very different risk and upside.

RISK AND UPSIDE CLIMB FROM BUY+PARTNER TO BUILD+DIY

BUY license a product	BUILD custom-develop
BUY + DIY License & Run It Yourself Only if you have the bench and an adoption owner. Otherwise: the dead zone. IN THE BOOK The department-level copilot your team learns in an afternoon.	BUILD + DIY Build It In-House Data moat plus a strong in-house AI team. Highest risk, highest upside. IN THE BOOK The deliberately missing quadrant — see “The Grid in Action” (in this Chapter).
BUY + PARTNER License + Get Help Landing It You bought it; a partner makes it land. Lowest risk. Lower ceiling. IN THE BOOK The voice agent that lifted revenue ~30% — bought, then landed with help (Chapter 5).	BUILD + PARTNER Co-Build & Transfer Differentiating, urgent, no internal bench yet. Risk shared, then handed to you. IN THE BOOK The \$2.1B distributor’s invoice agent — 260% Year 1 ROI (Chapter 8).

Buy + DIY is a real play only if you can name the team and the adoption owner. Wherever you start, the arrow points toward owning the AI function. Partners are leverage you keep, not a crutch you never put down.