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SOURCE Gartner · 29 Sep 2026

70% OF ENTERPRISES

WILL WALK AWAY

from AI agents built by their vendor’s own engineers, by 2028.



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FORWARD-DEPLOYED ENGINEERING (FDE)

Vendor engineers work directly with customers to build and deploy solutions, like AI agents.



Gartner says the pattern is familiar from enterprise software. What’s new is the intensity of the hype.

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GARTNER PREDICTS, BY 2028

70%

of enterprises will abandon agentic AI built by vendor FDE

“Trapped by soaring costs and unable to evolve it on their own.”

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"FDE WASHING"

Consulting services marketed as FDE.

Some providers charge premium fees without the delivery depth to justify them, Gartner says.

It also says some use the label thoughtfully, and others because it sounds more strategic.

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GARTNER'S CHECKLIST · 1 OF 2

The best-scoped FDE engagements have clear guidelines on

- Governance
- Business value delivery
- IP ownership

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GARTNER'S CHECKLIST · 2 OF 2

The best-scoped FDE engagements have clear guidelines on

- Project co-ownership
- Knowledge transfer
- An exit strategy from day one

THE QUESTION TO EXPECT FROM CLIENTS

Will we own this when you leave?



SHANE'S TAKE

If that's already how you work, it belongs at the top of your website.



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