

A HANDS-ON WORKSHOP · 90 MINUTES

# Building an **AI-Native** Company

An operating system for running a  
company of AI agents — where you set  
the goal and the work gets done.

You — the board

Your general agent — the companion

Paperclip — the operating system

Seven scenarios · From nothing to a working company

# Software used to wait for instructions. Now it can do the work.

For decades, you opened an app and did the work yourself — the spreadsheet, the email, the design. The software just sat there until you moved.

An **AI agent** is different. You hand it a goal, and it plans, decides, and carries the work out — checking in with you for the calls that matter.

## BEFORE VS. NOW

**“Post this week’s specials everywhere.”**

**Before:** you open five apps and post it five times. **Now:** you say it once, and the work gets done — written, scheduled, posted — while you serve customers.

## DEFINITION

# What "AI-Native" means

An AI-native company doesn't **use** AI as a tool on the side.

It is **run by** a team of AI agents — and run by **you**, the way a founder runs a board.

## You

set the goal, make the decisions

Building an AI-Native Company

## Agents

plan, hire, and do the work

## Always-on

it keeps running when you close the laptop

# From doing the work to running the company

## THE OLD ROLE

### **You are the worker**

Every task lands on your desk. You are the bottleneck. The business only moves as fast as your own hands.

## THE NEW ROLE

### **You are the board**

You set direction, approve the big calls, and hold the budget. A team of agents does the work — and reports back to you.

THE STANCE

# You make the calls only a **person** can make.

Approving a strategy. Deciding a hire. Setting a budget. Everything else — the planning and the doing — the agents handle. **Autonomy is something you grant, not a default.**

# The three players

01

## You

The board. You make the calls only a human can: the goal, the budget, the approvals.

decides

02

## Your General Agent

Your companion. The everyday AI tool you already use — it runs Paperclip for you and explains what's happening in plain language.

operates

03

## Paperclip

The operating system. It holds your company, wakes the agents, and keeps the budgets, approvals, and audit trail.

runs the company

# Your general agent is your companion

You never touch a command line. You talk to your general agent in plain English — and it does the technical work for you: installing, running, checking, recovering when something breaks.

Think of it as a capable operator sitting beside you.

**You say what you want; it figures out how.**

## YOU SAY

"Get this running on my laptop. Before you change anything, tell me your plan in plain language and where you'll need me."

## IT HANDLES

the checks, the install, the setup — and pauses for your decision before anything that matters.

# It works like a startup you already understand

IN A REAL BUSINESS...

---

You write a business plan

---

You hire a CEO to run it

---

The CEO proposes a strategy

---

The CEO builds a team

---

The team works off a task list

---

Finance keeps the books

---

IN YOUR AI COMPANY...

---

You set a **goal** for the company

---

You hire a **CEO agent** — your first hire

---

You **approve** it before anything proceeds

---

It **hires specialists**, with your sign-off

---

Tasks move across a **board**, owned by agents

---

Every action lands in an **audit trail**

---

## Part One

# The build: one company in 90 minutes

Seven scenarios, start to finish. You'll stand up a real company, hire a CEO, approve its strategy, watch a team do the work, and audit the whole run — all on your laptop.

# Meet Sunrise Bakery

A small neighbourhood bakery. Great bread, loyal regulars — but no website and no way to take orders online. The owner wants to change that, without hiring an agency.

We'll build them an AI company to do it. Every concept in this workshop, you'll watch it work for **this one real goal.**

## THE COMPANY GOAL

**“Launch online ordering and reach 200 weekly orders in 90 days.”**

One clear goal. One small budget. One team of agents to chase it — with the owner as the board.

SCENARIO 1 · ~15 MIN

# Stand up your company

Install Paperclip, then create the company: a name, goal, budget ceiling, and approval required before any hire.

## **DONE WHEN**

The dashboard shows "Sunrise Bakery" with the goal registered, a \$20 ceiling, and an empty roster waiting on your first hire.



# A company is a goal with a team

## GOAL

One thing everything traces back to. **200 weekly orders in 90 days.**

## TEAM

The agents you'll hire to chase the goal. **Starts empty.**

## BUDGET

A spending ceiling, set from day one. **\$20 / month.**

## BOARD

You. Hires need your sign-off. **You stay in control.**

SCENARIO 2 • ~10 MIN

# Hire your CEO

Your first agent. It runs on whatever AI tool you're already logged into — no extra setup — and reports to no one but you.

## **DONE WHEN**

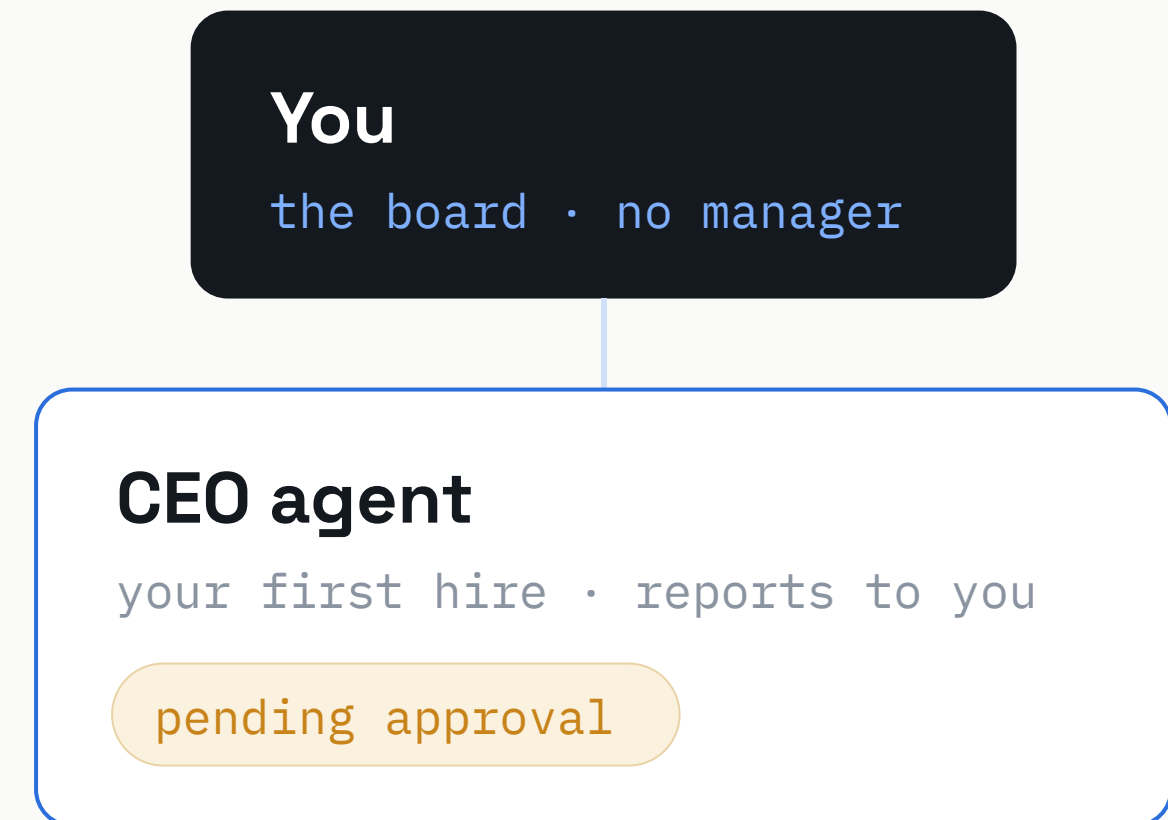
After you approve the hire, the dashboard shows one CEO agent, idle, reporting to you, ready to work.

2

# The first hire reports to you

An **agent** is an AI employee: a role, a manager it reports to, and a budget. The CEO is the only one with no manager above it — it answers to you, the board.

Even your very first hire passes through the approval gate. It sits in **pending approval** until you press the button.



# The adapter is just the plug

Every agent is powered by a model. The **adapter** is the plug that connects your agent to whichever AI you're using — like the right charger for your phone. For this workshop, you use the one you're already logged into. **No separate key, no extra cost.**

## IN PLAIN TERMS

**“Run my CEO on the AI tool I already have.”**

Your general agent picks a sensible default, tells you which, and plugs it in. You don't manage any of it.

SCENARIO 3 · ~15 MIN

# The strategy review

On its first turn, the CEO reads your goal and drafts a strategy — then stops, and puts it up for your review. Nothing proceeds until you sign off.

## **DONE WHEN**

You've moved the strategy to "done," and the record shows that you — the board — were the one who decided it.

3

# The heartbeat is an agent's shift

A **heartbeat** is an agent's scheduled turn to work: it wakes up, does a chunk, logs what it did, and clocks off until the next one.

On the CEO's **first** heartbeat, it does exactly one thing — reads the goal and drafts a strategy for your review.

## LIKE A WORK SHIFT

**Clock in → do a chunk → log it → clock out**

An employee doesn't work 24/7 in one blur. They work shifts. So do your agents — and you can fire a shift on demand, or let it run on a schedule.

CONCEPT · APPROVAL

# Approving the strategy **is** the board acting.

The CEO can propose, but it cannot proceed.

When you move the strategy from "in review" to "done," that decision is logged as **yours** — the proof that a human, not an agent, made the call.

# Building the workforce

With a strategy approved, the CEO breaks the goal into tasks and decides it needs a specialist. It files a hire request; you approve; the team takes over.

## **DONE WHEN**

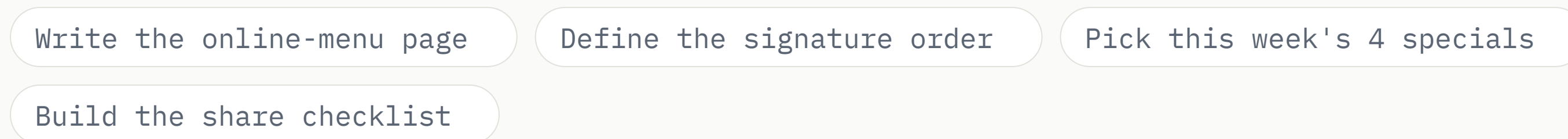
Your company has a CEO and a specialist, and a task the CEO delegated was completed by that specialist — not by the CEO.



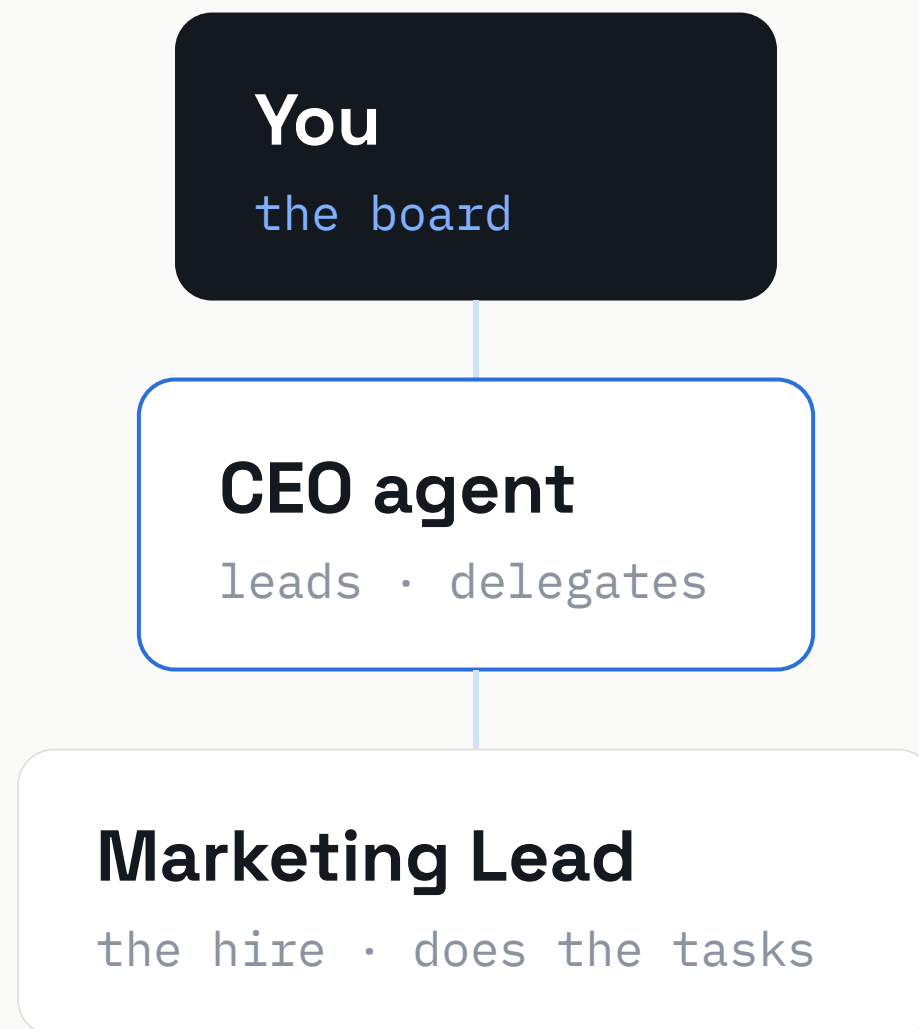
# Work moves across a board



A **task** is a unit of work — like a ticket — except the worker is an agent. Each task moves through the same lifecycle, and you can see exactly who owns it and where it stands.



# The team does the work



The CEO is the **leader, not the laborer**. It turns strategy into tasks and hands them down. The specialist it hired wakes on assignment and does the actual work.

As the company grows, the pattern repeats: today's hire becomes tomorrow's manager with a team of its own.

SCENARIO 5 · ~5 MIN

# The budget, your safety rail

Every agent carries a spending cap. A bug or a runaway loop can only ever cost a bounded amount — which is what makes a company safe to leave running.

## **DONE WHEN**

The cap is set, and you can state the rule: warn at 80%, pause at 100%.

5

# The safety rail

**80%**

**Paperclip warns you**

You see it coming, with room to act.

**100%**

**The agent pauses**

Spending stops. Nothing runs away.

## THE HONEST CATCH

# Today, it all costs \$0

The tool you're logged into bills nothing per use, so Paperclip records every action at **zero**. The rail is armed, but has nothing to push against yet.

It starts to bite the day you point an agent at a paid model — which is exactly when you want a budget watching.

\$  
recorded spend, so far  
0

SCENARIO 6 · ~10 MIN

# Query the audit trail

Play CFO. Everything that happened — every hire, approval, and task — is on the record, and anyone can reconstruct the whole run from it in seconds.

## **DONE WHEN**

You can pull up the ordered story of your run and name what tells a human decision apart from an agent's action.

6

# Every action, on the record

#	WHAT HAPPENED	WHO
1	Company "Sunrise Bakery" created	you
2	CEO hired	you
3	Strategy moved to done	you
4	Marketing Lead hired	you
5	Tasks created & delegated	agent · CEO
6	Menu page written, marked done	agent · Marketing

One column — **who** — separates your decisions from the agents' work. That's all an auditor needs to confirm a human signed off.

SCENARIO 7 · ~10 MIN

# Give it a real desk

So far the team has described its work in comments. Point the company at a real folder, and an agent writes actual files there — work you can hold.

## **DONE WHEN**

There's a real file in your folder — written by an agent — that you can open in a browser.



# From describing work to building it

## AN EMPLOYEE WHO ONLY TALKS

**“Here’s what the order page should say.”**

A description in a comment. Useful — but you still have to build it yourself.

## AN EMPLOYEE WHO DELIVERS

**order-page.html**

An actual file on disk, written by the Marketing Lead, that you open in a browser. That's the line between a demo and a company.

## Part Two

# Operate the company you now run

Standing it up was the easy part. Running it is a standing responsibility — and it takes one habit to do well.

# The monthly audit

A company running on its own quietly drifts. Every hire, budget change, and setting was a small decision — and small decisions add up.

The defense isn't watching every step. It's a **short review on a fixed cadence** — once a month, walk through everything that changed and tighten what slipped.

## THE STANDING ASK

**”Run my monthly audit.”**

Walk through everything hired, configured, or approved since last time. Flag anything I didn't sign off on, any idle agent, any budget that drifted. Save it as next month's baseline.

# Loose knobs to tighten

## NO CAP

A hire that slipped in without its own budget — silently spending against the whole company ceiling.

## TOO BUSY

An agent set to run too many things at once. Dial the concurrency back down.

## STALE CONFIG

A setting that no longer matches what's actually running. Refresh it to the live state.

## PARKED TASK

Work waiting in review on a decision only you can make. Decide it, or close it out.

None of these are failures. They're the ordinary drift of a company that runs without you — and catching them on a cadence is exactly how you stay the board.

## Part Three

# Now point it at your business

The bakery was the rehearsal. The same pattern works for almost any goal you actually have.

THE REAL MOVE

# Stand up a company whose goal is **your** actual business.

Let the CEO propose how to pursue it. Hire the specialists it needs. Let it run under the budgets and approvals that keep you the board. You already did it once.

SAME PATTERN, DIFFERENT GOAL

# It generalizes to almost

RETAIL SHOP

"Move 30% of sales online in one quarter."

LAW PRACTICE

"Turn 50 past matters into a searchable client FAQ."

REAL-ESTATE TEAM

"Publish a weekly listings digest to 2,000 buyers."

ONLINE STORE

"Cut support reply time to under an hour."

“

# Autonomy is something you **grant**, not a default.

You stay the board through tight budgets, required sign-off on hires and strategy, and a review on a cadence — even when the company runs itself.

# What you built

- 01 Set a goal and created a company
- 02 Hired a CEO that reports to you
- 03 Approved its strategy as the board
- 04 Watched a team do delegated work
- 05 Armed a budget as your safety rail
- 06 Audited the whole run from the record
- 07 Gave it a desk — work became a real file

Every move was a **governance move** — not a prompt. And the company is still there, paused at a clean baseline, waiting on your next decision.

# Two things you carry out

## THE DURABLE ARTIFACT

### **AGENTS.md**

The brief your general agent reads every session — portable to the next tool you put an agent in front of.

## THE DURABLE SKILL

### **The stance of the board**

Autonomy is granted, not assumed. You hold control through budgets, sign-off, and a review on a cadence — even when the company runs itself.

KEEP GOING

# Where to go next

YOU WANT TO...

THE NEXT STEP

---

Put recurring work on a schedule

**Routines** — a daily standup or weekly report that fires on its own

---

Let agents hire other agents under policy

The **Dynamic Workforce** course

---

Give agents a real codebase to work in

**Execution workspaces** — agents draft, edit, and run real code

---

Take the whole company with you

Export it to a portable **markdown package** and version-control it

---

## The Takeaway

# You don't use AI. You run a company of it.

Set the goal. Hire the CEO. Approve what matters. Let the team do the work — and stay the board through it all.

You — the board

Your general agent — the companion

Paperclip — the operating system