

# 2025 Work Trend Index Highlights the Rise of Frontier Firms—Here's Why SMBs May Have the Advantage

## The SMB Reality Check



81% of SMBs leaders say this is a pivotal year to rethink strategy and operations.

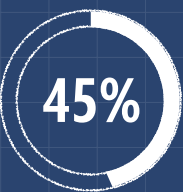
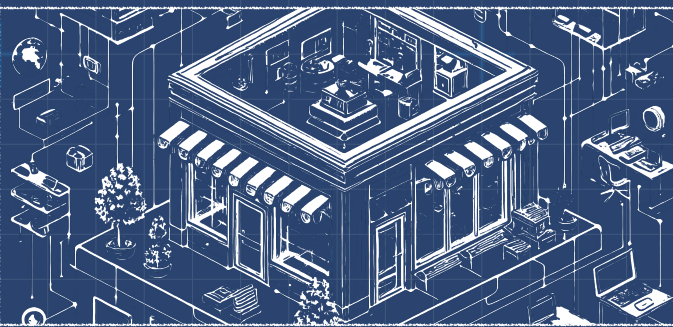
### You Can Buy Intelligence on Tap

Digital labor offers a powerful new lever for growth for SMBs.



53% of SMB leaders say productivity must increase, but both employees and leaders say they're lacking enough time or energy to do their work.

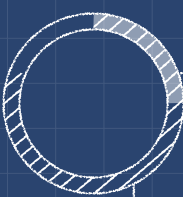
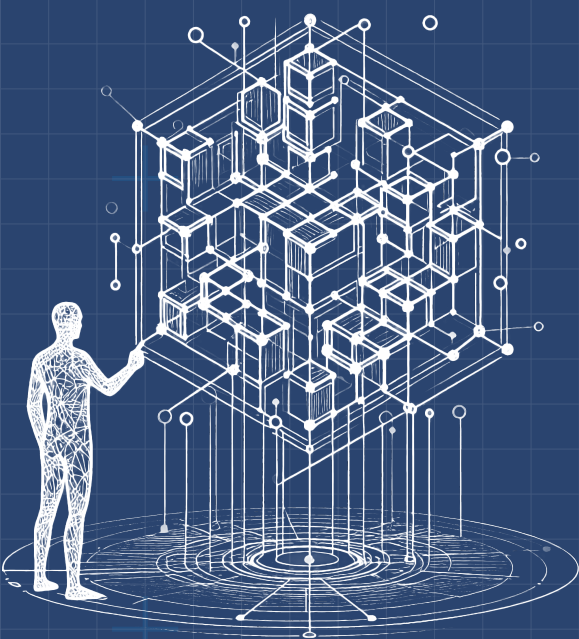
With the **democratization of intelligence**, it is now possible for a small business to operate with the scale and sophistication once reserved for companies ten times its size.



Nearly half of SMB leaders say expanding team capacity with digital labor is a top priority in the next 12 to 18 months.

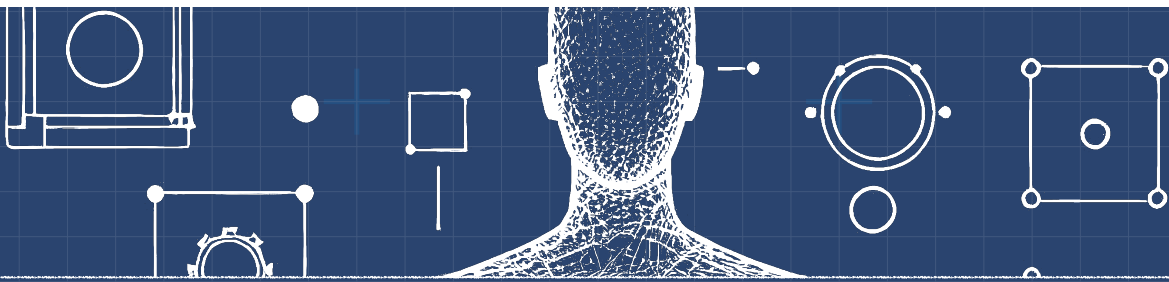
### Human-Agent Teams Will Upend the Org Chart

With the **rise of human-agent teams**, the agility of SMB work processes will become even more impactful.



24% of SMBs are already using agents and 79% plan to implement them within the next 12 to 18 months.

### Every Employee Becomes an Agent Boss



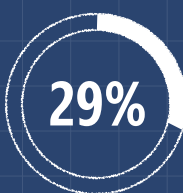
In the coming years, we'll see a rise of employees who **don't just use AI—but manage it**.

**It's a shift in mindset:** From doing everything yourself to delegating to agents with confidence.

In small businesses especially, that kind of empowerment isn't just helpful—it's **transformational**.



24% of SMBs are considering hiring AI Workforce Managers to lead hybrid teams of people and agents.



29% plan to hire AI Agent Specialists to design, develop, and optimize them within the next 12 to 18 months.

### Agility is the Small Business Advantage



As AI continues to evolve, one thing remains clear: **Small and medium-sized businesses are uniquely positioned to lead.**