

How we build now (July 2026)

Amazon Connect User Group
- Americas (Virtual)

7/7/26



AWS User Groups

Agenda

- This user group/This platform/Me
- An abridged history
- The current challenge
- How we decide
- Where we are going
- A Demo
- Conclusion

How We Build Now

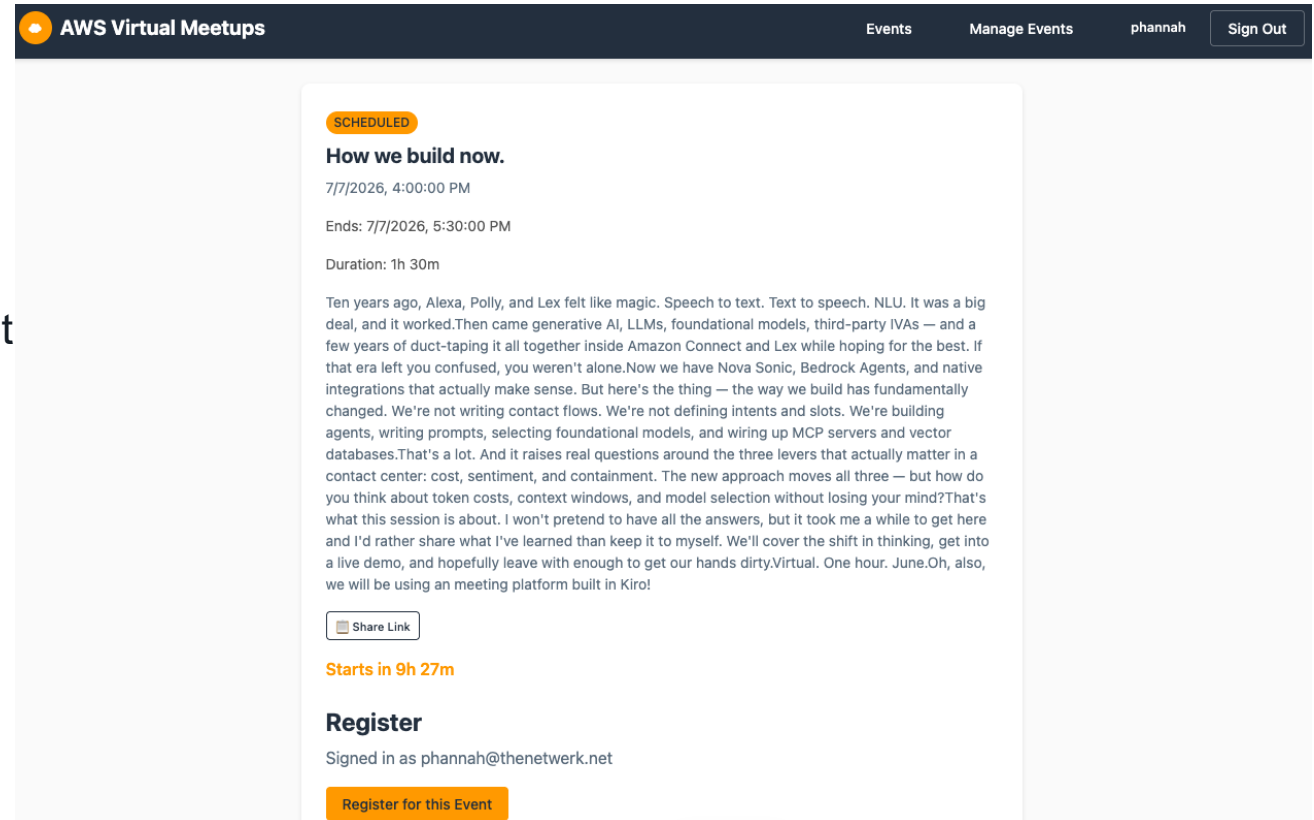


AWS User Groups

- We are part of the AWS User Groups Community: <https://builder.aws.com/community/user-groups>
- Connect focused and virtual; originally incepted by someone at AWS, I took it over some time ago when they stepped down.
- Without a doubt, in the 9+ years since Amazon Connect was launched, interest and investment has grown significantly, so I thought it was time to do something with the group.
- I don't want this to be about me – I want this to provide real value to the community (that's you), and I want the community to engage – virtual is hard (in-person is hard as well, some overlapping, some different reasons).
- Engage means how we stay in touch between sessions, how we produce and share material, and the way that material is presented.
- I have a sibling user group in suburban Atlanta (more AWS general in nature) I'm working to get going, which means that we can make this user group in person or hybrid from time to time as well (if you have specific region in mind, let's talk!)

Side Quest: This platform and Kiro

- If you are hearing me, and seeing my screen, it was a success. Otherwise, it's a great Linked In post about failing in public.
- The platform was built with Kiro. If you've not heard of it it's an IDE with AI assisted development built in, with a prescriptive leaning towards spec driven development.
- Even though we are talking Connect (and the related ecosystem, you might find value in Kiro in your own work, so give it a try!
- This platform is available on GitHub as well – fork, contribute, etc.: <https://github.com/ronin48llc/aws-virtual-meetups>



The screenshot shows the AWS Virtual Meetups website. The header includes the AWS Virtual Meetups logo, navigation links for Events, Manage Events, and a user profile for phannah with a Sign Out button. The main content area features a scheduled event titled "How we build now." with a date of 7/7/2026, a time of 4:00:00 PM, and a duration of 1h 30m. The event description discusses the evolution of AI in AWS services, from Alexa and Lex to generative AI and LLMs, and mentions the use of Kiro for building the meeting platform. A "Share Link" button is present below the description. The event starts in 9h 27m. A "Register" section shows the user is signed in as phannah@thenetwerk.net and includes a "Register for this Event" button.

AWS Virtual Meetups Events Manage Events phannah Sign Out

SCHEDULED

How we build now.

7/7/2026, 4:00:00 PM

Ends: 7/7/2026, 5:30:00 PM

Duration: 1h 30m

Ten years ago, Alexa, Polly, and Lex felt like magic. Speech to text. Text to speech. NLU. It was a big deal, and it worked. Then came generative AI, LLMs, foundational models, third-party IVAs — and a few years of duct-taping it all together inside Amazon Connect and Lex while hoping for the best. If that era left you confused, you weren't alone. Now we have Nova Sonic, Bedrock Agents, and native integrations that actually make sense. But here's the thing — the way we build has fundamentally changed. We're not writing contact flows. We're not defining intents and slots. We're building agents, writing prompts, selecting foundational models, and wiring up MCP servers and vector databases. That's a lot. And it raises real questions around the three levers that actually matter in a contact center: cost, sentiment, and containment. The new approach moves all three — but how do you think about token costs, context windows, and model selection without losing your mind? That's what this session is about. I won't pretend to have all the answers, but it took me a while to get here and I'd rather share what I've learned than keep it to myself. We'll cover the shift in thinking, get into a live demo, and hopefully leave with enough to get our hands dirty. Virtual. One hour. June. Oh, also, we will be using a meeting platform built in Kiro!

Share Link

Starts in 9h 27m

Register

Signed in as phannah@thenetwerk.net

Register for this Event

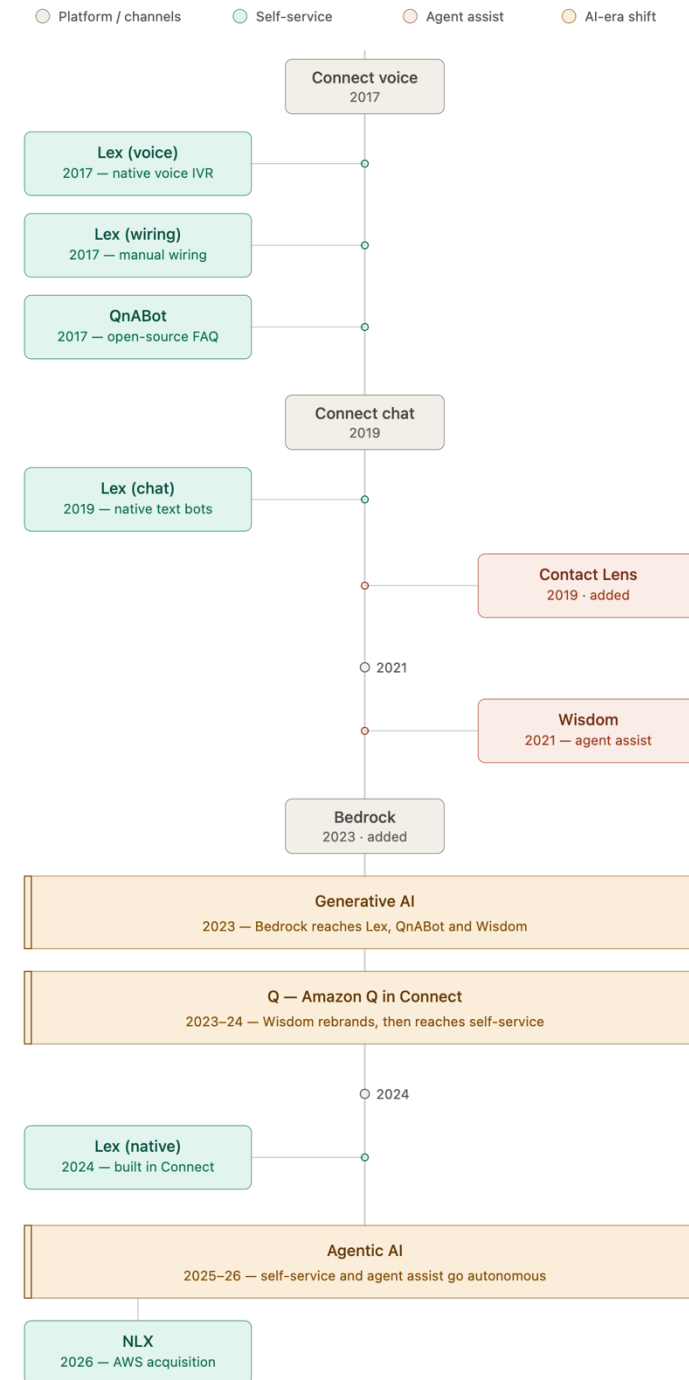
Me

- I really liked phones. Somehow, I lucked myself into a job that let me get paid to play with them, which is a lot cheaper than building a phone network on my own.
- That was 25 years ago.
- Avaya came into the picture; Oracle Oracled; I got bored and ended up in the cloud.
- Arguably the phone network was a form of the cloud, but with the cloud, the phone network got a lot more capable.
- Now we are seeing that with AI/ML/GenAI/AgentAI.
- I'm currently in Atlanta (suburban), but spent most of my life in South Florida – I did a lot of work with AWS user groups and the tech community in general, and I'm hoping to do the same for this group as well.



The abridged evolution of building

- Ten years ago, Alexa, Polly, and Lex felt like magic: voice, TTS, and NLU, each nailing one job.
- Connect, as we know, initially launched with Voice, and Lex support initially launched for Connect Chat. Voice has nuances (latency, compression, variability, variety, context, etc.) that Chat doesn't.
- Then generative AI arrived, and for a few years we duct-taped LLMs onto that Lex/Connect foundation and hoped nobody asked questions. If that left you confused, you weren't alone.
- Since then, NLU, while specialized, has been replaced with Agentic (generalized), but Lex remains, at the core, as the connector. We see similar on the consumer side with A(lex)a, right?



Multitude of options

- Contact Center Week (Las Vegas) was 2 weeks ago
- While it's clear the on-premises to cloud Contact Center Software (now CCaaS) discussion is over, and the CCaaS ecosystem is tightening up, just like we saw with hyperscalers, there is a large set of contenders in CCaaS adjacent areas (like Conversational AI), like how there was SIP-everything or adjunct-everything in previous generations.
- Some integrate with Connect, some safely integrate with Connect. What was once a safe conversation (Amazon Connect does everything) has become additional decisions in the tree.

Category	# Companies	% of Total
BPO & Outsourcing	60	21.8%
Other / Emerging	47	17.1%
AI Agents & Conversational Automation	43	15.6%
CCaaS & Contact Center Platforms	29	10.5%
Analytics, QA & Conversation Intelligence	16	5.8%
CRM & Customer Engagement Platforms	15	5.5%
Agent Training, Coaching & Employee Experience	13	4.7%
Consulting & Professional Services	10	3.6%
Agent Assist & Real-Time Guidance	8	2.9%
Knowledge Management & Self-Service	6	2.2%
Telecom, CPaaS & Network Infrastructure	6	2.2%
Workforce Management (WFM)	5	1.8%
Translation, Localization & Language AI	5	1.8%
Security, Compliance & Authentication	5	1.8%
Government & Economic Development	4	1.5%
Hardware, Headsets & Devices	3	1.1%
TOTAL	275	

The full comparison

Approach	Who	Status	Unlimited AI	Additional Costs
DTMF IVR	Customer	GA	✓ Yes	None
Lex V2 NLU Bot	Customer	GA	✓ Yes	Lambda · any downstream APIs
Legacy Self-Service ⚠	Customer	Legacy	✓ Yes	Bedrock KB · OpenSearch · S3
Agentic Self-Service — Voice ★	Customer	Recommended	✓ Yes	Lambda · AgentCore GW · Bedrock KB (if used) · 3P STT/TTS
Agentic Self-Service — Chat ★	Customer	Recommended	✓ Yes	Lambda · AgentCore GW · Bedrock KB (if used)
Answer Recommendation	Agent	GA	✓ Yes	Bedrock KB · OpenSearch · S3
Manual Search	Agent	GA	✓ Yes	Bedrock KB · OpenSearch · S3
Agentic Agent Assistance ★	Agent	Recommended	✓ Yes	Lambda · AgentCore GW · Bedrock KB (if used)
Auto Note-Taking	Agent	GA	✓ Yes	None beyond channel charges
Case Summarization	Agent	GA	✓ Yes	Connect Cases add-on (\$)
Email Thread Overview	Agent	GA	✓ Yes	Email channel charge (\$0.080/email)
Email Response Generation	Agent	GA	✓ Yes	Bedrock KB · OpenSearch · S3 · Email (\$0.080/email)
Email Generative Answer	Agent	GA	✓ Yes	Bedrock KB · OpenSearch · S3
Post-Contact Summary	Agent	GA	✓ Yes	Kinesis Data Streams if exporting (\$)
Custom Bedrock Agent (DIY)	Custom	Custom 8	✗ No	ALL Bedrock costs · Lambda · KB · OpenSearch · FM inference

Where to start

Of the 15 approaches on the last slide, these three are the ones marked ★ Recommended. Build these first.

FOR CUSTOMERS • VOICE

Agentic Self-Service — Voice

New voice self-service for complex multi-step work: orders, returns, account changes, troubleshooting.

★ Recommended

Nova Sonic + Q in Connect + Lex V2 • included in Unlimited AI

FOR CUSTOMERS • CHAT

Agentic Self-Service — Chat

Same job as voice, text-LLM (Nova Pro/Lite). Requires AI Message Streaming.

★ Recommended

Q in Connect + Lex V2 • included in Unlimited AI

FOR AGENTS • LIVE ASSIST

Agentic Agent Assistance

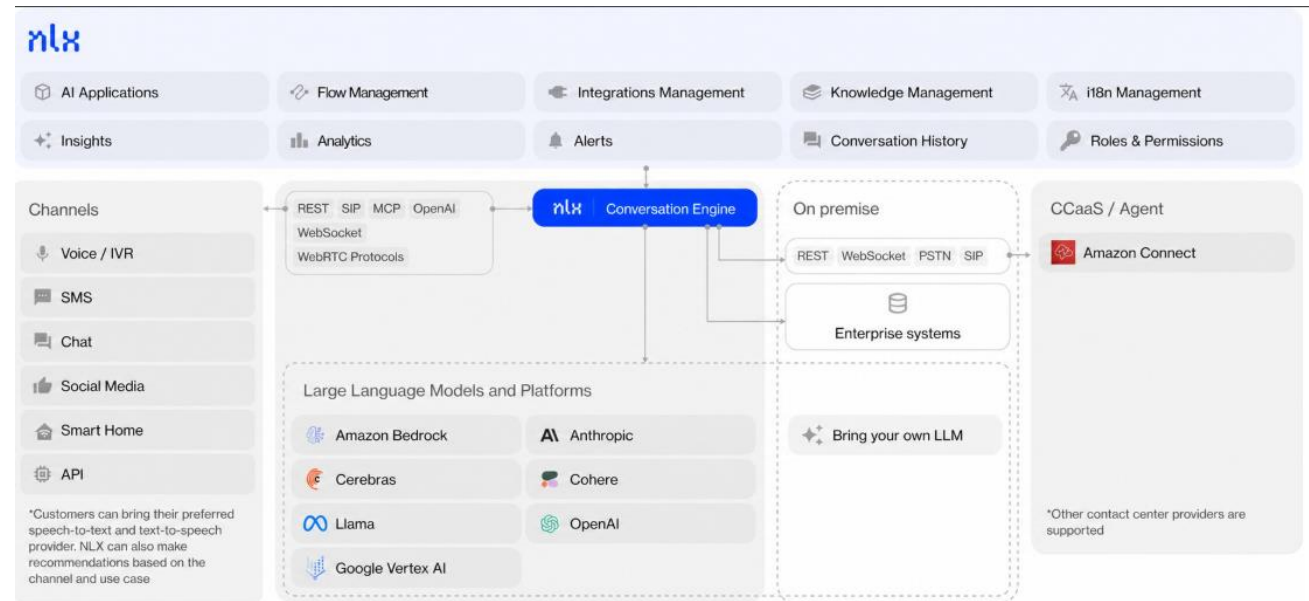
Complex multi-system work — cuts agent effort on data lookup and live record updates.

★ Recommended

Q in Connect + Contact Lens • included in Unlimited AI

NLX > Agentic CX Designer

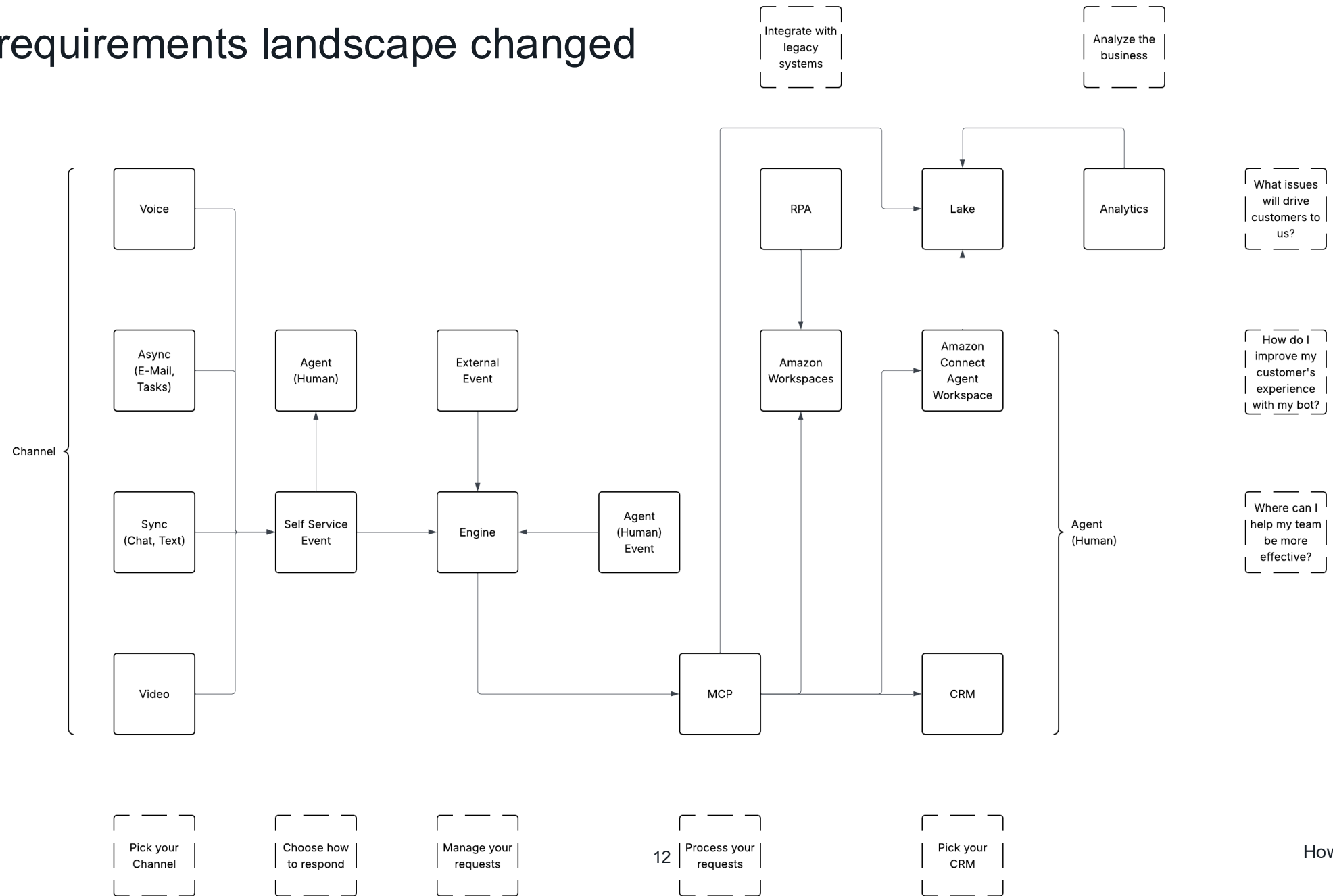
- AWS' solution? Acquire NLX.
- This is a moving target but 2 weeks ago AWS announced the integration into Connect and renaming to Agentic CX Designer.
- While there's a closed preview going on right now, I've not seen it (I couldn't tell you if I did, though).



So what's changed?

- 1 **MCP** – shared rules across the unit or organization
- 2 **CRM** – “the overlay is dead”
- 3 **Trees versus Graphs** – no single set of steps to fulfill
- 4 **Channels** – goes beyond a device to a person
- 5 **Fulfillment** – AI/ML/GenAI/AgentAI

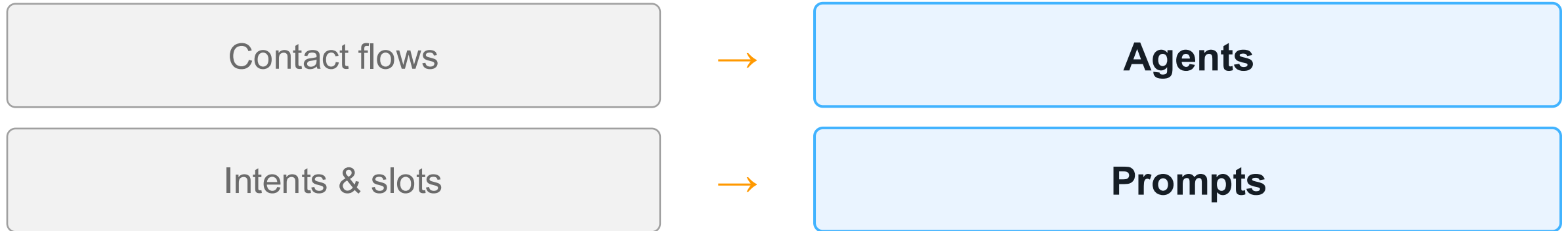
The requirements landscape changed



How we build now

The skill set changed

We're not writing contact flows. We're not defining intents and slots.



...and now, also:

Model selection

Which foundational model, for which job — Nova Sonic for real-time voice, Nova Pro/Lite for text, or bring your own.

MCP servers

How the agent reaches your systems — runtime discovery instead of a fixed API contract.

Vector databases

How the agent finds what it needs to know — the retrieval half of every Bedrock KB.

What are the skills required?

1

Contact Center

2

UI / UX

3

AI / ML / GenAI / Agentic AI

4

Amazon Connect

5

Transformation

6

**Control Tower / Landing
Zone**

7

**DevOps / SDLC /
Infrastructure as Code**

8

**Architecture, Security,
Operations & Finance**

How do you build your skills?

1

Skill Builder

Learning Plans

https://skillbuilder.aws/category/domain/contact-center?pageSize=5&page=1&accessTier=free&category=learning_plan

2

Skill Builder

Micro Credentials

<https://skillbuilder.aws/certification/microcredentials>

3

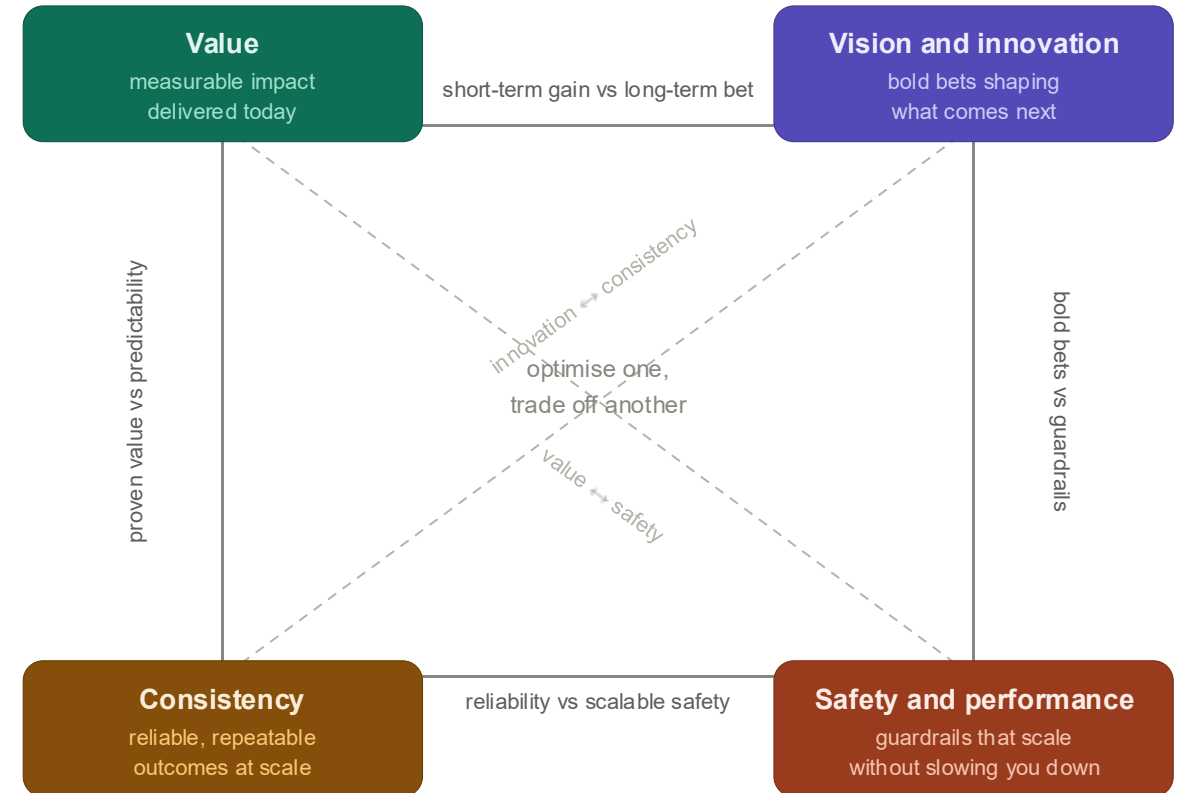
Anthropic

Skilljar training

<https://anthropic.skilljar.com/>

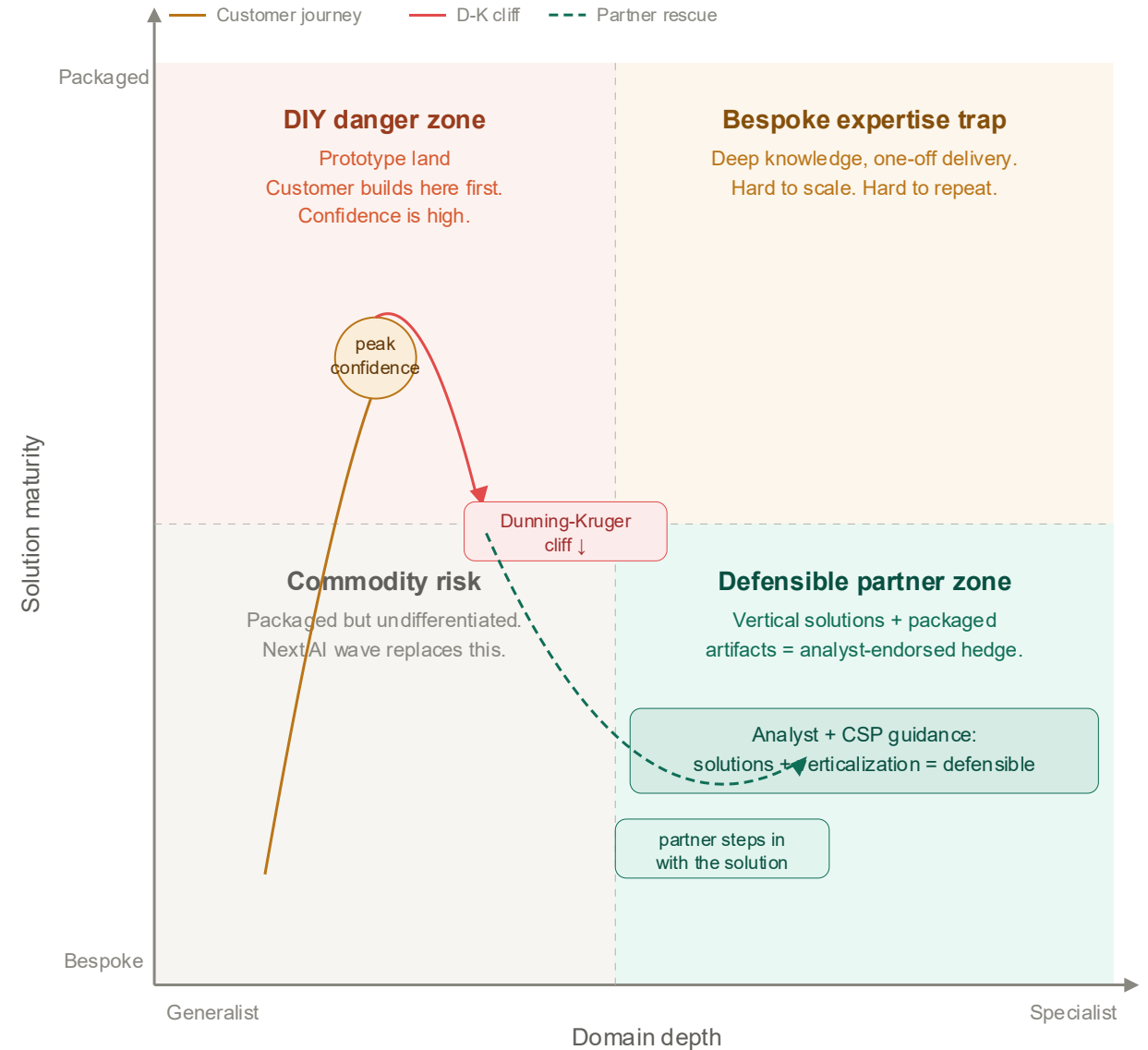
Balancing - Transformation

Transformation begins with, and ends with the perception of value, buy in to the vision and the innovation, past performance viewed through the lens of consistency, and the perception of safety/future performance.



Balancing - Build versus Buy

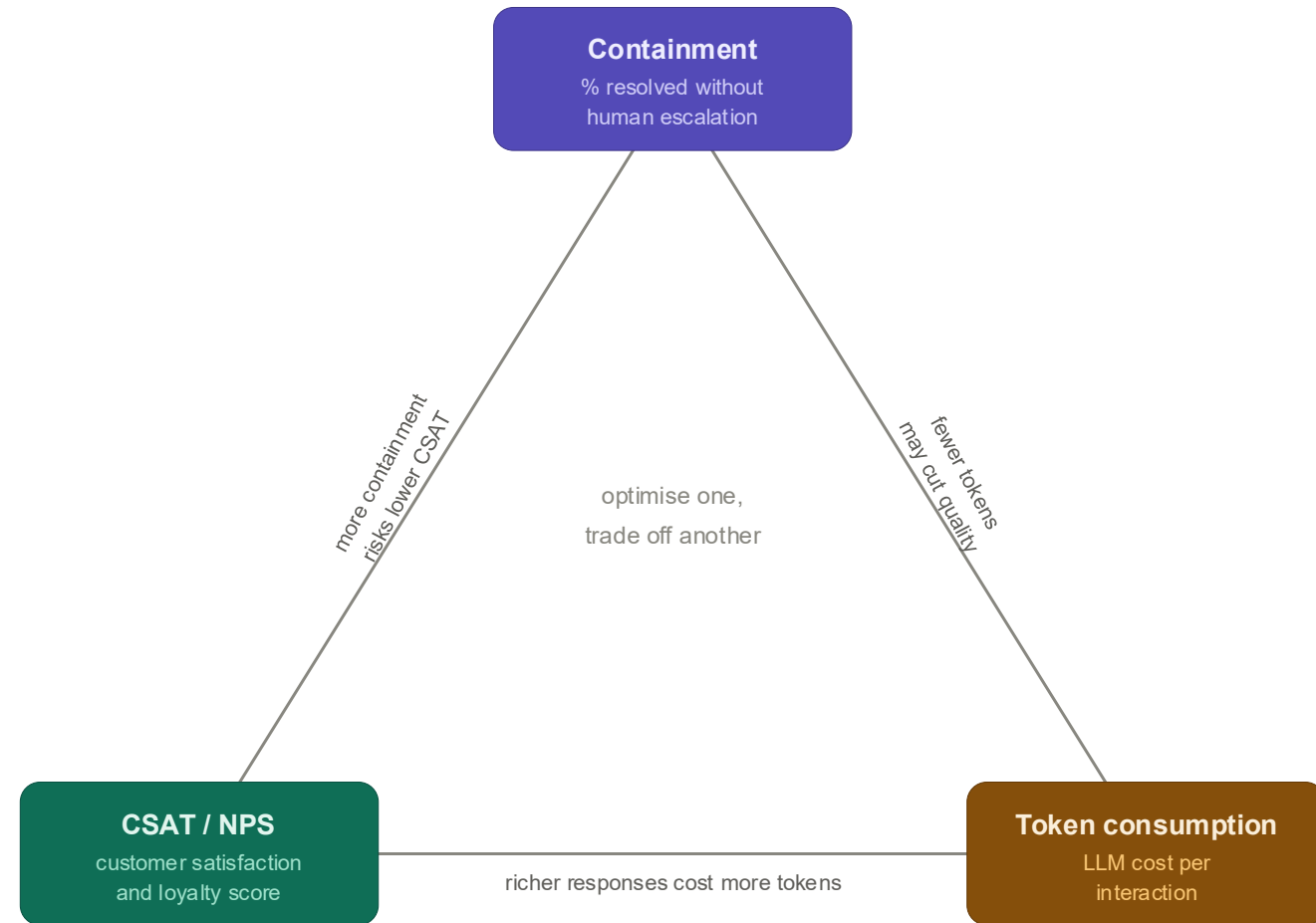
Ever build your own contact center technology? What about model? Where do we invest time to build and where do we decide it's better to buy?



Balancing - Costs

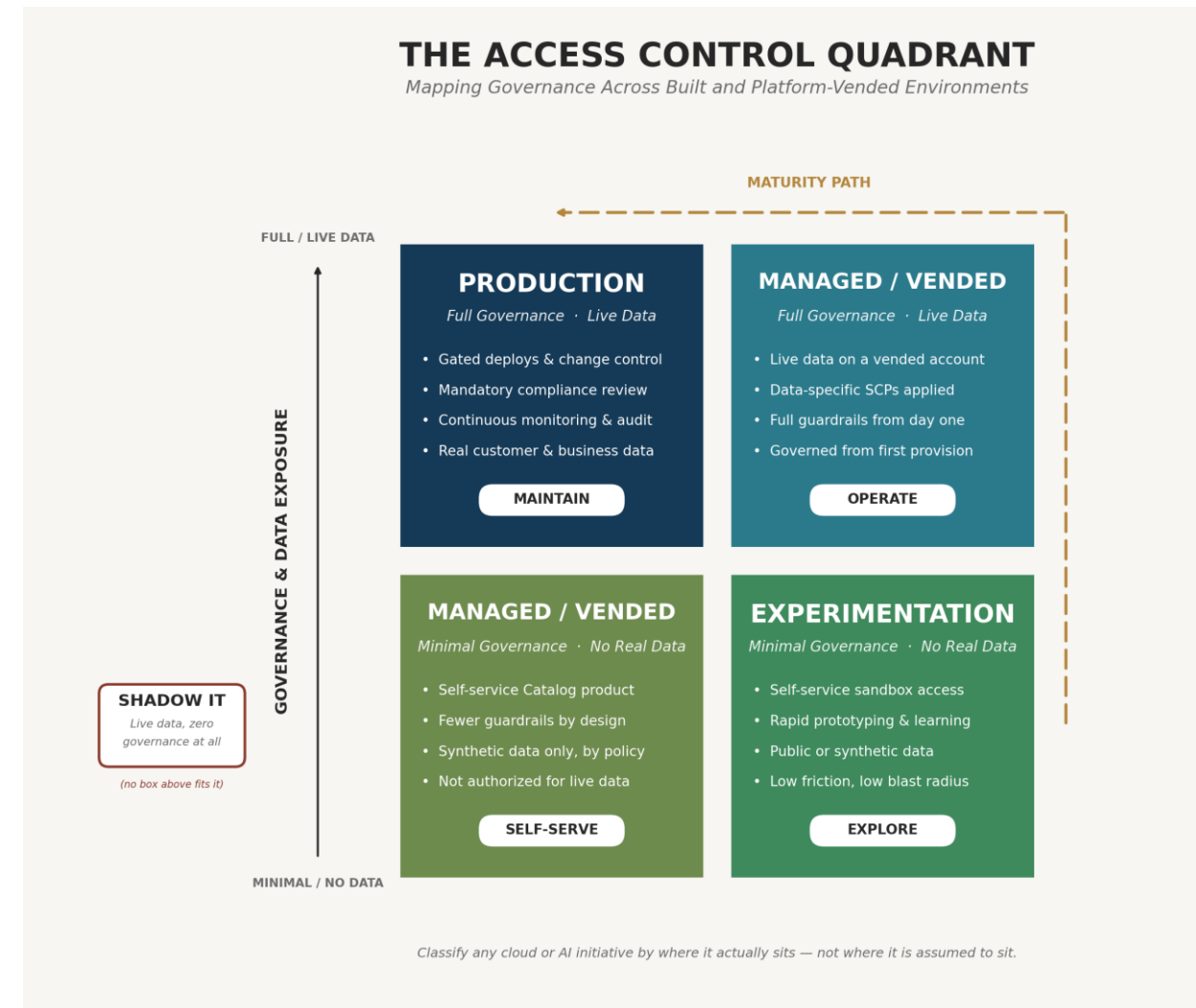
You have a budget – your challenge is to allocate that budget to 3 things: Containment, CSAT/NPS and Token Consumption.

Cost, sentiment, containment – the three levers, in practice.



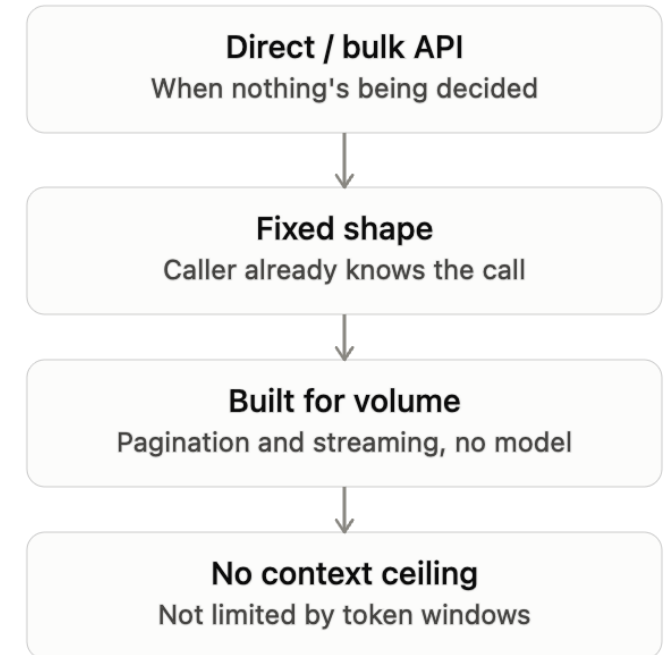
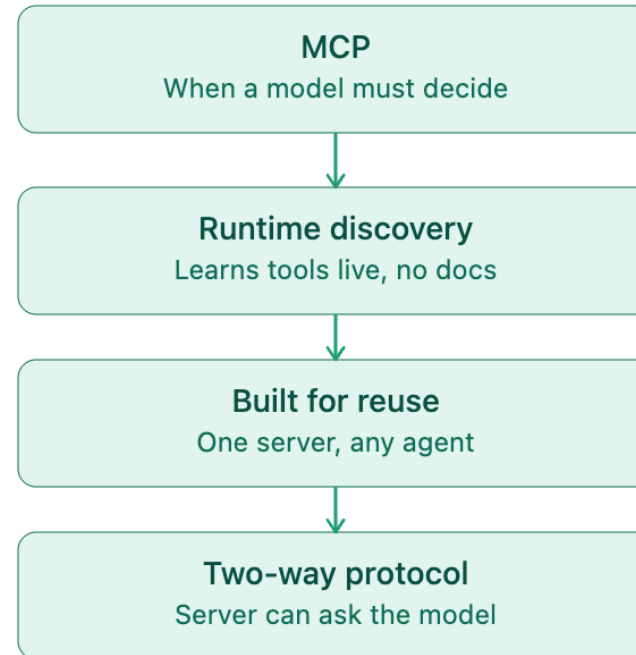
Balancing - Safety

Much like we saw with Public Cloud, the same safety (or similar) concerns exist with AI/ML/GenAI/AgentAI – we can apply a similar model to address a portion of these concerns, following the public cloud model used previously, with success.



Balancing - MCP versus API

With Generative and Agentic AI, we now see a new way to access data – MCP.



Moving targets

1 NLX (Agentic AI Designer) – Closed Preview – guidance will likely change in weeks/months

2 Generative/Agentic AI – continues to be a moving target (models in particular)

3 AWS Lifecycle Changes – Bedrock Agents → Bedrock Agent Core, Kendra → Bedrock Knowledge Bases

4 Amazon Connect → Amazon Connect Customer – renamed April 2026, now one of four: Decisions, Talent, Customer, Health

Demo

- Choose your own adventure!
- Lex
 - QNABot
 - Bedrock
 - Q
- Connect
 - Build Time
 - Run Time for the (Human) Agent
 - Run time for the (Not Human) Agent

How We Build Now



Conclusion + Homework

- 5 Minutes to a working Contact Center? Yes, it's still possible *but* it takes a *little* bit longer to get to world class.
- Contact Center + Technology is not static – needs should drive tech, but sometimes it's the reverse. Either way, close the loop – look at all that data you have access to now.
- Oh yeah, Connect is not just for Contact Centers anymore – Amazon Connect Customer now sits alongside three siblings: Decisions, Talent, and Health.
- And don't forget to keep skilling yourself.
- How do you approach your builds and revisions? Share with us!
- Have you worked with something like this before? If not, give it a try – tells us how you did or, if you get stuck, reach out!
- Have you found other ways to accomplish this? Share that with us too!
- Find any interesting use cases? We want to hear about them!
- How are you keeping up to date? Let's collaborate on the next meetup!

Thank you!

7/9/2026



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