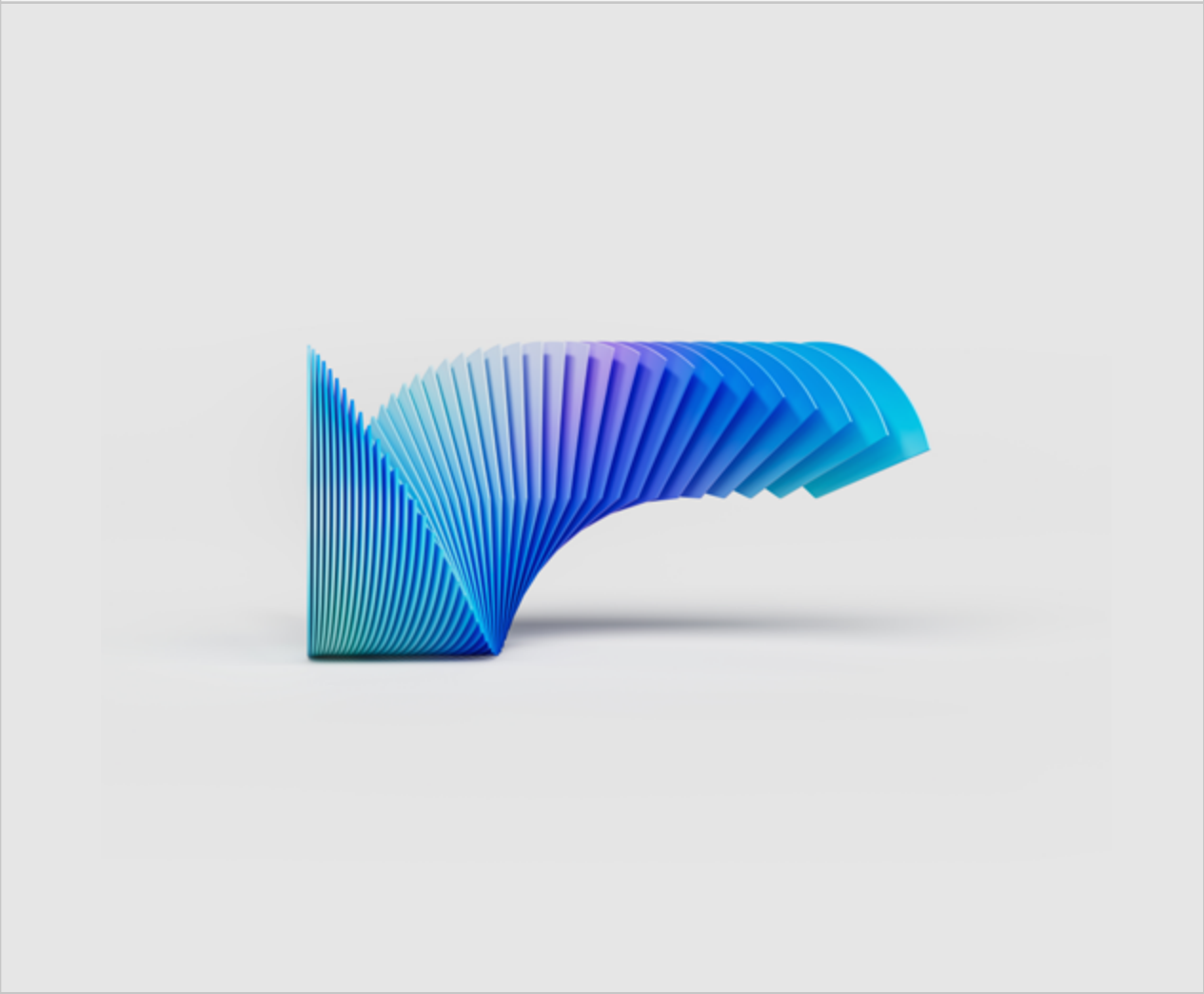


# IBM's AI agents and assistants



The complete 2025  
buyer's guide



# Contents





# 01

Why use AI agents  
and assistants now?





Enterprise generative AI (gen AI) is here to stay. But the promise of innovative solutions also comes with the potential for increased fragmentation and reduced ROI. What the next era of AI demands are tools that take companies from pilots to productivity, delivering impactful efficiencies, easing adoption barriers and creating exponential value. This value is estimated by McKinsey to add up to USD 4.4 trillion in global corporate profits annually.<sup>1</sup>

Though the future of AI continues to evolve, one thing is for certain: tech leaders need to act now to set their organizations and their teams up for success. Leveraging AI tools, such as AI assistants and agents, is an essential first step.

IBM's suite of AI tools helps make it simple for business leaders to integrate AI efficiencies at scale. Housed within a single interface, the tools reduce manual workflow with AI and automation, unlocking productivity gains and significant ROI in the process. AI agents and assistants can be easily built and deployed on low-code and no-code interfaces, using existing enterprise data. Finally, integrated AI governance within the tools reduces risk and helps ensure compliance with the latest AI regulations.

Use this guide to better understand what IBM's AI agents and assistants do best, how they can be used together to supercharge business goals and how to get started today.



By 2028, at least **15%** of day-to-day work decisions will be made autonomously through agentic AI, up from zero percent in 2024.<sup>2</sup>

Gartner

Operating profit gains directly attributable to AI doubled to nearly **5%** from 2022 to 2023—and executives expect that figure to hit **10%** by 2025.<sup>3</sup>

IBM Institute for Business Value

# 02

IBM's AI agents and  
assistants defined

A simplified overview of IBM’s three core AI productivity tools

IBM® watsonx Orchestrate®	IBM watsonx® Agents	IBM watsonx Code Assistant®
<p>Watsonx Orchestrate is an enterprise-ready solution that helps create, deploy and manage AI assistants and agents to automate processes and workflows.</p> <p>Watsonx Orchestrate provides seamless integration with existing business systems, connecting to any AI agent, model or automation tool that you or your clients may already use. The solution powers collaboration between AI assistants and agents in one unified experience. The result? Less manual effort, faster decision-making and greater efficiencies.</p>	<p>IBM watsonx Agents, available in watsonx Orchestrate, are AI agents designed for business use cases in HR, sales, procurement, finance and customer service.</p> <p>IBM watsonx Agents come ready with prebuilt integrations and tools, enabling them to immediately operate across existing applications and systems, breaking down barriers to AI adoption and accelerating time to value. They’re adept at complex, multistep tasks and can act on behalf of employees, freeing up their time for more strategic projects.</p>	<p>Watsonx Code Assistant is an enterprise-ready coding assistant that helps developers bridge their skills gap, increase their productivity and write high-quality code.</p> <p>The watsonx Code Assistant suite of gen AI tools caters to generic coding languages and specific programs, such as Python, Java, C, C++, Go, JavaScript and TypeScript. Additionally, it can be used to create Red Hat® Ansible® Playbooks and IBM Z® mainframe application modernization.</p>

# 03

## Solving challenges with specific tools

How to decide which tool to use, based on key business challenges.



# watsonx Orchestrate solves:



**Managing AI agents across the organization**  
Enterprises struggle to manage AI tools, data, agents and assistants across fragmented systems, slowing adoption and limiting impact. Watsonx Orchestrate seamlessly integrates with existing business systems, making it easier to collaborate across disconnected tools.

**Vendor lock-in**  
Many AI tools are locked into specific models or vendors. Watsonx Orchestrate delivers quick value by integrating with existing systems and tools—no rip and replace needed. Teams can build what they want, where they want it.

**Disconnected workflows**  
Business processes often span multiple applications and systems, making it difficult to automate end-to-end workflows without complex integrations. Watsonx Orchestrate integrates with over 80 leading enterprise applications, including Salesforce, Workday and more.

**Security and compliance concerns**  
As AI adoption grows, organizations struggle with ensuring compliance, security and ongoing oversight. Watsonx Orchestrate embeds governance and enterprise-grade security to confidently manage AI at scale.

## IBM watsonx Agents solve:



### **Lag time between implementation and impact**

Developing AI solutions from scratch requires significant time, expertise and resources, delaying ROI. IBM watsonx Agents deliver immediate impact with ready-to-deploy capabilities.

### **Lack of ROI on technology investments**

Enterprises struggle to integrate AI into existing systems. IBM watsonx Agents directly plug into tools, such as Salesforce, Workday and SAP, maximizing current investments without costly overhauls.

### **Inefficient workflows**

Employees often burn time on manual, repetitive tasks. IBM watsonx Agents automate complex, multistep processes, freeing teams to focus on strategic work.



## watsonx Code Assistant solves:



### Software development talent and skills gaps

Finding and retaining skilled developers with the right expertise is challenging. This issue is compounded by the growing complexity of enterprise application portfolios. These talent shortages lead to project delays, increased costs and strain on senior developers. Watsonx Code Assistant helps overcome skills gaps by using AI to democratize knowledge, with code explanation and code generation features.

### Trust, security and transparency concerns

These essential AI tool attributes make or break development efforts. Watsonx Code Assistant is built on an IBM Granite® code large language model (LLM) that offers IP indemnity, which doesn't store customer prompts or use them for machine learning. The product also provides code similarity checks.

### Delayed development cycles

Enterprise development teams are under constant pressure to deliver new features and updates quickly to support business innovation. Rapid digital transformation must be balanced with the same rapid testing and QA—essential factors for long-term sustainability. Watsonx Code Assistant accelerates development cycles by providing AI-powered code suggestions, automation and integration within popular development environments, streamlining workflows and reducing manual coding efforts. These features help teams deliver high-quality software faster and more efficiently.

### Deployment variability

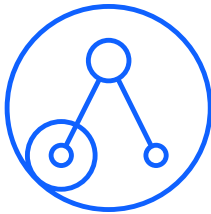
Some companies require tools to be SaaS, while others need them on prem. Watsonx Code Assistant does both.



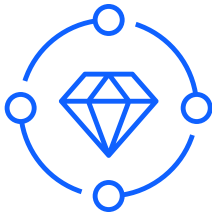
# 04

IBM's AI agents  
and assistants

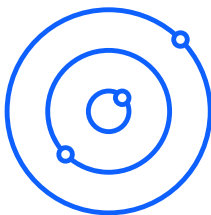
Here’s a summary of what watsonx Orchestrate does best:



**Integrates with enterprise systems, databases and AI models**  
Connects seamlessly with over 80 business applications—such as Salesforce, SAP and Microsoft—plus databases, while also supporting both IBM’s and third-party AI models. Helps ensure adaptability and scalability without vendor lock-in.

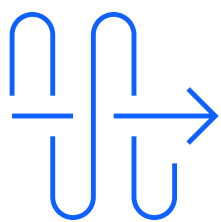


**Offers AI-powered orchestration with built-in governance**  
Acts as the command center for managing third-party and proprietary AI assistants, agents and automations in one unified platform. Provides visibility across all workflows, so organizations can monitor performance, optimize processes and ensure consistent governance across business functions.

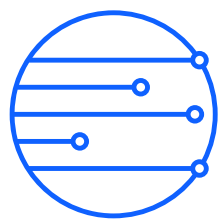


**Build AI agents with no-code and pro-code options**  
Empowers business users to build, customize and deploy AI-powered agents with or without coding. Leverages a vast catalog of prebuilt tools and agents that integrate seamlessly with popular enterprise apps, accelerating development and reducing time to value.

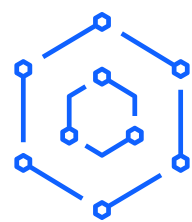
Here’s a  
summary of what  
IBM watsonx  
Agents do best:



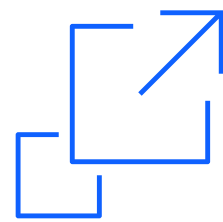
**Automates high-impact workflows**  
Agents come equipped with agentic tools and accomplish tasks across multiple, high-ROI use cases, such as employee support, talent acquisition, supplier management and sales prospecting in HR, sales, procurement, finance and customer service domains.



**Delivers work faster**  
Action-oriented from day one. Agents clear to-do list of repetitive, time-consuming tasks. Triggers workflows, updates systems, intelligently routes tasks and completes multistep processes across applications without manual intervention.



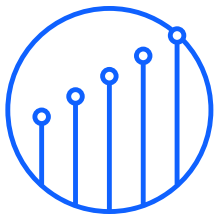
**Acts with enhanced autonomy**  
Infused with agentic automation, a set of expert agents in watsonx Orchestrate represent the next step in the evolution of AI—moving from scripted rules to autonomous action-taking. Independently collaborates with multiple agents, assistants and applications to complete complex, multistep tasks with just one user prompt.



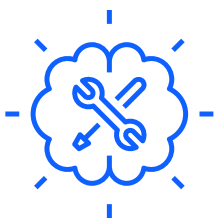
**Adapts to business needs with customization designed for ease of use**  
Flexible enough to evolve with business needs. Customizes workflows, integrates with new apps and even adjusts how decisions are made—all without writing a single line of code. Also learns from feedback, continuously improving their performance.



Here’s a  
summary of what  
watsonx Code  
Assistant does best:



**Boosts developer productivity with trusted, transparent gen AI**  
Increases developer productivity with context-aware assistance in the integrated development environment, such as VS Code and Eclipse, that helps generate, complete, transform, explain, document, review and test code.



**Performs specific tasks**  
Designed to perform specific tasks, such as Java modernization, Ansible Playbook creation and IBM Z mainframe application modernization, keeping trust, integrity and transparency intact.



**Manages AI security, privacy and compliance with hybrid cloud deployment**  
Supports hybrid cloud enterprises with a coding assistant fit for both SaaS hosting and on-premises deployment. Also bolsters regulatory compliance and meets data governance requirements.



**Accelerates application development and modernization**  
Built on Granite models tuned and trained for specific products. Accelerates coding with intelligent suggestions, streamlines code reviews with automated feedback, enhances testing by generating test cases and aids deployment with precise configuration.

# 05

Real-world  
success stories

# watsonx Orchestrate

IBM leveraged watsonx Orchestrate to drive enterprise-wide productivity by organizing complex HR workflows and automating manual processes, freeing teams to focus on strategic, high-impact work.

12,000 hours

saved in one quarter by automating manual data entry<sup>4</sup>

50,000 hours

saved annually through automation at scale (projected estimate)<sup>4</sup>

50%

reduction in promotion cycle time<sup>4</sup>

ThisWay Global, an IBM Business Partner, enabled FloCareer to implement watsonx Orchestrate to expand its pipeline of potential interviewers, take steps toward removing unconscious bias from its hiring processes, and improve the efficiency of its candidate communications and scheduling.

20,000

technical interviews completed per month<sup>5</sup>

70%

reduction in hiring turnaround time<sup>5</sup>

94%

in candidate satisfaction rate on post-interview surveys<sup>5</sup>

169 million

candidate pool with ThisWay Global varied and unbiased candidate database<sup>5</sup>





# IBM watsonx Agents

IBM used [IBM AskHR](#), an AI agent, to streamline its employee experiences and free up HR professionals to focus on higher-value tasks.

40%  
reduction in HR budget<sup>6</sup>

94%  
of employee inquiries resolved with AskHR<sup>6</sup>

Over  
55 point  
improvement of HR Net Promotor Score (NPS)<sup>6</sup>

IBM Business Partner [11x](#) built and deployed AI agents, Alice and Julian, to increase pipeline creation, boost conversion rates and drive predictable revenue growth.

2.5x  
lower cost per lead<sup>7</sup>

+61%  
inbound conversion<sup>7</sup>

+3.5%  
win rate<sup>7</sup>

+15%  
revenue growth<sup>7</sup>



# watsonx Code Assistant

IBM developers used watsonx Code Assistant to streamline coding processes to free them to focus on innovation.

90%  
more time saved on  
code explanations<sup>8</sup>

59%  
increase in average time saved  
on coding documentation<sup>8</sup>

Water Corporation accelerated the creation of Ansible Playbooks and cut development efforts and associated costs with watsonx Code Assistant.

40%  
reduction in cloud-related  
operating costs<sup>9</sup>

1,500 hours  
hours of manual labor  
saved annually<sup>9</sup>

Zero  
unplanned downtime over  
a one-year migration<sup>9</sup>



# 06

Top industry  
use cases



Here are the top use cases for watsonx Orchestrate:



**All-in-one agentic AI manager**  
Manage existing AI assistants and agents through a single, unified experience—seamlessly connecting applications, workflows and teams with orchestration capabilities. LLM-powered automation drives real-time collaboration and accelerates productivity at scale.



**Custom automations**  
Power existing workflows and automations with AI agents in watsonx Orchestrate. Maximize existing technology investments by adding AI tools that automate tasks, enhance workflows and seamlessly connect to enterprise systems.



**AI agent creation**  
Build and deploy AI agents with a low-code and pro-code interface. Use natural language to automate complex tasks, integrate with existing systems and scale AI across the enterprise—without complications or disruptions.



**Prebuilt AI tools**  
Choose from thousands of prebuilt AI tools that work with existing systems and applications to get AI agents up and running quickly across the enterprise without work disruptions.

Here are the top use cases for IBM watsonx Agents:



**HR and workforce productivity**  
Drives productivity beyond basic automation. IBM watsonx HR Agents don’t just handle simple HR queries—they autonomously manage end-to-end workflows, such as talent acquisition, onboarding, employee support and learning management. Works with Workday, SAP SuccessFactors, Oracle and more.



**Customer service and support**  
Delivers proactive, personalized customer experiences. IBM watsonx customer care agents predict, personalize and resolve customer issues autonomously. Agents handle complex queries, escalate when needed and continuously learn from interactions to improve over time. Works with ServiceNow, Zendesk and more.



**Sales acceleration and deal execution**  
Elevates sales productivity with IBM watsonx Sales Agents that go beyond surface-level automation. From lead qualification to deal closure, agents autonomously manage multistep workflows, such as drafting personalized outreach, tracking customer interactions, optimizing follow-ups and coaching reps with data-driven insights. Works with Salesforce, Microsoft Dynamics 365 and more.



**Finance and operational efficiency**  
Facilitates operational excellence. IBM watsonx Agents handle invoice processing and expense management, financial forecasting and compliance audits; dynamically adapt to regulatory changes; help ensure data accuracy; and provide real-time insights for smarter financial decisions. Works with Coupa, Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS), Oracle Cloud HCM, WageScape, D&B, Anaplan, IBM Cognos® and Microsoft Power BI.



**Procurement and vendor management**  
Transforms procurement operations with IBM watsonx Procurement Agents that orchestrate entire procurement lifecycles. Agents intelligently manage supplier onboarding, contract negotiations and purchase requisitions; perform compliance checks; proactively identify bottlenecks; recommend optimal sourcing strategies; and help ensure real-time visibility into vendor performance. Works with SAP Ariba, Coupa and more.

Here are the top use cases for watsonx Code Assistant:



**Developer productivity**  
Boosts developer productivity and flexes for various skill levels.



**Trust and security**  
Manages AI security, privacy and compliance with hybrid cloud deployment that's fit for both SaaS hosting and on-premises deployment.



**Java modernization**  
Streamlines the lifecycles of Java applications and reduces the cost and risk associated with modernization. Performs a deep analysis of Java applications and streamlines updates with a guided, automated experience that supports end-to-end application lifecycles.



**Playbook generation**  
Creates and explains full Ansible Playbooks using natural language task prompts.



**Mainframe application modernization**  
Accelerates every phase of the mainframe application lifecycle, from application, discovery and code explanation to auto refactoring, modular services and code optimization, transforming it into Java and testing for functional equivalence.



# 07

## Summary of capabilities

## Here's an overview of watsonx Orchestrate capabilities

### AI work orchestration and automation

- Manages everything in one place (AI assistants, agents and automation)
- Manages end-to-end workflow automation across HR, sales, procurement and more
- Has a built-in automation engine (native process automation)

### AI development and customization

- Uses low-code and no-code setup for agent builder
- Has a pro-code automation builder
- Has customizable workflows and decision logic

### Flexible AI deployment and interoperability

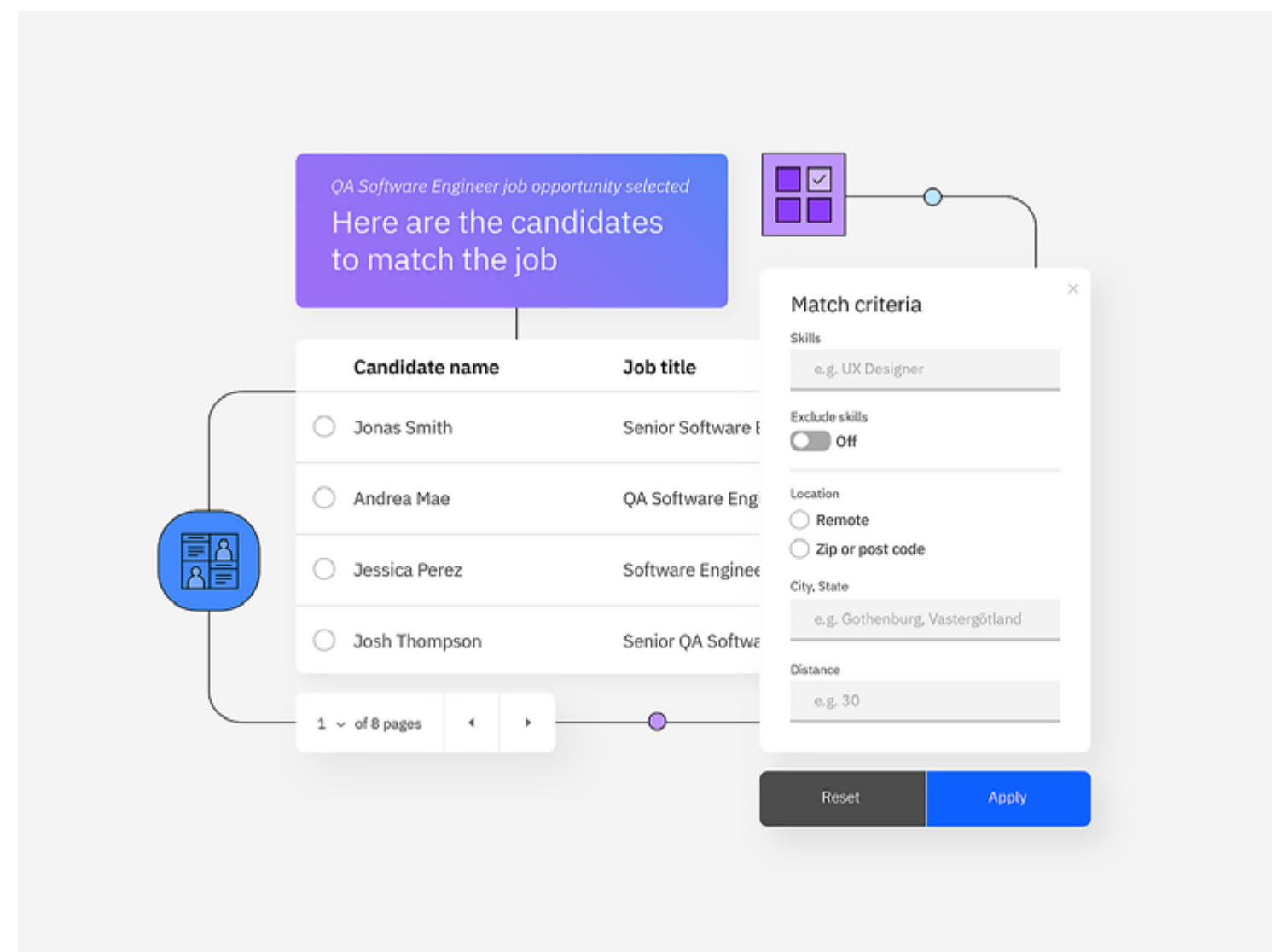
- Works with business applications (Salesforce, SAP, Microsoft, ServiceNow and so on)
- Supports IBM, third-party and open-source AI models
- Offers prebuilt connectors and OpenAPI support

### AI experience and governance

- Offers custom branding and tools for AI assistants and agents
- Offers enterprise-grade security, governance and compliance
- Includes configurable gen AI guardrails

### AI operations and scalability

- Coordinates multiple AI assistants and agents within existing workflows
- Embeds gen AI summarization, classification and insights
- Includes prebuilt domain AI agents and use case templates



“The integration of Box into IBM watsonx Orchestrate empowers enterprise users to effortlessly engage with their content through natural language interactions.”<sup>10</sup>

**Vishal Naik**

Head of Product Marketing,  
Platform at Box



## Here's an overview of the capabilities of IBM watsonx Agents

### AI development and customization

- Includes low-code builder. For example, simplified, drag-and-drop interface for faster customization.
- Includes pro-code builder. For example, advanced development environment for technical users.

### Domain-specific solutions

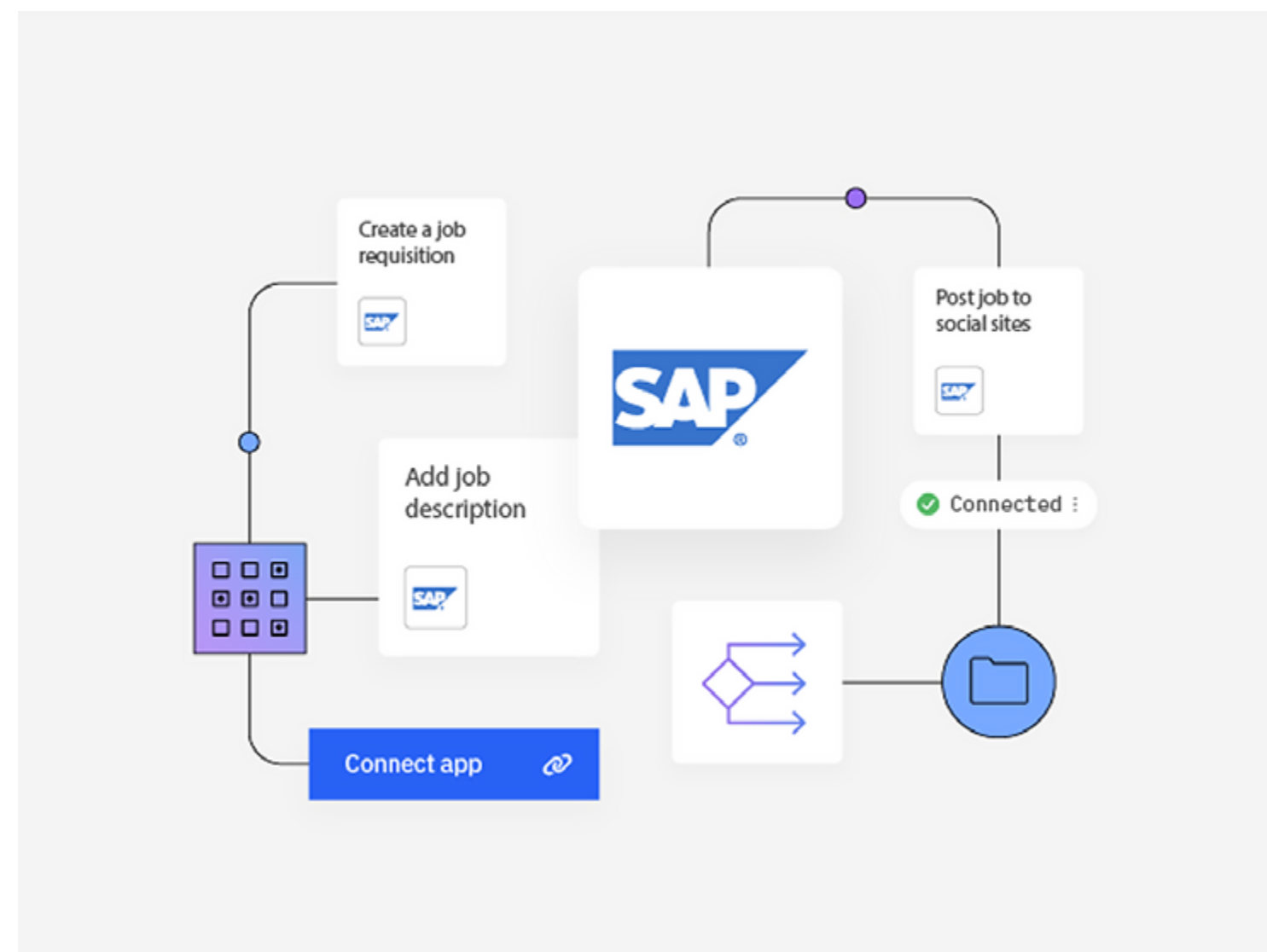
- Prebuilt, domain-specific AI agents tailored for specific business functions (HR, sales, procurement and so on).

### AI experience and branding

- Includes customizable assistant and agent branding tools.

### AI operations and workflow management

- Coordinates multiple AI agents for seamless workflow execution.





# Here's an overview of watsonx Code Assistant capabilities

## Code generation and assistance

- Autocompletes code snippets
- Generates full functions
- Includes language-specific features

## Code optimization and debugging

- Suggests performance improvements
- Detects and fixes common errors
- Refactors code

## Collaboration and documentation

- Shares and collaborates on code snippets
- Generates comments and docstrings
- Provides coding tips and best practices

## Integration and support

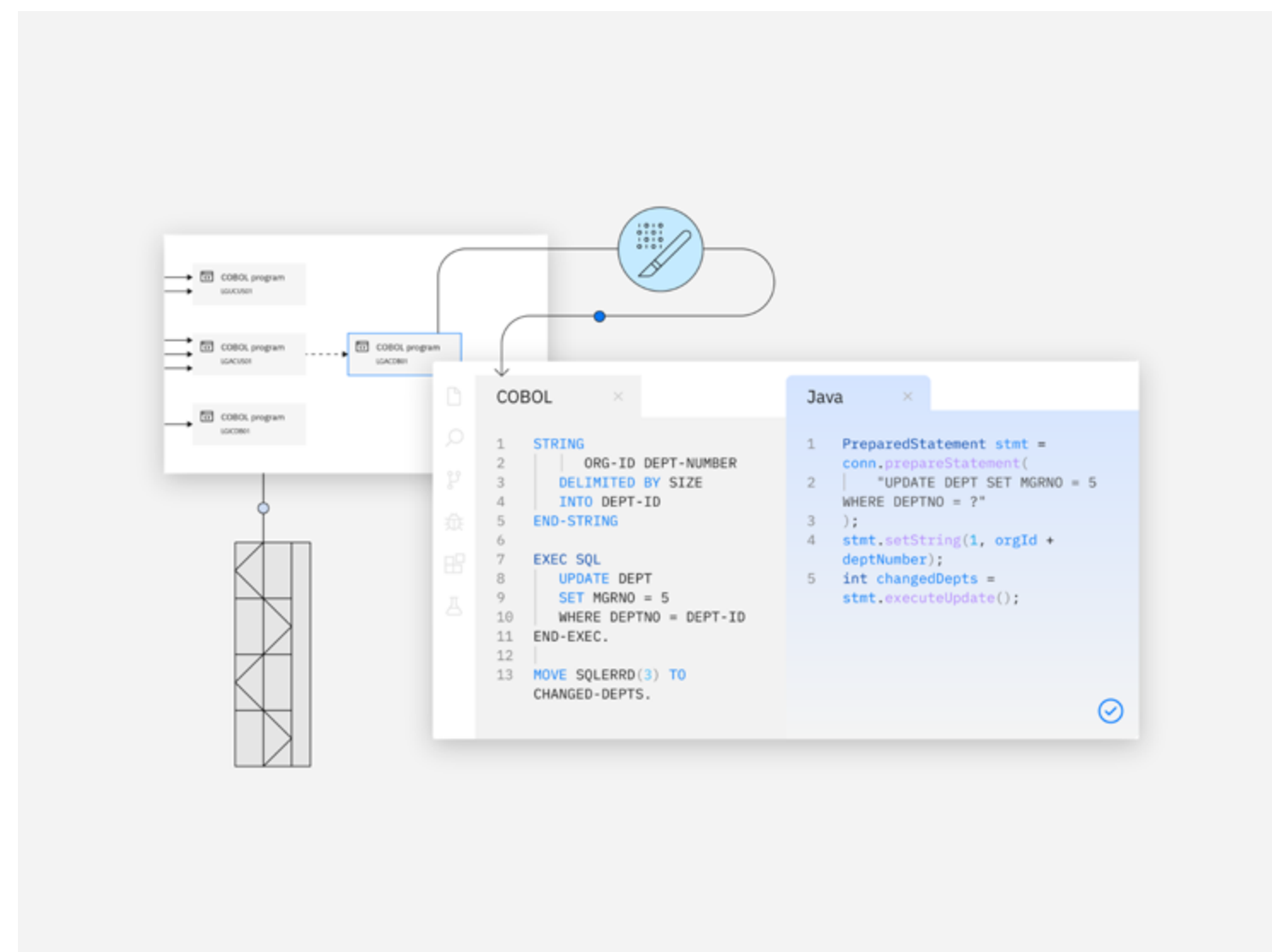
- Integrates with development tools
- Has API integration capabilities
- Offers code pattern recognition
- Recommends best practices
- Provides coding suggestions

## Security and compliance

- Identifies security vulnerabilities
- Does compliance checks
- Does code similarity checks
- Covers IP indemnity

## Testing and validation

- Automates testing
- Debugs and troubleshoots
- Autogenerates unit test cases



“IBM watsonx Code Assistant makes it easier, faster and ensures better quality for Java modernization. I would highly recommend the product to others and I’m excited about IBM’s future with generative AI.”<sup>11</sup>

**Walid Largou**  
Chief Executive Officer  
at rKube



# 08

How to  
get started



	watsonx Orchestrate	IBM watsonx Agents	watsonx Code Assistant
Step 1 Figure out which product you need	<b>For leaders who need AI to boost their teams’ productivity. Manage and scale AI and automation across the business from a single interface.</b> Whether it be third-party or proprietary AI assistants, agents, enterprise applications or workflows, watsonx Orchestrate helps ensure AI investments work together to be smarter and faster, maximizing their full potential.	<b>For leaders who need seamless, prebuilt AI agents for high-impact deployment.</b> Come equipped with the tools and integrations necessary to immediately get to work. Whether it be HR, sales, procurement, finance or customer service, they quickly adapt to workflows, handling complex tasks, so teams can focus on strategic priorities.	<b>For leaders who need a comprehensive, seamless solution to enhance their coding capabilities.</b> Boost productivity, optimize code and help ensure top-notch performance for development projects, the creation of Ansible Playbooks, Java and mainframe application modernization projects.
Step 2 Experience the product for yourself	<b>Watch demo videos</b> → <a href="#">watsonx Orchestrate</a> demo → <a href="#">The Builder Experience in watsonx Orchestrate</a> demo	<b>Watch demo videos</b> → <a href="#">AI agents for HR</a> demo → <a href="#">AI agents for Sales</a> demo → <a href="#">AI agents for Procurement</a> demo → <a href="#">Agent Builder</a> demo  <b>Try it</b> → <a href="#">AI Agents Co-Create Experience</a>	<b>Watch demo videos</b> → <a href="#">watsonx Code Assistant</a> demo  <b>Try it</b> → <a href="#">AI Code Generation Experience</a>
Step 3 Get access to these technologies by joining IBM Partner Plus®	Gain a competitive advantage by joining a partner program that gives you insider access to innovative technology, marketplaces, demand generation resources and more.  IBM Partner Plus is dedicated to helping you accelerate your time to market and drive revenue growth. With this program, <b>new partners can be onboarded and ready to transact in just 48 hours.</b>  → <a href="#">Join today</a>		

If you have any additional questions, contact your IBM representative.





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