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# Déjà Vu

What AI Adoption Can Learn from a Decade of Test Automation

Prepared by: Kayla Gillman

Role: Senior Manager - Canada & Global Head of Pre-Sales

Email: [Kayla.Gillman@ttcglobal.com](mailto:Kayla.Gillman@ttcglobal.com)

12 November 2025



# Introduction

## Kayla Gillman, Global Head of Pre-Sales & Senior Manager Delivery - Canada

- Live in Cincinnati, Ohio
- Moving to Toronto in June 2026
- Career spans QA Analyst, Automation Engineer, Solutions Architect, and Consulting
- Hobbies include travel, cooking, and video games
- Two cats – Ashes (15) and Rory (12)





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Kayla, do not use this version.

# Things That Annoyed Me as a Test Automation Consultant That are Now Annoying Me in the Age of AI.

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No Money to Give.  
Here's Questions Anyway.

## Question 1

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Companies today are all about gaining efficiency through \_\_\_\_\_.

A. Test Automation

B. Artificial Intelligence

## Question 1

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Companies today are all about gaining efficiency through \_\_\_\_\_.

**A. Test Automation - 2015**

**B. Artificial Intelligence - 2025**

## Question 2

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We're investing heavily in \_\_\_\_\_ to cut costs and increase quality.

A. Test Automation

B. Artificial Intelligence

## Question 2

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We're investing heavily in \_\_\_\_\_ to cut costs and increase quality.

**A. Test Automation - 2015**

**B. Artificial Intelligence - 2025**

## Question 3

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Most organizational \_\_\_\_\_ initiatives are failing to deliver value.

A. Test Automation

B. Artificial Intelligence

## Question 3

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Most organizational \_\_\_\_\_ initiatives are failing to deliver value.

A. Test Automation - 2025

B. Artificial Intelligence - 2025

# How Successful has AI Been – Really?

NEWSLETTERS · CFO DAILY

## MIT report: 95% of generative AI pilots at companies are failing



BY SHERYL ESTRADA  
SENIOR WRITER AND AUTHOR OF CFO DAILY

August 18, 2025 at 6:54 AM EDT



GETTY IMAGES



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# How Successful has AI Been – Really?

1. **Technology and business mismatch:** Companies often use generic models for specialized problems, leading to poor performance.
2. **Unclear goals:** Projects without specific, measurable goals get stuck in a "pilot purgatory" and never scale.
3. **Integration challenges:** AI solutions are not always designed to fit into existing business processes, creating friction and slowing adoption.
4. **Talent shortages:** A lack of in-house expertise to build, deploy, and maintain AI systems is a major hurdle.
5. **Focus on technology over people:** Organizations fail to prepare employees and redesign workflows to work with AI, leading to failed implementations.



# So, We've Got Automation Under Control... Right?

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## ASUG Study:

- 95% of organizations surveyed report only low to medium adoption of automation.
- 35% admitted very few processes are automated.
- 13% no automation implemented at all.

## Capgemini World Quality Report NA (2020/2021):

- 47% said they had difficulties in aligning the tools they should use for automated testing.
- 41% said they didn't have a good testing approach.
- 37% said their agile teams lacked professional test expertise.

## Virtuoso QA (Industry Commentary):

- 73% of test automation projects (estimated) fail to deliver promised ROI.
- 68% are abandoned within 18 months (estimated).

Wait, so why not?

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Low Organizational Readiness

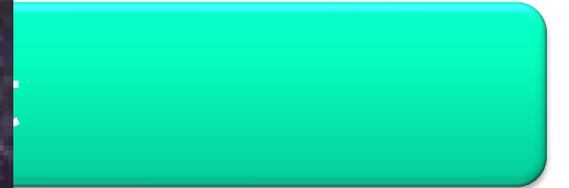
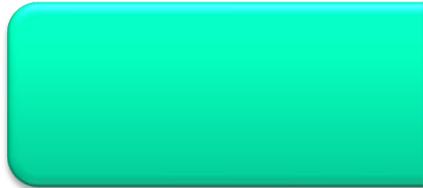
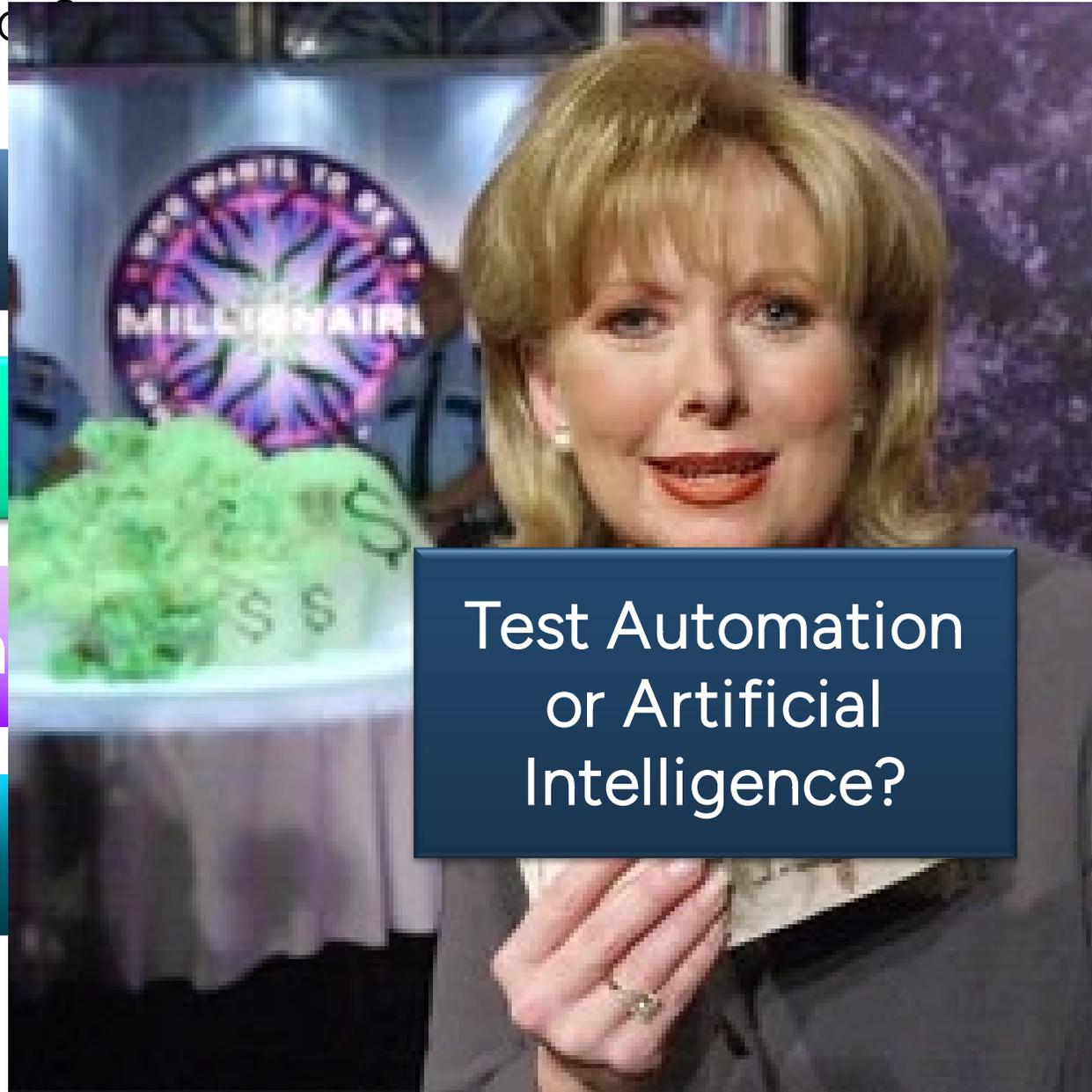
Tool & Strategy Misalignment

Lack of Skills & Continuous Enablement

Cultural and Leadership Gaps



Wait, so why not



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Test Automation  
or Artificial  
Intelligence?

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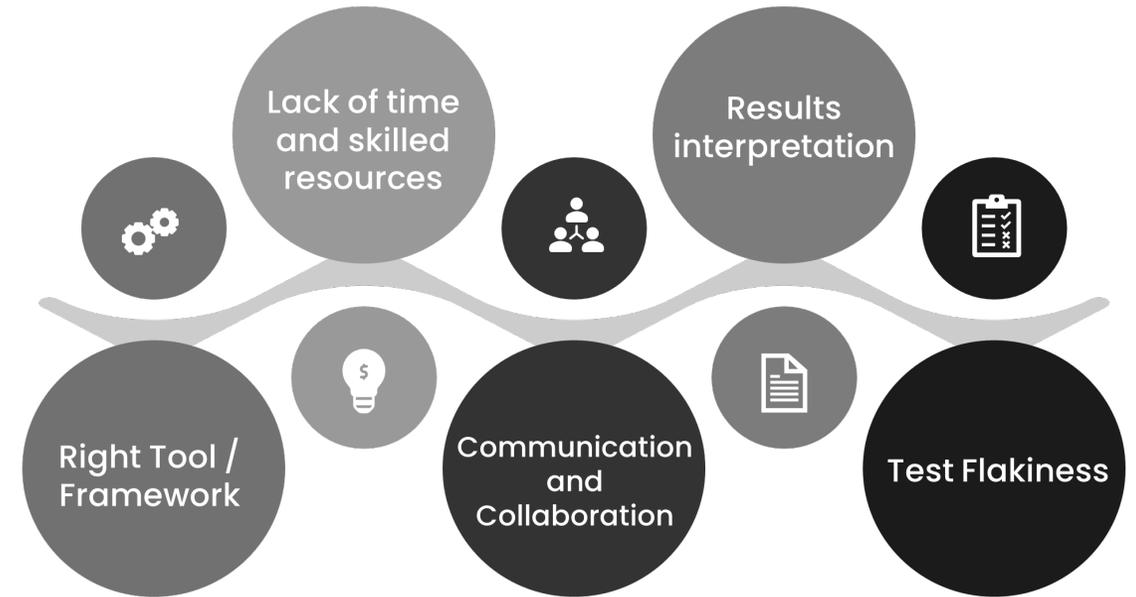
# Test Automation

## EXPECTATIONS



Benefits of test automation

## REALITY

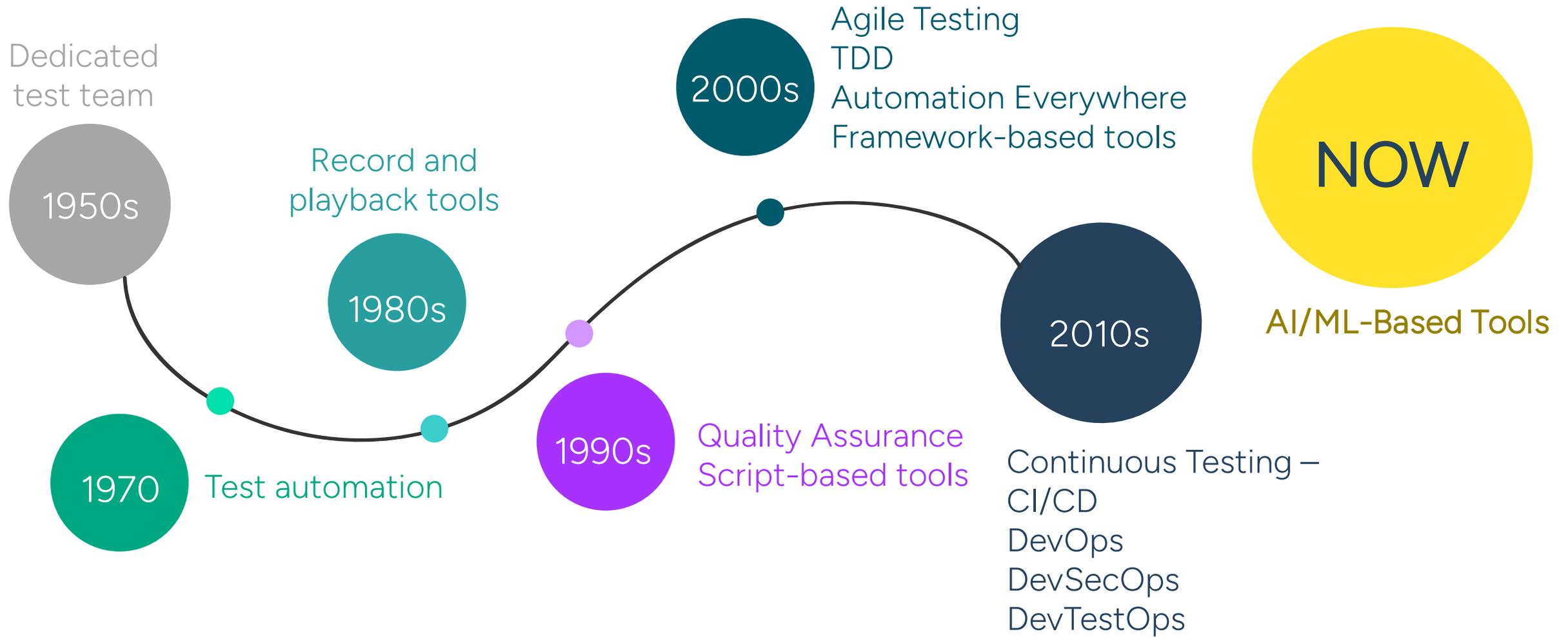


Challenges of test automation

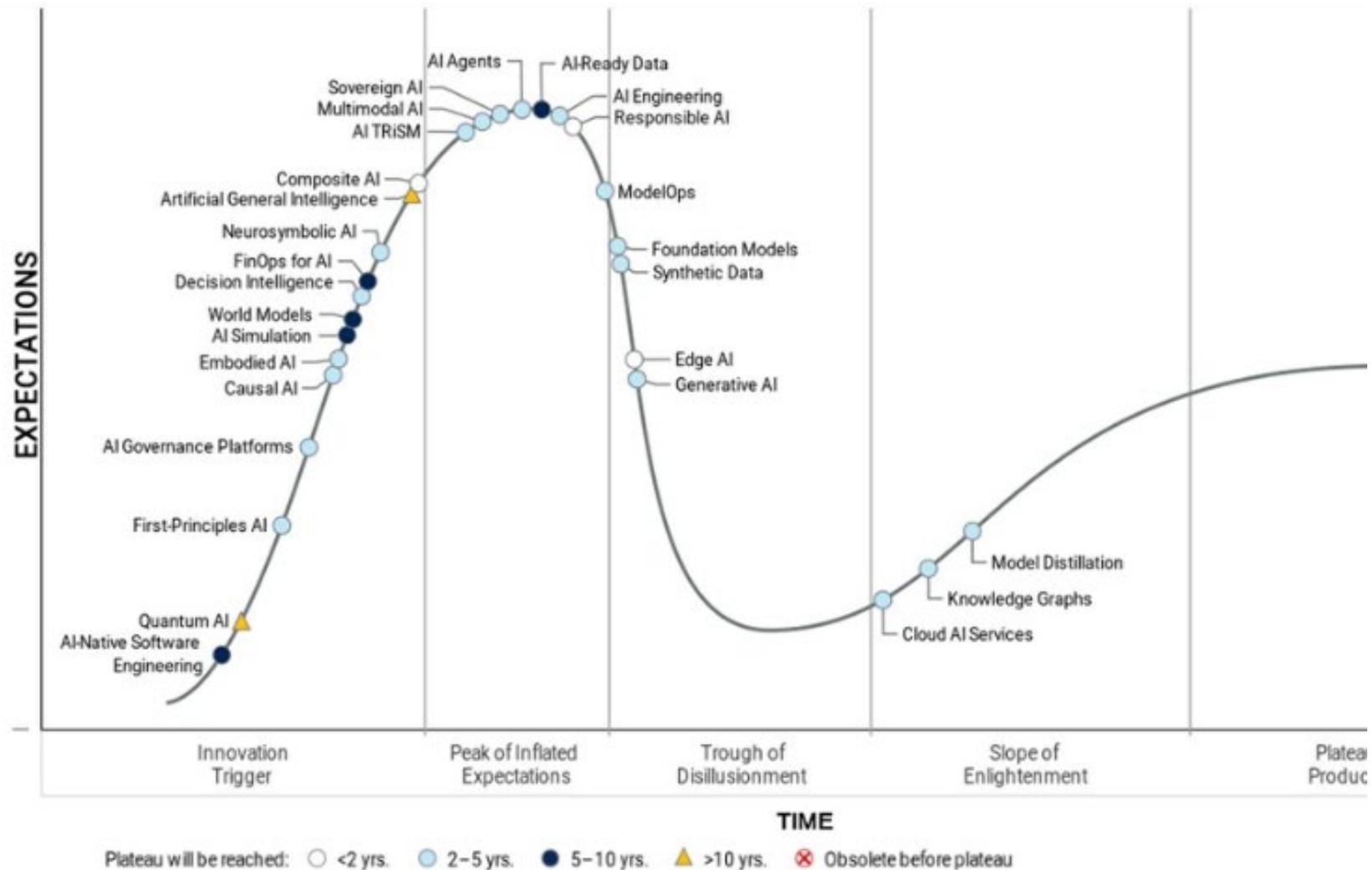
Test automation is only beneficial *if done right*.  
"Manual" testing is never going away.



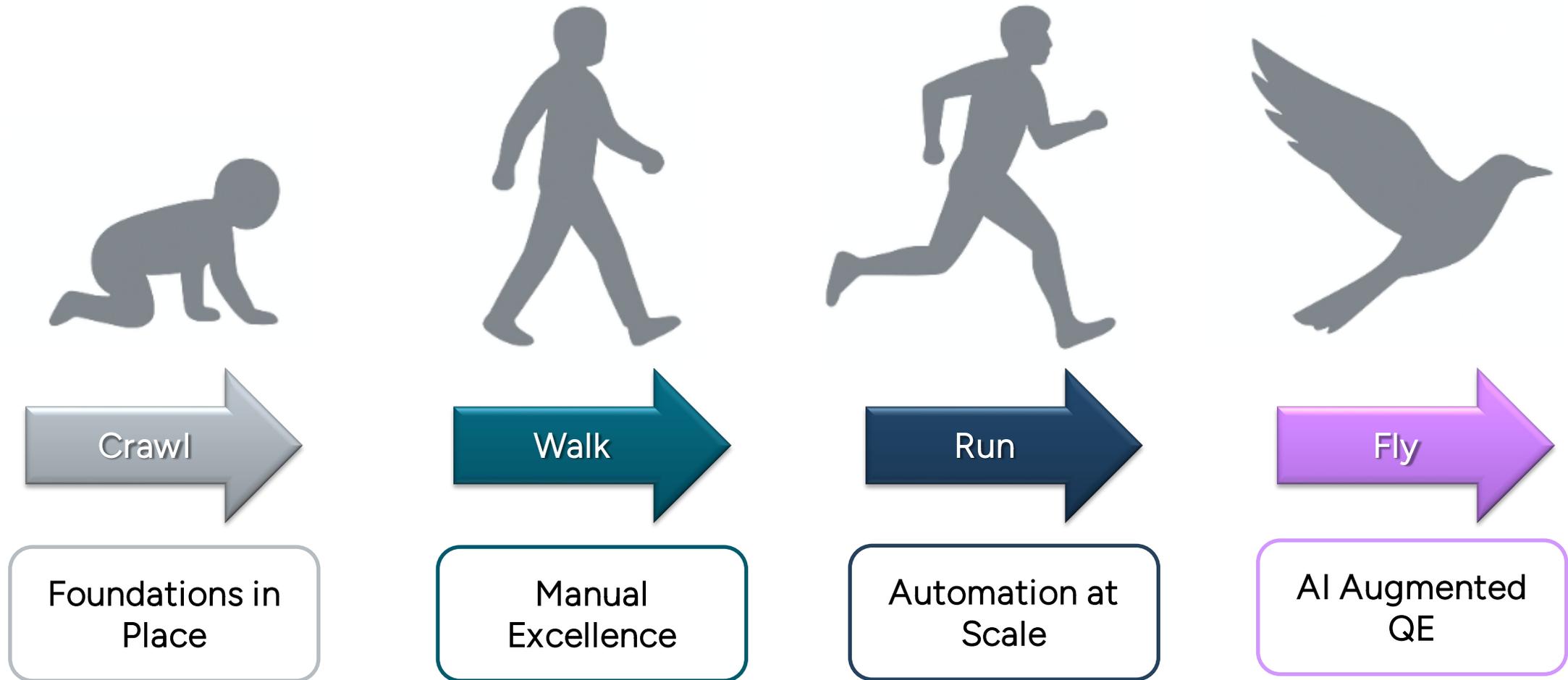
# Software Testing Trends



# Full Circle Moment – Gartner Hype Cycle 2025



# Tools Don't Transform – Practices Do.



Automation doesn't fail because of the tools.  
It fails because we automate before we are ready.  
And now we're doing the exact same thing with  
AI.

# What Do Teams Get Right?

And how can I apply that to AI initiatives?

# We Automated Repetitive Tasks



- Automation succeeded when we let tools handle repetitive tasks.
- It failed when we tried to outsource judgment and strategy to the tool.
- AI should free testers to think... not think for them.

Tools don't transform.  
Processes and People do.



# We Encouraged Innovation

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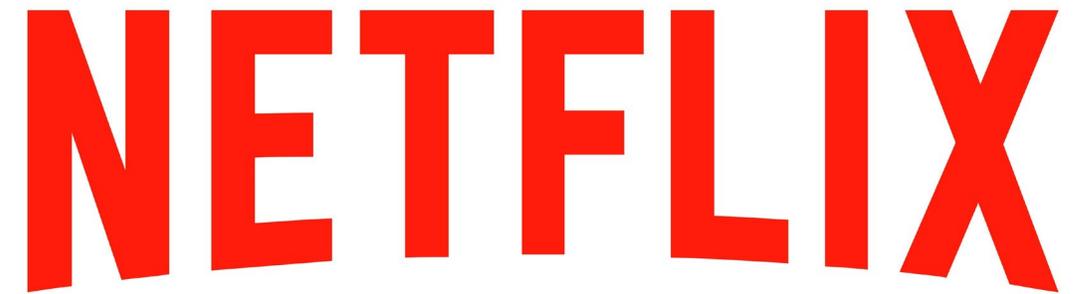
NETFLIX



## We Encouraged Innovation



**BLOCKBUSTER®**



**NETFLIX**

Blockbuster optimized the old model (late fees, physical stores).

Netflix empowered teams to experiment: mailing DVDs, then streaming, then AI-powered recommendations.



# We Proved the ROI

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# We Proved the ROI

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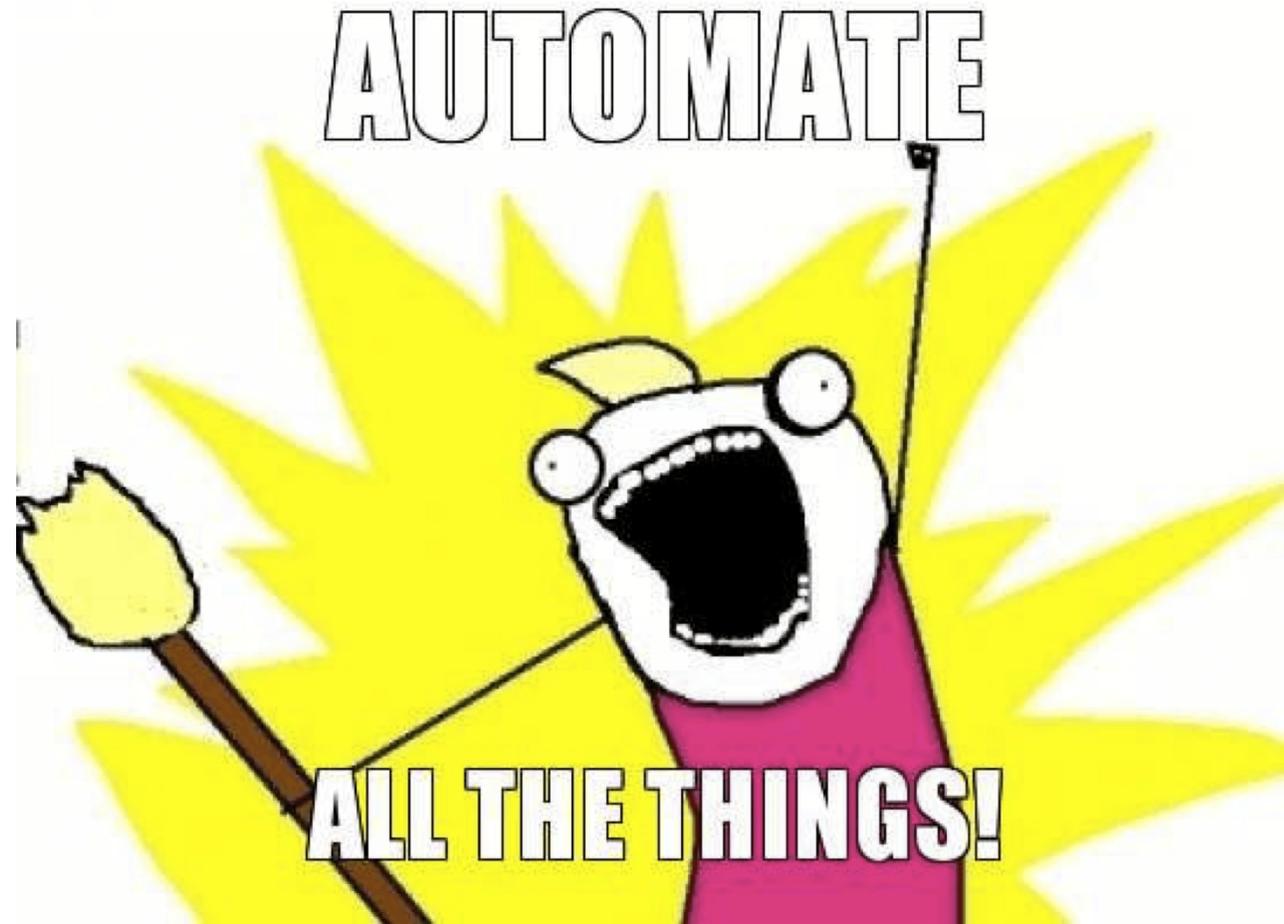
# What Do Teams Get Right - Summary

Theme	What We Got Right (Automation)	What AI Can Learn (AI Adoption)
We Automated Repetitive Tasks	We removed low-value, repetitive, manual work (regression runs, environment setup, data entry) so testers could focus on thinking, not clicking.	AI should eliminate cognitive busy-work (analysis, prioritization, documentation) so humans can focus on strategy, creativity, and quality decisions. Use AI for "laundry and dishes," not for the art.
We Encouraged Innovation	Teams were given permission to experiment. Pilots were safe to try. We shared lessons, not just results. Innovation happened because people were empowered, not mandated.	AI succeeds when teams get the same freedom - space to test ideas, try models, learn fast, and iterate. Don't mandate AI; empower exploration and learning.
We Proved ROI	Automation saved money by reducing the cost of repeat testing and defect escape. ROI became visible and measurable: faster cycles, fewer firefights, predictable releases.	AI ROI will be shown by reducing the cost of decision-making, analysis, and rework. AI must demonstrate value through outcomes, not hype: faster insights, smarter risk targeting, improved velocity.

# What Do Teams Get Wrong?

And how can we learn from those lessons?

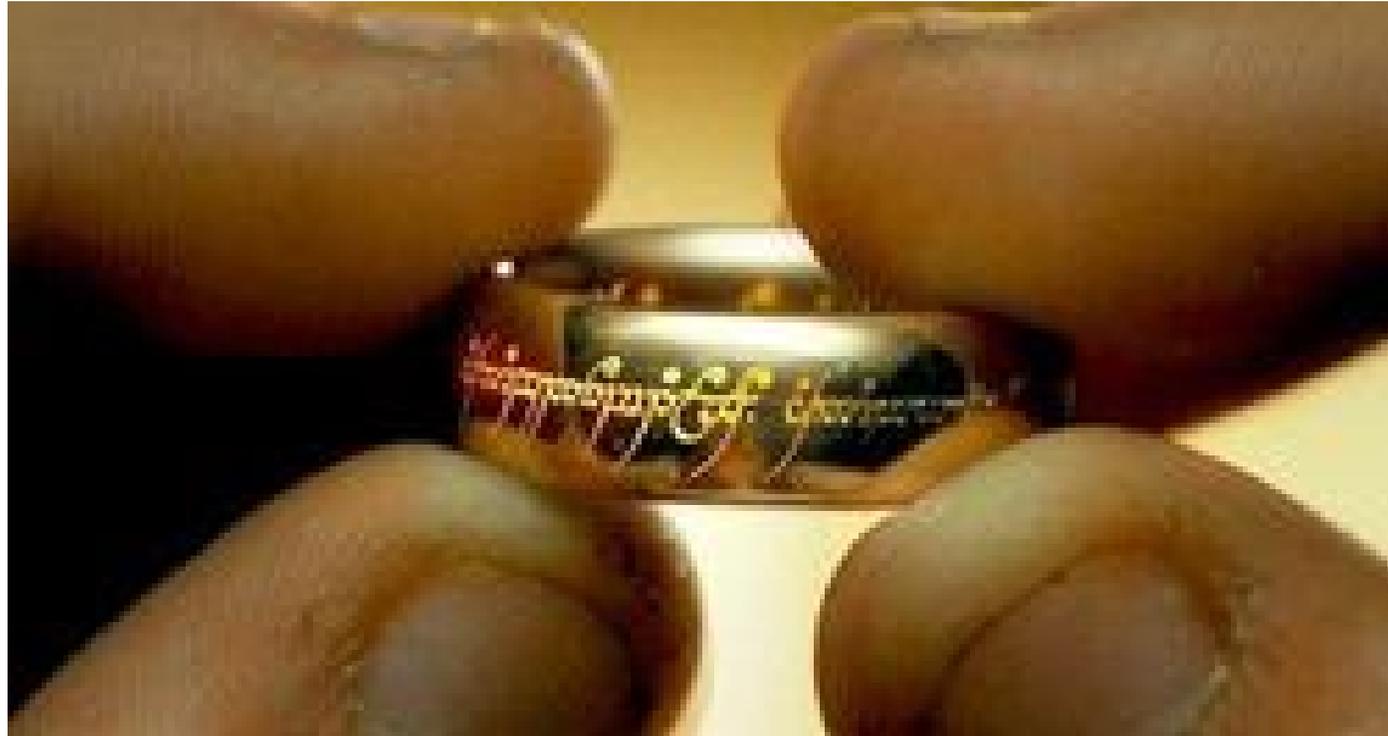
# "Let's Automate Everything"





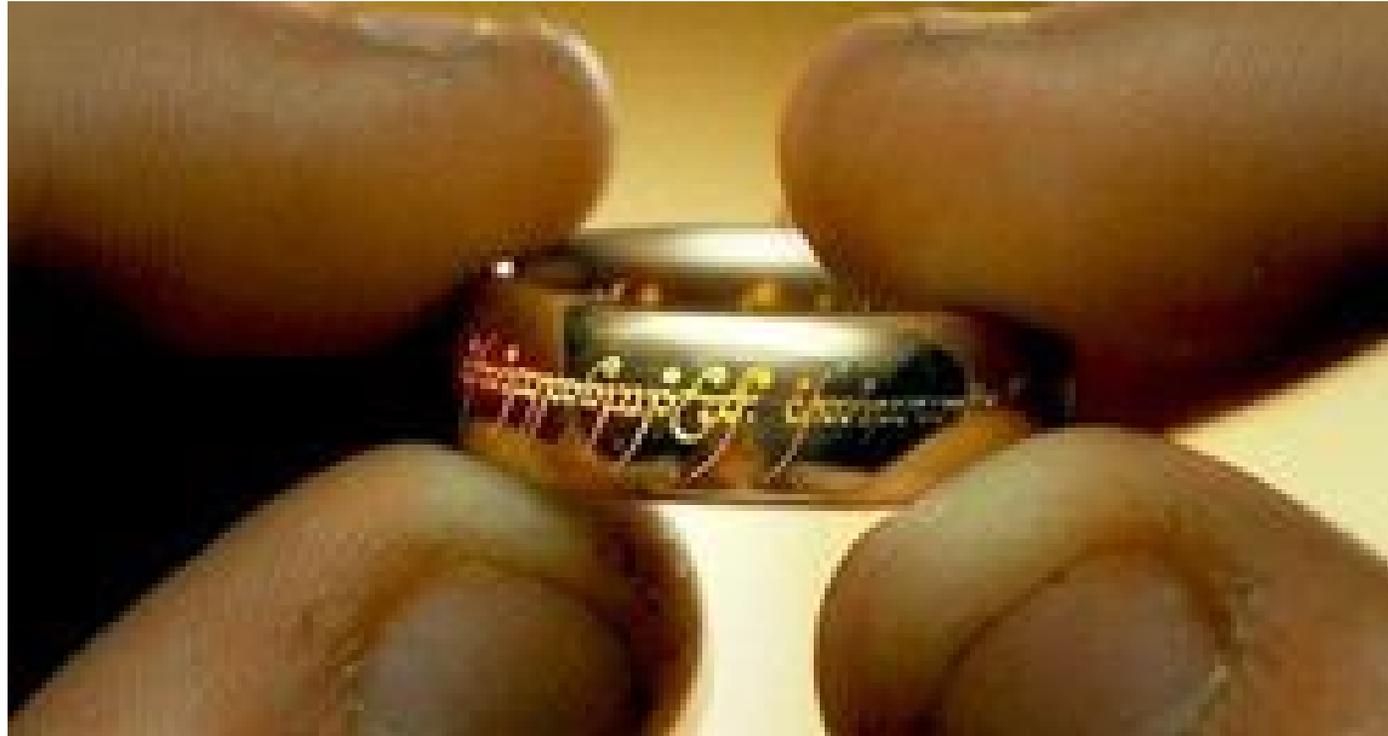
# Chased the Silver Bullet

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# Chased the "One Tool to Rule Them All"

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# Chased the "One Tool to Rule Them All"

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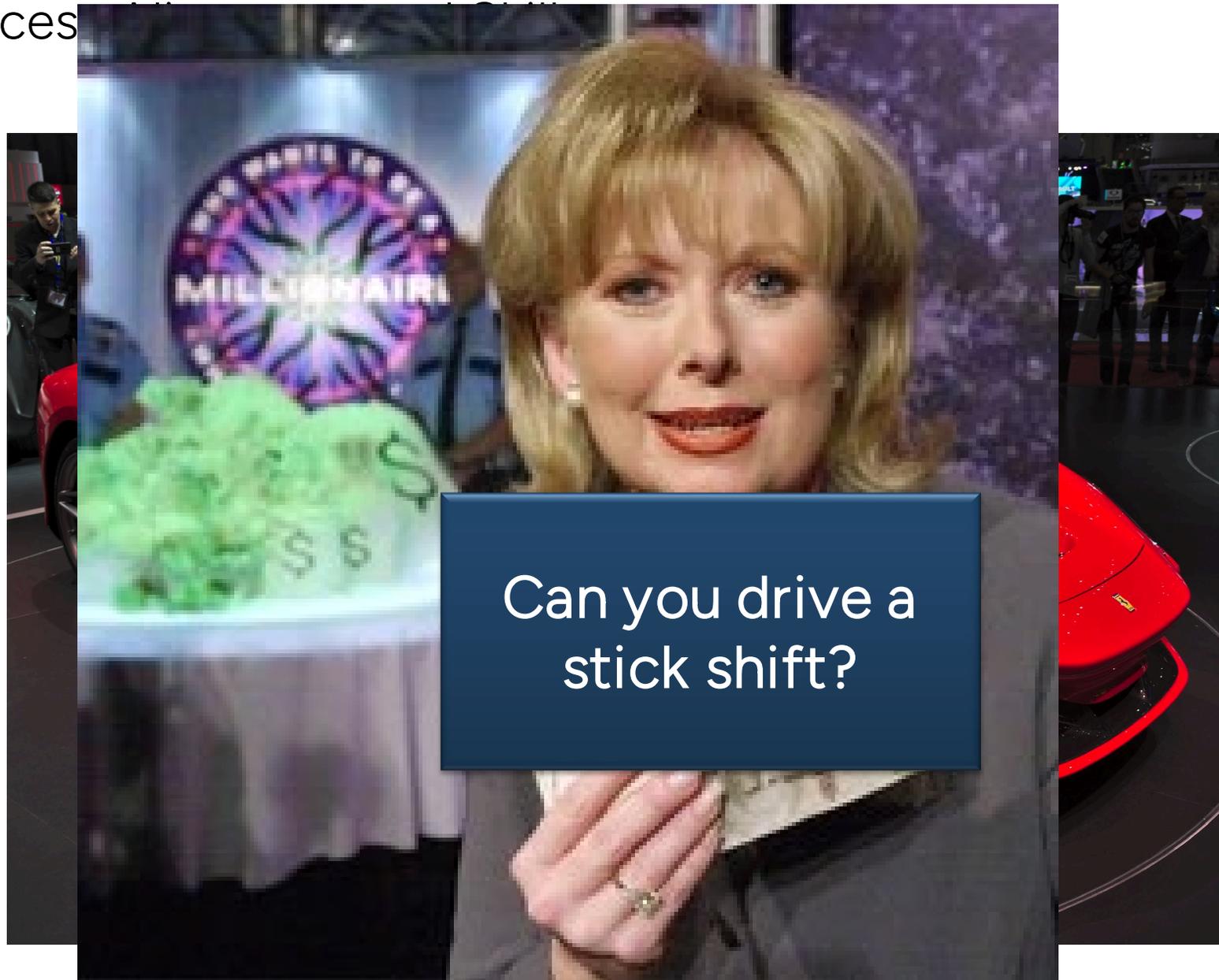


# Ignored Process Alignment and Skills

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# Ignored Process



# What Do Teams Get Wrong - Summary

Theme	What Automation Got Wrong (Past 10 Years)	What AI / Agentic Automation Is Getting Wrong (Right Now)
Automate Everything	Tried to <b>automate every test case</b> instead of the right test cases. Focus was on volume (“% automated”) instead of value. Result: brittle suites and high maintenance cost.	Belief that AI agents will <b>replace testers and thinking</b> . Trying to make AI generate all tests, requirements, bugs. Focus on “full autonomy” instead of strategic augmentation.
Chase the One Tool to Rule Them All	Teams chased the “silver bullet” automation tool: believing feature richness would solve maturity problems.	Organizations believe <b>agentic platforms will do it all</b> : generate tests, execute, triage, write bugs, maintain everything. Expectation that AI tools = transformation (without human oversight).
Ignoring Process & Skills	Bought expensive tools with no enablement plan. No governance, no ownership, no alignment to delivery process. Result: framework abandonment, low ROI, friction.	Buying AI platforms <b>before</b> aligning workflow, data governance, and reskilling teams. No AI literacy. No readiness. The tool arrives... the process doesn’t. Result: PoC purgatory.

# Key Takeaways

# Let's Learn From Our Mistakes

Theme	What Automation Got Wrong (Past 10 Years)	What AI / Agentic Automation Is Getting Wrong (Right Now)	What QA Leaders Can Do to Fix It
<b>Automate Everything</b> (Volume over Value)	Tried to automate every test case instead of the right test cases. Success was measured by % automation and number of scripts created.	Expectation that AI will <b>replace thinking and judgment</b> . Belief that autonomous agents will generate all tests, run them, and report defects flawlessly.	<b>Shift from "more automation" to "better outcomes."</b> Define high-value scope first (risk-based). Use AI to eliminate low-value work (data setup, documentation), not strategy or oversight.
<b>Chasing the Silver Bullet Tool</b> (The one framework to rule them all)	Tools bought on hype... not readiness. Tool changes every 18 months. Result: shelfware, rework, wasted spend.	Companies are buying AI platforms because of hype ("fully autonomous testing"), expecting instant transformation.	<b>Anchor decisions to outcomes, not vendors.</b> Require business cases. Run small proofs of value before platform adoption.
<b>Ignoring Processes &amp; Skills</b> (The Ferrari nobody can drive)	No enablement, no ownership, no process alignment. Automation treated as an add-on rather than a redesign of how testing happens.	AI tools purchased without governance, data readiness, or skills. No AI literacy plan. People don't trust or know how to use it.	<b>Invest in readiness before tools.</b> Build AI literacy programs. Define governance and guardrails (ethics, data quality, model evaluation). Assign ownership and change management.



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# Thank You!

Stay Connected – Reach Out via LinkedIn or Email

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