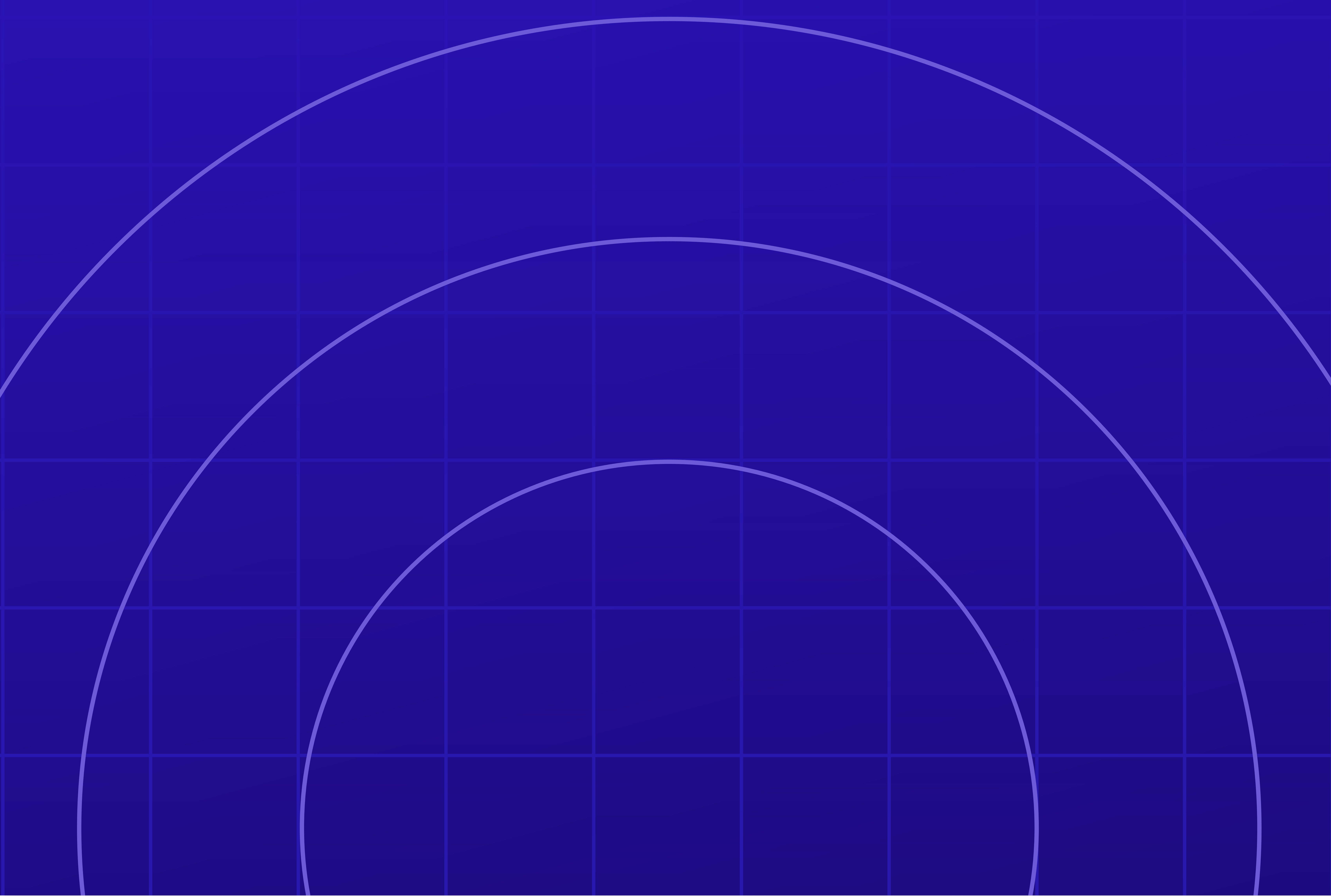




Orchestrating spend
so business can flow

The executive guide to

Procurement Orchestration



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In 2023, the interest in procurement intake and orchestration solutions caught fire, and **we expect continued growth and momentum in the months ahead.**

— Magnus Bergfors, [Ardent Partners](#)

“

This solution set has a lot of different names, intake, Intake-to-Procure, user experience, process orchestration (my current choice), and countless other descriptors. **Call it whatever you want, just understand that this is the new endgame.**

— Dr. Elouise Epstein, [Partner at Kearny](#)

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The spend orchestration space is growing quickly, with existing providers adding functionality and many new entrants entering the space. **Buyers report they appreciate the clean, transparent, and workflow-centric approach that drives visibility and time to value.** While it remains very early, there are already a number of highly compelling use cases.

— Patrick Reymann, [IDC](#)

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For a CPO to help transform value chains, enhance third-party management, and maximize enterprise value beyond basic supplier cost reduction and risk mitigation, **the CPO must take a leadership role in collaboratively building an enterprise capability of ‘orchestration.’**

— Deloitte 2023 Global Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) Survey: [Orchestrators of Value](#)

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Why is everyone talking about procurement orchestration?

Across the industry, everyone seems to be talking about **procurement orchestration**.

The buzz isn't without merit. Procurement orchestration has become a hot topic for a compelling reason: it represents the next evolutionary leap in procurement's strategic function, addressing the evolving complexities and demands of the modern procurement organization.

At the heart of this evolution is the recognition of a fundamental shift.

As the scope of procurement's responsibilities has expanded, so too has the proliferation of technological solutions designed to address its multifaceted challenges.

From contract management to third-party risk management, ESG considerations and beyond, countless specialized applications have emerged. However, this abundance has introduced a new problem: an overwhelming array of siloed tools, each addressing just a piece of the procurement puzzle but collectively complicating the overall procurement process.

Recognizing the need to streamline fragmented processes and systems, the concept of procurement orchestration has emerged.

At Zip, our approach began with the creation of a 'single front door' intake for initiating procurement requests. But was just the beginning of a broader evolution.

As organizations grapple with an intricate web of departmental systems; from IT to Legal, security teams and beyond, the need for a more comprehensive solution has become clear.

Procurement orchestration is that solution, offering a path to unify disparate systems into a cohesive, intelligent, and efficiently managed workflow.

In **'The Executive Guide to Procurement Orchestration'** we'll dig into the why and how of procurement orchestration. We'll explore its significance for Chief Procurement Officers (CPOs) and executive leaders of all company sizes across various industries, and reveal the technology that makes it work.

We'll uncover the building blocks of orchestration, its impact on procurement's evolving role, and why it's not just important but essential for leaders seeking to harness the full strategic potential of the procurement function.

Welcome to the next era of procurement.

Understanding procurement orchestration

IDC defines orchestration as the *“spend management applications that provide intuitive, dynamic, transparent self-service procurement capabilities that automate and orchestrate external spend management applications by leveraging a centralized workflow and integration hub to increase transparency, cost control, reduce risk and operational efficiency.”*

Put simply, it's about unifying siloed workflows and creating seamless bridges between applications, data, and users.

This strategic alignment ensures data integrity, fosters collaboration, and maintains transparency from the initial purchase request at intake all the way through to final payment and record-keeping. It's an approach that aligns procurement with the overarching business strategy, streamlining operations and enhancing efficiencies at every stage.

Procurement orchestration then is not just a component but an end-to-end workflow that spans from Intake-to-Pay. While centralized intake management now serves as a welcoming front door for any procurement-related request, orchestrated procurement is like exploring the entire house, every room, and the tools within.

Having pioneered the concept of intake, we recognized demand for a more expansive solution. This is why Zip has evolved into an **agentic procurement orchestration** suite, enabling an AI-powered *symphony of workflows* from various departments and systems all playing in harmony.

A SYMPHONY OF WORKFLOWS

To understand how procurement orchestration works, it helps to consider what your organization is orchestrating and why. Let's explore an analogy from the world of music.

In the opening bars of a symphony, a 'motive' introduces a theme. This motive, much like an intake request, sets the stage for everything to come. As the piece progresses, this theme expands across multiple instruments, presenting variations and transforming across sections.

Under the guidance of a conductor, much like the CPO at an organization, every participant (employees, legal, IT, security, and finance) operates in sync. The conductor ensures all players have access to the same rhythm (data), melody (workflows), and harmony (integrations), all performing together to create a masterpiece transcending the sum of its parts.

Procurement orchestration does the same for your procurement processes.

Requesters, cross-functional approvers, and procurement team members each have their own roles and tools to operate at specific moments. But each participant doesn't need to ask the conductor when to play or what to do; the entire workflow is laid out with centralized visibility and seamless integration at every step of the process.

Orchestration in procurement is not just (music) theory. It's practical and impactful, as demonstrated by the worldwide leader in cloud-mobilization, Snowflake.

As a newly public company facing increased scrutiny in the market, Snowflake sought to align data silos across a fragmented technology stack. Their goal, as Joe Frederick, Snowflake's Sr. Director of Procurement & Sourcing, was to create a unified visualization and approval process for all privacy, legal, security, and procurement workflows.

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Our north star was putting all privacy, legal, security, and procurement workflows in one visualization and approval process.



Joe Frederick, Sr. Director of Procurement & Sourcing, Snowflake

Under a newly implemented procurement orchestration platform, Zip allowed Snowflake to gain early visibility into over **\$6.7 billion of approved spend**, providing unprecedented insights and control over their financial commitments.

With insights across all workflows, Zip helped generate **\$50M+ in annual savings** from renewal leakage and net new negotiations due to visibility gained through intake, and **total platform-supported savings totaling \$305M**—a testament to the power of procurement processes all operating under a robust orchestration layer.

The CPO's perspective

For Chief Procurement Officers, procurement orchestration represents a paradigm shift for managing cross-functional procurement strategies.

At its core, the role of a CPO involves a delicate balancing act, managing budgets, identifying and implementing improvements in category strategies, and ensuring that procurement goals are kept in lockstep with overarching corporate strategy.

What makes a procurement orchestration platform unique then, is the ability to not just provide transparency and control for a CPO, but to always remain agile and ready for the opportunities and challenges that may arise in an ever-evolving market.

IMMEDIATE ADAPTABILITY

As technology advances and regulatory frameworks evolve, cross-functional teams require an adaptable platform that not only manages current complexities but also **anticipates and adapts to future changes**.

For example, the emergence of AI-powered tools presents a new challenge for procurement, one that requires a nuanced understanding of compliance frameworks, many of which are still being established. Similarly, the introduction of regulations like GDPR, or more recently ViDA, has underscored the need for procurement systems to adapt to new legal requirements across regions.

Without a procurement orchestration platform purpose-built to be flexible and evolve alongside market requirements, organizations risk falling behind. Such a platform must be backed by a team with deep procurement understanding and expertise to ensure a product that continually evolves, enabling a CPO to always remain a step ahead no matter which way the market moves.

HIGHER ADOPTION

Another top strategic objective for CPOs is ensuring that procurement processes are not only effective, but also easily adoptable and followed by everyone in the organization.

The complexity inherent in procurement should not be a barrier to compliance; rather, the focus should be ensuring that processes work for the end-users regardless of their involvement with the deeper underlying activities of procurement operations.

Procurement orchestration then serves as the ‘cohesive glue’, seamlessly binding stakeholders, their activities, and their relevant tools together in a fully-integrated workflow.

This means IT teams can continue to conduct their approvals in Jira, for example, while privacy and legal teams can simultaneously manage their workflows in their preferred tools.

This integrated approach significantly lowers the barrier to adoption, ensuring the orchestration process is both efficient and inclusive.

CENTRALIZED VISIBILITY

As the conductor of the orchestration, a CPO gains total visibility over all cross-functional processes. More than just oversight, this can be a catalyst for enhancing efficiency, fostering cross-departmental collaboration, and driving strategic procurement initiatives forward.

This task seems simple until you consider that **a CPO might coordinate >10 cross-functional teams**, each operating within their own preferred tools and distinct workflows and timelines.

One thing we often hear at Zip is that our orchestration platform enables 10x productivity gains within a static timeframe; not only because of the individual process efficiencies, but because of the platform's capability to facilitate parallel work streams simultaneously.

This degree of transparent coordination is vital as it allows CPOs to champion procurement as a central, integral function tying teams together, aligning workflows across the organization.

AUTOMATE, AND FOCUS ON STRATEGY

Procurement orchestration allows teams to prioritize the high-impact activities by automating the routine. This strategic redirection allows CPOs and their teams to **concentrate on the work with the highest ROI**, separating automatable tasks from those that really drive the business forward.

In many instances, the majority of contracts, while necessary, do not require the extensive negotiation or scrutiny that significantly alters business trajectory. Procurement orchestration leverages integrations, AI-guidance, and process automation to get these contracts reviewed, approved, and paid as quickly and compliantly as possible, freeing up valuable resources and attention.

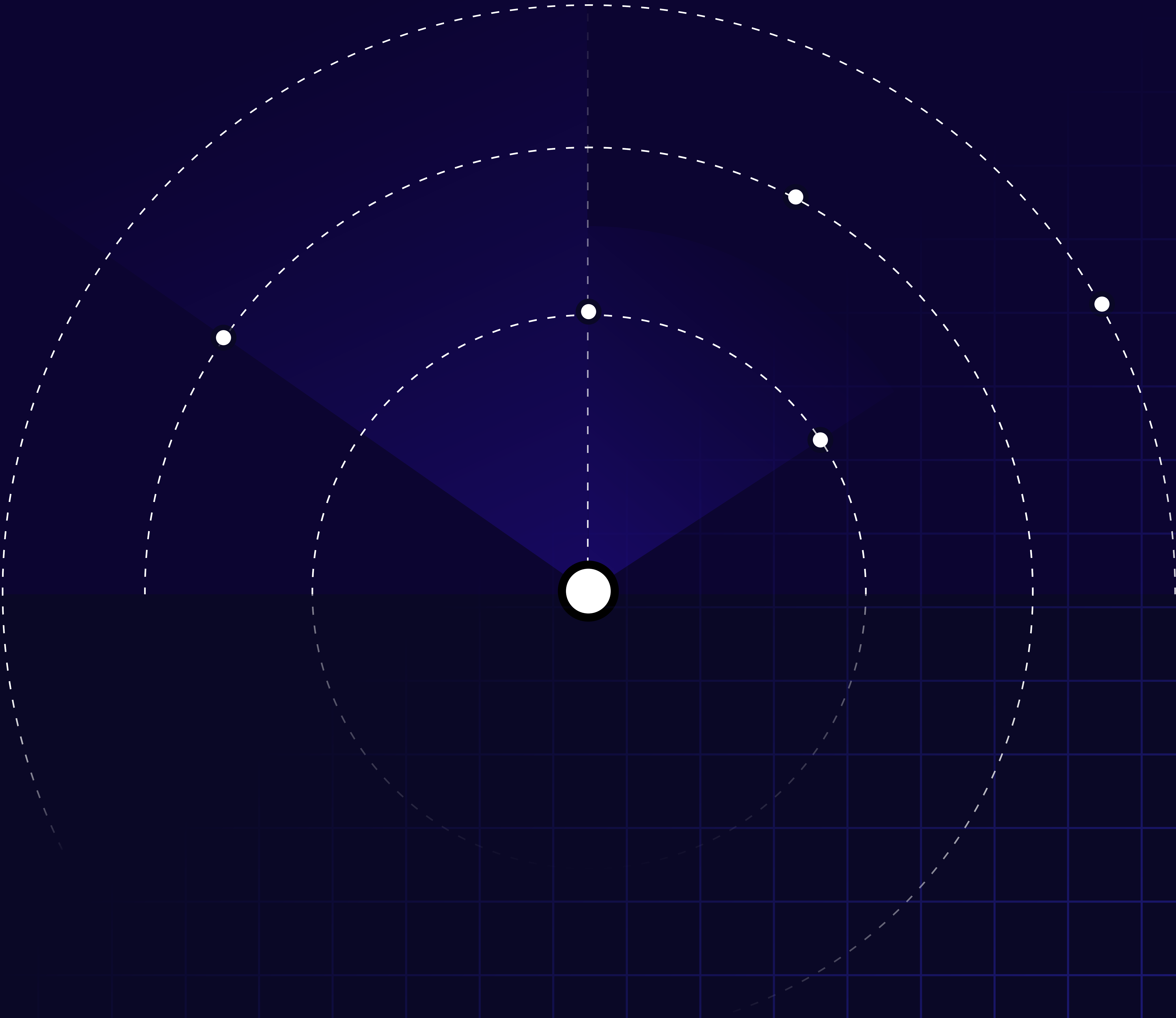
The focus, then, can be on the high-value, strategic contracts that actually do have a profound impact on a company's bottom line. These negotiations are complex, demand attention, and are pivotal to strategic business outcomes.

By automating routine tasks, procurement orchestration platforms like Zip can ensure teams are not bogged down by the minutiae of operational busywork.

MANY PLAYERS, TOTAL ALIGNMENT

As the role of procurement expands, the strategic significance of orchestration becomes indisputable. It transforms procurement from a traditional function into a strategic powerhouse capable of driving organizational change.

Procurement orchestration therefore, is not just a method for streamlining processes; it's a strategic necessity that **fundamentally elevates the role of the CPO**.



Orchestration = Integration

If we can distill the primary pain that orchestration is designed to solve, it's the issue of software fragmentation.

By aligning stakeholders and their tools, CPOs are able to gain a bird's-eye view of all purchasing operations across the company, providing a comprehensive feature set for procurement and the cross-functional teams involved in the process.

Some neutral procurement platforms facilitate a certain degree of process alignment, but fall short of justifying ROI for a CPO.

Without capabilities like AI-powered process guidance to supplement and improve workflows, these platforms offer a solution that is, at best, superficial. Integration complexity remains a daunting task; orchestration might streamline processes, but then what?

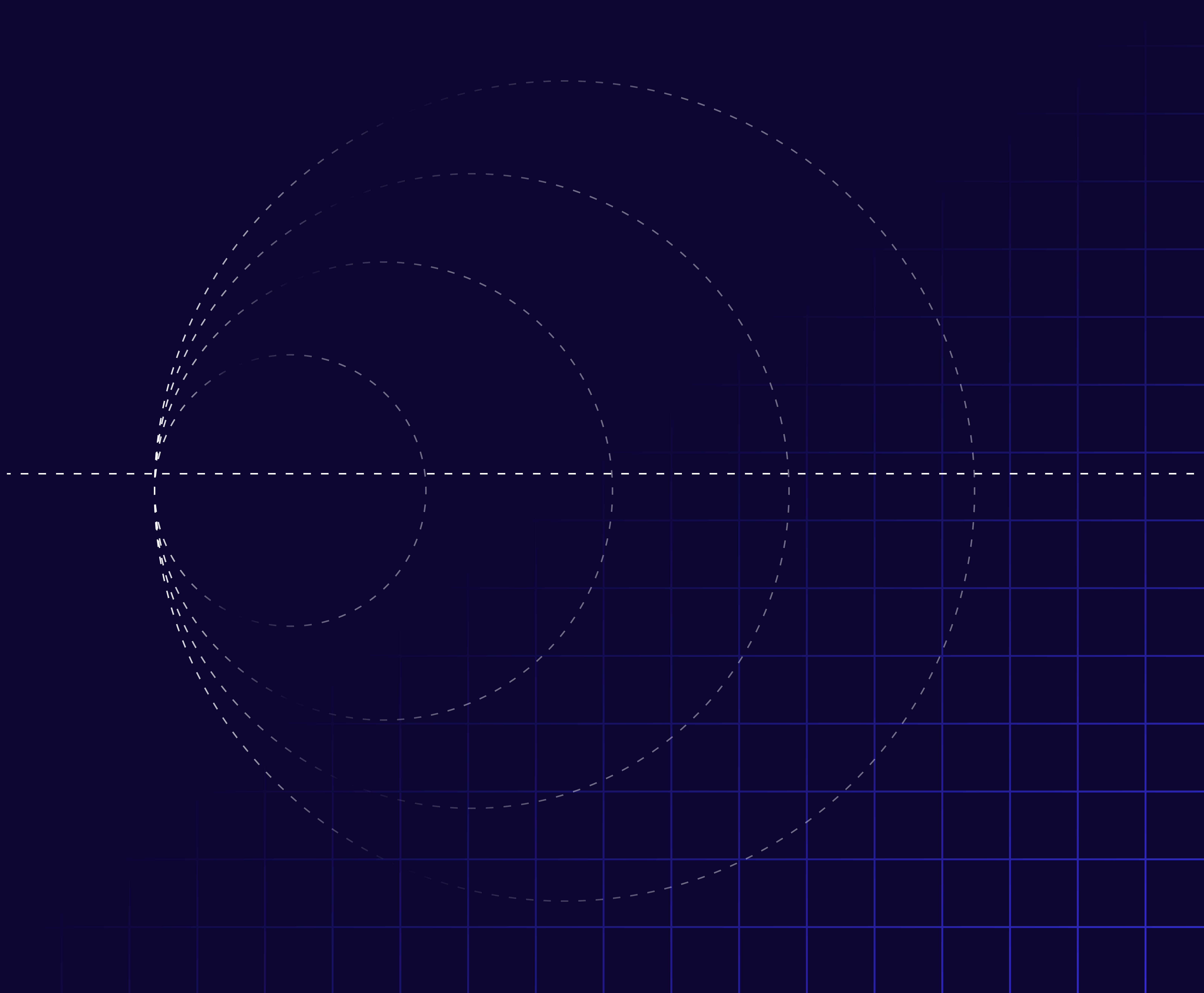
The expectation from a modern procurement orchestration platform is to not just make the process easier, **but actually make it better.**

BUILDING FOR THE 2020s

The issue is that many orchestration platforms are designed akin to relics from the 2000s, ill-equipped to meet the demands of the 2020s.

Whether it's legacy vendors anchored in a catalog-centric model, or the need for third-party support to implement these platforms effectively, the limitations are evident.

In contrast, a modern **agentic procurement orchestration** platform addresses these issues head-on with a robust library of integrations that not only fit into best-of-breed solutions but also empower customers to leverage and create **custom agentic AI-powered workflows** that provide real-time insights to guide and enhance strategic decision-making.



Procurement orchestration and **Agentic AI**

Procurement orchestration makes workflows better, faster, and smarter. Today, that vision is accelerating with the rise of agentic AI: autonomous, goal-driven software agents that execute tasks, surface insights, and adapt dynamically within orchestrated systems.

This is a monumental leap forward from traditional automation.

Whereas legacy tools required manual rules, triggers, and dashboards, **Zip's AI agents can act on their own** to identify risks, route approvals, validate data, and even recommend suppliers.

And because they operate within orchestrated workflows, teams retain control while dramatically increasing speed and scale.

50+ AI AGENTS PURPOSE BUILT FOR PROCUREMENT

Zip now includes **50+ purpose-built AI agents**, each designed to handle a specific procurement task, everything from vendor screening to document review.

These agents operate in the background while your teams focus on strategy, and they can be customized or built from scratch using Zip's no-code **Agent Builder**.

AI AGENTS, READY TO DO THE WORK

Imagine:

- An agent that flags high-risk vendors based on adverse media coverage
- Another that surfaces changes during contract renewals and recommends next steps
- One that validates request data and identifies gaps before approvals
- And another that dynamically routes intake based on region, urgency, or budget

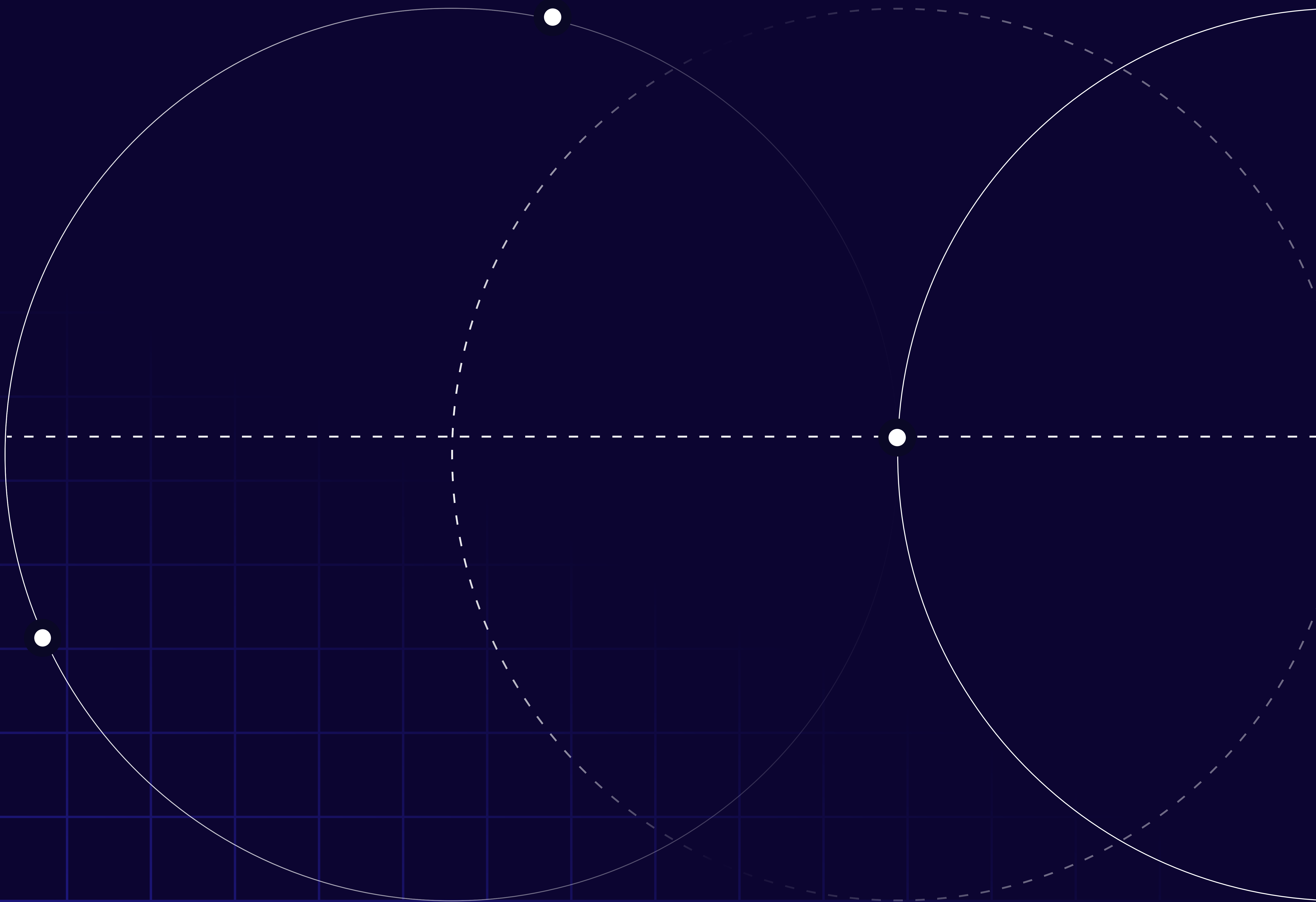
These AI agents are trained and ready, and already driving measurable ROI. And because they operate inside **Zip's orchestration platform**, they stay aligned with your business rules, approval flows, and compliance requirements at scale.

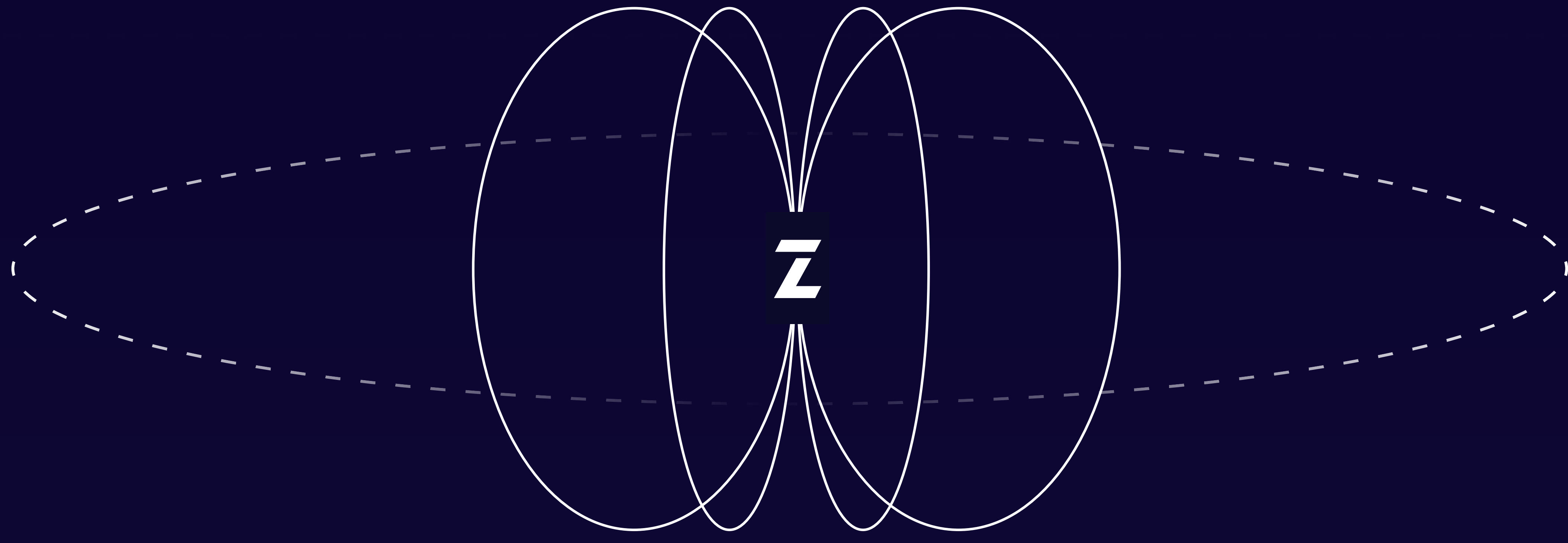
ORCHESTRATION IS WHAT MAKES AI SCALE

Even the smartest agent is only as useful as the systems it can access. Orchestration is what connects agents to the tools, data, and workflows they need to succeed. It provides the infrastructure that ensures every AI-driven action happens in the right place, at the right time, with full visibility and auditability.

Without orchestration, agents create chaos. With it, they become a **scalable engine of value**, automating tasks that once required entire teams, while giving leadership more transparency and control than ever before.

Agentic procurement orchestration is how lean procurement teams are multiplying their impact.





The next era of procurement is here

As the scope and needs of procurement continue to evolve, the urgency for a holistic and integrated approach has never been more apparent. Procurement orchestration, as we have outlined in this guide, underscores a shift toward strategic, efficient, and transparent processes.

From the foundational need of orchestration to the transformative power of AI, we've explored how modern platforms like Zip are redefining what it means to manage procurement today.

For executives, the message is clear: embracing procurement orchestration is the key to transforming procurement into **a strategic pillar capable of driving increased value across the organization.**

With the capabilities offered by agentic procurement orchestration, CPOs are equipped to gain control of the procurement ecosystem with greater agility, ensuring transparency and compliance every step of the way.

The next era of procurement is here.

As executive leaders, the opportunity to lead this change and shape the future of your organizations' procurement function is in your hands. By leveraging the power of Zip's agentic procurement orchestration platform, you can drive your teams towards unprecedented levels of efficiency, transparency, and strategic impact.

Let us embrace what is possible and chart a course towards a new era of **procurement, perfected.**