

## USER FRIENDLY



### Reimagining work with agentic AI

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**Guest:** Marie Myers, Chief Financial Officer, HPE  
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**Hanish Patel:** Hello, and welcome back to User Friendly. I'm Hanish Patel, and it's been an honor to serve as your host over the past seven years.

During that time, we've heard from industry leaders, unpacked big trends shaping our world, and hopefully made the complex just a little more ... User Friendly. As we look ahead, we're evolving the way we bring you these conversations. Starting today, User Friendly will feature a rotating group of hosts across Deloitte. Each bringing their own perspective, voice, and curiosity.

It's a reflection of my belief that the best conversations happen when we make space for a range of experiences and perspectives, but before I pass on the mic, I want to thank you, our listeners, for joining us on this journey. It's your interest, feedback, and enthusiasm that has kept this show going for all these years.

And I'm excited for the first of our many rotating host, Duncan Stewart, Director of Research for Technology, Media, and Communications at Deloitte Canada. I'm looking forward to this new chapter for User

Friendly. And listeners, I'll still be around, just on the other side of the mic now and then.

So, with that, happy listening and take us away, Duncan.

**Duncan Stewart:** Welcome to the User Friendly podcast. I'm Duncan Stewart, lead author of Deloitte's annual TMT Predictions report since 2008, and I have the pleasure of guest hosting today's episode.

We've got a great one planned for our listeners on none other than AI. Artificial

intelligence is rapidly evolving and quickly moving from “chat with your data” concepts to a core business driver. Specialized AI agents are transforming enterprise operations, performing transactional processes, generating more robust insights, and enabling real-time strategic executive decision-making.

These advancements are not just boosting productivity, but fundamentally changing how organizations collaborate, innovate, and unlock new sources of value.

In this episode, we'll explore the real-world impact of AI agents, considerations for integration within enterprise systems, and the opportunities and challenges of deploying these digital workforces at scale. Our aim is to demystify AI's role in the enterprise and offer practical takeaways for your digital journey.

Joining us today are Abdi Goodarzi, chief commercial officer of Zora AI™ by Deloitte, and Marie Myers, chief financial officer at HPE. Abdi, Marie, welcome to the show.

Marie, can you provide an overview of HPE's AI journey within finance?

**Marie Myers:** Duncan, great to meet you. Glad to be here today, and absolutely. Let me walk you through the journey we've been on inside of finance. So, to be honest, our journey began with a clear goal: to reimagine how finance operates, not just automate existing processes.

So, we identified a high-touch, very complex process: our weekly ops review. In fact, hundreds of people touch this process. People are involved in pulling data, formatting reports, and preparing insights.

We decided to deploy Deloitte's Zora AI (which actually we call Alfred at HPE) to help us reduce manual touchpoints with. We're seeing our teams free up their time, and it enables them now to focus on the strategic work rather than focus on pulling data.

**Duncan Stewart:** Abdi, I've heard you talk about AI agents as digital workforces. Can you explain why that framing is intentional and what the implications are for companies like HPE?

**Abdi Goodarzi:** The next generation of workers will be infused and enabled by quite a bit of technology, and that technology is mainly through AI, but it is enforced by other sources such as automations that other systems provide—the advancements that data sources and computations have.

And as a result of that, the role of work execution and work enablement is highly, highly technical then. And therefore, you can actually phrase that as digital workforce entrance into the execution of work for the enterprise.

And that is, as you said, the intentional reason we are calling it “digital workforce” because otherwise, you're just basically automating a series of tasks and that's not really efficiency and productivity gain.

**Duncan Stewart:** Marie, what have been the key focus areas for initial deployment of AI agents with your organization? Which outcomes are the most important to you?

**Marie Myers:** Yes, besides streamlining the weekly ops review, we've also been using AI in our investor relations area. Just like Alfred, we've got another fun name for our AI agent, we call it Adair. Adair actually uses real-time data and older analysis to help us with our earnings. Adair helps us get our sentiment analysis right on our calls. It helps us anticipate questions, understand better analyst profiles, and even prepare investor scripts.

In addition, we also use Adair to help our teams, on a daily basis, synthesize and prepare analyst reports and diagnose what came up in those daily reviews. So, this enables our teams to work much more effectively. It takes an enormous amount of time and a heavy lift out of the process.

That means myself and my investor relations team can really spend the time on preparing for the call. It's just a great example of how you are really taking the capabilities of GenAI and applying them to real processes in the organization.

**Duncan Stewart:** Speaking as a former sell-side stock analyst, I'm going to pretend to be one of those right now, Marie, and ask you, “Speaking as a CFO, what is the value or the ROI of agentic AI?”

**Marie Myers:** So, Duncan, apart from the fact we can build an analyst profile and the fact an agent profile that could emulate you and help us better predict your questions. I look at ROI, as you would imagine, from a CFO lens in two different dimensions.

First of all, from a direct perspective, you've got to look at productivity. And as we mentioned earlier in the call, as we talk about Zora, or Alfred at HPE, we've seen productivity gains just in our ops review process alone.

And on top of that, we're actually reducing our cloud costs. No longer do I have to worry about the expense around tokens. By having this on-prem in a hybrid way, we basically take a lot of cost out of the model.

**Duncan Stewart:** Abdi, given your robust experience driving large enterprise tech transformations, what are some potentially underappreciated aspects of what it takes to actually create value from AI agents/digital workforces in the enterprise?

**Abdi Goodarzi:** Companies for years have been trying to create more efficient systems, more effective processes, and enable the workforce with the utmost productivity. That's been the goal of implementing any systems, introducing any technologies to the enterprise.

The effort of making it all work requires attention in multiple dimensions and multiple areas. You cannot dismiss the role of data.

And the data is not just the data you produce today, data that you have produced over the years, and how that data has evolved and has become more and more important for the enterprise. The role of humans, how the personas and their dependencies to the systems and technology has changed, and that's another dimension.

And the third dimension, in my opinion, is the role of external business partners. Could be customers, could be the companies that you work with in the background for manufacturing or otherwise. All those implications come to life when you're thinking about bringing and introducing AI to the enterprise.

So, as much as technology's advancing and it's easy to use, easy to adopt, all these other elements makes it more complicated. And you cannot bring the entire thing to life unless you consider all these implications as part of your design, as part of your implementation, and ultimately, getting the outcomes that you're expecting.

**Duncan Stewart:** Sounds like it takes a village to create value from these agents. Marie, can you give us some practical examples of how agentic AI has impacted your team's decision-making?

**Marie Myers:** Absolutely. We've really challenged the entire organization to embrace AI, and it's just amazing to see the use cases that have started to emerge throughout the organization. One that I'm super excited about is the application of AI to help us with our SOX testing.

As all of you know, SOX testing is a very extensive. We have to do it. It consumes a lot of time in the organization, but it's a super important part of what finance does.

We've been able to actually use an agentic AI solution particularly in areas around inventory. What we've allowed AI to do is actually analyze a lot of that inventory data,

look for patterns, look for trends, and really help us to advance and automate a lot of the AI needed for SOX testing.

So, it's a great example where we've combined tools like RPA, machine learning, and GenAI to help us really enhance that process.

**Duncan Stewart:** Fantastic. Abdi, we haven't talked about trust and security within agentic systems so far. What does it look like to have trusted security built into the agents that are deployed to work across these enterprise systems?

**Abdi Goodarzi:** Trust and security will be fundamental, and in my opinion, it will become even more of an element that requires to be fully in place. Just think about humans now trusting machines, doing some of the work, and doing some of the things that they used to do. For humans to trust machines' ability to execute work the way they have executed, they expect that security and trust to be at the higher level.

And at the end of the day, that is a core requirement that has to be in place. And in my opinion, the elevation of trust in the entire kind of equation is elevated. And that's just the expectations that humans have and expectations that enterprises have, and add regulatory expectations on top of this, it even becomes more elevated and more important.

**Duncan Stewart:** That makes sense. Marie, as part of our 2025 Deloitte TMT Predictions report, I forecasted that many large enterprises, to my surprise, actually, would start buying their own GenAI servers running their own LLMs on-prem. Do you see the growth in agentic AI contributing towards that trend, towards on-prem AI—and I'll push you even a little bit further—and probably contributing to HPE revenues?

**Marie Myers:** I've got to say I love this question. So, the answer is easy: Absolutely. We saw this enormous opportunity to

use our private cloud AI infrastructure to enable Zora.

There's no doubt out there, as folks really move to adopt GenAI, you're going to see much more on-prem and hybrid models. Because honestly, that's where the data is, and AI is super data intensive, so it's only logical that the world of hybrid cloud has a renaissance here.

**Duncan Stewart:** I'm going to push you a little more on this question because you love it and I love it, so let's just go slightly deeper. One of the things you mentioned in an earlier response to one of my questions is you talked about getting the cost of tokens down by going on-prem. Are there other factors you see such as, like, I don't know, sovereignty and privacy and IP, that are driving this move towards hybrid or on-prem?

**Marie Myers:** As companies think about not just sovereignty, but also security, hybrid becomes really the answer.

And so, that's why as the CFO of HPE, I feel we are at an inflection point that will provide an enormous opportunity for our business to really take off here because it's clear that the use cases, not only through the models, but through the nature of the fact that companies, governments will want to have that better security, better control of their data, and ultimately, better cost, it becomes an easy answer.

**Duncan Stewart:** Fantastic. Abdi, Marie has talked a lot about finance and how agents can help there. What areas, aside from finance as part of a large enterprise, do you see holding the most untapped potential for agentic AI in digital workforces?

**Abdi Goodarzi:** Front office is one of the fastest areas and perhaps the most attractive areas for creating a lot more value through AI. Interactions with customers, interactions with the buyers, and the users of your enterprise's products and services is

something that over the years has been an area of investment for a lot of enterprises.

The second area for the enterprise that could be in the next wave of things to come is the human resources and human capital aspect of things. How do you make it easier for humans to operate in the enterprise? How do you make it easier for them to leverage their benefits and everything they need in order to do work within an enterprise? So, in my opinion, front office and human resources and human capitals are next.

Supply chain will be further away just for the fact that it's a very complicated area of business that requires a lot of attention and a lot of details before it can be fully automated.

**Duncan Stewart:** That sounds great.

Finally, what advice would both of you give to organizations looking to embark on a similar journey?

**Abdi Goodarzi:** Take a step back and look at your enterprise and look at the opportunities ahead in terms of taking advantage of AI to reimagine work. If you think about automation of as-is processes and as-is systems, at the end of the day, you get partial value out of the capabilities that technology will bring to life.

But thinking about it holistically and thinking about full automations, full productivity gain, full use of AI requires you to plan

more extensively, but at the end of the day, outcomes are bigger and better. And I highly recommend for organizations to take a step back and think about the possibility of reimagining work and reimagining how systems and processes and data are designed, and how that could be changed by extensive use of AI because technology's capabilities and advancements are real, and it's just going to get better and better.

**Duncan Stewart:** Marie?

**Marie Myers:** Yeah, a few lessons I learned personally. I'd say first of all, find a use case that's not too difficult. Start somewhere and start small, and get an early win. And I would argue, don't just try to automate bad process. You really have to do the hard work and reengineer. An example that we gave earlier around the ops process that we're using Alfred for; we're actually reengineering the entire financial planning process.

So, it's going to not only enable capability around the management of data around ops, but we're going to look at the overall end-to-end financial process. Then you've got to have executive sponsorship, you've got to have somebody who really is in the seat, who is absolutely endorsing the proposals that you've got. And then finally, you've got to have ROI. I always come back to this. Unless there's a compelling ROI story, it's really hard to get these initiatives off the ground.

And then the afterthought, is change management. Never underestimate change management. I've seen in my career so many amazing tech deployments that never got adopted. And AI adoption is really as much about people and process as it is about technology. And when you drive a management of change process with AI, the results are transformative. And that's what we're aiming to do.

**Duncan Stewart:** Thank you both for joining us on this episode of the User Friendly podcast. We've explored how agentic AI is opening up new possibilities for enterprise transformation, from streamlining operations to enabling smarter, faster decision-making.

Special thanks to our guests, Abdi Goodarzi and Marie Myers, for sharing their insights and experiences. We hope today's discussion has provided you with valuable perspectives and practical ideas to consider on your own digital journey.

If you enjoyed this episode, be sure to subscribe, and stay tuned for more conversations on the future of technology and business. Thanks for listening, and we'll see you next time.

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