

BUILDING AN AUTOMATION CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

with Red Hat® Ansible® Automation Platform 2.7

Daniel Goosen | CTO, Level Up Technology LLC
Red Hat Premier Partner

40 MINUTES • 2026

Three big picture datasets

US Companies Founded in the
Last Year

4,895 (vs. 1,742 in 2019)

Source: Crunchbase

The Biggest US Company the
Year You Were Born

1965: General
Motors, \$17.2B

1975: Exxon, \$42.06B

1985: Exxon, \$90.85B

1995: General
Motors, \$154.95B

2005: Walmart,
\$288.19B

Source: wallst.com

Total US Companies (Census
Bureau)

36.4M

Source census.gov

Seven ideas for the next 40 minutes

- 1 Why now?
- 2 The zero-to-one problem
- 3 The innovation paradox
- 4 Five stages of maturity
- 5 What a CoE actually does
- 6 AAP reference architecture
- 7 Leading with business value

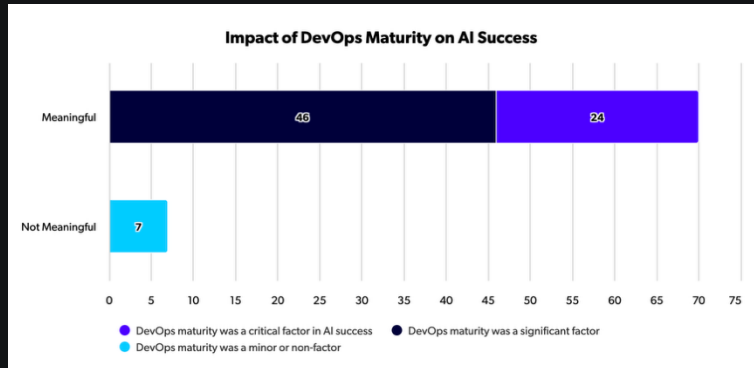
01

It's 2026. Should you create an Automation CoE now?

Yes - if the goal is to scale automation safely and consistently.

The State of DevOps and Cloud in Three Percentages

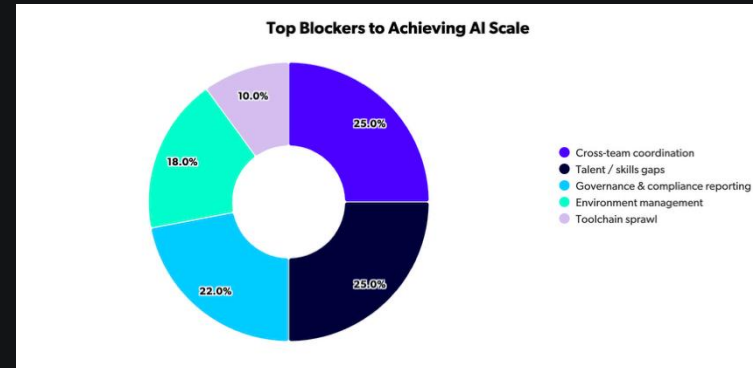
70%



70% of organizations say DevOps maturity directly impacts AI success.

<https://www.perforce.com/press-releases/state-of-devops-2026>

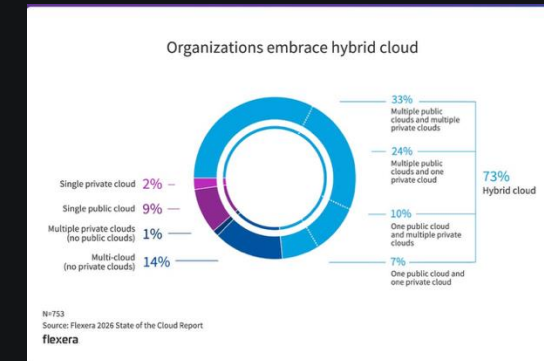
72%



72% of high-maturity DevOps organizations have successfully embedded AI into the SDLC versus only 18% of low-maturity organizations

<https://www.itpro.com/software/development/ai-isnt-killing-devops-youre-just-using-it-wrong>

73%

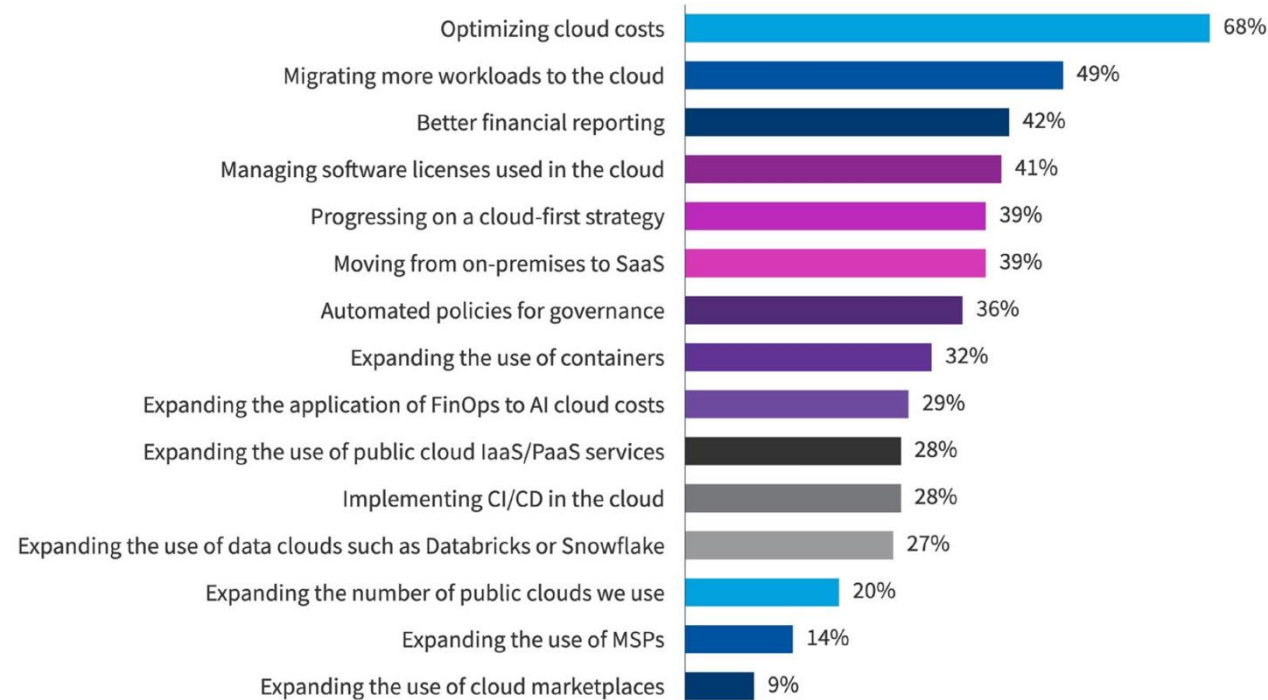


73% of organizations operating hybrid estates

<https://info.flexera.com/CM-REPORT-State-of-the-Cloud>

Automation is still HOW organizations become cloud-native

Top cloud initiatives for all organizations



N=753

Source: Flexera 2026 State of the Cloud Report (Figure 15)

flexera

AI has not made automation governance any less important.

AI is increasing the amount of automation organizations can create - and therefore must trust.



The CoE becomes the control plane for organizational automation capability.

02

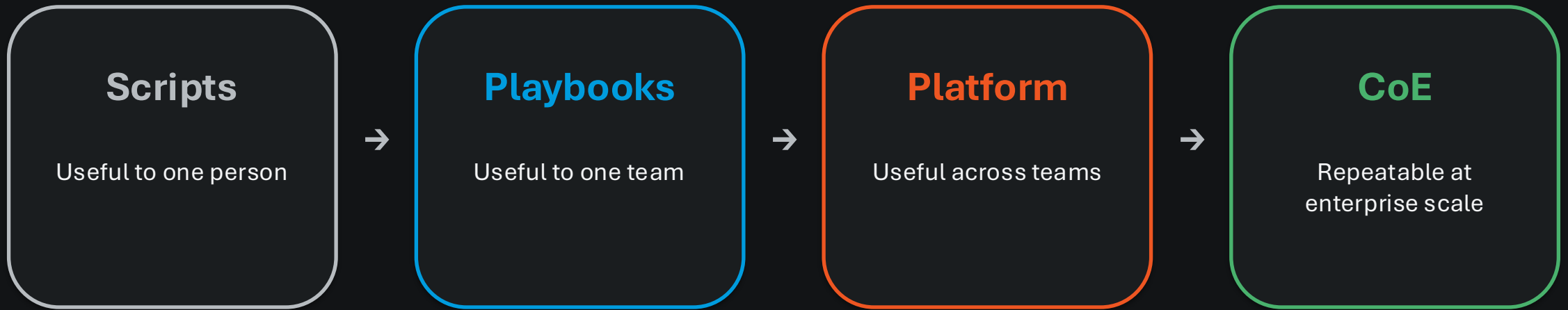
The Zero-to-One Problem



Why infrastructure automation is still at Day 1 almost everywhere you go.

Today's problem is rarely “Can we write a playbook?”

Now the harder problems begin with turning individual wins into an organizational capability.



ZERO → ONE

The jump from “we automate” to “automation is how we operate.”

Why organizations get stuck at zero

The symptoms look technical. The causes are usually operating-model problems.

1 Hero engineers + tribal knowledge

2 Duplicated content and inconsistent standards

3 Credentials and access patterns that do not scale

4 No product owner for the automation platform

5 No quantified value story for leadership

6 Training happens after the platform is deployed

03

The Automation Innovation Paradox

If a customer hasn't seen AAP in over a year, they may not know what AAP looks like anymore.

AAP 2.7 changes the conversation

Platform engineering + governance + AI-driven automation are now part of the same story.

SELF-SERVICE

Portal on RHEL 9/10 + OpenShift

Scale access without giving up control

STANDARDIZE

Visual EE builder + content discovery

Reduce drift; codify approved runtimes

DEVELOP

Browser-based development workspaces

Consistent tools + policy enforcement

SECURE

OIDC integration with HashiCorp Vault

Short-lived, job-scoped credentials

MEASURE

Automation dashboard integration (TP)

Job success, savings, ROI

AI-NATIVE

BYOK assistant + AAP MCP server (TP)

Enterprise context + agent interaction

Read the 2.7 features as CoE primitives

Each feature answers an operating-model question.

How do we democratize execution?

→ **Self-service automation portal**

How do we standardize runtime?

→ **Execution environment builder**

How do we standardize development?

→ **Ansible development workspaces**

How do we reduce credential risk?

→ **OIDC + short-lived Vault credentials**

How do we prove value?

→ **Integrated automation dashboard (TP)**

How do AI agents safely act?

→ **MCP server + governed AAP workflows (TP)**

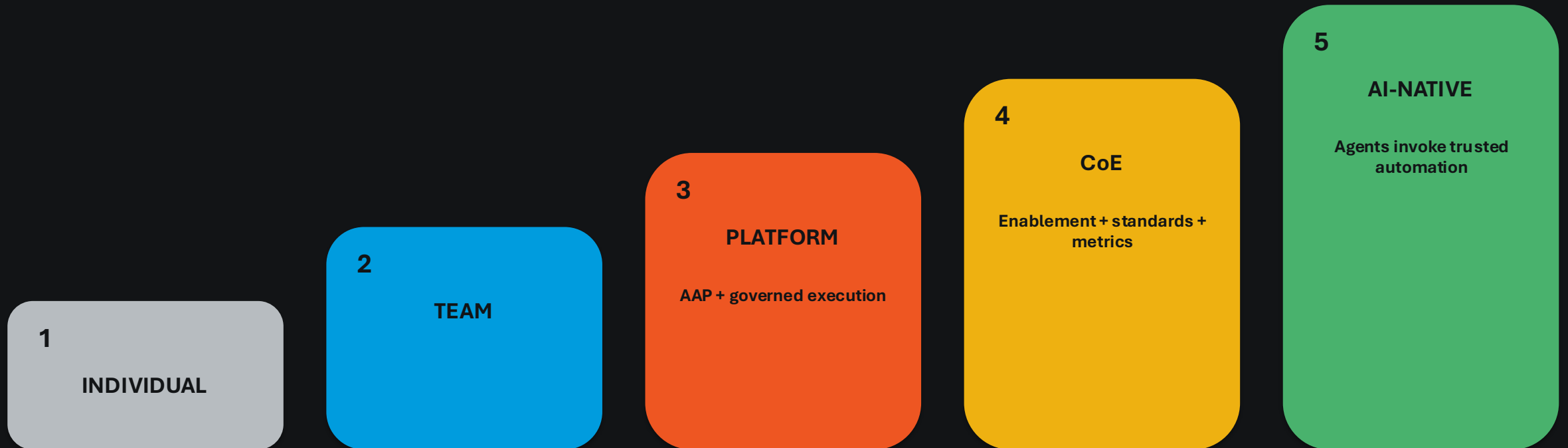
04

The Five Stages of Enterprise Automation Maturity

A framework customers can use to locate themselves - and decide what comes next.

Five stages: from individual productivity to AI-native operations

Maturity is not playbook count. It is the ability to create, govern, consume, and measure automation at scale.



A fast maturity diagnostic

Ask these five questions before you ask how many playbooks should exist.

- 1 WHO creates automation?**
- 2 WHO can safely consume it?**
- 3 HOW is runtime consistency enforced?**
- 4 HOW will business value be measured?**
- 5 CAN AI invoke approved automations safely?**

05

What an Automation CoE Actually Does

The CoE should not write all the automation. It should make everyone else successful at automation.

Build. Govern. Enable. Measure.

Four verbs define the operating model.

BUILD

Platform architecture
Golden paths
Reusable content

GOVERN

RBAC + secrets
Standards + policy
Lifecycle controls

ENABLE

Self-service
Training
Community +
coaching

MEASURE

Adoption
Reliability
ROI + business
outcomes

KPI: more teams automating independently, without sacrificing safety or consistency.

A practical CoE operating model

Centralize the platform and guardrails. Federate domain expertise and delivery.



Deep specialization is a feature, not a failure of self-sufficiency

The fastest path to independence often includes experienced help.

SOFTWARE

+

SERVICES

+

TRAINING

The platform

Architecture +
implementation

Knowledge transfer +
adoption

The optimal outcome is a customer team that can own the platform confidently.

Your internal customers deserve nothing less than the shortest credible path to self-sufficiency.

06

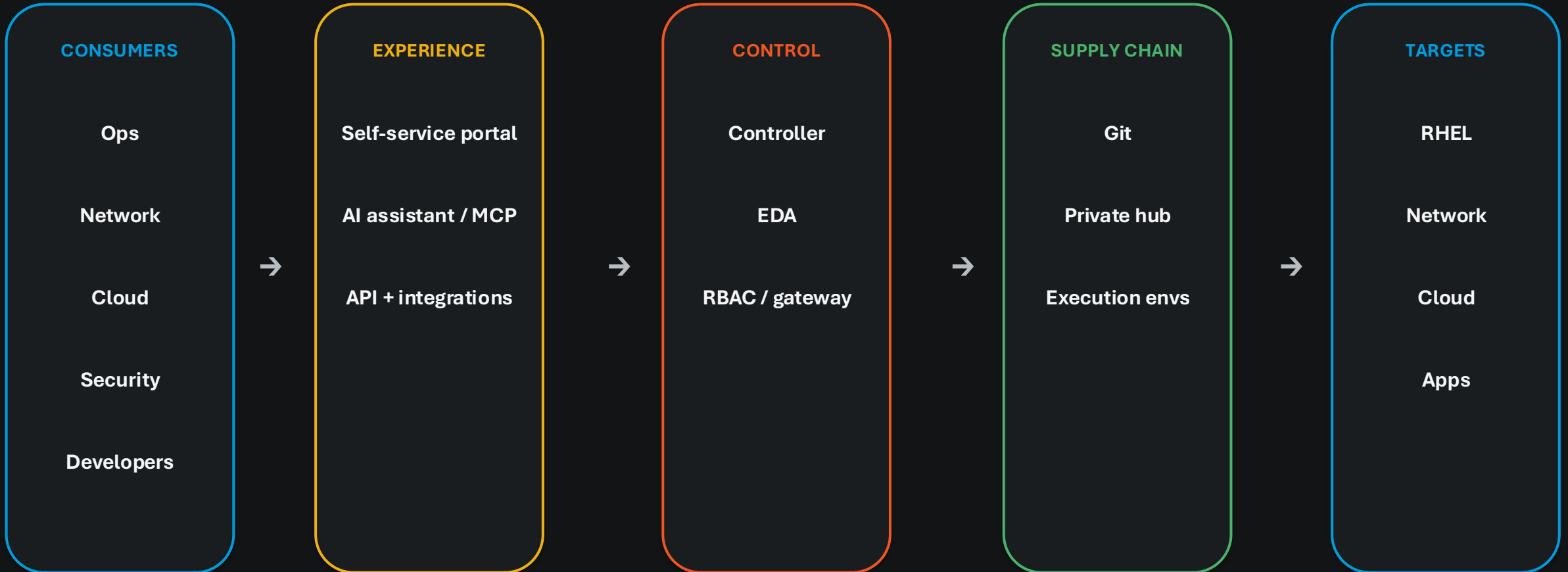
AAP Reference Architecture



Design for governed consumption, not just centralized execution.

Reference architecture: from intent to trusted execution

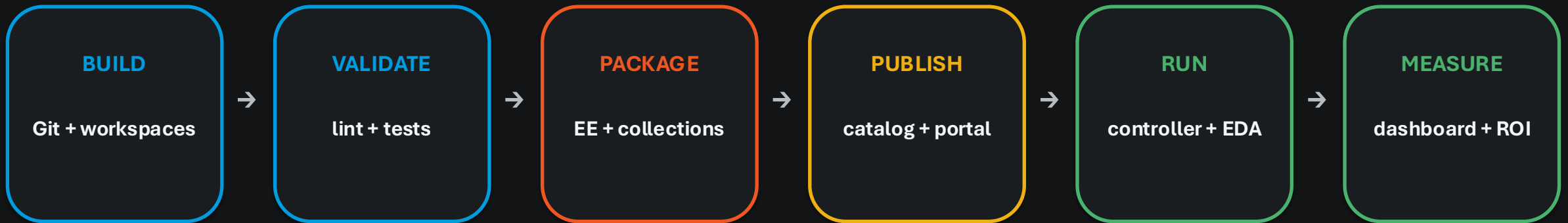
The CoE owns the paved road; domain teams own the destinations.



Cross-cutting: identity • secrets • observability • audit • lifecycle • metrics

Treat automation like a product lifecycle

Build → publish → consume → observe → improve.



A CoE creates the feedback loop that keeps this lifecycle improving.

07

How to "Sell" an Automation CoE Internally

Always lead with the business value of automation. Make automation products earn the right to be part of your organizational vision.

Do not lead with “we need an automation platform.”

Start with the outcome the customer is already accountable for.

FASTER

Provisioning, remediation, change

Lead time • MTTR • throughput

SAFER

Consistency, policy, credentials

Change failure rate • audit findings

CHEAPER

Labor leverage + reduced rework

Hours saved • cost avoidance • utilization

SCALABLE

Self-service + reusable content

Active users • reuse • jobs / team

Feature → capability → operational outcome → financial / risk outcome

Make ROI part of the platform, not an annual archaeology project

Define the measurement model before the first production sprint.

ADOPTION

active users
self-service
launches
domain coverage

DELIVERY

lead time
MTTR
throughput

QUALITY

success rate
change failure
rollback rate

ECONOMICS

hours saved
cost avoidance
ROI

If leadership cannot see the value, the CoE eventually becomes “just another platform team.”

An effective first 90 days

Start narrow enough to win. Design broad enough to scale.

0–30

ASSESS

Maturity baseline
Architecture + security
Select 2–3 use cases

31–60

BUILD

Platform guardrails
Golden paths + EEs
Train first champions

61–90

PROVE

Ship production use cases
Publish metrics
Expand self-service

Exit criteria: one repeatable operating model, not one impressive demo.

THE GOAL OF AN AUTOMATION CoE IS NOT TO CENTRALIZE AUTOMATION.

It is to decentralize automation safely.

Build the platform. Govern the paved road. Enable the teams. Measure the value.

Software + specialized services + practical training → long-term customer self-sufficiency