SEPTEMBER 29-30 / 2026

MACH ALLIANCE

Wrap Report

MACH X: AMSTERDAM 2026

Meet the Agents

Agents are already shopping, working inside teams, and being built in a matter of weeks. The harder question is where your business stands, and what to do next.

That was the question around 380 senior leaders across digital, product, and engineering brought to MACH X: Amsterdam. They got their answers from each other. Brands from grocery, sports retail, telecoms, industrial automation, beauty, footwear, and travel showed where agents are already working in their businesses: as customers, inside their teams, and built live in the room. They were open about what worked, what didn't, and what they would decide differently.

This report is a recap for those who were there, a benchmark for those who weren't, and a first look at where the conversation goes next, at MACH X: Boston and MACH X: Amsterdam 2027.

"Last year, I predicted that businesses would be running tens or hundreds of AI agents. Now, it's becoming clear that we're heading toward thousands, potentially even tens of thousands."



Jason Cottrell
President, MACH Alliance

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

adyen MongoDB. voucherify

BY THE NUMBERS

380 LEADERS

75% DIRECTOR-LEVEL OR ABOVE

21 COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

30+ INDUSTRIES REPRESENTED

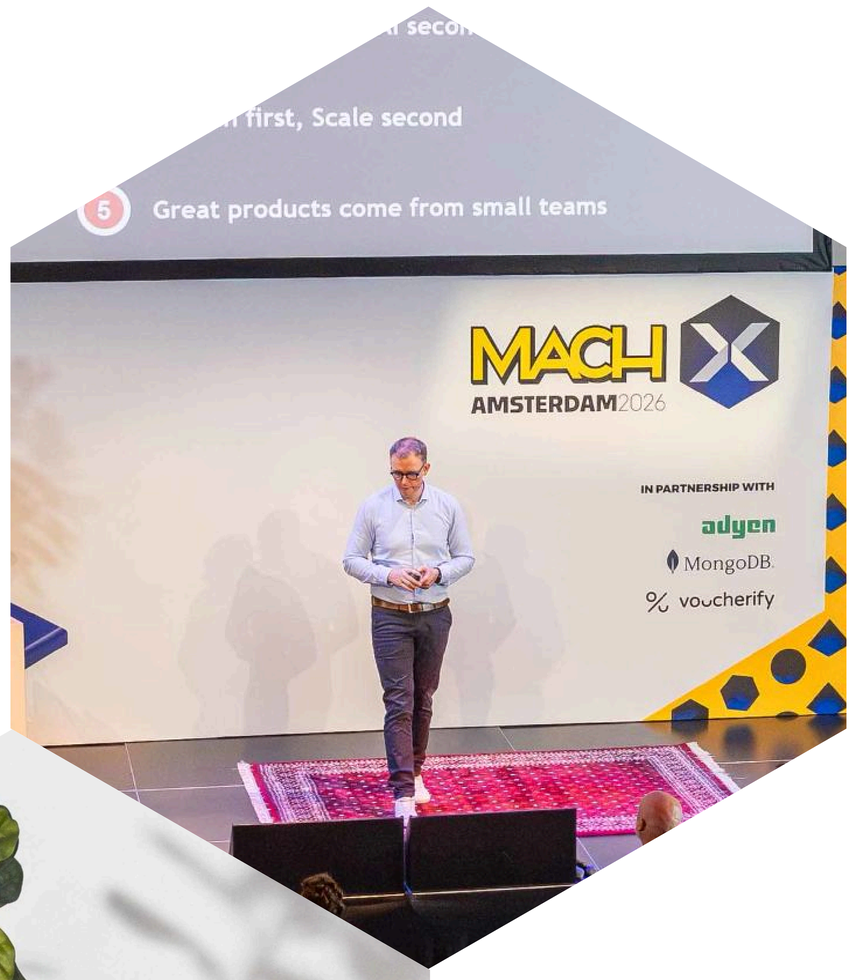
The Agents are already shopping

For Daniel Gebler, CTO of Picnic, AI agents are already shopping and exposing a blind spot in digital commerce. Customer journeys and interfaces were designed for humans, but agents decipher the underlying system. They find routes through APIs and mechanics nobody anticipated. Picnic has seen agents that wait for product retargeting discounts and maximize reward schemes.

> *Agents are surprisingly creative. They are figuring out paths through your APIs that you never designed or intended.*



DANIEL GEBLER, PICNIC, CTO





JD Sports saw a different side of the same shift. It expected customers to use its conversational agent for discovery. Instead, they used it on product pages, to ask how thick a material is, how waterproof it is, and how it fits. For Antonia Hansen, Group Director of Product, those conversations are a new source of insight that is now shaping JD's roadmap.

> *Before, you had to interpret where customers click and where their focus is. Now you can genuinely understand what they're trying to do, in their own words. That's massively powerful.*



ANTONIA HANSEN, JD SPORTS, GROUP DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT



Ready to re-decide

In 2023, Pierce Group was in financial trouble, with little time to turn things around. Replacing the entire tech stack was the only way to solve this and enable future growth. Along the way, the team learned to ombestemme, the Norwegian for “to re-decide,” when a four-month project was only 10% done by month nine. In her talk at MACH X: Amsterdam, CTO Emilija Frew shared why the bravest thing a leader can and should do is decide again and make different tech & platform choices.

> *Sunk cost is not a strategy. Sunk time is not a strategy either. If you dig a hole in the wrong place, digging it deeper is not going to help.*



EMILIJA FREW, PIERCE GROUP, CTO

JD Sports made a big call of its own. JD Sports replaced almost its entire digital platform across its key markets at once. Since the main markets launched in August, its AI-enabled squads have built and tested a one-page checkout in five weeks.



> *JD Sports is building agentic purchase capability now, to get ahead of demand.*



ANTONIA HANSEN, JD SPORTS, GROUP DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT

Re-deciding doesn’t always mean replacing everything. Virgin Media O2 kept the core systems it inherited from the Virgin Media and O2 merger and built a composable layer on top. Dr. Martens kept its monolith for processing orders, moved the rest to new services, and went live in seven markets in 25 days.

> *If you run technology inside a multi-billion-pound enterprise, you know greenfield is a fantasy. Real business happens in the brownfield.*



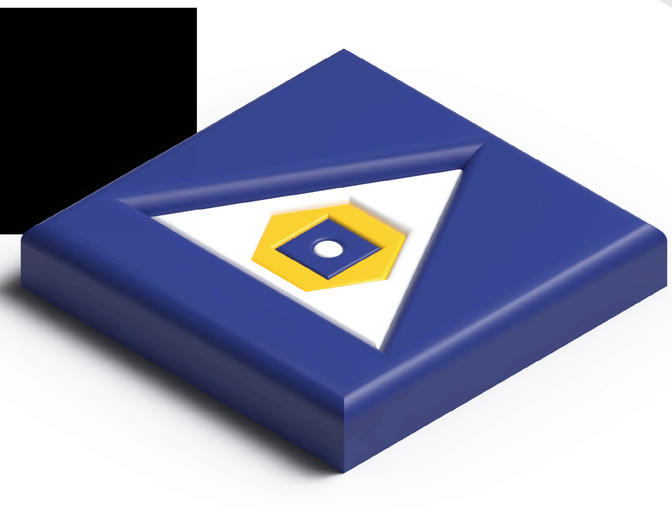
RAKESH RADHAKRISHNAN, VIRGIN MEDIA O2, DIGITAL & TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR - CONSUMER PLATFORMS





MACH ALLIANCE

Trust is earned in the data



ifm, which makes industrial sensors and automation products, put an AI sales assistant on its site for new customers who arrive with a problem rather than a part number. Early on, the team noticed the assistant was suggesting a standard sensor for a hydrogen application, which needs specialized sensors. They traced it to a single application report in ifm's database that was steering the assistant in the wrong direction. Once it was removed, the assistant gave the right answer.

> *Clean data is more valuable than another AI model. The databases need to be clean before we set up the AI model on top.*



MARIO HOLT, IFM, VICE PRESIDENT DIGITAL SALES AND SERVICES

Hobbii, the yarn retailer, lets anyone in the business ask Claude questions about its data in Slack. CTO Tomas Antvorskov Krag made that safe by governing the definitions, not the questions. The agent can only work from agreed definitions of each table and metric, and answers appear in shared channels where colleagues can spot mistakes.

> *Claude has a tendency to be confidently wrong. And human beings are super bad at dealing with confidently wrong.*



TOMAS ANTVORSKOV KRAG, HOBBII, CTO

At Virgin Media O2, every agent runs the same checks before it acts: who the customer is, what they've consented to, their live account data, and approved messaging rules.

> *Virgin Media O2's AI Agent hands complex cases to a human agent seamlessly with the customer context.*



JIM DRURY, VIRGIN MEDIA O2, HEAD OF PLATFORM INNOVATION

And when an agent gets it wrong, the accountability stays with people. On the ecosystem panel, MongoDB's Genevieve Broadhead summed it up as "accountability follows control." Doug Wooten of Charles Tyrwhitt put it more plainly.

> *If someone says, 'I bought 3 million white shirts because the AI told me to,' the accountability doesn't lie with the company that sold us the system. It lies with the person who pressed order.*



DOUG WOOTEN, CHARLES TYRWHITT, IT DIRECTOR

Small teams, delivering more

In a fireside with Holly Worst, VP of Retail and Loyalty at Adyen, flaconi CTO Sven Rosemann shared how the beauty retailer delivered 61% more of its roadmap than the year before, with the same people. Designers now fix front-end bugs themselves with AI, product owners set up their own A/B tests, and business teams build their own automations and agents. With a tech team of roughly 140, flaconi successfully scaled its international expansion, launching in 3 new countries in 2024, 5 in 2025, and 7 new markets in 2026. Customers notice too. flaconi's NPS is 85, which Holly called "world class" for retail, where the average is about 50.

> *Without these self-service automations for business teams, we couldn't scale this much without increasing headcount at the same time.*



SVEN ROSEMANN, FLACONI, CTO

BCG's Managing Director & Partner, Nick Smaling, who moderated the Build vs. Buy vs. Vibe panel, put numbers on the difference. Giving everyone AI tools typically lifts productivity by 5 to 10%. Reshaping a process end to end can lift it by 50 to 80%.



BUILT WITH THE COMMUNITY
THE AI EXCHANGE HACKATHON

Three brands brought real business problems to the AI Exchange and left with working AI solutions in a matter of weeks. **Dr. Martens** let shoppers buy through an AI conversation, from first search to checkout. With a composable foundation already in place, it took two to three weeks. **easyJet holidays** matched what's around each hotel with the reviews most relevant to each customer's search, helping answer the question that closes a booking: is this holiday right for me? **Your Golf Travel** turned more than 100,000 customer reviews into personalized trip recommendations. It also built its service team a human-in-the-loop agent that drafts replies using customer history and context, for a person to review and approve.

> *Rather than just a golf trip, it was very much your golf trip.*



OLIVER GUNNING, YOUR GOLF TRAVEL, CDO

BUILT IN THE ROOM
THE AGENT BUILD LAB

New this year, and in response to attendee feedback, the Agent Build Lab gave attendees an afternoon of hands-on building with agents developed by the Alliance's Enterprise Agent Architecture Working Group, part of the Agent Ecosystem. The session opened with a short grounding in five agent archetypes, from LLM-assisted workflows to agents at different companies negotiating with each other. Then came three hours of building. Attendees brought their own idea or picked a prepared scenario, working from reference prototypes such as an agent that reprices products around the clock, acting on its own within set limits and asking a person before going beyond them. Facilitators from AWS, Contentstack, Heretto, Orium, Outshift by Cisco, and Vercel worked alongside attendees throughout. The prototypes are open on GitHub, and the guide behind them, From Orchestration to Autonomy, is available on the MACH Alliance Insights Hub.



What to take from Amsterdam

Across seven industries and three tracks, a clear benchmark emerged for where agentic work stands today.

Now pedestrian using AI to discover.	When MACH Alliance President Jason Cottrell asked who had used AI to research or choose between products, most of the room raised a hand. Over two-thirds of the wider public now does the same.
Now practical agents working alongside people, on clean data, with a person accountable.	Virgin Media O2's customer agent hands complex cases to a human. flaconi's agent handles 40% of customer service tickets. PhotoSì uses Voucherify's agent, Vincent, to quickly set up and test offers using natural language.
Now possible agents that buy.	When Jason asked who had let an agent buy something for them, a couple of hands went up. One of them belonged to Antonia Hansen, whose team at JD Sports is already live with Gemini instant shopping in North America.

> *From an agentic commerce perspective, this momentum is unstoppable. AI agents will become increasingly action-oriented, moving beyond recommendations to executing transactions and driving real business outcomes.*

JASON COTTRELL, MACH ALLIANCE, PRESIDENT



The brands on stage are closing that gap at different speeds. JD Sports is building purchase ahead of demand. flaconi is getting its platform ready so it can move fast once the protocols settle. For the business leaders and practitioners in the room, it was a chance to hear those choices, and the reasoning behind them, firsthand. And that was only what happened on stage. Hundreds more stories were shared in the hallways, while networking, and at the curated roundtables the next day.

Two questions will shape the year ahead: When will people trust an agent to buy? And how do enterprises run and operate agents at scale, from the first few in production to the thousands? Nobody is answering them alone. MACH X is where senior practitioners learn from each other, speak candidly about what's working and what isn't, and walk away with a plan for what comes next.

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MongoDB.

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Speakers at MACH X: Amsterdam



Aanshi Desai
Blacklane



Adam Ull
H&M Group



Alessandro Tripi
PhotoSì



Alex Black
easyJet holidays



Andy Clarson
Deloitte Digital /
MACH Alliance
Executive Board



Anton Koval
Commerce



Antonia Hansen
JD Sports



Dana Lawson
Netlify / MACH Alliance
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Daniel Gebler
Picnic



Doug Wooten
Charles Tyrwhitt



Emilija Frew
Pierce Group



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