

FOR TECH LEADERS · APRIL 2026

---

# Build vs. Buy *is dead.*

The 5-posture framework for enterprise software in the AI era.

---

*A reframe in 8 slides.*

SWIPE →

# The mispricing.

\$2T

*wiped from enterprise software valuations in Q1 2026.*

---

The market is punishing two separate theses at the same multiple.

THEESIS A · DIRECTIONALLY RIGHT

Per-seat SaaS pricing is under pressure. Agents collapse seat counts.

THEESIS B · OVERSTATED

Enterprises will vibe-code their way out of systems of record.

---

***These should not trade together.***

# Five postures, *not two.*

*Each is a distinct organizational posture — with its own TCO curve, liability profile, and talent demand.*

- 1 Buy** *Vendor product, as-shipped.*
- 2 Configure** *Their framework, your semantics.*
- 3 Extend** *Trusted core + custom edge.*
- 4 Compose** *No single system owns the truth.*
- 5 Build** *Full-stack ownership.*

# Four postures in brief.

*Extend gets its own slide — it's the thesis payoff.*

1

## Buy

WHEN IT WINS

Commodity capability, stable requirements, real liability-transfer value.

*Email. Identity. GL core.*

2

## Configure

WHEN IT WINS

Commodity-ish capability with a genuinely unique process.

*Salesforce. Workday. ServiceNow.*

4

## Compose

WHEN IT WINS

Multiple systems, no single one owns the truth. Value lives in the orchestration layer itself.

*Customer 360. RevOps across the stack.*

5

## Build

WHEN IT WINS

Capability IS the business. Data is so unique no vendor can replicate it.

*Uber dispatch. Netflix recs.*

# 3 Extend

WHERE AI CODING MOVED THE MATH

*Keep a trusted SaaS core. Build differentiating capability on top via APIs, agents, or custom services.*

The vendor handles plumbing.

*You own the edge.*

## FORTUNE 500 / LARGE

AI agents that enrich Salesforce opportunities with proprietary signals. Pricing and offer-optimization layers on a CRM core.

## MID-MARKET

Custom workflow agents on top of HubSpot or Monday. Ops tools that stitch a SaaS stack into proprietary value.

## ANTI-PATTERN

*Extending into territory the core vendor will eat in their next release.*

*This is the frontier.*

# Three questions *pick the posture.*

## **1** Strategic or commodity?

Commodity pushes left (Buy / Configure). Strategic pushes right.

## **2** Who absorbs liability when it breaks?

High-regulatory or customer-data stakes push toward vendors who will sign the SOC 2.

## **3** Is the data uniquely yours?

If the vendor's dataset IS the value, you cannot rebuild it — however cheap the code becomes.

---

*Answer honestly — the posture picks itself.*

# AI coding didn't push everything toward *Build*.

It moved the optimal posture *one step to the right*.

**Buy** → *Configure*

**Configure** → *Extend*

*The frontier AI coding unlocked is Extend — bolt-on differentiation on top of trusted cores.*

YOUR TURN

---

# What's the best *Extend play* you've seen land in 2026?

Drop it in the comments.

*Best argument against the framework wins the next carousel.*

---

*Follow for more insights on enterprise technology and AI leadership.*